

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Abou-Bekr Belkaid University –Tlemcen
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English



**Investigating the Effect of Formative
Assessment on Algerian Third Year
Secondary School Pupils' Text
Comprehension**

Thesis submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the
Degree of 'Doctorat' in English Language and Education

Presented by

Miss. Amina BOUMEDIENE

Supervised by:

Prof. Hafida HAMZAOU-ELACHACHI

BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Prof. Radia BENYELLES	Chairwoman	University of Tlemcen
Prof. Hafida HAMZAOU-ELACHACHI	Supervisor	University of Tlemcen
Prof. Nourddine GUERROUDJ	External examiner	University of Sidi-Bel Abbes
Dr. Habib YAHYAOU	External examiner	University of Mascara
Dr. Nawal MEBITIL	External examiner	University of Mascara
Dr. Naima BOUYAKOUB	Internal examiner	University of Tlemcen

2017-2018

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution. I also certify that the present work contains no plagiarism and is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Name of the candidate:

Miss/ Amina BOUMEDIENE

Date: 29/11/2017

Signature:

To my dear parents

To my family

To my friends

Acknowledgements

I would welcome this opportunity to acknowledge those who gave me a hand of assistance and whispered a word of encouragement:

First and Foremost, I am immeasurably grateful to my dearest teacher and supervisor Prof. Hamzaoui-Elachachi Hafida. I really cannot find words to express my gratitude to you dear professor, you have been so caring and immensely supporting throughout the work. Thank you very much indeed for your endless support and guidance, invaluable assistance, and pertinent suggestions. You are the best teacher and supervisor one can ever have.

I owe my deepest gratitude also to the members of jury, Prof Radia Benyelles, Prof. Nourddine Guerroudj, Dr. Habib Yahyaoui, Dr. Nawal Mebitil and Dr. Naima Bouyakoub who have accepted to read my thesis and offer their valuable comments.

I would also like to thank all the teachers in the English department for their encouraging comments and supporting spirit.

My heartfelt gratitude also goes to my dear friends: Nounou, Karim, Ghania and all my friends who supported me throughout the work.

Special thanks to the informants and all the persons who helped in a way or another to achieve this work.

Abstract

The formative assessment regimes have solved the conundrum of good learning practices in different contexts. However, in the Algerian secondary school context, formative assessment is quite restricted to the textbook. Moreover, it is not always used by teachers who most of the time resort to summative assessment. Accordingly, the leading motive behind the current research is to shed light on the importance of formative assessment in the teaching and learning processes by highlighting its effect on text comprehension. The latter represents a real challenge for Algerian secondary school pupils because it is necessary for successful performance of these pupils in tests and exams namely the “Baccalauréat” exam. For this purpose, this work first attempted to highlight pupils’ difficulties in text comprehension and the sources of these difficulties. Then, it moved to investigate the effects of formative assessment on Algerian pupils’ text comprehension. To reach these ends, this study was based on a quasi experimental research undertaken on 16 third year foreign languages pupils at Mohammed Mchernen secondary school, Tlemcen. This sample was purposefully chosen since they were required to sit for the ‘Bacalauréat’ exam. The researcher opted for a questionnaire, a pretest and a structured interview in the pre-intervention phase, she then launched the intervention which lasted 5 weeks; and finally she administered a post-intervention questionnaire and a posttest at the end of the intervention. The results obtained showed that formative assessment led to a significant progress in pupils’ outcomes in text comprehension in the four language competences namely: grammatical, textual, functional and sociolinguistic competences. It also raised pupils’ positive attitudes towards text comprehension in particular and language learning in general. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers implement formative assessment in the Algerian classroom as a way to develop text comprehension and the four language competences.

Table of Contents

Declaration of originality.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Tables.....	xi
List of Figures.....	xiii
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1

CHAPTER ONE: Formative Assessment

1.1. Introduction	8
1.2. Assessment, Testing and Evaluation.....	8
1.3. Assessment	9
1.3.1. A brief History of Assessment.....	11
1.3.2. Pillars of Assessment.....	12
1.3.3. Importance of Assessment in the Classroom.....	14
1.4. Types of Assessment.....	16
1.4.1. Informal Vs. Formal Assessment.....	16
1.4.2. Summative Vs. Formative Assessment.....	17
1.4.2.1. Summative Assessment.....	17
1.4.2.2. Formative Assessment.....	19
1.5. Features of Formative Assessment.....	20
1.6. Research on Formative Assessment.....	24
1.7. Importance of Formative Assessment.....	29
1.7.1. Importance for Students.....	29
1.7.2. Importance for Teachers.....	32

1.8.	Using Formative Assessment in the Classroom.....	34
1.8.1.	Before Instruction.....	34
1.8.2.	During Instruction.....	35
1.8.3.	After Instruction.....	36
1.9.	The Role of Feedback in Formative Assessment.....	37
1.10.	Teacher’s Role in Formative Assessment.....	41
1.11.	Students’ Role in Formative Assessment.....	44
1.11.1.	Self-Assessment.....	45
1.11.2.	Peer Assessment.....	48
1.12.	Conclusion	51

CHAPTER TWO: The Reading Skill and Text Comprehension

2.1.	Introduction.....	53
2.2.	Reading	53
2.2.1.	Reading Defined.....	53
2.2.2.	Purposes of Reading.....	56
2.3.	Reading in the Foreign Language teaching.....	58
2.3.1.	Reading in the Different teaching Methods.....	58
2.3.2.	Importance of Reading.....	59
2.4.	Historical Overview and Reading Models.....	61
2.4.1.	Bottom-Up Model	61
2.4.2.	Top-Down Model.....	63
2.4.3.	The Interactive Approach.....	64
2.5.	Teaching Reading	66
2.6.	Text Comprehension	71
2.6.1.	Lower Level Processes.....	74
2.6.2.	Higher Level Processes.....	74
2.7.	Reading Strategies.....	76
2.8.	Factors Affecting Text Comprehension.....	79

2.8.1. Background/ Prior Knowledge.....	79
2.8.2. Vocabulary and Linguistic Complexity.....	80
2.8.3. Goal Setting.....	80
2.8.4. Strategy Use.....	81
2.8.5. First Language Deficiency.....	81
2.8.6. Lack of Practice.....	82
2.8.7. Rhetorical Patterns.....	83
2.9. Text Comprehension Competences.....	83
2.9.1. Chomsky’s Model.....	84
2.9.2. Canale and Swain’s/ Canale’s Model.....	85
2.9.3. Bachman and Palmer’s Model.....	87
2.9.3.1. Individual Characteristics.....	88
2.9.3.2. Strategic Competence.....	91
2.9.4. Bachman and Palmer’s Model Applied to Reading.....	93
2.9.4.1. Individual Characteristics in Reading.....	93
2.9.4.2. Strategic Competence in Reading.....	95
2.10. Conclusion.....	96

CHAPTER THREE: Situation Analysis and Research Design

3.1 Introduction.....	99
3.2 Situation Analysis.....	99
3.2.1. ELT in Algeria.....	99
3.2.1.1. ELT Approach.....	101
3.2.1.2. ELT Objectives.....	103
3.2.2. ELT in the Secondary School.....	104
3.2.2.1. Time and Coefficient Distribution.....	105
3.2.2.2. Textbook Design “ <i>New Prospects</i> ”.....	106
3.2.2.3. Reading in “ <i>New Prospects</i> ”.....	110
3.2.3. Assessment in the Secondary School.....	113

3.2.3.1.	Formative Assessment in the Algerian Secondary School.....	113
3.2.3.2.	The “Bacalaureat” Exam.....	115
3.3.	Research Design.....	118
3.3.1.	Research Objectives.....	118
3.3.2.	Type of Research	118
3.3.3.	Research Instruments.....	121
3.3.3.1.	The Questionnaire.....	121
3.3.3.2.	The Interview.....	125
3.3.3.3.	The Tests.....	128
3.3.4.	Sample Population.....	131
3.3.4.1.	Pupils’ Profile.....	132
3.3.4.2.	Teachers’ Profile.....	133
3.3.5.	Research Procedure.....	134
3.3.6.	Data Analysis.....	134
3.3.6.1.	Qualitative Analysis.....	134
3.3.6.2.	Quantitative Analysis.....	135
3.4.	Conclusion	136

CHAPTER FOUR: Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1	Introduction	139
4.2	Pre-intervention phase.....	139
4.2.1.	Pupils’ Pre-intervention Questionnaire.....	139
4.2.1.1.	Results.....	139
4.2.1.2.	Interpretation.....	150
4.2.2.	Teachers’ Interview.....	152
4.2.2.1.	Results.....	152
4.2.2.2.	Interpretation	158
4.2.3.	Pretest.....	161
4.2.3.1.	Results.....	161

4.2.3.2. Interpretation.....	166
4.3 The Intervention Phase.....	167
4.4 The post-intervention Phase.....	173
4.4.1. Pupils' Post-intervention Questionnaire.....	174
4.4.1.1. Results.....	174
4.4.1.2. Interpretation.....	178
4.4.2. Posttest.....	180
4.4.2.1. Results.....	180
4.4.2.2. Interpretation.....	186
4.5 Discussion of the Main Results.....	188
4.6 Conclusion.....	193

CHAPTER FIVE: Suggestions and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction	196
5.2. Implementing Formative Assessment in the Algerian Classroom.....	197
5.2.1. Teacher's Role.....	197
5.2.1.1. Goal Setting.....	198
5.2.1.2. Students' Involvement.....	199
5.2.1.3. Increasing Motivation.....	200
5.2.1.4. Guided Instruction.....	202
5.2.1.5. Providing Feedback.....	202
5.2.2. Students' Role.....	205
5.2.2.1. Peer Assessment.....	206
5.2.2.2. Self Assessment.....	207
5.2.3. The Process of Formative Assessment.....	208
5.2.3.1. Feed-up.....	209
5.2.3.2. Feedback.....	211
5.2.3.3. Feed-forward.....	216
5.2.4. Criteria for Effective Formative Assessment.....	218
5.3. Developing Text Comprehension through Formative Assessment.....	220
5.3.1. Regular Practice.....	221
5.3.2. Guided Instruction.....	222
5.3.3. Raising Students' Motivation.....	223
5.3.4. Goal Setting.....	226

5.3.5. Extensive Reading.....	227
5.3.6. Developing Strategic Competence (Explicit Instruction).....	229
5.3.7. Designing Reading Tasks.....	236
5.4. Developing Language Competences through Formative Assessment.....	238
5.4.1. Grammatical Competence.....	239
5.4.2. Textual Competence	240
5.4.3. Functional Competence.....	241
5.4.4. Sociolinguistic Competence.....	242
5.5. Further Pedagogical Implications.....	242
5.5.1. Classroom Management for Effective Assessment.....	242
5.5.2. Time Load, Syllabus Length and Class Size.....	243
5.6. Conclusion.....	244
GENERAL CONCLUSION.....	246
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	253
APPENDICES.....	267
Appendix A: Pupils' Pre-intervention Questionnaire.....	268
Appendix B: Teacher's Interview.....	274
Appendix C: Pretest.....	277
Appendix D: Tests (the intervention).....	280
Appendix E: Posttest.....	293
Appendix F: Pupils' Post-intervention Questionnaire.....	296
Appendix G: Pupils' post-intervention Questionnaire Arabic Version.....	299

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Bloom’s initial conception vs. an enlarged conception of formative assessment.....	27
Table 1.2: the five “key strategies” of formative assessment.....	50
Table 3.1: The teaching methods, characteristics and the textbook.....	101
Table 3.2: The English teaching time load and coefficient in relation to the streams at the secondary school.....	105
Table 3.3: Taught Units in relation to the streams.....	107
Table 3.4: Teachers’ degrees and experiences in teaching.....	133
Table 4.1: Pupils’ difficulties in text comprehension.....	142
Table 4.2: Pupils’ use of global reading strategies.....	147
Table 4.3: Pupils’ use of support reading strategies.....	148
Table 4.4: Pupils’ use of problem-solving reading strategies.....	149
Table 4.5: The central tendency for the pretest.....	162
Table 4.6: Pupils’ scores in the three sections of the pretest.....	163
Table 4.7: Pupils scores in the pretest tasks.....	165
Table 4.8: Pupils’ pretest scores in terms of the language competences.....	166
Table 4.9: The intervention activities and their aims.....	171
Table 4.10: The taught reading comprehension strategies.....	172
Table 4.11: Pupils’ competences development in relation to text comprehension.....	177

Table 4.12: Pupils' developed strategies.....	177
Table 4.13: The central tendency of the posttest.....	180
Table 4.14: Pupils' scores in the three sections of the posttest.....	181
Table 4.15: Pupils' scores in the posttest's tasks.....	182
Table 4.16: Pupils' posttest scores in terms of the language competences.....	183
Table 4.17: Comparison of pupils' scores in the different tasks between the pretest and the posttest.....	184
Table 4.18: Comparison of pupils' scores in the language competences in the pretest and the posttest.....	185
Table 4.19: Comparison of pupils' overall scores in the pretest and the posttest and the mean value.....	185

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: the Cycle of Instruction with Formative Assessment.....	23
Figure 2.1: Model of reading process.....	60
Figure 2.2: Bottom-up model of reading.....	62
Figure 2.3: top-down model to reading	63
Figure 2.4: Description of Bachman and Palmer’s Model.....	92
Figure 2.5: Application of Bachman and Palmer’s Language ability on reading.....	95
Figure3.1: A sample of reading lesson in “New Prospects”	111
Figure 3.2: Research design.....	136
Figure 4.1: Pupils’ difficulties in the English exam.....	141
Figure 4.2: Pupils scores in the pretest	163
Figure 4.3: Description of the intervention phase.....	169
Figure 4.4: Pupils’ developed rubric.....	176
Figure 4.5: pupils’ scores in the posttest.....	181

General Introduction

General Introduction

Assessment is a part and parcel of the teaching-learning process; it is responsible for checking students' progress and determining whether the stated objectives are met. Assessment can have different manifestations including: summative and formative; each of these has certain criteria. As far as the Algerian secondary school teachers are concerned, they tend to use assessment over a long period of time, this assessment is used to verify students' outcomes, grade them and make decisions accordingly, such type of assessment is known as summative assessment. Though summative assessment plays a major role in the students' evaluation, it remains insufficient to know students' progress and to diagnose the main areas of weaknesses and lacks, and this is the essence of formative assessment. The latter which takes the form of ongoing regular assessments throughout a learning course reveals many benefits for learning and teaching as well. There are many works in the literature which concur that formative assessment regimes are very likely to improve learning outcomes. The well-known work within this area is the one of Black and William (1998) who investigated the effects of formative assessment all over the world using a meta-analysis of more than 200 reports. The conclusions reached reveal that formative assessment does improve learning. On the basis of this work, many researchers explored formative assessment in different contexts and with various aspects including language skills. For the present study, formative assessment is explored in relation to text comprehension.

The focal role that reading plays in educational arenas and everyday life makes the development of this skill a necessity. Indeed, reading is an important and a vital language skill which assists readers to gain knowledge and also helps learners to foster other skills (writing, speaking and listening). The importance of reading lies in the fact that it is responsible for the other skills development, besides its intricacy as it covers a set of mental operations which require the students to endow much time and energy to comprehend a given text. The complexity of reading can be clearly observed in the interaction between different levels of processes (high-level, i.e., use of reading strategies and low-level processes, i.e., linguistic ability in reading), it is the effective use of these

General Introduction

processes and the ability to make them interact together which generates comprehension. Reading in a foreign language is considered much more difficult than reading in one's first language as the student has to take many points into consideration including: mastery of grammatical patterns, good background regarding vocabulary and many other aspects. These aspects can be thought of in terms of Bachman and Palmer's model of language ability (1996) which encompasses four major competences: grammatical, textual, functional and sociolinguistic. Each of these competences covers a given area in reading either in higher-level processes or in lower-level processes. Accordingly, weak reading comprehension constitutes one of the major impediments towards high achievement and successful learning. Indeed, text comprehension is considered as a difficult task to be achieved by many EFL learners, and the Algerian secondary school pupils are a case in point. Therefore, the development of this competence is the concern of many Algerian teachers.

Accordingly, the motive behind this study is Algerian secondary school pupils' low achievement in text comprehension in spite of the importance of the latter for successful performance in examinations namely the Baccalureat exam and later in tertiary studies. The researcher believes that the development of text comprehension can be achieved thanks to ongoing assessment which will lead to practice of texts guided by teacher's feedback, in sum thanks to formative assessment. Yet, before investigating the impact of formative assessment on text comprehension, assessment will be used to identify pupils' difficulties in text comprehension and the sources of these difficulties.

The significance of the present study lies in offering a model of formative assessment which can be used to enhance Algerian pupils' competences in learning in general and in text comprehension in particular. Additionally, the study aims also at improving pupils' outcomes in text comprehension mainly in the baccalaureate exam for the long-term.

