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An Evaluation of the Algerian Middle School English Syllabuses and Textbooks

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Dedication

To my **father** who did not live long to see this work.

To my **mother**.

To my husband **Zoheir** and my children **Firas** and **Yara** for their support and patience.

To my brothers and sisters.

To my so dear and special friend **Hakima**.

To **Wafa**, to **Radia** and **Ahlem** for believing in me.

To all those who lent a helping hand I dedicate this humble work.

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Abstract

Syllabus design and textbook selection are important acts, and their evaluation even more of an important concern. The present study attempts to evaluate the Algerian middle school English syllabi and the four textbooks that are designed to achieve the course objectives. The research strives to discover whether middle school textbooks of English fulfil learners' needs or not, since the selection principles of any educational system need to be based on learners' needs. In addition to learners' needs, a correspondence between the objectives and the syllabi, the syllabi and the textbooks is also sought after, before ultimately deciding whether or not the four textbooks, under study, consolidate one another or not. It is hypothesized in this study that, first, the Algerian middle school pupils' needs are taken into account, second, there is a correlation between the aims and the syllabi, and the syllabi and the textbooks, third, the Algerian middle school English textbooks consolidate one another. Therefore and so as to achieve our goal quantitative and qualitative data were obtained throughout a constructed checklist and two questionnaires delivered to both teachers and learners. The self-constructed checklist was based on ten recognized checklists and sought the determination of the weaknesses and strengths of the four middle school textbooks of English against certain set criteria. The two questionnaires targeted the investigation of middle school pupils' needs and teachers' perceptions of the currently used textbooks of English; both questionnaires were administered in Constantine. The research findings revealed that the used textbooks consolidate one another but do not live up to the needs of learners and expectations of teachers. A thorough needs analysis is then mainly recommended as a pre-requisite that can guarantee a sound syllabus design and an adequate textbooks' selection.

Key Words: Education, evaluation, syllabus, textbooks.

List of Abbreviations

AM: Année Moyenne

BEM: Brevet de l'Enseignement Moyen

CBA: Competency-based Approach

CBE: Competency-based Education

CBI: Competency-based Instruction

CIPP: Context, Input, Process, Product

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CNDP: Centre National de la Documentation Pédagogique

CNEG: Centre National de l'Enseignement Généralisé

CNP: Communicative Needs Processor

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EGP: English for General Purposes

ELT: English Language Teaching

ENSC: Ecole Normale Supérieure, Constantine

ESL: English as a Second Language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

INRE: Institut National de la Recherche en Education

IPN: Institut Pédagogique National

ITE: Institut Technologique de l'Éducation

KASA: Knowledge, Awareness, Skills, Attitude

MNE: Ministry of National Education

NA: Needs Analysis

ONPS: Office National des Publications Scolaires

OTM: On the Move

PDP: Pre-During-Post

PPP: Presentation-Practice-Production

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SOE1: Spotlight on English Book 1

SOE2: Spotlight on English Book 2

SOE3: Spotlight on English Book 3

TBI: Task-based Instruction

TBLT: Task-based Language Teaching

UFE: Utilization-Focused Instruction

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

It is beyond doubt that English is gaining ground and is more and more viewed as the most important language to learn, a fact attributed to the status this language enjoys worldwide as the language of scientific publications, technology transfer and Internet communication (Gradoll, 1997). Cook (2001:165) reiterates the importance of English in scientific inquiry, as he contends that English is viewed as “a requirement for scientific writing and reading: few scientists can make a proper contribution to their field without having access to English.”

More important is the fact that literacy index, in today’s world, shifted from the ability to read and write and then the ability to use computers and related technology, to how well one knows and uses the English language.

Accordingly, and so as to cope with the evolving demands of an everlasting changing world “English learners are increasing in number and decreasing in age” (Graddol 2006:10-11), and the English instruction is more and more becoming a thorny issue as it is the means that can ensure an efficient involvement in global affairs.

In the Algerian educational context, textbooks remain a major source of contact with the English language that is why their evaluation merits serious consideration because an inappropriate choice may waste funds and time.

2. Statement of the Problem

In an attempt to cope with the worldwide changes, Algeria launched in 2003 educational reforms that were also intended to dispel the moans and groans that grew out of dissatisfaction with the then existing syllabi and textbooks. A new methodology was

advocated, namely the Competency-based Approach (CBA), and those reforms found reflection in new syllabi and textbooks.

Intriguingly, those reforms, as substantiated by Bouhadiba (2015), and after more than a decade of their implementation do not seem to rise to teachers, parents and even learners' expectations, he (ibid) views that the competency-based language teaching (CBLT) embraced in Algeria is subject to controversies; the objective set for the CBLT "seems to turn into a source of tensions and even divergences between decision makers, inspectors, teachers, pupils and parents" (5). Because the textbook is the unique aid used by both teachers and learners in our classrooms, the present research is propelled by an attempt to evaluate the Algerian middle school English textbooks, supposed to be a reflection of syllabuses, so as to cognize the reasons behind the discontent with the existing syllabi and textbooks and the result would be an optimum use of the strong areas and a strengthening of the weak points throughout adaptation or renewal.

3. Aims of the Study

The English language instruction relies on many important and interrelated components, and the globalized era we are involved in did not manage to reshape our views about textbooks. The latter remain essential constituents to many language classrooms, despite the controversy upon the way they should be used. Hutchinson and Torres (1994:315) advance that "The textbook is an almost universal element...No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook."

Textbooks are a pedagogical crutch on which teachers and learners lean, and as conceived by Nunan (1988) they are "the tangible manifestation of the curriculum in action" (98).

With regard to their pivotal role, textbooks' selection need to be carefully handled especially in contexts where English is not just a foreign language (FL) but a language presented to beginners, the case of the Algerian middle school pupils; those early years of exposure to this FL can be detrimental to beginners if the syllabus and its manifestation, i.e. the textbook, are not paid enough investment and attention.

Since "The heart of the systematic approach to language curriculum design is evaluation" (Brown 1995: 217) and evaluation helps determine the suitability and appropriateness of an existing practice (Rea-Dickens and Germaine, 1992), the present study departs from the premise that the evaluation of the English language textbooks used in the Algerian middle schools gives insights about their pedagogical value and provides guidance for further improvements and modifications that would ensure quality in education.

4. Research Questions

The research is guided by certain questions posed; they are listed as follows:

1. To what extent do the English textbooks reflect the needs of Algerian middle school pupils?
2. Do the stated aims and objectives correspond to the designed syllabi? Moreover, do the syllabi find reflection in the selected textbooks?
3. Do the textbooks provide consolidation of one another?

5. Hypotheses

In an attempt to answer the above questions, we suggest three hypotheses open to be proved or disproved:

Hypothesis one:

The Algerian middle school pupils' needs are taken into account. If so, then their necessities, wants and lacks will be met by textbooks.

Hypothesis two:

The Algerian middle school syllabi of English correspond to the stated aims and objectives, and find reflection in the textbooks. If so, then there is a correlation between the aims and the syllabi, and the syllabi and the textbooks.

Hypothesis three:

The Algerian middle school English textbooks reinforce what has been learnt previously. If so, then they consolidate one another.

6. Research Methodology

After setting out our research with an extensive review of literature related to syllabuses, textbooks and their evaluation, a pair of research tools is used to collect quantitative and qualitative data; a self-constructed checklist and two questionnaires. The first questionnaire consists of needs analysis conducted with a total number of 189 pupils dispatched on four middle school classes in Constantine. We deemed essential the investigation of the pupils' necessities, wants and lacks as a pre-requisite that would help assert the compatibility of the pupils' needs with the perceived aims and objectives of the textbooks. The second questionnaire is submitted to the fulcrum of education, to teachers. 40 middle school teachers of English from Constantine responded to a 42 items questionnaire to determine their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the currently used textbooks; Spotlight on English One, Spotlight on English Two, Spotlight on English Three, On the Move, and also to find out whether or not those textbooks meet the needs of

learners and reflect the aims of the syllabi and whether or not they consolidate one another or not.

A self-constructed checklist is the second tool used; checklist method is a widely used means to judge the worth of textbooks, it is cost effective and user friendly. Ten English language teaching (ELT) checklists were reviewed (Daoud and Celce-Murcia, 1979; Williams, 1983; Doughill, 1987; Sheldon, 1988; Skierso, 1991; Cunningsworth, 1995; Ur, 1996; Brown, 2001; McDonough and Shaw, 2003; Litz, 2005). Then the researcher developed one so as the criteria judged important are inserted in the constructed one and because a ready-made evaluation checklist cannot fit all contexts with regard to the specificities of the different teaching situations.

7. Structure of the Thesis

The research study is presented in six chapters in addition to an introduction and a general conclusion. The first three chapters form the theoretical framework of the thesis whereas the three other chapters constitute the practical side.

Chapter one, “Syllabus Design”, tries to provide a comprehensive view related to syllabus and syllabus design. First, a terminological distinction is made between the two concepts; syllabus and curriculum to dissipate any confusion between the two terms. Then and in order to understand the rationale behind syllabus design, the different views on syllabus design all along the pre-requisite steps the syllabus designer needs to go through are reviewed. Because the design of a syllabus has an impact on the selection of materials, the different approaches to syllabus design had to be presented. Diverse types of syllabi are also focused on to explain the divergent views that are related to what language is and how it is learnt.

Chapter two, “Textbook Scenario”, tackles language materials development with a specific reference to textbooks. Textbook use, development principles, production and content seem a pre-requisite for a deeper investigation of textbook worth.

Chapter three, “Syllabus and Textbook Evaluation”, is devoted to the literature on the evaluation of both syllabi and textbooks. It seeks to help the reader gain insights into the different approaches to syllabus and textbook evaluation. Furthermore, a special reference is made to the checklist as a textbook evaluation tool, throughout the review of ten checklists by ten leading experts in the field.

Chapter four, “Self-constructed Checklist”, is a practical undertaking aiming at first analysing and then evaluating the four middle school textbooks; Spotlight on English One (SOE1), Spotlight on English Two (SOE2), Spotlight on English Three (SOE3) and On the Move (OTM). The four middle school textbooks are analysed to provide as clear a picture as possible of the layout of those instructional materials, to assist the reader in gaining an overview on the textbooks’ structure. Within the frame of the reviewed literature and the ten checklists to textbook evaluation, a list of criteria is set to constitute the self-constructed checklist. The latter was established to determine the worth of the aforementioned textbooks. Those criteria cover authors’ qualifications, layout and design, artwork, aims and objectives, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, writing, culture, and autonomous learning.

Chapter five “Needs Analysis” presents and interprets the investigated needs of the 198 Algerian middle school pupils in the district of Constantine. Our participants’ investigated areas revolved around their attitudes towards English, their favourite topics, their favourite language areas, their preferred language skills, their preferred learning styles and strategies and finally their lacks in English.

Chapter six “Teachers’ perceptions on Textbooks” attempts to analyse the teachers’ questionnaire administered to 40 middle school teachers of English in the district of Constatntine to gain insights about their views on the four currently used textbooks. Finally, some conclusion and recommendations are drawn to wrap up the whole study.

8. Limitations of the Study

The research is not without limitations; the following limitations need to be recognized:

- Needs analysis was conducted on a small scale with 186 pupils; therefore, our findings applicability will be limited. A larger sample size for future research would yield more comprehensive results.
- A broader perspective on syllabus design and textbook development would have been gained had Algerian syllabus designers and textbook writers accepted to be consulted.

CHAPTER ONE: Syllabus Design

Introduction

Language learning is a multifaceted process that depends on different interconnected factors which if in harmony cannot but ensure quality in education. Among those factors is the syllabus. The latter in this respect is the contract shared between the two pivotal agents, teachers and learners, which provides guidance and support.

This chapter is undertaken so as to provide as thorough as possible an overview on syllabus and syllabus design, beginning with a distinction that needs to be made between curriculum and syllabus, two concepts generally misused or used interchangeably. This will be followed by the different schools of syllabus design and steps preceding the final content to be taught. Since foreign language learning and teaching contexts witness a wide variety of types of syllabuses, an examination of those types helps justify the selection of one type over the other. As a last step, the formats and purposes of syllabuses will be tackled.

1.1. Definitions of Curriculum

Etymologically, curriculum is derived from the Latin word ‘currere’ which means ‘to run’ or ‘to proceed’. At its simplest level, curriculum is defined by Pratt and Short (1994:1320) as a “plan for a sustained process of teaching and learning.” Curriculum is then equated to set of actions that support learning and teaching.

In its broad sense, however, curriculum is considered by Nunan, (1993) as “concerned with the planning, implementation, evaluation, management, and administration of education programs” (p.8). In line with Nunan, Kelly (1999) distinguishes the wide scope of curriculum and states that

Any definition of curriculum; if it is to be practically effective and productive, must offer more than a statement about the knowledge content or merely the subjects which schooling is to 'teach' or transmit. It must go far beyond this to an explanation, and indeed a justification, of the purposes of such transmission and an exploration of the effects that exposure to such knowledge and such subjects is likely to have, or is intended to have, on its recipients- indeed it is from these deeper concerns.....that a curriculum planning worthy of the name must start.” (p.3)

Kelly views that to determine what a curriculum is, one needs to shift emphasis from just which content to teach? To why teaching that content? Last which impact can it have on its receivers? Three questions are then worth answering, if aspiring for an effective curriculum: what to teach? Why? To achieve which effects? In the same vein, Richards, Platt and Platt (1993) define curriculum as an educational program that articulates first, the ends or the purposes of the educational program; second, the means or the content, the teaching procedures and learning experience which will be necessary to achieve the aforementioned ends. Third, the assessment tools that help determine whether the educational ends have been achieved.

Robertson (1971) puts it so succinctly when he advances that a curriculum involves the purposes, content processes, resources, and evaluation of all the learning experiences pupils undergo both in and out of the school community through classroom instruction and related programs. Still, Carter and Nunan (2001) define curriculum as involving “the aims, content, methodology and evaluation procedures of a particular subject or subjects taught in a particular institution or school system (p.221).”

As a synthesis of all the aforementioned definitions, curriculum encompasses the planning, implementation and evaluation of all the learning experiences learners.

1.2. Definitions of Syllabus

There are as many definitions of the term syllabus as there are writers in the field. North American scholars' terminology differs greatly from that used by their British counterparts. Curriculum is used interchangeably with syllabus for the Americans, but the British draw a clear distinction between the two terms; syllabus and curriculum are not the same.

White (1988) in an attempt to dissipate the confusion between the two concepts states "In a distinction that is drawn in Britain, 'syllabus' refers to the content or subject matter of an individual subject, whereas 'curriculum' refers to the totality of content to be realized within one school or educational system. In the USA, 'curriculum' tends to be synonymous with 'syllabus' in the British sense (p.4)." Syllabus, for White (ibid) is narrower in that reference is made to just one subject, whereas curriculum pertains to all the subjects taught in a school.

Even when a settlement seems to be reached in relation to what the two concepts 'curriculum' and 'syllabus' are, the definition of 'syllabus' itself has witnessed swings; the traditional conception of syllabus which was restricted to the definitions of Wilkins (1981) and Nunan (1993) to the selection and grading of content started to give way to further components. Dubin and Olshtain (1997 :28) point out that a syllabus is "a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translates the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level". A syllabus accordingly, is a rewording of the curriculum broad lines into more detailed teaching and learning units, directed towards the attainment of particular objectives. One can conclude that just evaluation is excluded, whereas the other steps that are planning, implementation and objectives attainment seem integral parts of a syllabus.

Widdowson(1990) considers a syllabus as

[...] the specification of a teaching programme or agenda which defines a particular subject for a group of learners. Such a specification not only provides a characterization content, the formalization in pedagogic terms of an area of knowledge or behaviour. A syllabus specification, then, is considered with what is to be taught...which serves as a reference for teaching (p.117).

The syllabus, then, answers ‘what’ ‘why’ and ‘how’ to teach. Syllabus includes, in addition to the content, the desired ends and the route to take (Hamada, 2007:129).

1.3. Syllabus Design

Taking decisions about what to teach and in what order falls within the scope of syllabus design. Two views of syllabus design seem to prevail; a narrow and a broad one (Nunan 1988). The narrow view of syllabus design is limited to the statement of learning objectives, and the selection and grading of content. This view acclaims a distinction between syllabus design and teaching methodology. The broad view, on the other hand, extends syllabus design to methodology, i.e. learning tasks and activities and discounts the distinction between syllabus design and methodology.

1.4. Schools of Syllabus Design

Three schools according to Stern (1984) mark syllabus design landscape, the Lancaster School, the London School, and the Toronto School.

1.4.1. The Lancaster School

This view on syllabus design is represented by Candlin and Breen and depicts the broad view of syllabus design. The Lancaster school is against the idea of a fixed syllabus which “can be planned, pre-ordained, and imposed on teachers and students...they regard the

syllabus as open and negotiable.” (Stern, 1984:7). This school goes against a specific prescription of what should be taught, and is rather for the freedom of teachers and learners to negotiate a syllabus. Candlin, more than Breen, and in Freire’s (1970) terms, disapproves a fixed syllabus that makes of learners depositories who bank knowledge deposited by the teacher, and is rather for a problem-posing syllabus framework that urges learners to think critically, instead of regurgitating what has been presented by the teacher. The syllabus, according to Candlin (1984), is a means for encouraging learners to challenge the pedagogic ideologies and views of reality that the syllabus designer brings to the class.

1.4.2. The London School

The London School characterizes the narrow view of syllabus design. It is represented by Widdowson and Brumfit. This school reacted in disfavour of the Lancaster view considered as “unrealistic and extreme” (Stern 1984:8). The syllabus according to Widdowson is necessary; it is economical and useful, and like Candlin and Breen, he also favours the idea of teacher’s freedom. A distinction is made, however, between syllabus and teaching methodology. A syllabus, for Widdowson “is confined to content specification”(Stern 1984:8), and methodology, on the other hand, is not part of his syllabus concept (Stern *ibid*). According to Widdowson “a syllabus should be structural; it is the methodology that can be communicative” (Stern 1984:8). For him there is no such thing as a communicative syllabus, methodology, rather, can be communicative and is the exclusive domain of the teacher.

Brumfit does not deny the practical purposes the curriculum serves; “a curriculum is a public statement” (Stern 1984:9). He seems to be much more concerned with the quality and the characteristics of a syllabus than with the question of freedom and constraint of the

teacher. The syllabus, according to him, must be based on concepts of language, language learning, and language use. Sequencing in the content, which is inevitable for Brumfit, must be based on practical teaching considerations and great flexibility so as not to hinder the good teacher.

1.4.3. The Toronto School

Allen, according to Stern (1984), represents this trend; the Toronto School believes that the need for a syllabus is indisputable; Allen's main concern is the building of a theoretically sound syllabus and a practically useful curriculum. He is not preoccupied with the learner's role in syllabus design but advocates an emphasis on grammar, discourse features and communicative aspects of language at various points in the language programme decided on after a needs analysis and based on learners' proficiency level.

1.4.4. Yalden's Formulation

Yalden's formulation came to bridge the stands of the London and the Toronto schools. She shares the viewpoints of Widdowson and Brumfit, and admits the practical social necessity of a syllabus. Like Brumfit, she recognizes the theoretical underpinnings of a syllabus, and advances that "if we view language as learned, then the logic of grammar imposes a sequence; if we view language as acquired (in Krashen's sense), there is no linguistic content restriction; if we base a syllabus on language use, then, following the Council of Europe, we require a needs analysis, and the identified needs impose the choice of syllabus content" (Stern 1984:9). According to Yalden, three principals can tell about syllabus design; how language is learned, how it is acquired, and how it is used. Like Allen, she does not stress learner's role in syllabus development; for her, it is primarily a teacher's statement about objectives and content.

1.5. Syllabus Design Framework

Within the overall frame of syllabus design, different terminologies refer to nearly the same stages of development. Yalden (1983), for example, put forward five steps to be followed by the syllabus designer: needs survey, description of purpose, choice of a syllabus type, the prototype or the initial syllabus, and the pedagogical syllabus type.

Graves (2000), on her part, offers the following steps that underlie: defining the context, assessing needs, articulating beliefs, formulating goals and objectives, organizing and conceptualizing content, developing materials, designing an assessment plan. She adds that there is ‘no hierarchy in the processes and no sequence in their accomplishment’ (Graves 2000:3). Conceptualizing and organizing content, synonymous with content selection and organization, according to Graves (2000:37-38) is a process that requires the following stages:

1. Thinking about what you want your students to learn in the course, given who they are, their needs and the purpose of the course
2. Making decisions about what to include and emphasize, and what to drop
3. Organizing the content in a way will help you to see the relationship among various elements so that you can make decisions about objectives, materials, sequence and evaluation.

Macalister and Nation’s (2010) ‘Curriculum Development Model’ involves three outer circles and one inner circle. Syllabus design process is represented by the inner circle in the curriculum design diagram. This central or inner circle has goals at its centre, and is then subdivided into three main divisions that are content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessment. The three outer circles relating to curriculum design encompass environment analysis, needs analysis and principals. A large outer

circle, which encloses evaluation, envelops all the outer and inner circles. Design at the level of the inner circle is determined by actions and decisions undertaken at the level of the three outer circles, which explains the interconnectedness of all the circles.

The abovementioned models seem to overlap in the following areas:

1. Needs and situational analyses
2. Statement of goals and objectives
3. Content selection and organisation
4. Materials selection
5. Evaluation

The compiled data or information from both needs and situational analyses serve as a prelude for the formulation of goals and objectives which are then translated into a content designed and sequenced against certain criteria which is then reflected in materials. Evaluation helps determine how far the purposes have been achieved. The three first steps are within the scope of the present chapter, and the two last steps will be dealt with in the subsequent chapters.

1.5.1. Needs Analysis

Needs analysis made its appearance in the 1920's (White, 1988; West, 1997), and gained popularity in language teaching in the 60's when associated to the teaching of English for specific purposes (ESP). Munby's (1978) Communicative Syllabus Design was a very influential book that pioneered in determining the content of purpose-specific language programs that tried to meet learners' specific needs. His model also dubbed Communicative Needs Processor (CNP) marked a shift of focus from the linguistic characteristics, to an interest in learners' specific needs or purposes behind language learning; it helped set a profile of learners' language needs. Target situation emerged as a

concept of great importance in needs analysis along functions and situations. Nine elements, according to Munby, are to be considered to determine the linguistic characteristics of the target situation:

1. Participant or who are the learners?
2. Purposive domain or which study or occupational domain will they need English for?
3. Setting or when and where will they need to use English?
4. Interaction or with whom?
5. Instrumentality or which media and modes are used spoken or written, face-to-face or indirect?
6. Dialect or which variety of English?
7. Target level or which proficiency level is required?
8. Communicative event or which skills are needed?
9. Communicative key or in what tone? Or what level of formality and attitudes are required?

Li (2014) states that a shift of focus from learners' language needs to the learning needs helped apply needs analysis in the English for General Purposes (EGP), and became, thus, an important step in course design of foreign language teaching. Many scholars emphasize the value of needs analysis in general language classes, because when taking part in needs analysis, learners feel highly involved in what they are learning (Richards 2012; Seedhouse 1995; Tarone and Yule 1989).

Jordan (1997) estimates that needs analysis has to be the starting point in syllabus design, course materials and classroom activities. Riddell (1991) highlights the important role needs analysis plays in syllabus design as he observes that through needs analysis the

syllabus or the course designer becomes equipped to match up the content of the program with the learners' needs. In line with Riddell (1991), McDonough (1984:29) substantiates that "language needs will help in drawing up a profile to establish coherent objectives, and take subsequent decisions on course content."

Needs analysis should, then, be considered as a pre-requisite in syllabus design because it helps the designer take sound decisions as to which content meets best the needs of particular learners. In addition, the compiled data from this procedure can help formulate general goals or aims and derive related objectives, which will find expression in a given textbook.

What is needs analysis?

Richards et al. (1992) identify needs analysis in language teaching as

...The process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities. It makes sense of both subjective and objective information. The analysis seeks to obtain information on the situation in which the language will be used including whom it will be used with, the objectives and purposes for which the language is needed, the type of communication that will be used, and the level of proficiency that will be required.... (242-243).

In their definition, Richards et al. delineate needs analysis, in language learning, to the gathering of information on learners, be they subjective or objective, i.e. collecting data pertaining to factual information such as age or gender, or personal ones such as motivation and likes on learners, then, classifying those needs according to priorities. The sought after information relate not just to learners but to where the language will be used? With whom? Why? Using which type of communication? Targeting which proficiency level?

Nunan (1988) refers to needs analysis as a set of techniques and procedures used to gather data on learners to be used in syllabus design. The suggested procedures can, for example, range from questionnaires or interviews to observation, depending on the purpose set for the analysis. In line with Nunan (1988), Graves (2000) points out to needs analysis as a systematic and important step whereby data on learners are gathered, then interpreted to finally form the basis of a syllabus supposed to cater to the needs of learners. She, then, brings forth the necessity to consider needs analysis as an ongoing process, i.e. needs have to be continually examined, because as stated by Brown (1995) needs are not absolute; once identified they need to be perpetually checked for validity to make sure that they remain real needs for the students involved.

1.5.1.1. Definition of Needs

Robinson (1991:7) advances that ‘needs’ are “students’ study or job requirements, that is what they have to be able to do at the end of their language course. “Berwick (1989:52) identifies ‘needs’ as “a gap or measurable discrepancy between a current state of affairs and a desired future state.” Put differently, a need is the gap existing between what learners are before being exposed to a given content, and what they are expected to be as a result of instruction. Needs are also referred to as wants, desires, demands, expectations, motivation, lacks, constraints and requirements (Brindley 1984).

Mountford (1981) holds that ‘needs’ are what society or a teaching organization perceive as necessary to learn.

1.5.1.2. Classification of ‘Needs’

Needs typology determines the type of information supposed to be gathered. The following dichotomies express scholars’ views on which data to gather. Felt/perceived needs, objective/ subjective needs, and target /learning needs will be identified below.

Felt Needs and Perceived Needs

Berwick (1989) identifies felt needs as desires and wants learners express and seem to take as their needs, this type of needs is derived from learners on subjective factors. Perceived needs, on the other hand, are articulated by experts, according to their own experiences, on learners' objective needs. Felt needs are expressed by insiders, the learners, where as perceived needs emanate from outsiders, experts.

Objective Needs and Subjective Needs

Objective needs according to Brindley (1989) pertain to needs derived from factual information about learners. Those objective needs are based on clear cut data such as age, gender, proficiency level, skill level, and difficulties in foreign language learning. Subjective needs, on the other hand, are inferred from the affective and cognitive factors of learners that include their personality and self-esteem (Brindley 1989). Graves (2000) suggests such factors as learners' attitudes towards learning, the targeted culture, the language, and their expectations for themselves and for the language course as information used to assess the subjective needs of learners.

Target Needs and Learning Needs

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) are behind this typology. Target needs according to our two authors refer to what learners need to do to perform effectively in the target or desired situation. Target needs are identified in terms of 'necessities', 'wants' and 'lacks'. 'Necessities' are what learners need to know so as to function effectively, 'lacks' represent the gap between learners' current proficiency level and the targeted level. 'Wants' are what learners prefer and think they need as what teaching content do they prefer, for example.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) view that a course design should not be restricted to the objectives of the target situation, the needs of the route between the current situation (lacks) and the desired future situation (necessities) must also be considered. This route or process reflects the learning needs of learners. Learning needs relate to what learners need to do so as to learn.

Jordan (1997) recognizes three types of needs to be analyzed; deficiency analysis aiming at compiling data on the 'necessities' learners lack. Strategy analysis determines which learning styles and strategies learners prefer. Last, means analysis scrutinizes the situational constraints, so as to ensure a successful course implementation.

Long(2005) wraps up all what has been identified so far in relation to needs analysis by comparing the latter, in foreign language teaching, to the diagnosis before the doctor's prescription. But without another thorough consideration of the context or situation of use called situational analysis, the prescription will remain ineffective.

1.5.2. Situational Analysis

Situational analysis can be concurrently used with needs analysis; some experts consider it as part of needs analysis. Richards (2001), and Graves (2000), for example, identify situational analysis as part or as a dimension of needs analysis. Situational analysis is concerned with the examination of the different factors that can either facilitate or hinder the implementation of a given content. Such factors, as stated by Richards (2001), can be first societal pertaining to the effect certain groups in society at large can have on a given program. Examples of such groups can involve policy makers, parents, educational and other government officials. The second factors, project factors, have to do with the general atmosphere in which operates the team and the constraints that can impact their work i.e. time, resources and personnel. The third factors are institutional; they put emphasis on the

human and physical resources available in an institution. The fourth factors include teachers in relation to their training and qualifications, teaching experience, beliefs, teaching style, skill and expertise, morale and motivation. The fifth factors deal with learner factors in relation to their background, expectations, beliefs, and preferred learning styles. The last factors encompass adoption factors that revolve around the introduction of any changes at the levels of curriculum, syllabus or materials and their acceptance or rejection.

Graves (2000) offers five elements against which the context is defined; people, time, physical setting, teaching resources, and nature of the course and institution. People refer to students' number, age, gender, purpose and education. Time consideration, however, determines the time allotted to a class, length of the course, and how often the class meets. Physical setting relates to the location of school, classroom size and furniture. Teaching resources refer to the materials and equipments available. The last element which is the nature of the course and institution tries to determine the type of course and its relation to present or past courses, and required tests or not.

Both of needs and situational analyses resort to the same techniques and tools that can be questionnaires, interviews, observation, case studies or any other suitable tool. All in all, well-established needs and situational analyses will help recognize the general purposes behind language learning which in return will provide support for materials and methodology selection.

1.5.3. Aims /Goals and Objectives

Aims and goals are used interchangeably by Richards (2001); the latter defines an aim as “a statement of a general change that a program seeks to bring about in learners” (p.120). However, for other authors aims are broader than goals. The present research will

refer to the two terms as being interchangeable in that both are broader than objectives. Graves (2000:87) identifies a goal as “a way of putting into words the main purposes and intended outcomes of a course”. So be it a goal or an aim, both answer why a given program is undertaken. Graves (2000) suggests three frameworks, to select from, for the organization of goals. The first is “KASA (knowledge, awareness, skills, attitude)” (Graves2000:83). Knowledge goals concern what learners will know and understand; awareness goals addresses what learners need to be aware of when learning a language; skills goals relate to what learners can do with the language, and attitude goals address learners’ feelings towards themselves, others, and the target culture.

The second framework is the model of Stern (1992) which involves “cognitive goals, proficiency goals, affective goals, transfer goals” (Graves 2000:83). Cognitive goals refer to the explicit knowledge, information, and conceptual learning about language and culture; proficiency goals have to do with what learners will be able to do with the language; affective goals pertain to the achievement of positive attitudes towards the target language and the target culture and learning about them. Transfer goals address ways of using what one does or learns in the classroom outside the classroom context.

Language, strategic, socio-affective, philosophical and method or process goals constitute the third framework; the one of Genesee and Upshur (1996). Language goals encompass the language skills acquired in the classroom; strategic goals refer to the strategies used to learn the language; socio-affective goals deal with the changes in the attitude or behaviour as a consequence of what takes place in the class; philosophical goals address changes in values, attitudes and beliefs. Last, method or process goals include the specific activities.

Graves (2000) views that goals need to be broad but not vague, and future-oriented in that they project in the future the change sought after in learners as a result of instruction. Finally yet importantly, aims are benchmarks of course success, i.e. their attainment is a mark of course success.

So as to reach those broad aims and goals, smaller units must precisely state what learners are expected to be able to do, that is what objectives are for. Graves (2000) views that goals and objectives can be compared to a journey, she affirms that “If we use the analogy of a journey, the destination is the goal, the journey is the course. The objectives are the different points you pass through on the journey to the destination.” (p. 76) For Graves (2000) objectives help break a goal into ‘learnable and reachable units’ (p.88). An objective needs to determine a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound change in learners as a result of instruction.

Bloom’s taxonomy (1956) has been a reference for the development of educational goals and objectives. Three domains are emphasized; the cognitive, psychomotor and affective resulting in three types of objectives: cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. The cognitive domain is knowledge- based and is made up of six levels that are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation before being revised in 2001 by an ex -student of Bloom, Lorin Anderson, along with David Krathwol. The revised taxonomy used action verbs instead of nouns and changed the names of three levels (Knowledge, comprehension, and synthesis). The upper two levels were exchanged. The six revised cognitive levels are stated as follows:

1. Remembering- Retrieving, recognising, and recalling relevant knowledge from long-term memory

2. Understanding- Constructing meaning from oral, written, and graphic messages through interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining
3. Applying- Using information in new ways; carrying out or using a procedure or process through executing or implementing
4. Analysing- Breaking material into constituent parts; determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose through differentiating, organizing, and attributing
5. Evaluating- Making judgements based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing; defending concepts and ideas
6. Creating- Putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; re-organizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing

The affective domain includes feelings, values and attitudes. It has five levels that are: receiving (raising awareness), responding (displaying a new behaviour as a result of experience), valuing (showing a commitment), organization (making of the new acquired value part of one's general values), and characterization by value (acting consistently with the new value).

The psychomotor domain refers to skills' development revolving around manual tasks and physical movement. Some other taxonomies are provided such as Dave's (1975) model which can be summed up into three actions; imitation, practice and habit throughout the following levels: imitation, manipulation, precision, articulation, naturalization.

In sum, we can say that goals and aims are broad claims about the purposes of a program that need to be reduced into manageable and more specific objectives. Their statement helps provide guidance in teaching and testing materials.

1.6. Approaches to Syllabus Design

McDonough and Shaw (1993:6) assert that the syllabus has direct implications for the “design and selection of materials and tests, the planning of individual lessons and the management of the classroom itself.” Syllabus design, hence, has a great impact on all the subsequent steps that are undertaken; the materials, tests, lessons, and even classroom management as contended earlier.

Syllabus design, as stated by Robinson (2011) is essentially based on a compilation of decisions regarding units of classroom activity to present, and their order of performance. Diverse units of organization underlie a variety of taxonomies that characterize foreign language syllabus design. Sometimes, different terminologies are used for the same dichotomy.

Wilkins (1976) distinguishes between synthetic and analytic syllabuses; Nunan (1988) differentiates between product and process syllabuses, whereas Richards (2013) offers forward, central and backward design processes. In what follows the taxonomies mentioned earlier will be covered in details.

1.6.1. Synthetic/Analytic Syllabi

Syllabus construction has traditionally been marked by two approaches, one focuses on discrete items to be learnt such as grammar or lexis, and the other stresses the purposes for which learners learn a language, and how they learn it. Wilkins (1976) distinction of syllabus design into synthetic versus analytic syllabuses asserts that synthetic syllabuses break down language into discrete items which are gradually introduced to the learner. As

far as the latter's role is concerned, Wilkins (1976:2) states: "The learner's task is to re-synthesize the language that has been broken down into a large number of small pieces with the aim of making his learning easier." Accordingly, so as to facilitate learning, the designer dissects the target language into parts, and the learner is expected to put the parts together.

The analytic syllabuses, on the other hand, consider language as a whole and focus on the learner and his needs, the purposes for learning a language, and the means to meet those purposes. Ellis (2012:342), in relation to synthetic versus analytic syllabuses, states "The former involves a structural approach to teaching that has as its goal the creation of 'form and accuracy contexts', while the latter involves a task-based approach that seeks to create 'meaning-and-fluency contexts.'" Ellis (ibid) views that synthetic approaches to syllabus design give prominence to form and accuracy, and analytic approaches focus on tasks that promote fluency and focus on meaning.

Unlike the synthetic approaches, however, the analytic ones invite the learner, as stated by Wilkins (1976:14) "...to recognize the linguistic components of the language behaviour he is acquiring, we are in effect basing our approach on the learner's analytical capacities." For Wilkins, the learner and not the syllabus designer is supposed to be analytical.

1.6.2. Product/Process Syllabi

Nunan (1988) asserts that while the focus in the product type of syllabi is on the knowledge and skills that learners are supposed to gain as a result of instruction, process syllabi focus on the learning experiences themselves. White (1988) advances that the process syllabuses seek to build skills for the real world through open-ended situations, whereas the product syllabuses give prominence to a particular product at the expense of the skills needed in real-life application. Breen (1987a) re-coined this taxonomy as

propositional/process plans. He identifies the Propositional type as plans that aim “to represent what is to be achieved through teaching and learning as formal statements, the expected outcomes being systematically organized and presented in these syllabus types as logical formulae, structures, networks, rules or schemes” (Breen *ibid*:85).

On the other side of the continuum, process plans “focus on how correctness, appropriacy, and meaningfulness can be simultaneously achieved through communication with events and situations (Breen 1987b:160).” For Breen, propositional syllabi emphasize the outcomes and the product, and process syllabi stress the learning process itself. Put differently, product is equated with form and process with meaning.

1.6.3. Type A/Type B

White (1988) distinguishes type A from type B, in relation to what should be learned in a second language, and how should a second language be learned. The ‘what’ to learn relates to type A; focus is on content, objectives are set weeks ahead, and the sole authority in class is the teacher. Things are done not by the learner, but to the learner. Type B is concerned with ‘how’ a language is learned. Focus is on the learning process; objectives are fixed during the course and are derived from learners’ needs. Teachers and learners negotiate the content. Things are done with the learner.

The following table (Table 1) summarizes the distinction between the two types A and B:

Type A What is to be learnt?	Type B How is it to be learnt?
Interventionist	
External to the learner	Internal to the learner
Other directed	Inner directed or self-fulfilling
Determined by authority	Negotiated between learners and teachers
Teacher as decision-maker	Learner and teacher as joint decision-makers
Content = what the subject is to the expert	Content = what the subject is to the learner

Objectives defined in advance	Objectives described afterwards
Assessment by achievement or by mastery	Assessment in relationship to learner's criteria of success
Doing things to the learner	Doing things for or with the learner

Table1: Language Syllabuses: Types A and B (Adapted from White, 1988)

Synthetic syllabi like type A syllabi dissect the language into discrete items to be presented one at once, acquisition equals the accumulation of the parts until the whole structure is built. Type A, as the product syllabi focus on what to teach, and process syllabuses, like type B emphasize how to teach.

1.6.4. Forward/Central and Backward Syllabus Design Process

Drawing on Wiggins and McTighe (2006) typology, Richards (2013) substantiates that in language teaching three elements are to be considered; input, process, and outcomes. Input refers to the linguistic content to be taught, but which needs to be organised into teachable and learnable units and sequenced in a rational way. Process pertains to issues related to teaching methods and the design of classroom activities and materials, in other words it is methodology. Last but not least, outcomes or output and they represent what learners are able to do as the result of instruction.

Forward Design

The forward design process starts from input then shifts to process, to finally reach outcomes or output in a linear way. The three steps occur in a fixed order typical forward – design lesson plan as stated by Wiggins and McTighe (2006 cited in Richards 2013) gives the following:

1. The teacher chooses a topic for a lesson (e.g. racial prejudice)
2. The teacher selects a resource (e.g. *To Kill a Mocking-bird*)

3. The teacher chooses instructional methods based on the resource and the topic (e.g. a seminar to discuss the book and cooperative groups to analyze stereotypical images in films and on television)
4. The teacher chooses essay questions to assess student understanding of the book.

Central Design

The central design, as a second approach to syllabus design, starts from the selection of teaching activities, techniques and methods rather than with a specification of the input or outcomes. Leung (2012, cited in Richards2013) views that the central design can be considered as a “learner-focused and learning-oriented perspective.”

Backward Design

The third approach; the backward design, begins with a specification of learning outputs or outcomes which are then used as the basis for the development of instructional processes and input. The approach according to Taba (1962) as quoted by Richards (2013) consists of:

Step 1: diagnosis of needs

Step 2: formulation of objectives

Step 3: selection of content

Step 4: organization of content

Step 5: Selection of learning experiences

Step 6: organization of learning experiences

Step 7: determination of what to evaluate and the ways of doing it.

The table below summarizes the three design processes as stated by Richards (2013:30); it draws on Clark (1987:93-99).

	Forward design	Central design	Backward design
Syllabus	Language-centred Content divided into key elements Sequenced from simple to complex Pre-determined prior to a course Linear progression	Activity-based Content negotiated with learners Evolves during the course Reflects the process of learning Sequence may be determined by learners	Needs based Ends-means approach Objectives or competency-based Sequenced from part-skills to whole Pre-determined prior to course Linear progression
Methodology	Transmissive and teacher-directed Practice and control of elements Imitation of models Explicit presentation of rules	Learner-centred Experiential learning Active engagement in interaction and communication Meaning prioritized over accuracy Activities that involve negotiation of meaning	Practice of part-skills Practice of real-life situations Accuracy emphasized Learning and practice of expressions and formulaic language
Role of teacher	Teacher as instructor, model, and explainer Transmitter of knowledge Reinforcer of correct language use	Teacher as facilitator Negotiator of content and process Encourager of learner self-expression and autonomy	Organizer of learning experiences Model of target language performance Planner of learning experiences
Role of learner	Accurate mastery of language forms Application of learned material to new contexts Understanding of language rules	Negotiator of learning content and modes of learning Development of learning strategies Accept responsibility for learning and learner autonomy	Learning through practice and habit formation Mastery of situationally appropriate language Awareness of correct usage Development of fluency
Assessment	Norm-referenced, summative end-of-semester or end-of-course test Assessment of learning Cumulative mastery of taught forms	Negotiated assessment Assessment of learning Formative assessment Self-assessment Develop capacity for self-reflection and self-evaluation	Criterion-referenced Performance-based Summative assessment Improvement oriented Assessment of learning Cumulative mastery of taught patterns and uses

Table 2: Features of Forward, Central and Backward Design

1.7. Types of Syllabuses

Designing a syllabus is taking a decision as to what to teach, in what order and in what way, but as all items of knowledge are impossible to teach at once, a pre-selection of certain items imposes itself. Such decision is generally motivated by certain factors related

to theories of language, theories of language learning, in addition to learners' needs, educational goals, and other socio-economic elements.

Krahnke (1987) lists six types of syllabi that are the structural, functional/notional, situational, skill-based, task based, and content-based. Brown (2001) identifies seven types of syllabi; the structural, situational, topical, functional, notional, skills-based, and task-based.

1.7.1. Product or Content-based Syllabuses/ Forward Process

The product syllabuses put emphasis on the knowledge and skills learners should gain as a result of instruction and the grammatical, situational, functional-notional, skills-based and topical syllabuses are typical examples of this type.

1.7.1.1. The Formal or Grammatical syllabus

The grammatical syllabus, also called the traditional/formal or structural syllabus, draws from the work of structural linguistics. The formal characteristics of linguistic units: sounds, phonemes, letters, words, phrases, sentences and patterns of language are its principal units of study. Language is broken into its components which are then described; subsequent rules about how those language constituents are organized follow. Knowledge of a language is closely tied to how far one masters those descriptive rules.

The aforementioned trend found reflection in syllabus design throughout the dissection of language into a list of grammatical units graded according to their grammatical complexity and simplicity, their frequency, their contrastive difficulty in relation to the learner's first language, situational need, and pedagogic convenience. Krahnke (1987) maintains that a structural syllabus is one in which the content of language teaching is a

collection of the forms and structures, usually grammatical, of the language being taught. Grammar is then the organizing principal of this type of syllabi.

The roots of the grammatical syllabus are traced back to the study of Latin, a then dead language, which explains why communication in this language was irrelevant. Brown (2001) reports that rote memorization of Latin vocabulary and grammatical items, in addition to translation exercises were enough to learn Latin. Pedagogically speaking, this type of syllabus gives rise to a teacher-fronted classroom where memorization, repetition, and drills prevail.

Breen (1987) sets three justifications for the selection of the grammatical syllabus: the first one relates to the long tradition of linguistic analysis it is informed by. The second main rationale deals with the systematic and rule-governed nature of the subject learners are presented with. The third reason is that since the linguistic system is segmented into units; those latter facilitate matters for the learner to uncover how the whole linguistic system functions.

Krahnke (1987) highlights the merits of the grammatical syllabus by further stating that grammar is an indispensable ingredient of communicative competence; grammar remains the backbone of any language. In addition to this, the content of the structural knowledge is the most measurable component of the communicative competence. Last but not least, formal syllabi are value and culture-free. Despite its benefits, the structural syllabus is not exempt from criticism, the one it received most is that communicative competence is totally disregarded, and accuracy is emphasized at the expense of fluency. Learners end up by mastering the grammatical rules but are at loss of communication. Moreover, grammar is not the unique language aspect.

1.7.1.2. The Situational Syllabus

The failure of the grammatical syllabus to provide a communicative view of language and to contextualize the language samples presented led to an alternative content i.e.a situational syllabus. The latter takes situations, an non linguistic category, as its organising principal. This syllabus answers three questions: who, what, and where, that is the participants, the activities they engage in, and the setting of those activities. The syllabus designer selects and organizes different real life or imaginary situations which are presented through dialogues.

The situational syllabus enhances learners' motivation with regard to the realistic materials it presents, since as Wilkins (1976:16) maintains, it is "learner- rather than subject- centred."But it is criticized on the grounds that the language required by a given situation cannot be transferred to other situations. As a consequence, general English students' needs cannot be catered for. The situational syllabus also presents sequencing problems; which situation should come first? Situations, hence, proved to be the unsuitable frame in syllabus design.

1.7.1.3. The Functional/ Notional Syllabus

Hedge (2000) views that 'the communicative revolution' in the 70's prompted specialists to rethink the emphasis they were putting on the structure of the language for the benefit of what learners are supposed to do with language i.e. communicative ability. A new trend to syllabus design made its appearance: a notional functional syllabus. Wikins (1976) in a definition of this type specifies that a Notional Functional syllabus

takes the desired communicative capacity as a starting point. In drawing up a notional syllabus, instead of asking how speakers of the language express themselves or when and where they use the

language, we ask what it is they communicate through language. We are then able to organise language teaching in terms of the content rather than the form of the language. For this reason the resulting syllabus is called the notional syllabus (p.18).

This type of syllabus is, then, organized around functions and notions. Meaning rather than form is emphasized; this view of language goes beyond the sentence level and puts emphasis on discourse in context. Nunan (1988) describes functions as the communicative purposes of the language in use, and notions as the conceptual meanings via language usage. Examples of functions would be apologizing and requesting. Notions can be concerned with such concepts as time, frequency and cause.

White (1988) states that Wilkins' 'Notional Syllabuses' and the council of Europe's Threshold Level (Ek and Trim 1990) specification resulted in first, an emphasis on meaning rather than form, and second on the development of needs analysis. According to Wilkins (1981:84) "Starting from an awareness of the learners and their needs, it is proposed that from the total set those categories should be selected that are relevant to the particular population of learners." Moreover, White (1988:84) identifies needs analysis as the ends which a learner targets, and that "the teacher or planner investigates the language required for performing a given role or roles." According to White, functions and notions are derived from learners' needs and help achieve a given end.

From the abovementioned view, we can say that the functional notional syllabus seems to create divergent opinions as to whether it is product or process oriented, synthetic or analytic. In an attempt to settle this problem, Richards (2001: 38) responds to Wilkins (1976), who insists on the analytic nature of this type of syllabus, by claiming that classifying the functional notional syllabus as an analytic one was "semantic sleight of

hand”, because this type of syllabus did not get rid of the linguistic control and accumulation of forms. That is why it seems to belong to the product and synthetic types.

In his definition of what the functional-notional syllabus is, Wilkins (1976) highlights the advantages this syllabus presents and sustains that:

It is potentially superior to the grammatical syllabus because it will produce a communicative competence and because its evident concern with the use of language will sustain the motivation of the learner. It is superior to the situational syllabus because it can ensure that the most important grammatical forms are included and because it can cover all kinds of language functions, not only that typically occur in certain situations (p.38).

For Wilkins (ibid), the functional notional syllabus seems to be superior to the two previous types of syllabi covered earlier, i.e. the grammatical and situational syllabuses, in that unlike the grammatical syllabus, learners’ communicative competence is taken into account, thing which heightens learners’ motivation. But, unlike the situational syllabus which inserts just the grammatical forms imposed by the selected situation, the functional-notional syllabus guarantees the insertion of the most important grammatical forms, and presents all kinds of language functions not just those the situations dictate.

The functional notional syllabus is, no exception, in criticism. Brumfit (1981) advances that problems arise when defining ‘notions’, and extends his criticism to the difficulty of putting what is learnt in real social settings. Nunan (1988) views that dissecting language into units misinterprets the nature of communication. Tagg and Woodard (2011) think that generalizing functions, then creating new utterances from them renders the functional notional syllabus more difficult than the grammatical syllabus; functions cannot be generalized or used to form new sentences. Still, Richards (2001) states that even if the functional notional syllabus seems to take the needs of learners into account, it does not

consider the needs of such stakeholders as policy makers, academics, employers and others.

1.7.1.4. The skills- based Syllabus

Skill is the principle around which this type of syllabus is organized. Skill according to Krahnke (1987) is defined as “A specific way of using language that combines structural and functional ability but exists independently of specific settings or situations” (52). The skill-based pedagogy segments the language into bits or skills, which are then taught. The learner is supposed to put the parts together to form a whole. Specific skills are presented to the learner because deemed necessary in using language. Brown (1995) explains that the selection of skills is left to the author’s intuition as for their usefulness, whereas their gradation is based on such criteria as chronology, frequency, or relative usefulness. This syllabus emphasizes the macro skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, and micro skills such as listening to news, presenting a report, scanning or skimming, and summarizing a text.