Drawing from all these considerations, and in order to reach the stated objectives, the researcher strives to provide answers to the following questions:

General Introduction

1. What are the most salient pupils' difficulties in text comprehension?
2. What are the factors behind pupils' problems in text comprehension?
3. How does formative assessment develop pupils' text comprehension?
4. What changes can formative assessment bring in terms of students' achievements and attitudes towards text comprehension?

These questions represent the framework leading the present research, thus, in order to thoroughly examine them, we hypothesize the following:

1. Pupils' difficulties in text comprehension are related to the four language competences mainly the grammatical competence.
2. The major factors behind pupils' problems in text comprehension are due to lack of practice inside the classroom, lack of reading outside the classroom and poor use of reading strategies.
3. Formative assessment highlights learners' difficulties in text comprehension and this helps the teachers to assist his pupils to overcome their problems through intensive feedback, and the learners to monitor their progress.
4. Formative assessment enhances pupils' achievement through regular practice of text reading and comprehension, and develops language competences. This, in turn, will lead them build up positive attitudes towards text comprehension.

In order to reach the above stated objectives, explore the research questions, and test the hypotheses, a quasi experimental research design is used. Sixteen secondary school pupils receive an intervention which lasts for five weeks. The sample population is third year pupils at Mohammed Mchernen secondary school, Ben Sekran (Tlemcen). Prior to the intervention, the pupils are given a pre-intervention questionnaire while teachers are given a structured interview, in addition to a pretest; all these research instruments help the researcher to draw a clear picture about the pupils' proficiency level and accordingly design the intervention. The latter is a set of baccalaureate exam samples practiced regularly and guided by extensive feedback provided by the teacher. The post-intervention phase is characterized by the use of two research instruments: a posttest and a

General Introduction

questionnaire, these two instruments help the researcher in comparing pupils' scores in the pretest and the posttest, in addition to their attitudes and views about the intervention. Accordingly, the researcher opts for a mixed-method approach for data analysis including: the qualitative and the quantitative approaches. The two methods help the researcher to effectively analyze the data gathered. Additionally, a full exploration of the research issues necessitates the exploration of theoretical bases underpinning this research. Accordingly, the work is divided into two main phases a theoretical one and a practical one. The work is then purposefully divided into five chapters.

In chapter one, the researcher offers the theoretical frame for formative assessment. The chapter delineates the literature related to formative assessment starting from a broad definition of assessment and the importance of the latter in the teaching and learning processes. In addition to the different types of assessment with a close reference to formative assessment as a major component in the present work. The researcher also offers a brief history of research on formative assessment and highlights its importance; she further provides its different components and the role of the teacher and the student in the process.

In chapter two, the researcher will still strive to provide the theoretical background for her research work. This chapter is devoted to reviewing the literature related to text comprehension and the reading skill. At the beginning the researcher seeks to provide a definition to reading within the foreign language context. Moreover, the different models of reading are offered and the ways through which reading can be taught. In addition to the main features characterizing text comprehension. Finally, the competences of the latter are provided in relation to certain models of language ability mainly the model proposed by Bachman and Palmer (1996).

The third chapter is divided into two main parts: the first one sheds light on the Algerian educational system with a close reference to the research main issues. The second part sets the practical basis driving the research work including the research objectives, design, procedure and the data analysis procedures.

General Introduction

Chapter four is entirely devoted to data analysis. The analysis is put under three headings: data related to the pre-intervention phase, the intervention phase, and the post-intervention phase. The researcher employs both qualitative and quantitative methods for analyzing the data obtained, finally the research findings are discussed.

The last chapter exploits the results obtained to provide suggestions and recommendations. It mainly focuses on promoting effective formative assessment practices in the Algerian educational system, and offers a formative assessment model based upon three major phases: feed-up, feedback and feed-forward (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). Additionally, the chapter strives to offer a framework for developing text comprehension and the main language competences through formative assessment according to the results of this study.

CHAPTER ONE: Formative Assessment

1.1. Introduction	8
1.2. Assessment, Testing and Evaluation.....	8
1.3. Assessment	9
1.3.1. A brief History of Assessment.....	11
1.3.2. Pillars of Assessment.....	12
1.3.3. Importance of Assessment in the Classroom.....	14
1.4. Types of Assessment.....	16
1.4.1. Informal Vs. Formal Assessment.....	16
1.4.2. Summative Vs. Formative Assessment.....	17
1.4.2.1. Summative Assessment.....	17
1.4.2.2. Formative Assessment.....	19
1.5. Features of Formative Assessment.....	20
1.6. Research on Formative Assessment.....	24
1.7. Importance of Formative Assessment.....	29
1.7.1. Importance for Students.....	29
1.7.2. Importance for Teachers.....	32
1.8. Using Formative Assessment in the Classroom.....	33
1.8.1. Before Instruction.....	34
1.8.2. During Instruction.....	35
1.8.3. After Instruction.....	35
1.9. The Role of Feedback in Formative Assessment.....	37
1.10. Teacher's Role in Formative Assessment.....	41
1.11. Students' Role in Formative Assessment.....	44
1.11.1. Self-Assessment.....	45
1.11.2. Peer Assessment.....	47
1.12. Conclusion	50

1.1. Introduction

Formative assessment represents one of the key factors of success in the educational field in general and in language learning in particular. The term has sparked the interest of many researchers who attempt to give it a comprehensive definition relevant to its main pillars, while others attempt to draw on the principles of this term with regard to various contexts and instances to check its effectiveness. Researchers agree on the fact that formative assessment enhances learning gains and help teachers to be successful in their classrooms.

The current chapter aims to explore one of the work's key words which is formative assessment. The chapter starts broadly and ends narrowly. Accordingly, the chapter is initiated with a distinction between assessment, evaluation and testing followed by a definition of the term assessment with its related intricacies including a brief history about the term and its main pillars and with a close reference to its importance in the classroom. The researcher steps forward to talk about different types of assessment. Subsequently, the researcher starts narrowing her scope by defining formative assessment, its main features then a brief survey of research in this area is offered. The researcher also sheds light on the importance of formative assessment. Then, the use of formative assessment in the classroom is introduced with its different stages. The role of feedback in the process of formative assessment is highly influential, for that reason the researcher devotes a section to stress the role of formative feedback. Finally, the teacher's and students' roles in the process of formative assessment are portrayed.

1.2. Assessment, Testing and Evaluation

Before digging into the meaning of assessment it is important to clarify associated terms. In the language learning classroom, one can encounter different terminology which can be thought of as synonyms, a vivid example of such a situation occurs in the following list: assessment, evaluation and testing. Brown (2003) states that tests are part of assessment, and that assessment can occur through different procedures and test is one

of these procedures. He clarifies that a test is “a method of measuring a person’s ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain” (Brown, 2003: 3), the way and the criteria of measuring depend on the context and on the individual. The difference between test and assessment lies in the fact that the former occurs in a given point of time throughout the year, i.e., “identifiable times in a curriculum when learners master all their faculties to offer peak performance, knowing that their responses are being measured and evaluated” (Brown, 2003:3); while assessment is an ongoing process which occurs on a regular basis.

Regarding the difference between assessment and evaluation, a lot has been echoed hither and thither about the two terms including those who see the terms as different aspects and others who use the terms interchangeably, and some view assessment as part of evaluation (Scriven 1967). Nunan (1992: 185) makes a clear distinction between the two terms and states: “assessment refers to the processes and procedures whereby we determine what learners are able to do in the target language... Evaluation on the other hand, refers to a wider range of processes which may or may not include assessment data”. In this way, then, assessment is process-oriented while evaluation is product-oriented.

1.3. Assessment

On the basis of the above discussion concerning the difference between assessment, evaluation and testing, one can conclude that assessment is a process which is based upon identifying students’ abilities in a given area, in this regard Richards and Schmidt (2002: 35) point out that assessment is “a systematic approach to collecting information and making inferences about the ability of a student or the quality or success of a teaching course on the basis of various sources of evidence”. Accordingly, assessment can cover different ranges but in the present study the researcher is concerned with learner assessment.

Assessment is an important aspect and a crucial part that should be integrated in the classroom as it is regarded as “a form of communication” between different parties in

education including: learners (feedback on their learning), teachers (feedback on their teaching), curriculum designer (feedback on the curriculum), administrators (feedback on the use of resources) and employees (quality of job applicants) (McAlpine 2002)). For the sake of making this communication more meaningful and useful different aspects should be taken into account including (adapted from McAlpine 2002):

- The purpose of assessment should be well-established in relation to students' needs and lacks.
- The assessment should be valid in terms of its relevance to the skill or ability being assessed, and reliable in terms of the achieved results.
- The assessment should have a reference to which it is measured, this reference can be: other candidates, objective criteria or the candidate's own performance in another area.
- The assessment items should be within the candidates' reach i.e. "a good assessment ought to be at about the difficulty level of the average candidate" (McAlpine, 2002: 5)
- The grading system of the assessment should be clear and easy to understand.

Different parameters should be taken into account when designing an assessment including reasons behind this assessment and these entail: "the information that you want to get out of the task, the uses that you will put that information to, how much time and effort you are able to devote to it, what information you wish to convey to students and others" (McAlpine, 2002: 6), the teacher, then, should have control over all these points in order to have valid and effective assessment.

Assessment goes through various paradigms; each paradigm has its own characteristics, the next section offers a brief history of assessment in relation to these paradigms.

1.3.1. A Brief History of Assessment

According to Serafini (2000) assessment passed through three major paradigms which are: assessment as measurement, assessment as procedure, and assessment as enquiry, this division according to Serafini is related to the shift from the positivist to the constructivist view. Assessment as measurement is the traditional approach to assessment; it is based on the behaviouristic theory of learning (Birenbaum 1996), this traditional approach to assessment is characterized by decontextualized knowledge (unrelated to students' experience), in-class administration (Dochy 2001 cited in Falchikov 2005) and delayed feedback (Radnor and Shaw 1995 cited in Falchikov 2005), in this paradigm of assessment, the teachers have little or no input to the decision making process, and therefore the results of these assessments is not used to direct the classroom and make decisions (Rothman, 1996 cited in Serafini 2000). The second paradigm is "assessment as procedure", as the name implies, the main concern of this paradigm is the assessment procedure rather than the underlying purposes of assessment (Falchikov, 2005), in describing this category of assessment Daly uses the term "methodolatry" which means "an overemphasis on the correct method of doing things, rather than on the purposes for doing those things" (cited in Serafini 2000: 386), therefore it focuses in the first place on the way assessment is conducted. This paradigm is similar to the previous one in the fact that the results held by the assessment are not used to inform future instruction but to measure students' achievement and to inform stakeholders, hence the teachers are outside the decision-making process, their work is to measure the students objectively and report the information yielded to external audience(Serafini, 2000).

The third paradigm is assessment as enquiry¹, it is characterized by the inclusion of metacognitive component and the contextualization of knowledge (Birenbaum 1996), it

¹ : Different terminologies were given to this paradigm: Radnor and Shaw name it 'reconciliation model', Allal and Ducrey (2000) call it 'dynamic assessment movement', while Reynolds and Trehan (2000) term it 'participative assessment'. In addition to different names within this category: authentic assessment (Torrance 1995a), autonomous assessment (Brown and Glanser 1999), competence-based assessment, performance assessment, and sustainable assessment (Boud 2000), (cited in Falchikov 2005) these terminologies are derived from the underpinning of this paradigm.

focuses on the assessment of the process rather than the product, it is “a process of inquiry, and a process of interpretation, used to promote reflection concerning students’ understanding” (Serafini, 2000: 387). This paradigm is, therefore, different from the previous ones regarding the purpose of assessment and the degree of teachers’ and students’ involvement in the process, moreover, the major purpose is to understand the individual learner’s progress. The assessment as inquiry paradigm focuses on the alternative ways of assessment which consider the student as the focal point in the assessment process and change the role of the teacher towards new direction which is mainly providing feedback. Additionally, both the teacher and the students are involved in the assessment process, they are “viewed as active creators of knowledge rather than as passive recipients” (Wells, 1984 cited in Serafini 2000: 387). The teacher uses the assessment’s results to inform future instruction and to facilitate learning, and the students are involved in the process in lieu of being just a tool to measure the results in relation to external audience. Assessment within this paradigm is based on interaction between the teacher and the students, and the assessment process is seen as an integral part of the learning process not separate from it.

In the present work and as the focal point is formative assessment, the researcher is more concerned with the last paradigm of assessment as it meets the underpinnings of this type of assessment.

1.3.2. Pillars of Assessment

As far as assessment in education is concerned, Falchikov (2005: 01) gives seven pillars upon which assessment is based viz.

- (1) Why assess?
- (2) How to assess?
- (3) What to assess?
- (4) When to assess?
- (5) Who assesses?

(6) How well do we assess?

(7) What next?

The first pillar “why assess?” is concerned with the purposes of assessment and how these purposes are best used to assist students in their learning since the driving purpose is directly related to students’ needs. According to Falchikov (2005: 4), the purposes of assessment can be grouped under two categories: summative and formative. The summative purposes include selection, accountability, and effective monitoring; while formative purposes consist of motivation, feedback and learning improvement.

The second pillar of assessment is concerned with the methodology used while assessing that is: how to assess? Different distinctions have been offered regarding the way to assess: qualitative vs. quantitative, process vs. product, continuous vs. terminal, internal vs. external, convergent vs. divergent, idiographic vs. nomothetic, and obtrusive vs. unobtrusive. Quantitative approach to assessment is analytic and based on grading and marking while the qualitative approach is based on description and on specific criteria in addition to the degree of match between objectives and student achievement. Product assessment include traditional activities such as examinations and tests, process approach involves class participation, presentations, etc. Continuous method of assessment means regular assessment such as coursework, while terminal assessment is limited to the end of a module or course such as examinations (Rowntree 1987 cited in Falchikov 2005). Another contrast is related to internal and external assessment, the former denoting assessment which occurs inside the institution by teachers and students, and the latter refers to assessment occurring outside the institution hold by external parts e.g. supervisors. The convergent vs. divergent distinction is associated to Hudson’s study (1967): “a convergent test is one which has correct or predictable answers, while a divergent test has many possible answers, relying on the creativity and interpretation of the testee” (Falchikov, 2005: 7).

Another division of assessment is concerned with idiographic and nomothetic, idiographic assessment deals with smaller population, it includes diary keeping, portfolios, and records of achievement, it is found within action and ethnographic research. Nomothetic approach is concerned rather with gathering data from larger population and uses different methods such as: the questionnaire. The last distinction of assessment is related to obtrusive and unobtrusive types, the obtrusive assessment occurs when the students are informed that they are being assessed while the unobtrusive assessment is done without being signaled (Falchikov 2005).

The third standard presented by Falchikov deals with the content of assessment: what to assess? This pillar includes different areas ranging between traditional assessments and new alternative ways of assessments. The subsequent pillar is related to the timing of assessment: when to assess? It can be associated to summative and formative assessment or terminal and continuous assessment. The fifth pillar asks the question of who assesses? This point is related to those who do the assessment or sources of assessments, they can be: teachers, tutors, self, peer, and so on. The next pillar deals with how well do we assess? This question is related to the quality of assessment including: reliability, validity and standards. The last pillar is related to the next step after assessment: What next? Where the teacher uses information gathered in assessment to inform future instruction.

Drawing from all these pillars, one can posit that assessment is an important aspect of the teaching and learning process. Indeed, the importance of assessment in the classroom is highlighted by different researchers.

1.3.3. Importance of Assessment in the Classroom

Assessment is very important for many reasons; one point to start with is the fact that teaching, learning and assessment are interrelated. As one cannot talk about teaching without learning, he cannot talk about these two processes without assessment. Assessment is one of the main features of teaching, it is “the only way that we can know

whether what has been taught has been learned” (William, 2010: 18). Indeed, teachers cannot predict what their students have learned without the use of assessment, hence teachers cannot know the extent of their teaching efficacy only through assessment, it acts as a bridge between learning and teaching. At this level it is necessary to recall Brown’s words when he states that teaching and assessment are partners (2000); he explains further this claim and offers a set of points that assessment is likely to offer in the classroom:

- Periodic assessment, both formal and informal (see section 1.4.1 below) can increase students’ motivation.
- Assessment can push learners to set their own learning goals.
- Assessments encourage retention of information through the offered feedback.
- Assessment can provide a sense of periodic closure to various units and modules of a curriculum: mainly summative assessment (see section 1.4.2 below).
- Assessment encourages students’ self-evaluation. Accordingly, it encourages their autonomy by knowing their areas of weaknesses and areas of strengths.
- Assessment is a way to evaluate teaching effectiveness.

In the same regard, O’Farrell (2009) sets a number of functions which assessment is likely to serve in the classroom; the points she raised are similar to those of Brown (2000).

Assessment is critical in the learning process since it frames it, creates learning activities and orients aspects of learning (Gibbs, 2006). It is only through assessment that the teacher can know about his students’ performance and progress, it allows him to check the progress of each individual learner by making connections between the actual level and the desired level with a close reference to the stated objectives. Additionally, it allows the teacher to know the students’ lacks and areas of weaknesses and therefore paves the way for better learning; it is therefore “the defining feature of effective instruction” (William, 2010: 18). Through assessment the teacher can know the students’

level and accordingly adjust instruction in order to meet the learning goals, this feature of assessment is in fact the core of formative assessment, later sections of the research will provide further explanations of this point.

Assessment in the foreign language learning context represents a major area because it is the only way through which the teacher can determine what students have learned. It helps students to direct their attentions to important things, represents an incentive for study, and communicates to them their points of weaknesses and points of strengths. Additionally, it develops self-confidence for future tasks (Boud and Falchikov 2007).

In a nutshell, the importance of assessment in the teaching-learning process cannot be denied; assessment can have a great influence on learning and teaching as suggested by Boud (1988 qtd. in Race 2015: 97): “Assessment methods and requirements probably have a greater influence on how and what students learn than any other single factor. This influence may well be of greater importance than the impact of teaching materials”. However, in order to be more effective the teacher should employ different types of assessment in the classroom to ensure that the taught points are fully attained by the students.

1.4. Types of Assessment

Researchers have identified different types of assessment including: Informal vs. formal, formative vs. summative assessment. Each of these will be addressed in details.

1.4.1. Informal Vs. Formal Assessment

According to Brown (2003: 5) informal assessment: “can take a number of forms, starting with incidental, unplanned comments and responses, along with coaching and other impromptu feedback to the student”. Informal assessment is a random type of assessment that occurs all the time in the classroom. The teacher regularly assesses students work through, for example, “marginal comments on papers, responding to a draft

of an essay, advice on how to better pronounce a word, a suggestion for a strategy for compensating for a reading difficulty, and showing how to modify a student's note-taking to better remember the comment of a lecture" (Brown, 2003: 5-6). Therefore, teachers are sometimes unaware that they use such kind of assessment as it occurs unconsciously. Besides informal assessment is not based on making judgments about students' work but rather giving supporting comments such as: "*good*", "*carry on*", "*you have mistaken in such thing...*" and so on.

As opposed to the previous one, formal assessment is systematically designed and "constructed to give teacher and student an appraisal of student achievement" (Brown, 2003: 6); such type of assessment can be confused with the test, however, one point to keep in mind is that all tests are seen as formal assessments but not all formal assessment is testing, i.e., formal assessments are not intended to make judgments but only to have an idea about students' level, an example may include: gathering information about students' level through journals and portfolios; tests, on the other hand are more directed to making judgments, they are time-constrained (Brown 2003). Formal assessment is therefore based on assessing students' performance in a given area but it is not intended to make final decisions.

1.4.2. Summative Vs. Formative Assessment

One point to start with is the fact that the summative and formative manifestations of assessment are viewed not only as types of assessment but also as purposes of assessment because of their nature. Indeed, in relation to the summative/formative distinction, Popham (2008: 7) points out that it is the purpose of assessment which divides it into either formative or summative: "it is not the nature of the test that earns the label formative or summative but the use to which that test's results will be put". The same idea is shared Falchikov (2005) who posits that the answers to the questions "why assess?" can be put under two main categories: summative and formative.

1.4.2.1. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is defined by Cizek (2010: 3) in terms of its criteria, he points out that summative assessment has two criteria: “(1) it is administered at the end of some unit (e.g. unit, semester, school year); and (2) its purpose is primarily to characterize the performance of a student or a system; that is main purpose is to obtain measurement of achievement to be used in decision making”, it is therefore intended to make judgments about students’ performance as it is administered at the end of a course. Giving students diagnostic information about their progress is not among the parameters of this type of assessment.

Bloom et.al state that the main characteristic of summative assessment is that “a judgment is made about the student, teacher, or curriculum with regard to the effectiveness of learning or instruction after the learning or instruction has taken place” (1971, qtd. in Cizek, 2010: 5). The results supplied through summative assessment are not improvement-based but rather grade-based since they do not provide constructive feedback for teachers and students alike in order to improve learning. Accordingly, the purposes of summative assessment include: grading, certification, evaluation of progress, or research on the effectiveness of a curriculum, course of study, or educational plan (Bloom et.al 1971, cited in Cizek 2010). In addition to ensuring whether the students met required standards, and as a method for selecting students for entry into further education (OECD, 2005: 21)

Put briefly, summative assessment is used at the end of a course to judge the overall performance; it focuses on global rather than individualized learning (McMillan, 2007). Regarding the Algerian secondary school context, summative assessment is found within the school year through three main exams which are grade-based and mainly intended to make decisions for students’ performance which will allow them to pass to higher levels; in addition to tests known as “*les devoirs*” which carry the same objective of the exam. Summative assessment is also portrayed in Algerian national exams

including BEM¹ and BAC, the former allows the students to pass to the secondary school while the latter provides them with the opportunity to enter higher education: the university.

1.4.2.2. Formative Assessment

While summative assessment asks questions like: ‘are we there yet?’ or ‘have we arrived at the intended learning destination, formative assessment asks rather about the route taken to reach the goal and teachers’ assistance in this journey (Greenstein, 2010). Formative assessment has evoked the interests of different researchers who tried to approach the term in various contexts.

Formative assessment or assessment for learning (Gipps 1994) as many researchers call it is “a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students’ achievement of intended instructional outcomes” (FAST SCASS² 2006 Qtd in Popham, 2008: 5), what is relevant from this definition is the fact that formative assessment is a process rather than a product, i.e., it contains different steps which occur throughout a teaching-learning course, this process is based on feedback which is intended to make adjustments and aims at improving learning outcomes, the expression “used by teachers and students” is a connotation of self- and peer assessment. In the same line of thoughts, Popham (2008: 6) proposes a terse definition to formative assessment when he states that it is “a planned process in which teachers or students use assessment-based evidence to adjust what they are currently doing”. What Popham adds is the point that formative assessment is a planned process, that is, it does not occur at random and it does not involve one particular test but rather it is a multistep process. The adjustments which formative assessment offers should be placed on the spot i.e. when the course is still available and not at the end of it. Thus, essentially, formative assessment is an ongoing assessment process which

¹ : Brevet de l’Enseignement Moyen.

² :Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers is part of State Collaborative on Assessment and Students Standards

attempts to provide students with constructive timely feedback that helps them in achieving their learning goals and enhance their achievements. Regarding the frequency of practice of formative assessment, there are many views as stated by William (2013) some think that it should be used in every day-to-day interactions while others consider interim assessment¹ also as formative assessment, William (2013:15) further suggests that the term “formative should apply not to the assessment but to the function that the evidence generated by the assessment actually serves”, this correlates with the early mentioned claim of Popham (2008) who suggests that formative assessment is a purpose rather than a type. A thorough understanding of formative assessment necessitates an understanding of its features.

1.5. Features of Formative Assessment

Formative assessments is based on the “idea that evidence of student achievement is elicited, is interpreted, and leads to action that results in better learning than would have been the case in the absence of such evidence” (William, 2010: 18) i.e. in formative assessment classroom the teacher gathers data from students, interprets these data to identify students’ proficiency level and then acts in accordance with this interpretation. Accordingly, there are three principles which constitute the defining framework of formative assessment (William and Thompson 2007, William 2013):

- Establishing where learners are in their learning.
- Establishing where they are going
- Establishing how to get there

In the same regard, and with a more elaborated view, Allal and Mottier Lopez (cited in OECD, 2005: 247) propose that formative assessment is lead by four major elements:

¹ : Interim assessment means assessment that occurs periodically every six to eight weeks hence it is somewhere between formative assessment and summative assessment.

- The actions that teachers and students actually carry out to alter a learning gap or to arrive at a shared vision of learning objectives.
- The degree of active student involvement in these actions.
- The uses students make of tools and resources present in the instructional environment to adapt or enrich their learning.
- The meaning attributed by teachers and students to assessment practices.

These elements promote a formative assessment culture in the classroom and enhance teacher-student interaction. Indeed, formative assessment is a collaborative process between students and educators; it is the nexus of educational improvement as Greenstein (2010) puts it. Moreover, it is a reflective process in the sense that it uses actual students' level of learning including weaknesses and strengths to guide future instruction.

Cizek (2010: 4) further offers basic criteria related to formative assessment when he states that formative assessment is based on some purposes including, but not limited to, "to identify the students' strengths and weaknesses; to assist educators in the planning of subsequent instruction; to aid students in guiding their own learning, revising their work, and gaining self-evaluation skills; and to foster increased autonomy and responsibility for learning on the part of the student". Formative assessment is also characterized by its non-evaluative aspect i.e. it "avoids assignment of penalties, grades, or other accountability-related consequences" (Cizek, 2010: 6). Drawing from all these criteria, one can state that formative assessment offers an ample scope for teachers and students also to improve learning and increase achievements.

Formative assessment is a student-focused approach in which "students become personally involved in monitoring and adjusting how they are attempting to learn" (Stiggins and Popham 2008, Qtd. in Greenstein, 2010: 142). As a matter of fact, the consideration of formative assessment in the classroom has changed the roles of teacher and learner by considering this latter as an active partner in the teaching-learning process. At this level it is important to step back and consider Serafini's paradigms, by analogy

formative assessment is similar to the third paradigm proposed by Serafini i.e. assessment as enquiry, they lie upon the same canopy of principles.

Formative assessment is a goal-oriented process as Greenstein (2010: 105) puts it: “in a formative classroom, learning is regularly compared to goals, and instruction is adjusted accordingly”, in view of that formative assessment is based on regular ongoing assessment which aims at improving students’ learning outcomes in relation to specific objectives.

Greenstein (2010) reports that formative assessment is a reporting-in process as opposed to reporting out i.e. the reporting-out process of assessment is one in which students’ level and achievements are reported to people outside the classroom including: parents, administrators etc. while in a reporting-in process data about students’ level and achievement are maintained inside the classroom and adjust students’ learning.

Formative assessment can be conducted through different methods and by several sources including: traditional classroom tests, observations, oral questioning, class discussions, projects, homework, group work with peer feedback, and student self-assessment (Cizek 2010: 7). Regardless to the method through which the teacher gathers formative assessment data, its purpose remains “the gathering of information for the purpose of adapting teaching and learning to the current functioning and future needs of students” (Cizek, 2010: 7). In the same line of thought, it is the purpose of the assignment which dictates the method to be used for formative assessment and what the teacher wants to extract from students necessitate the use of a certain method rather than another, regarding this point, George and Cowan (1999: 26) suggest that teachers should “plan evaluation by choosing a method or methods appropriate to what [they] or [their] course team want to know rather than [...] choosing a method for no relevant reason”. Therefore the teacher should be sensitive when choosing the method of assessment on the basis of the course objectives and goals.

Instructions related to formative assessment are also critical for its success or failure as declared by Greenstein: “what teachers and students need is assessment and instruction that are conceived as a unit, employed as a unit, and applied as a unit” (2010: 24); Greenstein summarizes the main instructional principles related to formative assessment:

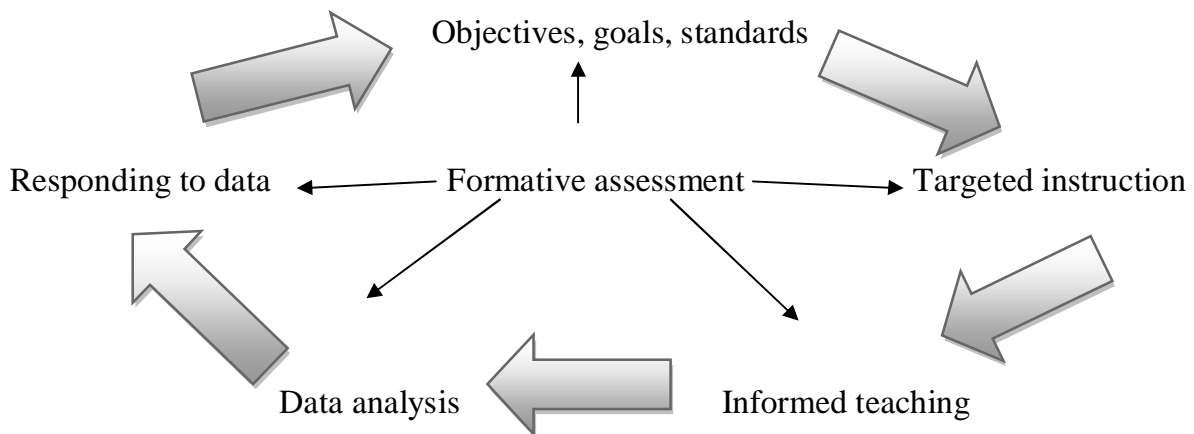


Figure 1.1: the Cycle of Instruction with Formative Assessment (Greenstein, 2010: 24)

The teacher first states the objectives clearly to the learners. Targeted instruction is related to learners’ level and differentiated instruction. The interaction between the teacher and the learner informs teaching and what needs to be done in the future. The teacher then analyses the data gathered via this interaction, and finally he responds to this data in relation to the stated objectives. These principles occur in a cyclical manner in the process of formative assessment.

It is necessary to combine all these principles for a sound formative assessment to occur as Greenstein further states: “it is through the weaving together of all the principles that high-quality formative assessment arises and the blending of assessment and teaching occurs” (Greenstein, 2010: 24).

Worth noting is the fact that formative assessment does not call for an exclusion of standardized large-scale and summative assessments but rather it attempts to create a balance in the assessment stage which leads to effective learning because: “the use of standardized tests alone as a measure of knowledge does not typically lead to improved learning” (Greenstein, 2010: 26). Moreover, the results drawn from summative assessment can be used to inform formative assessment as Abedi (2010: 188) points out: “findings from summative assessments can be applied in developing reliable and valid formative assessments”. As a matter of fact, summative assessment and formative assessment are two sides of the same coin.

Put briefly, Black and William (1998a: 53) remark: “assessment is formative only when comparison of actual and reference levels yields information which is then used to alter the gap”, therefore, formative assessment is driven by the fact that the students actual level and desired level are compared and the information gathered from this comparison are used to inform instruction. In the following section, a glimpse on the research on formative assessment is offered.

1.6. Research on Formative Assessment

Formative assessment as a practice existed throughout history for example with Socrates asking his students questions and using their responses as a guide for future instruction and a measure for their understanding (Greenstein 2010). However, it was till the 1960’s that formative assessment start to exist as a term with Michael Scriven (1967) who first coined the term and also distinguished between formative and summative assessment where he suggests: “summative evaluation provided information to judge the overall value of an educational programme ..., whereas the results of formative evaluation were targeted at facilitating programme improvement” (cited in Bennett, 2011: 6); at that time formative assessment was not gaining ground. In 1971, Bloom and his associates (Hastings and Madaus) made the term formative assessment more popular and more recognizable through the introduction of ‘*Handbook of Formative and Summative Evaluation of Students Learning*’, besides they provide a more elaborated definition,

according to them formative assessment is: “the use of systematic evaluation in the process of curriculum construction, teaching and learning for the purpose of improving any of these three processes” (1971 qtd in Cizek 2010: 6). Over the following years, formative evaluation changes into formative assessment as it was, and is still, concerned with student’s learning inside the classroom.

Subsequent years witnessed a welcome move towards formative assessment and a wide exploration of the term in relation to different issues; Bloom (1977 cited in Greenstein 2010), for instance, identifies two aspects related to formative assessment: feedback for students and corrective conditions for all important components of learning. Moreover, he asserts that data gathered from formative assessment can be used to divide the class into groups on the basis of students’ performance, and this can in turn assists teachers to select appropriate teaching strategies and suitable corrective feedback with regard to individual student’s needs.

In 1988, Terry Crooks investigated the effects of classroom assessment practices (formative assessment) on students learning and motivation, he came to the conclusion that classroom assessment “appears to be one of the most potent forces influencing education. Accordingly it deserves very careful planning and considerable investment of time from educators” (1988: 476). One year after, Sadler (1989) investigated formative assessment in relation to the design of instructional systems and draws the conclusion that: “instructional systems which do not make explicit provision for the evaluative expertise are deficient, because they set up artificial but potentially removable performance ceilings for students” (1989, 119) which means that instructional systems which do not provide effective feedback to students are poor, this is just another way to emphasize the importance of formative assessment and formative feedback in students’ learning. Sadler further states that one way to improve learning outcomes is self-monitoring including self-assessment which is a key component in formative assessment: “a key premise is that for students to be able to improve, they must develop the capacity to monitor the quality of their own work during actual production” (1989: 119).

Then in 1998 comes the oft-cited and highly influential research of Paul Black and Dylan William who investigated formative assessment through a meta-analysis which lasted about nine years , they reviewed approximately 250 reports in the area of formative assessment. Black and William’s meta-analysis was concluded by the fact that “formative assessment does improve learning” (1998a: 61). They assert other conclusions which were summarized by Greenstein (2010: 22):

- The success of formative assessment is highly related to how teachers use it to adjust teaching and learning practices.
- Effective learning is based on active student involvement.
- Enhanced feedback is crucial to improve outcomes.
- There is a link between formative assessment and self-assessment.