The main focus of a skill-based syllabus is to combine linguistic competencies such as pronunciation and discourse together to attain generalized types of behaviour, examples would be: listening to spoken language to discover the main idea, summarizing and delivering presentations orally. Richards (2001), in support of this syllabus, sees that it offers a practical framework to design courses and materials, as emphasis is put on the performance of specific tasks. Krahnke (1987) concurs that the skills based syllabus proves useful when learners are required to handle particular types of language uses. But, Willis et al (2005) question the reliability of the skills based syllabus, for them a mere list of skills and micro skills cannot form a syllabus.

1.7.1.5. The Topical Syllabus or Content-based Instruction (CBI)

Krahnke (1987) defines the content based syllabus as “the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught” (66). Language is thematically approached under this type of syllabuses. Topics or themes form its constituents, and the focus is on the content presented through language. The main concern of this content based syllabus is to teach some content using the language students are learning. The theme is primordial, language learning occurs incidentally. Topics such as ‘health’, and ‘food’ can be suggested in the language learners need to learn, and their sequencing is determined by the likelihood learners will encounter them.

The topic based syllabus increases learners’ motivation; a topic alongside a language is tackled. The topical syllabus contributes to the whole curriculum with topics that can serve more than one course. But the topical syllabus overloads the teacher who needs to present a given topic in a given language of study; this teacher needs to master the topic and the language. In addition, learning a language needs more than a sole reliance on topics.

1.7.2. Process or Method-based syllabi/Central process

The advent of the communicative approaches, such as the functional-notional syllabus, was viewed as “merely replacing one kind of list such as a list of grammar items with another, i.e. a list of notions and functions, and therefore lacking a communicative process.”(Richards and Rodgers, 2001:74). A shift of focus in syllabus design from a teaching-oriented approach to a learning-oriented approach resulted in an emphasis no more put on the linguistic component, but on the pedagogic steps of the teacher, learners’ experiences, and the activities done at the classroom level. Analytic type syllabuses, as a result, gained ground.

Long and Crookes (1993) identify those analytic syllabuses as those that

Present the target language whole chunk at a time, in molar rather than molecular units, without interference or control. They also rely on (a) the learner's presumed ability to perceive regularities in the input and include rules, and /or (b) the continued availability to learners of innate knowledge of linguistic universals and the ways language can vary, knowledge which can be reactivated by exposure to natural samples of the L2. Procedural, process and task syllabuses are examples of the analytic syllabus type (11).

The analytic type syllabuses do not segment the language into discrete units; it presents it as a whole, with no intervention. The learner's analytical processes are called upon, as s/he is asked to recognize the linguistic constituents of the language. The process or negotiated syllabus, the procedural syllabus and the task-based syllabus in addition to the competency-based syllabus are typical examples of this dichotomy

1.7.2.1. Process/Negotiated Syllabus

Process oriented syllabi are analytic and fall under Type B. The process syllabus builds on negotiation of content between the learner and the teacher. This type of syllabus is traced back to the works of Breen (1984), Breen and Candlin (1987). The focus of process syllabi is the learner and learning processes and preferences (Long and Crook 1992). Breen (1984:56) states: "A process syllabus addresses the overall question: 'Who does what with whom, on what subject- matter, with what resources, when, how, and for what learning purpose(s)?" The learner, under the process syllabus, is involved in the selection of tasks, objectives, content and methodology. S/he and the teacher take joint decisions as to what to learn, that is why great demands are said to be made on learners' linguistic competence and teachers' competence in facilitating this negotiation (White 1988).

Still, the process syllabus has been criticized by Long and Crooks (1992) on the following grounds: first, no needs analysis is conducted to diagnose the needs of learners. Second, when grading task difficulty and sequencing tasks, problems seem to surge as no fixed criteria are set. Third, no explicit provision is made for a focus on language form. Last but not least, it is difficult to determine to which theory or research in Second Language Theory (SLA) the process syllabus is to be held accountable.

1.7.2.2. Procedural Syllabus

The procedural syllabus is associated to the Communicational Teaching Project of Prahbu in India from 1979 to 1984. Like the process syllabus, the organising principle of the procedural syllabus is no more a discrete linguistic item but a task, and language learning is not a gradual or step by step procedure. Prahbu (1984:275-276) views that no syllabus could be organised “in terms of vocabulary or structure, no pre-selection of language items for any given lesson or activity and no stage in the lesson when language items are practised or sentence production as such is demanded. The basis of each lesson is a problem or a task.” Moreover, Johnson (1982) defines procedural syllabus as a syllabus organized around tasks which are grouped by similarity and graded conceptually.

The procedural syllabus is learning-centred, and assumes that language is acquired when attention is directed toward meaning, i.e. task completion, rather than form. The content consists of a series of problem-solving tasks in a teacher –fronted classroom. However, the procedural syllabus has received the same criticism directed to the process syllabus. And criticism has been extended to a lack of any evaluative component, and to no linguistic specificity for this procedural syllabus.

1.7.2.3. Task-based syllabus

Richards and Rodgers (2001:226-228) state the following underlying theories behind task-based language teaching (TBLT):

- Language is primarily a means of making meaning.
- Multiple models of language inform TBI
- Lexical units are central in language use and language learning
- “Conversation” is the central focus of language and the keystone of language acquisition.

Task- Based Instruction (TBI) includes different models among which are the three types: the process, procedural and task-based syllabuses. Focus in learning a language is on meaning rather than form, and language use primes over language usage.

According to Long and Crookes (1992:27) the three types “while differing from one another in important ways, all three reject linguistic elements (such as word, structure, notion, or function) as the unit of analysis and opt instead for some conception of *task*.”

In an attempt to overcome the lacks of the two previous types of syllabuses, a task-based syllabus made its appearance. It is based on SLA research which attempted to investigate the relationship between certain types of formal language instruction and second language development. Ellis (1984, 1985), for example, claims that if opportunities for negotiation of meaning are offered, formal language instruction cannot be but positive.

According to Krahnke (1987), “The primary theory of learning underlying task-based instruction is Krashen’s acquisition theory (Krashen 1982)” (59). The latter stipulates that exposure and participation in using language are key conditions for its acquisition. Furthermore, Nunan (2004) specifies that a needs analysis is undertaken under the task-based language teaching. The diagnosed needs find expression in two types of tasks; the

real-world tasks learners are likely to undertake in real-life such as buying a train ticket or solving math problem, and pedagogical tasks designed to be worked on in the classroom.

The step that follows target tasks' specification, according to Long and Crookes (1992), is the classification of those real-world tasks to derive task types. Pedagogic tasks are derived from target tasks. Nunan (2004:1) states that at the pedagogical level, the following practices and principles are strengthened thanks to the task-based language teaching (TBLT):

- ◆ A needs –based approach to content selection.
- ◆ An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
- ◆ The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
- ◆ The provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning process itself.
- ◆ An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
- ◆ The linking of classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom.

Task-based syllabus has advantages as well as disadvantages. Among the strengths it displays is that it is based on theories of language learning, Crookes and Long (1993) claim that it is based on second language learning research, second language classroom research, and principles of course design. SLA research proved that language is not learned in a sequential and accumulative way. Synthetic syllabi fragment language into discrete units and present them one after the other, that is why they do not seem to be the appropriate type. Contrary to the synthetic approach, Nunan (2004) views those analytic syllabuses

such as the task-based syllabus fell in favour because they activate the internal processes of the learner which results in acquisition.

Willis (1996) and Skehan (1996 b) advance that the task-based syllabus focuses on form. Communicative language teaching approaches put emphasis on fluency at the expense of accuracy, or meaning at the expense of form; the task-based syllabus came to reconcile both. Last but not least, the task-based syllabus is said to be flexible as it can be implemented in various contexts ranging from English for Specific Purposes, to beginners or advanced learners.

The opponents of the task-based syllabus; however, question the theoretical foundations of this type of syllabus. Sheen (2003) went further when claiming that its focus on form is a myth perpetuated by its proponents. Skehan (1996a) puts forward the heavy burden placed on teachers required to “command a significantly wider range of skills than in more structural approaches” (30). Particularly, Hedge (2000:36) frames her criticism of task-based syllabus in terms of design and implementation, which is “how to put together a series of tasks to form a coherent programme.” The main features of the process, procedural and task-based syllabus are best summarized in the table below:

Task-based Syllabus	Procedural Syllabus	Process Syllabus	TBLT
Type of task	Language-learning-centred. Information-gap, opinion-gap and Reasoning-gap activities	Learner-centred social and problem solving orientation.	Language-learning centred. Target tasks.
Main Features	Priority is given to task completion meaning-based; teacher speech resembles “caretaker talk”; no systematic correction of learner errors; has been subjected to rigorous testing	Takes its roots in general educational theory and philosophy; centred on the learner and learning as opposed to language learner and learning; learning is a	Based on SLA and 12 classroom research; makes use of course design for LSP; relatively structured; provides provision for focus on form.

		negotiated process.	
Potential problem areas	No prior needs analysis, hence no criteria/rationale for task selection; arbitrary grading and sequencing selection; arbitrary grading and sequencing of tasks; lack of regard for a focus on form as suggested by SLA research.	No prior needs analysis, hence no criteria/rationale for task selection; the problem of grading and sequencing of tasks is not resolved; no explicit provision is made for a focus on form; no SLA rationale; has not been subjected to rigorous testing.	Limited research base; the problem of grading and sequencing tasks is not resolved; lesser learner autonomy; has not been subjected to rigorous testing.

Table 3: Three Types of Task-based Approaches (Based on Long and Crookes 1992, 1993)

1.7.2.3.1. Definitions of Task

All three types, process, procedural and task-based language teaching share the same unit of organization i.e. ‘task’, but do not seem to agree on one and the same definition of the term ‘task’. Many definitions are provided; Long (1985) sees a task as

A piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus, examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, taking a hotel reservation, writing a check, finding a street destination and helping someone cross a road. In other words, by ‘task’ is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between. Tasks are the things people will tell you to do if you ask them and they are not applied linguists (p.89).

For Long (ibid) 'task' encompasses all the varied daily activities one undertakes freely or for a given reward in return. But if Long (ibid) is not involving any educational setting, Crookes (1986, cited in Long and Crookes 1993: 39) defines a task as " a piece of work or an activity, usually with a specified objective, undertaken as part of an educational course, at work, or used to elicit data for research" . 'Task' definition is extended to the educational setting to mean an activity undertaken with a specific purpose to be attained. Precisely, Wright (1987) steps inside the classroom throughout his definition of the word 'task', which is identified as

Instructional questions which ask, demand or even invite learners (or teachers) to perform operations or input data. The data itself may be provided by teaching material or teachers or learners. I shall term this limited set of tasks "instructional tasks (48).

Tasks for Wright (ibid) are learners or teachers' performances or data processing that requires focus on meaning to be completed, the source of this input can be the teaching material, the teacher or the learner. Furthermore, Nunan (2004) views a task as

a piece of work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end (4)

Prahbu (1987:24) advances that "An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate the process, was regarded as a 'task'."(oriented towards cognition, process, and teacher-fronted pedagogy). Both of Nunan (89) and Prahbu (87)

identify tasks as activities that are marked by an outcome, and have to engage learners in thinking processes such as understanding, using and producing information where focus is on meaning rather than form. For Prahbu (1987) the activities take place in a teacher-fronted classroom. Skehan (2003) perception of task is resumed to the following features; a task for him puts emphasis on meaning; does not make learners regurgitate others' meanings, has some relationship to the real world; its completion is primordial; and its assessment is in terms of outcome.

1.7.2.3.2. Types of Tasks

Prahbu (1987:46-47) distinguishes three types of activities that are: information-gap activities, reasoning activities and opinion-gap activities. The first type involves a transfer of information from one person to another, from one form to another, or from one place to another. The second type subsumes deriving some new information from given information through processes of inference, deduction, practical reasoning, or perception of relationships or patterns. The last type encompasses identifying and articulating a personal preference, feeling, or attitude in response to a given situation.

In addition to prahbu's task types, Willis (1996:23-24) typology deals with the operations learners are asked to effectuate. The tasks are classified as follows:

Listing

Ordering and sorting

Comparing

Problem-solving

Sharing personal experiences

Creative tasks often called projects.

Breen (2001:153-154) recognizes four types listed as follows:

Communicative tasks

Meta-cognitive tasks

Content tasks

Decision-making tasks

We can notice, here, that the communicative tasks seek to engage learners in sharing meaning in the target language about everyday life. Meta-cognitive or learning tasks concern learners' involvement in sharing meaning about how the language works, or is used in the target situations and/or sharing meaning about students' own learning processes. The third type revolves around content, methodology and learning that interact during classroom lessons providing content and topic oriented syllabuses with formal tasks. Decision-making tasks provide a framework for negotiations about the purposes, contents, and ways of working in process-oriented syllabus.

Many proposals for task-based teaching syllabuses were advanced, and Breen (2001) throughout his typology, reinforces this viewpoint and holds that it is specific to the task-based syllabus which varies from one context to another. Apart from this specificity that is peculiar to the task-based syllabus, do tasks components differ as well?

1.7.2.3.3. Task Components

Breen (1989), Candlin (1987), Nunan (1989), and Hyland (2003) are examples of scholars who suggested varying components that are listed below:

- Candlin (1987:19) views that tasks need to involve seven components:

1. Input which relates to data introduced by teachers to learners
2. Roles; they determine the relationships between participants in the task
3. Setting; it indicates the environment where tasks are completed.
4. Actions; they correspond to the activities learners engage in while performing tasks.

5. Monitoring; it relates to the control of tasks.
6. Outcomes; they refer to the goals of tasks.
7. Feedback; it pertains to the evaluation of tasks.

Breen (1989:48) on his part designates five components of tasks listed as follows:

1. Task objectives which are the purposes for which teachers engage learners in such tasks.
2. Task content; it is the input learners are provided with.
3. Task procedure, and is about how learners fulfil the task.
4. Learners' contributions deals with what learners bring to the task.
5. Task situation; it concerns the environment where the task takes place.

On his side, Nunan (1989) suggests the following components:

1. Goals, which are the overall aims behind the selected tasks; teachers try to find out why they had learners do a given task (48).
2. Input or the data and information learners are provided with and from which they depart. The input can be a dialogue, a text, a film or a letter (53).
3. Activities or what learners do with data. Those activities can be real ones or pedagogic ones. Learners in real-world tasks are called upon to near, in class, the kind of tasks needed to be performed outside the classroom. On the other hand, pedagogic tasks learners are engaged in require a performance very improbable to be carried out in the real-world. Real-world tasks are selected on needs analysis basis. Pedagogic tasks rely in their selection on some theory of second language acquisition (SLA) (40-41).
4. Learners' roles allude to the part they play in fulfilling the task, in addition to the interpersonal relationship between participants (79).

5. Teachers' roles pertain to their part in the task and the type of relationship they are assumed to set with the learners (84).

6. Setting refers to the classroom setup, it also considers where and how is the task carried out? Is it an in-class or an out-of-class task? Is it an individual, a pair or a group work? (91-3).

Likewise, Hyland (2003) distinguishes between a physical setting, i.e. whether the task is carried out inside or outside the classroom, and a social setting dealing with how learners perform the task, i.e. will they work individually, in pairs or in small groups? (118)

1.7.2.3.4. Characteristics of Tasks

Candlin (1987:19-20) presents, in a comprehensive list, the salient characteristics of tasks that should:

1. Provide attention to meaning, purpose, negotiation
2. Encourage attention to relevant data
3. Draw objectives from communicative needs of learners
4. Allow for flexible approaches to the task, offering different routes, media, participation, procedure
5. Allow for different solutions depending on the skills and strategies drawn on by learners
6. Involve learner contribution, attitude, and affects
7. Be challenging but not threatening, to promote risk-taking
8. Require input from all learners in terms of knowledge, skills, participation
9. Define a problem to be worked through by learners, centred on the learners but guided by the teacher
10. Involve language use in the solving of the task

11. Allow for co-evaluation by the learner and the teacher of the task and of the performance of the task
12. Develop the learners' capacities to estimate consequences and repercussions of the task in question
13. Provide opportunities for meta- communication and meta-cognition (i.e. provide opportunities for learners to talk about communication and about learning
14. Provide opportunities for language practice
15. Promote learner training for problem sensing and problem-solving (i.e. identifying and solving problems)
16. Promote sharing of information and expertise
17. Provide monitoring and feedback, of the learner and the task
18. Heighten learners' consciousness of the process and encourage reflection (i.e. to sensitize learners to the learning processes in which they are participating)
20. Ensure cost-effectiveness and a high return on investment (i.e. the effort to master given aspects of the language should be functionally useful, either for communication beyond the classroom, or in terms of the cognitive and effective development of the learner).

As stated earlier, procedural or task based syllabuses put emphasis on 'how' a target language is learned more than on any other aspect, which explains why nearly all task features, as presented by Candlin (1987), pertain more to 'how' to learn, than to 'what', 'why', and 'when' to learn.

1.7.3. Backward Process

The backward process to syllabus design, as stated earlier, begins with a delineation of the learning outcomes which are then used as the basis for the development of instructional input. The competency-based syllabus exemplifies best this type.

1.7.3.1. Competency-based Syllabus

The point of departure, under a competency-based syllabus, is a specification of the learning outcomes in terms of ‘competencies’. Schenk (1978, cited in Richards2013:24) asserts:

Competency-based education has much in common with such approaches to learning as performance-based instruction, mastery learning and individualized instruction. It is outcome-based and is adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers and the community....Competencies differ from other student goals and objectives in that they describe the student’s ability to apply basic and other skills in situations that are commonly encountered in everyday life. Thus CBE is based on a set of outcomes that are derived from an analysis of task typicality required of students in life role situations.

Competency-based instruction draws a lot from performance-based instruction also called task-based instruction, in that tasks are viewed “as the mechanism that best activates language learning processes” (Richards, 2013:17). It differs, however, from the objectives-based approach in that the content is not specified so as to help attain the set objectives, but is based on students’ abilities to apply basic and other skills to perform tasks likely to be performed in real life situations.

Since the Algerian educational system is currently embracing this approach to the teaching of English and all the other remaining subjects, worthy of mention is a thorough and detailed description of the competency-based approach, after a detailed presentation of the task-based syllabus.

1.7.3.1.1. Theoretical Framework of the Competency based Approach

The competency- based approach (CBA) as stated by Richards and Rodgers (2001) adheres to the interactional and functional views of language learning; it advocates the determination of learning goals in terms of measurable and precise descriptions of knowledge, skills and behaviors, expected from the part of learners at the end of a course of study. In like manner, Bowden (2004) asserts that determining outcomes in explicit and precise ways are prerequisites for a successful career. Emphasis on observable behaviors goes back to the origins of CBA which, as stated by Tuxworth (1990), drew on industrial and business models that specified outcomes in terms of behavioral objectives. Similarly, Richards (2006) views that work related and survival oriented language teaching relied widely on the competency-based model, so as to teach students the basic skills they need in every day survival situations.

For Docking (1994) a CBA ‘.... is organized not around the notion of subject knowledge but around the notion of competency. The focus moves from what students know about language to what they can do with it. The focus on competencies or learning outcomes underpins the curriculum framework and syllabus specification, teaching strategies, assessment and reporting’ (p.16).

Accordingly, CBA is stressing what learners can do with language not what they know about language. The organization of the curriculum, the syllabus, the teaching strategies, and assessment tools have competencies at their heart.

Aurebach(86) lists eight key features of the CBA:

1. A focus on successful functioning in society: The goal is to enable students to become autonomous individuals capable of coping with the demands of the world.

2. A focus on life skills: Rather than teaching language in isolation, CBA/ESL teaches language as a function of communication about concrete tasks. Students are taught just those skills required by the situations in which they will function.
3. Task-or performance-centered orientation: What counts is what students can do as a result of instruction. The emphasis is on overt behaviors rather than on knowledge or the ability to talk about language and skills.
4. Modularized instruction: Objectives are broken into narrowly focused sub objectives so that both teachers and students can get a clear sense of progress.
5. Outcomes which are made explicit a priori: Outcomes are public knowledge, known and agreed upon by both learner and teacher. They are specified in terms of behavioral objectives so that students know exactly what behaviors are expected of them.
6. Continuous and ongoing assessment: Students are pre-tested to determine what skills they lack and post-tested after instruction in that skill. If they do not achieve the desired level of mastery, they continue to work on the objective and are retested. Program evaluation is based on test results and, as such, is considered objectively quantifiable.
7. Demonstrated mastery of performance objectives: Rather than the traditional paper-and-pencil tests, assessment is based on the ability to demonstrate pre-specified behaviors.
8. Individualized, student-centered instruction: In context, level, and pace, objectives are defined in terms of individual needs; prior learning and achievement are taken into account in developing curricula. Instruction is not time-based; students progress at their own rates and concentrate on just those areas in which they lack competence (p.414-415).

Weddel (2006) resumes the different stages of CBA pedagogy into; first, an assessment of the learners needs, second a selection of the competencies that should be specific and stated in measurable behaviors. Third, determination of the target instruction; the content is based on learners' goals i.e. competencies. Last but not least evaluation of the competency, learners continue to learn until mastery of the competency. Assessment should be criterion-referenced: each competency must have clear performance criteria, and learners need to be assessed on how successful they are in performing tasks, not how well they know about language.

1.7.3.1.2. Definition of Competency

Some dichotomies are made between competency and competence, competency for Bowden (2004) is a diminutive of competence. Competence, for some, is job related, and determines an individual's capacity to meet the requirements of a job. Competency, on the other hand is person related because it is all about a human's knowledge, skills, and abilities integrated to effectively perform in life or workplace. Competency will be retained in the present study.

The Competency based approach (CBA) as an educational movement is, then, having competencies as its organizing principal. Competencies according to the Report of the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative Working Group on Competency-based Initiatives in Post Secondary Education (NPEC Report, Jones, and Voorhees, 2002), '...are the result of integrative learning experiences in which skills, abilities, and knowledge interact to form bundles that have currency in relation to tasks for which they are assembled and demonstrations are the result of applying competencies. It is at this level that performance can be assessed' (P.7).

Competency is then an integration of knowledge, skills, and abilities that lead to demonstrable and measurable behaviors as a manifestation of this competency. Still, Mrowicki (1986) considers competencies as the description of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors necessary to the performance of a real life task.

Well designed Competencies, according to Griffith and Lim (2014), need first, to describe specific knowledge and skills that can be applied in new and complex contexts. Second, clear performance criteria must be described; standards need to be clear. Third, each competency must be personalized. Examples of competencies listed by Mrowicki (ibid) can involve the following:

Topic: shopping

1. Read a limited number of basic signs.
2. Ask about the price of items.
3. Express basic food needs.
4. Request correct change when incorrect change is received.
5. Express intention to buy the item.
6. Read abbreviations for common measures and weights.
7. State clothing needs, including size and color.
8. Differentiate sizes by reading tags and tape measures

1.7.3.1.3. Role of Teachers

Teachers under a learner-centered approach that is the CBA are no more the detainers of knowledge, but facilitators and guides; they assist their learners all along the path towards competency acquisition. Still, they have to determine what and how well learners must perform; they give clear instructions and make sure that every learner understands the task. In this respect, Paul (2008) maintains that teachers need to be providers of authentic

materials, activities, and practice opportunities. Those materials as advanced by Griffith and Lim (2014) need to be oriented toward doing rather than knowing, and related to any domain of life. Typical areas, for which competency-based activities can be suggested can involve job interview or job application, these areas are described by Docking (1994) “...as a collection of units of competencies” which consist of “specific knowledge, thinking processes, attitudes, and perceptual and physical skills” (14); the competency specified needs to be dissected into sub skills that call upon a specific knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Furthermore, teachers need to guarantee an individualized instruction, as learners are supposed to move at their own paces; instruction is not time-based. They are also required to provide constructive feedback on how well learners are doing toward successful completion of tasks; they have to ensure an ongoing assessment.

1.7.3.1.4. Role of Learners

The learner is active and learns to learn by acting upon his learning because s/he is at the heart of this instruction. Richards and Rodgers (2001) advance that the learner needs to practise and perform the skills taught; he has to do something with the language, not just knowing about the language. He is required to be well aware of the appropriate and purposeful uses of the targeted competencies. Besides, he must be able to transfer the knowledge gained in school to pertinent contexts of use outside, in real life. Mastery of the stated competency determines the learner’s success. If the specified competency is unattained he stays in the actual program.

1.7.3.1.4. Evaluation under the CBA

Evaluation under the CBA needs to be performance based. It is of two types, formative or summative. The formative evaluation is ongoing and continuous used all along the route

toward the prescribed competency. The summative one, on the other hand, determines competency mastery; it is administered as a final test. Failure in summative tests equals retaking the same module and not moving on to the next competency. The summative assessment, as stated by Griffith and Lim (2014), needs to involve performance based tests not fill –in- the-blank, and multiple choice tests. Docking (1994) shares the same stand when he says that “Instead of norm-referencing assessment, criterion-based assessment procedures are used in which learners are assessed according to how well they can perform on specific tasks.” (16). Assessment under the CBA needs to consider not what they know, but how far can they meet the standards of the specific tasks. Assessment under the CBA is criterion-referenced instead of norm-referenced.

1.7.4. Proportional Syllabus

No single syllabus seems to be exempt from criticism; each has strengths as well as weaknesses, and since no syllabus seems to fully fit all teaching contexts, Yalden (1987) suggests a syllabus she dubbed proportional syllabus, and which aspires to instil “an overall competence” in learners (97). Yalden presupposes three principles which inform about syllabus design: (1) a view of how language is learned, which would result in a structure-based syllabus; (2) a view of how language is acquired, which would result in a process-based syllabus; (3) a view of how language is used, which would result in a function-based syllabus. According to Yalden (*ibid*), the combination of all three principles form the proportional syllabus with a semantic-grammatical organizational base, a linguistic component based on language functions, and themes based on learners’ needs. Structure might be emphasized in the early stages of language learning, before moving on to functions and then using tasks or topics to apply and creatively use the language. That is why Yalden (*ibid*: 81) contends that the proportional syllabus surmounted “the problem of

reconciling functional and structural demands... (and) offers a close interweaving of structural and non-structural systematic and non-systematic elements over time.”

The reconciliation of form and interaction is not the unique feature of the proportional syllabus, Rabbini (2002) adds that “this practical approach with its focus on flexibility and spiral method of language sequencing leading to the recycling of language seems relevant for learners who lack exposure to the target language beyond the classroom.” The spiral format of the proportional syllabus, as stated by Rabbini (2002), leads to the recycling of already learnt items, and it seems to be the suitable method in foreign language learning contexts where the exposure to the foreign language in naturalistic settings is confined to the classroom walls. All in all, the syllabus be it coined proportional, integrated (Richards 2001), or multidimensional (Johnson 2009), if applied by teachers would provide them with a panoply of alternatives to put into practice inside their classrooms

1.8. Formats of Syllabus

Dubin and Olshtain (1986) view that the finite syllabus needs some kind of organization, or format, five types will be highlighted below; the linear, modular, cyclical, matrix, and story telling formats.

1.8.1. The Linear Format

The teaching items in a linear syllabus are covered once only, that is why Dubin and Olshtain (ibid:51) substantiate that “When designers utilize it, issues of sequencing and grading are of paramount importance.” The order of the items in a syllabus is determined by linguistic and pedagogical principles. The order of the units to be taught cannot be skipped or changed.

Content is considered as a whole. Content units are broken up into different sections that are not totally self-contained. Links between content are stressed and encouraged. The

key concepts and skills underpin the entire course. Dubin and Olshtain (ibid: 51) assert that “The format traditionally adopted for discrete element content, particularly grammar or structures is the linear shape.” According to our authors, the linear type is the old format used especially in the organization of grammatical items.

1.8.2. The Modular Format

“...a modular format is often used for a syllabus designed for a program in which the objective is maximum flexibility in the materials to be used.” (Dubin and Olshtain ibid: 53). The modular format is resorted to when seeking a change in the materials to be used. Unlike the linear format, content is divided into a number of self-contained units. Content units have well-defined and precise boundaries, with no links between them. The modular format fits best the courses which integrate thematic or situational contents

1.8.3. The Cyclic Format

The selected units can be reintroduced and tackled more than once

1.8.4. The Matrix Format

It is flexible in that teachers are given freedom to select from a table of content topics randomly.

1.8.5. The Story Line Format

It takes the form of a narrative that can be used with the previous types.

1.9. Purposes of a Syllabus

The syllabus fulfils a wide variety of functions; Altman and Cashin (2003) contend that it allows learners know what the course is about, why it is taught, where it is delivered, and

what will be required for them. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:83-84) delineate the following purposes a syllabus can have:

1. To break language into manageable units and provide a practical basis for textbooks and instructional blocks
2. To thus provide teachers and learners with moral support.
3. To reassure students and/or sponsors that a course has been well planned: its cosmetic role.
4. To give both students and teachers an idea of where the course is going.
5. To act as an implicit statement of the views held by the course designers regarding language and language learning-telling students not only what they are to learn but why
6. To guide the selection of materials, texts and exercises.
7. To ensure an element of uniformity across a school or educational system.
8. To assess how successful a student has been during a course by providing a basis for testing.

Still, the syllabus can operate as a contract, a planning and teaching tool for teachers, a course plan for learners, communication device, a plan and a cognitive map, a permanent record, a learning tool, and an artefact for teacher evaluation (Matejka and Kurke, 1994; Parkes and Harris, 2002; Smith and Razzouk, 1993; Thompson, 2007)

Syllabus as a contract

The syllabus as a contract is an agreement between the teacher and the learner, and is hence a “legal document”, Matejka and Kurke (1994:115). It “serves to set forth what is

expected during the term of the contract.....and to guide the behaviours of both parties” (Parkes and Harris, 2002:55). The syllabus, accordingly, sets forth the rules and regulations both teachers and learners should abide by, sketches the roles expected from both, and delineates the policies to respect and the procedures to follow.

To make of this contract a reliable document, the syllabus, for Matejka and Kurke(ibid), should include such components as: name, course, location, time, office hours, phone number, texts, readings, instructional methods, course objectives, testing, grading, attendance and participation and schedule of class activity. Parkes and Harris (ibid), on the other hand, suggest the following elements: clear and accurate course calendar, grading policies: components and weights, attendance policy, late assignment policy, make-up exam policy, policies on incompletes and revisions, academic dishonesty policy, academic freedom policy and accommodation of disabilities policy.

Syllabus as a permanent record

The syllabus has to serve accountability and documentation functions (Parkes and Harris, ibid) in that it contains information utile for evaluation of instructors, courses; and programs; it documents what was covered in a course, at what level, and for what kind of credit. The following components are required to fulfil this purpose: basic course information, instructor information, pre-and co-requisites for the course description, required texts and other materials, course goals and objectives, description of course content, and description of assessment procedures.

Syllabus as a learning tool

The syllabus as learning tool (Parkes and Harris, ibid) aids learners become more efficient, provides a doorway into the teacher’s beliefs about teaching, learning and the content area. It focuses on learners and what they need to be more effective. In addition to

this, it places the course in context. For a syllabus to serve this purpose the below elements are primary; the teacher's philosophy about the course content, teaching and learning; relevance and importance of the course to students; information on how to plan for the semester including self-management skills, guidance on time to spend outside of class, tips on how to do well on assessments, common misconceptions or mistakes, and specific study strategies; pre-requisites courses or skills; availability of instructor(s) and teaching assistants; campus resources for assistance and offices that aid learners with disabilities. To wrap up, if the various purposes or functions the syllabus is assumed to play are fulfilled, this syllabus cannot but entail a high teaching learning quality.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, our foregoing chapter attempted to determine what a syllabus is and tried to dissipate the confusion prevailing between what a syllabus and a curriculum are. Four schools namely the Lancaster, the London, the Toronto and Yalden's formulation view syllabus design differently; the Lancaster school represented by Candlin and Breen go against a fixed and pre-ordained syllabus, a syllabus should be negotiated by the teacher and the learners. The London school, as depicted by Widdowson and Brumfit, reacted against the unrealistic view of the Lancaster school; a syllabus is necessary and a distinction should be made between a syllabus and a teaching methodology. The Toronto school as represented by Allen put emphasis on the theoretical underpinnings of a syllabus more than on any other aspect. Yalden formulation bridged the gaps the London and the Toronto schools left; the need for a syllabus remained unquestionable and the theoretical underpinnings of the syllabus are also recognized. According to Yalden, three principals can tell about syllabus design; how language is learned, how it is acquired, and how it is used.

In addition to the aforementioned schools, syllabus design framework requiring a needs analysis, a situational analysis and a translation of those data into aims and objectives have also been part of our first chapter. Different types of syllabi were identified with a special reference to the CB syllabus, the embraced type of syllabus by the Algerian educational authorities. The linear, the modular, the cyclic, the matrix, the story line are the syllabus formats identified before finally suggesting some purposes of the syllabus. This chapter constituted a pre-requisite step for the coming chapter in which we will try to see the reflection of such theoretical bases in a palpable and tangible manifestation; the textbook.

CHAPTER TWO: Textbook Scenario

Introduction

No teaching seems to be done without textbooks whose importance remains unquestionable, especially that they influence what teachers teach and how students learn. The upcoming chapter tries to shed light on the instructional materials or textbooks' scenario, and unfolds with a definition of materials development before narrowing down the scope to what a textbook is, and which arguments can be provided in favour or disfavour of textbook use. Then emphasis shifts to the underlying principles behind textbook development so as to gain knowledge of the fundamentals on which to base textbook selection and development. As textbook production seems a neglected area, we judged important to tackle it because it is a step that determines the content of textbook. Work on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and the four skills: readings, writing, listening and speaking, functions, in addition to culture constitute textbook content which is theoretically detailed so as to pave the way for the practical undertaking of the research which is related to the evaluation of those aspects.

2.1. Definition of Materials Development

It was not till the 90's that interest in materials development and evaluation gained popularity as an independent area. Tomlinson (2001:66) asserts that materials development was seen as "a sub-section of methodology, in which materials were usually introduced as examples of methods in action rather than as means to explore the principles and procedures of their development". Tomlinson (ibid) holds that materials development was considered as part of methodology. In line with Tomlinson, Canniveng and Martinez (2003) observe that

While much has been published on SLA and on a multitude of topics relevant to language teaching and to applied linguistics, there have been fewer books on materials design.....General introductory books on language teaching devote little space to materials development and evaluation.....general and more specific books on syllabus design and curriculum offer at least one unit or chapter with some comments on the subject.....It is since 1990s, however, that material development has shown its real value (p.479).

Tomlinson (2011) identifies materials as ‘Anything which is used to help language learners to learn. Materials can be in the form, for example, of a textbook, a workbook, a cassette, a CD ROM, a video, a photocopied handout, a newspaper, a paragraph written on a whiteboard: anything which presents or informs about the language being learned’(xiii). Still, materials are defined by Tomlinson (2012) as ‘anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language including coursebooks, videos, graded readers, flash cards, games, websites and mobile interactions’ (p.143). He, then, adds that they can be informative (informing the learner about the target language), instructional (guiding the learner in practising the language), experiential (providing the learner with experience of the language in use), eliciting (encouraging the learner to use the language), and exploratory (helping the learner make discoveries about the language).

Both of Tomlinson’s definitions assert that whatever is used to help learn a language is a material. Furthermore, materials examples seem to evolve according to the demands of the new era of technology to encompass websites and mobile interactions. Be it a website or a cassette, materials need to inform about the target language, to provide guidance when practising the language, to provide the learner with opportunities of language use, and to stimulate the learner use the language, and they have to help the learner find out how language works.

Materials differ with regard to their purpose, format, and creator. According to their purpose they can be instructional or authentic; according to their form they can be paper-based, audiovisual or electronic, and according to the creator they can be commercial or ‘open market’ materials, as suggested by McDonough and Shaw (1993), materials produced by a ‘Ministry of Education (or some similar body)’ (McDonough and Shaw (Ibid: 64), or simply in-house materials produced by teachers themselves.

Materials development as defined by Tomlinson (2016:2) is ‘a practical undertaking involving the production, evaluation, adaptation and exploitation of materials intended to facilitate language acquisition and development.’ Materials can be adopted throughout the selection of the existing materials, developed via the creation of one’s own materials or adapted where selection plus some modifications are opted for.

The development of such materials is a by-product of the steps discussed in chapter one, needs and situational analyses, broad language goals and specific objectives, selection and grading of content.

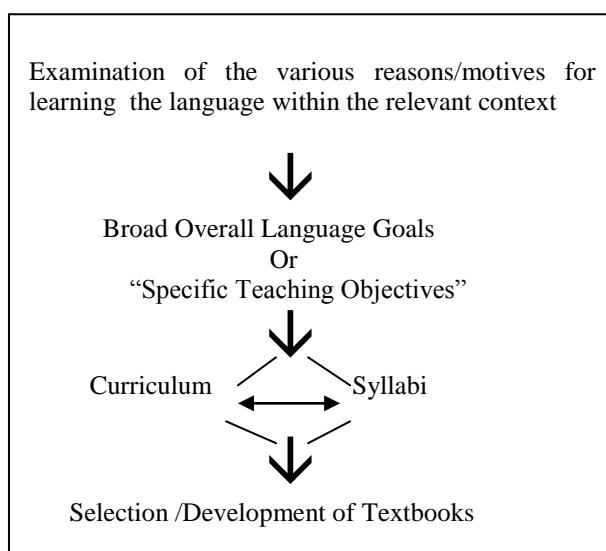


Figure 2.1: Materials development Framework (Adapted from Mc Donough and Shaw, 1993)

2.2. Definition of Textbook

Textbook as defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000) is "A book that teaches a particular subject and that is used especially in schools and colleges..." (p.479). Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2011) considers 'coursebook' as the British synonym of the word 'textbook'. Coursebook for Tomlinson (2011) is "A textbook which provides the core materials for a language-learning course. It aims to provide as much as possible in one book and is designed so that it could serve as the only book which the learners necessarily use during a course" (p. xi).

In the same vein, Stray (1993:73) recognizes a textbook as a book "designed to offer a pedagogical and didactic presentation of a certain field of knowledge".

Coursebook, textbook and material are retained to be used, in the present research, interchangeably to mean the book that presents a given content used by both teachers and learners.

2.3. Textbook Use

Greenall (1984; cited in Sheldon, 1988) frames the contradicting opinions in relation to textbook use in terms of a 'coursebook credibility gap'. Proponents and opponents of textbook use seem to have, each, disparate arguments.

2.3.1. Arguments for Textbook Use

The advantages of textbooks use are delineated by Cunningsworth (1995:7) as a resource for presentation material (spoken and written), a source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction, a reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.....,a source of stimulation and ideas for classroom language activities, a syllabus where are reflected learning objectives which have already been

determined, a resource for self-directed learning or self-access work, and a support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain confidence.

In addition, Ur (1996) views that textbooks provide both teachers and learners with guidance within a structured framework to follow, they are time saving, economic, light and easy to carry, and an opportunity for learners to learn independently. Hutchinson and Torres (1994:315) contend that "... No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook". Their view highlights the vital role textbooks play in the teaching-learning context. What's more, our two authors state that textbooks are pivotal in times of innovation; their use supports and reassures teachers throughout the change processes as they provide a blueprint for how lessons shall be conducted.

In vein with Hutchinson and Torres (*ibid*), Sheldon (1988:237) claims that textbooks are not only "the visible heart of any ELT program" but are also accredited by students as more effective than teacher-generated or "in-house" materials.

2.3.2. Counterarguments of Textbook Use

On the other side of the spectrum are authors who view that textbooks are not so important. Allwright (1981) opines that "...the management of language learning is far too complex to be satisfactorily catered for by a pre-packaged set of decisions embodied in teaching materials" (p.9). For Allwright (*ibid*), textbooks cannot satisfy the complex dynamics of language, and seem to enclose imposed decisions that are far from being meeting the needs of their receivers. In vein with this argument, Williams (1983) and Ur (*op-cit*) view that no one textbook can meet the individual differences, learning styles, and requirements of every classroom.

Tomlinson (2008) goes further by blaming textbooks for the incapacity of most learners to develop communicative skills because of an emphasis placed on linguistic items rather than opportunities for acquisition and learning.

McGrath (2002) maintains that reliance on textbooks renders teachers uncritical of content and values portrayed in their coursebooks. More than this, overreliance on textbooks may result in teachers teaching the textbook not the language. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) view that textbooks can act as de-skinner, in that they restrict the inventiveness and creativity of teachers.

Tomlinson (2010) observes that a major disadvantage of textbook use is that just a minority of textbook writers make reference to applied linguistics principles. Tomlinson (2008) points out that many rely on their intuition as to what they view best for language learning.

Textbooks remain indispensable in the teaching learning context despite the aforementioned drawbacks; it is just that they need to be carefully handled by textbook writers, teachers and learners.

2.4. Textbook Development Principles

Seguin (1989) maintains that textbooks “must correspond to curricula so far as objectives, content and methodology of instruction of each subject are concerned. A textbook usually corresponds to the syllabus of a discipline, the objectives of which can serve as titles or sub-titles of different chapters of the book” (p.23).

In addition, Loveridge et al (1970:10) assert that “as the syllabus is a refined detail of the curriculum at a particular stage of learning for a particular subject, the textbook must be a refinement of those parts of the syllabus which are best taught by the aid of books.”

Textbooks, accordingly, need to reflect the indications and guidelines provided in curricula and syllabi. Nunan (1988) in support to this idea contends that a textbook is “the tangible manifestation of the curriculum in action” (p.98). Furthermore, Dubin and Olshtain (1996) view that the textbook reduces the objectives of the syllabus into manageable units.

Tomlinson (1998, 2003 and 2008) exposes the theoretical principles underlying textbooks’ development which have:

1. To impact through novelty, attractive presentation and appealing content
2. To supply a wide range of texts and activities so as to, positively, influence the target learners,
3. To be relevant to learners’ needs,
4. To raise learners’ consciousness to the represented culture
5. To initiate a response to the target culture
6. To engage learners in contextualised tasks that induce meaningful communication and lead towards effective outputs of language
7. To present learners with authentic texts
8. To promote the receptive skills through thought provoking texts
9. To encourage learners indulge in extensive listening and reading of relevant, motivating, and engaging texts
10. To create opportunities that help learners acquire production skills
11. To ensure a personal participation of learners in an unthreatening environment
12. To engage learners in cognitive and affective activities
13. To encourage learners gain confidence through difficult but achievable tasks
14. To promote higher order skills
15. To be learner-centred and discovery-based

In line with Tomlinson, Mares (2003) maintains that coursebooks need to “provide the learners with comprehensible input....in an engaging way” (p.134). Learners need to understand what they are exposed to (input), and need also to be emotionally involved because if they do not feel any emotion whilst exposed to language in use they are unlikely to acquire anything from their experience (Tomlinson (2010). In this respect, Krashen (1983) advances that the comprehensible input needs to be slightly above the current level of learners that is “i+1”, not finely tuned to their level. If adjusted exactly to their level, the input will turn to be boring, and if exceeding too much their present level the challenge can be insurmountable.

Mares (op-cit) further states that textbooks should enclose a variety of authentic texts and communicative activities that invite learners to reflect on what they have beforehand. Authentic texts relate to texts not written or spoken for language-teaching purposes and are opposed to simplified texts; those authentic materials present learners with real contexts of language use and help learners use language effectively for communication (Tomlinson 2011). Still, Tomlinson (2010) asserts that if cognitively engaged, i.e. when thinking about what they are reading or listening to, learners are likely to acquire the language. The cognitive engagements expected from learners made Mares (op-cit) reject the Presentation –Practice-Production approach and emphasize the Observe-Hypothesize-Experiment approach to textbook development.

Richards (1990:15) estimates that good language teaching materials need to:

1. Be based on sound theoretical learning principals;
2. Arouse and maintain learners’ interest and attention;
3. Meet the learners’ needs and background;
4. Provide examples of language use;

5. Provide meaningful activities;
6. Provide opportunities for authentic language use.

Crawford (2002:84-87) delineates the following principles for effective teaching materials

1. Present functional language in context;
2. Present realistic and authentic language models;
3. Promote purposeful use of language;
4. Include an audio-visual component;
5. Foster learner autonomy;
6. Cater for individual and contextual differences;
7. Engage learners affectively and cognitively.

As a consequence, textbooks should meet learners' needs; concretize the broad aims which are then translated into manageable units; help learners gain linguistic and communicative competences.

2.5. Textbook Production

Seguin (op-cit) reports that “ The production and distribution of school textbooks is a complex and long-term venture, necessitating large investments, the work of competent personnel, forward planning and organisation of the whole process from the elaboration of manuscripts up to their distribution to schools” (p.8). Textbook industry is too demanding with regard to the physical and human resources required. Considerable budgets need to be deployed to achieve the desired outcomes.

Textbook production according to Seguin (ibid) encompasses the identification of needs and examination of the financial resources as two pre-requisites to the elaboration of textbooks then follows printing, publishing, distribution, circulation and marketing of

textbooks. The identification of needs relates to an-in depth and quantitative estimation of two things; first the different levels of instruction, and second the objectives and content of programmes. Such tasks are undertaken by Textbook Committees which base their investigations on “surveys of books already used in schools, on opinions of the most qualified teachers, and on comparable books published in other countries” (Seguin *ibid*: 8). The second pre-requisite revolves around the financial resources.; at this level a distinction has to be made between private publishing organisations and state textbook production services. If production relies on the state, then long-term funding is required. Seguin (*ibid*) declares that “Drafting manuscripts, publishing, printing and distribution require a minimum of six years and it is reasonable to foresee a global period of approximately ten years, given the time needed for preliminary stages, planning, recruitment and often staff training” (p.8). Textbook elaboration is not an easy endeavour, it demands six to ten years of hard work that should be carefully planned and handled; staff selection and training should precede textbook compilation.

After a careful scrutiny of the needs and financial resources available, time is now for the elaboration of textbooks by authors. Textbook elaboration needs to be in line with the following aspects: objectives of curricula, priorities for levels of study and disciplines, quality of publications, any financial constraints. Byrd (1995) suggests five principles material writers need to consider; first, the material should be formatted to meet the needs of learners and teachers; second, the material should be contextualized above the sentence level; third, the material should be written in a style appropriate to the academic context; fourth, presentation of the readings in the material can be used as basics for class discussion of important issues. Last, the material should use a reference system to indicate the source of the material as a way to avoid both plagiarism and violation of copyright law.

Competence and experience are two qualities textbook authors are supposed to fulfil. Seguin (ibid) contends that in the least developed countries it is rare to find sufficient textbook authors that are highly qualified. Similarly, Altbach (1991) claims that “in the Third World, the problem is simply to locate authors with the needed qualifications to write textbooks” (p.250).

In addition to authors or textbook writers, Richards (2001) puts forward the following textbook compilation panel:

Project director: held responsible for the overall management of the project team, for setting goals and ensuring that the targets are achieved.

Writers: those supposed to write the textbook materials.

Media specialists: those in charge of such aspects as audiovisual materials and computer software.

Editor: is the one who reviews all what writers produced, and takes in charge the final version of the materials for the publication or duplication.

Illustrator: the one to prepare and select art and illustrations.

Designer: the person responsible for the layout, type style, graphics, and the overall format of the material.

In the Algerian context, textbook production generally falls under governmental agencies. The Ministry of National Education (MNE) detains supremacy over textbook production. Indeed in 1996, the restructuring of the National Pedagogical Institute (IPN) the then responsible for every single step in textbook production into two branches: the National Institute of Research in Education (INRE) or Institut National de la Rechercheen

Education, and the National Authority for School Publications (ONPS) or Office National des Publications Scolaires, made the latter responsible for the publishing and printing of textbooks' and the former, accountable for the conception, elaboration and edition of textbooks and other supporting materials. The National Centre of Pedagogic Documentation or Centre National de Documentation Pedagogic (CNDP) takes in charge the distribution of textbooks across the country.

2.6. Textbook Content

Tomlinson (2011) in reference to textbook content views that “Such a book usually includes work on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation , functions and the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking” (p. xi). Textbook content should not just help the learner acquire a linguistic and a communicative competence but should also be an open window on the culture of the target language.

2.6.1. Grammar

Attitudes toward the teaching of grammar in the context of English language learning impact greatly the selection and presentation of materials, and pedagogical practices. The advent of communicative approaches, in the 80's, caused a vacillation in attitudes between those favouring an explicit analysis of the language system or grammar rules, and those who prefer an implied and unconscious learning of form throughout language use. This debate can be summed up under what Thornbury (1999) calls shallow-end approach and deep-end-approach to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The shallow-end approach stipulates that so as to make the learner use communicatively language in a given situation, it is necessary first to learn the grammatical rules then to put them into practice in that communicative situation.

The deep-end approach, on the other hand, believes that grammar is acquired unconsciously during the performance of those communicative situations, which renders the explicit teaching of grammar useless. Grammar under the deep-end approach is taught through the inductive approach also called the rule-discovery path as opposed to the deductive approach. Purpura (2004) states that through the deductive approach “...the teaching of language obviously involved the transmission of grammar rules from teacher to student, and to know a language meant to know the intricacies of its grammatical system and to recite its rules” (p.1) where as in the inductive approach “...students are presented with examples of the target language and led to discover its underlying organizational principles in order to be able to formulate a formal set of rules and prescriptions” (p.2). If deductively presented, grammar rules are transferred from teacher to learners, but if inductively presented learners take in charge the discovery of grammar rules; the teacher presents learners with examples from which they discover rules by themselves, thing that can make those rules more memorable. Similarly, Stranks (2003) backs the idea of raising learners’ attention to the grammatical features in the input and then asking them to draw their conclusions, what is known as presenting grammar as a ‘receptive skill’.

Rutherford (1996) calls the inductive approach consciousness raising, in which learners link new grammatical concepts to already acquired ones from both the target language and even the mother tongue. Other post communicative approaches such as Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) put emphasis on what learners can do with language, they are action-oriented. Nunan (2007) views that there are two versions of TBLT; the strong version does not deal with grammar teaching at all, the weak version, however, focuses on form and includes explicit grammar teaching. Those two versions induce focused tasks and unfocused tasks (Nunan, *ibid*), and are similar to shallow-end and deep-end approaches, stated earlier.