This work was followed by a summary under the title: “*Inside the black box*” (1998b) in which Black and William further assert that “formative assessment is an essential component of classroom work and that its development can raise standards of achievement” (1998b: 139). The work of Black and William gives more ground to formative assessment and build a strong basis upon which formative assessment practices all over the world can be defined and conducted. Accordingly, several research works have been conducted in the area. Indeed, formative assessment was applied to different areas of education including not only language learning but also content areas.

In 2004, William, Lee, Harrison and Black investigated the effects of formative assessment on science and math classes through an experiment, the 24 teachers participating in the study were trained to use formative assessment during six months, they found that formative assessment has a considerable influence on the afore-mentioned classes. During the same year, Ruiz-Primo and Furtak also examined formative assessment within science classes and concluded that there is a positive relationship between teachers’ formative assessment practices and students’ learning.

There were also many formative assessment works that were web-based. Sly (1999 cited in Dunn and Mulvenon 2009), for instance, investigated the influence of formative assessment among Curtin university students using a computer-managed learning assessments, and found that students who participated in formative assessment significantly outperform those who did not in the exam.

Worth noting is the fact that formative assessment initially (Bloom et.al 1971) was conducted at the end of each unit, however, subsequent works (Allal 1979, 1988; Perrenoud 1998b cited in OECD 2005) contrasted Bloom’s view and call for the integration of formative assessment within instructional activities, using formative assessment in such an integrated way needs different ways of assessment including: formal (paper-pencil tests, quizzes etc.) and informal (direct observation, classroom discussions etc.) ways to elicit students’ understanding (Allal and Mottier Lopez cited in OECD 2005). Allal and Mottier Lopez (2005) offer a thorough differentiation between the two views:

Table 1.1: Bloom’s initial conception vs. an enlarged conception of formative assessment (OECD, 2005: 245)

Bloom’s initial conception	An enlarged conception
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insertion of FA after a phase of teaching • Use of formative tests • Feedback+ correction→ remediation • Management of FA by the teacher • Instruction given to all students • Remediation benefits the students who were assessed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of FA in all learning situations • Use of varied means of data collection • Feedback+ adaptation of instruction→ regulation • Active student involvement in FA • Differentiation of instruction according to individual students • Regulation at 2 levels: for the students assessed, for future students (continuing instructional improvement)

The two views are contrasted in terms of the period of assessment, the methods used, the degree of students' and teachers' involvement in the process, the feedback and the instruction provided.

As far as regulation is concerned, there are three types in relation to formative assessment: interactive regulation, retroactive regulation and proactive regulation (Allal 1979, 1988 cited in OECD 2005: 245).

- **Interactive regulation:** is when formative assessment relies on interaction between the student and other components of the classroom (teacher and other students), in other words it provides students with feedback from the teacher and the classmates.
- **Retroactive regulation:** is the identification of the attained and non-attained objectives after the completion of formative assessment, such identification paves the way for remediation of weaknesses and procedures to overcome them to attain the non-attained objectives.
- **Proactive regulation:** attempts to “insure enrichment and consolidation according to student needs, rather than focusing on remediation of learning difficulties” (Allal and Mottier Mopez 2005: 246), it is related to the teacher's differentiated instruction that attempts to cope with individual student's needs i.e. students' differences and new instruction to cope with these differences.

All of them are combined in the new view of formative assessment, and they are equally important. Interactive regulation promotes informal assessments to depict students' level; retroactive regulation uses more formal assessments to identify uncovered points in the interactive regulation, and proactive regulation takes into account different information available to enhance future performances i.e. it offers a plan for differentiation of instruction.

An important point to rise at the end of this section is concerned with the shift from formative to summative assessment; the reasons for the shift from summative to formative

manifestation of assessment, and the urge call for implementing formative assessment in the classrooms are due to the following facts (adapted from Cizek 2009):

- Formative assessment has the potential to provide missing linkages between classroom practice and large-scale assessments.
- It represents the next best hope for promoting greater achievement gains for students.

Indeed, formative assessment represents a successful component in the classroom, in what follows is a consideration of the importance of formative assessment in the classroom.

1.7. Importance of Formative Assessment

Different research works (Heritage et al. 2009; Herman et al. 2006, Popham 2008, Black and William 1998, Shepard 2000) came to the conclusion that formative assessment is useful for learning improvement, it is “one of the most important interventions for promoting high-performance ever studied” (OECD 2005: 22). For this reason, different parties are calling for the implementation of formative assessment in the classroom for its beneficial aspects. In what follows, the importance of formative assessment is highlighted in relation to students and teachers.

1.7.1. Importance for Students

Formative assessment is the best step through which students can enhance their level and achieve progress, as Cizek (2010: 4) suggests: “formative assessment offers great promise as the next best hope for stimulating gains in student achievement”. Moreover, it is used as a bridge between classroom practices and large-scale assessments (summative assessment), in other words, it acts as a support to summative assessment. Therefore, formative assessment is used to assist learning and improve future performance. Additionally, the aspect of regularity found within formative assessment

practices tends to make students accustomed with the atmosphere of assessment and hence reduce any anxiety in summative assessments.

Formative assessment develops students' thinking processes, according to McMillan (2007: 1) formative assessment is related to the students' cognitive processes: "formative assessment helps students see the connections and clarify meaning in small, successive steps as new knowledge is related to existing understanding". Additionally, it helps students to move from "knowledge and understanding to the higher cognitive levels of synthesis, analysis, and application" (Greenstein, 2010: 36). Hence, it develops students' cognitive skills which are highly influential in learning.

Formative assessment develops students' critical thinking and metacognitive skills since one of its pillars is self-assessment which permits students to monitor and evaluate their own learning. As a result, it gives them a sense of responsibility for their own learning as Greenstein (2010: 69) posits: "including students in the assessment process tends to inspire a feeling of agency in their own learning". Indeed, formative assessment provokes learner autonomy as it raises students' responsibility for their own learning; it develops this sense of responsibility through enhancing students' 'learning to learn' skills (metacognitive strategies) (OECD, 2005: 23) by:

- Placing emphasis on the process of teaching and learning, and actively involving students in that process.
- Building students' skills for peer and self-assessment.
- Helping students understand their own learning, and develop appropriate metacognitive strategies.

One aim of formative assessment is to reduce the negative attitudes related to evaluation by for instance "reducing the judgmental aspects of evaluation" (Bloom et.al 1971, Qtd in Cizek 2010: 6) simply because formative assessment is not based upon judging students but rather assisting them through providing feedback. Formative assessment is then the key to school improvement in general as suggested by Greenstein

(2010: 26): “the pathways to school improvement are lined with formative assessment”, when the results of formative assessment are used to inform instruction better standardized scores can be easily achieved.

Formative assessment is also a key factor in increasing students’ motivation and self-confidence, this conclusion has been reached by Miller and Lavin (2007 cited in Abedi 2010) in their study where they examined the effect of formative assessment on students’ self- esteem and found that “students demonstrated a greater degree of self-competence and became more aware of the learning process” (Abedi 2010: 183). Margolis and McCabe (2006 cited in Greenstein 2010) also demonstrate that formative assessment with its different features (feedback, self-assessment and goal setting) can enhance students’ self-efficacy. Formative assessment consideration of student as central in the teaching learning process promotes students responsibility about their own learning and enhance their motivation towards goals achievement.

Formative assessment helps mainly low achievers (Black and William, 1998b; Greenstein, 2010; Cizek, 2010) to perform well as it gives them always new opportunities to be better and to achieve well, in addition to new strategies needed for success. Formative assessment also helps students with special needs and learning disabilities (Black and William, 1998b; OECD; 200;, Cizek, 2010), in such ways, then, formative assessment promotes equity between students with diverse learning needs as it focuses on individual students’ weaknesses and attempt to cure them. English language learners, for instance, may face difficulties in comprehending the instructional and assessment materials because of the linguistic complexity and the cultural bias, formative assessment can be used to help students to overcome such complexities, moreover, it can be used by the teacher to identify and control them (Abedi, 2010). Additionally, sometimes students are good learners, however, lack of intention given to them may lead them to be passive learners, and it is formative assessment which plays the main role in bringing such students back to the classroom and to the learning environment.

In this way, then, formative assessment is useful since it is used as a tool to inform students about their abilities and weaknesses paving the way for progress as it is based on day-to-day interaction between the teacher and the students, it “refers to frequent, interactive assessments of student progress and understanding. Teachers are then able to adjust teaching approaches to better meet identified learning needs” (OECD, 2005: 13). Therefore, formative assessment foments interaction between teachers and students. In the same vein, Cizek (2010) comments that formative assessment allows the attainment of information about students’ strengths and weaknesses in a non-evaluative context where the students and the teacher can interact easily and set future instructions on the basis of the attained information and in relation to the target objectives.

1.7.2. Importance for Teachers

According to Black and William (1998) formative assessment is at the heart of effective teaching. Regular formative assessment offers opportunities for teachers to uncover students’ learning needs, weaknesses, strengths and interests and to plan instruction accordingly.

Formative assessment is also beneficial to the teacher as it allows him to modify the content of his teaching according to the students’ situation as Popham (2008: 7) puts it: “one component of formative assessment process is for teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional activities”, hence the implementation of formative assessment in the classroom assists teachers to be better prepared to respond to their students’ needs. Moreover, it makes their teaching more effective and fruitful as it “has the happy effect of helping successful teachers be accurately regarded as successful” (Popham, 2008: 13, 14). Formative assessment provides teachers with insights about what their students are learning and how well they are progressing, and accordingly adapt instruction in relation to students’ needs and learning goals (Greenstein 2010).

The OECD (2005) summarizes the benefits of formative assessment into the following:

- Improvements in the quality of teaching: teachers using formative assessment “develop their ability to scaffold learning goals for students and to adapt instruction to meet individual learning needs” (OECD, 2005: 72), and this promotes effective and meaningful teaching.
- Stronger relationships with students: as formative assessment is based on interaction between the teacher and students, consequently this interaction leads to strong relationships which in turn promote a teaching learning environment that is more comfortable and more fruitful.
- Different and better work products from students: students enhance their level of achievement towards betterment.
- Greater student engagement: formative assessment helps the teacher to engage his students in the learning process.
- Gains in academic achievement, and greater attention to the weakest students: formative assessment enhances learning outcomes not only of active students but also low achievers can benefit and enhance their achievement level as they are given enough attention and feel themselves engaged in the learning process.

Put briefly, formative assessment is a beneficial tool for both students and teachers as it “can help teachers teach better and learners learn better” (Popham, 2008: 14); it is a tool which is used to customize future instruction on the basis of present students’ needs and interests. Though it is not the ‘silver bullet’ which can solve all educational issues, formative assessment promote good opportunities to enhance learning and achievement by addressing goals for high performance, promoting high equity of students outcomes and enhancing students’ life-long learning skills (OECD, 2005). Therefore, formative assessment *raison d’être* is to improve learning; it represents a key component to effective instruction and learning. Yet, the effective use of formative assessment in the classroom is driven by the effectiveness of the different stages this process goes through.

1.8. Using Formative Assessment in the Classroom

One point to start with is the fact that it is the way that the teacher approaches a given task which makes it a formative one i.e. if the teacher gives his students a given task and judges or grades them at the end of it then this task is related to summative assessment while if he gives the same task but just supplies students with feedback about their learning then this task is formative. However, to make formative assessment a terse and efficacious process, teachers should employ a set of well-defined strategies with clearly-determined goals and objectives that are primarily and chiefly intertwined with students' needs and weaknesses. Accordingly, teachers using formative assessment in their classrooms should be aware of the fact that it represents "as a whole a planned strategy carried out to improve learning" (Greenstein, 2010: 31).

Like any other process, formative assessment passes through three phases: prior to instruction, during instruction, and post instruction, besides it goes without saying that the second stage represents the core of this process and the one which has seminal influence on it, yet, the other two stages are also important and play major role in the success of the process. The first phase is critical as it paves the way for accurate instruction and the last one is essential for the fact that it measures the success of formative assessment. Worth noting is the fact that sometimes these phases are done within one session.

1.8.1. Before Instruction

Pre-formative assessment stage is important because it supplies the teacher with the information needed to "make accurate diagnoses and prescriptions for learning" (Greenstein, 2010: 39), through this teachers use correct strategies related to each student's level and avoid redundant and unnecessary content during instruction. Teachers cannot measure growth in learning without knowing the starting point (Greenstein, 2010: 39). Pre-formative assessment phase is also useful to "clarify the gap between current and desired achievement levels" and "identify sources of incoming information" (Greenstein 2010: 44).

Before starting formative assessment, the teacher can employ different ways to gather data to inform instruction. One and most famous ways is that of pretests which “have been around for a long time and can be used to quickly determine a student’s background knowledge” (Greenstein, 2010: 39). For an effective pre-formative assessment activities related to this phase should be: “ungraded, brief, nonthreatening, and targeted toward instructional improvement” (Greenstein, 2010: 44) because the aim behind them is to identify students’ level and not to embarrass them. Asking students about some psychological variables is equally important as asking them about prior knowledge and actual level, hence, in the pre assessment stage, the teacher has to ask questions which he thinks are influential for students learning e.g. attitudes, motivation, etc. this step can be fulfilled through a questionnaire or an interview. It is essential to organize the gathered data in order to know what aspect to focus on more, what kind of interventions to plan and how to guide instruction.

1.8.2. During Instruction

This phase is simply the intervention, at this level the teacher starts implementing the decided-on instruction on the basis of the pre-formative assessment data. The teacher can instruct students either individually or in groups for differentiated intervention depending on their level of understanding of a given point. The teacher can assess students either in groups or individually through different ways including: tests, questions during the lesson etc. In the same vein, students can demonstrate their understanding through a variety of ways such as: writing, verbal explanation or signaling (Greenstein, 2010).

Boston (2002) proposes different ways through which formative assessment can be conducted in the classroom including (adapted from Boston, 2002):

- Have students write their understanding of concepts before and after instruction.
- Ask students to summarize the main ideas they have taken from a lecture or discussion.

- Have students complete few problems or questions at the end of instruction and check answers.
- Interview students individually or in groups about their thinking.
- Assign brief, in-class writing assignments.

It is important and crucial to keep assessing students during the intervention phase and not wait till the end of it to assess students because before all this is the essence of formative assessment: regular, ongoing assessment.

1.8.3. After Instruction

The last phase when implementing formative assessment chiefly aims at measuring the success of the intervention, as well as it is the last opportunity before summative assessment and can clarify things further as suggested by Greenstein: “this last assessment will identify areas in which students could use a bit more clarification, practice, or reinforcement before a summative assessment” (2010: 103). This last stage can be also seen as a pre assessment stage in a long course of instruction i.e. data gathered at this level can be used to inform future formative assessment; hence it is an ongoing intertwined process.

According to Greenstein (2010) this phase of formative assessment can be done through a variety of strategies that are based mainly on review and summary of what has been learned. Additionally, at this level students can use self-assessment or peer assessment which are highly effective in developing students’ learning and critical thinking skills. Greenstein (2010) includes peer and self-assessment in this last phase because: first, concerning peer assessment students cannot understand the essence of assessment till the end of instruction, before they do not have a full mastery of the assessed area, and therefore they cannot assess their peers’ works; second, students need more practice and guidance in order to be able to effectively assess their own work or the work of their peers.

In a study conducted via the examination of eight case studies, the OECD (2005) asserts that the use of formative assessment in the classroom lies upon six principles viz.

- Establishment of a classroom culture that encourages interaction and the use of assessment tools.
- Establishment of learning goals, and tracking of individual student progress toward those goals: enables students to perform well and teachers to diagnose individual student's level, and hence makes learning a clear, well-determined process.
- Use of varied instruction methods to meet diverse student needs: teachers tend to adjust their teaching to cope with different students' needs.
- Use of varied approaches to assessing student understanding: because there are students who do not perform well in a given approach while they do better in another e.g. doing well in writing and failing in verbal communication, so the teacher should offer different assessment approaches on the basis of students' preferences.
- Feedback on student performance and adaptation of instruction to meet identified needs: students need to be provided by timely constructive feedback which assists in enhancing learning outcomes, besides teachers need it to have a closer look on students' level.
- Active involvement of students in the learning process: equipping students with the appropriate strategies that enable them to learn by themselves not only inside the classroom but also in real life situations (life-long learning).

The stated principles are tightly related to Allal and Mottier Lopez enlarged conception of formative assessment. When these elements exist together in the classroom, they promote effective powerful formative assessment. What can be clearly observed from all the above mentioned phases of formative assessment is that the notion of feedback is strongly present in every aspect of the process; accordingly the following section will examine the role of feedback in the process of formative assessment.

1.9. The Role of Feedback in Formative Assessment

Feedback is any input including comments, information and suggestions that one receives after performing a given task and is said to be an empowerment to the person involved as William (2010: 19) states: “the defining feature of feedback is that the information generated within the system must have some effect on the system”, Ramaprasad (1983: 4) views feedback as “information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way”, feedback is therefore used as a support to learning, it acts as a bridge between students’ actual level and the desired level.

In investigating the distinction between formative and summative assessment, one key component between the two is feedback. While summative assessment provides feedback which is “often too little, too late” (Herman and Baker, 2005: 48), formative assessment offers ongoing feedback which can improve learning before it is too late (Abedi 2010: 182). Indeed, what students really need is constructive feedback that show them the way to achieve their learning goals rather than feedback which tells them whether they have reached these goals (Greenstein 2010, 26). Thus, the role of feedback in formative assessment is crucial and critical.

Feedback is therefore, a key component in formative assessment; Black and William (1998b: 140) asserts that formative assessment is “all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged”, in the same vein Irons (2008: 7) suggests, defining formative assessment, “Any task or activity which creates feedback (or feed-forward) for students about their learning” . Therefore, feedback is the defining feature of formative assessment; it is a crucial and important step when conducting formative assessment in the classroom.

When dealing with the role of feedback, Gipps (1994: 129) states that feedback “contributes directly to progress in learning through formative assessment”, which means

that feedback is best defined in the context of formative assessment which paves the way for it to be terse and efficacious. Frey and Fisher (2011) also emphasize the importance of feedback as a way to improve students' achievement. Moreover, Race (2015: 97) views assessment as “the engine that drives learning” and feedback as “the oil that lubricates the cogs of understanding”, he further suggests talking about the lack of formative assessment in the classroom: If students do not have “a clue about how they are doing, a negative mindset can easily develop, leading to a downward spiral and ultimate drop-out.” (2015: 101). Thus, feedback in formative assessment is an essential tool that aids learning and teaching as well, this kind of feedback enables: “students to restructure their understanding/skills and build more powerful ideas and capabilities”, and help teachers also to: “realign their teaching in response to learners' needs” (Juwah et.al 2004: 3), it yields many gains for both the teacher and the student. Feedback, hence, is regarded as a two-edged sword for formative assessment since it represents the canopy upon which it rests on the one hand, and the other the results of formative assessment are used for feedback to both teachers and students.

Feedback generated through formative assessment refines learning, consolidates the objectives and foster students' intrinsic motivation (Cizek, 2010). However, in order to attain all these benefits and reach a high level of utility formative feedback should have some characteristics as Boston puts it: “the most helpful type of feedback on tests and homework provides specific comments about errors and specific suggestions for improvement and encourages students to focus their attention thoughtfully on the task rather than on simply getting the right answer” (2002: 1), such kind of feedback is helpful mainly for low achievers. In the same vein Cizek (2010: 8) provides some feedback criteria that are mainly useful in the formative assessment classroom, it should be: “non-evaluative, specific, timely, related to the learning goals, and provides opportunities for the student to revise and improve work products and deepen understandings”. Formative feedback should not be redundant but rather it should be structured and well defined according to students' needs and lacks in order to achieve substantial learning gains.

Formative assessment in relation to feedback is based on four major elements as Black and William (1998a) propose:

- Data on the student's current level of performance.
- Data on the expected/ reference level of student's performance.
- A mechanism based on comparison of the two levels and generation of data about the gap existing between the two levels.
- A mechanism which uses the data generated to alter the gap.

As a matter of fact, Sadler (1989: 121) also states criteria of effective feedback which are closely related to those of Black and William, according to Sadler for feedback to be more influential students must:

- Possess a concept of the standard (or goal, or reference level) being aimed for.
- Compare the actual (or current) level of performance with the standard.
- Engage in appropriate action which leads to some closure of the gap.

Therefore, in order to make feedback beneficial it is necessary for students first to be aware of their actual level and also be aware of the learning objectives leading to the desired level. Moreover, students need to compare their actual level with the desired one in order to be able to take actions that bridge the gap existing between the two levels and enhance their learning.

O'Farrell (2009) summarizes the importance of formative feedback in the following points, formative feedback:

- Builds students' self-confidence.
- Motivates students to improve their learning.
- Provides students with enough information about their progress.
- Identifies strengths and weaknesses, and correct errors.

Last but not least, the feedback generated by formative assessment should go hand in hand with each individual student's needs because "while a particular kind of feedback might make one student work harder, it might cause another student to give up" (William, 2013: 18), for this reason the teacher should be first knowledgeable about his students' level, and second careful when providing feedback to the students. Moreover, the teacher should offer feedback which is not arbitrary but rather it should be structured and tightly linked to the learning goals. Moreover, the timely feedback orients students towards the learning goals as early as possible (Gibbs, 2006), because the structured timely feedback allows the students to see the link clearly between what is taught and what is assessed. Accordingly, the teacher's role in the process of formative assessment is important and this is the essence of the next section.

1.10. Teacher's Role in Formative Assessment

Before digging into the role of the teacher in the formative assessment classroom it is important to point out that teachers using formative assessment are more successful in their teaching since they are prepared to meet diverse students' needs and to raise their achievements and learning outcomes.

Formative assessment calls for a change in roles between teachers and students, i.e., roles of teachers and students are altered. Accordingly, teachers need to be aware of that change and make their students also concerned with it as Perrenoud remarks: "every teacher who wants to practice formative assessment must reconstruct the teaching contract so as to counteract the habits acquired by his pupils" (1991 qtd. in OECD 2005: 233). Therefore, teachers using formative assessment offer to their students opportunities to be more responsible for their own learning and lie fine-grained ground for learner autonomy, they "guide students toward development of their own 'learning to learn' skills" (OECD, 2005: 22).

One of the focal areas for teachers using formative assessment is being knowledgeable about the students' needs. In addition to knowledge about students'

learning styles and strategies as formative assessment is based upon differentiated instruction for individual students. The teacher should also be careful when providing feedback to students, he should pay attention to “timing and specificity of feedback he provides to students, more attention to scaffolding of questions, and greater focus on students’ learning-to-learn skills” (OECD 2005: 71). Furthermore, as formative assessment is based on interaction teachers need to interact more with the students checking for understanding and relating students’ level with intended goals.

Through formative assessment, teachers can carefully examine areas of weakness on students’ level and hence try to reduce and remedy them as Greenstein (2010: 141) points out: “teachers in a formative classroom point out progress as well as deficiencies and, most importantly, offer strategies and resources for overcoming shortfalls”. In order to do so, teachers need to have knowledge about different points and also a set of skills. Starting with the area of knowledge teachers need to have four major elements which include: Domain knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of students’ previous learning and knowledge of assessment (Heritage, 2007).

- **Domain knowledge:** teachers should have knowledge regarding the domain they are dealing with including knowledge of concepts and skills; they should also know the criteria of good performance in that domain. Such type of knowledge allows the teacher to follow the progress of his students in a logical way and link this progress to the learning goals.
- **Pedagogical content knowledge:** this type of assessment provides the teacher with necessary tools to adapt the teaching situation in general including the teaching method, teaching strategies, etc. so that he can use instructions relevant to his students’ needs and level, therefore, “teachers will need differentiated instructional strategies and a knowledge of how to use them in the classroom” (Heritage, 2007: 4). Pedagogical content knowledge is therefore important for the teacher using formative assessment as one of the main criteria of this latter is differentiated instruction.

- **Knowledge of students' previous learning:** in the formative assessment classroom, students' previous learning is very important since it maps the route of learning in general. According to Heritage (2007), knowledge of students' previous learning includes different areas including: knowledge of their attitudes and their language proficiency level.
- **Assessment knowledge:** teachers should have knowledge about the essence of formative assessment in order to “maximize the opportunities for gathering evidence” (Heritage, 2007: 4). Teachers also need to know how to link formative assessment practices with the learning objectives within the frame of learning progression.

As far as skills are concerned, Heritage posits that the teacher using formative should possess a set of skills in order to be successful in his classroom. The skills include:

- **Creating classroom conditions that allow for successful assessment:** the teacher has to create a classroom culture that supports formative assessment; this culture is based on involvement of students in the assessment process through self and peer assessment. This will give students the opportunity to express themselves in the classroom and to be more responsible and autonomous towards their learning. The classroom culture also includes “recognition and appreciation of individual differences” (2007: 5), the teacher should establish classroom atmosphere which is based on communication and interaction between him and his students and between students also. This communication generates constructive feedback and makes the students more comfortable and safe in the learning environment.
- **Teaching student self and peer assessment:** the teacher should teach students how to assess their own work and the work of their peers; he should develop their metacognitive skills in learning including: self-monitoring and self-evaluation, in addition to enhancing their autonomy and independence, students, then, “can recognize when they do not understand, when they need to do something about it, and what they can do to improve” (2007: 5). In the same scope, the teacher can

teach students how to give constructive feedback through modeling to students diverse ways to give feedback.

- **Interpreting evidence:** the teacher should know how to interpret the assessment data correctly by drawing inferences from students' responses in relation to the learning objectives. The teacher, then, supplies his students with feedback which is likely to enhance their level.
- **Matching instruction to the gap:** "teachers need the skills to translate their interpretations of the assessment results into instructional actions that are matched to the learning needs of their students" (2007: 6), this is based primarily on differentiated instruction, the teacher needs to employ effective strategies to bridge the gap between students' actual level and desired level.

During formative assessment all these skills come into play for a fruitful assessment. As already stated formative assessment is an interactive process between the students and the teacher, in view of that students also play a focal role in the process. The success of formative assessment requires ongoing exchange of ideas between these two parties: the teacher and the student.

1.11. Student's Role in Formative Assessment

As already stated, formative assessment promotes learning autonomy and raises students' sense of responsibility through developing their 'learning to learn' skills. Developing such skills prepare students to life-long learning as they (students) develop a wide range of strategies including: learning to judge the quality of their own work (self-assessment) and the quality of others' work (peer assessment), and setting well-defined learning goals (OECD, 2005).

Students in the formative assessment classroom play an important role; they represent the internal source of feedback as they generate feedback to themselves and to their peers. For this reason, students in the formative assessment classroom have to be more active: "for the students, they have to change from behaving as passive recipients of

knowledge offered to becoming active learners who could take responsibility for their own learning” (OECD, 2005: 233). Students’ involvement in the formative assessment process develops their critical thinking (Greenstein, 2010), they will be able to think comparatively and understand things more clearly. Moreover, they promote reflection (Topping, 2010; Brew, 1999) where the students reflect on their peers’ comments through negotiation.

1.11.1. Self-Assessment

According to Boud (1991, qtd. in Boud, 1995: 12) self assessment is: “the involvement of students in identifying standards and/ or criteria to apply to their work and making judgments about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards”, it is, therefore, characterized by students’ knowledge and awareness of the learning goals. As a matter of fact, students should be aware of the learning goals in order to base their assessment on these goals. Black et.al (2004, Qtd. in Andrade and Brooke 2010: 76) also consider the fact of the learning goals and state: “students can achieve a learning goal only if they understand that goal and can assess what they need to do to reach it”, they concluded their claim by stating that self-assessment is essential to learning. Indeed, self-assessment enhances many critical areas on the language learner including: autonomy and responsibility: two main areas which are highly recommended in the prevailing teaching methodology in today’s world i.e. Competency Based Approach, and also in the last assessment paradigm proposed by Serafini: assessment as inquiry.

As far as formative assessment is concerned, bearing in mind that it draws on the same principles of assessment as inquiry, and it calls for students’ involvement in the assessment process, self-assessment represents a focal point in the process. Andrade and Boulay define self-assessment in formative process as a process “during which students reflect on the quality of their work, judge the degree to which it reflects explicitly stated goals or criteria, and revise their work accordingly” (2003, Qtd in Andrade, 2010: 91), self assessment, therefore, invites students to think carefully and critically about their own

work rather than relying on the teacher, for this reason self-assessment is a key element of formative assessment (Andrade 2010). The main aim behind the insertion of self-assessment in the formative assessment process is to enhance learning as it acts as “a readily available source of feedback about the students’ own understanding and performances” (Andrade, 2010: 92). Self-assessment is therefore not about signing grades, it is rather based upon feedback generated by students themselves; Andrade (2010) posits that signing grades is the essence of self-evaluation. Spiller (2009) suggests a set of advantages of self-assessment:

- Self-assessment helps students to check their own progress towards the learning goals, and hence the recognition of these goals allows for higher achievements.
- Encourages students’ reflection and autonomy and raise their motivation towards learning.
- Accommodates diversity of learners’ readiness, experience and backgrounds.
- It deepens students’ understanding

For an effective self-assessment, students need to have enough skills as pointed out by Brew (1999: 160): “students need systematic practice in judging their own work and getting feedback on their ability to do so”, hence it is the teacher’s role as a prompter which is responsible for doing this, he should open discussions with his students about self-assessment in order to make them aware of the essence of this kind of assessment. Goodrich (1996) summarizes the main characteristics of effective self-assessment (cited in Andrade 2010):

- Awareness of the value of self-assessment.
- Access to clear criteria on which to base the assessment.
- A specific task or performance to assess
- Direct instruction in and assistance with self-assessment including feedback.
- Practice
- Cues regarding when it is appropriate to self-assess.

- Opportunities to revise and improve the task or performance.

These characteristics should be established by the teacher once he decides to engage his students in self-assessment to make them more interested in the process and to make the process more valuable. By the same token, Boud (1995) posits that effective self-assessment entails:

- *A clear rationale*: the teacher should establish the purpose behind this activity.
- *Explicit procedures*: students should be told about what is expected from them
- *Reassurance*: the teacher should ensure a safe environment which can help students to be honest, and not afraid to express themselves.
- *Confidence*: the teacher ensures that all students will do the same, and he has to detect and discourage any cheating or collusion.

Self-assessment allows the students to monitor their own learning, being aware of the learning goals leads to good achievements, in addition to developing necessary skills of life-long learning (Boud, 1995). This actually fosters students' motivation to learn and progress.

What is criticized about this type of assessment is the unreliability of assessment results (Gardner 2000). However, in an attempt to encourage self-assessment in the classroom, Gardner (2000: 53) suggests: "reliability is an issue that needs to be kept in mind but it is one which should not prevent self-assessment from being tried", therefore, it is recommended that self-assessment should be done under the supervision of the teacher who will check by himself whether the assessment's results are reliable or not.

Implementing self-assessment in the classroom requires a good preparation and a special care from the part of the teacher in order to have good results, according to Muñoz and Alvarez (2007: 4): "if students are trained and pass through different stages of support and guidance, they can self assess their language ability with reasonable accuracy",

therefore, teachers have to know the different parameters of self assessment in order to guide and control their students during this process.

1.11.2. Peer Assessment

Another source of external feedback, in addition to the teacher, is related to peers. Peer assessment “involves students making judgments about, or commenting upon, each other’s work” (Brew, 1999: 160), judgments include both marking and feedback. This type of assessment is beneficial because students feel more confident to express their thoughts to a friend before sharing them with the whole class and the teacher (OECD, 2005), for that reason feedback provided by peers is said to be more immediate, timely and individualized than teacher feedback (Topping 2010). Peer assessment allows interaction between students in the classroom. Feedback provided by peers in formative assessment is more elaborated, qualitative and formative (Topping 2010). Spiller (2009) states the benefits of using peer assessment:

- It encourages collaborative learning through the exchange of ideas.
- Develops students’ cognitive skills
- Students can help each other to bridge the gap between the current level and the desired one.
- Students’ engagement in peer assessment can develop their ability to judge and make intellectual choices.
- Peer assessment provides the students with a variety of opinions which are likely to improve their level.
- It can help students to learn how to give and receive feedback.

The purpose of peer assessment is to assist students to plan each other’s learning, identify their strengths and weaknesses, identify areas that need remedial action, and hence develop a better performance. Peer assessment is more beneficial when conducted in pairs or in small groups (Topping, 2010). Like self-assessment, peer assessment also needs practice and training so that students can have the capacity to correctly assess their

peers; Spiller (2009) offers some points relevant to the implementation of peer assessment in the classroom, these include:

- The teacher should establish clear goals of the assessment practice in addition to the criteria used for this assessment
- The teacher should ensure an environment of trust in the classroom

When implementing self- and peer assessment in the classroom it is necessary to: first, set the rationale behind doing this, in this regard Greenstein (2010: 116) posits a set of questions including:

- Is it simply to have students reflect on what they or others have learned?
- Is it to help students move toward objectively assessing their progress toward achieving standards?
- Is it for students to identify and plan ways to improve their own work, or is it for a group of students to work together to achieve goals.

The teacher needs to ask these questions to make the assessment, be it self or peer-assessment, more valuable and more goal-oriented. Second, the teacher needs to establish clear assessment criteria and make them relevant to students to use them i.e. you determine the objectives of a given activity in order to help students assess well through using these objectives as a reference. Therefore, both self assessment and peer assessment need practice; students should be trained well in order to be able to assess their own work or the work of their peers.