The unfocused tasks are designed with no specific linguistic structure in mind, whereas focused tasks indulge learners in processing receptively or productively a specific linguistic structure. The focused tasks help learners use linguistic forms accurately, and meaningfully, resulting, hence, in a communicative and linguistic competence.

The teaching of grammar, for Larsen-Freeman (1991), “means enabling language students to use linguistic forms accurately, meaningfully and appropriately” (p.280). That is why she structures the teaching of grammar within a three dimensional framework encompassing form, meaning, and pragmatics. Form answers how is the structure formed? Meaning answers what does the structure mean? Pragmatics answer when/why is the structure used? Grammar teaching should focus on providing learners with meaningful input related to real- life contexts of use. Learners need to know what the suggested structures mean, and when or why they are used. If all three requirements are met, learners can use grammar not as an end in itself but as a means to achieve competence in language use.

2.6.2. Vocabulary

Vocabulary as knowledge of words and word meanings gained ground in language learning with regard to the important role it plays. Zimmerman (1997) views that vocabulary learning is of great importance to EFL learners. Wilkins (1972) reports that “While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (p.111) that is without vocabulary the learner will be at a loss of communication.

Beck et al (1987) advance that “Research has provided much useful information about vocabulary learning and instruction. What it has not provided is a simple formula for optimal instruction, because no such formula can exist” (p.150). Interesting findings have

been unveiled about the teaching and learning of vocabulary, but none could pretend to present the best teaching method in relation to this aspect.

Literature and research related to vocabulary teaching and learning hold that two approaches are followed: the implicit and incidental approach and the explicit and intentional approach. Hulstijn (2001) defines the implicit one as “learning of vocabulary as the by-product of any activity not explicitly geared to vocabulary learning” (p.271), whereas the explicit one as “any activity geared at committing lexical information to memory” (p.271). The implicit way encourages learners to infer meaning of words from context leading, thus, to an incidental learning of those words. The explicit way, on the other hand, focuses learners’ attention directly on the words to be learnt. Sokmen (1997) presents key principals related to what to teach and how to teach vocabulary explicitly:

1. Building a large sight vocabulary; high-frequency words, or most common English words, need to be focused on. Schmitt (2000) views that high-frequency words should be explicitly taught at the beginning of any language course, and should be the main aim of all beginners. Fry, Kress and Fountoukidis (2004) assert that learning the 100 most frequent words count for 50% of the material one reads, and the 25 most frequent words form about a third of the written material. If listeners and readers are familiar with 85% of the words in a text, they can reach text comprehension (Hirsch and Nation, 1992). Consequently, those high-frequency words, as they cover a large proportion of the English language, should be taken into account when designing materials.
2. Integrating new vocabulary with old; learners are presented with better chances of vocabulary storage in their long-term memories if textbook activities draw on learners’ schemata and encourage learners to identify the link between the new word and the old word they have already learnt.

3. Providing a number of encounters with a word; new words should be integrated in different contexts so as to help learners store and then retrieve those new words.
4. Facilitating imaging and concreteness; new words can be addressed through the use of illustrations and visual aids such as pictures which are sometimes said to be “worth a thousand words”. New vocabulary can be most effective if related to learners’ personal lives; learners can for example draw their own family tree so as to store the vocabulary related to family.
5. Using a variety of techniques such as word analysis, and dictionary use.
6. Encouraging independent learning strategies; learners should be encouraged to understand words by themselves. Oxford (1990) purports that learners can comprehend a lot of words through the use of a dictionary or through guesses from contextual clues. Suffixes and prefixes can be used to grasp the meaning of unknown words. Learners need to be inculcated strategies that would help them, without teachers’ intervention, build meaning.
7. Promoting a deep level of processing, learners throughout the suggested activities need to succeed in transferring information from their short-term memories to their long-term memories; the more they encounter, manipulate and think about a word the more it will be transferred to the long-term-memory.

In a nutshell, high-frequency words need to be a high priority because learners are likely to encounter them in the input they receive and the output they produce. In addition, textbooks need to help provide an explicit instruction of contextualized words so as to help learners transfer those learnt words from their short memories to their long-term memories. Learners should be encouraged and trained throughout the various textbook tasks to use and to be aware of the different strategies they can use to comprehend the difficult

vocabulary. Among such strategies are: the use of contextual clues, the use of dictionaries, or word analysis.

2.6.3. Listening

Rivers (1966) points out that “Speaking does not of itself constitute communication unless what is said is comprehended by another person” (p.196). Communication, accordingly, is not achieved unless a speaker is understood by a listener; this view highlights the pivotal role of listening. In vein with the aforementioned importance of listening, Mendelsohn (1994) views that listening accounts for 40-50% of communication, with speaking at 25-30%, reading at 11-16%, and writing at 9%.

Still, Long (1985) cited in Dunkel (1991), lists theories of second language acquisition, such as the information processing model (McLaughlin, Rossman, and McLeod, 1983), monitor model (Krashen, 1977), the intake model (Chaudron, 1985), the interaction model (Hatch, 1983), all stress the crucial role listening plays in second/foreign language, especially at the early stages of language development.

But despite the importance of this skill, Brown (1987) argues that a considerable number of published courses on listening comprehension and classroom practices in many schools and in many countries show that listening is still considered as the least important skill in language teaching.

The language supposed to be comprehended by the listener falls under two categories; the transactional and the interactional language functions (Brown and Yule, 1983; Richards 2008). Richards (ibid) equates listening to listening comprehension and suggests that listening instructional materials and classroom activities need to combine two types of communication: the interactional and the transactional besides two language processes: the bottom-up and the top-down.

The interactional way of communication involves small talk and conversations that seek to maintain or further social interaction. Small talk consists of short exchanges on non-controversial topics, such as the weather, school, etc. and generally closes up with fixed expressions such as 'see you later'. Conversation, on the other hand, involves a joint interaction around topics.

The transactional language, however, is an interaction that focuses on getting something done rather than maintaining social interaction; this type of language is generally referred to as functions. There are two types of transactions; giving or obtaining information; examples can involve asking for direction, and obtaining goods or services such as ordering food in a restaurant.

The two processes namely bottom-up process and top-down process, Richards (ibid) suggests, attempt to explain how learners can understand the spoken discourse. The bottom-up processing as defined by Richards (ibid) "refers to using the incoming input as the basis for understanding the message. Comprehension begins with the received data that is analysed as successive levels of organisation- sounds, words, clauses, sentences, texts- until meaning is derived. Comprehension is viewed as a process of decoding" (p.4).

The top-down process involves the use of background knowledge to understand meaning of a message. Consequently, the bottom-up process uses linguistic knowledge to comprehend meaning; it moves from language to meaning, and top-down process uses prior knowledge to get the message and so moves from meaning to language.

Knowledge of language, familiarity with topic or purpose for listening are factors that determine the selection of one process over the other, even if for Lynch and Mendelsohn (2009) listening comprehension is not either one process or the other but the listener uses

parallel processing, bottom-up and top-down, so as to perceive, interpret, and respond to the information being heard.

Peterson (1991:114-115) suggests the following bottom-up processing goals for beginning level listeners:

1. Discriminating between intonation contours in sentences.
2. Discriminating between phonemes.
3. Selective listening for morphological ending.
4. Selecting detail from the text.
5. Listening for normal sentence words order.

The goals Peterson (ibid) suggests for top-down processing for beginning level listeners are as follows

1. Discriminating between emotional reactions.
2. Getting to the gist of the sentence.
3. Recognizing the topic.

Morley (1991a) recommends listening activities that take the format of Listen- and- Do that culminate with an outcome. The latter is defined by Sinclair (cited in Morley ibid: 93) as a “real job where people can actually see themselves doing something and getting somewhere...” Morley (ibid: 93-102) considers outcome an important component in listening comprehension activities and lists six outcome categories:

1. Listening and performing actions and operations, under this category are responses to directions, instructions, and descriptions in a variety of contexts. Examples can involve listening and locating routes of specific points on a map, identifying a person, place, or thing from description, or carrying out steps in a process such as a cooking sequence.

2. Listening and transferring information, and one kind of this transfer is from spoken to written form so to achieve examples of the following outcomes: listening and filling in blanks in a gapped story game in order to complete the story, or listening and summarizing the gist of a short story, report, or talk in order to report it to a third person. Transfer of information can also be verbal i.e. from aural to oral such as listening to a part of a story and repeating it to others.
3. Listening and solving problems, games and puzzles are good examples. In addition, real-world problems can involve comparison of shopping tasks using recorded conversations for practice(a customer asking for prices from several rent-a-car dealers, or several florist shops, or several barber shops, then choosing the best bargain), followed by similar kinds of field trips.
4. Listening, evaluating, and manipulating information. The outcomes at this level are intellectually challenging; they can include such tasks as evaluating information in order to make a decision or construct a plan of action, or evaluate arguments in order to develop a position for or against.
5. Interactive listening and negotiating meaning through questioning/answering routines. Focus of the outcome is on both product of transmitting information and the process of negotiating meaning in interactive reciprocal listener/speaker exchanges. Some question types can be used to expect verbatim repetition of information, or to seek paraphrasing, verification or clarification. Other question types look for elaboration or additional information on an already introduced point, or extension which involves information on a new point. Last but not least questions asked may be asked to challenge points given or conclusions drawn.
6. Listening for enjoyment, pleasure and sociability and they include songs, stories, and poems.

To wrap up, the listening materials, as suggested by Hill and Tomlinson (2003), can develop learners' listening comprehension abilities if they manage to involve learners affectively either by relating the subject to learners' lives, or seeking an emotional response to the situation. In addition, listening materials need to tackle both types of communication, the interactional and the transactional, and stimulate the use of the two cognitive processes: the bottom-up and top-down to help learners build meaning from what they listen to; what should be avoided, however and as stated by Morley (1991a), is to use listening tasks to test memory.

2.6.4. Pronunciation

Pronunciation for Seidhover (2001) is the production and perception of significant sounds of the language where meaning is targeted when using language. Morley (1991b:488) views that "Intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence". In line with Morley (ibid), Fraser (2000) holds that

being able to speak English of course includes a number of sub-skills, involving vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, etc. However, by far, the most important of these skills is pronunciation; with good pronunciation, a speaker is intelligible despite other errors; with poor pronunciation, a speaker can be very difficult to understand despite accuracy in other areas (p.7).

With regard to the important role pronunciation plays in language learning, Celce-Murcia and Goodwin (1991) assert that pronunciation can and should be taught at any level.

Richards and Renandya (2002) view that "...pronunciation also known as phonology includes the role of individual sounds and sound segments, that is, features at the segmental level, as well as supra-segmental features as stress, rhythm and intonation" (p. 175).

Ladefoged (2006), and Richards and Renandya (2002) divide speech into two levels: segmental and supra-segmental. Segments are identified by Ladefoged (ibid) as discrete units or small segments of speech which are consonants and vowels which together constitute a syllable and form an utterance. Supra-segmental features refer to aspects beyond the level of individual sounds to include words and larger chunks of speech such as intonation, stress, and rhythm.

Harmer (2001) considers that the teaching of pronunciation does not just raise learners' awareness to the various sounds, their characteristics and meanings, but also helps enhance the speaking skill. Pronunciation teaching, for Celce-Murcia et al (1996), can include the following activities:

1. Listen and imitate: learners listen to a teacher-provided model and repeat or imitate it.
2. Phonetic training makes use of articulatory descriptions, articulatory diagrams and a phonetic alphabet; it can involve doing phonetic transcription as well as reading phonetically transcribed texts.
3. Minimal pair drills help distinguish between similar and problematic sounds in the target language. They begin with word-level drills and then move on to sentence-level drills.
4. Contextualized minimal pairs is a technique initiated by Bowen (1972, 1975 cited in Cele-Murcia et al 1996). The teacher establishes the setting (e.g., a blacksmith shoeing a horse) and presents key vocabulary; students are then trained to respond to a sentence stem with the appropriate meaningful response (a or b)

Sentence stem

The blacksmith (a. hits; b. heats) the horseshoe

Cued student response

a. with the hammer; b. in the fire

5. Visual aids: enhancement of the teacher's description of how sounds are produced by audiovisual aids as sound-colour charts, pictures, mirrors, etc.
6. Tongue twisters: a technique from speech correction strategies for native speakers (e.g., "She sells seashells by the seashore.")
7. Developmental approximation drills: a technique suggested by first language acquisition studies in which second language speakers are taught to retrace the steps that English speaking children follow in their first language. Thus as children learning English often acquire /w/ before /r/ or /y/ before /l/, adults having problems pronouncing /l/ or /r/ can start with /w/ or /y/, and then move to /r/ or /l/
8. Practice of vowel shifts and stress shifts related by affixation is used with intermediate or advanced levels. The teacher points out the rule-based nature of vowel and stress shifts in etymologically related words to raise awareness; sentences and short texts that contain both members of a pair may be provided as oral practice material.

Vowel shift: mime (long /i/) mimic (short /i/)

Sentence context: Street mimes often mimic the gestures of passerby

Stress shift: PHOtograph phoTOGraph

Sentence context: I can tell from these *photographs* that you are very good at *Photography*.

9. Reading aloud/ recitation: learners read aloud or practise scripts or passages focusing on stress, timing and intonation.
10. Recordings of learners' production: audio- and videotapes of rehearsed and spontaneous speeches, free conversations, and role plays provide opportunities for feedback from teachers, peers and self-evaluation.

Materials should contextualize both features of pronunciation, the segmental and supra-segmental ones, in meaningful and real-life situations, if intelligibility is sought after. Pronunciation intelligibility, for Morley (1991b), is to reach a certain level of pronunciation which does not hinder the learner's ability to communicate.

2.6.5. Speaking

Chaney (1998:13) defines speaking as “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts”. Speaking is a two-way process that involves a speaker to be understood by a hearer.

Speaking, is then an interactive process whose participants, as stated by Nunan (1999) require a linguistic as well as a socio-linguistic competence, that is they not only need to formulate correct sentences, but are also required to know when, why, and in what ways to produce language. Speaking as a communicative act in an EFL context requires a special attention for two main reasons. First, because the English language is hardly spoken outside the classroom confines, the case of Algeria, and second because many learners consider speaking as the measure of knowing the language. In the same vein Richards (2008) contends that “The mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second-language or foreign language learners. Consequently, learners often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how much they feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency” (p. 19).

Nunan (2003) views the teaching of the speaking skill as enabling learners to:

1. Produce the English speech sounds and sound patterns
2. Use word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language.

3. Select appropriate words and sentences according to the proper social setting, audience, situation and subject matter.
4. Organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence.
5. Use language as a means of expressing values and judgements.
6. Use the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called as fluency.

To promote speaking in foreign language learners, the abovementioned steps need to be concretized in real and meaningful activities where learners “feel emotionally involved and enjoy what is going on” (Dat 2003:386) so as to help them speak accurately and fluently in real situations of language use. A wide exposure to the FL remains pivotal to the achievement of intelligibility; the following activities can help bring the real world to a context where exposure to the target language is restricted to classroom practices:

1. Role play
2. Simulations
3. Information gap
4. Brainstorming
5. Storytelling
6. Interviews
7. Story completion
8. Picture narrating
9. Reporting
10. Picture describing
11. Discussions
12. Speeches

2.6.6. Reading

Eskey (2005) deposits that many EFL learners do rarely speak the language in their day-to-day lives but need to read to get access to the bulk of knowledge. There goes without denying the fact that this bulk of information exists nowadays in English that is why reading as a skill needs to be instilled in learners.

Reading is identified by Grabe and Stoller (2002) as “...the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately” (p.6). In trying to extract meaning from print, three main processes gained popularity in developing teaching methods and in conceiving textbooks; the bottom-up model (Gough, 1972), the top-down model (Goodman, 1988) and the interactive model (Rosenblatt, 1994).

The bottom-up model in reading is similar to the one used in listening comprehension earlier, it holds that meaning of what is being read is constructed throughout a shift from individual letters, to words, to sentences, to finally reach the whole text. Meaning is decoded from the parts to the whole. Bloomfield (1933: 500-501 cited in Dubin and Bycina) reports that “The person who learns to read, acquires the habit of responding to the sight of letters by utterance of phonemes. This does not mean that he is learning to utter phonemes; he can be taught to read only after his phonemic habits are thoroughly established.” According to Bloomfield, reading following the bottom-up model is considered as a process of manipulating phoneme-grapheme relationships, and is viewed as a pre-requisite step.

On the other hand, in the top-down model the reader does not attend to separate letters, but builds meaning relying on his/her schemata. Comprehension is dependent on readers’ schemata. The latter is identified by Carrell (1984) as the activation of background knowledge to bring meaning to texts. Because texts do not carry meaning by themselves, the reader capitalizes on his previous acquired knowledge to extract this meaning.

The interactive model views reading comprehension as the result of interaction between the bottom-up and the top-down models. Rosenblatt (1994) posits that readers use simultaneously both processes to extract meaning; they start from smaller units of the text then move up to make meaning by activating their background knowledge. An interaction then takes place between the reader and the writer and the text. Furthermore, King (2008) upholds that reading comprehension involves four factors; the reader, the text, the strategies, and the goal. But then puts emphasis on reading strategies as what makes the difference between poor and good readers; they are the most important factor. Similarly, Brown (2001) views that ‘reading comprehension is a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies’ (p.306).

Strategy is defined by Brown (2007) as “ the specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information”(p.119). Brown (ibid) considers strategies pertaining to input as learning strategies and those related to output as communication strategies. Reading is a receptive skill, so learning strategies will be referred to; he then lists the ten following reading strategies:

1. Identify the purpose in reading.
2. Use graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up reading.
3. Use different silent reading techniques for relatively rapid reading.
4. Skim the text for main idea.
5. Scan the text for specific information.
6. Use semantic mapping or clustering.
7. Guess when you are not certain.
8. Analyze vocabulary.
9. Distinguish literal and implied meanings.

10. Capitalize on discourse markers to process relationships.

Foreign reading instruction, however, as stated by Dubin and Bycina (1991) “has simply been used as a vehicle through which to teach structure and lexis of the language rather than the skill of reading” (p.198), and even if no linguistic practice was sought after, reading instruction “has often involved little more than assigning the students a text and requiring them to answer a series of comprehension questions when they have finished. This procedure, however, is really a testing rather than a teaching strategy” (p.202).

So as to opt for the best teaching strategy in reading, in the Algerian middle school context, the texts or the passages enclosed in textbooks need to be carefully selected in order to permit an interaction between the text and the reader.

Texts

Day (1994) lists seven factors that determine the effectiveness of the selected passages.

1. Interest
2. Exploitability
3. Readability
 - a. Lexical knowledge
 - b. Background knowledge
 - c. Syntactic appropriateness
 - d. Organisation
 - e. Discourse phenomena
 - f. length
4. Topic
5. Political appropriateness
6. Cultural suitability

7. Appearance

- a. Layout
- b. Type size and font

Savage and Mooney (1979) argue that “If we are truly interested in what we are reading, we will likely comprehend it better than if we could not care about the topic. Interest or motivation is an important factor in determining how hard readers will work at trying to understand what they read” (p.31). Interest, according to our two authors is synonymous with motivation, and the latter is heightened if the topic of the text, as noticed by Nuttall (82) tells the learners what they do not already know and introduces them to new and relevant ideas. Williams (1986) advances that “in the absence of interesting texts, very little is possible” (p.42). He also views that interest enhances motivation and this in turn results in reading speed and fluency.

Exploitability as defined by Nutall (op-cit) is the facilitation of learning; put differently to what extent does the passage help achieve the stated objectives of the reading lesson?

Readability as defined by Wimmer and Dominick (2005) is “the sum total of the entire elements and their interactions that affect the success of a piece of printed material” (p.331). Those elements according to Carrell (1987) refer to syntactic appropriateness, logical rhetorical ordering of ideas, textual phenomena at the discourse level, lexical appropriateness, and background knowledge of the reader. Nutall (op-cit) relates readability just to syntactic and lexical considerations. For Day (op-cit) lexical knowledge and reader’s background knowledge determine the passage readability.

The texts selected have also to be sensitive to the policy of the country and in accordance with the native culture of learners. Last but not least the layout and type size

font of the reading text, or its typography, contribute also to its legibility, if the text is clear enough in terms of printed words quality, its comprehension is enhanced.

As a synthesis, readability of a text is hampered mainly if three requirements are not met. First if the passage is overloaded with unknown words; and in this respect Day (1994) views that the number of unknown words should be kept to a maximum of no more than one or two words per page because emphasis is on reading not vocabulary development. Second if unknown grammatical constructions are presented to readers, for as long as the number of unknown structures increases, comprehension falls. Third, if the reader does not have any background knowledge about the topic or if his cultural background is not taken into consideration, h/she is likely to comprehend the text.

But what was not mentioned in Day's (ibid) factors, and that we deem important is text authenticity. Lee (1995:324) considers that " A text is usually regarded as textually authentic if it is not written for teaching purposes, but for a real-life communicative purpose, where the writer has a certain message to pass on to the reader". So the text is authentic when it is not modified for teaching purposes. Peacock (1997) states that "using authentic materials has a positive effect on learner motivation in the classroom" (p. 145). Cunningsworth (1984) states that authentic materials offer the following advantages:

1. Provide proper representation of the linguistic forms occurring in a particular text.
2. Heighten the learners' awareness of grammar in real use.
3. Train the learners to deal with real English without feeling inhibited.
4. Promote the learners' confidence and motivation and, therefore, their overall learning performance is promoted (p. 72).

On the other hand, Berardo (2006:61) holds that “the language in inauthentic texts is artificial and unvaried, concentrating on something that has to be taught and often containing a series of “*false-text indicators*” that include:

- *perfectly formed sentences (all the time);*
- *a question using grammatical structure, gets a full answer;*
- *repetition of structures;*
- *very often does not “read” well. (Italics original).*

The language used in inauthentic texts is not the language used in real life, Berardo (ibid) considers those texts as appropriate for the teaching of language structures but not useful to enhance learners reading skill.

Analysis of Texts

A reading lesson, according to Dubin and Bycina (ibid), should involve three phases; a pre-reading phase, a while-reading phase, and a post- reading phase. The pre-reading phase seeks to activate learners’ background knowledge of the subject because it affects their comprehension of the material, and “to provide any language preparation that might be needed for coping with the passage, and, finally, to motivate the learners want to read the text” (Dubin and Bycina, ibid: 202).

Some of the techniques that can be used at this stage can include pictures, word association technique, guessing games, reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures, using the title or subtitles, and telling a parallel story to introduce difficult words.

The while-reading stage aims at helping students understand the content and its rhetorical structure. The commonly used technique is asking comprehension questions. For Dubin and Bycina (ibid) three levels of comprehension should be addressed; the explicit,

the implicit, and the implied. Alderson (2000) puts so succinctly by stating that reading involves “reading the lines, reading between the lines, and reading beyond the lines” (p.9).

The explicit level, or reading the lines, relates to literally stated information, and involves closed and low-order questions because the reader is expected to retrieve factual information from the text. The implicit level, or reading between the lines, pertains to information that can be inferred from the text, and the implied, or reading beyond the lines, requires linking new ideas to past knowledge. Both implicit and implied levels make use of open and high-order questions where the reader is involved in inferring and linking his/her past knowledge to new ideas. Among the other techniques, that can be used while reading, are jigsaw reading and cut-up texts where learners re-order the text read, in addition to gap-filling, and matching.

The last step is the post-reading phase; it seeks to check learners’ comprehension, and can take the form of a written or oral summary or comparison of several texts.

2.6.7. Writing

Prior to the 80’s, writing was conceived as a product that needed to be strictly controlled by the teacher to reduce the possibility for errors (Kroll, 1991). It was used as a means towards one end: language practice where “methodology involved the imitation and manipulation (substitutions, transformations, expansions, completions, etc.) of model passages carefully graded for vocabulary and sentence patterns” (Silva, 1990:12).

Writing then started to be considered as a communicative act whereby ideas prime on accuracy. So interest shifted, as stated by Tribble (1996), to “writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas and collection of data through to the ‘publication’ of a finished text” (p.36). What was targeted was no more the end product of writers, but the different steps writers go through to achieve the final outcome, namely planning, drafting,

editing and publishing. The process approach to the teaching of writing aspires to raise learners' awareness to the various cognitive strategies the act of writing demands. But neither the linguistic knowledge nor the linguistic skills were enough, writers needed to set a purpose and to determine the contexts where writing is produced. The last two components constitute the genre-based approach to writing. Writing is consequently, cognitively and physically demanding, and what compounds the difficulty of the writing act in the Algerian educational context is that it remains the sole means by which learners' performance is examined.

The targeted level determines how the three approaches can be integrated. The early stages of FL writing instruction need to first, centre on the mechanics of writing such as basic rules of spelling, punctuation and capitalization (Olshtain 1991), in addition to structural aspects. Focus is on how accurate the piece of writing is, because if errors are fossilized they are difficult to eradicate at later stages that is why writing needs to be strictly controlled. But at later stages, "writing tasks should not simply emphasize formal accuracy and discrete aspects of language" (Hyland, 1996:27), Learners should be aware of the different stages mentioned earlier as part of the process approach, and should be aware of the specificities and requirements imposed by each production be it an email, a dialogue or a letter. Writing should be viewed as a tool conditioned by context specificities that is used to help learners achieve communicative competence.

2.6.8. Functions and Notions

Functions and notions have been tackled earlier under the Functional- Notional syllabus (see chapter one). Their selection needs to be based on a needs analysis so as to determine the purposes for which learners would like to put language in use.

Halliday (1975: 11-17) presents seven functions:

1. The instrumental function: using language to get things;
2. The regulatory function: using language to control the behaviour of others;
3. The interactional function: using language to create interaction with others;
4. The personal function: using language to express personal feelings and meanings;
5. The heuristic function: using language to learn and to discover;
6. The imaginative function: using language to create a world of the imagination;
7. The representational function: using language to communicate information.

Ek and Trim (1990) classify language functions for threshold level into six categories:

1. Imparting and seeking factual information
 - reporting (describing and narrating)
 - correcting
 - asking
 - answering questions
2. Expressing and finding out attitudes
 - expressing agreement with a statement
 - expressing disagreement with a statement
 - enquiring about agreement and disagreement
 - denying statements
 - stating whether one knows or does not know a person, thing or fact
 - enquiring whether one knows or does not know a person, thing or fact
 - stating whether one remembers or has forgotten a person, thing, or fact or action
 - enquiring whether one remembers or has forgotten a person, thing, or fact or action
 - expressing degrees of probability
 - enquiring as to degrees of probability

- expressing or denying necessity (including logical deduction)
- enquiring as to necessity (including logical deduction)
- expressing degrees of certainty
- enquiring about degrees of certainty
- expressing obligation
- enquiring about obligation
- expressing ability/inability to do something
- enquiring about ability/inability to do something
- expressing that something is or is not permitted, or permissible
- enquiring whether something is or is not permitted, or permissible

Granting permission

- withholding permission
- expressing wants / desires
- enquiring about wants/desires
- expressing intentions
- enquiring about intentions
- expressing preferences
- inquiring about preferences
- expressing pleasure, happiness
- expressing displeasure, unhappiness
- inquiring about pleasure/displeasure/happiness/unhappiness
- expressing liking
- expressing dislike
- inquiring about likes and dislikes
- expressing satisfaction

- expressing dissatisfaction
- expressing interest
- expressing lack of interest
- expressing surprise
- inquiring about surprise
- expressing hope
- expressing disappointment
- expressing fear
- giving reassurance
- inquiring about fear/worries
- expressing gratitude
- reacting to an expression of gratitude
- offering an apology
- accepting an apology
- expressing moral obligation
- expressing approval
- expressing disapproval
- inquiring about approval/disapproval
- expressing regret/sympathy

3. Deciding on courses of action

- suggesting a course of action
- agreeing to a course of action
- requesting someone to do something
- advising someone to do something
- warning others to do something or refrain from something

- encouraging someone to do something
- instructing or directing someone to do something
- requesting assistance
- offering assistance
- inviting someone
- accepting an invitation/offer
- declining an offer/invitation
- inquiring whether an offer or invitation is accepted or declined
- asking someone for something

4. Socialising

- attracting attention
- greeting people
- meeting a friend or acquaintance
- replying to a greeting from a friend or acquaintance
- addressing a friend or acquaintance
- addressing a stranger
- addressing a customer or a member of the general public
- introducing someone to someone else
- being introduced someone, or when someone is introduced to you
- congratulating someone
- proposing a toast
- taking leave

5. Structuring discourse

-opening

-hesitating

-correcting oneself

-introducing a theme

-expressing an opinion

-enumerating

-exemplifying

-emphasising

-summarising

-changing the theme

-asking someone to change the theme

-asking someone's opinion

-showing that one is following a person's discourse

-interrupting

-asking someone to be silent

-giving the floor over

-indicating a wish to continue

-encouraging someone to continue

-indicating that someone is coming to an end

- closing
- telephone opening
- asking for [someone]
- asking someone to wait
- asking whether you are heard and understood
- giving signals that you are heard and understood
- announcing new call
- opening [letter]
- closing [letter]

6. Communication repair

- signalling non-understanding
- asking for repetition of sentence
- asking for repetition of word or phrase
- asking for confirmation of text
- asking for confirmation or understanding
- asking for clarification
- asking someone to spell something
- asking for something to be written down
- expressing ignorance of a word or expression
- appealing for assistance
- asking someone to speak more slowly
- paraphrasing
- repeating what one has said

-asking if you have been understood

-spelling out a word or expression

-supplying a word or expression

2.6.9. Culture

Alpetkin (2002:57) states that “learning a foreign language becomes a kind of enculturation, where one acquires new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target language culture and its speakers”. According to Alpetkin, the foreign language one learns becomes a vehicle for the canalization of the target culture norms and values, and which in their turn become references for the learners of that foreign language. Cultural representation in textbooks needs to be considered with precaution so as to prevent the denial of one’s culture and thus one’s identity, or the total rejection of the target culture which leads to an alienation in a shrinking world.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) assert that three types of materials can underlie the cultural representation in textbooks; source culture materials, target culture materials, and international materials. Source culture materials mirror the local culture and not the target culture. Drawing on the native culture, learners are exposed to contexts and topics they are familiar with but in English because as reported by Cunningsworth (1984) time “would be better spent learning the language rather than the structuring of the social world in which the learner is never likely to find himself” (p.61-2). According to Cunningsworth (ibid) it is preferable to keep the second/foreign language learner away from the target culture as s/he is not going to get in the target society; time should be devoted to language learning rather. In addition to this argument, other experts regard exposure to the target culture as a threat to the native culture, and as a blow to learners’ identity.

Contrary to Cunningsworth (ibid), Pulverness (2003) views that culture should be an integral component of textbooks' content because language and culture cannot be dissociated, he contends that "To treat language...as a value-free code is likely to deprive learners of key dimensions of meaning and to fail to equip them with necessary resources to recognize and respond appropriately to the cultural subtext of language in use" (p.428). Language and culture are closely tied, and both help achieve communicative competence. Pulverness (2003) view is mirrored in the second type suggested by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) i.e. target culture materials which teach the target or the English culture, those materials raise learners' awareness to the culture of the country where English is used as an L1. Last, international materials fuse a variety of cultures involving both English-speaking countries and countries where English is neither the first nor the second language.

In addition to the above sources of cultural representation, many researchers view that culture in language teaching and learning falls under two types: big 'C' culture and small 'c' culture. Chastain (1988) and Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) present the elements of big 'C' culture as follows: art, economy, education, geography, history, institutions and literature. The small 'c' culture related topics, as viewed by Chastain (ibid) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) encompass: everyday life, living conditions, interpersonal relations, values, beliefs, attitudes, body language, social conventions and ritual behaviour.

The content of textbooks, hence, is supposed to include language knowledge i.e. grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, functions and notions, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition to those components, raising learners' cultural awareness is inevitable if seeking to meet the three textbook content requirements of Loveridge et al (1970) which are first, content must contain what is basic to the subject being treated,

second it has to contribute to the pupils' education, and third it needs to help pupils understand the world around them and fit them for practical life.

Conclusion

This chapter has been an attempt to examine the textbook scenario. The starting point was a broad overview on materials development area which is considered as a practical step undertaken to facilitate language acquisition and development. A special reference is then made to 'textbook' used interchangeably, in the present study, with coursebook and material to mean the book that presents a given content to be used by teachers and learners. But as divergent views are expressed in relation to textbook use, proponents and opponents' arguments are advanced. Textbook development was then considered in an attempt to highlight the importance of basing the textbook on sound principles if we really aspire to make of it the tangible manifestation of the curriculum and the refinement of the syllabus. Furthermore, as textbook production seems an under investigated area, we deemed necessary to tackle it so as to gain insights about the interdependent stages the whole textbook industry goes through, and to put emphasis on the necessity of a high physical and human investment in textbook elaboration. Last but not least, textbook content is referred to in relation to the presentation of grammar, vocabulary, listening, pronunciation, speaking, reading, writing, functions and notions, and culture.

Since the quality of the teaching-learning procedure is settled upon the selected material, then an on-going checking of the strengths and weaknesses of this material imposes itself. The coming chapter will put emphasis on evaluation as an act that helps determine the worth of first the syllabus and then its reflection the textbook.

CHAPTER THREE: Syllabus and Textbook Evaluation

Introduction

The important role textbooks play, as a reflection of syllabuses in the teaching learning realm, renders the selection and design of such material a critical issue. Evaluation remains the unique means that can help maximize the likelihood of an effective design of a syllabus and an effective translation of this syllabus into a textbook. The present chapter attempts to highlight the evaluation of syllabuses and textbooks and the different ways that can be used to approach this act.

3.1. Definition of Evaluation

“The heart of the systematic approach to language curriculum design is evaluation: the part of the model that includes, connects, and gives meaning to all the other elements” (Brown, 1995:217). Evaluation should be regarded as an integral component of curriculum and syllabus design, it is the most important step that helps validate and determine the success of all previous stages. In its broad sense, evaluation is viewed by Genesee (2001) as a process whereby information is collected, analyzed and interpreted. Worthen (1990) identifies evaluation “as the determination of the worth of a thing” (p.42). A program evaluation for Scriven (1991) is “judging the worth or merit of something or the product of the process’ (p.139). In accordance with Scriven (ibid), Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1994) define evaluation “as the means by which we can gain a better understanding of what’s effective, what’s less effective and what appears to be no use at all” (p.28). Worthen and Sanders (1987) conceive evaluation as the formal determination of the quality, effectiveness or value of a program, product, project, objective, or curriculum. Patton (2008) defines program evaluation as “...the systematic collection of information about the

activities, characteristics, and results of programs to make judgements about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and/or increase understanding” (p.39). Emphasis according to Patton (ibid) needs to be put on the usefulness of evaluation and its role in decision making. Scriven (1986) views that the role of the evaluator is to determine whether what is evaluated is good or bad, “Bad is bad, and good is good, and it is the job of evaluators to decide which is which (p.19).

As a synthesis evaluation can be identified as a systematic process undertaken to determine the positive and negative aspects of what is being evaluated, generally resulting in bringing about a value judgement.

3.2. Syllabus Evaluation

Alderson (1992) views in program evaluation an endeavour to find answer to the following questions: why to evaluate? For whom to evaluate? Who evaluates? What to evaluate? How to evaluate? When to evaluate?

1. Purpose refers to the reason for which evaluation is undertaken. What does the evaluator seek to achieve?
2. Audience is, to use Nevo’s (1983) terms, related to who should be served by an evaluation? Nevo (ibid) views that evaluation should serve the information needs of all actual and potential parties interested in the evaluation object (“stakeholders”).
3. The evaluator so as to be competent and trustworthy needs to fulfil the characteristics Nevo (ibid) delineates in terms of “technical competence in the area of measurement and research methods, understanding the social context and the substance of the evaluation object, human relations skills, personal integrity, and

objectivity, as well as characteristics related to organizational authority and responsibility” (p.123).

The evaluator can be internal or external (Scriven 1991). The latter defines internal evaluators or evaluations as “... those done by project staff, even if they are special evaluation staff -that is, even if they are external to the production/writing/service part of the project” (p.197). Whoever is employed by the project is an internal. Critics put the internal evaluator objectivity and credibility at stake, the evaluator is not independent and his/her belonging to the team influences his/her decisions. “An external evaluator, on the other part, is someone who is at least not on the project or program’s staff” (Scriven *ibid*: 159), that is why objectivity and credibility from the part of this type of evaluators can be guaranteed.

4. Content or what to evaluate relates, according to Nevo (*op-cit*), to objects of evaluation, for him “typical evaluation objects in education are students, educational and administrative personnel, curricula, instructional materials, programs, projects, and institutions” (p.125).
5. Method or how to evaluate is closely tied to the nature of the problem raised in evaluation. Quantitative and qualitative methods are the widespread research methodologies used. The quantitative methods rely on an objective, inferential, deductive approach built on hard numerical data and use standardized assessment techniques; qualitative methods, on the other hand, resort to subjective, open-ended, exploratory and inductive approaches putting emphasis on abundant data; they are descriptive in nature (Nunan, 1992). What seems advisable, however, is to use more than one method.

6. Timing determines when evaluation is undertaken; it can take place before, during the development and implementation of a program or after it has been implemented.

3.3. Approaches to Syllabus Evaluation

Worthen et al (1997) classify the approaches to evaluation into five categories: Objectives-Oriented Approach, Management-oriented Approach, Consumer-oriented Approach, Adversary-Oriented Approach, and Participant-Oriented Approach, in addition to those approaches another approach that is Judgement-Oriented Approach will also be tackled.

3.3.1. Objectives-Oriented Approach

It is also labelled Goal Attainment Approach, or Performance-Objectives Congruence Approach. Tyler is the first to conceptualize this approach; he defines evaluation as a process of determining how far the educational goals and objectives of a given program are actually being realized. Worthen (1990) reports that Tyler suggested “a process in which broad goals or objectives would be established or identified, defined in behavioural terms, and relevant student behaviours would be measured against this yardstick, using either standardized or evaluator-constructed instruments” (p.44). For Tyler, goals and objectives identification are a pre-requisite to evaluation. They have to be identified in terms of behaviours expected from students, then follows the degree to which students’ performance is congruent with the set expectations. The tool used can be a standard or a self-constructed instrument.

The Objectives-oriented Approach to syllabus evaluation helps determine the extent to which goals and then derived objectives are achieved or not.

Scriven (1967), however, was among those who criticized this approach on the grounds that goals themselves need to be examined and whether attained or not cannot form the frame within which to evaluate a program. Worthen and Sanders (1987) consider that the

sole focus on objectives attainment in evaluation can prevent the evaluator from considering other important outcomes not directly linked to the goals of evaluation.

3.3.2. Management-Oriented Approach

Unlike the previous approach which emphasizes the extent to which goals are attained, Hogan (2007:7) advances that the Management-Oriented or Decision-Management approach “serves organizational leaders by meeting the informational needs of managerial decision makers”. Evaluation is regarded as serving mainly educational decision-makers’ needs. Stufflebeam’s model: Context, Input, Process, Product, (CIPP) (Stufflebeam and Webster 1980) and Patton’s (2008) Utilization-Focused Evaluation are two well known frameworks of evaluation under this approach.

The CIPP model to evaluation puts emphasis on four aspects; goals, design, process, and outcomes. To draw on Nevo’s (1983) conceptualization, a syllabus evaluation according to the CIPP model entails an assessment of (a) the merit of its goals (b) the quality of its plans (c) the extent to which those plans are being carried out (d) the worth of its outcomes (p.120).

In addition to the CIPP model, Patton’s Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE) pattern also stresses the necessity to undertake evaluation with specific users and specific intended uses serving decision-making. Evaluation according to this pattern is judged by its utility and actual use. Patton (2012) offers the following checklist steps to design and conduct evaluation:

Step 1. Assess and build program and organisational readiness for Utilization-Focused Evaluation.

Step 2. Assess and enhance evaluator readiness and competence to undertake a Utilization-Focused Evaluation.

- Step 3. Identify, organize, and engage primary intended users: the personal factor.
- Step 4. Situation analysis conducted jointly with primary intended users.
- Step 5. Identify and prioritize primary intended uses by determining priority purposes.
- Step 6. Consider and build in process uses if and as appropriate
- Step 7. Focus priority evaluation questions
- Step 8. Check that fundamental areas for evaluation inquiry are being adequately addressed: implementation, outcomes, and attribution questions
- Step 9. Determine what intervention model or theory of change is being evaluated
- Step 10. Negotiate appropriate methods to generate credible findings that support intended use by intended users
- Step 11. Make sure intended users understand potential methods controversies and their implications
- Step 12. Simulate use of findings: evaluation's equivalent of a dress rehearsal
- Step 13. Gather data with ongoing attention to use
- Step 14. Organize and present the data for interpretation and use by primary intended users: analysis, interpretation, judgement, and recommendations
- Step 15. Prepare evaluation report to facilitate use and disseminate significant findings to expand influence
- Step 16. Follow up with primary intended users to facilitate and enhance use

Step 17. Meta-evaluation of use: be accountable, learn, and improve summary and conclusion

The result of the Decision-Management approach to evaluation as stated by Worthen (1990:44) is “an explicitly shared function dependent on good teamwork between evaluators and decision makers.” This collaboration between evaluators and decision-makers turned to be a criticism because it is said to provide opportunity to bias results. Furthermore, Worthen (ibid) contends that the Decision- Management Approach, as stated by some evaluators, failed to determine explicitly the program’s worth, and the cause can be traced back to its dependence on somewhat unrealistic assumptions about the orderliness and predictability of the decision-making process.

3.3.3. Judgement-Oriented Approach

Worthen (ibid) states that this approach is historically the most widely used approach which “is dependent upon experts’ application of professional expertise to yield judgements about a program being observed” (p.44). Evaluation throughout this approach relies heavily on judgements made by experts in the field.

Under this approach emerged Scriven’s Goal-Free model, and Stake’s Countenance Model. Scriven (1967) considers judgement as pivotal in evaluation, and suggests a goal-free evaluation where evaluators need to turn blind to the goals. On score of that, evaluators need to weigh the outcomes of a program be they intended or unintended, instead of emphasizing the objectives-performance consistency or program managers’ decisions. Scriven distinguishes between an evaluation undertaken during the development of a programme i.e. a formative evaluation to improve its quality, and an evaluation undertaken after the implementation of a programme i.e. a summative evaluation to end up with judgements on the worth of this programme.

If critics of Scriven's model do not deny its usefulness, they doubt its practicality and claim that just few recorded cases made use of such model.

In addition to Scriven (ibid), Worthen (op-cit) states that Stake's Countenance Model, under this approach, suggests two main activities in evaluation: description and judgement. In line with Worthen, Nevo (1981) advances that the evaluation process according to Stake's model (1967) should include the following steps (a) describing a program (b) reporting the description to relevant audiences (c) obtaining and analyzing their judgements and (d) reporting the analyzed judgements back to the audiences. Stake's later Responsive Evaluation Model (1975) as viewed by Nevo (ibid) suggested 12 steps that kept a dynamic interaction between the evaluator and his audiences while conducting an evaluation. Worthen et al (1997) in a criticism to Judgement-Oriented Approaches view that judgements are biased because of their subjective nature and also that they are not relying on objectives.

3.3.4. Adversarial Approach

According to Worthen (1990) this type of approach to evaluation builds on "divergent evaluation practices" (p.45). In a process so often compared to a jury trial because, as advanced by Hogan (2007), it "involves a hearing, prosecution, defence, jury, charges and rebuttals" (p.8), two teams of evaluators are involved; one tries to highlight the positive aspects and are referred to as advocates, the other team presents the negative sides of the programme and are supposed to be adversaries. The two opposing sides defend their stands in front of a third party of evaluators, playing the role of a referee. The advocates and their adversaries and the referee consider both sides' arguments before giving a verdict. Results are then fused in a single evaluation supposed "to assume fairness and balance and illuminate both strengths and weaknesses of the program" (Worthen op-cit: 45).

This approach allows for a fair evaluation where both positive and negative aspects are considered, but critics view that this approach can be used only in summative evaluation and takes a long time.

3.3.5. Participant-Oriented Approach

This approach to evaluation puts emphasis on firsthand experience with a program. Cousins and Earl (1992:399-400) state that “By participatory evaluation we mean applied social research that involves a partnership between trained evaluation personnel and practice-based decision makers, organizational members with program responsibility or people with a vital interest in the program.” Similarly, Turnbull (1999:131) defines this approach as “generally used to describe situations where stakeholders are involved in evaluation decision-making as well as share joint responsibility for the evaluation report with an external evaluator.” Put differently, evaluation is a jointly shared action between a trained evaluator and decision makers which makes of this approach a partnership approach to evaluation in which stakeholders engage in all evaluation phases. Decision makers are supposed to be organization members with program responsibility or people with a vital interest in the program (Cousins and Earl, 1995), they are also called the primary users of the programme. Trained evaluators (researchers) are involved in a given institution to assist key personnel (practitioners) in the evaluation of a given programme. The task of those evaluators is to attempt to equip practice-based staff or primary users with the required knowledge and skills to conduct an evaluation (Cousins and Earl, 1992); this approach fits best the formative evaluation projects “that seek to understand innovation programs with the expressed intention of informing and improving their implementation” (Cousins and Earl,1995:8).

Among the advantages of this approach is that it enhances relevance, ownership and utilization (Cousins and Whitmore, 1998). Relevant questions are identified locally by

those with a stake in the programme; focus is on the needs of those participating in the programmes thing which can enhance the personnel staff motivation. Participants' sense of ownership is also heightened as they take part in program design, methodology and evaluation, hence, utilization is increased. On the other hand, it is a time-consuming approach that requires training expertise and skill. It is also an approach that might result in conflicts between the two parties.

3.3.6. Consumer-based Approach

Scriven, a well known proponent of this approach, puts emphasis on the needs and opinions of the consumers of a given programme i.e. recipients to-be, they can be students or teachers. The role of the evaluator is that of an enlightened surrogate consumer (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 1985). A surrogate consumer is borrowed from the marketing language to designate a professional or agent retained by a consumer to guide, direct, and/or transact market place activities on behalf of this consumer. Surrogates are resorted to because the consumers may lack time or expertise to look for information or to take decisions. In the educational field, the evaluator, acting as a surrogate consumer, relies on his/her professionalism to determine which alternative among the wide variety consumers are offered with, is the best. Teachers, as an example of consumers of a given program, can be seconded by an evaluator to determine the worth of competing programmes; to decide which one to select. This approach despite the advantages it provides requires a highly skilled evaluator all along the whole process.

3.4 Textbook Evaluation

Textbooks influence what teachers teach and to some extent how students learn (McGrath 2002) that is why Ellis (1997) contends that every single textbook used to teach should be evaluated. But prior to any definition of textbook evaluation is textbook analysis.

The latter is defined by McGrath (2001) as looking for what is already there in the textbook, which results in an objective and verifiable description where as evaluation is subjective. Tomlinson (2003) distinguishes between evaluation as being subjective and focusing on the users of the materials, and analysis as an objective undertaking that seeks to identify the materials as they are. Analysis needs to precede evaluation.

Tomlinson (2003) defines textbook evaluation as “a procedure that involves measuring the value (or potential value) of a set of learning materials” (p.15). Textbooks evaluation helps assign value to what teachers are using to teach and what learners are using to learn i.e. textbooks. For McGrath (2002) textbook evaluation pertains to finding out what, as an evaluator, you were looking for was there or not, and then assigning a value to those findings.

Littlejohn (1998) considers textbooks evaluation as providing insights into textbooks’ design and use. Cunningsworth (1995) holds that textbook evaluation helps make sound decisions as to which new textbook to adopt, or to determine the merits and demerits of a textbook already in use.

3.5. Approaches to Textbook Evaluation

It is incumbent that textbooks be perpetually evaluated so as to determine their relevancy and appropriateness. Researchers seem to agree on a “levelled” approach in evaluation, even if different appellations distinguish the two levels (Cunningsworth (ibid); McGrath (op-cit); Grant, 1987; McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Ur, 1996). At a first level a general overview on the textbook is advisable, at a second level a penetration into the textbook content is recommended, both levels add credibility and reliability to the achieved findings.

3.5.1. Impressionistic Evaluation/ In –Depth Evaluation

Cunningsworth (1995) considers the impressionistic evaluation as a means to cast light on the general features of the textbook. It can involve the claims made by the authors or publishers about the goals set, the methodology selected, the table of content, or layout so as to provide a general impression on the material. Put differently, this approach to evaluation tries to find out what Cunningsworth (1984) calls ‘what the books say about themselves’.

Misjudgements can be the consequence of such ‘quick impression’ as viewed by Tomlinson (2003), so a deeper examination is required in order to examine a textbook and determine its worth. The in-depth evaluation is the subsequent step to the impressionistic one, after the textbook has been judged potentially appropriate. It also helps determine whether the outside features and internal content are in harmony (McDonough and Shaw, 2003). Evaluation at this level moves beyond the blurb, and table of content, to encompass a detailed examination built on the specified objectives, procedures and principles. Cunningsworth (1995) suggests as an example of an in-depth evaluation the selection of one or two chapters and then analyzing them in details.

Grant’s (1987) coins the Impressionistic approach Initial Evaluation which is also called CATALYST, an acronym whose first letters correspond to: Communicative? Aims? Teachability? Available Adds-on? Level? Your impression? Student’s interest? Tried or tested? The In-Depth Evaluation corresponds to what Grant (ibid) names Detailed Evaluation and In Use evaluation whereby the evaluator determines whether the textbook suits the students, the teacher and the syllabus.

McGrath (2002) calls the first level “First Glance” and the second level ‘Arm-chair’ evaluation, Ur (1996) distinguishes two levels as well; “General and Specific evaluation”.

Last but not least, McDonough & Shaw (1993) distinguish an External Evaluation, an Internal Evaluation and an Overall Evaluation.

External evaluation is impressionistic and involves the intended audience, the proficiency level, the context of use, the layout, the main objective and the cultural bias(if any) of the textbook.

The internal evaluation is an in-depth scrutiny where emphasis is put on the content of the textbook; skills, grading and sequencing of materials, authenticity of activities and texts; the matching of learners' needs to textbook content can also be analysed. McDonough and Shaw (ibid) recommend the analysis of preferably two units.

The overall evaluation is reserved to a final judgement as to whether the textbook is worth using or not.

3.5.2. Predictive / In use/ Retrospective Evaluation

Evaluation can be addressed from a perspective other than initial or in-depth. A distinction is made between a predictive, an in-use and a post-use or retrospective evaluation (Cunningsworth, 1995; Ellis, 1997)

A predictive evaluation takes place before materials step inside classrooms, to take decisions related to which materials to select and which ones to effectively use. Rubdy (2003) underscores the importance of the predictive evaluation in measuring the potential of what teachers and learners can do with materials in the classroom. An in use evaluation, as contended by McGrath (op-cit), stresses textbook use in the classroom. A retrospective evaluation, on the other hand, occurs after materials have been used. This type of evaluation helps determine the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook after it has been used. Ellis (1997:37) contends that a retrospective evaluation "...provides the teacher with information which can be used to determine whether it is worthwhile using the materials again, which activities 'work' and which do not, and how to modify the materials to make

them more effective of ‘testing’ the validity of a predictive evaluation, and may point to ways in which the predictive instrument can be improved for future use”. The retrospective evaluation has a dual impact, it helps the evaluator determine the merits and demerits of a textbook after it has been used and aids in determining which improvements the predictive evaluation needs for further uses.

Harmer (2001) affirms that the pre-use stage demands an impressionistic evaluation. The in-use and post-use stages help determine how well a textbook has performed.

3.5.3. For Potential / For Suitability Evaluation

Cunningsworth (1995) identifies a for potential evaluation as the one undertaken with no particular learners or context of use in mind, contrary to the evaluation for suitability where pre-set criteria are used to determine the appropriateness of the textbook being evaluated.

3.6. Textbook Evaluation Checklists

Sheldon (1988) views that textbook evaluation “...is fundamentally a subjective rule-of-thumb activity, and that no neat formula, grid or system will ever produce a definite yardstick...” (p.245). According to Sheldon (ibid) textbook evaluation is subjective, and no one set of criteria can fit all situations. As a consequence, a large number of researchers in the field developed their own criteria against which textbooks are evaluated. Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979), Williams (1983), Dougill (1987), Sheldon (1988), Skierso (1991), Cunningsworth (1995), Ur (1996), Brown, H.D. (2001), McDonough and Shaw (2003), and Litz (2005) used the checklist based approach in evaluating ELT textbooks.

3.6.1. Definition of Checklist

Stufflebeam (2000) defines checklists as “valuable evaluation devices when carefully developed, validated, and applied. A sound evaluation checklist clarifies the criteria that at least should be considered when evaluating something in a particular area; aids the

evaluator not to forget important criteria; and enhances the assessment's objectivity, credibility, and reproducibility." Checklists are important evaluation tools which, if soundly designed, offer advantages that can be listed in terms of helping clarify the criteria to be measured, of operating as an aid to memory, of increasing the objectivity of the evaluator, of enhancing the reliability of the findings, and of facilitating the replication of the evaluation. Similarly, McGrath (2002) views that checklists are systematic in that they can guarantee that all elements judged important are taken into account, they are cost effective which helps compile data in a relatively short space of time; information is recorded in a format that is convenient for purposes of comparison between competing materials; they are explicit and categories involved are clear to all those concerned by evaluation. Checklists can also present a common framework for decision-making.

3.6.2. Models of Checklists

Several researchers have developed checklists as a tool to judge the worth of textbooks. Ten of those checklists will be considered.

3.6.2.1. Daoud&Celce-Murcia (1979)

Daoud&Celce-Murcia (1979) list five major components:

A. Subject matter

1. Does the subject matter cover a variety of topics appropriate to the interests of the learners for whom the textbook is intended (urban or rural environment; child or adult; male and/ or female students)?
2. Is the ordering of materials done by topics or themes that are arranged in a logical fashion?
3. Is the content graded according to the needs of the students or the requirements of the existing syllabus (if there is one)?
4. Is the material accurate and up-to- date?

B. Vocabulary and structures

1. Does the vocabulary load (i.e. the number of new words introduced in every lesson) seem to be reasonable for the students of that level?
2. Are the vocabulary items controlled to ensure systematic gradations from simple to complex items?
3. Is the new vocabulary repeated in subsequent lessons for reinforcement?
4. Does the sentence length seem reasonable for the students of that level?
5. Is the number of grammatical points as well as their sequence appropriate?
6. Do the structures gradually increase in complexity to suit the growing reading ability of students?
7. Does the writer use current everyday language, and sentence structures that follow normal word order?
8. Do the sentences and paragraphs follow one another in a logical sequence?
9. Are the linguistic items introduced in meaningful situations to facilitate understanding and ensure assimilation and consolidation?

C. Exercises

1. Do the exercises develop comprehension and test knowledge of main ideas, details, and sequence of ideas?
2. Do the exercises involve vocabulary and structures which build up the learner's repertoire?
3. Do the exercises provide practice in different types of written work (sentence completion, spelling and dictation, guided composition)?
4. Does the book provide a pattern of review within lessons and cumulatively test new material?

5. Do the exercises promote meaningful communication by referring to realistic activities and situation?

D. Illustrations

1. Do the illustrations create a favourable atmosphere for reading and spelling by depicting realism and action?
2. Are the illustrations clear, simple, and free of unnecessary details that may confuse the learner?
3. Are the illustrations printed close enough to the text and directly related to the content to help the learner understand the printed text?

E. Physical make-up

1. Is the cover of the book durable enough to withstand wear?
2. Is the text attractive (i.e., cover, page, appearance, binding)?
3. Does the size of the books seem convenient for the students to handle?
4. Is the type size appropriate for the intended learners?

3.6.2.2. Williams' Checklist

Williams (1983) suggested a checklist that can be adapted to fit specific situations, because no single textbook can address the requirements of every classroom context. The features of his evaluative scheme is based on four assumptions related first to an up-to-date methodology of L2 which stipulates that the textbook needs to be in line with the psychological and linguistic tenets underlying current accepted methods of second language teaching. Second, guidance for non-native speakers of English, third needs of learners, fourth and last relevance to the socio-cultural environment. Each feature can be

evaluated in terms of linguistic/pedagogical aspects: general, speech, grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing and technical.

3.6.2.3. Dougill Checklist

Dougill's (1987) checklist determines the worth of a textbook in relation to

Framework

Syllabus

- The type, for example structural/ functional/ multi-syllabus etc.....
- How comprehensive is it?
- How relevant is it to the stated aims?

Progression

- Is the course linear?
- How steep or shallow is it (compared to other courses)?

Revision and recycling

- To what extent is this built in or provided for?

Skills

- Is there an internal skills approach?
- To what extent are all the four skills catered for?

Cohesion

- Does the course hang together as a whole or is there an imbalance?
- Is there undue weighing on certain aspects?

The Units

Length of Unit

- Is the amount of material commensurate with the intended amount of contact time?

- Does the unit seem forbidden or inadequate?

Presentation

- Is the language presented in a clear manner and in an interesting way?
- Is there an inductive or deductive approach?

Practice

- Is it sufficient?
- Does it allow for free presentation?
- Is it meaningful or personalised? (In other words, does it involve the students in any way other than just as a mechanical exercise?)
- Does it ensure that students will be able to generate language on their own outside the classroom?

Variety and regularity

- Does each unit follow the same format? If so, is there sufficient variety to maintain student interest?
- If not, is there sufficient regularity for teacher and students to establish a working pattern?

Clarity of purpose

- How far clear is what students are expected to do?

Subject-matter

Interest

- How likely is the subject matter to hold students' interest?
- Is there a fact or fiction bias?
- Is it intrinsically interesting, or does it merely serve as a vehicle for the language work?

Culture or-age-bound

- Is the material culture-specific?
- Is it too childish or too sophisticated for the target- group?
- Is it sexist or racist?

Form

Visual appeal

- Are the pages too dense to be unappealing?
- Do the layout and type face aid or hinder the purpose of the material?

Motivating

- Is the book likely to have a motivating effect or to put students off?

Illustrations

- Do they serve a function or are they decorative?
- Are they clear enough for the intended purpose?
- Are there too many or too few?
- Are they childish, sexist or culturally offensive?

Other features

- Are there any extra tables, limits or explanations for the students?
- How useful are they?
- How useful is the book for the students outside the class? Is there a key?

Course components

The cassette

- How clear is it?
- How natural? To what extent is it authentic?
- Does it necessitate a tape-script? If so, is it available?
- Is it sufficiently demanding?
- Are the passages too long to hold the students' attention?

The teacher's book

- Is it aimed at experienced or inexperienced teachers?
- Is it foolproof (i.e. sufficiently methodical to guide the inexperienced teacher through the lesson)?
- Does it provide (imaginative) alternatives?
- Is it easy to follow visually? Is it interleaved? If not, is it manageable when used in conjunction with the students' book?
- Does it leave the teacher with a lot of preparing to do?

Tests, laboratory drills and workbooks

- Do they accomplish what they set out to do?
- How far are they communicative?
- Do they provide a worthwhile investment, or would teachers be better advised to do without or make up their own?

3.6.2.4. Sheldon Checklist

Sheldon (1988) introduced a checklist that involves two major categories: factual details and factors. The factual details deal with the title of the textbook, author, publisher, price, level, physical size, length, target skills, target learners, target teachers.

The factors involved are:

1. Rationale
 - Why was the book written in the first place, and what gaps is it intended to fill?
 - Are you given information about the Needs Analysis or classroom piloting that were undertaken?
 - Are the objectives spelt out?
2. Availability

- Is it easy to obtain sample copies and support material for inspection?
- Can you contact the publisher's representatives in case you want further information about the content, approach, or pedagogical detail of the book?

3. User definition

- Is there a clear specification of the target age range, culture, assumed background, probable learning preferences, and educational expectations?
- Are entry/exit language levels precisely defined, e.g. by reference to international 'standards' such as the ELTS, ACTFL or Council of Europe scales, or by reference to local or country-specific examination requirements?
- In case of an ESP textbook, what degree of specialist knowledge is assumed (of both learners and teacher)?

4. Layout/graphics

- Is there an optimum density and mix of text and graphical material on each page, or is the impression one of clutter?
- Are the artwork and typefaces functional? Colourful? Appealing?

5. Accessibility

- Is the material clearly organized?
- Can the student find his or her location in the material at any point, i.e. is it possible to have a clear view of the 'progress' made, and how much still needs to be covered?
- Are there indexes, vocabulary lists, section headings, and other methods of signposting the content that allow the student to use the material easily, especially for revision or self-study purposes?
- Is the learner (as opposed to the teacher) given clear advice about how the book and its contents could be most effectively exploited?

6. Linkage

- Do the units and exercises connect in terms of theme, situation, topic, pattern of skill development, or grammatical/lexical 'progression'?
- Is the nature of such connection made obvious, for example by placing input texts and supporting exercises in close proximity?
- Does the textbook cohere both internally and externally (e.g. with other books in series)?

7. Selection and grading

- Does the introduction, practice, and recycling of new linguistic items seem to be shallow/deep enough for students?
- Is there a discernable system at work in the selection and grading of these items (e.g. on the basis of frequency counts, or on the basis of useful comparisons between the learner's mother tongue and English)?
- Is the linguistic inventory presented appropriate for your purposes, bearing in mind the L1 background(s) of your learners?

8. Physical characteristics

- Is there space to write in the book?
- Is the book robust? Too large? Too heavy?
- Is the spine labelled?
- Is it a book that could be used more than once, especially if it is marked by previous students?

9. Appropriacy

- Is the material substantial enough or interesting enough to hold the attention of learners?

- Is it pitched at the right level of maturity and language, and (particularly in the case of ESP situations), at the right conceptual level?

- Is it topical?

10. Authenticity

- Is the content obviously realistic, being taken from L1 material not initially intended for ELT purposes?
- Do the tasks exploit language in a communicative or 'real-world' way?
- If not, are the texts unacceptably simplified or artificial (for instance, in the use of whole-sentence dialogues)?

11. Sufficiency

- Is the book complete enough to stand on its own, or must the teacher produce a lot of ancillary bridging material to make it workable?
- Can you teach the course using only the students' book, or must all the attendant aids (e.g. cassettes) be deployed?

12. Cultural bias

- Are different and appropriate religious and social environments catered for, both in terms of the topics/situations presented and of those left out?
- Are students' expectations in regard to content, methodology, and format successfully accommodated?
- If not, would the book be able to wean students away from their preconceived notions?
- Is the author's sense of humour or philosophy obvious or appropriate?
- Does the course book enshrine stereotyped, inaccurate, condescending or offensive images of gender, race, social class, or nationality?

- Are accurate or ‘sanitized’ views of the USA or Britain presented; are uncomfortable social realities (e.g. unemployment, poverty, family breakdowns, and racism) left out?

13. Educational validity

- Does the textbook take account of, and seem to be in tune with, broader educational concerns (e.g. the nature and role of learning skills, concept development in younger learners, the function of ‘knowledge of the world’, the exploitation of sensitive issues, and the value of metaphor as a powerful cognitive learning device)?
- Stimulus/practice/revision: is the course material interactive, and are there sufficient opportunities for the learner to use his or her English so that effective consolidation takes place?
- Is the material likely to be retained/ remembered by learners?
- Is allowance made for revision, testing, and on-going evaluation /marking of exercises and activities, especially in large-group situations; are ready-made achievement test provided for the course book, or is test development left for the hard-pressed teacher? Are ‘self-checks’ provided?

14. Flexibility

- Can the book accommodate the practical constraints with which you must deal, or are assumptions made about such things as the availability of audio-visual equipment, pictorial material, class size, and classroom geography; does the material make too many demands on teachers’ preparation time and students’ homework time?
- Can the material be exploited or modified as required by local circumstances, or is it too rigid in format, structure, and approach?

- Is there a full range of supplementary aids available?

15. Guidance

- Are the teacher's notes useful and explicit?
- Has there been an inordinate delay between the publication of the student's and teacher's books which has meant that teachers have had to fend for themselves in exploiting the material?
- Is there advice about how to supplement the coursebook, or to present the lessons in different ways?
- Is there enough/ too much 'hand-holding'?
- Are tape scripts, answer keys, 'technical notes' (in the case of ESP textbooks), vocabulary lists, structural/functional inventories, and lesson summaries provided in the Teacher's Book?
- Is allowance made for the perspectives, expectations, and preferences of non-native teachers of English?

16. Overall value for money

- Quite simple, is the course book cost-effective, easy to use, and successful in your teaching, in terms of time, labour, and money?
- To what extent has it realized its stated objectives?

3.6.2.5. Skierso Checklist

Skierso(1991) developed a fifty nine criteria checklist grouped into six categories listed as follows:

Bibliographical Data

- Author qualifications
- Availability of accompanying materials
- Completeness

- Quality of supplementary materials
- Cost effective

Aims and Goals

- Targeted students' specifications
- Matching to students' needs
- Matching to syllabus requirements
- Compliance with overall educational concerns
- Feasibility.

Subject-matter

- Suitability and interests level
- Ordering
- Variety of text type
- Content grading
- Level of abstractness
- Register
- Cultural sensitivity
- Content accuracy
- Cultural integration

Vocabulary and Structures

Grammar

- Number and sequence appropriacy (of structures)
- Accuracy
- Clarity and completeness
- Meaning context

Vocabulary

- Load suitability
- Appropriate context
- Vocabulary and structures
- Suitable readability level
- Inclusiveness per text
- Inclusiveness per syllabus
- Suitable sequence of progression
- Adequate control of presentation
- Balanced distribution
- Presentation, practice, and recycling suitability
- Recycling for reinforcement and integration
- Standard language
- Suitability of sentence length and syntactic complexity
- Cultural presentation
- Accessibility

Exercises and Activities

- Satisfaction of syllabus objectives
- Fulfilment of student objectives
- Effectiveness
- Sequencing toward communication
- Meaningful communication
- Communicative development
- Internalisation via active participation
- Production of critical thinking
- Instructional clarity and appropriacy

- Stereotype free content
- Suitability and interest level
- Provision for review
- Development of study skills

Layout and Physical Make-up

- Motivational attractiveness
- Suitability, look and type dimensions
- Organisational clarity and function
- Effectiveness in presentation
- Relativity, linkage and integration
- Stereotype-free, accurate, authentic portrayal
- Suitability of artwork
- Illustrative clarity and simplicity
- Motivational atmosphere

3.6.2.6. Cunningsworth Checklist

Cunningsworth(1995) suggests the following evaluative scheme:

A. Aims and Approaches

- Do the aims of the course book correspond closely with the aims of the teaching program and with the need of the learners?
- Is the course book suited to the teaching/ learning situation?
- How comprehensive is the course book? Does it cover most or all of what is needed? Is it a good resource for students and teachers?
- Is the course book flexible? Does it allow different teaching and learning styles?

B. Design and Organization

What components make up the total course package (e.g., students' books, teachers' books, workbooks, cassettes)?

How is the content organized (e.g., according to structures, functions, topics, skills, etc)?

How is the content sequenced (e.g., on the basis of complexity, "learnability", usefulness, etc.)?

Is the grading and progression suitable for the learners?

Does it allow them to complete the work needed to meet any external syllabus requirements?

Are there reference sections for grammar, etc.? Is some of the material suitable for individual study?

Is it easy to find your way around the course book? Is the layout clear?

C. Language Content

Does the course book cover the main grammar items appropriate to each level, taking learner's needs into account?

Is material for vocabulary teaching adequate in term of quantity and range of vocabulary, emphasis placed on vocabulary development strategies for individual learning?

Does the course book include material for pronunciation work? If so, what is covered: individual sounds, word stress, sentence stress, intonation?

Does the course book deal with the structuring and conventions of language use above the sentence level, for example, how to take part in conversations, how to identify the main point in a reading passage?

D. Skills

- Are all four skills adequately covered, bearing in mind your course aim and syllabus requirements?
- Is there material for integrated skills work?
- Are reading passages and associated activities suitable for your students' levels, interesting, etc? Is there sufficient reading material?
- Is listening material well recorded, as authentic as possible, accompanied by background information, questions and activities which help comprehension?
- Is material for spoken English well designed to equip learners for real-life interactions?
- Are writing activities suitable in term of amount of guidance/control, degree of accuracy, organisation of longer pieces of writing (e.g., paragraphing) and use of appropriate styles?

E. Topic

- Is there sufficient material of genuine interest to learners?
- Is there enough variety and range of topic?
- Will the topic help expand students' awareness and enrich their experience?
- Are the topics sophisticated enough in content, yet within the learners' language level?
- Will your students be able to relate to the social and cultural contexts presented in the course book?

F. Methodology

- What approaches to language learning are taken by the course book?
- What level of active learner involvement can be expected? Does this match your students' learning styles and expectations?
- What techniques are used for presenting/practising new language items? Are they suitable for your learners?
- How are the different skills taught?
- How are communicative abilities developed?

G. Teacher's Books

- Is there adequate guidance for the teachers who will be using the course book and its supporting materials?
- Are the teachers' books comprehensive and supportive?
- Do they adequately cover teaching techniques, language items such as grammar rules-specific information?

H. Practical Considerations

- What does the whole package cost? Does this represent good value for money?
- Are the books strong and long lasting? Are they attractive in appearance?
- Are they easy to obtain?

3.6.2.7. Ur Checklist

Ur, (1996) criteria for textbook assessment set out to find whether:

1. Objectives are explicitly stated and implemented in the material
2. The approach is educationally and socially acceptable to target community
3. The layout is clear and attractive, and print is easy to read
4. Appropriate visual materials are available

5. Interesting topics and tasks are available
6. Topics and tasks are varied to address learners' levels, styles and interests
7. Instructions are clear or not
8. There is a systematic coverage of syllabus
9. Content is clearly organized and graded(sequenced by difficulty)
10. Period review and test sections exist
11. Plenty of authentic language exists
12. A good pronunciation explanation and practice is considered
13. A good vocabulary explanation and practice is considered
14. A good grammar explanation and practice is considered
15. Fluency practice in all four skills is catered for
16. Promotion of autonomous learning is taken into account
17. Teachers are guided(not too heavy preparation load)
18. Audio cassettes
19. Readily available locally

3.6.2.8. Brown Checklist

Brown, H.D. (2001) sets forth the following criteria to rely on in textbook evaluation or selection:

- Goals of the course;
- background of the students (age, native language and culture, educational background, motivation or purpose for learning English);
- theoretical approach (theory of learning and theory of language);
- language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing);

- quality of practice material (explanations, clarity of directions and active participation of students);
- sequencing (by grammatical structures, skills, situations or by some combination of the above);
- vocabulary (relevance, frequency and strategies for word analysis);
- format (clarity of typesetting, use of special notation (phonetic symbols, stress/intonation marking), quality and clarity of illustrations, general layout, size of the book and binding, quality of editing, index, table of contents and chapter headings);
- supplementary materials (workbook, audio and video-tapes, posters, flashcards, a set of tests);
- teachers' guide (methodological guidance, alternative and supplementary exercises, suitability for non-native speaking teacher and answer keys).

3.6.2.9. McDonough and Shaw Checklist

McDonough and Shaw (2003) offer a three tiered model of textbook evaluation that involves an external, an internal, and an overall evaluation.

1. External Evaluation

- The intended audience
- The proficiency level
- The context in which the materials are to be used
- How the language has been organized into teachable units/lessons
- The author's view on language and methodology and the relationship between the language, the learning process and the learner.
- Are the materials to be used as the main 'core' course or to be supplementary to it?

- Is a teacher's book in print and locally available?
- Is a vocabulary list/ index included?
- What visual material does the book contain (photographs, charts, diagrams) and is there for cosmetic value only or is it actually integrated into the text?
- Is the layout and presentation clear or cluttered?
- Is the material too culturally biased or does it represent a 'balanced' picture of a particular country/society
- The inclusion of audio/video material and resultant cost: is it essential to possess this extra material in order to use the textbook successfully?
- The inclusion of tests in the teaching materials (diagnostic, progress, achievement) would they be useful for your particular learners?

2. Internal Evaluation

- The presentation of skills in materials
- The grading and sequencing of materials
- Where reading/discourse skills are involved, is there much in the way of appropriate text beyond the sentence?
- Where listening skills are involved, is there much in the way of appropriate text beyond the sentence?
- Where listening skills are involved, are recordings 'authentic' or artificial?
- Do speaking materials incorporate what we know about the nature of real interaction or are artificial dialogues offered instead?
- The relationship of tests and exercises to (a) learner needs and (b) what is taught by the course material?

- Do you feel that the material is suitable for different learning styles; is a claim and provision made for self-study, and is such a claim justified?
- Are the materials sufficiently 'transparent' to motivate both teachers and learners alike, or would you foresee a student/teacher mismatch?

3. Overall Evaluation

- Usability factor: how far could the materials be integrated into a particular syllabus as supplementary or 'core'.
- Generalisability factor: is there a restricted use of 'core' features which make the materials more generally useful?
- Adaptability factor: can parts be added/extracted/ used in another context/ modified for local circumstances?
- Flexibility factor: how rigid is the sequencing and grading; can the materials be entered at different points/used in different ways?

3.6.2.10. Litz Checklist

Litz (2005) suggests for students' textbook evaluation, the examination of:

A. Practical Considerations

1. Price
2. Accessibility

B. Layout and Design

1. Appropriateness and clarity
2. Effective organisation

C. Activities

1. Balance in distribution between free/controlled exercises and fluent/ accurate productions in tasks.
2. Promotion of communicative and meaningful practice.

3. Balance between individual/pair and group work.
4. Realistic and motivating contexts for grammar and vocabulary points.
5. Promotion of creative, original, and independent responses.

D. Skills

1. Focus on skills learners need
2. Appropriate balance of the four skills.
3. Consideration of sub-skills

E. Language Type

1. Authenticity of language
2. Suitability of English to learners' level
3. Easy presentation of grammar
4. Functions exemplify the English likely to be used in the future
5. Diverse registers and accents are addressed

F. Subject and Content

1. Subject and content relevant to learners' needs
2. Subject and content is realistic
3. Subject and content is interesting, challenging and motivating
4. Sufficient variety in the subject and content
5. Materials are culturally unbiased and do not portray negative stereotypes

G. Overall Consensus

1. Textbook raises interest of learners in further English language study
2. Learners' would choose to study this textbook again

Sheldon (1988:242) contends that “any culturally restricted, global list of criteria can never really apply in most local environments, without considerable modification.”

Accordingly, there is no one-size-fits-all list of criteria that applies to all situations, hence the need to accommodate the criteria of evaluation to the local needs and context. To borrow Littlejohn (1998) words, those “off-the-shelves checklists”, or those readily available checklists, with regard to the implicit assumptions criteria contain, pushes the evaluators to put emphasis on what the desirable qualities of a textbook are, instead of using criteria to scaffold and guide them reach their own conclusions. Moreover, certain evaluation criteria, as contended by McGrath (2002) and Sheldon (1988) are too complex and abstract to the extent of not applying to actual evaluation. As a consequence, McGrath (2002) and Tomlinson (2003) judge it important for evaluators to determine their own principled criteria of evaluation in relation to a specific group of learners.

A self-constructed checklist will be built, as a tentative attempt to meet the requirements of a specific context of use and a specific group of learners, i.e. the Algerian context, and Algerian middle school pupils. The ten abovementioned checklists will be referred to, so as to determine their common grounds and most salient features. Further criteria will be inserted with regard to their importance and relevance to the research. Worth of mention, however, and as pointed out by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) evaluation criteria must fulfil five requirements. First, questions must be evaluation not analysis questions, Tomlinson (2003) views that ‘Does each unit include a test?’ (p.28) is an analysis question that needs to be changed into ‘To what extent do the tests provide useful learning experiences?’ (p.28). Second, each question has to ask only one question ‘Is it attractive? Given the average age of your students, would they enjoy using it?’ (Grant, 1987: 122), this criterion combines two questions. Tomlinson (2008:29) breaks it into two separate questions: ‘Is it suitable for the age of your students?’ and ‘Are your students likely to enjoy using it?’ Third, each question has to be answerable, ‘To what extent is the level of abstractness appropriate?’ (Skierso, 1991:446) is too vague to be

answered. Fourth, each question has to be dogma-free: authoritative points of view need to be avoided, ‘Are the various stages in a teaching unit (what you would probably call presentation, practice and production) adequately developed?’(Mariani, 1983:29), this question insists on the use of the (PPP) approach. Fifth, each question has to be reliable in that other evaluators would interpret it in the same way. ‘Is each unit coherent?’ (Tomlinson, 2003:30) can be interpreted differently, that is why it needs to be reformulated to ask the following question ‘Are the activities in each unit linked to each other in ways which help the learners?’ (Tomlinson, *ibid*).

3.7. Synthesis of Checklists

Nearly all the ten checklists, with one exception Williams (1985), refer to the physical characteristics of the textbook under different appellations. For Daoud and Celce Murcia (1979) it is physical make-up, for Dougill (1987) it is form, for Sheldon (1988) it is physical characteristics, for skierso (1991) it is layout and physical make-up, for Cunningsworth (1995) it is practical considerations, , for Ur (1996) it is layout, for McDonough and Shaw (2003) it is layout and presentation, for Brown, H.D. (2001) it is format, and for Litz (2005) it is layout and design.

All agree on an impressionistic evaluation that is reinforced by an-in-depth examination of the textbook. Richards (2001) substantiates that evaluation can only be done by relating something to its purpose. An in- depth evaluation considers generally the educational purposes set and the content of textbooks. Purposes are spelt out as aims and objectives, and focus is on whether aims and objectives are compatible with the textbook content. Dougill(1987), Sheldon (1988), Skierso (1991), Cunningsworth (1995), Brown (2001), and Ur (1996) evoked this criterion.

For nearly all the aforementioned checklists, language content pertains to the presentation of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, language skills, functions and notions in addition to the cultural representation.

3.8. Self-constructed Checklist Criteria

As asserted by Sheldon (1988) no one set of criteria can fit all situations, and as pointed out by McGrath (2008:42) “there is no logical reason why a checklist should have any specific number of questions or, if it consists of sections, why these should be of equal size”. We deemed necessary the construction of our own checklist so as to include the necessary elements that can help us answer our research questions. The self-constructed checklist involves the following criteria

I. Physical characteristics

1. Authors’ qualifications,
2. Layout
3. Artwork (illustrations)

II. Aims and Objectives Correspondence

III. Textbook Content

1. Grammar presentation
2. Vocabulary presentation
3. Pronunciation presentation
4. Listening presentation
5. Speaking presentation
6. Reading presentation

7. Writing presentation
8. Cultural representation
9. Autonomy development.

Conclusion

This chapter put emphasis on evaluation as an integral component of syllabus design and textbook elaboration. It first reviewed some definitions of evaluation, and then focused on syllabus evaluation to find answer to why to evaluate? For whom to evaluate? Who evaluates? What to evaluate? How to evaluate? When to evaluate? Then six approaches to syllabus evaluation were tackled: the Objectives-based Approach which investigates the extent to which goals and then the derived objectives are achieved or not; the Management-oriented Approach which serves mainly educational decision makers' needs; Judgement-oriented Approach which is dependent upon experts' expertise to present judgements about a program; the Consumer-oriented Approach which puts emphasis on the needs and opinions of the consumers or recipients of a given content i.e. students and teachers ; the Adversary-oriented Approach which calls upon the arguments of two opposing sides of evaluators defending their stands in front of a referee; and the Participant-oriented Approach which takes evaluation as a jointly shared action between a trained evaluator and decision makers. Textbook evaluation was also undertaken in relation to different approaches and checklists. As for the approaches, first the 'Impressionistic evaluation' is referred to, to cast light on the general features of the textbook as opposed to the 'In depth evaluation' which is a detailed consideration of textbook's content. Second, the 'Predictive/ In use/ Retrospective approaches' are addressed; throughout those approaches the textbook is evaluated before its use, while it is used or after it has been used. Third, 'For potential evaluation' is identified as an evaluation which does not take any learners or context in mind versus 'For suitability evaluation' that considers pre-set

criteria before evaluating textbooks. The end of the present chapter is marked by the presentation of ten checklists designed by experts and used as textbook evaluation tools. The analysis of those tools helped us design our own checklist to textbooks evaluation which constitutes the focus of the coming chapter. This chapter also marks the wrap up of the theoretical undertaking of our work and the beginning of the practical field.

CHAPTER FOUR: Self-constructed Checklist

Introduction

The Ministry of Education launched new reforms that resulted in the embracement of a new approach; the CBA, and the publication of new textbooks for the four middle school years of English study. The four manuals are respectively, **Spotlight on English Book One (SOE 1)** for first year, **Spotlight on English Book two (SOE 2)** for second year, **Spotlight on English Book Three (SOE3)** for third year, **On the Move (OM)** for fourth year. The present chapter is undertaken within this scope of reforms to provide first an overview on the school system in Algeria, the context of the study, then an analysis of the four aforementioned textbooks, before finally attempting an evaluation via the use of a self-constructed checklist based on ten recognized checklists.

4.1. The Algerian School System

Education in Algeria is mandatory and free for all Algerians, and three stages distinguish the school system: primary, middle and secondary education. Primary school is compulsory and used to last six years, but is now reduced to five years at the end of which children generally aged 11-12 years old pass “Primary School Examination”. Contrary to primary school, middle school study period was, again, extended to four years instead of three after the 2003 educational reforms, and a “Middle School Certificate” (BEM) would allow 15-16 years old pupils to progress to secondary school in one of the three streams that are: literary streams, scientific streams and technological streams, according to their general averages. Secondary school starts with a one year foundation course for the different streams then in their second years and again according to their averages students are assigned to a more specialised stream. Three years form the whole duration of secondary studies, and end up with the baccalaureate examination (BAC) which once

passed allows students to follow higher education or tertiary education at around 18-19 years old.

Students who fail in either middle or secondary school examinations are left with two choices; they can either gain a vocational training in a training centre or undertake distance learning with the National Open School (CNEG).

4.2. Textbook Analysis

Analysis of textbooks is an objective undertaking involving a careful examination of the content without the articulation of any value judgement.

4.2.1. Spotlight on English Book One (first year)

Spotlight on English Book One is made up of 189 pages. It was first issued in 2003 by, as authors, L. Merazga, head of project, K. Achour, H. Ameziane, F. Bouhadiba, W. Guedoudj, O. Mekaoui, B. Riche, and L. Tamrabet. The textbook is destined to learners aged 11 to 12 years old who have never been introduced to English.

SOE1 like SOE2, SOE3 and OTM are built on a competency-based approach and seek to develop three competencies in middle school pupils, namely:

- To interact orally
- To interpret authentic oral or written documents
- To produce simple oral or written messages

The textbooks reflect a competency- based content which is organised around structures, functions, notions, and topics along the four skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A project work culminates each unit studied.

- **SOE1 Layout**

The textbook destined for the Algerian first year middle school pupils is communicative in terms of syllabus design, and is thematic or topical in terms of organisation; seven topics are suggested: *Hello, Family and Friends, Sports, In and Out, Food, Inventions and Discoveries, and Environment*. The seven files, SOE1 encloses, unfold with an Introduction in Arabic directed to pupils; it gives an overview on the content of the textbook with a great emphasis placed on the learner as an active agent in the learning process expected to be open to other cultures, and supposed to collaborate with her/his classmates to find solution to the different problems they are confronted with, in their project work. The presentation of the final outcome of the project work, as stated in this introduction, would not only enhance pupils' learning of English, but helps them extend and transfer its use to similar contexts as well.

The pre-file, as an introductory unit, is named **you Know English!** It unfolds with an activity (activity a page 13) in which pupils look at pictures and say their corresponding names in English, even if the instruction is unclear; it says "Look at picture 1 and say", where in fact there are twenty six small pictures. The names corresponding to those pictures are alphabetically enclosed in a table and are oriented from right to left. Then follow six other activities (b, c, d, e, f, and g) in which pupils first, listen and repeat all the alphabet presented under two forms: upper-case letters and lower-case letters; second write down then say the letters of the alphabet that have the same pronunciation in their L1 or in French; third, say the alphabet; fourth, write in English what eight pictures represent; fifth, order the words alphabetically, and last pupils refer back to the first activity to fill in a puzzle. But activities 'h', 'i' and 'j' shifted away from the alphabet to the reading of signs in the street, and to the matching of clothing articles to their countries, then matching words with symbols in a record player. Those two activities relevancy to the whole pre-file

topic supposed to be about the alphabet, school things and school commands remains questioned. In addition to the English alphabet, some school things are displayed in pictures with their corresponding names in English. This pre-file closes with school commands such as ‘sit down’, ‘raise your hand’, ‘read’, and ‘write’.

Each file is made up of three sequences, in addition to Listening Scripts, Learn about Culture, Reminder, Check, and Your Project.

File Structure Description

All files in **SOE1** are made up of three sections dubbed sequences; each sequence consists of “Listen and Speak”, “Practise”, and “Produce”.

- Listen and Speak

This sub-sequence aims at promoting oral interaction in English among 1st year pupils, it generally starts with a conversation related to the topic of the file. The pupils are required to listen, recognise, and practise patterns of speech, under the guidance of their teacher, in contexts similar to real life ones.

The second sub-sequence called ‘Practice’, presents the pupils with more practice of the new points taught through role play, information gap activities and reading passages. Grammar is presented at this stage.

- Produce

The suggested activities in this third sub-sequence are designed to determine how far pupils are mastering the newly taught notions. The writing skill seems to be the prevailing skill stressed throughout the suggested activities.

The three sequences are then followed by the “Listening Scripts” which are the transcripts of the listening materials of the three first sequences.

“Learn about Culture” is the subsequent section where pupils are exposed to a cultural aspect related to the topic of the file, either in the local culture or the target one. This section is a bridge between the pupils’ culture and the British or the English -speaking countries’ culture.

- **Reminder**

It is a summary of the vocabulary items, grammar points, and functions covered in the file.

- **Check**

This part acts as a classroom evaluation tool of the learning process that helps pupils consolidate the previously learnt items, and orients the teacher toward any remedial work needed.

- **Project Work**

The project is the core of the file; it is the context where pupils assume a gradual responsibility for their learning. In a group work, the pupils process factual and linguistic information, practise language items acquired in class, and re-invest them in similar contexts they may encounter in real life.

A glossary or vocabulary list is provided at the end of the textbook (p.165-189). The English vocabularies have their equivalents in Arabic.

4.2.2. Spotlight on English Book 2 (Second year)

Spotlight on English Book 2 targets learners that have been exposed to English for one year and who are aged between 12-13 years old. The textbook was first published in 2004; the authors are L. Merazga as head of project, F.Bouhadiba, W.Guedoudj, Z. Torche. This textbook has 125 pages and five files.

SOE2 also starts with an introduction in Arabic where the learner, still placed at the heart of the teaching learning process, is supposed to start his/her second year of learning English using a textbook not so different in its structure from SOE1.

SOE2 Layout

Five topical files are presented: ‘A Person’s Profile’, ‘Language Games’, ‘Health’, ‘Cartoons’, and ‘Theatre’. All five files follow the same pattern; they are made up of three sequences which open up with the objectives of the sequence in question. After the three sequences come, respectively, the “Listening Scripts”, “Learn about Culture”, “Check”, “Your Project”, and “Self-assessment”. Then follow three lists. The first relates to contractions of the two auxiliaries “to be” and “to have” (p.118), the second is a list for spelling (p.118), and last a list for verb forms (p.119).

File structure Description

Objectives

Each sequence has its own objectives to be achieved.

Learn the language

This part comprises three sequences. All three sequences follow the same pattern. Each sequence unfolds with the objectives it seeks to achieve, then progresses as follows

- **Listen and Speak**

It starts with

- A conversation to listen to
- Pronunciation and Spelling
 - a- Listen and repeat
 - b- Identify
 - c- Compare
- Practise stress and intonation
 - a- Practice
 - b- Go forward
- **Discover the Language**

In this part of the file, pupils find out how language works in a contextualised framework, they practise either orally or in writing the language structures they have come across, in the short text they read at the beginning. So as to be internalized, the rules pupils deduce are supplied in Reminders. The following sub parts form this section:

- a- Read
- b- Practice
- c- Reminder
- **Listening Scripts**

The scripts of the conversations pupils listen to in “Listen and Speak” come under this heading.

- **Learn about Culture**

Pupils are introduced to some cultural facts, related to the topic of the file. Cultural pluralism is highlighted with one end in perspective; to make of the individual pupils tolerant persons open to the other culture, and ready to accept the differences existing between the local culture and the target one.

- **Check**

A series of tasks form this section that seeks to help learners consolidate previously learnt items. This section can direct the teacher to any remedial work, if the pupils fail to find the adequate answers

- **Your project.**

Pupils through the project work are placed in front of a problem situation whose resolution requires the integration and re-investment of the knowledge, skills and capacities acquired along the file in order to come out with a tangible output or a solution, and in which pupils' attitudes are inferred from the teacher's observation.

- **Self-assessment**

It is a grid that closes up the file. Pupils are rendered responsible for their learning; they are the ones to determine what they have acquired and what remains to be done, in addition to whether they enjoyed or not the topic of the file, the projects, the activities selected, and working alone, with a partner or in groups.

4.2.3. Spotlight on English Book 3 (revised edition)

SOE3 was first published in 2005 and then revised in 2009, 188 pages form this manual whose authors are S.A. Arab, B. Riche, H. Ameziane, N. Khouas, K. Louadj. The targeted learners have spent two years learning English and are 13-14 years old.

The textbook opens with a table of content that encloses four files; Communication, Travel, Work and Play, Around the World. A preface to the revised edition then follows, and unlike the preceding textbooks, this preface is in English. The authors of the textbook claim, in the preface, that SOE3 differs from its predecessors in a number of ways that resulted in significant changes which can be grouped under four innovations. The first innovation deals with the introduction of the Reading and Writing skills, a development that complies with the Middle School, Year Three curriculum. The authors inserted authentic texts, even if they are occasionally simplified, to help exemplify the learnt language forms, and to serve as models in guided and free writing activities. The second innovation concerns the cultural component which is built in the various texts and illustrations. The third innovation relates to training the pupils on the sound system, namely pronunciation, stress and intonation. The Fourth and last innovation has to do with the grammar items which are grouped at the end of the three sequences toward the end of the file.

SOE3 Layout

To the difference of the preceding textbooks, the project is announced right from the beginning of the file. Then a preview follows, in which the functions to be dealt with in all three sequences are listed. Just after those three sequences, come Snapshots of Culture, Activate your English, and Where Do We Stand Now? At the end of SOE3 is a list for electronic messaging (p.171), a list of phonetic symbols (p.172), a list for pronunciation rules for final “ed” and “s” (p.173), a list for irregular verbs (p.173) and a list for spelling rules (p.175-176).

File Structure Description

The textbook still sticks to three sequences which are preceded by:

- **Project**

It announces the project final outcome.

- **Preview**

It gives the student the contents of the file.

Sequences 1, 2, and 3

Each sequence starts with:

- **Listen and Speak**

The pupils, with books closed listen to the teacher as s/he reads the “Listening Scripts” at the end of the book. They are expected to make sense of what they hear and to familiarise themselves with a number of language structures.

- **Say It Clear**

This sub section trains pupils’ tongues and lips not just to speak correctly, but also meaningfully.

- **Practice**

Pupils are asked to act out guided dialogues designed to make them re-use the grammar structures they have already acquired.

- **Imagine**

Relying on cues from pictures and texts, pupils play roles in situations that imitate real life; they use the sense, sound, vocabulary and grammar items they have already learnt.

- **Read and Write**

Different reading tasks are suggested to train pupils become good readers. It is made up of two sub parts:

- **Your Turn**

It is a guided writing, where pupils use what has been learnt so far to write short sentences.

- **Write It Out**

Inspired from what pupils already read in “Read and Write”, a longer piece of 6 to 8 lines is expected.

- **Snapshots of Culture**

This part is an open window on Britain, the USA and other English-speaking countries. In class discussions and writing tasks the pupils compare and contrast the local culture to the target culture.

- **Activate Your English**

Pupils practise the vocabulary they have acquired in the file and build it up. They make use of it in specific situations.

Where Do We Stand Now?

It is made up of three sub-sections:

- **Project Round-up**

In this sub-part, pupils in a group work put the final touch to their project which should reflect a great deal of what they have acquired.

- **Language Summary**

This sub-section involves the forms, uses, and meanings of the grammar items encountered in every sequence.

- **Test Yourself**

It is a set of exercises pupils need to do, so as to know what they have been able to know and practise.

Learning Log

It records what pupils learnt and what they have not. Findings of this Learning Log need to be communicated to the teacher to find assistance.

Time for a Song

It is a rest time; a song closes up the file before pupils' progress to the next file.

4.2.4. On the Move (OTM), fourth year textbook

On the Move was first published in 2006, its two authors are S.A. Arab, and B. Riche. The fourth year textbook consists of 6 files displayed along 192 pages. The book is designed for learners aged 14-15 years old who spent three years learning English.

On the Move takes from Spotlight on English Book Three, but unlike all three previous textbooks where just the student is addressed in the introduction, fourth year textbook starts by addressing the students first and the teacher next. The students are, then, provided with a thorough explanation of what they have to do in each part of the file. The part devoted to the teacher highlights the new features that distinguish On the Move, such features, as stated by the authors on page 9, are:

First, the clear distinction between the receptive phase and the productive phase of the learning/teaching process- as appears from the division between Language Learning and

Skills Building. Second, the inclusion of an objective, graded, end of the file evaluation (Progress Check) the purpose of which is to counter-balance the rather subjective student self-assessment(Learning Log). Third, the streamlining of the cultural component which becomes in-built and is no longer grafted on the language learning proper now. Fourth, the strengthening of the correlation between the primary skills, the social skills and the project work which becomes, for its part, less obtrusive and more realizable while remaining 'visible' through such reminders as Brainstorming, Fact Finding etc. Fifth, the slotting-in of a soft story- line involving a number of recurrent characters throughout the book, thus creating a sense of continuity and arousing student creativity. Sixth, the foregrounding of grammar, both in theory and practice, notably through checking and cross-referencing. Seventh, the widening of the intellectual scope to new horizons (the USA, India and Australia) through comparison and contrast with Algeria. Finally, the development of student autonomy through "survival strategies" (Coping) and research tasks involving group work and peer evaluation.

OTM Layout

The novelty in the fourth year textbook is that the file is no more segmented into three sequences; it is rather made up of two sub-sections that are: Language Learning, and Skills Building.

Language Learning is sub-divided into "Listen and Consider", "Read and Consider", "Words and Sounds" and last "Take a Break".

"Skills Building", on the other hand, includes: "Research and Report", "Listening and Speaking", "Reading and Writing", "Project Round up", "Where Do We Stand now?" "Time for..." OTM encloses from page 177 to 190 a Grammar Reference, then follows (p.191) a list for phonetic symbols.

File Structure Description

Language Learning

Food for Thought

Under this sub-section, two pictures are contrasted to set students think, and to warm them up to what comes next.

Listen and Consider

Students go through three steps, pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening stages. Each of which helps practise and improve pronunciation and intonation patterns. Grammar is also practised in oral and written texts, and the rules are enclosed in a Grammar Reference at the end of the book.

Read and Consider

Reading in this sub-section goes through a pre-reading stage, a while reading stage and a post-reading stage. A pre-reading stage helps students predict what the reading extract is about, a while- reading stage helps confirm the hypothesis formulated earlier, and a post-reading phase to practise the rules discovered while reading in the “Write it out” section.

Words and Sounds

This sub-part is designed to help students acquire new vocabulary related to the topic of the file, practise word formation as well as pronunciation, stress, and intonation.

Take a Break

Students at this level relax, play games and practise every day English with a smile.

Skills Building

Place is now to the productive skills of students, different sub-parts are involved:

Research and Report

Students engage in research tasks that will make them better acquainted with English speaking countries and become more autonomous and more articulate.

Listening and Speaking

The materials provided will help students acquire a good command of listening, and speaking skills and strategies. The Coping window will give students tips and hints for the purpose. These tips and hints will also help develop social skills among students.

Reading and Writing

This sub-section is similar to the previous one except that listening and speaking are not the stressed skills, but reading and writing.

Brainstorming

At the level of the file, students start thinking with their partners on the ways in which they will realise their project.

Project Round up

Students are asked to compare their project with the one given to them as an example; they can be inspired by the example or can improve on it. As a group, they compare, discuss and assess other groups' projects.

Where Do We Stand Now?

This sub-part helps students assess their achievements through; Progress, Check, and Learning Log.

Time for....

Students sing, share a joke or words of wisdom, just to get ready for the new next file.

4.3. Textbooks Evaluation (SOE1, 2, 3 & OTM)

Unlike analysis, evaluation is a thorough examination that results generally in bringing a value judgment. Our self-constructed checklist is the tool used for this end.

4.3.1. Authors' Qualifications

Altbach (1991) affirms that textbook authors constitute “the most important ingredient of textbook quality and it is surprising that little attention is paid to the nature of textbook authorship in debates about textbook quality and development” (p.249). Textbook quality, as contended by Altbach (ibid), depends heavily on the qualifications of authors; unfortunately, who the authors are? Or what their qualifications are? do not seem to be at the heart of debates on textbook quality. Nevertheless, textbook authors are asked to meet two requirements; competence and experience as contended by Seguin (1989), even if the problem in third world countries remains where to locate authors with such qualities.

Authorship of the Algerian middle school English textbooks is limited to a list of names on the first page of the textbooks with no reference to their qualifications or professional titles that can reflect their competence and experience.

On the first page of SOE1 authors are listed as follows: Mrs. Merazga L., head of project, Mr. Achour K., Mr.Ameziane H., Mr.Bouhadiba F., Mrs Guedoudj W., Mrs.Mekaoui O., Mr. Riche B., and Mr.Tamrabet L. SOE2 authors are Mrs LakriaMerazga, head of project, Mr. Farouk Bouhadiba, Mrs. WahibaGuedoudj, Mrs ZhouTorche. The same remark can be made; the qualifications do not figure out on the first page of the textbook. SOE3 revised edition authors are S.A.Arab, B. Riche, H. Ameziane, N. Khouas, k. Louadj Not

just authors' qualifications are not again mentioned, but the name of the head of project as well. OTM revised edition authors are Arab, S.A., and Riche, B. Their qualifications or professional titles remain unstated in the textbook. Still, no explicit reference is made to the head of project.

In fact, the researched qualifications revealed that Mrs Merazga L. is a former middle school general inspector, Mr.Achour K. is a high school inspector, Mr. Ameziane, H. is a university teacher, Mr. Bouhadiba, F. is a university teacher, Mrs Mekaoui O. is a high school teacher, Mr.Riche B. is a university teacher, Mr.Tamrabet L. is a middle school inspector, Arab S. A. is a university teacher.

The qualifications and professional titles add credibility to textbooks, so authors' professional titles need to figure out.