Peer assessment was criticized by some researchers including Falchikov (2005: 67) who states that “some students question their own competence when required to carry out self- or peer assessment”, therefore, the question which rises is whether students are competent enough to assess themselves or their peers. Moreover, such type of assessment does not generally reveal the actual situation as students tend to be more ‘tolerant’ towards their friends: “many students dislike having to mark their peers, particularly if

they are friends” (Falchikov, 2005: 67), thus, peer assessment can be affected by the side of emotions and relationships between classmates.

In view of the roles of each of the afore-mentioned parties in the process of formative assessment, William (2013) links these to the three pillars underpinning formative assessment (see section 1.5 above), he summarizes his findings into five main strategies:

Table 1.2: the five “key strategies” of formative assessment (William, 2013: 16)

	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is right now	How to get there
Teacher	Clarifying, sharing, and understanding learning intentions	Engineering effective discussions, activities, and tasks that elicit evidence of learning	Feedback that moves learning forward
Peer			Activating students as learning resources for one another
Student			Activating students as owners of their own learning

William’s suggested strategies of formative assessment are tightly related to the three main pillars proposed earlier, what is relevant from these strategies is the fact that the process of formative assessment makes every individual in the classroom involved in the teaching-learning process not only the teacher. In formative assessment, communication and interaction between the teacher and students is of paramount importance, by doing this students become aware of the learning objectives. Moreover, formative assessment should be based on activities and tasks whose main aim is to diagnose students’ level. The final step in the process is feedback which is generated by both teachers and peers; the feedback provided is relevant to students’ level and aims ultimately to improve it in relation to the discussed learning objectives.

1.12. Conclusion

After examining the literature related to assessment in general and formative assessment in particular, the researcher came to assert certain points: first, the assessment process has long been integrated with the process of teaching and learning, it has also gone through different paradigms including: assessment as procedure, assessment as procedure and assessment as inquiry. The underpinnings of the last paradigm are similar to those of formative assessment which is based on different pillars responsible for its success or failure in the classroom. The effectiveness of formative assessment has been proved by many researchers as an essential tool towards success and improvement. The effectiveness of the process is defined by some principles including differentiated instruction and feedback which is regarded as a key cornerstone in the process; formative feedback needs to carry some characteristics in order to be more valuable and fruitful. In addition to feedback, formative assessment requires also teachers and students to perform certain roles in the classroom.

Formative assessment has been linked to diverse contexts, and examined in relation to different critical areas in the language learning process including the language skills. The present work, for instance, attempts to explore the formative assessment effectiveness regarding text comprehension which represents a critical area in the process of language learning. Accordingly, in the next chapter we will focus our attention on this specific point i.e. text comprehension with its different parameters.

CHAPTER TWO: The Reading Skill and Text Comprehension

2.1.	Introduction.....	53
2.2.	Reading	53
2.2.1.	Reading Defined.....	53
2.2.2.	Purposes of Reading.....	56
2.3.	Reading in the Foreign Language teaching.....	58
2.3.1.	Reading in the Different teaching Methods.....	58
2.3.2.	Importance of Reading.....	59
2.4.	Historical Overview and Reading Models.....	61
2.4.1.	Bottom-Up Model	61
2.4.2.	Top-Down Model.....	63
2.4.3.	The Interactive Approach.....	64
2.5.	Teaching Reading	66
2.6.	Text Comprehension	71
2.6.1.	Lower Level Processes.....	74
2.6.2.	Higher Level Processes.....	74
2.7.	Reading Strategies.....	76
2.8.	Factors Affecting Text Comprehension.....	79
2.8.1.	Background/ Prior Knowledge.....	79
2.8.2.	Vocabulary and Linguistic Complexity.....	80
2.8.3.	Goal Setting.....	80
2.8.4.	Strategy Use.....	81
2.8.5.	First Language Deficiency.....	81
2.8.6.	Lack of Practice.....	82
2.8.7.	Rhetorical Patterns.....	83
2.9.	Text Comprehension Competences.....	83
2.9.1.	Chomsky's Model.....	84
2.9.2.	Canale and Swain's/ Canale's Model.....	85
2.9.3.	Bachman and Palmer's Model.....	87
2.9.3.1.	Individual Characteristics.....	88
2.9.3.2.	Strategic Competence.....	91
2.9.4.	Bachman and Palmer's Model Applied to Reading.....	93
2.9.4.1.	Individual Characteristics in Reading.....	93
2.9.4.2.	Strategic Competence in Reading.....	95
2.11.	Conclusion.....	96

2.1. Introduction

Reading represents a fundamental area in the language learning process, be it in one's first language or in a second or foreign language, thus it requires the reader to be aware of certain areas for effective comprehension. Accordingly, the present chapter is put forward to review the literature relevant to reading and text comprehension. The review will include: first, a broad definition of reading with a close reference to its purposes. Second, reading in the foreign language is highlighted including its critical status in this context. Subsequently, we highlighted the different models of reading in relation to historical development. The section which follows strives to offer a glimpse about the teaching of reading. The researcher steps forward to talk about text comprehension, and then the reading strategies, and then she sheds light on the main factors affecting text comprehension. Text comprehension competences are also of paramount importance in the process of comprehension, for this reason the last sections are devoted to this area namely: the models of language competence, Bachman and Palmer model, and finally the application of this latter on text comprehension.

2.2. Reading :

Reading is an important skill in language learning whether in first or foreign language; its importance lies in the fact that it covers many processes, below is a description of reading and its importance, besides other areas.

2.2.1. Reading Defined

Reading as an activity can be defined as the act of “perceiving a written text in order to understand its contents” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 443). The word perceiving can be viewed as a connotation to the person's (reader) interpretation, and the word contents also can denote that a text can have different interpretations depending on the reader. The understanding which results from this activity is called reading comprehension. Accordingly, reading is based on two major areas: the process and the

product, the former is concerned with the activity of perceiving the text while the latter is concerned with the result of this activity.

Indeed, when defining reading, one has to consider two main views: reading as a process and reading as product. Reading as a product is concerned with the final result of reading. In this view Alderson (2000: 4) states “what matters is not *how* you reach that understanding (of the text) but the *fact* you reach it”¹. The view of reading as a product has been criticized by many researchers including Alderson (2000: 5) who posits that the product approach to reading has been unfashionable because teachers “have endeavored to improve the way in which their students approach text”. Additionally, some view this approach as inadequate for instruction. At this level it is important to point that approaching reading as a product or as a process depends on the purpose of the reading task itself, yet the comprehension purposes necessitates both the process and the product.

Reading as a process is concerned with the steps undertaken while reading including interaction between the reader and the text, it is concerned not only with deciphering letters and words and deciding what they mean, but it goes beyond this level to take into account the reader’s thinking while he is reading, how the text relates to his previous experiences, the difficulties he is likely to encounter and so on. Alderson (2000: 3) points out that the process of reading is likely to be “dynamic, variable and different for the same reader on the same text at a different time or with a different purpose in reading”, Lems et.al (2010) also stress the fact that reading is not static. Indeed, the process differs from one reader to another depending on the steps undertaken by each reader, his background knowledge, his previous experience and also the purpose behind reading. All these parameters result in various interpretations of the text, for this reason Alderson (2000) posits that the reading process is characterized by silence, privacy and internality.

¹ : Italics in original

Grabe (2009) and Grabe and Stoller (2013) view reading as a complex set of processes, it is not concerned with a single process only but it covers a wide range of processes, these processes define the nature of reading:

- *A rapid process*: since it is done in a rapid way especially for fluent readers
- *An efficient process*: regarding the smooth interaction of skills, and the rapid shift from different cognitive processes (word recognition, meaning formation.etc)
- *A comprehending process*: it is concerned with understanding the author's intended meaning using different cognitive processing, and the ultimate goal is to comprehend.
- *An interactive process*: Reading is an interactive process as various skills and abilities interact together to make the reading process more accurate, and also because of the interaction between the reader's basic knowledge and knowledge found in the text, this also enables the reader to interpret the text more effectively (Grabe and Stoller 2013).
- *A strategic process*: the reader employs a set of strategies while reading; these strategies help the reader to “anticipate text information, select key information, organize and mentally summarize information, monitor comprehension, repair comprehension breakdowns, and match comprehension output to reader goals” (Grabe, 2009: 15).
- *A flexible process*: in the sense that the reader shifts purposes and adjusts goals throughout the reading operation.
- *A purposeful process*: as the reader sets purpose(s) when he starts reading.
- *An evaluative process*: is related to monitoring one's own reading, it includes also reader's interests and attitudes towards the text. Text evaluation requires also a set of inferencing processes and the use of background knowledge.
- *A learning process*: through reading, the person can learn different points; moreover, what makes reading a learning process is the decisions made about how

to respond to the text. Grabe and Stoller (2013) also see reading as a learning process in the sense that the most common way to learn new things is reading.

- *A linguistic process*: for the fact that it is primarily concerned with deciphering letters and words and linking them to their meaning.

In this way, then, reading is not a simple task but rather a complicated one where different mental processes operate to interpret the intended meaning of the text. Accordingly, different levels should be mastered as Graesser (2007: 3) puts it: “reading is an extraordinary achievement when one considers the number of levels and components that must be mastered”. These levels and components are mainly higher level and lower level processes (see 2.6.1 and 2.6.2). The complexity of reading also resides in the fact that it covers a wide range of purposes.

2.2.2. Purposes of Reading

When one starts reading, he has a specific goal in mind, different readers have different intentions. Indeed, there are various reasons why one reads including reading for a gist, reading to understand something, reading to communicate, reading to learn, and so on. Thus, reading can be done for different intentions and can cover various purposes (Grabe and Stoller 2013) including:

- a) *Reading to search for simple information*: the reader uses reading to scan specific information in the text, this requires the reader to process meaning slowly in order to understand the meaning intended.
- b) *Reading to skim quickly*: means to gather different segments in the text for general understanding, skimming is a quick process but it helps the reader to have a general idea about the text.
- c) *Reading to learn from texts*: this requires the reader to grasp as many information from the text as he can, accordingly this task needs reflection and rereading, in addition to inferencing strategies which enable the reader to link background

knowledge to information existing in the text. In this purpose the reader should possess different abilities including:

- Remembering the main ideas and the supporting ideas found in the text.
 - Recognizing and building a rhetorical framework which enables the reader to organize information in the text.
 - Linking the text to the background knowledge
- d) *Reading to integrate information*: is related to integrating known information to those found in the text, it is quite related to using background knowledge.
- e) *Reading to write (or search for information needed for writing)*: this is simply related to reading where the main intention is to produce a piece of writing.
- f) *Reading to critique texts*: the goal is to read the text to critique its component either form or content.
- g) *Reading for general comprehension*: this can be defined as “the ability to understand information in a text and interpret it appropriately” (Grabe and Stoller, 2013: 11), it is the most common purpose of reading; it represents the basis for the afore-mentioned purposes. Indeed, this purpose is important because it “requires very rapid and automatic processing of words, strong skills in forming a general meaning representation of main ideas, and efficient coordination of many processes” (Grabe and Stoller, 2013: 8), therefore the reader should have control over all these skills for a good comprehension. As a matter of fact with skillful readers these skills occur automatically, however, second language and foreign language readers see the mastery of these skills together with the time constraint (especially in the classroom) as a huge obstacle especially because they have less exposure to the target language.

Being aware of the purposes of reading is crucial in developing one’s ability in reading as suggested by Anderson (2000 Qtd in Grabe, 2009: 07): “reading ability can be improved by teaching how to read for particular purposes”. By the same token, Linderholm and Van Den Broek (2002, 778) suggest that having a goal in mind while

reading is also critical for reading success, they state: “successful reading includes the ability to adjust processing in such a way that learning goals are met”. Therefore, clear purposes are responsible for effective reading, these purposes are important not only in first language reading but also in the foreign language reading context. As a matter of fact, reading in a foreign language is more sophisticated than first language; the subsequent section is concerned with features of foreign language reading.

2.3. Reading in Foreign Language Teaching

In the foreign language teaching context, reading is a very important component as it is considered as one of the four skills besides: speaking, listening, and writing; it constitutes together with listening the receptive skills of the language. A significant point to start with before stating the importance of reading in the foreign language classroom is the status given to reading in relation to the different teaching methods.

2.3.1. Reading in the Different Teaching Methods

First, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), this method is characterized by its focus on explicit teaching of grammar rules and vocabulary, yet the aim within this approach is to develop students’ ability to read literary texts in the target language. Moreover, literary language is seen as superior to spoken language and students’ learning of culture is based on literature (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Accordingly, the primary focus of this method is to develop reading skills. Within this method, students are given a text followed by a set of comprehension questions in addition to other activities including grammar, vocabulary (synonyms and antonyms), fill in the gap and so on. The questions are based on students’ understanding of the text, their inferencing strategies and their background knowledge. Therefore, students are exposed to a set of reading strategies including translation and inferencing (Larsen-Freeman 2000).

In the Direct Method, reading is also seen as an important skill together with speaking, it is developed from the beginning of language instruction. As the primary

focus of this method is to develop oral communication, students are asked to read aloud texts and passages; reading is, therefore, based on what students practice orally (Larsen-Freeman 2000).

As far as the Communicative Language Teaching is concerned, the major aim is to make students communicatively competent and to enable them to communicate effectively in the target language, and this requires knowledge of linguistic forms and meanings. Additionally, being communicatively competent encompasses different areas including the ability to figure out the writer's intention (Larsen-Freeman 2000). Thus, the reading skill is approached through the suprasentential level enabling the students to develop an understanding of text's coherence and cohesion by advocating a set of tasks such as scrambled sentences. CLT is also characterized by the use of authentic materials including authentic texts with the intention of "developing strategies for understanding language as it is actually used" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 130).

Reading in the competency based approach is seen as an essential skill, and its development is the responsibility of both the teacher and the learner as this latter is regarded as the central part of the learning process in general. Thus, reading within this approach is mainly related to the use of metacognitive strategies which call for students' involvement in the reading process through: self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and planning.

Reading, therefore, is regarded as an important component of language learning throughout the different teaching methods. Indeed, reading is an important aspect of language learning, and its importance can be portrayed in many points.

2.3.2. The importance of Reading

Reading is an essential skill in language learning as Mikulecky (2008) puts it: "effective reading is essential for success in acquiring a second language. After all, reading is the basis of instruction in all aspects of language learning". Moreover, reading

is responsible not only for the skill development but it is also essential for broader learning, success in education, employment and social life (Oakhill et.al, 2015). Alderson (1984) also emphasizes this point when he states that reading for foreign language students is responsible for academic studies, professional success and personal development. In the same vein of thoughts, Rivers (1981: 259) posits: “reading is a most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and expending one’s knowledge of the language”, thus reading is seen as a means and as an end.

Reading is an essential skill not only in learning but in the life-span as a whole, Grabe (2009: 5) points out that “reading skills do not guarantee success for anyone, but success is much harder to come without being a skilled reader”, thus success is tightly linked with efficient reading skills.

Krashen and Terrel (1983) link reading to competence in the second language when they point out that “there is good reason, in fact, to hypothesize that reading makes a contribution to overall competence, to all four skills” (1983: 131), they see reading as a source of comprehensible input and put the following figure:

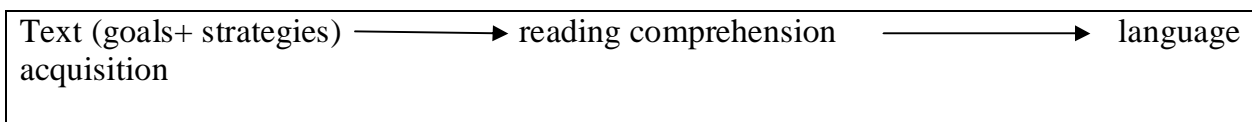


Figure 2.1: Model of reading process (adapted from Krashen and Terrell, 1983)

In this regard, then, reading promotes language acquisition. Krashen (2004) also posits that reading is responsible for cognitive development; he argues that those who read more tend to achieve better results in different content areas. Schafer and Anastasi (1968) report that students who are considered as creative read more than average students (cited in Krashen 2004).

Reading is important for the development of other skills mainly writing; students who read more tend to have a good command of the writing skill, besides they have low

anxiety when writing. Lee and Krashen (2002), for instance, state that reading is responsible for writing apprehension because of the students' superior command of the written language; they state that "those who read more have more competence in the written language, which lowers apprehension" (2002: 538).

To put it briefly, in his book "*The Power of Reading*", Krashen (2004: 37) summarizes the benefits of reading and points out: "reading is the only way, the only way we become good readers, develop a good reading style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammatical competence, and the only way we become good spellers". Thus reading is an essential skill which is responsible for the development of many areas of language learning, it is a critical component in the process and plays a major role for its development. Additionally, reading is the best way through which students can enrich their knowledge and enlarge their understanding of the world around them.