4.3.2. Layout and Design

Layout and design refer to the organisation and presentation of the textbook content. All the units of SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM follow each a standard format (see Textbook Analysis) which renders students familiar with the textbook structure after a couple of unit. The PPP pattern (presentation, practice and production) is adopted for the presentation of linguistic input in all the four middle school English textbooks (SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM). On the other hand, the PDP approach (Pre, During and Post) is adopted for the presentation of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). All the four textbooks enclose a Book Map which specifies file contents. But with regard to the number of files in SOE1: seven files, SOE2: five files, SOE3: four files, OTM: seven files, and each file is made up of sequences and sub-sections, the textbooks seem crammed.

4.3.3. Artwork (Illustrations)

A Chinese proverb says “one sighted is worth a hundred words”, illustrations are what learners can see in instructional materials and they can be more expressive than words. Illustrations in instructional materials, according to Hewings (1991) refer to any input that excludes texts and that involves “ drawings, cartoons, photographs, flow charts, pie charts, graphs and tables” (p.237). They are of great importance if effectively used and can be useful adjuncts to text learning. Levin (1981) categorizes illustrations functions into decorative, representational, organisational, interpretational and transformational. Decorational illustrations just decorate the text with little or no relation to the text; representational illustrations are the most common and they represent the text or part of the text; organizational illustrations provide a structural framework for the text; interpretational illustrations clarify difficult to understand materials, and last transformational illustrations are mnemonic pictures that assist learners in learning from text.

Levie and Lentz (1982) distinguish another dichotomy that distinguishes representational illustrations from non-representational illustrations. The former pertains to “ordinary drawings and photographs that show what things look like” Levie and Lentz (ibid: 214). The latter, however, relates to diagrams, charts, maps, and graphs supposed to “depict the organisation and structure of the key concepts of a content area” (ibid: 215). Hill (2003) categorizes illustrations into decorative and instructional.

Murakami and Bryce (2009) opine that “when images or figures match the verbal input, they are encoded by both the verbal and non-verbal systems, thus promoting memory more strongly than in the case of verbal or visual input alone” (p.50). Accordingly, if illustrations and words are concurrently used in a textbook they are likely to enhance

comprehension and retention of the presented material than when just one of the two is presented solely without the other.

All four middle school textbooks, from a visual inspection, make use of both representational and nonrepresentational illustrations even if the representational ones outnumber the non-representational ones.

The same names re-occur as illustrators in SOE2, SOE3 and OTM namely Beghdad T. and Kaci Ouali Y. and no hints are given to their qualifications. SOE1 illustrator(s) are unknown. The earlier mentioned illustrators seem to progressively gain more professional experience in working with textbook authors, that is why SOE3 illustrations are better than those of SOE2. In addition, the dimensions of the two aforementioned textbooks allowed for bigger illustrations and thus clearer ones in comparison to those of SOE1 and OTM. Sometimes ill-conceived illustrations cannot be traced back just to unskilled illustrators but to an absence of collaboration between textbooks' authors and illustrators.

SOE1 and OTM representational illustrations are unappealing in comparison to those of SOE2 and SOE3. More attractive illustrations related to the learner's inner experience could have been worked on in SOE1, especially that 11-12 years old pupils are targeted. Some illustrations, in SOE1, are distant from the verbal language they are supposed to clarify as is the case in file two, page 41; a drawing involving a family tree is to be used in activity 'C' p. 45, the family tree is not only unattractive but not adjacent to the stated activity as well. Still, another illustration in the same file but on p. 43 gives rise to ambiguities as within the same bubble are involved two replications that should be set into separate bubbles so as to help pupils alternate roles. Moreover, some photos are not up to date; on p. 52 Zineddine Zidane is presented as a footballer where in fact he is currently a coach. OTM encloses some obscure photographs that do not catch the interest of learners

as is the case for the photography in file three, page 89, or the coloured one in file five, p.122. Last, OTM black and white illustrations could have been replaced by colourful ones with regard to the findings reached by Smilek et al (2002) and which advance that colours have an effect on memory performance; memory recall among their participants was better when exposed to colours than when just presented with black and white colours. In conclusion, SOE1 and OTM do not seem satisfactory in relation to artwork, unlike SOE2 and SOE3.

4.3.4. Aims and Objectives

The finalities of the teaching of English according to the Ministry of Education (2003) are expressed in the following words:

The teaching of **English** must be imperatively conceived within the objective of helping our society integrate harmoniously into **modernity**. It concerns a full participation in a new linguistic community that **uses English** for all types of ‘**transaction**’. This participation must be based on the sharing and the exchange of ideas and scientific, cultural and civilisational experiences. This will allow knowledge of oneself and the other.....Hence, we will give to each the possibility to access to science, technology and universal culture while avoiding the pitfall of acculturation....Teaching seen from this angle implies the development of a critical mind, of tolerance and of openness....learning of English must move **to an interactive and integrative logic**. This learning permits to the pupil **a cognitive and meta-cognitive pathway** leading progressively to **autonomy** (p.41) [text translated from French words in bold as in original text]

As put forward by the Algerian educational authorities, the introduction of English at the middle school level must be conceptualized within the perspective of a full integration in a modern community where English is the shared language that can guarantee the

success of all transactions; it is the world's lingua franca. Three objectives are to be retained from the above quotation: linguistic, methodological and cultural. The linguistic objectives pertain to a good command of the English language aspects that will help learners cope with the scientific and technological advances in the world. The conception of the methodological objectives is framed within a cognitive and socio-constructivist perspective. Learners are supposed to act upon their learning and to work on task projects and problem-solving situations whose resolution requires the mobilisation of different learning strategies be they cognitive or meta-cognitive. The expected results, at later stages of learning, are an autonomous learner and a viable and sustainable learning.

The cultural objectives seek to make of the Algerian pupil a tolerant citizen, open to the other culture and ready to accept it.

The Algerian educational system has adopted a competency-based approach that targets three competencies:

1. To interact orally
2. To interpret simple authentic oral or written messages
3. To produce simple oral or written messages

An examination of the stated competencies reveals a mismatch between the requirements of a competence and the three aforementioned competencies. Competencies as stated by Richards and Rodgers (2001) “are the essential skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours required for effective performance of a real world task or activity.” Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (ibid) link competency-based approach to performance approach when they assert that: “Competency based education has much in common with such approaches of learning as performance-based instruction, mastery of learning and individualized instruction. It is outcome-based and is adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers and the community” (p.141).

In line with Richards and Rodgers (ibid), Nunan (2002) views that “competencies bear a strong family resemblance to performance objectives and reside squarely within the behavioural tradition” (p.5). Nunan (1990) opines that both competencies and performance-based objectives should meet three requirements that are performance or ‘task’ statement, a ‘conditions’ statement, and a ‘criterion’ or ‘standards’ statement. The task element determines what learners are to do, the conditions statement indicates the circumstances under which learners are to perform the task, and last, standards statement designates how well the task is to be performed. The abovementioned competencies in the Algerian educational system are not specifying neither the conditions in which the competencies will manifest themselves nor the standards of performance required from learners. Nunan (2002:4) gives the example of a competency, as stated by New South Wales Adult Migrant Education Service (Sydney: 1993)

The learner can negotiate complex/problematic spoken exchanges for personal business and community purposes. He or she: achieves purpose of exchange and provides all essential information accurately uses appropriate staging, e.g. opening and closing strategies, provides and requests information as required, explains circumstances, causes, consequences, and proposes solutions as required, sustains dialogue e.g. using feedback, turn taking, uses grammatical forms and vocabulary appropriate to topic and register and grammatical errors do not interfere with meaning, pronunciation/stress/intonation do not impede intelligibility, interprets gestures and other paralinguistic features (p.4).

As can be noticed the three conditions are met; the task specification, the circumstances and the standards. The selected competencies need to fulfil the aforementioned criteria so as to constitute the pillars on which is founded and organised content.

Objectives as considered in our literature review are not reflected in our textbooks. SOE1 files or sequences do not unfold with the learning objectives to achieve; they are stated at the end of each file as part of a ‘Reminder’. Normally objectives are stated at the

beginning as they represent the road map that guides both teachers and learners, and their statement does not meet the three requirements that are: performance, conditions and standard. If one considers 'To spell words' on page 36, it is not an objective, as it is not specific. In SOE2 objectives are stated at the beginning of each sequence, but again not all statements at the beginning of sequences can be considered as objectives, the objectives of sequence one, file three illustrate best our remark:

- Consolidate 1st AM vocabulary about illnesses
- Consolidate "have got"
- Consolidate the imperative
- Use "must"/ "mustn't"
- Use "should".

In SOE3 and OTM a preview, at the beginning of each file, gives an idea on the objectives learners are expected to achieve, but no statements are explicitly stated to refer to the standards or the conditions. What's more, OTM in all the enclosed previews starts with: 'In this file you will learn the following', objectives stress what learners are expected to do not know. If the CBA is said to be the embraced methodology by the Algerian educational system, it needs to be task-based or performance-based in which doing will allow observing and measuring the desired changes.

Objectives in all textbooks need to be first SMART; i.e. specific (who is the target population? What will be accomplished); Measurable (can the objective be measured?); Attainable (can the objective be achieved in the suggested time frame with the available resources?); Realistic (does the objective address the goal?); Time-bound (does the objective propose a timeline when the objective will be met?).

The objectives suggested in middle school textbooks do not seem to reflect the overall aims set as finalities for the teaching of English, they do meet the requirements.

4.3.5. Textbooks Content

Textbooks, as substantiated by Tomlinson (2011), include work on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, functions and the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. All those aspects in addition to two further components we judged worth involving; the cultural representation and the promotion of autonomous learning, have been evaluated as part of the textbooks content.

4.3.5.1. Grammar Presentation

Grammar, also known as linguistic competence, is of great importance in achieving communicative competence (Canale and Swain, 1980). Its effective presentation in teaching materials is recommended as it is the backbone of any language.

Which approach to grammar presentation is adopted?

According to syllabus designers' claims, an inductive conceptualization characterizes the presentation of grammar under the competency-based approach in all the Algerian middle school syllabi. Learners discover the rules presented in focused tasks, and in contexts so as to ensure an accurate, meaningful and appropriate use of English.

SOE1 delineates the following language forms:

- Cardinal and ordinal numbers
- Auxiliaries to be/ to have
- Personal pronouns
- Possessive adjectives (my/your)
- Demonstrative pronouns (this/that)
- Prepositions (location: from, in, on, at, near/ time: at+time)
- Present simple tense
- Present continuous
- Qualifiers (physical appearance and nationalities)/ quantifiers (some and any)
- Yes/no questions
- Articles a/an
- 'Wh' questions (what/when/why)
- Can/can't
- Imperative
- Countable /uncountable nouns
- Do/does questions

- Past simple
- Did questions
- Comparative of equality/ superiority
- Future simple
- Affirmative/ negative sentences
- Adjectives

Grammar reflection in 1st year textbook draws on the same pattern in all seven files. The Presentation Practice Production (PPP) pattern is adopted; it is an approach whereby language items are first presented, then practised and last produced either orally or in writing. A merit of the PPP pattern as viewed by Thornbury (1999) is that knowledge (presentation) becomes skill through successive stages of practice; a lot of practice results in an accurate use of language, and out of accuracy comes fluency.

Presentation phase in SOE1, in nearly all the files, consists of short, contrived dialogues that elucidate the grammar items and which are first read from the textbook by the teacher. Repetition and habit formation characterize practices at this stage; the same dialogues read by the teacher are mechanically drilled by pupils and are highly controlled by the teacher until said correctly. An example would be file two: Family and Friends (p. 41), sequence one: pupils under 'Listen and Speak' listen to their teacher reading a short dialogue in which 'Sally' introduces her cousin 'Jim' to 'Wang' a friend of hers. The Personal pronoun 'He' and the demonstrative 'That' are presented (activity a. page 43). Practice follows presentation, pupils throughout some activities put into practice the aforementioned linguistic items; personal pronouns (She/he) and demonstrative pronouns (This/That); in activity a. page 44, pupils are asked to introduce friends to their mums in their birthdays, they are provided by an example to follow e.g. Mum, this is my friend Aminata. She is Nigerian.

The production phase follows the practice stage; pupils use the already introduced and practised items to complete a conversation between 'Sally' and 'Aminata' who are looking

at photos and introducing family members, the demonstrative ‘this’, and the personal pronoun ‘he’ are used (activity a. page 46).

SOE1 design in relation to grammar presentation does not seem to be compatible with the tenets of a competency-based approach acclaimed to be learner-centred and task-based; it looks like a teacher-fronted classroom where the teacher keeps a firm grip on the teaching/learning process and where the learner is a passive agent that processes language mechanically because even at the production level, pupils are guided by prompts that do not allow for any free output. All the grammar items are summarized under ‘Reminder’ at the end of the three sequences.

Similarly to SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM follow the same pattern to the teaching of grammar, namely the PPP pattern. Pupils are presented with grammar points in contexts, be they short conversations or short reading texts followed by practice activities that help pupils use the grammatical items before expecting, generally, a writing production.

The grammatical notions in SOE2 involve:

- The present simple/ continuous (consolidation)
- Adjectives
- Past tense (consolidation)
- Cardinal and ordinal numbers (consolidation)
- The past simple + ago
- Possessive (‘s)
- The demonstratives(these / those)
- The modal can (possibility)/ could (polite request)
- Prepositions of location
- Possessive pronouns
- The imperative (consolidation)
- Have got (consolidation)
- Must /mustn’t (obligation/ recommendation)
- Should
- Adverbs of manner
- Time adverbs
- Passive form
- Time expressions (consolidation)
- The future tenses (intention : will/planning: going to)
- ‘Wh’ questions
- Like+ ing
- Present perfect

In like manner to SOE1, all grammar points in SOE2 are summarised and highlighted in a grammar box called 'Reminder' at the end of each sequence. In addition, verb forms figure out at the end of the textbook to help learners revise and retain them.

Similarly, grammar presentation falls under the same approach in SOE3; pupils are introduced to the following grammatical points:

- Adjectives (order of adjectives)
- Link words: and, but and because
- Prepositions of time/place (consolidation)
- Relative pronouns which and who (consolidation)
- Do you like/enjoy/love+ verb+ ing?
- Present continuous and going to in future arrangements
- Present simple (consolidation)
- Frequency adverbs
- Present perfect in yes/no questions and 'wh' questions
- Present perfect with since/for /how long/already/yet
- Past simple (consolidation)
- Time markers: yesterday/last week/month, etc
- Past continuous (consolidation)
- Link words: when and while.
- Comparative adjectives and adverbs
- Superlative adjectives
- Nouns
- Interjections and exclamations
- Pronouns (consolidation)

Grammar in SOE3 is embedded in listening and reading passages to help pupils practice grammar in meaningful contexts of use while improving their listening, speaking and reading skills.

OTM, is no exception as it presents pupils with grammatical forms that are contextualized in listening and reading passages so as to guarantee a display of the use of the structure in question; they are first presented, then practised and last produced. The textbook puts emphasis on the following grammar items:

- Tag questions
- Imperative (consolidation)
- Sequencers (consolidation)

- Comparatives and superlatives of adjectives (consolidation)
- Modals (can, may, might and could)
- Irregular forms of the modals can and could: am able/will be able/was able to
- Modals (must/ have to and need to) (consolidation)
- Agreement and disagreement patterns (so can I/ neither can I...
- Time clauses with when /while/ as soon as/ before/ after/till/until
- Conditional type 1
- Future with 'will'(consolidation)
- Simple past tense (consolidation)
- Semi-modal 'used to'
- Relative pronouns which, who, where, whose, that
- Time sequencers (consolidation)
- Conditional type 2
- Modal might, if I were.....would and could in recommendations
- Superlatives of adjectives (consolidation)
- Past simple (consolidation)
- Present perfect (consolidation)
- Past continuous (consolidation)
- Interrupted past actions with while, when and as.
- Simultaneous past actions with while and as.

The presence of a Grammar Reference rubric at the end of OTM (p.176-190) facilitates pupils' revision of all grammatical lessons.

Grammar in all four textbooks does not seem to comply with the principles of the CBA which claims an inductive teaching that aspires to help learners communicate effectively. Furthermore, grammar is overemphasized, with regard to the number of items to be covered, to the extent of turning it into an end in itself, not a means that helps achieve communicative competence.

Is grammar recycled?

An examination of all middle school grammar points presented in SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM listed earlier, allows us to advance that the grammatical presentation is cyclic in that certain items are reworked not just in the same file but are also consolidated in the subsequent textbooks which provides pupils with ample opportunities for practice and revision. Textbooks, then, consolidate one another.

Is grammar contextualised?

Worth of mention is the fact that grammar points in the four textbooks and more specifically in SOE1 are not introduced in motivating and realistic contexts. Presentation of grammar items should be embedded in authentic materials that add relevance and bring realism while increasing learners' motivation (Cunningsworth 1995). To scaffold Algerian middle school pupils learning of English, the school textbooks need to be vehicles for authentic input that is sometimes simplified to adjust the level of beginners, the case of Algerian middle school pupils, and so as to maximize the unconscious acquisition of the English grammar especially that it constitutes the backbone of the language. If grammar is conceived, as claimed by syllabus designers to be a means not an end in itself, an interaction with authentic language is recommended. The extracts relied upon in the grammatical presentation are in their majority inauthentic.

4.3.5.2. Vocabulary Presentation

Is vocabulary load suitable?

Bacher (2013) advances that in Finland learners are supposed to acquire 3, 4 words in every session whereas 1st year Algerian pupils need to learn 10, 43 words in every session throughout the school year through SOE1. This shows how overloaded the Algerian learners are in terms of vocabulary acquisition. Still, in a research undertaken by Torki (2012) the number of new items introduced in SOE2, not occurring in SOE1, is estimated at 738 lexical new items which did not occur in SOE1 and which represent a percentage of 52,49% of the total items occurring in SOE2. But pupils in SOE3 are presented with 194 new lexical items not encountered in SOE2, which again as stated by Torki, represent a percentage of 26, 98% of the total items. In OTM 675 new lexical items that did not exist in SOE1, SOE2 and SOE3 are encountered which represents 35, 36% of the total items presented in all three textbooks. The number of new lexical items should normally increase

as learners move from one level to another but the contrary seems to take place in our middle school English textbooks; from 738 lexical new items in SOE2 to 194 new lexical items in SOE3.

The lexical coverage impacts greatly the readability level; the same study (Torki, 2012) advances that if the lexical coverage in a textbook is lower than 95% and higher than 75% this means that the textbook is at the students' level and has a medium readability level. The lexical coverage of SOE2 is 47, 51%, SOE3 lexical coverage is 73, 02%, OTM lexical coverage is 64, 64%. SOE3 is the most readable textbook and SOE2 the least readable textbook in that the middle school pupil encounters more than one unknown word in every ten words.

In our literature review related to vocabulary instruction, learning the 100 most frequent words count for 50% of the material one reads, and the 25 most frequent words form about a third of the written material. If listeners and readers are familiar with 85% of the words in a text, they can reach text comprehension (Hirsch and Nation, 1992), the most frequent words, since counting for text comprehension, need to form the core of vocabulary presentation.

Are the most frequent words taken into account?

In a doctoral research undertaken by Grazib (2013) Lextutor Software was used to analyse almost all important wordlists, paragraphs and texts according to the most frequent words that figure out in all four middle school textbooks. Results revealed that among the 369 processed words in extracts selected from SOE1, 85% of those words belong to words ranked between 1 and 500 most frequent words used in English. In SOE2 the 333 processed words revealed that 82% belong to words ranked between 1 and 500 most frequent words. In SOE3 84% of the 359 processed words belong to words ranked between

1 and 500. Last, the 498 processed words from OTM showed that 82% of those words belong to words ranked between 1 and 500.

According to Nation and Waring (1997) the 2000 first word families on West's (1953) 'General Service List of English Words' are the ones English learning beginners should be exposed to. Likewise, Schmitt (2000) views that high-frequency words should be the main aim of all beginners. With regard to the above findings in relation to the Algerian middle school textbooks, the four textbooks enclose the most frequent words that are of great importance in comprehending reading passages.

Do textbooks provide for vocabulary acquisition strategies?

In all four textbooks vocabulary presentation is topical in that each topic dictates a certain lexicon. SOE1 relies more on imaging and illustrations, even if those illustrations as mentioned previously are not motivating and clear, but they are used to help clarify meanings, such pictures can be worth a thousand words, instances of such use are found on pages 17, 18, and 138, pupils rely on pictures to infer meanings. 1st year pupils are initiated just to translation from English to Arabic (pages 66 and 137 are examples) as a vocabulary acquisition strategy. At an upper level in SOE2 and in addition to translation, dictionary use is emphasized and activities 3 and 4, page 13 are two illustrations. Pupils are also introduced to some strategies that can help them acquire new vocabularies such as keeping a vocabulary notebook (see Help on page 46) or using contextual clues (see Help on page 69). Such strategies foster independence in learners and help them deduce the meaning of unknown words by themselves without resorting to translation, dictionaries or relying on teachers explanation. In SOE3 after all three sequences is found 'Activate your English' which is devoted to the practice of acquired vocabulary in the file in further contexts of use. One merit of such vocabulary reinvestment is that the more pupils encounter and manipulate words the more likely those words will be transferred to their

long-term memories. OTM still exposes pupils to various coping strategies related to vocabulary acquisition; using a synonym or explaining the meaning of the word with a complete sentence, using prefixes to form opposites and relying on the illustrations that accompany a text. Some of those strategies are explicitly explained (see Coping p.30 and p.108). In addition, some idioms and colloquialisms are also presented and the pupils are asked to match them with their meanings and are then required to give their equivalents in their language to facilitate their retention (see p.100). All such strategies lead to autonomous learning and initiate pupils to vocabulary acquisition independently of their teachers.

4.3.5.3. Pronunciation Presentation

Communicative competence is hard to achieve without an accurate pronunciation. All middle school English textbooks are considering phonology. The speech sounds focused on in SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM emphasize both segmental and supra-segmental speech features: sounds, stress and intonation. In SOE1 all files follow the same pattern in their phonological presentation. All three sequences unfold with ‘Listen and Speak’ under which comes ‘Pronunciation and spelling’; sounds are presented in minimal pairs to be drilled after listening to the teacher pronouncing them. Those sounds are compared against their spelling. The latter remains unchanged unlike pronunciation which differs from one word to another; the sounds ‘i’ and ‘ai’ are to be repeated after listening to the teacher saying them, the case of file one, sequence one, ‘Pronunciation and spelling’ under ‘Listen and Speak’ (p.21). After a mechanical drilling, pupils are required to identify and then compare the sounds drilled earlier in new words. The pattern is the same all along SOE1; just sounds differ from one file to another.

Practice of stress on the first, second or third syllable and rising falling intonation are the second feature, after sounds that characterize pronunciation presentation throughout

SOE1. At the supra-segmental level practice is done at the sentential level as the case in file one, sequence two, page 48; file three, sequence one, page 64 and file six, sequence two, page 150.

The same pattern is exactly followed in SOE2, further sounds are introduced, and in addition to the rising falling intonation that is consolidated, falling rising intonation is introduced for the first time. In file one, sequence one, page 28 pupils listen then repeat the /s/, /z/ and /iz/ sounds before identifying and then comparing the above sounds in new words. Practice of stress and intonation is done at the sentence level just after sounds practice, as in file two sequence one, page 28 or file five, sequence three, page 105.

The phonological aspects stressed in SOE3 are intonation in ‘or-questions’, and exclamations; pronunciation in offers; weak and strong forms of auxiliary was/ were, prepositions: at, of, for, from and to, and as....as; corrective stress; stress in listing; pronunciation of ‘have’ and ‘haven’t’ , ‘more’ in comparatives and letters ‘ph’; word stress: function and content words; pronunciation of suffix ‘-er’ in comparatives and ‘-est’ in superlatives.

In SOE3 and still in all three sequences, but under ‘Say it clear’ pupils are trained to pronounce accurately, and to mark stress and intonation. At this level, pupils are asked to read tips related to phonology, as part of ‘Say it clear’. In some instances, after selecting the intonation to mark (rising falling or falling rising) they are supposed to justify their choices and that raises their awareness to the phonological aspects of the language. In file two, sequence one, page 55 pupils are asked to read the following tips: “When we offer to help someone, we should pay attention to the ‘music’ of our voice in order to sound polite. The intonation should go up on the first word (I/We), fall, and then, go up a little at the end. The higher your intonation is at the start, the more polite you sound. We generally use ‘will/’ll to make offers.” In the following activity pupils are asked to listen and mark the

intonation in offers. The same remarks can be extended to some other examples such as in file one, sequence three, page 33 or file four, sequence one, page 129.

In OTM emphasis is on silent letters, long and short vowel sounds, intonation in questions and tag questions as in (pages 18-19, 68), 'wh' questions, pronunciation of suffix 'ed' (page 24), stress in words starting with prefixes and words ending with suffix 'tion' (page 149), strong and weak forms of auxiliaries (page 144), clusters, diphthongues (page 99), triphthongues, and stress shift in the same word as noun and verb (page 126). All those phonological features are presented and practised under 'Listen and consider' and 'Words and Sounds' in which pupils listen to the teacher then practise pronunciation, stress and intonation.

Middle school pupils are asked to imitate the teacher pronouncing sounds in minimal pairs at the word level, and to practise supra-segmental features under the guidance of a teacher supposed to be a model.

When prominence is said to be given to oral interaction (Accompanying Documents, 2AM) pronunciation requires a competent speaker or a teacher with a near-native accent to ensure an effective inculcation and exposure to the phonological features of the English language, especially that varieties in pronunciation are what mark this language system. In the Algerian middle schools teachers sometimes not only lack skill in modelling pronunciation but are also deprived of accompanying media to help them, such as audio or audio visual materials. The four middle school textbooks do not have any cassettes or CDs. The available practice materials themselves are neither authentic nor motivating with regard to pupils' ages and interests. Songs as an example could be appropriate for pronunciation practice, especially for weak forms targeted in SOE3 and OTM; learners can join pleasure and fun to learning. Short stories for 1st and 2nd year pupils with the rising

falling or falling rising intonations can be acted out by teachers instead of the dry sentences or dialogues said by the teacher.

4.3.5.4. Listening Presentation

SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 unfold with 'Listen and speak' the natural order one follows in acquiring the mother tongue; the Natural Order hypothesis (Krashen 1983). The listening materials are meant to be read out by the teacher and are available for linguistic study. The four textbooks combine the use of interactional and transactional language in that language is used to maintain social relations and to give and obtain information. The transactional language is referred to as functions. Both processes are catered for bottom-up and top-down processes. Pupils are paired up and grouped in their practice phases to approximate real-life listening experiences.

The listening strategies, as stated by syllabus designers for all four levels, revolve around the identification of purpose, recognition of the task, perseverance in listening even if the meaning of a word is unknown, inference of the meaning of unknown words from the context, spotting the key words and expressions that help comprehend the message. Last but not least, pupils reformulate what they listened to in their own words. Dornyei (1995) views that communication strategies need to be explicitly taught for students to improve their accuracy and fluency. With the exception of OTM and SOE3 the other two textbooks; SOE1, SOE2 do not provide opportunities for explicit teaching of such strategies.

Morley (1993) advances that outcome is important in listening comprehension activities; 1st year pupils and with regard to their level and age (11-12 years old) are assisted in developing basic listening abilities. That's why and till file three, they are just required to listen and repeat short dialogues where they pay attention to pronunciation of sounds, and intonation and stress (bottom-up process) to get accustomed to the English

language; no actions or operations are expected to be performed. In file three, however, sequence one, pupils listen and process in a top-down way information being heard; they say what the score is (a. page 63); in sequence two, they listen and say Sue's family name. In file four, sequence one, (a. page 83) they listen and spot the wrong information and correct, or listen and say what Jane is doing (b. page 83). In file four, sequence two, Listen and speak (c. page 87) they listen and find answer to questions.

In SOE2 pupils in file one sequence two (page 12) listen and fill in a form, in file two, sequence three (page 36) pupils listen to their teacher and try to locate places on the map. .

In SOE3 pupils listen then are required to perform higher order listening skills such as predicting what the headmaster and teachers are saying in the staff-room (file one, sequence one, Listen and speak, task 2 page 16). Or listening to a text on Algeria and completing a table with the right information on Algeria's location, population, land and climate (file four; sequence one, task 3 page 128).

Listening in OTM falls under two sections: 'Listen and Consider' and 'Listening and Speaking'. The 'Listen and consider' part follows the Pre- During- Post (PDP) pattern that is, there is a 'before listening', a 'during listening' and a 'post listening' phases. The pre-listening phase seeks to activate pupils' background knowledge throughout pictures, all the pre-listening phases in all the files require pupils to consider pictures orally as a means towards schemata activation; they try to make predictions about what will be read by the teacher. Then the teacher reads the scripts (p. 165-175) and the pupils listen to either confirm or infirm their predictions. Pronunciation is also practised at the while listening stage to stress the fact that speaking and pronunciation cannot be dissociated. The post-listening phase helps check the acquisition of the grammatical items covered throughout oral and written practice.

As for the listening strategies pupils need to acquire so as to cope with the different situations they might be placed in, just in SOE3 under ‘Say it clear’ and in OTM under ‘Coping’ are explicitly stated strategies to help develop listening or speaking skills.

Listening is also presented for enjoyment, pleasure and sociability; 3rd year pupils listen to a song at the end of file one (p.51); 4th year pupils have a song at the end of file one (p.40), file four (p. 116), file five (p.140), and file six (p. 164), the famous address of Luther King is presented at the end of file two (p.64), and a poem figures out at the end of file three (p.89),

No sound media are used in all four textbooks, and teachers remain the sole source of linguistic input in class. There goes without denying the fact that those records are of great importance in a foreign context with a non-native teacher, but there remains a positive aspect in the teacher’s physical presence in that students gain cues to meaning from the teacher’s facial expressions and body language.

Sometimes native speech can be difficult to comprehend, that is why according to Cook (1998) the role of coursebooks is how to select, idealize and simplify the language to make it more accessible to students. All the listening scripts in middle school textbooks are unreferenced, and seem produced by textbook authors.

4.3.5.5. Speaking Presentation

The first competence sought after is to interact orally; the interactive competence in all four textbooks comes under ‘Listen and speak’. Algerian middle school syllabus designers set the following strategies in relation to interaction; using a verbal and/or non verbal language to show one’s agreement/disagreement and comprehension; using an adequate verbal language to seek repetitions, clarifications and reformulations; using another language to fill gaps; using a verbal or non verbal language to ask for speech; asking

questions to clarify one's comprehension; using compensation strategies (gestures, mimes, drawings) to make one's self understood.

Throughout the speaking skill in SOE1, pupils greet, ask for information, make phone calls, talk about nationalities, introduce people, ask and give information about people/inventions, talk about family members, describe peoples' physical appearance, talk about sport activities, talk about daily activities/ hobbies, talk about present/ everyday activities/ past events, give information about animals/ name and describe them, tell the time, ask about prices, say quantities, order a meal, describe a process, instruct, discriminate between goods, talk about ailments talking about peoples' lives/biographies, talk about the weather, express intentions, talk about rights and duties.

In SOE2 the speaking skill involves describing the physical appearance of a person, talking about someone's life, asking and answering about possession, expressing possibility/capacity/permission/prohibition, talking about prices/ health/remedies/distances/duration/likes and dislikes, inviting, enquiring about someone's likes/career/preferences/past activities, and interviewing.

In SOE3 pupils speak to greet, to introduce someone, to part, to describe a personality, to make and answer requests, to ask for clarifications, to make apologies and give explanations, to make and respond to offers, to respond to an advertisement, to talk about likes and dislikes, to express emotions and preferences, to invite and accept or decline invitations and requests, asking for and giving direction, checking understanding and correcting misunderstanding, asking and giving advice, locating and describing places, agreeing and disagreeing, asking for and giving opinion, and predicting.

In OTM pupils talk about the origin of some food, predict and check prediction, talk about one's abilities/obligations and rights, make a short class presentation, talk about one's expectations, recognizing tone in speech, coping with interruptions in a conversation,

asking for clarification, correcting oneself, doing a class presentation, speaking from notes, using hesitation devices, talking (host and guest in a quiz show, passenger- taxi driver, customer travel agent), talking about personal experiences, talking about an accident.

The teacher remains the unique source of oral input inside the classroom, the scripts are to be said by the teacher; no CD's or audio materials by native speakers are provided. In addition and as previously mentioned the explicit hints and tips related to speaking, listening and pronunciation are displayed just in SOE3 and OTM.

4.3.5.6. Reading Presentation

The second competence sought after is to interpret authentic simple oral or written messages; and all four middle school syllabi, according to the Accompanying Documents, advocate an interactive approach to reading where meaning is constructed throughout pupils' interaction with authentic texts. All four syllabi list different reading strategies for instruction to help acquire this second competence.

- Reading Texts

SOE1 encloses short passages and paragraphs. With the exception of a short passage on page 93, file four, sequence three "Sam the Farmer" (From the Country News, March 24th, 2003), and a poem "Trees"(by Joyce Kilmer, Abridged version *On Wings of Verse*) in file seven, sequence two, page 153 that are referenced, all other reading passages are unreferenced. Similarly, SOE2 has only one referenced short text adapted from "The old Man and the Sea" by Ernest Hemingway, in file one, sequence three, page 18.

SOE3 reading texts that are referenced involve "Wonderful Trip with ONAT", file two, sequence one, page 58, "Moby Dick" by Herman Melville, file three, sequence one, page 96, or "The Pyramids of Giza"(adapted from *Reflections*, Student's Book 2 by James Taylor) in file four, sequence three, page 147. The other reading texts are unreferenced.

OTM referenced texts include a short text by Susan Sheerin (Spotlight on Britain), file one, 'Read and Consider', page 22; "Table Manners" (Bernal Seal) page 23; "A report" (from USA Today) file two, "Read and Consider" page 47; "A Famous Address" (**I have a Dream** by Martin Luther King) file two, page 64; "A Rainy Sunday" (Jimmy Spheens) file three, "Reading and Writing" page 82. Last, "Snow White" (Grimm's Fairy Tales) file six, "Reading and Writing", pages 156-158.

The claims of syllabus designers in that reading is an interaction with authentic texts does not seem to be taken into account by textbook writers with regard to the number of unreferenced texts in all the textbooks. The unreferenced ones seem to be designed by textbook authors for pedagogical purposes; the claims of the syllabus designers are not matching the textbooks' reading passages. In conclusion, the inauthentic passages cannot have the impact of authentic materials on middle school pupils.

- **Reading Activities**

According to the aforementioned finalities stated by the Algerian Ministry of Education, pupils are progressively led towards autonomy all along a cognitive and meta-cognitive pathway. King (2008) contends that strategies use is what differentiates good from poor readers. To make of the Algerian pupils good and autonomous readers, some reading strategies and processes are targeted throughout the suggested reading activities. To achieve reading comprehension throughout a bottom-up process, syllabus designers in the "Accompanying Documents" for middle school curriculum of English list the following bottom-up processes: pupils are asked to recognize the grapho-phonetic relationship; to recognize words; to identify morphological cues or cohesive devices, to identify the role of punctuation, to skip unknown words, to use the dictionary or to reread. At the top-down level pupils are required to predict; to recognize the context through

illustrations and text features; to use background knowledge; to identify the author's intention, and to skip unknown words. Moreover, at the meta-cognitive level, pupils need to ponder on the steps and strategies followed to achieve reading comprehension.

Both processes need to be used simultaneously, but at lower levels it is advisable to give firm grounding in bottom-up more than in top- down processing which is not the case. SOE1 authors, for example, seem to proceed the other way round, as just two activities target the bottom-up process, namely activity C. page 22 whereby pupils resort to the identification of the role of punctuation in reading comprehension, and activity a. page 93 in which pupils have to fill in blanks with words whose meaning is derived from an identification of their grammatical function. All the other reading activities focus on top-down processes.

- **Reading Strategies**

In terms of strategies, 1st year pupils are initiated to scanning as a reading technique whereby they look for specific information, as in activity B. page 26. In addition to scanning, skimming which refers to looking for the gist or main ideas is also targeted, as in activity C. page 49 or activity E. page 65. Some comprehension questions that follow certain short paragraphs or passages, supposed to check the understanding of pupils, seem a testing more than a teaching strategy. Other reading activities are meant to develop pupils' background knowledge as in activity C. page 96. But other activities are used just to practise language forms as is the case in activity B. page 85 (affirmative/ negative forms); activity C. page 112 (interrogative form) and activity C. page 126 (final pronunciation of 't' 'd', and 'id').

Pupils are introduced to prediction as a reading strategy as in activity B. page 89. When they make predictions, pupils activate their prior knowledge about the text and this strategy helps them make connections between what they already know and the new information.

Reading passages and activities in SOE2 come under ‘Go Forward’ and ‘Discover the language’; both processes are catered for: bottom-up and top-down. The former is used in activity 3, page 13 as well as activity 4 page 81; pupils are asked to use a dictionary. In addition to checking the dictionary, 2nd year pupils also infer synonyms or antonyms as in activity 3, page 29 or use lexical rules to get the meaning of unknown words as in activity 5, page 33. Top-down processes are present in activity 1, page 13 and activity 1, page 17 or activity 1, page 61 in which pupils use pictures or the title to guess or predict what they will be reading. Certain reading extracts seek pupils to act upon what they read by giving pieces of advice as in activity 1, page 51. Comprehension questions are used to check comprehension as in activity 2, page 76, activity 1, page 98 or activity 1, page 107. But worth of mention is the fact that all reading extracts and activities falling under ‘Discover the Language’ are used as tools towards language practice.

SOE3 is the first textbook where two separate sections are aimed at enhancing the reading and writing skills: ‘Read and write I’ and ‘Read and write II’. If the first rubric is set for the sake of establishing reading skills and strategies, the second is meant to promote extensive reading skills. 3rd year pupils go through a pre- then while and last post reading phases in some of the suggested passages as in activity 1, page 74. They scan and skim the reading passages suggested as in activities 1, and 2 pages 20-21, activities 1 and 2 page 29 or activity 1, page 38. Comprehension questions are also used for linguistic practice as in activity 2, page 58 but other comprehension questions are meant to help comprehend the text as in activity 3, page 96. Prediction is also emphasized especially as a pre-reading strategy.

OTM is distinguished from the three previous textbooks in that a first section is devoted to language learning whereas the second is for skills building. Reading under the first section is a means towards language practice and in the second section it is an end in itself,

and in both cases there is a before reading a while reading and a post reading. The activities where reading is targeted as an end outnumber the activities in which reading is used for language practice purposes. Illustrations, titles, and sometimes the cover of a book are used as prediction tools that help pupils guess the topic of what will be read as in activity 1, page 21; activity 1, page 32; 'Before you read' page 46; activity 1, page 57; 'Before you read' page 70; activity 1, page 82; activity 1, page 95; 'Before you read' page 122; activity 1; page 133; 'Before you read' page 146 and last 'Before you read' page 156. Comprehension questions are used while reading to check previous predictions or hypotheses, as in activity 2, page 22; activity2, page 32; activity 1, page 46; activity 2, page 57 or activity 2, page 107. While reading, pupils check their predictions. The post reading activities check pupils' comprehension of what has already been read through comprehension questions as in activity 4, page 33 or extracting synonyms and antonyms from what has been read the case of activity 4, page 108 or filling blanks with link words as in activity 8, page 134. The majority of the post reading activities suggested do not seem to check comprehension as much as practice language forms or test pupils.

All in all, reading needs to be approached as an interaction between the reader and the text that will ultimately result in comprehension. Furthermore, the textbooks need to provide more opportunities for the practice of various reading strategies to produce independent readers. SOE1 does not provide pre-reading activities. The latter according to Williams (1984) help stimulate learners' interest in the text, give a reason for reading, and prepare the reader for the language of the text. In addition bottom-up process should be given prominence in the activities suggested. Variety in reading strategies is advisable as a predominance of prediction characterizes all four textbooks especially OTM.

Reading comprehension questions need to require more than the recall of details from the text, i.e. literal questions, inferential questions should be emphasized as well. Last but not

least, no explicit reading strategy instruction is ensured in SOE1, SOE2 and SOE3, just OTM copes with this situation throughout ‘Coping’ boxes that openly explain different reading strategies use. Effective reading instruction at early stages results in strategic readers in the future but the Algerian textbooks do seem neither to address different reading strategies nor to emphasize the use of meta-cognitive strategies.

4.3.5.7. Writing Presentation

The Algerian pupils’ academic success relies heavily on writing; all exams are in writing. Writing as a skill is conceived, by syllabus designers for all levels, as a learning and communication tool. If the targeted strategies in reading, as stated by middle school syllabus designers, are cognitive and meta-cognitive, the presentation of the writing skill targets cognitive, meta-cognitive and rhetorical strategies. The cognitive strategies are aimed at developing handwriting; selecting the appropriate words, expressions and sentence types; and editing. The meta-cognitive ones, however, urge pupils to recognize the purpose and to anticipate the content. The rhetorical strategies help recognize the audience, text types and text format.

- Writing Strategies

SOE1 comprises 43 writing activities throughout the three sequences the seven files enclose. The majority of the suggested writing activities put emphasis on rhetorical strategies; 23 activities target rhetorical strategies, as examples are activity c. page 23 and activity b. page 70 in which pupils are asked to order sentences to get a conversation; activity d. page 27 in which pupils write an e-mail to a pen friend; activity c. page 46 in which pupils describe a friend; activity c. page 50 in which they describe themselves; activity c. page 66 where they describe their champions. Those rhetorical strategies seek to raise pupils’ awareness to the different text genres. A consideration of the number of activities devoted to rhetorical strategies instruction urges us to ascertain that there is an

overreliance on this type of strategies at the expense of the other ones, and so a mismatch exists between the claims of the syllabus designers and the textbook writing activities when the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies are not given equal importance.

SOE2 presents pupils with 43 activities targeting the writing act in all the sequences the five files enclose; among which 9 activities are aimed at strategy instruction and relate to activity 1 page 9 in which pupils write a text from notes taken after having listened to their teacher; it is a cognitive strategy. The second cognitive strategy is to be found in activity 1 page 12 where pupils have to copy a form then listen to the teacher and fill it in. In activity 6 page 11 and activities 3 and 4 page 13, they translate into another language and acquire new vocabularies. In like manner, new vocabularies are also built as in activity 3 page 33; rhetorical strategy is targeted. Similarly, rhetorical strategies are also sought after in activity 2 page 58 in which pupils are required to put words in the right order, and to re-order sentences to get a conversation, as in activity 5 page 87 or to imagine another ending to a story as in page 107 activity 3. 23 activities are used to practise language forms; ‘Go forward’ 1 page 9; 1 page 10 (Practice); 4 page 11; 3 page 17; 4 page 19; 2 page 52 ; 5 page 54; 4 page 56; 1 page 58 (Practice); 5 page 58; 1 and 2 page 63; 4 page 82; 3 page 86; 3 page 97; 2 , 3 and 4 page 99; 1, and 4 page 103; 2, 3 and 4 page 108. 7 activities target copying to develop mechanics of writing; ‘Discover the Language’ 1 page 10, 1 page 14; 1 page 18; 3 page 29; ‘Discover the Language’ page 34; ‘Discover the Language’ page 62, and ‘Discover the Language’ page 81. Certain writing activities aim at transferring information on a map as in activity 1 page 37 or transferring information from a non-verbal form to a verbal language as in activity 3 page 53 or transferring items into a questionnaire as in activity 5 page 100. The activity left, page 65, aims at writing about home remedies. Copying as an activity that helps gain a basic mechanical competence should have been emphasized in SOE1 more than in SOE2, which is not the case. Writing

is used for language practice purposes, and just 9 out of 43 activities aim at strategy instruction, and mainly rhetorical strategies are emphasized.

SOE3 comprises 43 writing activities dispatched through the sequences the four files involve. Those writing activities do more than just use language to practice grammar, they are used to raise pupils' awareness to different genres; a letter as in 'Write it out' 1 page 30 and page 60, an e-mail as in activity 3 page 66, an article as in 'Write it out' page 108, a report as in activity 3 page 110, an advert as in activity 2 page 139, a talk as in 'Write it out' page 146 or setting information in notes then expanding the notes to write a talk as in activities 1 and 2 page 73. SOE3 considers the writing process, pupils are asked to draft, revise, and edit as in activities 2 page 30, activity 3 page 73, or activity 2, page 76. The pupils are also introduced to writing types; description as in activity 4 page 39; comparison and contrast as in activity 3 page 148 or persuasion as in activity 2 page 145. Peer review and editing are also taken into account in activities 2 page 68 and activity 2 page 76. Rhetorical strategies still prevail in comparison to other writing strategies, but SOE3 seems the textbook that considers the process approach to the presentation of writing.

The five files in OTM include 52 writing activities, and 15 target language practice, examples involve activity 3 page 20; activity 1 page 48 or activity 1 page 94. The remaining activities encompass strategy instruction and transfer of information from verbal to non-verbal or non-verbal to verbal. Focus is still put on rhetorical strategies more than on any other strategies; pupils classify foods and drinks in 'Write it up' page 20, describe a dish in 'Write it up' page 31 or narrate a short story as in page 162. Pupils' awareness is raised to different kinds of genre as far as writing is concerned: report as in activity 1 page 27 and 'Write it up' page 45, activity 4 page 53; invitation card and invitation letter as in activities 2 and 3 page 34, a newspaper article as in activity 3 page 59; an advert on page 78; an e-mail for contingency plans as in 'Write it out' page 84 or page 125 and

biographies as in activity 6 page 102 and activity 1 page 109. Diverse to SOE3 in which the writing process is catered for, OTM suggests just three writing activities that urge pupils to consider the audience as in activity 2 page 77, to proof read as in activity 1 page 151 or to edit as in activity 3 page 151.

In a nutshell, rhetorical strategies are given prominence but variety in writing strategies be they cognitive or meta-cognitive would have supported the claims of syllabi designers.

4.3.5.8. Cultural Representation

Learning about the other culture is viewed as an integral component of communicative competence that not only comprises grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences (Canale and Swain 1980) but also includes intercultural communicative competence (Byram 1997, Byram and Zarate 1998).

To help the Algerian middle school pupils be tolerant and open to the other culture, SOE1, SOE2 devote special sections for cultural teaching labelled ‘Learn about Culture’; SOE3 explicitly presents cultural aspects under ‘Snapshots of Culture’, but no specific section in OTM is set apart for cultural presentation. The four textbooks open a window on the Algerian culture (source culture), the target culture (UK and USA) and the international culture (Kenya, India, Egypt...). Still, big ‘C’ culture representation exceeds small ‘c’ culture representation in all four middle school textbooks. In SOE1 the source culture has 22 instances of representation. The target culture representation, UK and USA, has 44 occurrences, and international culture representation has 38 cases.

Examples of big ‘C’ cultural representation in SOE1 can be depicted in the pictorial monuments displayed in page 32; the Statue of Liberty, Big Ben, the Eiffel Tower, Golden Gate Bridge, MaquamEshahid, Tower Bridge and Taj Mahal. The British Royal Family. Flags and currencies are to be seen on pages 34 and 35. Practices representative of small ‘c’ culture are depicted in greetings and celebrations in page 56 or breakfast around the

world, and countries and their dishes, page 115. Similarly, SOE2 encloses 28 cases of the target culture representation (UK and USA), 16 examples represent the source culture and 21 cases mirror the international culture. Big 'C' representation is exemplified in pages 16 and 17 with literary products (Oliver Twist) of Charles Dickens. Different kinds of music, page 21, and theatre genres, page 111. Small 'c' is presented throughout grandmother practices related to health problems, page 65. SOE3 has 34 target culture representations; 10 source culture examples, 29 international culture samples. Examples of big 'C' culture Life Guards, page 39, and schools in Britain, page 111. Celebrations on page 38 represent culture with a small 'c'. OTM has 47 target cultural representations, 17 source culture representations, and 26 international culture examples. Culture in OTM is pervasive throughout the units. Table manners are presented in page 23 as an occurrence of culture with a small 'c'. Big 'C' culture representation is to be found in page 64; the famous address of Martin Luther King.

A point worth emphasizing is that Algeria promoted the local design and production of textbooks whose cultural representation, by local textbook writers helps prevent learners from falling in the trap of alienation or assimilation. But the culture presented in EFL textbooks needs to foster an intercultural communicative competence that helps keep our pupils away from any cultural shock especially that 1st and 2nd year middle school participants in our needs analysis questionnaire expressed visiting English-speaking countries as a second reason behind the learning of English, and it was the third reason for 3rd year pupils and the fourth reason for 4th year pupils. Our pupils' awareness should be raised towards the conduct to adopt if ever visiting a foreign country, and more importantly what to avoid doing so as to ensure an effective use of language. Thompson (1993) advances that knowledge of social values, norms of behaviour and interaction, and cultural

discourse can be considered as a crucial component of overall linguistic competence, and that's what textbooks should prioritize when presenting culture.

4.3.5.9. Autonomy Development

Little and Leni (1998) contend that “there is a great agreement in the theoretical literature that learner autonomy grows out of the individual learner’s acceptance of responsibility for his or her own learning” (p.2). Autonomous learning is achieved when learners take fully in charge their learning. Autonomous learners before assuming full responsibility for their own learning need to go by the following three stages as suggested by Scharle and Szabo (2000); first learners’ awareness is raised by presenting new experiences and viewpoints, and most activities are structured. Second is the stage of changing attitudes through a lot of practice and preparation of learners to assume new roles and to get rid of old practices. Third, roles are transferred; teachers transfer roles with learners, the latter are given freedom in accomplishing tasks and deciding about tasks.