Reading passes through different historical stages and different models are proposed for the sake of making this skill clear and easy for learners.

2.4. Historical Overview and Reading Models

Research on second language reading was nonexistent before the 1970's until the work of Kenneth Goodman (1967): "*Reading: A Psycholinguistic Guessing Game*". This work paves the way for research in the area of second language reading and many researchers attempt to investigate this significant scope of language learning. Accordingly, second language research has gone through different phases and witnessed many transformations.

2.4.1. Bottom-up Model

As far as first language reading is concerned this model gained ground in the 1940's and 1950's with the behaviorist view. Regarding second language reading, Goodman (1967) focuses on the distinction between this model and the top-down model to reading. Bottom-up is a reading model where the reader "creates a piece-by-piece

mental translation of the information in the text, with little interference from the reader's own background knowledge" (Grabe and Stoller, 2013: 25), in this model the reader analyses word by word and sentence by sentence starting from smaller units to reach larger units in order to achieve comprehension. Alderson (2000) posits that in this model the reader starts with printed words, decodes them and then decodes meaning; the aim is to make students "decoders of sequential graphic-phonemic-syntactic-semantic systems" (Alderson, 2000: 17). Therefore, this model of reading is linguistically-based as it focuses on recognizing "a multiplicity of linguistic signals (letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, grammatical cues, discourse markers)" (Brown, 2000: 299), it is more oriented towards lower-level processes (see section 2.6.1 below). A clear demonstration of how this model operates is offered by Cambourne (1979) who calls the model as "outside-in" rather than the bottom-up model:

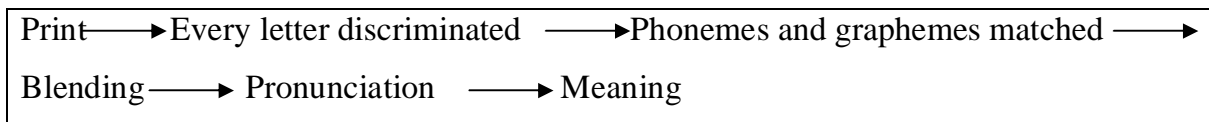


Figure 2.2: Bottom-up model of reading (Cambourne 1979, cited in Nunan 1991: 64)

As demonstrated in the figure above, in the bottom-up model the reader starts by lower levels including letters, then he matches phonemes with graphemes and blends them together to form words; these words are pronounced and then comes the final higher stage which is meaning derivation and construction. The model therefore examines readers understanding of single words rather than advocating the meaning of the text as a whole. Stated differently, within this model, readers are more concerned with the microstructure rather than the macrostructure. As a matter of fact, this was among the criticisms of this model, it focuses on developing the readers' ability to decode letters and words and the meaning of single words, and totally neglect an important aspect of reading which is overall meaning of the text and the interaction between the reader and the text including the use of background knowledge. Reading is beyond the linguistic and mechanical processes, it is rather a process which calls for the reader's own interaction

with the text, his predictions and interpretations are major components in the reading process.

Despite these criticisms, the bottom-up model “seems a reasonable and a logical explanation of what happens when we read” (Nunan, 1991: 64). Indeed, the first thing that the reader starts with is the decoding of letters and words to construct meaning, though this operation happens more fluently and unconsciously by advanced learners, it is a focal area with beginners. The criticism given to the bottom-up model gives birth to another model of reading known as the top-down model.

2.4.2. Top-down Model

Sometimes referred to as the “psycholinguistic approach”; in first language reading, this model gained ground in the 1970’s and came as a reaction to the previous model: bottom-up. During the same decade, Goodman distinguishes between the two models in the area of second language reading research. The top-down model of reading is “primarily directed by reader goals and expectations” (Grabe and Stoller, 2013: 25), hence it takes readers’ goals into account. As far as expectations are concerned, the reader forms hypotheses about the text and then tests whether these hypotheses are correct or not. Accordingly, the reader searches for the most useful information in the text, the use of background knowledge and inferencing strategies is a prominent feature of this model; it also includes monitoring of comprehension. In this model the reader has to bring to the text not only his linguistic ability but a set of skills and psychological variables as well including: knowledge of the subject, knowledge and expectations about how language operates, motivation, interests, and attitudes towards the content of the text (Nunan 1991). Cambourne (1979) provides a schema about how this model operates:

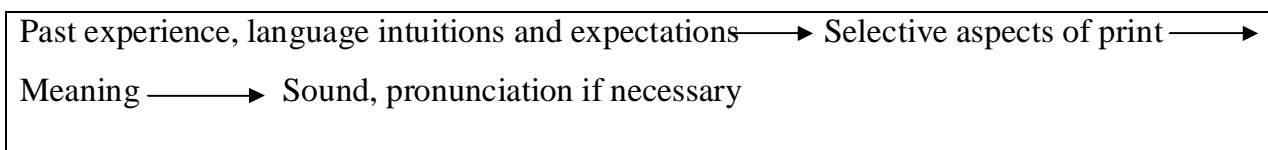


Figure 2.3: top-down model to reading (Cambourne 1979, cited in Nunan 1991: 65)

Relevant from the figure above is the fact that this model pays more attention to meaning construction and interpretation of the whole text rather than decoding words and letters. Indeed, this approach to reading takes the reader's background knowledge and past experiences as a starting point without which meaning cannot be reached.

Though the top-down model was popular among researchers, it was criticized for the fact of expectations as suggested by Grabe and Stoller (2013: 26): "what a reader can learn from a text if the reader must first have expectations about all the information in the text". Moreover, this model "fails to distinguish adequately between beginning readers and fluent readers" (Nunan, 1991: 66), indeed, the focus on expectations and goals is quite beyond the level of beginning readers especially L2 and FL readers who struggle to decode the letters and words and derive meaning; the lower-level processes should be used to direct the reader towards the higher-level processes. Stanovich (1980) also criticizes the idea of hypothesis generation and points out that "the generation of hypotheses would be more time consuming than decoding would be" (qtd. in Nunan, 1991: 66-67). Subsequent years witnessed the emergence of a new approach to reading known as the interactive approach.

2.4.3. The Interactive Approach

This approach has been proposed by Stanovich (1980), it draws on the deficiencies of the previous models and call for the integration of both higher-level and lower-level processes, i.e., it takes into account "phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic and discursal knowledge" (Nunan, 1991: 67). Grabe and Stoller (2013) state that the good idea about this model is that it takes useful ideas from the bottom-up model and combine them with key ideas of the top-down model. In the same vein, Nunan (1991) posits that higher level processes can compensate deficiencies of lower-level processes and vice-versa, i.e., readers can rely on a set of processes which they master the most to overcome deficiencies in comprehension.

The interactive nature between the different processes (higher-level and lower-level) and the possibility of compensation between the two processes on the basis of the reader's abilities, all these features make the interactive model a useful one for reading especially in L2 and FL contexts. Researchers argue that both models are important for reading, and one cannot rely only on one area and put aside the other one as stated in Nuttall's words: "in practice, a reader continually shifts from one focus to another, now adopting a top-down approach to predict probable meaning, then moving to the bottom-up approach to check whether that is really what the writer says" (1996: 17 Qtd in Brown 2000: 299). Thus, this approach calls not only for the interaction between the two previous models but also for the interaction between the reader and the text.

The interactive approach to reading is in fact based upon the schema theory as they lie upon the same principles. The term 'schema' was first introduced to reading by Rumelhart (1980), it is defined as "a general knowledge structure used for understanding" (Medin and Russ, 1992 Qtd in An, 2013: 130). The essence of the schema theory in reading is that the written text does not carry meaning by itself, "the text only provides directions for readers as to how they should retrieve and construct meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge" (An, 2013: 130), the previously acquired knowledge is the reader's background knowledge including information, knowledge, motivation, emotion, experience and culture (Brown, 2000). Accordingly, the process of reading is based upon an interaction between the text and the reader's background knowledge. Researchers propose different types of schemata including:

- **Content schemata:** is related to the "background knowledge of content area of the text" (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983 Qtd in An, 2013: 130) including reader's knowledge about the topic, people, the world, and culture (Brown 2000), thus, this schema is culturally-oriented. Content schemata are crucial for comprehension.
- **Formal schemata:** includes "knowledge of formal, rhetorical organizational structures of different types of texts" (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983 Qtd in An, 2013: 130), it is concerned with the language forms found within different text

genres, the reader's ability to distinguish these structures is crucial to comprehension.

- **Linguistic schemata:** it was proposed by Urquhart and Weir (1998), it refers to knowledge about grammar and vocabulary, and the ability of decoding in general. Being linguistically-competent is crucial for text comprehension especially for L2 readers.

In a nutshell, all the above stated models and theories are set forward to examine the difficult nature of reading, these are actually the outstanding theories. However, there are different reading theories which have been proposed, Grabe (2009: 91) mentions these in his book "*Reading in a Second Language*". Additionally, research in second language reading tries to cover different areas including: reading and language proficiency, reading and vocabulary, reading and grammar, reading and text structure, reading and background knowledge and so on (Eskey, 2005). All these theories and investigations are targeted towards one ultimate aim which is the effective teaching of reading in the classroom.

2.5. Teaching Reading

One of the major problems of teaching reading either in first language or second language/ foreign language contexts is the fact that the teacher cannot see the product of reading, i.e., reading is unobservable, the processes that readers engage in while reading cannot be seen by the teacher. However, the teacher can use certain techniques to ensure that what he taught is learned by students, for instance, in the reading classroom, the teacher should make students aware of certain strategies and how to use them in order to respond effectively to the text; in this regard, Eskey (2005: 576) suggests that "teaching reading strategies can have positive effects on the reading performance of second language learners".

Moreover, reading is the process of constructing meaning through the combination of bottom-up and top-down processes. The teacher should make his students aware of these processes and encourage them to use these processes while reading (Ur, 1996).

Additionally, the teacher should first provide the students with the letters of the language and their pronunciations mainly for beginners and even intermediate students; the idea behind this activity is that students will be able to recognize the pronunciation of different words within a text and hence proceed more rapidly and focus on more larger units instead of struggling with smaller ones.

Regarding the reading tasks, the teacher's ultimate goal is to draw students' attention to the overall meaning of the text and not focusing on single words because this is likely to hinder students' understanding of the text and also decreases their motivation, in this line of thought Ur posits (1996: 141) when teaching "we should not insist too strongly on our learners understanding every word, but rather encourage them to go for the overall meaning of a text". Additionally, one of the common reading activities is text followed by comprehension questions, this activity, in fact, "tests reading but does not teach it, and this contributes little to improving any student's reading performance" (Eskey, 2005: 574). In this regard, Ur (1996: 146) suggests a set of reading activities which can improve students' reading abilities.

Brown (2000) suggests a set of teaching strategies in the foreign language classroom; these strategies are said to facilitate comprehension and enhance students reading abilities; he puts them under the following headings:

- ***Identify the purpose in reading***: the teacher should make his students aware of the purpose of the reading task; setting the purpose at the inception of the reading task helps the students to know what is required from them, focus their attention on specific idea and monitor reading accordingly. Moreover, the notion of purpose identification should be present also in the different reading strategies and techniques, i.e., what is the intention behind certain strategies.
- ***Use graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up decoding (especially for beginning level learners)***: making the relationship between the spoken and the written form is among the main difficulties that students face when reading

(especially beginners), thus the teacher has to supply his students with orthographic rules and patterns about certain English words.

- ***Use efficient salient reading techniques for relatively rapid comprehension (for intermediate to advanced levels)***: beginners cannot fulfill this task as they still face many difficulties in pronunciation of single words; more advanced students can use silent reading under the supervision of the teacher who teaches them certain rules about silent reading:
 - Students do not need to pronounce each single word.
 - Students try to visually perceive more than one word at a time, preferably phrases.
 - If the students face a difficult word, they skip over it and try to infer its meaning from the context.
- ***Skim the text for main ideas***: skimming means “quickly running one’s eyes across a whole text for its gist” (Brown, 2000: 308), this strategy helps students to predict the main topic of the reading passage. Training students how to skim the text is essential for effective reading.
- ***Scan the text for specific information***: scanning means “searching for some particular piece or pieces of information in a text” (Brown, 2000: 308), scanning helps students to extract certain information from the text without necessarily reading the whole text; hence it assists in the process of comprehension.
- ***Use semantic mapping or clustering***: using semantic mapping and grouping ideas into meaningful clusters is essential for quick and easy understanding of the text especially when there is a “long string of ideas or events” (Brown, 2000: 308), this strategy helps students to understand the text by linking different ideas together.
- ***Guess when you are not certain***: students should be taught about how to use their guessing skills when comprehension becomes difficult. They can guess the meaning of a word, grammatical relationships, cultural references and so on. Accordingly, the teacher has to teach his students and guide them how to use guessing strategies accurately and effectively.

- **Analyze vocabulary:** when students face difficulties in understanding words, the teacher interferes and help them to analyze the word by breaking the word down into prefixes, suffixes and roots, and also by looking at the grammatical context in which the word occurs, and the topic also.
- **Distinguish between literal and implied meaning:** students need to be taught that words and sentences are not always associated with a single connotation. When the word has a literal meaning the students can understand it easily, but when it carries an implied meaning the students should use certain techniques to infer the exact meaning behind. Thus, the role of the teacher is to make students aware about the difference between the implied meaning and the literal meaning.
- **Capitalize on discourse markers to process relationships:** discourse markers allow the reader to follow the chronological order in the text, and this in turn facilitates comprehension; hence the teacher should make his students familiar with a set of discourse markers which they are likely to encounter in their reading passages.

Brown (2000: 313) further provides a number of principles which are crucial in the foreign language reading classroom, these include:

- ✓ Teachers should use techniques that are intrinsically-motivating, i.e., bringing texts that are interesting for students, or make the students select texts by their own (Language Experience Approach LEA Brown, 2000: 313), and encourage self assessment in reading tasks.
- ✓ Balance authenticity and readability in choosing texts: when designing reading tasks, the teacher has to select texts which are authentic and simple i.e., texts that are grammatically and lexically simple; while if the teacher opts for simplified texts, he must preserve the natural features of the original text, because sometimes some texts are oversimplified to the extent that they become difficult. Nuttall (1996, cited in Brown 2000) proposes three criteria to take into account when choosing reading texts: (1) *suitability of content*: the text should be enjoyable to

students, motivates them and tightly linked to their learning goals; (2) *exploitability*: a text which is exploitable for instructional tasks and can integrate different language skills; and (3) *readability*: the text should be challenging to students through some lexical and structural difficulty, yet it should not be overwhelming.

- ✓ Encourage the development of reading strategies: teaching students strategies is crucial for their success in the reading tasks as it has already been highlighted.
- ✓ Include both bottom-up and top-down techniques: an important point which has already been stated. The teacher should make sure that all areas necessary for reading are explored including: lower-level and higher level processes.
- ✓ Follow the ‘SQ3R’ sequence: a reading sequence based on the following points; this sequence can be used as a guide for reading tasks:
 - a) *Survey*: skim the text for the main ideas.
 - b) *Question*: the students ask questions about what they intend to find in the text.
 - c) *Read*: read the text in order to find answers to the questions raised earlier.
 - d) *Recite*: reconsider the main points in the text through oral or written language.
 - e) *Review*: assess the importance of the reading task and match it with the learning objectives.
- ✓ Subdivide your techniques into pre-reading, during reading, and after reading phases:
 - ***Before you read***: introduce the topic, encourage some reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, predicting, this step motivates students and make them ready to explore the reading passage with more enthusiasm.
 - ***While you read***: the teacher should “give students a sense of purpose for reading rather than just reading because he ordered it” (Brown, 2000: 315)
 - ***After you read***: this phase includes a variety of activities including: comprehension questions, vocabulary and grammar study and other skills mainly writing.

- ✓ Build in some evaluative aspect to your techniques: the teacher's ability to assess students' comprehension; it can be done through different ways (Brown, 2000: 316).

All these techniques allow the teacher to guide his students in the reading process and help them to achieve comprehension; the teacher should also select a set of tasks that match these techniques and assist students in their comprehension process. Indeed, the reading tasks should be purposeful and effective for more successful outcomes.

By the same token, Anderson (1999) also develops a set of teaching strategies; his set of strategies includes: activating background knowledge, cultivating vocabulary, teaching for comprehension, increasing reading rate, verifying reading strategies, evaluating progress, building motivation, and selecting appropriate materials.

Put briefly, when the teacher takes all these aspects into account, his students will comprehend the text easily and quickly. Moreover, these steps help the students also in their real life and professional life; whenever they encounter a text they employ them. Thus, regular practice of reading on the basis of these aspects leads the students to use them automatically whenever needed. Additionally, the teacher's role is crucial in the reading classroom as he is responsible for enhancing students' abilities in reading; Eskey (2005) sees that this can be best fulfilled by intensive practice inside the classroom; the teacher should also motivate students to read and facilitate this process.