‘Check’ at the end of each file in SOE1 is supposed to make pupils check and monitor their learning. Similarly SOE2 encloses ‘Check’ and ‘Self-assessment’ that target autonomous learning. In like manner SOE3 and OTM throughout ‘Where Do We Stand Now’ rubric seek to raise pupils’ awareness to their ways of learning and to make learners responsible for their learning as well. Last but not least, Project work in all four textbooks remains the context where autonomous learning is best manifested; it embodies Nunan’s (1997) transcendence step where learners step outside the classroom confines and turn into researchers to connect the dots between what they learned inside the classroom and the world outside. In practice, however, projects are bought from a cyber space and the activities part of ‘Check’, ‘Self-assessment’ or ‘Where Do We Stand’ are skipped with regard to how lengthy and crammed both syllabi and textbooks are.

Likewise, all four textbooks do not foster the use of a variety of strategies to promote independence in learners, they just emphasize two: prediction in reading and rhetorical strategies in writing.

Pupils should be explicitly trained to the use of strategies (Graham and Harris, 2000) because, as stated by Wenden (1998), “Without developing such strategies, students will remain trapped in their old patterns of beliefs and behaviours and never be fully autonomous” (p.90).

As a conclusion textbooks need to put much more emphasis on strategy training and use at those early stages of language learning to establish good learning habits independently of teachers by first, raising pupils awareness to the importance of strategies use in learning and second, by training them to their use; the ultimate consequence of such endeavour is an autonomous learner.

Conclusion

This chapter tried to evaluate the four Algerian middle school English textbooks; SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM against certain criteria a self-construct checklist enclose. Ten recognized checklists have been reviewed for the purpose. The criteria used to examine the strengths and weaknesses of our four textbooks involve authors’ qualifications, layout and design, artwork, aims and objectives and textbook content. The latter involved grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, writing, culture and development of autonomous learning. The undertaking of the present chapter helped confirm the third chapter in that textbooks consolidate one another but proved a mismatch between the aims and the objectives.

The weaknesses the four textbooks displayed outweigh the strengths, but worth of mention is the fact that the textbooks remain a local product whose flaws can be remedied provided that the efforts of all the agents are redoubled and that the educational sector

regains its due importance in our society as the pillar on which stands the whole nation. Findings in the current chapter are also checked against what the coming two chapters will reveal. Learners and teachers will be involved in the subsequent two chapters as key agents.

CHAPTER FIVE: Needs Analysis

Introduction

Needs analysis (NA) plays a weighty role in the planning, implementation, evaluation and revision of any educational program and the translation of those investigated needs into linguistic and pedagogical terms heightens learners' motivation and ensures an effective instruction. In this respect, Richards (2012) asserts that an operative teaching demands that learner factors such as knowledge, views of learning, learning styles and motivation are taken into account.

The ensuing chapter is an attempt to develop and administer a needs analysis survey to a sample of Algerian middle school learners in Constantine in order to investigate their attitudes towards EFL learning, their favourite topics and language areas, their preferred skills, learning styles and strategies, in addition to their lacks. The purpose of this investigation is to determine whether or not our sample's needs are taken into consideration or not throughout the implemented middle school English textbooks.

5.1. Definition of Questionnaires

Questionnaires as defined by Brown (2001:6) are "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they have to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". Bryman (2004) classifies questionnaires into two types: self-completion, also called self-administered questionnaires, and postal or mail questionnaires. In the former type "respondents answer questions by completing the questionnaire themselves" (p.132), as opposed to what Oliver (1997) calls interview questionnaires in which the researcher writes the respondents' answers himself / herself. The postal or mail questionnaires, on the other hand, are not personally delivered by the researcher but sent via post or mail.

Questionnaires can enclose a series of questions or statements, and the respondents' task is to give answer to the asked questions or to select from the available alternatives the one(s) that reflect their attitudes and views. In this respect, the questions asked can be open-ended, in that they require full responses from the part of participants, or closed-ended in that just a 'yes' or 'no' answers are expected, with no additions. Some experts view that open-ended questions should not be inserted; Cohen and Manion (1989) are an example. The insertion of open-ended questions, in their opinion, is not advisable because respondents' physical absence will not allow any further clarifications if ever needed. Dornyei (2007) argues that closed-ended questions should prevail in a questionnaire. Nunan (1992) is inclined to the use of open-ended-questions, without denying closed-ended questions importance in a questionnaire, he (ibid) puts forth that "While responses to closed questions are easier to collate and analyse, one often obtains more useful information from open questions. It is also likely that responses to open questions will more accurately reflect what the respondent wants to say" (p.143). Responses to closed-ended questions are easy to tabulate and analyse, but answers to open-ended questions permit a deeper exploitation of the question and respondents have enough room to speak up their minds.

Regardless of whether open-ended or closed-ended, Nunan (op-cit) maintains that each question should be explicit far from conveying the researcher's attitude, and should make reference to a research objective.

In a nutshell, questionnaires remain cheap, quick to administer, and unbiased in comparison to other investigation tools where the researcher's presence can influence participants' reactions. Moreover, questionnaires stay convenient for respondents as they can complete them when they want and at their own speed (Bryman op-cit).

The questionnaire used in the present study to investigate the needs of a sample of Algerian middle school learners of English in Constantine, asks the participants to select from available alternatives with regard to their proficiency level and age.

5.2. Description of Participants

Middle school pupils seem to be the foremost stakeholders as far the prescribed syllabuses and textbooks are concerned, that is why their needs have to be thoroughly investigated. The research comprises a sample of four middle school classes with a total number of 148 middle school pupils from Boughaba Rokia Middle School, asked to answer the questionnaire during the school year 2015/2016. One 1AM class, out of a total number of five 1st year classes was randomly selected; this selected class involves 36 pupils with an average age of 11-12 years old. One 2AM class was also randomly selected out of five 2nd year classes; the chosen class involves 39 pupils with an average age of 12-13 years old. One 3AM class, still randomly selected from a total of five 3rd year middle school classes, the selected class involves 33 pupils with an average age of 13-14 years old. Last, one 4AM class was chosen out of four 4th year middle school classes. The fourth year randomly selected class involves 40 pupils with an average age of 14-15 years old. The researcher deemed the population representative as the standard proportion required in Human and Social Sciences is 1/5 of the whole population.

BoughabaRokia middle school, located in the district of Constantine, was the unique institution where all the questionnaires were filled in, and where the whole staff welcomed our presence and allowed us to hand out the questionnaires to all the four classes under study. The sample could have been more representative if attempts in other middle schools, we visited, did not fail and if pupils did not hand over the questionnaires half completed if not filled at all, thing which nullified them.

5.3. Description of the Questionnaire

The same Needs Analysis (NA) questionnaire was submitted to all four middle school classes. It was first written in English then translated into Arabic, the respondents' L1, (see Appendix 1 and 2) because their current proficiency level will not help them answer in English. The questionnaire opens up with an introductory paragraph that informs our participants about the purpose of the study. Pupils are, then, asked just closed questions requiring them to tick either 'yes' or 'no', 'like' or 'do not like' from among alternatives. Two main parts form the whole questionnaire (see appendix 2).

Part I seeks to compile demographic data on our sample in relation to their sex and age. Part II comprises seven sections. The first section inquires about our participants' attitude towards learning English: eight alternatives or reasons behind learning English are provided. Section 2 asks about the participants favourite topics; 14 topics are to be chosen from. Section 3 is related to the language area our participants like or do not like (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation). Section 4 inquires about their favourite skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Section 5 asks participants to select from three alternatives their preferred learning style (working alone, in pairs or in groups). Section 6 seeks the participants to select from three suggested learning strategies; the one(s) they use to learn best (visual, acoustic or kinaesthetic). Last but not least, section 7 puts emphasis on the participants lacks in English in relation to listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

5.4. Analysis of Data

Part I

5.4.1. Background Information

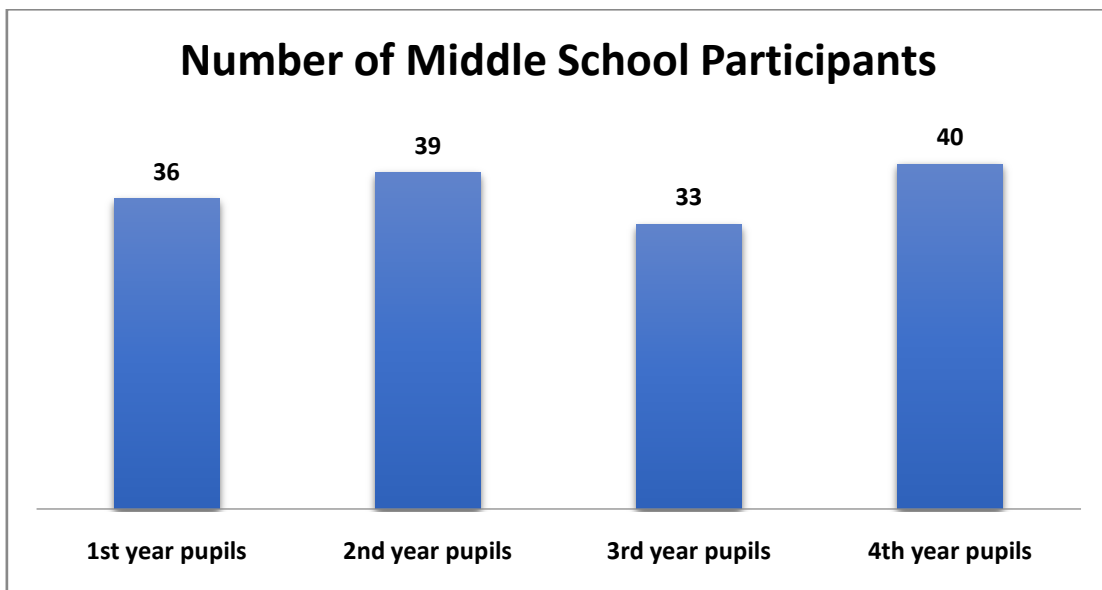
Level

1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year

Sex

Male Female

Age



Graph 1: Number of Middle School Participants

Objective data on participants revealed that out of the 148 participants, 36 are 1st year pupils, 39 are 2nd year pupils, 33 are 3rd year pupils and 40 are 4th year pupils. Among the 36 1st year pupils are 17 girls and 19 boys with an average age ranging between 11 -12 and even 13 years old. For the 39 2nd year pupils, there are 23 girls and 16 boys with an average of 12 to 13 years old. The 33 3rd year pupils are formed out of 20 girls and 13 boys

whose ages vary from 13-14 to 15 years old. The 4th year class is the largest as it involves 40 pupils split equally into 20 girls and 20 boys with an average age of 14 to 16 years old.

Exposure to English as a foreign language takes place for the first time at the first year level. The participants are witnessing a transition not just from primary school to middle school but from childhood to early adolescence as well, and at that period of their development, our participants undergo changes at three main levels; cognitive, physical and social. According to Piaget, the 11 to 15 years old period coincides with the formal operational stage characterized cognitively by an increase in logic, an understanding of abstract ideas, the use of deductive reasoning, the ability to solve problems in an organized way, a sharp sense of curiosity and inquiry about one's own thinking (meta-cognition). Physically, puberty marks that sensitive period of adolescence with all the accelerated physical changes both girls and boys undergo with varying degrees. Those pubertal changes result in an emotional ambivalence that leads those adolescents to seek independence and look for adult guidance and assistance at the same time. All along those adolescents' quest for a personal identity, they do not stop swinging between conflictual moods. At the social level, adolescents start getting rid of their egocentrism; they start considering others and communicating with them, but peers' acceptance remains their primary target. Those developmental changes lived during early adolescence need to be taken into account when deciding about educational practices, which is not generally the case, as pointed out by Lipsitz (1984) who advances that:

A central weakness in most schools for young adolescents is a wide-spread failure to reconsider each school practice in terms of developmental needs in order either to incorporate responsibility for meeting them into the school's academic and social goals or to keep them from being barriers to attaining these goals (p.168).

According to Lipsitz (ibid) the majority of schools for young adolescents fail to take into account early adolescence needs so as to address them or avoid them as obstacles towards goals attainment.

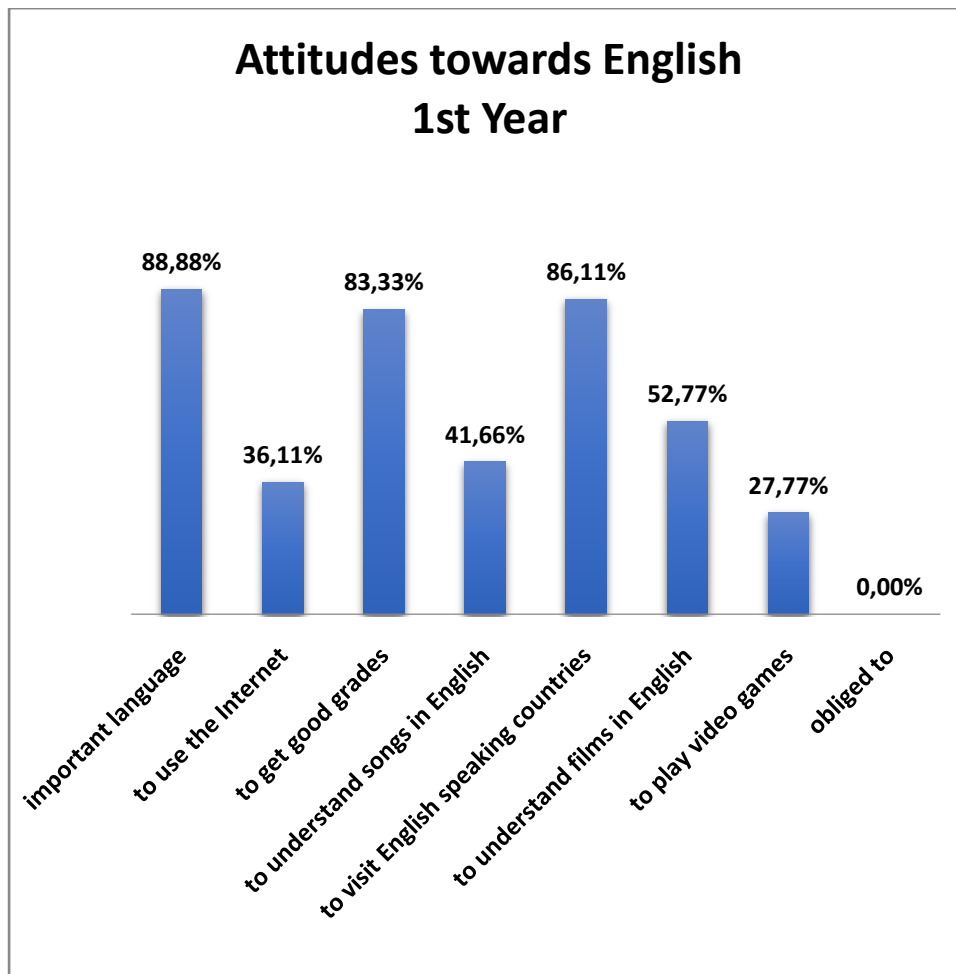
Syllabi and subsequent materials destined for Algerian middle school early adolescents should be tailored to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social changes of those learners. If an 11 years old pupil, for example, is said to wiggle a lot, then this energy should be canalised in activities that require bodily movements to help absorb this extra energy.

Part II

5.4.2. Attitudes towards English

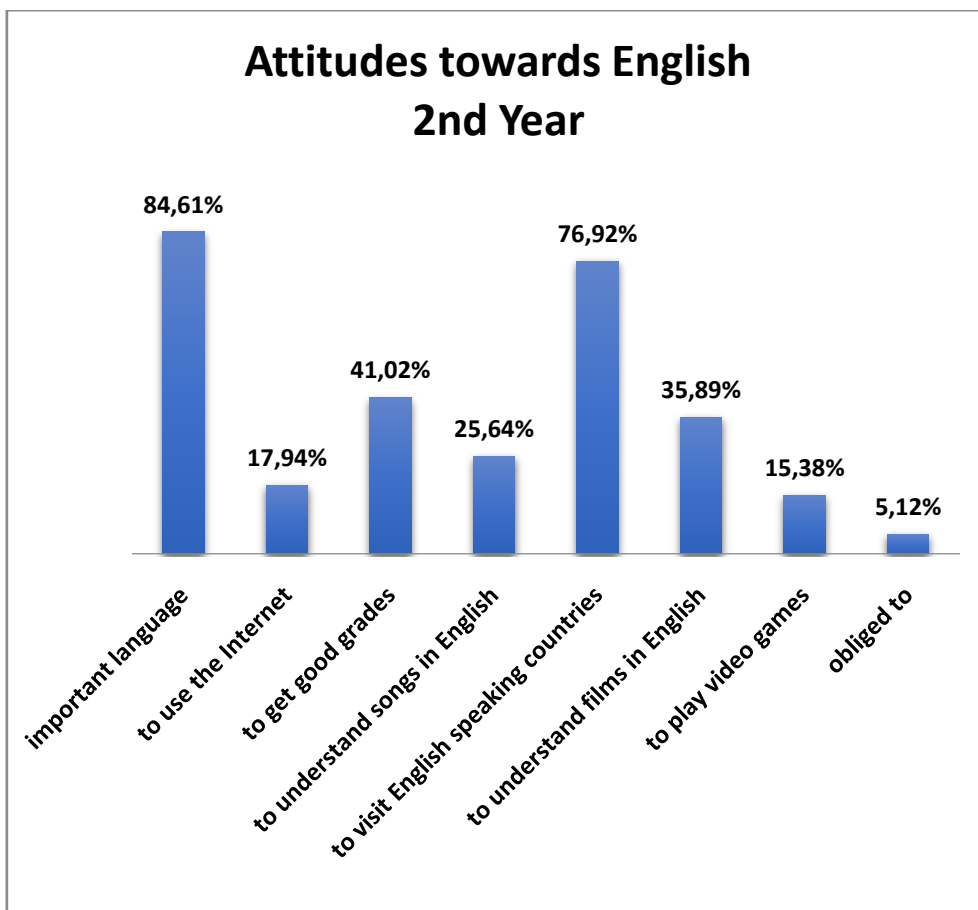
Why do you learn English?

1. English is an important language
2. To use the Internet
3. To get good grades in English
4. To understand songs in English
5. To visit English speaking countries
6. To understand films in English
7. To play video games
8. I am obliged to, I do not like it



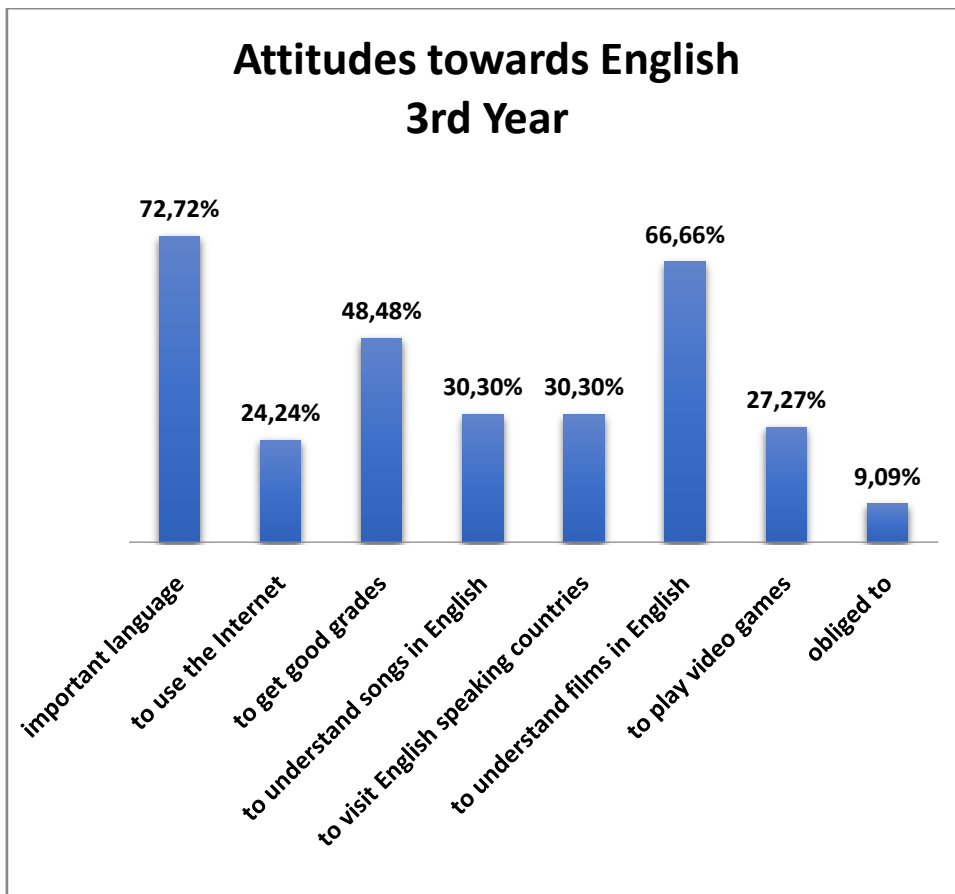
Graph 2: Attitudes towards English (1st year)

The core of the questionnaire starts with learners' attitudes towards English. Results related to 1st year participants revealed that their reasons for learning English are that "English is an important language" (88.88%), "To visit English speaking countries" (86.11%), "To get good grades in English" (83.33%), "To understand films in English" (52.77%), "To understand songs in English" (41.66)%, "To use the Internet" (36.11%), and "To play video games" (27.77%). Worth of mention is that none of all the 36 pupils did select "I am obliged to learn it, I do not like it".



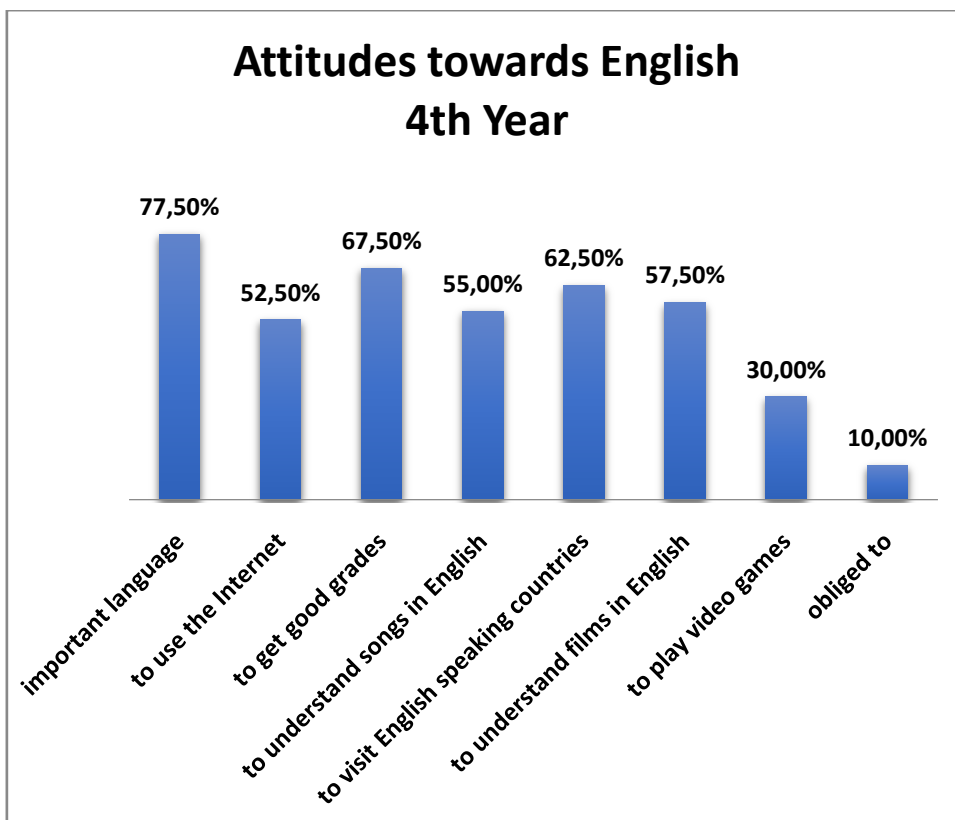
Graph 3: Attitudes towards English (2nd year)

To our surprise, 2nd year pupils' gave exactly the same reasons for learning English as those provided by 1st year pupils. That is, 84, 61% see that “English is an important language”, 76. 92% selected “To visit English speaking countries”, 41.02% preferred “To get good grades in English”, 35. 89% want to learn English “To understand films in English”, 25.64% would like “To understand English songs”, 17.94% answered that “To use the Internet” is their reason behind learning English where as 15.38% consider “To play video games” the incentive behind their choice. If none among 1st year pupils opted for the last alternative, 5. 12% of 2nd year pupils responded that they are obliged to learn English and that they do not like it. The two target populations, 1st and 2nd year participants are close in age which justifies the common reasons they provided for learning English; their interests and visions are not so disparate.



Graph 4: Attitudes towards English (3rd year)

3rd year pupils first reason for learning English is “English is an important language” with 72.72%, and 66.66% chose “To understand films in English”, 48.48% picked out “to get good grades in English”, 30.30 % selected “To visit English speaking countries”, and still 30.30% chose “To understand songs in English”, 27.27% opted for “To play video games”, 24.24% preferred “To use the Internet”, and 9.09% are obliged to learn it; they do not like it.



Graph 5: Attitudes towards English (4th year)

4th year pupils' reasons do not vary greatly from their predecessors choices in that 77.50% want to learn English because it is an important language, 67.50 % want to get good grades in English, 62.50% want to learn English because they want to visit English speaking countries, 57.50% would like to understand films in English, 55% target understanding songs in English, 52.50% opted for using the Internet, 30% consider video games playing their reason behind learning English. 10%, however, view that they are obliged to learn English; they do not like it.

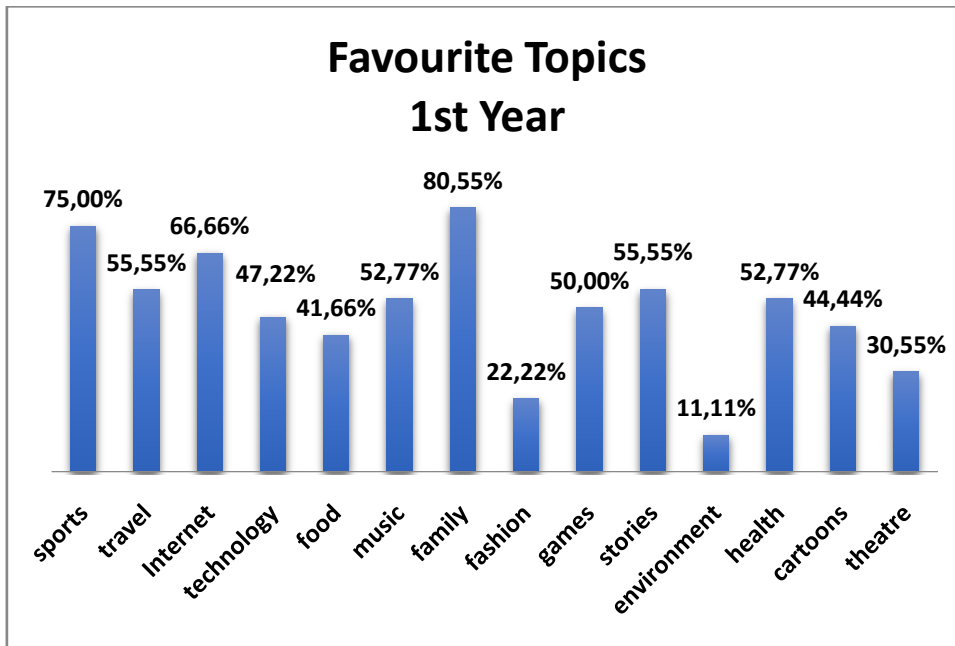
All our participants, be they 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th year pupils, are academically inclined to learn English and assimilate it, i.e. they have presented different reasons for learning English. Our surveyed pupils seem motivated even if the orientation of motivation differs from one pupil to another; and from one level to the other. For some it is an intrinsic motivation, as is the case of those who selected alternatives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7; for others it is

extrinsic as an external factor stimulates their learning; the case of those who opted for alternative 3 which is “To get good grades in English” and which has not been selected as a first reason by all the participants. As a consequence, our sample, in its entity, seems more intrinsically than extrinsically motivated to learn English, which seems a very good starting point. According to Ryan and Deci (2000) intrinsic motivation “refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable”, whereas extrinsic motivation “refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome” (p.55). On score of that, our two authors (ibid) consider that “Intrinsic motivation results in high-quality learning and creativity” (p.55). Intrinsic motivation prevails among our participants and thus helps a lot in learning English as a foreign language hardly used out of the precincts of school.

In addition, middle school syllabus designers ascertain that in an era of globalisation English is a lingua franca whose mastery is synonymous with first, interaction and communication with people all over the world and second, with access to the bulk of knowledge which is in English. The top reason for learning English for all the surveyed pupils involves English as an important language. Our participants are all aware of the important role this foreign language plays all over the world. Still communication is sought after, since visiting English speaking countries is what 1st and 2nd year pupils advanced as a second reason for learning English, whereas 3rd year pupils gave it as the fourth reason, and for 4th year pupils it was the third reason. Visiting English-speaking countries is synonymous with interaction with native speakers and use of English in authentic contexts of use. Those communicative needs, as expressed by our participants, seem to corroborate with the aims set by middle school syllabus designers.

5.4.3. Favourite Topics

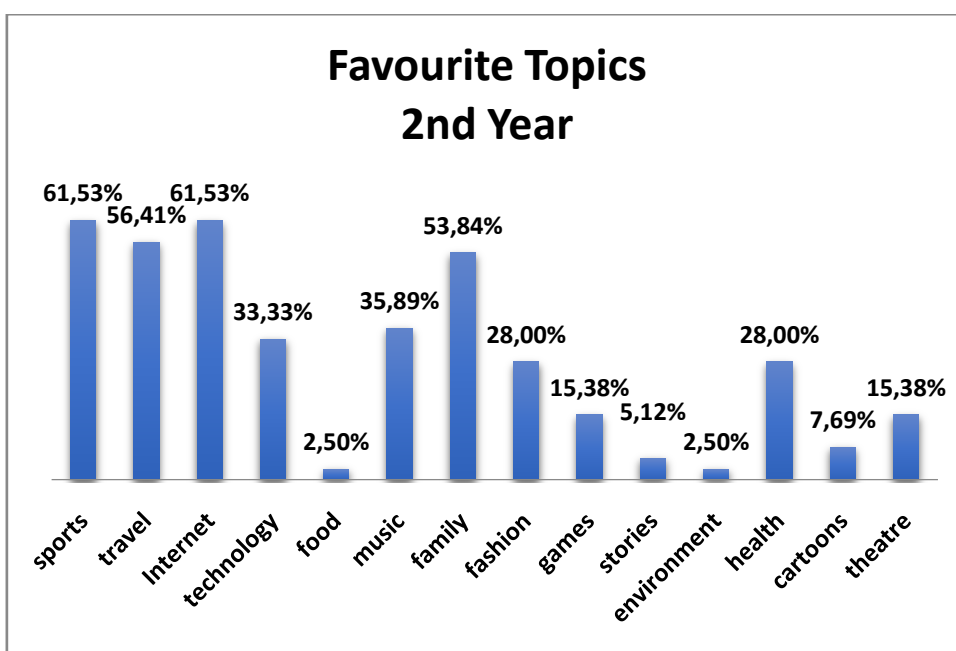
1. Sports
2. Travel
3. Internet
4. Technology
5. Food
6. Music
7. Family
8. Fashion
9. Games
10. Stories
11. Environment
12. Health
13. Cartoons
14. Theatre



Graph 6: Favourite Topics (1st year)

As far as the third section is concerned the preferred topics are as follows; 80.55% of 1st year pupils prefer 'Family', 75% like 'Sports', 66.66% opted for 'Internet', 'Stories' and 'Travel' are on equal footing as 55.55% estimated that they are the topics they like. In like manner 'Music' and 'Health' are two topics selected by 52.77%, 'Games' as a topic was chosen by 50%, 'Technology' 47.22%, 'Cartoons' 44.44% , 'Food' 41.66%,

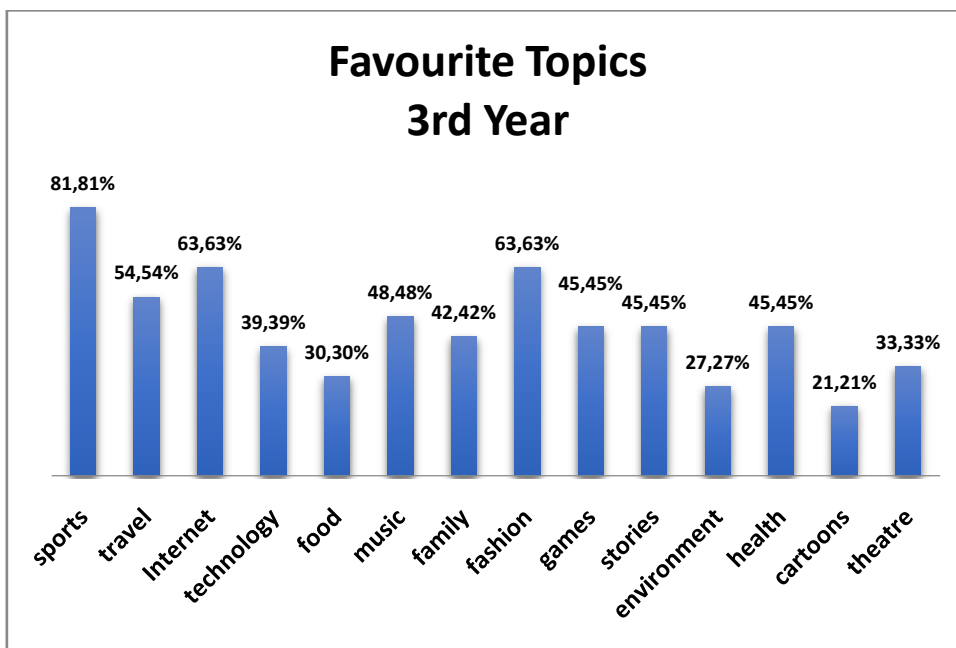
‘Theatre’ 30.55%, ‘Fashion’ 22.22% and last ‘Environment’ 11.11%. The top three topics are ‘Family’, ‘Sports’ and ‘Internet’. Among the seven topics suggested in SOE1 just the two first ones: ‘Family’ and ‘Sports’ (files 2 and 3) are linked to our participants’ area of interest. The least preferred topic which is “Environment’ figures out in SOE1 (file 7) which leads to a lack of motivation from the part of our sample. Topics should be carefully selected in that they should be linked to learners’ interests so as to ensure a higher involvement from their part in the teaching/learning process.



Graph 7: Favourite Topics (2nd year)

2nd year pupils, on the other hand, selected as their first favourite topic both of ‘Sports’ and ‘Internet’ with each 61.53% followed by 56.41% of those who chose ‘Travel’. 53.84% opted for ‘Family’, 35.89% selected ‘Music’, 33.33% chose ‘Technology’, followed by 28% of those who selected ‘Health’ and the same percentage for ‘Fashion’ i.e. 28%. In like manner ‘Games’ and ‘Theatre’ got each 15.38%. ‘Cartoons’ got 7.69%, ‘Stories’ 5.12%, ‘Food’ and ‘environment’ got also each 2.5%.

Spotlight On English (SOE2) encloses topics such as ‘Language Games’ (file two), ‘Health’ (file three), ‘Cartoons’ (file four), and ‘Theatre’ (file five) which seem the least interesting for our sample; they are among the eight last topics to be selected with percentages ranging between 28% and 7%.

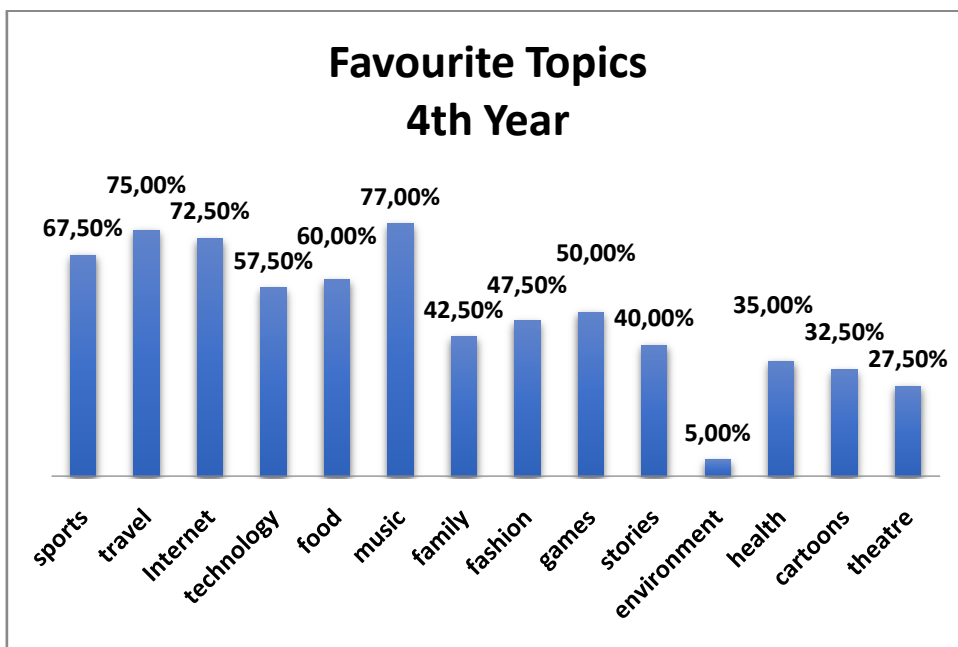


Graph 8: Favourite Topics (3rd year)

3rd year middle school participants selected ‘Sports’ like the precedent participants but with 81.81% followed by 63.63% of those who chose ‘Internet’. ‘Fashion’ got 63.63% whereas ‘Travel’ had 54.54%. ‘Music’ was chosen by 48.48% and ‘Games’, ‘Stories’ and ‘Health’ were put on equal footing with 45.45%. ‘Family’ got 42.42%, ‘Technology’ 39.39%, ‘Theatre’ 33.33%, ‘Food’ 30.30%, ‘Environment’ 27.27%, ‘Cartoons’ 21.21%.

The three top topics as selected by 3rd year participants are ‘Sports’, ‘Internet’ and ‘Fashion’. The three least interesting topics are ‘Food’, ‘Environment’ and ‘Cartoons’. The driving force behind the selection of the three first topics may be due to the fact that they can be an outlet for our teenagers. The files suggested in SOE3, ‘Communications’, ‘Travel’, ‘Work and Play’, and ‘Around the World’ are, with the exception of ‘Sports’, in

harmony with the classification provided by our sample, in that ‘Internet’ is encompassed in ‘Communications’, and ‘Travel’ figures out in file two. On score of that, all files are aspiring to equip pupils with the necessary skills to operate effectively in real life contexts.



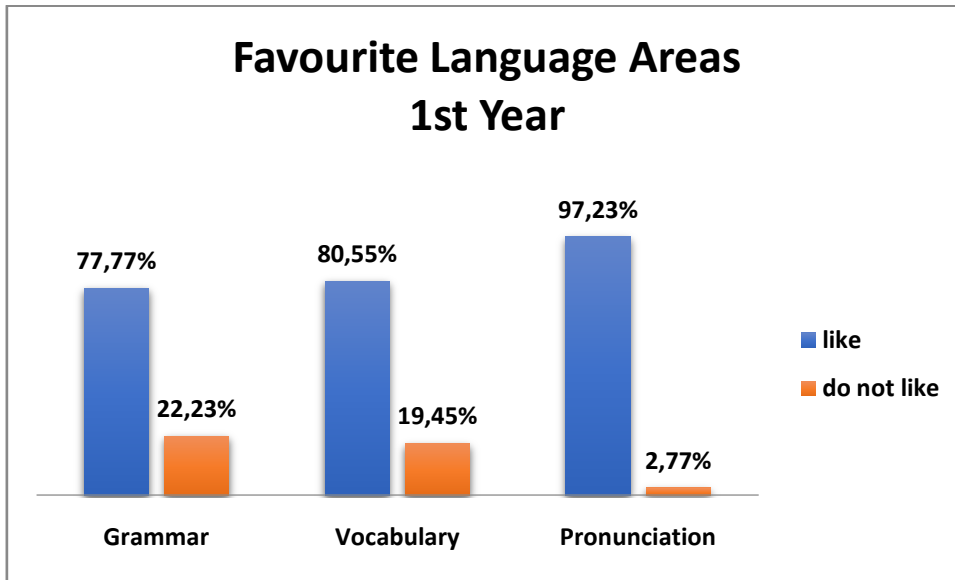
Graph 9: Favourite Topics (4th year)

4th year sample percentages of their favourite topics are stated as follows: 77% for ‘Music’, 75% for ‘Travel’, 72. 5% for ‘Internet’, 67. 5% for ‘Sports’, 60% for ‘Food’, 57.5% for ‘Technology’, 50% for ‘Games’, 47.5 for ‘Fashion’, 42.5% for ‘Family’, 40% for ‘Stories’, 35% for ‘Health’, 32,5% for ‘Cartoons’, 27,5% for ‘Theatre’, and 5% for ‘Environment’.

Nearly all the topics do not figure out in OTM with one exception, which is ‘Food’ (file one). Again the more interesting the topics are, the more motivated learners would be which does not seem to be the case of our 4th year respondents’ textbook topics. The Topic ‘Environment’ seems the least interesting topic for all the middle school participants.

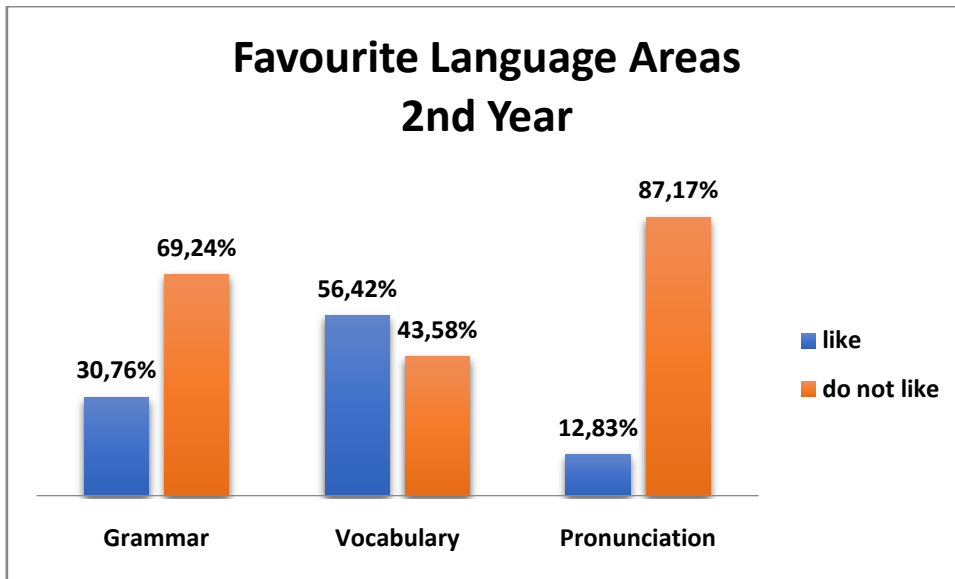
5.4.4. Favourite Language Areas

	I like	I do not like
Grammar		
Vocabulary		
Pronunciation		



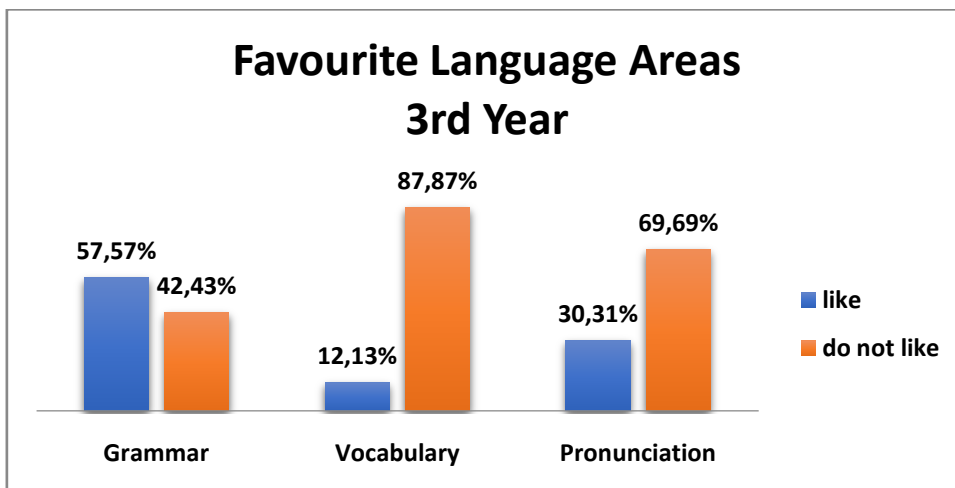
Graph 10: Favourite Language Areas (1st year)

77.77% of 1st year sample responded that they like grammar, against 22.22% who do not like grammar. Still, 80.55% said that they like vocabulary against 19.44% who do not like vocabulary. Pronunciation got the lion's share with 97.23% of participants who like it, against 2.77% who do not like it.



Graph 11: Favourite Language Areas (2nd year)

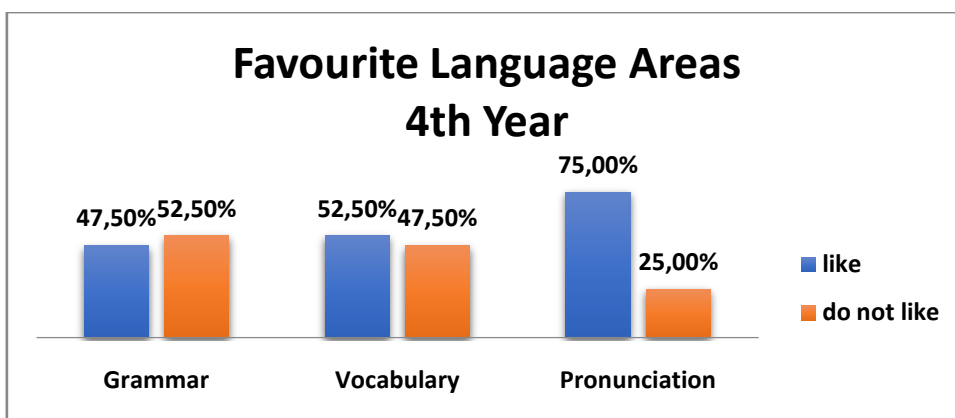
30. 76% of 2nd year surveyed pupils responded that they like grammar, against 69.24% of those who do not like it. The participants who responded that they like vocabulary were estimated at 56.42% against 43.58 %. Only 12.83% of the sample responded that they like pronunciation in comparison to 87.17% of those who do not like it.



Graph 12: Favourite Language Areas (3rd year)

In relation to 3rd year sample, 42.43% responded that they do not like grammar against 57.57% who like it; 87.87% do not like vocabulary against 12.13% of those who like it. In

relation to pronunciation just 30.31% answered that they like it whereas 69.69% said that they do not like it.



Graph 13: Favourite Language Areas (4th year)

47.5% of 4th year participants said they like grammar against 52.5% of those who answered that they do not like it. Those who like vocabulary represent, among the chosen sample, 52.5% against 47.5% of those who responded that they do not like vocabulary. As far pronunciation is concerned, 75% of our respondents answered that they like it whereas 25% said they do not like it.

1st year respondents' preferred language areas are first pronunciation, second vocabulary and third grammar. 2nd year participants selected first vocabulary second grammar and third pronunciation. 3rd year surveyed sample opted for, first grammar, second pronunciation and third vocabulary. 4th year participants chose first pronunciation, second grammar, and third vocabulary. The participants' disparity in relation to their preferred language content areas is what marks their responses. They expressed wants more than necessities in relation to language areas.

1st year respondents hold positive attitudes towards the different language areas as the highest percentages are attributed to the language aspects they like. Their first exposure to

English as a foreign language seems to be behind this motivation to learn the language as a whole with no distinction between its discrete areas.

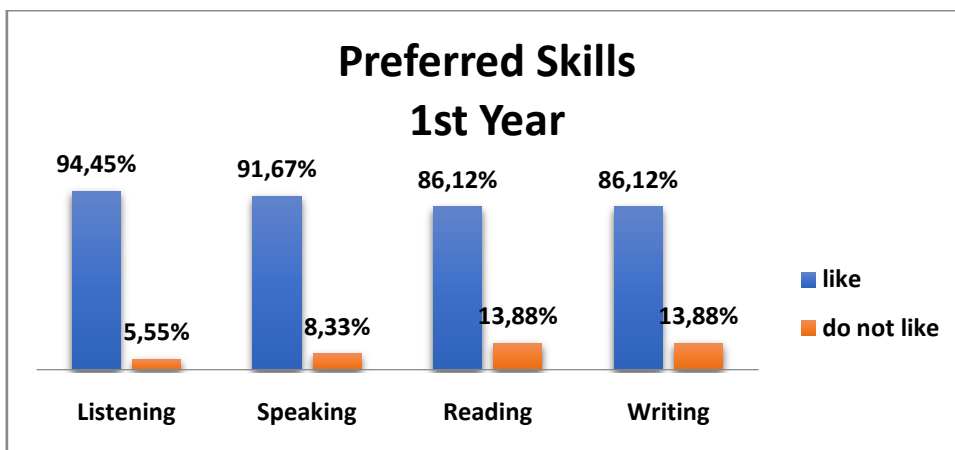
69.24 % of 2nd year participants do not like grammar which might be attributed to the overemphasis placed on grammar in their textbooks, and which has been noticed throughout our textbooks evaluation (see chapter four). 87.17% of the same population responded negatively in relation to pronunciation which might be justified by the fact that after a year of exposure to English, they can realise that teachers are neither native speakers nor are they assisted by audio materials to help compensate for the native accent those learners can be impressed by when watching English speaking movies or when listening to English songs.

3rd year respondents hold the same negative attitudes towards pronunciation, 69.69% dislike it which might be due to the same reasons advanced earlier with 2nd year participants. But the highest percentage 87.87 % refers to vocabulary as the most disliked language area by our sample. An attitude that could have been justified if held by 2nd year participants, not 3rd year sample because the number of the lexical items presented in SOE2 and not encountered in SOE1 is 738 whereas just 194 new lexical items are presented in SOE3 (see chapter four).

52.5% of 4th year participants responded that they do not like grammar which once again seems related to the overemphasis of middle school textbooks on this language aspect.

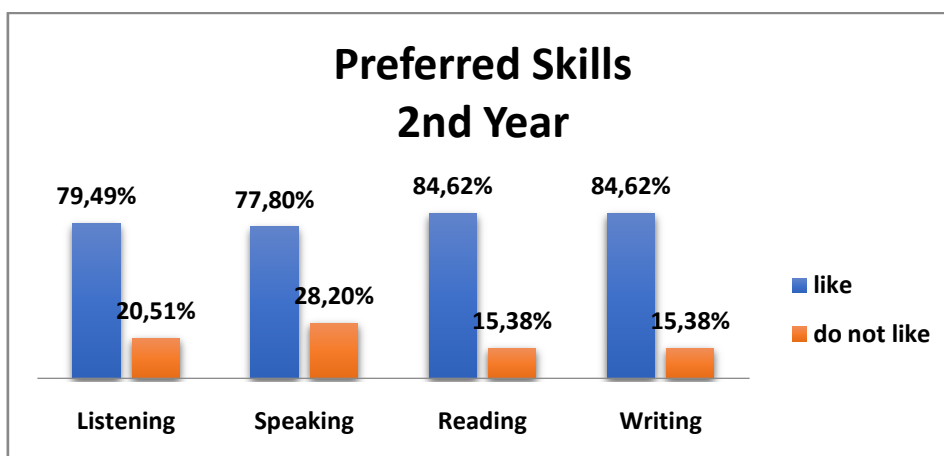
5.4.5. Favourite Language Skills

	I like	I do not like
Listening		
Speaking		
Reading		
Writing		



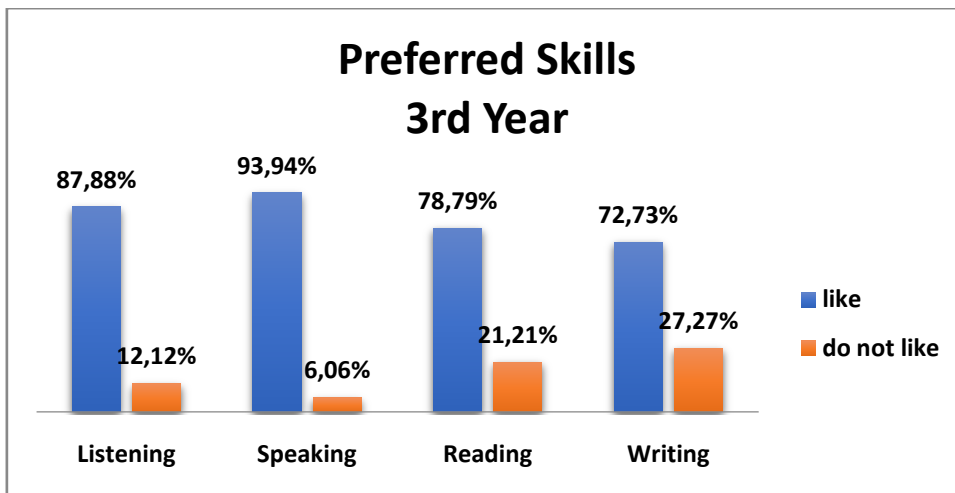
Graph 14: Preferred Skills (1st year)

94.45% of 1st year sample answered that they like listening against 5.55% who do not like the listening skill, 8.33% do not like the speaking skill whereas 91.67% like it. 86.12% like reading but 13.88% do not like it, and 13.88% still do not like the writing skill and again 86.12% like writing. This finding confirms the intrinsic motivation of learners reached when inquiring about their attitudes towards English.



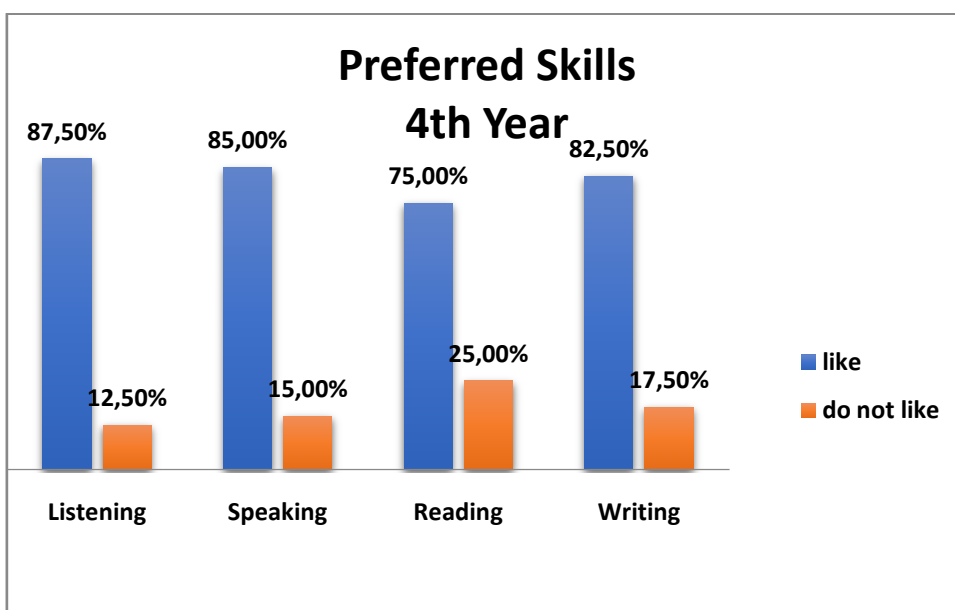
Graph 15: Preferred Skills (2nd year)

20.51 of 2nd year participants said that they do not like listening against 79.49 % who like it. 77.80 % like speaking and 28.20 % do not like it. 15.38 % do not like reading and 84.62 % like it. 15.38% do not like writing and 84.62% like it.



Graph 16: Preferred Skills (3rd year)

Among our 3rd year surveyed sample 12.12% do not like listening and 87.87 % like it; 6.06% do not like speaking whereas 93.94 % like it. 21.21% do not like reading and 78.79 % like it. 27.27% do not like writing and 72.73 % like it.



Graph 17: Preferred Skills (4th year)

12.5% of 4th year participants responded that they do not like listening but the overwhelming majority 87.5 % answered that they like it; 15% of the same sample do not

like speaking but 85% like it; 25% do not like reading and 75 % like it. 17.5 % do not like writing whereas 82.5 % like it.

Worth of mention, in relation to the preferred language skills, is the fact that the aural/oral skills are given primacy over the reading and writing skills, as reported by our participants. Reading and writing are the least preferred skills for all our respondents; they prefer to listen and speak more than read and write.

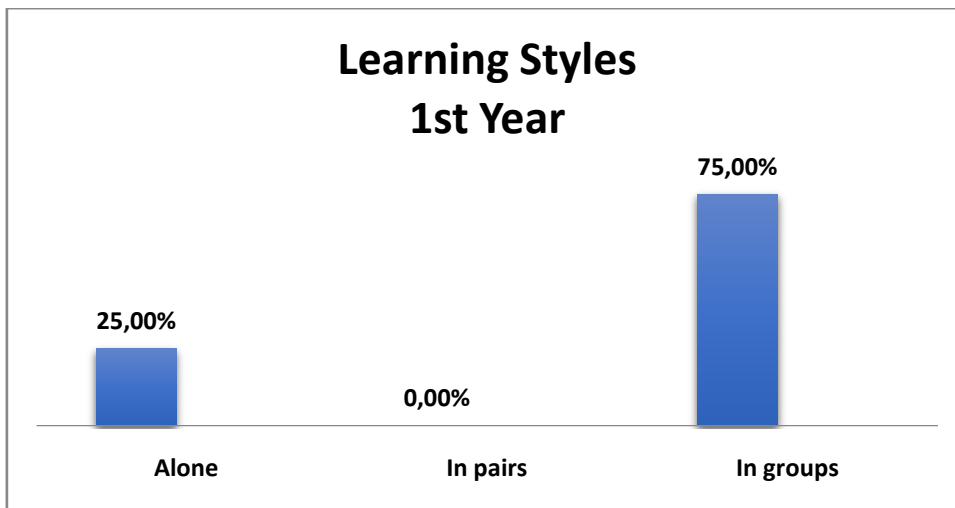
Our participants selected reading and writing last, may be because they have difficulties performing such skills. They struggle with reading passages as they are not assisted with strategies to help them read easefully and depend on themselves. As for writing it is assumed to be the most difficult skill and the least easy to acquire. Byrne (1988) identifies psychological, linguistic and cognitive problems faced when writing; the psychological problems stem from the physical absence of a reader which results in lack of interaction and feedback; the linguistic problems arise from the intolerance of inaccuracies because writers are supposed to have enough time to consider what they are writing. The cognitive problems spring from the fact that writing does not develop naturally, it has to be learned through instruction.

As a consequence those two skills need to be given much more importance; reading and writing strategies instruction can be of great help to learners as they are the key to learners' autonomous learning.

5.4.6. Preferred Learning Style

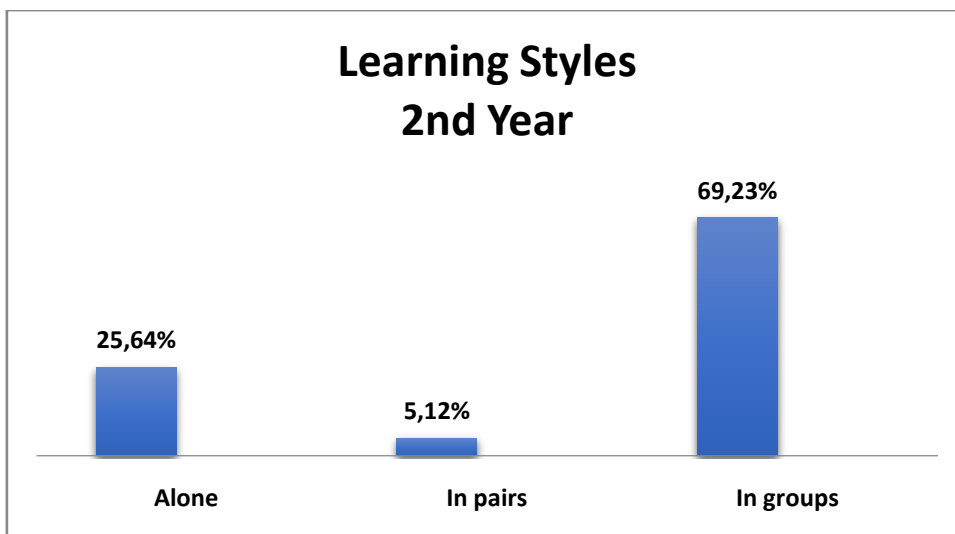
I prefer to work:

Alone	
In pairs	
In groups	



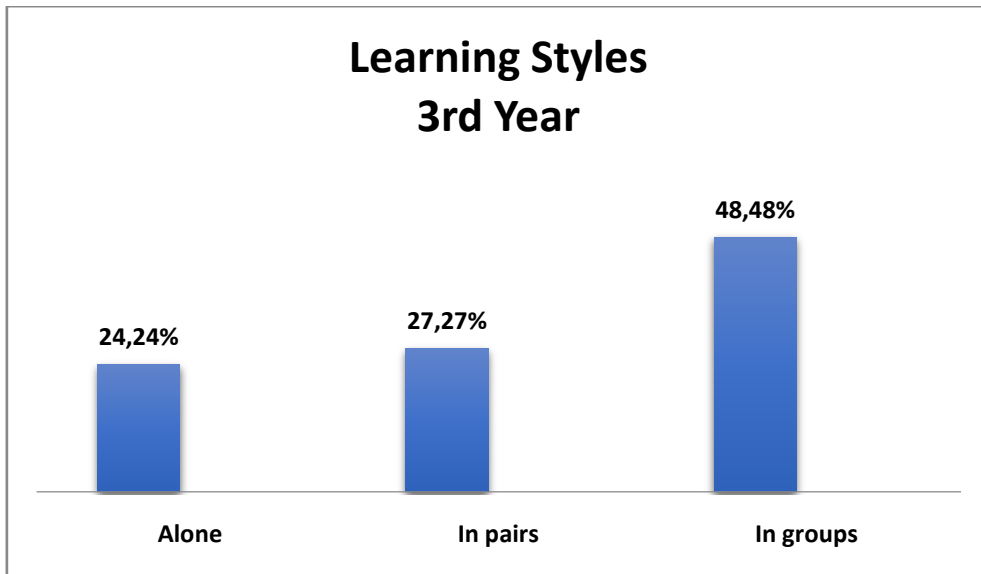
Graph 18: Learning Styles (1st year)

None of the 1st year respondents answered that s/he prefers to work in pairs, 25% of the participants responded that they prefer to work alone, and 75% selected group work.



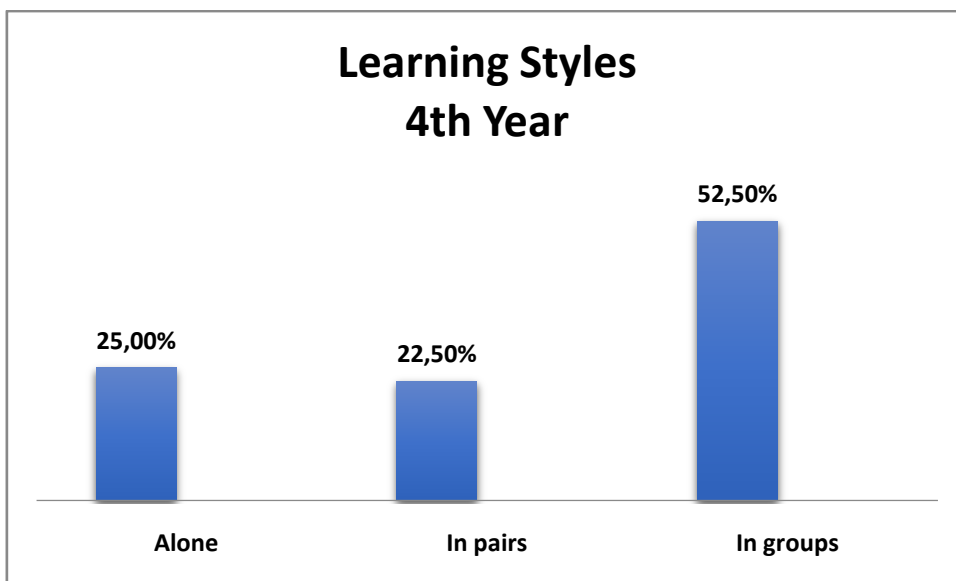
Graph 19: Learning Styles (2nd year)

25.64% of 2nd year pupils said that they prefer to work alone; 5.12% responded that they prefer to work in pairs and 69.23% answered that they prefer to work in groups.



Graph 20: Learning Styles (3rd year)

24.24% of 3rd year sample seem inclined towards individual work; 27.27% prefer to work in pairs and 48.48% selected group work.



Graph 21: Learning Styles (4th year)

25% of 4th year participants prefer to work alone, 22.5 % prefer to work in pairs and 52.5% prefer to work in groups. In relation to the preferred learning strategies, the majority of all surveyed samples opted for work in groups which complies with the socio-

constructivist learning theory of Vygotsky advocated by the competency-based approach in the Algerian educational system; learners learn best with the assistance of more competent peers or adults.

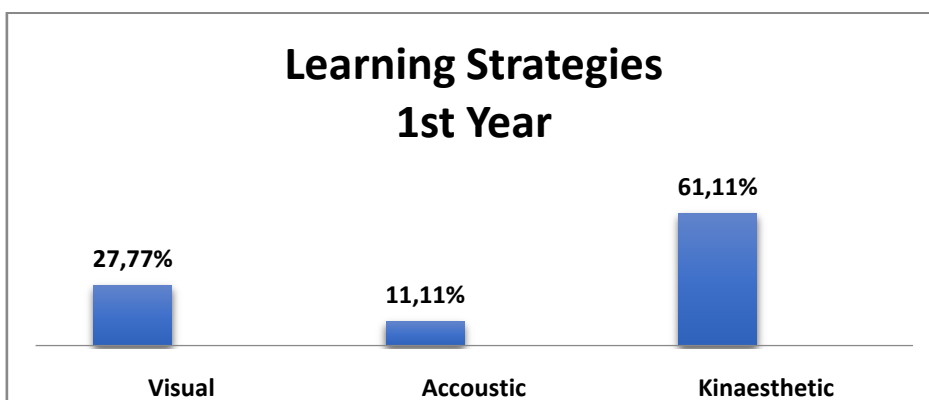
Adolescents as mentioned earlier seek peer acceptance and are eager to interact and to have new relationships that is why they prefer to be in groups. Moreover, work in groups means a shared responsibility and collaboration in solving problems. Those who prefer to work alone seek self-affirmation without any assistance from their peers, or can be introvert or shy that is why they do not want to work in pairs or groups. Effective instruction should address all learning strategies so as to meet the different needs of learners.

5.4.7. Preferred Learning Strategy

The learning strategies refer to the different ways pupils use to learn.

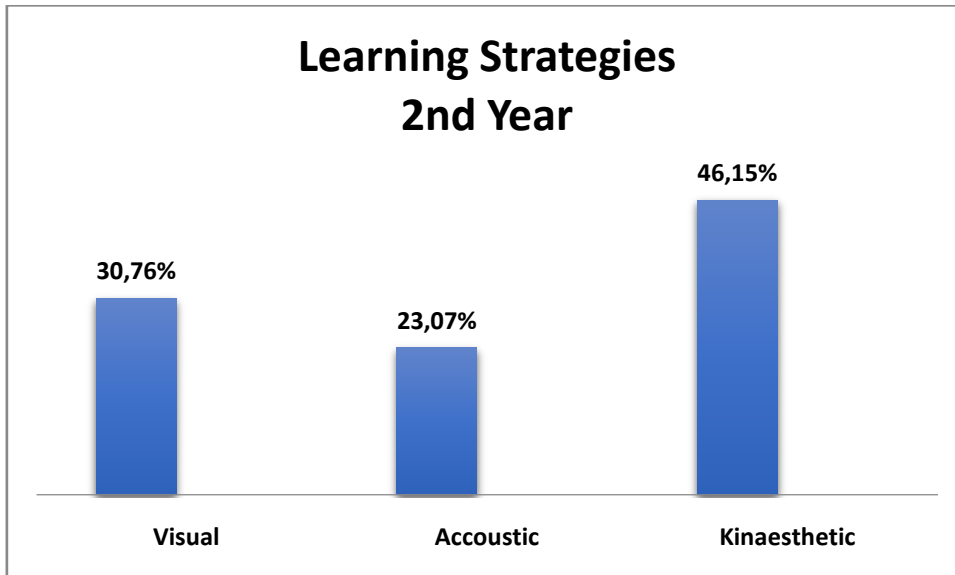
I learn best when

I see	
I hear	
I use my hands and body	



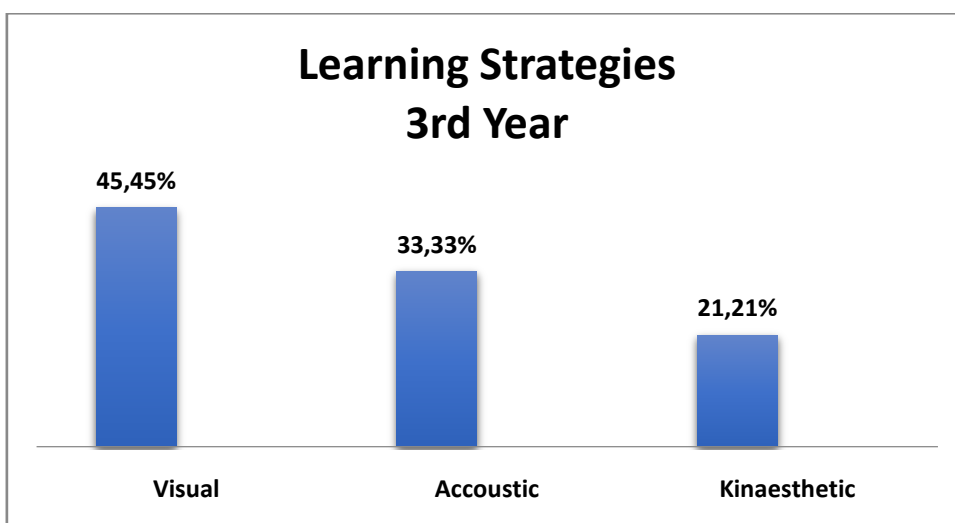
Graph 22: Learning Strategies (1st year)

27.27% of 1st year sample are visual learners that is they prefer to see what they learn, a graphic representation suits them well. 58.33% are kinaesthetic learners, i.e. they need hands-on experience; they prefer moving, and touching. 13.88% are acoustic learners in that they learn best when the material is spoken or heard.



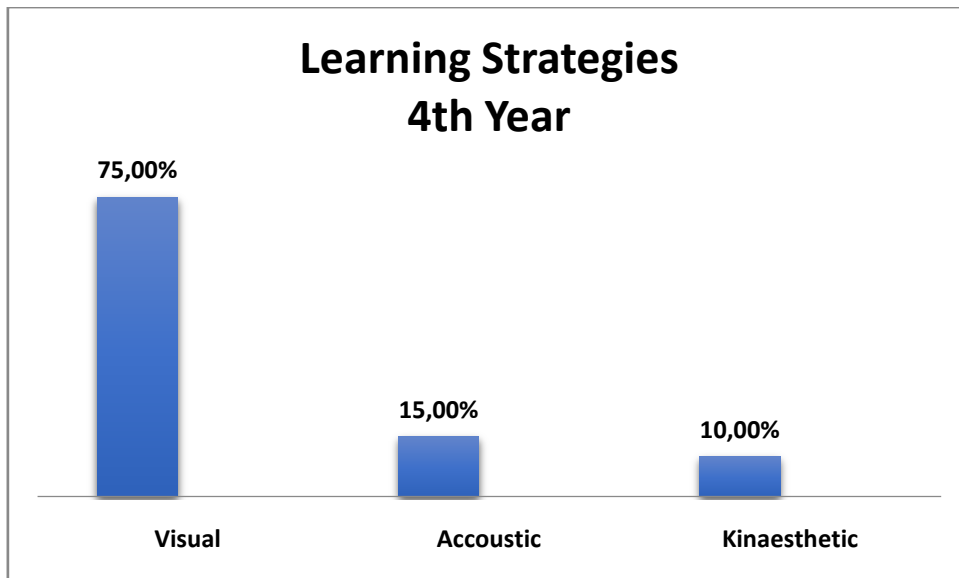
Graph 23: Learning Strategies (2nd year)

46.15% of 2nd year participants said they are kinaesthetic learners, 30.76% are visual learners and 23.07% are acoustic learners.



Graph 24: Learning Strategies (3rd year)

45.45% of 3rd year sample are visual learners, 33, 33% are acoustic learners and 21, 21% are kinaesthetic learners



Graph 25: Learning Strategies (4th year)

Among 4th year participants 75% are visual learners, 15% are acoustic and 10% are kinaesthetic learners. 1st year and 2nd year pupils are in their majority kinaesthetic learners; with regard to their ages they prefer to move and they learn through their bodies and rely a lot on their senses of touch. Kinaesthetic learners, in general, have problems sitting still, and retain best what they do when they learn, they are said to have a physical memory. They enjoy taking part in activities such as role plays and performances and action verbs suit best. Games and projects seem the best way to engage them in learning.

3rd and 4th year pupils are in their majority visual learners; they learn best when they see or read the material presented to them. Visual learners attend best to information when the presented material is accompanied by a visual back up.

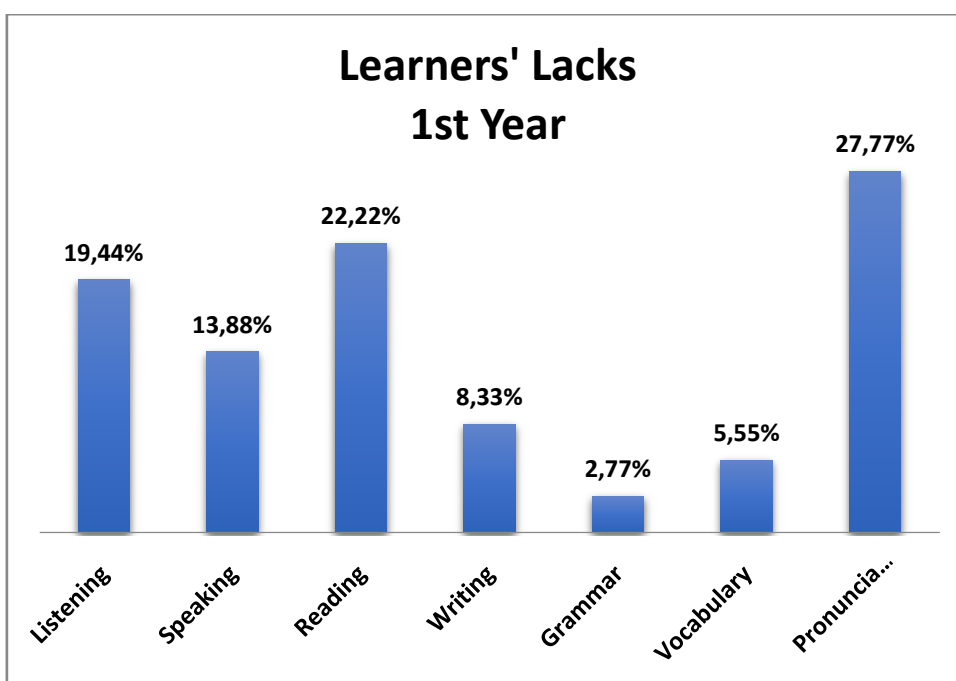
Recognizing the different learning strategies entails the use of different methods and materials so as to address those various ways of learning and gain maximum advantage

from the learning experience. An increase in motivation can be guaranteed if learners' learning strategies are taken into account all together.

5.4.8. Learners' Lacks

I have problems in

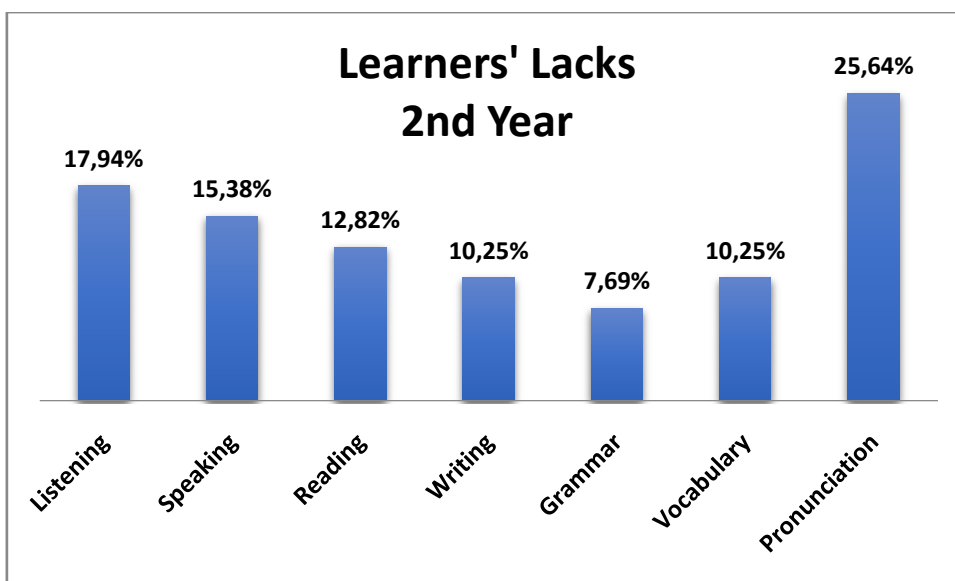
	Yes	No
Listening		
Speaking		
Reading		
Writing		
Grammar		
Vocabulary		
Pronunciation		



Graph 26: Learners' lacks (1st year)

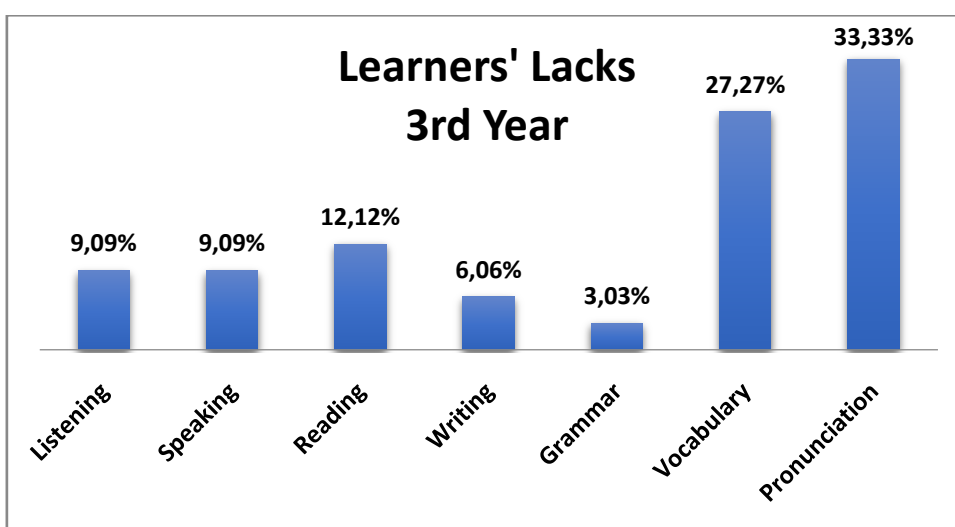
27.77% of 1st year participants answered that they have problems in pronunciation ; 22.22% have problems in reading; 19.44% have problems in listening; 13.88 have

problems in speaking; 8.33% have problems in writing; 5.55% have problems in vocabulary; 2.77% have problems in grammar.



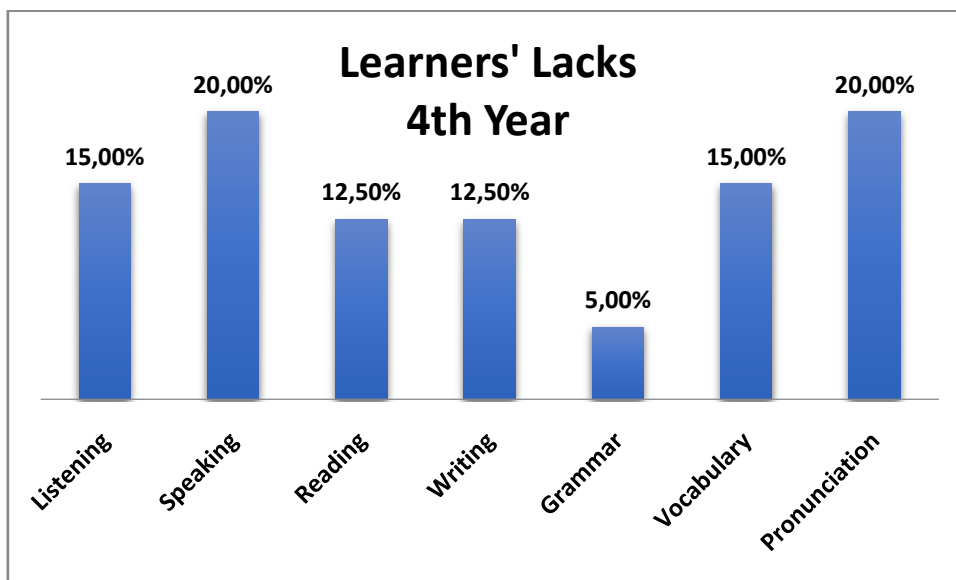
Graph 27: Learners' lacks (2nd year)

25.64% of 2nd year participants report having problems in pronunciation; 17.94% have problems in listening; 15.38% have problems in speaking; 12.82% have problems in reading; 10.25% have problems in vocabulary; the same percentage i.e. 10.25% have problems in writing and last 7.69% have problems in grammar.



Graph 28: Learners' lacks (3rd year)

33.33% of 3rd year sample stated that their lacks are in pronunciation; 27.27% reported having problems in vocabulary; 12.12% have problems in reading; 9.09% have problems in listening; still 9.09% have problems in speaking. Last 3.03% have problems in grammar.



Graph 29: Learners' lacks (4th year)

20% of 4th year participants revealed having lacks in pronunciation, and the same percentage went to those having lacks in speaking, that is 20%. 15% have problems in listening and 15% still have problems in vocabulary; writing and reading got each 12.5% and just 5% said they have problems in grammar.

Gathering information on learners' lacks determines the gap existing between the present situation and the desired future state which in return ensures a sound syllabus and curriculum design.

All our respondents expressed a common lack which is related to pronunciation, even if for 1st and 4th year pupils pronunciation is their favourite language area. Our participants answered that they have problems in pronunciation; a result that supports our findings reached throughout the constructed checklist and which showed that the absence of the

audio materials did not help compensate for the mispronunciation of some teachers who neither are native speakers nor have a near native accent.

Grammar, as expressed by our participants, is the least problematic area, which again seems to confirm the fact that grammar is overemphasized in all the four textbooks that is why our pupils do not have problems in this area.

5.5. Interpretation and Summary of Findings

The abovementioned results show that the surveyed 1st year middle school pupils expressed the need to study English for three main purposes related first, to the status of English as an important language, second to the need to visit English speaking countries and third to get good grades in English. English learning for our participants is triggered mainly by an intrinsic motivation rather than imposed by an external pressure.

Moreover, their top three preferred topics are “Family”, “Sports” and “Internet”. As far as the four skills are concerned, they hold positive attitudes and favour listening followed by speaking reading and last writing. Furthermore, their preferred language areas are first pronunciation, second vocabulary and third grammar. As for their preferred learning style, they opted in their majority for group work, and responded again in their majority that they are kinaesthetic learners. Finally yet importantly, they expressed their lacks mainly in relation to pronunciation followed by reading, listening, speaking, writing, vocabulary and last grammar.

2nd year pupils’ attitudes towards English did not differ from those of 1st year pupils, their three top reasons behind the study of English were exactly the same. They, however, differed in their favourite topics because 2nd year participants selected the following three top topics “Sports”, “Internet” and “Travel”. In relation to the skills they like, they put on equal footing reading and writing followed by listening then speaking. Vocabulary was

their unique favourite language area as the other areas that are grammar and pronunciation were the areas they dislike and the ones that got the highest percentages. In addition, 2nd year respondents in their majority prefer to work in groups and similarly to 1st year sample, the majority viewed that they learn best when they use their bodies. Last, they seemed to have problems first in pronunciation, then listening, speaking, reading, vocabulary, writing and last grammar.

3rd year participants responded that they learn English because first, it is an important language and second because they want to understand films in English, and third to get good grades. Their three top topics are “Sports”, “Internet”, and “Fashion”. They were positive towards the four skills and ranked them as follows; speaking then listening, reading and writing. Contrariwise, negative stands were hold towards vocabulary and pronunciation as 87, 87% responded that they do not like vocabulary and 69, 69% answered that they do not like pronunciation, where as 57, 57% viewed grammar as their favourite language area. Group work was still the best learning style for the majority of our respondents and 45, 45% of our sample replied that they learn best when they see what they learn. Their lacks, on the other hand, were linked to pronunciation first, vocabulary second, reading third, listening fourth, speaking fifth, grammar sixth, and writing seventh.

4th year respondents’ three top reasons behind learning English were first, it is an important language; second, to get grades and third, to visit English speaking countries. Their three first favourite topics are “Music”, “Travel”, and “Internet”. Positive attitudes are displayed towards the four skills that came ranked from listening, speaking, reading to writing. High percentages went to the language areas they like; pronunciation came first followed by vocabulary and grammar. Group work was the preferred learning style for the majority of our 4th year participants who were visual in their majority still. They expressed

having problems in pronunciation first, speaking second, listening third, vocabulary fourth, reading fifth, writing sixth, and grammar seventh.

Conclusion

The needs analysis survey undertaken with four middle school classes helped shed light on the needs as expressed by our participants in relation to their attitudes towards English, their preferred topics, their preferred language skills, their favourite language areas, their preferred learning styles and strategies and their lacks. The results arrived at revealed that learners' needs are not considered, because if pupils' needs were taken into account, then their wants necessities and lacks would have been met by textbooks. This hypothesis has not been confirmed.

The consideration of one key agent in the teaching learning context that is the learner, supposed to be the one to receive the content, requires the consultation of the implementer of this content that is the teacher, what will constitute the core of the upcoming chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: Teachers' Perceptions on Textbooks

Introduction

The questionnaire, in the present chapter, is designed for middle school teachers of English; it seeks to assess the effectiveness of the four middle school textbooks: SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM from the perspective of teachers. It is also used to help confirm or infirm our hypotheses; first, the textbooks meet the needs of Algerian middle school learners of English. Second, middle school English textbooks reflect the aims and objectives of the Algerian teaching/learning program, and third textbooks consolidate one another.

6.1. Participants

In this study, “The fact that teachers are the mediators between published material and learners, and can choose to work with its intentions or undermine them, is a good reason for not only listening to what they have to say....but actively researching their views” (McGrath 2002:20). Teachers’ according to McGrath are intermediaries between textbooks and learners, and the ones to implement and transmit those textbooks’ content according to their own perceptions and convictions, so their opinions on textbooks need to be thoroughly investigated. The research sample consisted of 40 middle school teachers of English from 11 middle schools in the district of Constantine: Benbaatouche, BenabdelmalekRamdane, BoughabaRobia, Djouablia Mohammed, El Maamoun, Ibn Badis, Karboua A/Hamid, MouloudMaameri, Mustapha Abdenouri, 11 Decembre 1960, and SaadGuellil.

6.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 42 questions coming under four sections: General information, Syllabi, textbooks and further suggestions.

Section one: General information (Q 01-Q 05). It aims at establishing a demographic profile of the selected sample in terms of gender, age, degrees, teaching experience and the levels they taught or are teaching.

Section two: Syllabus (Q6-Q9). It seeks teachers' opinions in relation to how far the aims behind the designed syllabi are explicitly stated or not; whether those aims reflect learners' needs or not and if 'no', teachers are asked to justify their answers. Last, teachers are asked whether the syllabi they are using or have used provide consolidation of previously learnt knowledge.

Section three: Textbook (Q 10-Q42). The questions under this section are related to 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year middle school textbooks in relation to the physical layout, correspondence of objectives with the overall aims, the compliance of the textbooks to the advocated approach, the suggested topics, grammar, vocabulary, skills, exercises, activities, tasks, autonomy in learning and culture in textbooks.

Section four: Further suggestions. This section is meant to give teachers the floor to express themselves freely and to suggest any further comments.

6.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire

6.3.1. General Information

1. Gender

Male	6	15%
Female	34	85%
	40	100%

Table 6.1: Participants' Gender

The participants that took part in our research are predominantly female teachers, 85%, against 15% of male teachers. This is mainly due to the increasing number of female teachers in the Algerian society. The researcher is teaching at the Teachers' Training School of Constantine, and worth of mention is that out of a total number of 46 pre-service middle school teachers of English, just three are male would-be secondary school teachers.

2. Age

Under 30	6	15%
Between 30 and 50	25	62.5%
Above 50	9	22.5%
	40	100%

Table 6.2: Participants' Age

62.5% of our respondents are aged between 30 and 50 years old; this reveals that the majority of our sample is more and more gaining maturity and can, thus, can be critical and can weigh the strengths and weaknesses of the syllabi and textbooks used.

4. Degree from

University	21	52.5%
Institut Technologique de l'éducation (I.T.E)	9	22.5%
Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS)	10	25%
	40	100%

Table 6.3: Participants' Degrees

The majority of the teachers who answered our questionnaire graduated from the university; 52.5 %. This is mainly due to the fact that the Technological Institutes of Education (I.T.E) shut down in the 90's; they were supplanted by the Teachers' Training Schools that then took in charge the education and training of future teachers. An example is the Teachers' Training School of Constantine (ENSC) which forms and trains future middle and secondary schools teachers of English, but the criteria set for acceptance in this school made that just a limited number of students is admitted, and on score of that, the number of future teachers that are from Constantine, and will thus teach in the district of Constantine, is really reduced in comparison to the overall number of teachers to-be.

4. Teaching Experience

Less than 5 years	3%	7.5%
Between 5 and 10 years	7%	17.5%
Between 10 and 15 years	9%	22.5%
More than 15 years	21%	52.5%

Table 6.4: Participants' Experience

Teachers' experience in teaching helps them give insightful answers; 52.5% have been teaching for more than 15 years against 7.5% who have less than 5 years of experience. The majority of the participants implemented the syllabi and their subsequent textbooks for

more than a decade and are, thus, able to spot their weaknesses and strengths; they are acquainted to textbooks use.

5. Level(s) you are teaching or have been teaching

1st year (1AM)	40	100%
2nd year (2AM)	40	100%
3rd year (3AM)	40	100%
4th year (4AM)	40	100%

Table 6.5: Levels Taught

All the participants assert having taught all levels, so they are familiar with the syllabi and the textbooks; and all of them are using or have used all the textbooks under study.

6.3.2. Syllabus

6. Are the aims of the syllabus (es) you are using, or have used, clearly stated?

	Yes		No	
1st year	23	57.5%	17	42.5%
2nd year	26	65%	14	35%
3rd year	32	80%	8	20%
4th year	24	60%	16	40%

Table 6.6: Syllabus Aims

The majority of teachers view that the aims of the four syllabi are clearly stated. They all, then, know the general purposes set for the teaching of English in middle school. If aims are explicitly stated and teachers are well aware of them then they can ponder on the

derived objectives and can determine whether those aims are really reduced into manageable units that are objectives or not and whether the derived objectives match the stated aims or not. The four textbooks' content can also be evaluated against the objectives set, and whether the four textbooks help achieve those objectives. On the other hand, if the aims are not clearly stated, teachers might imply certain interpretations that are not intended by syllabus designers, and the real repercussion of such misinterpretations will be on the changes they would like to bring in learners, every teacher will set her/his own objectives. If objectives are not clearly stated, assessment criteria can not only be clear but unreliable as well in a context where all learners sit for the same end of the year exams.

7. Do the aims of the syllabus reflect the needs of your learners?

	Yes		No	
1st year	21	52.5%	19	47.5%
2nd year	25	62.5%	15	37.5%
3rd year	27	67.5%	13	32.5%
4th year	31	77.5%	9	22.5%

Table 6.7: Aims and Learners' Needs

The majority of the respondents 52.5% view that 1st year syllabus aims reflect the needs of 1st year pupils; 62.5% affirm that 2nd year syllabus aims reflect the needs of 2nd year pupils; 67.5% assert that 3rd year syllabus aims reflect the needs of 3rd year pupils, and 77.5% contend that 4th year syllabus aims reflect the needs of 4th year pupils.

The teaching and learning of English in the Algerian middle school for all levels, as pleaded by syllabus designers, aspires to instill a communicative competence in learners; English is used as a means that helps learners exchange ideas and experiences with the

other. English is also conceived as a means that helps integrate in a world of technology and science.

Middle school pupils who took part in our needs analysis (see chapter five) expressed the need to learn English because all of them view that English is an important language, in addition to learning it so as to visit English speaking countries and understanding films. The importance of English lies in the fact that it is the language that helps integrate into modernity and helps catch up with technology and science. Moreover, visiting English speaking countries and understanding films means interacting, communicating and knowing the other. As a consequence, the aims as stated by syllabus designers corroborate with the reasons middle school pupils sample advance for the learning of English.

8. If 'no' why?

The reasons behind the aims of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years syllabi not reflecting the needs of middle school pupils, as expressed by a minority, are that the learners' ages, levels and interests are not taken into account; certain suggested topics are sometimes beyond the cognitive abilities of learners the case of file six 'Inventions and Discoveries' in SOE1. Additionally, those participants advanced that pupils' needs change constantly but the syllabi remained the same for many years and thus cannot address the evolving needs. 5 out of the 9 teachers who teach or taught 4th year level, advanced that those pupils needs are not taken into account because the B.E.M exam results are not satisfactory; for those teachers, meeting the needs of learners will heighten their motivation and interest which will be reflected in the good results gained by the end of the year in their final exam.

9. Do the syllabuses you are using or have used provide consolidation of previously learnt knowledge?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	0		0	
2 nd year	29	72.5%	11	22,5%
3 rd year	25	62.5%	15	37,5%
4 th year	33	82.5%	7	17,7%

Table 6.8: Complementarity of textbooks

The majority of our participants responded that 2nd, 3rd and 4th year syllabi provide consolidation of previously learnt items.

- If 'yes' please give examples.

Teachers explained that certain functions, grammar points, lexical items, topics and pronunciation patterns are reworked in the following syllabus for consolidation purposes. The case of the present simple, past simple, the imperative, cardinal and ordinal numbers and prepositions of time and place for the grammar points; some 1st year vocabulary is consolidated in SOE2. Food as a topic is used in SOE1 and OTM.

The self-constructed checklist used by the researcher (see chapter three) displays as an example the grammar points covered by all four textbooks and as presented by our surveyed teachers the present simple is used in all four levels. The present continuous the cardinal and ordinal numbers, the imperative, 'Have got' and time expressions are consolidated in SOE2. SOE3 consolidates the prepositions of time and place, the relative pronouns 'which' and 'who', the past simple the past continuous and pronouns. OTM consolidates the imperative, sequencers, comparatives and superlatives, modals (must/have to and need to), future tense with 'will', simple past tense, past continuous, present perfect and time sequencers.

6.3.3. Textbook

10. Is the textbook's layout attractive to the intended learners?

	Yes		No	
1st year	13	32.5%	27	67.5%
2nd year	21	52.5%	19	47.7%
3rd year	23	42.5%	17	57.7%
4th year	12	30%	28	70%

Table 6.9: Textbooks' Layout

SOE1 and OTM layouts, as expressed by our participants, are not attractive contrary to SOE2 and SOE3 which proved to be attractive, according to our respondents, a finding that backs what was achieved from our the self-constructed checklist (see chapter four)

11. If 'no', what aspects related to format are not motivational for your learners?

Grade	Aspects	N	%
1st year	1.Size of the textbook	4	14.81%
	2.Clarity of illustrations	23	85.18%
		27	100%

Table 6.10: SOE1 Unattractive Aspects

The highest percentage (85.18%) is attributed to the unclear illustrations; the respondents consider that drawings, pictures and photos are not motivational for 1st year pupils.

Grade	Aspects	N	%
2st year	1.Size of the textbook	10	52.63%
	2.Clarity of illustrations	9	47.36%
		19	100%

Table 6.11: SOE2 Unattractive Aspects

52.63% of the respondents, who viewed that SOE2 is not attractive, attributed its unattractiveness to the size of the textbook, against 47.36% who do not find the illustrations clear.

Grade	Aspects	N	%
3rd year	1.Size of the textbook	9	52.94%
	2.Clarity of illustrations	8	47.05%
		17	100%

Table 6.12: SOE3 Unattractive Aspects

52.94% of the participants using SOE3 do not find the size of the textbook attractive, against 47.05 who consider the illustrations unclear and thus unappealing to pupils.

Grade	Aspects	N	%
4th year	1.Size of the textbook	4	14.28%
	2.Clarity of illustrations	24	85.71%
		28	100%

Table 6.13: OTM Unattractive Aspects

OTM illustrations did not prove to be clear for 85.71% of our population, and 14.28% did not find the size of the textbook attractive.

12. Are the objectives derived from the overall aims stated in the syllabi?

	Yes		No	
1st year	12	30%	28	70%
2nd year	13	32.5%	27	67.5%
3rd year	15	37.7%	25	62.5%
4th year	14	35%	26	65%

Table 6.14: Objectives and Aims Correspondence

According to the majority of our participants; 70% of 1st year sampled teachers, 67.5% of 2nd year participants, 62.5% of 3rd year surveyed teachers and 65% of 4th year sample contend that the objectives are not derived from the general aims stated by syllabus designers. The sampled teachers do not think that aims and objectives are compatible. In question 6, the respondents, in their majority, view that aims are clearly stated, and again the majority holds that the objectives do not follow the aims. The number of years spent in teaching for the majority, more than 15 years, allows them to put forward this claim.

Approach (CBA)

13. Do the textbooks comply with the advocated approach, namely the competency-based Approach?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	7	17.5%	33	82.5%
2 nd year	11	27.7%	29	72.3%
3 rd year	13	32.5%	27	67.5%
4 th year	10	25%	30	75%

Table 6.15: Textbook Compliance with the CBA

A large proportion of our sample 82.5% of 1st year teachers' sample, 72.3% of 2nd year sampled teachers, 67.5% of 3rd year sampled teachers and 75% of 4th year participants put forward that the four textbooks do not comply with the competency-based approach (CBA)

14. If 'no' why?

Three main reasons are provided by our surveyed teachers for the non-compliance of textbooks to the CBA. The first reason is that the CBA is supposed to be task-based; pupils are asked to engage in meaningful tasks likely to take place in real-life, but the four textbooks under study, overemphasize grammar at the expense of meaningful tasks. A teacher goes further by explicitly stating "I feel sometimes that I am implementing a grammatical syllabus!" The second reason provided, is that all textbooks prepare learners for the exams not for real-life situations they might be placed in outside the classroom. The third reason deposited by our participants has to do with their practices inside the classroom; for them the teaching/learning paradigm did not change: classrooms are teacher-fronted and not learner-centered. They claim not being informed or trained to put into practice the new approach, their resistance to change made that they carried on teaching the way they used to teach. Moreover the large classes are a factor that can hinder the implementation of the best approach in the world, not just the CBA, as claimed by 5, 4th year teachers.

Topics

15. Do the following textbooks cover a variety of topics?

	Yes		No	
1st year textbook	30	75%	10	25%
2nd year textbook	36	90%	4	10%
3rd year textbook	34	85%	6	15%
4th year textbook	32	80%	8	20%

Table 6. 16: Textbooks' Topics

The majority of the surveyed teachers articulate an agreement on that textbooks cover a variety of topics.

16. Are the topics covered up-to-date?

	Yes		No	
1st year	8	20%	32	80%
2nd year	3	7.5%	37	92.5%
3rd year	34	85%	6	15%
4th year	13	32.5%	27	67.5%

Table 6. 17: Textbooks' Topics and Learners' Interests

The sampled teachers in their majority, with the exception of 3rd year surveyed teachers, report that the textbooks do not reflect up-to date topics.

17. If 'no' please, why?

The 1st, 2nd, and 4th year samples in their majority advance that the topics suggested do not cope with the evolving demands of the new era, an era of technology and science. If the bulk of knowledge is in English, and access to that knowledge requires mastery of this language, textbooks' topics should take learners a step forward not a step backward. 'In and Out' in SOE1, 'Theatre' in SOE2 and 'Then and Now' in OTM are examples of topics suggested by our surveyed teachers as old-fashioned.

18. Which topics suggested in your textbooks do your learners like most?

The majority of the 1st year surveyed teachers answered that 'Sports' and 'Family' are the topics they liked most. The majority of 2nd year surveyed teachers view that 'Language Games' is their preferred topic in SOE2. The sampled third year teachers advance 'Communications' as third year pupils' preferred topic. 4th year participants consider 'Great Expectations' and 'Dreams, Dreams.....' the most interesting ones for their pupils.

Grammar

19. Are the grammatical points put in contexts?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	34	85%	16	15%
2 nd year	31	77.5%	9	22.5%
3 rd year	30	75%	10	25%
4 th year	26	65%	14	35%

Table 6.18: Contextualization of Grammar

The majority of our respondents think that the grammar points introduced in their respective textbooks are contextualized.

20. Is the sequence of the grammatical items in the textbooks from simple to complex?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	36	90%	4	10%
2 nd year	38	95%	2	5%
3 rd year	37	92.5%	3	7.5%
4 th year	38	95%	2	5%

Table 6.19 : Grammatical Grading

The sequencing of the grammar points, according to the overwhelming majority of our participants, is from simple to complex which proves to be a positive point in textbooks because learners' cognitive abilities are taken into account and grading is favorable to the teaching of grammar.

21. Do the grammatical items promote meaningful communication?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	4	10%	36	90%
2 nd year	10	25%	30	75%
3 rd year	9	22.5%	31	77.5%
4 th year	17	42.5%	23	57.5%

Table 6.20: Grammar and Meaningful Communication

A high percentage of the surveyed middle school teachers; 90% of 1st year sample, 75% of 2nd year sample, 77.5% of 3rd year sample and 57.5% of 4th year sample do not think that the grammar presented in textbooks promotes meaningful communication.

Vocabulary

22. Is the number of new words suitable for your learners?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	24	60%	16	40%
2 nd year	10	25%	30	75%
3 rd year	35	87.5%	5	12.5%
4 th year	33	82.5%	7	17.5%

Table 6.21: Vocabulary Load

The 1st year sampled teachers claim that the number of new words in SOE1 is suitable for their learners where as 2nd year participants assert that the vocabulary load in SOE2 does not fit their learners. 3rd year surveyed teachers, on the other hand, joined their 1st year counterparts because they believe that the vocabulary load of SOE3 is appropriate to their learners. In like manner, 4th year sampled teachers think that OTM vocabulary load is suitable for their learners.

23. If 'no' why?

The highest percentage of the sampled teachers who answered 'no' refers to 2nd year participants and, accordingly, SOE2 is the textbook whose vocabulary load is not suitable. Those teachers consider that a great number of new words are introduced and files are overloaded with many new difficult words.

24. Are words presented in appropriate contexts?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	19	47.5%	21	52.5%
2 nd year	18	45%	22	55%
3 rd year	17	42.5%	23	57.5%
4 th year	16	40%	24	60%

Table 6.22: Vocabulary Contextualization

Results unveil that majority of all the sampled teachers be they teaching 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th year pupils, seem to consider the contexts where words are presented as appropriate.

25. If 'no' why?

The reasons provided by nearly all the surveyed teachers are that the materials used to contextualize the vocabulary presented in textbooks are neither authentic nor motivating with very few exceptions; the contexts, as expressed by our surveyed participants, are not similar to what learners can face in real-life.

26. Do textbooks provide explicit strategies instruction for vocabulary acquisition?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	10	25%	30	75%
2 nd year	18	45%	22	55%
3 rd year	19	47.5%	21	52.5%
4 th year	16	40%	24	60%

Table 6.23: Vocabulary Strategies in Textbooks

The majority of our sampled teachers state that there is no explicit strategy instruction for vocabulary acquisition in SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM.

Vocabulary and Structure

27. Are new structures and vocabulary recycled for reinforcement?

	Yes		No	
1st year	34	85%	6	15%
2nd year	30	75%	10	25%
3rd year	32	80%	8	20%
4th year	33	82.5%	7	17.5%

Table 6.24: Structures and Vocabulary Recycling

The majority of our sampled from all levels: 85% of 1st year surveyed teachers, 75% of 2nd year sample, 80% of 3rd year participants and 82.5% of the 4th year sampled teachers, all advance that structures and vocabulary are recycled for reinforcement. Previously presented grammar and vocabulary are reworked not just in the subsequent sequences but in the upper levels as well.

Skills

28. Is there a balance in the distribution of the four skills?

	Yes		No	
1st year	37	92.5 %	3	7.5%
2nd year	32	80%	8	20%
3rd year	34	85%	6	15%
4th year	38	95%	2	5%

Table 6.25: Skills Distribution

Again, the majority of the surveyed teachers converge on this question-item as 92.5% (1st year), 80% (2nd year), 85% (3rd year), 95% (4th year) express that there is a balance in the distribution of skills. This majority admits that listening, speaking, reading and writing are equally distributed in SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM.

29. Do textbooks provide any audio materials?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	0	0	40	100%
2 nd year	0	0	40	100%
3 rd year	0	0	40	100%
4 th year	0	0	40	100%

Table 6.26: Audio Materials in Textbooks

All the respondents state that no textbook is accompanied by audio-materials. The teachers are the models learners listen to. If lucky enough, those learners can have a teacher with a near native accent or a correct pronunciation of English, if not mispronunciation problems will arise and sometimes fossilization of those errors are difficult to eradicate at later stages.

30. Do speaking materials help learners interact in real-life?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	4		36	
2 nd year	10		30	
3 rd year	15		25	
4 th year	12		28	

Table 6.27: Speaking Materials in Textbooks

The majority of our participants substantiate that the speaking materials in SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM do not help learners interact in real-life

31. Are there any explicit reading strategies in your textbooks?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	10	25%	30	75%
2 nd year	11	27.5%	29	72.5%
3 rd year	27	67.5%	13	37.5%
4 th year	32	80%	8	32.5%

Table 6.28: Reading Strategies in Textbooks

The majority of 1st year teachers view that in SOE1 there are no explicitly stated reading strategies to instruct. Similarly, 2nd year teachers who took part in this study state that the reading strategies are not overtly stated in SOE2. But 4th and 3rd year sampled teachers advance that strategies are explicitly stated in both of OTM and SOE3.

32. Are there any explicit writing strategies in your textbooks?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	9	22.5%	31	77.5%
2 nd year	12	30%	28	70%
3 rd year	15	37.5%	25	62.5%
4 th year	13	32.5%	27	67.5%

Table 6.29: Writing Strategies in Textbooks

The majority of the sampled teachers assert that no explicit writing strategies are enclosed in all the four textbooks.

Exercises, Activities and Tasks

33. Do exercises, activities and tasks satisfy syllabus objectives?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	9	22.5%	31	77.5%
2 nd year	12	30%	28	70%
3 rd year	25	62.5%	15	37.5%
4 th year	8	20%	20	80%

Table 6.30: Practice and Objectives Correspondence

Findings reveal that our participants, with the exception of 3rd year sampled teachers, feel negative about this item; exercises, activities and tasks, for them, do not satisfy syllabus objectives. 62.5% of 3rd year sampled teachers state that the practice work in SOE3 satisfies the syllabus objectives.

34. If 'no' please why?

The overwhelming majority of 1st, 2nd and 4th year surveyed teachers does not think that practice work satisfies syllabus objectives. 1st year sample dissatisfaction is due to the fact that practice is too controlled; learners should be given less guided opportunities of practice. 2nd year sample, however, views that the practice work does not satisfy syllabus objectives in relation to two main skills: listening and speaking. They think that practice linked to those two skills cannot contribute to a significant change in learners, especially that teachers are not native speakers or have a near-native accent to be models to follow. And what compounds this problem is the lack of any audio materials to help compensate for the mispronunciation problems some teachers have. In addition, some teachers assert having themselves difficulties dealing with the phonological system of English. 4th year sampled teachers view that practice work does not help achieve communicative competence as the main focus is on grammar and final year BEM exam.

35. Are activities and tasks of problem-solving type?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	11	27.5%	29	72.5%
2 nd year	13	32.5%	27	67.5%
3 rd year	31	77.5%	9	22.5%
4 th year	14	35%	26	65%

Table 6.31: Practice Type

1st year, 2nd year and 4th year sampled teachers view that those activities and tasks do not place learners in front of problems to be solved by calling for learners' cognitive abilities, the main focus, in those activities, is the practice of linguistic forms.

36. Do the suggested activities and tasks encourage pair and group work?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	38	95%	2	5%
2 nd year	39	97.5%	1	2.5%
3 rd year	40	100%	0	0
4 th year	38	95%	2	5%

Table 6.32: Practice and Interaction

The surveyed teachers, in their majority, recognize that the majority of activities in all textbooks: SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM encourage pair and group which complies with socio-constructivist view of learning advocated by the CBA whereby learners learn best with the assistance of more competent peers or adults.

37. Do exercises, activities and tasks promote autonomous learning?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	7	17.5%	33	82.5%
2 nd year	9	22.5%	31	77.5%
3 rd year	18	45%	22	55%
4 th year	15	37.5%	25	62.5%

Table 6.33: Practice and Autonomous Learning

The sampled teachers overwhelmingly assert that the practice work enclosed in all four textbooks does not promote autonomous learning.

Project Work

38. Do you consider project work the most important part of the file?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	30	75%	10	25%
2 nd year	31	77.5%	9	22.5%
3 rd year	32	80%	8	20%
4 th year	31	77.5%	9	22.5%

Table 6.34: Project work Importance

The respondents view that project work is the most important part of the file in their majority. Project work as claimed by the official documents is the pillar of the CBA and the context where the three competencies will manifest themselves. If the participants conceive it important, their practices need to reflect their positive attitudes.

39. Do you consider the suggested project works in your textbooks as real-life tasks?

	yes		No	
1st year	5	12.5%	35	87.5%
2nd year	7	17.5%	33	82.5%
3rd year	8	20%	32	80%
4th year	2	5%	38	95%

Table 6.35: Project work Relevance to Real-life Tasks

The majority of the surveyed teachers find the projects suggested in SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM are not real-life tasks learners can perform in real-life. They hold negative attitudes towards the suggested project topics.

40. Do you assign project work to your learners?

	yes		No	
1st year	10	25%	30	75%
2nd year	18	45%	22	55%
3rd year	19	47.5%	21	52.5%
4th year	5	12.5%	35	87.5%

Table 6.36: Assignment of Project work

To our surprise, and despite the recognized importance of project work, the majority of the participants do not assign project work to their pupils.

41. Do textbooks present the culture of the target language?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	33	82,5%	7	17,5%
2 nd year	35	87,5%	5	12,5%
3 rd year	36	90%	4	10%
4 th year	32	80%	8	20%

Table 6.37: Culture in Textbooks

All the four textbooks, according to the overwhelming majority, present the target culture.

42. Are the cultural aspects in your textbooks suitable to your learners?

	Yes		No	
1 st year	9	22.5%	31	77.5%
2 nd year	12	30%	28	70%
3 rd year	15	37.5%	25	62.5%
4 th year	8	20%	32	80%

Table 6.38: Suitability of Cultural Aspects to Learners

The sampled respondents view that the cultural items covered by all four textbooks are not suitable to their learners.

6.3.4. Further Comments and Suggestions

Our respondents suggest first that learners' ages, background and levels should be investigated. Second, teachers must be consulted as partners when designing syllabi and textbooks because they are key elements; they are the ones to implement the syllabuses and textbooks. Others suggest that SOE1 and OTM files have to be slimmed down because they cannot be covered with regard to the time available. Last but not least, middle school

teachers view that the early years of FL learning are critical that is why syllabuses and textbooks must be carefully designed by specialists.

6.4. Discussion and interpretation of findings

6.4.1. Demographic Profile

The 42 item questionnaire has been developed around three main sections (general information, syllabus and textbooks) and has been handed to 40 teachers. Because the teaching profession is more and more becoming gender imbalanced, a female predominance characterizes our surveyed sample because in Algeria teaching is becoming an overwhelmingly female profession with regard to the main advantages this job offers; women, as the primary caregivers in families can have fifteen days rest at the end of each term, in addition to two months at the end of the school year, in summer. In conjunction with gender, experience in teaching revealed that the majority of our participants spent more than 15 years teaching. Experience in teaching generally results in sound opinions and critical views about syllabi and textbooks as those experienced teachers come to know, better than novice teachers, the learners and the teaching materials. Furthermore, studies revealed that knowledge schemata of the experienced teacher are better and more elaborate than .the ones of the novice teacher. In this respect, Livingston and Borko (1989) substantiate

....the cognitive schemata of experts typically are more elaborate, more complex, more interconnected, and more easily accessible than those of novices.....Therefore, expert teachers have larger, better- integrated stores of facts, principles, and experiences to draw upon as they engage in planning, teaching and reflection (p.37).

The researcher can pretend to gain insightful answers from those experienced teachers.

6.4.2. Syllabus

After drawing a demographic profile of our respondents, emphasis shifted to the syllabus and our participants viewed that the aims of 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year syllabi are clearly stated; the surveyed population seems well aware of the educational intent set for the teaching and learning of English, and their awareness helps them recognize with precision the final destination of their journey. This may be due to their experience in teaching and their ages as they are, in their majority, between 30 and 50 years old.

Besides the clarity of the stated aims, positive attitudes are also expressed by the respondents towards the needs of learners which they think reflected in the stated aims. Their answers show that if they think that aims reflect their learners' needs, then they know what the necessities, wants and lacks of their middle school pupils are. Knowledge of one's learners' needs helps adopt or adapt the textbook to meet those needs by teachers, and is motivating for learners whose areas of interest and concern are taken into account while designing a syllabus or a textbook. For syllabus designers, aims are derived from a needs analysis.

The last question item related to the syllabus showed that the participants agreed that the syllabi they are using or have used provide consolidation of previously learnt knowledge which denotes a cyclic format of the syllabi used in middle school. Revision of previously presented items helps learners use the presented items as much as possible and helps the learners retain them.

6.4.3. Textbook

- Physical Layout

The negative attitudes teachers hold are towards the textbooks used and more particularly to the layout of SOE1 and OTM which does not appear to be attractive to the intended learners, in relation to the clarity and simplicity of the illustrations. This negative attitude from the part of our sample seems to support the researcher's findings throughout the constructed checklist; the artwork in relation to the illustrations of SOE1 and OTM proved to be the least appealing among the four middle school textbooks they were unclear and sometimes not adjacent to the materials they were supposed to clarify or explain. On the other hand, SOE2 and SOE3, as expressed by our sampled teachers, were considered as unappealing with regard to their big size. The unattractiveness of textbooks because of their illustrations does not only kill interest and motivation in learners but does not also favour retention of information; the dual-coding theory of memory (Paivio, 1971) advances that when information is displayed verbally and visually, throughout illustrations, it has better chances of being remembered. In addition, further researches view that pictures alone are remembered better than words alone (Fleming and Levie, 1978). Illustrations play a pivotal role in textbooks; they need to be taken into account as aids to learning that help catch learners' attention and interest. Our findings revealed that SOE1 and OTM were a failure in relation to illustrations unlike SOE2 and SOE3. The big size of SOE2 and SOE3 was also negatively perceived by our sample.

- Aims/Objectives Correlation

The negative attitude of the majority of our surveyed teachers was extended to objectives/ aims correlation. The sampled teachers think that the objectives textbooks enclose are not derived from the overall aims. If the aim provides the overall direction of a syllabus, objectives are the different steps gone through to achieve the aim.

Again our checklist (see chapter four) attempted to evaluate the extent to which the objectives reflect the aims set by the middle school syllabi designers, and the answers of the majority of our participants confirmed our results. The teachers, as the immediate implementers of the syllabi and textbooks, are the best placed ones to determine the worth of the objectives, especially after more than 15 years of teaching experience, they can determine whether or not the smaller units are grounded in the general goals. Aims /objectives mismatch, as signalled by our sampled teachers, not just blurs the way towards the final destination but also renders course and assessment development unreliable.

- Approach

As for the approach embraced, our surveyed teachers do not think that the four textbooks do comply with the CBA which once again creates a gap between the theoretical grounds advocated by the designers and the practical concerns of teachers inside the classroom. The sampled teachers backed their negative stands with arguments ranging from the fact that claims behind the CBA hold that it is built around problem-solving tasks but grammar seems to be the organizing principle of the textbooks. Learners are held second in rank in a teacher-fronted classroom, contrary to the learner-centred principle of the CBA. The middle school textbooks prepare for the final exams more than for real-life practice, as remarked by our sample.

- Topics

The positive perception of our participants in relation to the variety of topics the four textbooks cover was palpable among the overwhelming majority: 75% for 1st year sample, 90% for 2nd year participants, 85% for 3rd year sample, and 80% for 4th year participants. This positive attitude, however, faded away when our respondents had to answer whether those topics were up-to-date or not, the majority viewed that the topics are not up-to-date.

The topics in a syllabus act as vehicles that support language instruction and reflect the thematic content. Correspondingly, textbooks should include up-to date topics, depicted from various real-life contexts; they have to be related to learners' background and areas of interest.

The needs analysis undertaken with our middle school pupils sample (see chapter five) revealed that some of the suggested topics do not seem to be interesting, the case of 'Environment' for 1st year pupils, 'Cartoons' and 'Theatre' for 2nd year pupils, 'Food' and 'Environment' for 3rd year pupils, and again 'Environment' for 4th year pupils. The more the surveyed sample dislikes those topics, the less interested in their presentation they would be; language instruction would be affected as the vehicle is not motivating for learners.

- Grammar

Our sampled teachers hold positive views in relation to grammar contextualization, for the majority of them, the grammar points tackled in all four textbooks are not presented in isolation but placed in contexts which help pupils remember and recall those points better.

The grading of the grammar points stimulated a positive response among our respondents. According to the latter, all grammar points in all textbooks are graded from simple to complex, and this sequencing criterion helps beginners learn best, as the presentation considers their cognitive abilities.

Contrary to the answers provided for the previous question-item, the 21st question showed that our participants in their majority do not think that grammar, as presented in all four textbooks, promotes meaningful communication.

Those results corroborate with our checklist findings; the contexts grammar is placed in are not authentic and motivating, they bear little relevance to real-life situations pupils might face. The contrived dialogues cannot help achieve communicative competence.

- **Vocabulary**

The surveyed teachers did not share similar stands when asked about the vocabulary load suitability to the targeted learners. 1st, 3rd, and 4th year sampled teachers, in their majority, admitted that the load was suitable, unlike 2nd year participants majority, who saw the vocabulary items presented as unsuitable to their learners.

Statistics reported in our checklist revealed that in SOE1 pupils encountered 10, 43 new words per session which seemed unsuitable when compared to just 3, 4 words per session in Finland (Bacher, 2013). The sampled teachers and the 1st year surveyed pupils hold positive attitudes towards vocabulary presentation in SOE1. The former considered vocabulary items adequate to their learners and the latter considered vocabulary as the second preferred learning area after pronunciation.

2nd year surveyed teachers, however, felt negative about the vocabulary load as 75% of them viewed the vocabulary load as unsuitable to their learners, and they justified their answers and said that files are “overcrowded with difficult words”. Difficult words mean unknown words by learners or words they did not encounter in the previous textbook.

The majority of all the sampled teachers asserted that the contexts provided for the introduced words in SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM were inappropriate; the reasons provided were that the contexts were not authentic and thus do not motivate learners.

The last question posed in relation to vocabulary brought out that all the participants viewed that there is no explicit strategies instruction related to vocabulary.

- **Vocabulary and Structure**

In the 9th question item, the participants viewed that the syllabi provide consolidation of previously learnt knowledge, and again in this 27th question-item the participants, still, think that new structures and vocabulary are recycled for reinforcement which reinforces the cyclical format of the syllabus.

- **Skills**

The majority of the surveyed teachers from all four levels unveiled that there is a balance in the distribution of skills. The sampled pupils throughout our needs analysis answered that they liked all four skills: 58.33% among 1st year sample, 38.46% among 2nd year participants, 33.33% among 3rd year sample and 30% among 4th year surveyed pupils and their expressed needs seem to be reflected in the textbooks, as the four skills are addressed in the four textbooks.

The sampled teachers, with no exception, confirmed that no audio materials were provided in textbooks. This justifies the fact that the two least liked skills for all our middle school surveyed pupils are listening and speaking. The pupils who took part in our needs analysis did not seem to like the presentation of those two skills; teachers are not native speakers and the audio materials supposed to compensate for this lack are missing, and the result is a lack of interest in those skills from the part of the sampled pupils.

If our surveyed teachers unanimously answered that no audio materials are available in the four middle school textbooks, a majority viewed that there were no explicit writing strategies in the four textbooks, contrary to reading strategies which are explicitly provided but just in SOE3 and OTM. SOE1 and SOE3 were for the majority the two textbooks that were devoid of any strategies be they in writing or reading.

Our checklist results revealed that just in SOE3 and OTM separate sections are devoted to reading and writing instruction. OTM explicitly provided reading strategy instruction and prediction was the overemphasized reading strategy. Rhetorical strategies, on the other hand, were overused in writing instruction and SOE3 was the textbook to consider the process approach to the teaching of writing. Consequently, those two textbooks are the ones stated by our sample.

Strategies importance resides in leading learners towards autonomy in learning, and in the question-item 13 our respondents clearly stated that the textbooks do not comply with the CBA because they think that it is a teacher-fronted classroom where learners play a secondary role, and also because there is an overemphasis of grammar at the expense of meaningful tasks. In addition, some teachers might be unaware of the importance of strategies in learning; they might be so preoccupied by the idea of covering a lengthy syllabus reflected in a crammed textbook to be implemented in a large class. Strategies need to be explicitly taught in classes and learners' awareness should be raised towards their use so that ... "learning permits to the pupil **a cognitive and meta-cognitive pathway** leading progressively to **autonomy**" (Ministry of Education 2003:41).

- **Practice Work**

The practice work, the textbooks under study, enclosed created a negative perception in the sampled teachers with one exception: third year surveyed teachers who seemed satisfied with the practice work and who viewed it as fulfilling the objectives of the syllabus.

All the surveyed teachers consensually agreed that the practice work encouraged pair and group work. But just a majority among 3rd year sampled teachers (77, 5%) viewed that the activities and tasks in SOE3 were of problem-solving type, all the rest were of

opposing view. Conjointly, all the sampled teachers considered that practice work does not promote autonomous learning. Nunan (1997) views that autonomy in learning is achieved throughout different steps that are classified as follows: making instruction goals clear to learners; allowing learners create their own goals; encouraging learners use their second language outside; raising learners awareness of learning processes; helping learners identify their preferred styles and strategies; encouraging learners' choices; allowing learners generate their own tasks; encouraging learners become teachers and last encouraging learners become researchers.

Our sampled teachers and pupils, from the collected answers, do not seem to hold a pedagogical partnership; teachers still represent the authority inside the classroom and the learners do not seem to act upon their learning.

Project Work

Theoretically, the overwhelming majority of our surveyed teachers consider project work as the most important part of the file which denotes that they are well aware of the fact that the project is the pillar of the CBA and the context where the competencies will manifest themselves.

But the project works suggested in all four textbooks, as conceived by our respondents, are not considered as real-life tasks. The tables below display the proposed projects in all middle school textbooks:

SOE1 Projects

Files	Project work
One	- Making a tourist brochure/ A poster
Two	- Making a game card/ A family profile
Three	- Designing a sport magazine
Four	- Designing a poster/ A questionnaire
Five	- Designing a recipe book/ A menu for

	a week
Six	- Designing a children’s book/scrap book/ a ‘wheel of knowledge game’ (civilisation profile)
Seven	- Designing a junior animal encyclopaedia/ An ideal city profile

Table 6.39. SOE1 Projects

SOE2 Projects

Files	Project work
One	- Making a person’s profile
Two	- Designing a language games booklet
Three	- Making a medical or herbal guide
Four	- Making a strip cartoon
Five	- Writing and staging a play

Table 6.40. SOE2 Projects

SOE3 Projects

Files	Project work
One	- Making a wall sheet about greetings
Two	- Making a travel phrase leaflet
Three	- Designing a school magazine page
Four	- Making a tourist brochure

Table 6.41 SOE3 Projects

OTM Projects

Files	Project work
One	- Designing an advertising leaflet for restaurant
Two	- Making a profile of changes in man’s capabilities
Three	- Arranging a conference
Four	- Making a poster about differences
Five	- Laying out a newspaper page
Six	- Making a scrapbook

Table 6.42. OTM Projects

The majority of our participants view that the projects bear no relevance to real-life tasks. Examples can be “Designing a junior animal encyclopaedia” in SOE1, file seven,

or in file four of the same textbook where learners are asked to design a “Brochure about animals”. The same remark can be extended to SOE2 when “Making a strip cartoon”, as an example, as part of file four project. Similarly, OTM second project work, revolving around ‘A profile of changes in man’s capabilities’ does not seem to be a real-life task, learners can be asked to perform outside the classroom confines. SOE3 suggested projects seem the closer to real-life tasks.

Surprisingly, the majority of the sampled teachers and despite the importance of project work, they do not deny, do not assign project work to their learners, and the highest percentage is attributed to fourth year surveyed teachers which might be justified by the fact that learners will sit for a final year BEM exam, and that focus should be placed on the coverage of the syllabus. But if such are the sampled teachers’ practices, the three competencies supposed to manifest themselves in project work won’t be possible, and if the pillar of the CBA collapses, the whole edifice will fall apart. Project work makes learning more sustainable as it extends school acquisitions to real-life situations and practices, learners will learn by doing and thus can retain better and effectively put into practice what they learnt in new contexts of use.

- **Culture**

The cultural aspects are present in all four textbooks, as presented by the majority of our participants, but they viewed these cultural aspects as unsuitable to their learners.

Valette (1986) specifies four categories of cultural goals for the classroom teacher:

To develop a greater awareness of and a broader knowledge about the target culture; acquire a command of the etiquette of the target culture; understand differences between the target and the student culture; and understand the values of the target culture (181).

The learners, accordingly, are expected to be well aware of the differences the native culture and the foreign culture display, and more important is which appropriate

behaviours and conducts they should adopt, and inappropriate ones to avoid with those who speak the target language, so as to ensure the establishment of an intercultural communicative competence.

The sampled teachers' attitude towards the suitability of the cultural aspects in all middle school textbooks coincides with our checklist results; the cultural representation in SOE1, SOE2, SOE3 and OTM does not initiate learners to “acquire a command of the etiquette” to avoid any cultural shock.

Conclusion

The teachers' questionnaire provided sound information about the four middle school textbooks of English. Teachers expressed views in relation to the syllabus and the subsequent textbooks and displayed a general dissatisfaction with the content of the textbooks they have used or are using. The majority of our participants stated that the overall aims are clearly stated but think that the objectives textbooks enclose are not derived from the overall aims. In addition, they held negative attitudes towards the physical layout of SOE1 and OTM. The presentation of grammar, vocabulary, skills, projects and the selected topics were also subject to criticism from the part of our respondents; they did think that textbooks do not rise to their expectations and their learners' needs.

To wrap up, the findings achieved from the teachers' questionnaire confirmed just the third hypothesis; if each of first, second, third and fourth year middle school English textbooks reinforce what has been previously learnt, then they consolidate one another. Teachers, on the other hand, hold negative attitudes towards the implemented textbooks, which rejects the second hypothesis, whereby we expressed that when the syllabus is working the objectives set, then there is a correlation between the objectives, the syllabus and the textbook.

General Conclusion

“An Evaluation of the Algerian Middle School English Syllabuses and Textbooks” is a research undertaken to determine the worth of the official middle school syllabi and textbooks. Interest in this study stemmed from the vital role textbooks play in the teaching/learning context; they are the palpable manifestation of the syllabus and are a source of input used by both teachers and learners. Consequently, textbooks’ selection needs to be tackled with care, and equally important is textbook evaluation which helps not just identify the textbooks’ advantages and disadvantages but aids in updating and/ or renewing the existing textbooks.

A theoretical overview in relation to syllabi and textbooks and their evaluation characterizes the beginning of this study which was upheld to find answer to three questions that revolve first around whether or not the needs of the Algerian middle school pupils are met, second whether the stated aims and objectives correspond to the designed syllabi of English and the selected middle school textbooks of English, and third whether the textbooks consolidate one another.

Answers to the above asked questions were reached throughout a practical study whereby a self-constructed checklist and two questionnaires were used. The checklist involved criteria pertaining to the physical characteristics of the four textbooks: Spotlight on English Book One, Spotlight on English Book Two, Spotlight on English Book Three and On the Move, aims/ objectives correspondence, and textbooks’ content with reference to grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, writing in addition to the cultural representation and the promotion of autonomy in learners.

The two questionnaires were submitted to 40 teachers and 198 learners in Constantine to investigate the former's perceptions of textbooks and the latter's needs behind the learning of English.

Analysis of the compiled data revealed certain weaknesses that can be listed under the following conclusions:

- Learners' needs are not met.
- Textbooks' physical characteristics seem unsatisfactory and must be worked on.
- There is a mismatch between aims and objectives.
- There is an overemphasis on grammar which does not seem to promote meaningful communication.
- Absence of audio materials and native-speakers as teachers of English cripples the instruction of pronunciation, listening and speaking.
- Vocabulary load in all four textbooks is imbalanced.
- Lack of variety in reading and writing strategies in the textbooks.
- Cultural representation is unsuitable.
- Textbooks do not promote autonomous learning.

In the light of the aforementioned findings, our two first hypotheses have been disproved; learners' needs are not met, and no correspondence exists between the aims and objectives and the selected textbooks do not reflect the suggested syllabi. The strong point textbooks display is the consolidation of one another.

According to the achieved results our middle school textbooks' weaknesses overbalance the strengths, but textbook industry in Algeria remains a local endeavour undertaken by local syllabus designers and textbook writers and deserves to be applauded and encouraged.

Recommendations

In an attempt to redress the weaknesses our scrutinized textbooks enclose, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Needs Analysis

Prior to any syllabus design, the educational authorities have to undertake a thorough ‘needs analysis’. This step is of great importance because all subsequent stages: goals/aims statements and content selection rely heavily on it. Furthermore investigating learners’ needs results in a heightened motivation because whenever learners are consulted and their necessities, wants and lacks are taken into account and reflected in the selected textbooks they feel involved in the whole process.

2. Consideration of Findings in Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Findings in SLA should be used as the bases on which textbooks content is selected because they provide insights as to how language can be learnt best

3. Selection of Syllabi and Textbooks’ Committees

Syllabi and textbooks’ committees should be carefully selected; specialists and experienced members should be hired for the purpose. Moreover, they should coordinate and complete each other.

4. Revised Editions

Revised editions of textbooks should be issued to catch up with the possible errors and problems the original versions display.

5. Textbook Content Selection

5.1. Physical attributes

The impact of illustrations, layout and design, size of textbooks is as important as the impact textbooks' content leaves on learners; so those physical characteristics need to be adjusted to the learners' ages and interests in order to be effective.

5.2. Grammar

The presentation of grammar should be contextualized in authentic contexts so as to be motivating and to promote meaningful communication. Grammar under the proclaimed communicative approaches has to be a means towards an end not an end in itself.

5.3. Provision of Audio Materials

Pronunciation, listening and speaking cannot be enhanced in English if our textbooks carry on being devoid of any audio materials. Teachers are overloaded enough to have to compensate for the absence of such audio materials.

5.4. Explicit Presentation of Strategies

Autonomous learning cannot be ensured if learners are not assisted by an explicit teaching of different strategies in relation to vocabulary, and the four skills. Stressing one strategy per se and excluding the others from our textbooks will not be of great help.

5.5. Culture

The presentation of culture should highlight the norms of behaviour, conduct and interaction in authentic situations so as to avoid any possible alienation or acculturation and to expect positive attitudes towards the target culture from the part of learners.

5.6. Initiation of Teachers to Textbook Evaluation

The fulcrum of education is the teacher; the latter is the user of the selected textbook, s/he has to be well aware not just of how to use the textbook but how relevant this textbook is to learners' needs and to the purposes set. With this end in mind, textbook evaluation should be viewed as an integral component of the teaching learning process; teachers should be trained to evaluate their textbooks throughout the use of different schemes, and once skilful in evaluating textbooks, teachers' resulting opinions have to be taken into account. On the basis of such evaluation teachers can pretend to adapt or adopt their textbooks.

To wrap up policies in general change, and Algeria is no exception, while writing this thesis a new textbook has been prescribed for 1st year middle school pupils entitled "My Book of English", so it is important that further studies are conducted to evaluate the existing textbooks or those intended for future use, and the efforts researchers spend evaluating need to have one end in mind: the amelioration of the standard of English in Algeria.

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APPENDIX I: Learners' Questionnaire (Arabic)

أعزائي التلاميذ

اطلب منكم التكرم بالإجابة على الأسئلة المطروحة ا دنا ه لمساعدتي في بحثي المتعلق بتحليل احتياجاتكم من وراء دراسة الانجليزية.

شكرا جزيلا

I معلومات أساسية

المستوى الدراسي

سنة اولى سنة ثانية سنة ثالثة سنة رابعة

الجنس

ذكر أنثى

العمر

.II

1. موقفك من الانجليزية

لمادا تتعلم الانجليزية؟
1. الانجليزية لغة مهمة
2. لكي استعمل الانترنت
3. لاجتياز امتحانات اللغة الإنجليزية
4. لفهم الأغاني بالانجليزية
5. لزيارة البلدان الناطقة بالانجليزية
6. لفهم الأفلام الناطقة بالانجليزية
7. من اجل العاب الفيديو
8. أنا مجبر على تعلمها أنا لاحبها

2. مواضعك المفضلة

1. الرياضة

2. السفر
3. الانترنت
4. التكنولوجيا
5. الطعام
6. الموسيقى
7. العائلة
8. الموضة
9. الألعاب
10. الحكايات
11. المحيط
12. الصحة
13. الرسوم المتحركة
14. المسرح

3. جوانب اللغة

لا أحب	أحب	
		قواعد اللغة
		المفردات
		النطق

4. المهارات

لا أحب	أحب	
		الاستماع
		التحدث
		القراءة
		الكتابة

5. أفضل العمل

	بمفردي
	في أزواج
	في مجموعات

6. أتعلم أفضل عندما

	أرى
	أستمع
	أستعمل يدي و جسمي

7. عندي مشاكل في

لا	نعم	
		الاستماع
		التحدث
		القراءة
		الكتابة
		قواعد اللغة
		المفردات
		النطق

Appendix II: Pupils' Questionnaire (English)

Dear pupils,

I kindly request you to answer the below questions, by simply ticking so please tick the appropriate box or column to help me undertake my research that deals with the analysis of your needs.

Thank you very much.

Part I

Background Information

Level

1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year

Sex

Male Female

Age

Part II

Section 1

Attitudes towards English

Why do you learn English?

9. English is an important language	
-------------------------------------	--

10. To use the Internet	
11. To get good grades in English	
12. To understand songs in English	
13. To visit English speaking countries	
14. To understand films in English	
15. To play video games	
16. I am obliged to, I do not like it	

Section 2

Your Favourite Topics

15. Sports	
16. Travel	
17. Internet	
18. Technology	
19. Food	
20. Music	
21. Family	
22. Fashion	

23. Games	
24. Stories	
25. Environment	
26. Health	
27. Cartoons	
28. Theatre	

Section3

Favourite Language Areas

	I like	I do not like
Grammar		
Vocabulary		
Pronunciation		

Favourite Skills

	I like	I do not like
Listening		
Speaking		

Reading		
Writing		

Section 5

Preferred Learning Style

I prefer to work:

Alone	
In pairs	
In groups	

Section 6

Preferred learning Strategy

I learn best when

I see	
I hear	
I use my hands and body	

Section 7

I have problems in

Listening		
Speaking		
Reading		
Writing		
Grammar		
Vocabulary		
Pronunciation		

Appendix III : Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Fellow Teachers,

This questionnaire is part of a research work. It aims at evaluating middle school syllabuses and textbooks you are using or have used, namely **Spotlight on English 1, 2, 3** and **On the Move**. You are kindly requested to contribute to this study, so please tick the appropriate box.

I. General information

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age

Under 30

Between 30 and 40

Above 40

3. Degree from

University

Institut Technologique de l'éducation (I.T.E)

Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS)

4. Teaching Experience

Less than 5 years

Between 5 and 10 years

Between 10 and 15 years

More than 15 years

5. Level(s) you are teaching or have been teaching

1st year (1AM)

2nd year (2AM)

3rd year (3AM)

4th year (4AM)

II.Syllabus

6. Are the aims of the syllabus (es) you are using, or have used, clearly stated?

Yes

No

1st year

2nd year

3rd year

4th year

7. Do the aims of the syllabus reflect the needs of your learners?

Yes

No

1st year

2nd year

3rd year

4th year

8. If 'no', why?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

9. Do the syllabuses you are using or have used provide consolidation of previously learnt knowledge?

Yes

No

III. Textbook

Physical layout

10. Is the textbook's layout attractive to the intended learners?

	Yes	No
1 st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. If 'no', what aspects related to format are not motivational for your learners?

1. Size of the textbook
2. Type size
3. Clarity and simplicity of illustrations

12. Are the objectives stated in the textbooks derived from the overall aims stated in the syllabus?

	Yes	No
1 st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Approach

13. Do the textbooks comply with the advocated approach, namely the Competency-based Approach?

	Yes	No
1 st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. If 'no', please why

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Topics

15. Do the following textbooks cover a variety of topics

	Yes	No
1 st year textbook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year textbook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year textbook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year textbook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Are the topics covered, up –to-date?

	Yes	No
1 st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. If ‘no’, please why?

.....

.....

.....

18. Which topics in your textbooks do your learners like most?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Grammar

19. Are the grammatical points put in contexts?

Yes No

20. Is the sequence of grammatical items in the textbooks from simple to complex?

Yes No

21. Do the grammatical items promote meaningful communication?

Yes No

Vocabulary

22. Is the number of new words suitable for your learners?

Yes No

23. If ‘no’, why?

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24. Are words presented in appropriate contexts?

Yes

No

25. If 'no', please why?

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26. Do textbooks provide explicit strategies instruction?

Yes

No

Vocabulary and structure

27. Are new structures and vocabulary recycled for reinforcement?

Yes

No

Skills

28. Is there a balance in the distribution of the four skills?

Yes

No

29. Do textbooks provide any audio materials?

Yes

No

30. Do speaking materials help learners interact in real life?

Yes

No

31. Are there any explicit reading strategies in your textbook?

Yes

No

32. Are there any explicit writing strategies in your textbook?

Yes

No

Exercises, activities and tasks

33. Do they satisfy syllabus objectives?

Yes

No

34. If 'no' why?

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35. Are activities and tasks of problem-solving type?

Yes

No

36. Do the suggested activities and tasks encourage pair and group work?

Yes

No

37. Do activities and tasks promote autonomous learning?

Yes

No

Project work

38. Do you consider project work the most important part of the file?

Yes No

39. Do you consider the suggested projects in your textbooks as real-life tasks?

Yes No

40. Do you assign projects to your learners?

Yes No

41. Do your textbooks present the culture of the target language?

Yes No

42. Are the cultural aspects suitable to your learners?

Yes No

Your comments and suggestions:

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Thank you

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APPENDIX I : Learners' Questionnaire (Arabic)

أعزائي التلاميذ

اطلب منكم التكرم بالإجابة على الأسئلة المطروحة ادناه لمساعدتي في بحثي المتعلق بتحليل احتياجاتكم

من وراء دراسة الانجليزية

شكرا جزيلاً

I معلومات أساسية

المستوى الدراسي

سنة اولى ثانية ثالثة رابعة

الجنس

ذكر أنثى

العمر

II

1. موقفك من الانجليزية

لماذا تتعلم الانجليزية؟
1. الانجليزية لغة مهمة
2. لكي استعمل الانترنت
3. لاجتياز امتحانات اللغة الإنجليزية
4. لفهم الأغاني بالانجليزية
5. لزيارة البلدان الناطقة بالانجليزية
6. لفهم الأفلام الناطقة بالانجليزية
7. من أجل ألعاب الفيديو
8. أنا مجبر على تعلمها أنا لاحبها

2. مواضعك المفضلة

1. الرياضة
2. السفر
3. الانترنت
4. التكنولوجيا
5. الطعام
6. الموسيقى
7. العائلة
8. الموضة
9. الألعاب
10. الحكايات
11. المحيط
12. الصحة
13. الرسوم المتحركة
14. المسرح

3. جوانب اللغة

لا أحب	أحب	
		قواعد اللغة
		المفردات
		النطق

4. المهارات

لا أحب	أحب	
		الاستماع
		التحدث

		القراءة
		الكتابة

5. أفضل العمل

		بمفردتي
		في أزواج
		في مجموعات

6. أتعلم أفضل عندما

		أرى
		أستمع
		أستعمل يدي و جسمي

7. عندي مشاكل في

لا	نعم	
		الاستماع
		التحدث
		القراءة
		الكتابة
		قواعد اللغة
		المفردات
		النطق

Appendix II: Pupils' questionnaire (English)

Dear pupils,

I kindly request you to answer the below questions, by simply ticking **so please tick the appropriate box or column** to help me undertake my research that deals with the analysis of your needs.

Thank you very much.

Part I

Background Information

Level

1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year

Sex

Male Female

Age

Part II

Section 1

Attitudes towards English

Why do you learn English?

1. English is an important language	
2. To use the Internet	
3. To get good grades in English	
4. To understand songs in English	

5. To visit English speaking countries	
6. To understand films in English	
7. To play video games	
8. I am obliged to, I do not like it	

Section 2

Your Favourite Topics

1. Sports	
2. Travel	
3. Internet	
4. Technology	
5. Food	
6. Music	
7. Family	
8. Fashion	
9. Games	
10. Stories	
11. Environment	
12. Health	
13. Cartoons	
14. Theatre	

Section3

Favourite Language Areas

	I like	I do not like
Grammar		
Vocabulary		
Pronunciation		

Favourite Skills

	I like	I do not like
Listening		
Speaking		
Reading		
Writing		

Section 5

Preferred Learning Style

I prefer to work:

Alone	
In pairs	
In groups	

Section 6

Preferred learning Strategy

I learn best when

I see	
I hear	
I use my hands and body	

Section 7

I have problems in

Listening		
Speaking		
Reading		
Writing		
Grammar		
Vocabulary		
Pronunciation		

Appendix III : Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Fellow Teachers,

This questionnaire is part of a research work. It aims at evaluating middle school syllabuses and textbooks you are using or have used, namely **Spotlight on English 1, 2, 3** and **On the Move**.

You are kindly requested to contribute to this study, so please tick the appropriate box or give full statements when necessary.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration

I. General information

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age

Under 30

Between 30 and 40

Above 40

3. Degree from

University

Institut Technologique de l'éducation (I.T.E)

Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS)

4. Teaching experience

Less than 5 years

Between 5 and 10 years

Between 10 and 15 years

More than 15 years

5. Level(s) you are teaching or have been teaching

1st year (1AM)

2nd year (2AM)

3rd year (3AM)

II. Syllabus

6. Are the aims of the syllabus (es) you are using, or have used, clearly stated?

	Yes	No
1 st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Do the aims of the syllabus reflect the needs of your learners?

	Yes	No
1 st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. If 'no', why?

.....

.....

.....

9. Do the syllabuses you are using or have used provide consolidation of previously learnt knowledge?

Yes No

III. Textbook

Physical layout

10. Is the textbook's layout attractive to the intended learners?

	Yes	No
1 st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. If 'no', what aspects related to format are not motivational for your learners?

1. Size of the textbook
2. Type size
3. Clarity and simplicity of illustrations

12. Are the objectives stated in the textbooks derived from the overall aims stated in the syllabus?

Yes No

1 st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Approach

13. Do the textbooks comply with the advocated approach, namely the Competency-based Approach?

	Yes	No
1 st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. If 'no', please why

.....

.....

.....

Topics

15. Do the following textbooks cover a variety of topics

	Yes	No
1 st year textbook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year textbook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year textbook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year textbook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Are the topics covered, up-to-date?

	Yes	No
1 st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. If 'no', please why?

.....

.....

18. Which topics in your textbooks do your learners like most?

.....

.....

Grammar

19. Are the grammatical points put in contexts?

Yes No

20. Is the sequence of grammatical items in the textbooks from simple to complex?

Yes No

21. Do the grammatical items promote meaningful communication?

Yes

No

Vocabulary

22. Is the number of new words suitable for your learners?

Yes

No

23. If 'no', why?

.....
.....
.....

24. Are words presented in appropriate contexts?

Yes

No

25. If 'no', please why?

.....
.....

26. Do textbooks provide explicit strategies instruction?

Yes

No

Vocabulary and structure

27. Are new structures and vocabulary recycled for reinforcement?

Yes

No

Skills

28. Is there a balance in the distribution of the four skills?

Yes

No

29. Do textbooks provide any audio materials?

Yes

No

30. Do speaking materials help learners interact in real life?

Yes

No

31. Are there any explicit reading strategies in your textbook?

Yes

No

32. Are there any explicit writing strategies in your textbook?

Yes

No

Exercises, activities and tasks

33. Do they satisfy syllabus objectives?

Yes

No

34. If 'no' why?

.....
.....

35. Are activities and tasks of problem- solving type?

Yes

No

36. Do the suggested activities and tasks encourage pair and group work?

Yes

No

37. Do activities and tasks promote autonomous learning?

Yes

No

Project work

38. Do you consider project work the most important part of the file?

Yes No

39. Do you consider the suggested projects in your textbooks as real-life tasks?

Yes No

40. Do you assign projects to your learners?

Yes No

41. Do your textbooks present the culture of the target language?

Yes No

42. Are the cultural aspects suitable to your learners?

Yes No

Your comments and suggestions:

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Thank you

ملخص

تهدف هذه الأطروحة المتكونة من ستة فصول علاوة عن المقدمة والخاتمة إلى تقييم المناهج و الكتب المدرسية للغة الانجليزية للسنوات الأولى، الثانية، الثالثة و الرابعة متوسط، و هذا شعورا منا بوقع الوسائل التعليمية على المسار التعليمي - التعلّمي. نقطة الانطلاق كانت أسئلة طرحت من قبل الباحثة ترجمت إلى ثلاث فرضيات جاءت على النحو التالي:أولا كتب اللغة الانجليزية للطور المتوسط تلبى احتياجات التلاميذ،ثانيا هناك تطابق بين أهداف المناهج و الكتب المدرسية للغة الانجليزية و ثالثا الكتب المدرسية للغة الانجليزية توطد بعضها البعض. التحقيق الميداني المتمثل في استبيانين واحد موجه لأساتذة الطور المتوسط والآخر موجه للتلاميذ إضافة إلى قائمة مرجعية -من إنشاء الباحثة- مكنت من دحض الفرضيتين الأولى والثانية و إثبات الفرضية الثالثة.

بناءا على النتائج المتحصل عليها تم تقديم مقترحات متواضعة تهدف إلى الرفع من نوعية المناهج و الكتب المدرسية و الارتقاء بمستوى التلاميذ .

كلمات مفتاحية: تعليم- تقييم -مناهج - كتب مدرسية .

Résumé

La présente recherche essaie d'investiguer l'efficacité des programmes et manuels des première, deuxième, troisième et quatrième années moyennes d'anglais en termes de leurs réponses aux besoins des élèves et leur corrélation avec les objectifs tracés et aussi le degré de consolidation des contenus des manuels entre eux. Cette recherche est basée sur le rôle très important que joue le manuel scolaire qui est censé être une réflexion du programme dans le contexte de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage scolaire. Trois hypothèses ont été formulées pour trouver réponses à nos questions : premièrement, les manuels répondent aux besoins des apprenants ; deuxièmement, il y a une corrélation entre les objectifs, les programmes et les manuels scolaires ; troisièmement, les manuels scolaires se consolident. Deux questionnaires administrés aux apprenants et enseignants en plus d'une liste, auto-construite, de contrôle de l'évaluation des manuels ont aidé à infirmer les deux premières hypothèses et n'ont confirmé que la troisième. En conclusion, quelques recommandations pédagogiques ont été formulées en vue d'améliorer le scénario des programmes et manuels scolaires en Algérie.

Mots Clés : Education – évaluation- programmes- manuels scolaires.