2.6. Text Comprehension

Defining text comprehension is somehow critical because it does not involve only one skill but rather a set of intertwined skills, however, a comprehensive definition of text comprehension can be the following: the interpretation of the information in the text (Grabe 2009). Though this definition seems digestible, it provokes different parameters when one digs deeper, the interpretation of information requires a set of skills. Indeed, the process of comprehension is an evolving interaction between the text and the reader's

background knowledge, and it is accomplished by the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Lems et.al 2010). Kendeou et.al (2007: 28-29) also mention the idea of interaction when they state: “at the core of comprehension is our ability to mentally interconnect different events in the text and form a coherent representation of what the text is about”. The interaction which occurs between the text and the reader’s background knowledge is critical in the process of comprehension as suggested by Koda (2005: 4): “comprehension occurs when the reader extracts and integrates various information from the text and combines it with what is already known”. Therefore, comprehension requires certain skills on the part of the reader, but before exploring this idea, it is necessary to recall the different types of comprehension. On the basis of the afore-mentioned purposes, Richards and Schmidt (2002) propose four different types of comprehension including:

- a. *Literal comprehension*: is based on understanding, remembering or recalling explicit information found within the text.
- b. *Inferential comprehension*: finding information that is not explicitly demonstrated in the text by using one’s experience and intuition and by inferencing.
- c. *Critical or evaluative comprehension*: comparing one’s own knowledge and values with information found in the text.
- d. *Appreciative comprehension*: gaining emotions from a text; it includes reading for pleasure.

Gray (1987: 146) also explores text comprehension and points out that it is based on three basic aspects: the author of the text, the reader himself, and the teacher.

- ***The task of the author:***

The author should make sure that the text is understandable for the reader: ‘s/he must be able to anticipate what sorts of background her/his intended readers have and write so that they will be encouraged to draw on this background knowledge’ (Gray, 1987: 147) through this, she carries on, the author ensures comprehension.

- *The task of the reader:*

This criterion is based upon readers' anticipation about the text in relation to prior knowledge; there must be an interaction between the reader and the author in the sense that readers use their background knowledge as a framework and establish a dialogue with the author, this interaction is what creates comprehension.

- *The task of the teacher:*

The role of the teacher is "to determine whether students have the general background or experience to understand what they are reading" (Gray, 1987: 148), in other words, the teacher should give students texts that are within their reach and that they can understand quickly in the early stages of reading, later on the teacher can give more challenging texts to students. Moreover, it is important for the teacher to be aware of his learners' problems in order to help them overcome these problems.

Oakhill et.al (2015) points out that text comprehension requires two main skills; the two skills originate from the work of Gough and Tunmer (1986 cited in Oakhill et.al 2015), a good text comprehension requires the two components together including:

- Adequate word reading: the reader cannot understand the whole text if he is not able to decode single words
- Good language understanding: this entails comprehension of words and sentences

In the same vein, Grabe and Stoller (2013) posit that comprehension requires two major processes: lower-level processes and higher-level processes. The former are more related to the linguistic ability of the reader while the latter are concerned with background knowledge and inferencing abilities. In text comprehension both types of processes come into play, interact together and give birth to relevant comprehension.

2.6.1. Lower-level processes: they are composed of a set of linguistically-oriented skills; they occur automatically in the mind of the reader, they encompass three basic areas:

- ✓ *Lexical access* which is related mainly to word recognition, it is not concerned with how words are spelt as much as with the meaning of the word, hence, lexical access is crucial to comprehension and in order to be developed the reader needs much exposure to the language (written language) and much practice as well.
- ✓ *Syntactic parsing* which enables the reader to recognize and understand grammatical structures found in the text, it is intended to “clarify how words are supposed to be understood” (Grabe and Stoller, 2013: 16). Moreover, it helps the reader to determine to what pronouns and definite articles refer in the text. Syntactic parsing is also critical to comprehension; it can be developed either through explicit grammar instruction or implicitly through texts.
- ✓ *Semantic proposition formation* related to linking meanings throughout the text, when the text becomes difficult the reader “pauses to consider consciously how to extract the most appropriate meaning from the text being read” (Grabe and Stoller, 2013: 19). Like the other lower-level processes, semantic proposition formation is important aspect of text comprehension; it constitutes together with lexical access and syntactic parsing the base upon which text comprehension operates.

2.6.2. Higher-level processes: this entails more complicated processes, and draw on the basis of the cognitive and metacognitive skills of the reader. They cover a significant range of areas including:

- ✓ *Text model for comprehension:* it is related to the reader’s ability to link main ideas with supporting points in order to have a full understanding of the text. The ideas that are repeated throughout the text are viewed as main ideas while other ideas which appear once or twice in the text are not, therefore “less important ideas tend to get pruned from the network, and only the more useful and important ideas remain active” (Grabe and Stoller, 2013: 20). Text model for

comprehension, therefore, refers to the reader's ability to distinguish main ideas from supporting ideas, and also to internally summarize these main ideas.

- ✓ ***Situation model for reader interpretation:*** Grabe and Stoller (2013: 22) point out that the situation model “*integrates* text information with a well developed network of ideas from the reader's background knowledge, and it *interprets* new information in the light of reader background knowledge, attitudes, motivations, goals and task purposes”, it is related to the reader's interpretation of the text. The interpretation is based upon different parameters such as: reader's background knowledge, reader's goal behind reading, reader's motivation and attitudes. Accordingly, wrong or incomplete background knowledge can lead to loose interpretation of a text. Worth noting is the fact that, interpretation can be either about what the author means or what the reader wants the text to mean.
- ✓ ***Background knowledge use and inferencing:*** inferencing is related to the reader's ability to extract valid answers from the text. Background knowledge is important for the fact that it “plays a supporting role and helps the reader anticipate the discourse organization of the text” (Grabe and Stoller, 2013: 21) the reader can, therefore, interpret the text relying on his acquired knowledge, besides he can identify points related beyond the content-level as well including discourse type and so on.
- ✓ ***Executive control processes:*** This operation requires the reader to “monitor comprehension, use strategies as needed, reassess and re-establish goals and repair comprehension problems” (Grabe and Stoller, 2013: 22), therefore, it is related to the reader's assessment and monitoring of his comprehension. At certain points in reading, the reader pauses and considers the points being read and sees whether his comprehension and interpretation is correct or not.

These processes occur automatically except when difficulties arise (Grabe 2009). On the basis of the above-highlighted processes, different researchers (Grabe and Stoller

2013; Duke and Pearson 2002) summarize the main characteristics of a good “fluent” reader, a good reader:

- Has clear goals at the outset of the process, and check continuously whether they are meeting these goals throughout the reading process.
- Looks over the text before he reads it noticing its length and structure.
- Reads selectively and makes decisions about what to read carefully, what to reread and what to ignore.
- Knows how to relate words to their meanings.
- Reads different kinds of texts differently.
- Figures out how to connect new ideas to existing ones, i.e., relates text knowledge to background knowledge.
- Checks interpretation of the information according to purposes, attitudes and background knowledge.
- Monitors his comprehension, makes appropriate inferences, shifts strategies, repair understanding and address difficulties.
- Comprehension for a good reader is a consuming, complex activity but at the same time it is satisfying and productive.

Additionally, one of the main characteristics of the fluent reader is the effective use of reading strategies. Text comprehension and understanding necessitates the use of a set of reading strategies; these strategies assist the reader in achieving comprehension and building an accurate interpretation of the text.

2.7. Reading Strategies

The reader makes use of a set of strategies, Lems et.al (2010: 172) define reading strategies as follows: “in the context of reading comprehension, strategies can be defined as deliberate actions that readers take to establish and enhance their comprehension”. The use of strategies enables the reader to build strong base regarding the text and hence

effectively interpret its main components. Moreover, the use of reading strategies allows the reader to be flexible in his interpretation of the text and also shift from different purposes easily (Grabe and Stoller 2013). However, the reading strategies cannot be successful if the reader does not have a good mastery of the read language as stated by August and Shanahan: “strategies of various types are unlikely to help students who do not have the requisite language proficiency to comprehend the text” (2006, qtd. in Lems et.al 2010, 173), for this reason strategies employed by native speakers and English language learners are not the same in most cases. Indeed, in second language or foreign language contexts, students tend to rely mainly on translating and guessing strategies to cope with difficulties in comprehension (Grabe and Stoller, 2013); nevertheless, other strategies are also employed and they occur mainly unconsciously. Researchers propose different categories of reading strategies which are used by both native speakers and EFL learners. In the present study Mokhtari and Reichard’s categorization (2002) known as MARSII is opted for.

Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) develop a model of reading strategies which is based on metacognitive strategies of reading. Metacognitive strategies can be defined as conscious awareness about one’s own thinking and learning process (Lems et.al 2010). This set of strategies involves three main areas: goal-setting, planning and monitoring and finally evaluating; they help to “prepare for a reading task, monitor the task as we go along, and then evaluate it when we have completed it” (Lems et.al 2010: 181). Metacognitive strategies are useful in terms of assisting the reader to fix breakdowns in comprehension. The model developed by Mokhtari and Reichard falls within three headings: global strategies, problem-solving strategies and support strategies.

- ***Global reading strategies:***

This set of strategies originally contains thirteen items (see appendix A), they can be seen as: “generalized, intentional reading strategies aimed at setting the stage for the

reading act” (Mokhtari and Reichard 2002: 252), i.e., they help the reader to build a global analysis of the text.

- *Problem-solving reading strategies*

As the name implies these strategies are related to solving problems when text becomes difficult to read, there are originally 8 items within this category (see appendix A), they are used by the reader as action plans to permit him to navigate skillfully through the text, they can be seen also as repair strategies which are used “when problems develop in understanding textual information” (Mokhtari and Riechard, 2002: 252).

- *Support reading strategies*

Support reading strategies are related to the use of outside reference materials such as dictionaries or other functional or support strategies to assist the student to better comprehend the text; these strategies are useful for the fact that they “provide the support mechanisms aimed at sustaining responses to reading” (Mokhtari and Reichard, 2002: 253). There are basically 9 items within this section (see appendix A).

Worth noting is the fact that, these strategies are used in different stages of reading. There are some strategies which are used before reading, others are used during reading, and also there are strategies which are concerned with the last stage, i.e., after reading.

In a nutshell, reading strategies are crucial for the success of the reading activity and comprehension, for that reason teachers should pay attention to these strategies as stated by Richards and Schmidt (2002: 444): “the teaching of reading strategies and helping learners understand and manage the use of strategies is thought to be an important aspect of the teaching of second or foreign language reading skills”. Moreover, the teacher should make sure that the strategies are used in combination because the interaction between different strategies leads to a valuable interpretation of the text in hand. However, the effective use of strategies is not the only point which can hinder comprehension; there are many factors which affect text comprehension.

2.8. Factors affecting Text Comprehension

Lems et al (2010: 171-172) state that reading comprehension is a tough task for English language learners “the level of effort required to read for meaning in real time academic situations can be a monumental task”. Indeed, comprehension and understanding of a text requires the reader to possess certain skills and competences. In the same line of thought, Alderson (1984: 1) points out that: “reading in a language which is not the learner’s first language is a source of considerable difficulty”, hence foreign language readers tend to have more difficulties than native speakers.

Grabe (2009: 17) summarizes the importance and the challenging nature of text comprehension when he posits that text comprehension is “an outstanding example of the challenges facing teachers and students who need to dedicate time, effort, motivation, and growing skills to the development of fluent academic reading abilities”. In the same vein, Grabe and Stoller (2013: 24) point out: “difficulties may arise when readers do not have adequate background, information, do not have the necessary linguistic resources or have not read enough in the language to have developed efficiencies in reading”, thus, these are the major factors responsible for weak comprehension of texts. In what follows, different factors affecting text comprehension are highlighted.

2.8.1. Background / Prior Knowledge

What students know about the topic assist them in a better text comprehension. Students may have different interpretations of the text according to their prior knowledge, in this regard states Mikulecky (2008): “a reader approaches a text with a huge store of prior knowledge and experience”, in order to better assimilates and construct meaning of the text in hands the reader matches the information presented in the text with background knowledge. Indeed, background knowledge is a main area in text comprehension, this idea has been supported by many researchers such as Hudson (2007: 293) who states: “on a basic level, it is clear that knowledge of any text topic is essential for successful comprehension... without basic knowledge it would be impossible to even approximate a

writer's intended message". Background knowledge is one of the factors responsible for comprehension, if the reader has no background knowledge or he is not able to relate his prior knowledge to that of the text comprehension will not occur, and if ever it occurs it will be loose.

2.8.2. Vocabulary and Linguistic Complexity

Because of the students' lack of vocabulary, they tend not to use contextual cues found within the text (Brutten 1981). Moreover, Lems et.al (2010: 171) point out that what makes reading in a foreign language an overwhelming task is the fact that students have "less extensive listening vocabulary upon which [they] can draw when reading written words they have never seen before". As a result of their limited vocabulary, ESL learners tend to shy away from looking for and utilizing the contextual cues that are present in a reading passage. Lems et. al (2010: 173) offer a set of vocabulary enhancing methods which can be used for both L1 and EL learners.

The linguistic complexity of the reading task is also an obstacle for text understanding, and also for task completion. Indeed, one of the major factors that influence students' performance is the complexity of the reading task in terms of the linguistic aspect, Abedi (2010: 189) states: "EL students had difficulty with the test items that were longer and were more linguistically complex". One way to overcome this issue is "to revise assessment questions to be more accessible in terms of linguistic structure, without affecting the construct being measured" (190). If students do not know what is required from them their scores will be low, hence an understanding of the linguistic aspect of the reading task is very crucial in good achievement, Abedi (2010: 189) posits: "language factors affect performance outcomes, especially for English language learners".

2.8.3. Goal-setting

One of the major obstacles facing EFL readers is the lack of awareness regarding the reading goal. When reading it is necessary to have a purpose in mind as this helps the

reader to follow a set of strategies relevant to this purpose, Grabe (2009: 19) stresses this fact and suggests “students need to become aware of the goals that they might adopt while reading, and teachers need to be more sensitive to clarifying goals explicitly... goals and purposes for reading play a major role in reading development”. Setting goal before reading is critical to effective comprehension as it helps the reader to focus their attention on specific information. Goal setting is beneficial in both L1 and L2 reading contexts (Grabe 2009).

2.8.4. Strategy Use

Reading comprehension is driven by the use of strategies before, during and after reading, these strategies can be defined as “deliberate actions that readers take to establish and enhance their comprehension” (Lems et.al, 2010: 172). However, one of the main problems in reading is the inaccurate and the ineffective use of reading strategies: first, students are not aware of the strategies, second, they do not know what strategy to use in a given situation “poor readers, especially those with word recognition problems, experienced difficulties because they lacked knowledge about when and why a particular strategy was effective” (Miller and Yochum 1991: 478). Hence, the misuse of strategies can lead to problems in comprehension and hence inaccurate interpretation of the text.

2.8.5. First Language Deficiency

Different researches demonstrate that first language reading proficiency is responsible for second and foreign language reading proficiency, Alderson (1984: 2) for instance, points out that if students “learned to read properly in their first language, the problems of reading in English will be vastly reduced”. This conclusion is also reached by Jolly (1978) who finds that reading in a foreign language depends mainly on students’ ability to read on their mother tongue rather than on their level in English, he posits that foreign language reading requires “the transfer of old skills, not the learning of new ones” (1978, Qtd in Alderson 1984: 2) and the students who face difficulties in reading foreign language material lack these old skills. Coady (1979, Qtd in Alderson 1984: 2) also shares

Jolly's point and states: "many students have very poor reading habits to transfer from their first language". Thus, low reading proficiency in students' mother tongue is responsible for low proficiency in foreign language reading.

Some researchers such as Yorio, 1971 (cited in Alderson, 1984), Alderson et.al, 1977; Aron, 1978 (cited in Perkins et.al 1991) see that students' reading ability in the first language has nothing to do with proficiency in a second or foreign language; Yorio (1971: Qtd in Alderson 1984: 3) states: "the reader's knowledge of the foreign language is not like that of the native speaker"; students' lack of reading skills is mainly attributed to lack of knowledge in the foreign language. Perkins et. al (1991: 55) also reach similar conclusions in their study and point out that "second language reading comprehension may be more clearly associated with second-language proficiency than with first language reading comprehension". Yorio (1971 cited in Alderson 1984) carries on and states that students may face difficulties in many areas including: the ability of guessing and predicting to reach correct cues, the wrong choice of cues or the uncertainty of the choice, the unfamiliarity with the material and lack of training. Indeed, one of the main factors affecting foreign language reading ability is lack of exposure to the foreign language and lack of practice.

2.8.6. Lack of Practice

Lack of practice represents one of the main impediments towards success in general, and reading is not an exception. The development of reading cannot be achieved without enough practice, Eskey (2005: 574) posits: "people learn to read, and to read better, by reading"; thus the only way through which one can improve his reading skills is reading. In the same vein, Miller and Yochum (1991: 466) point out "reading difficulties may be related to inaccurate knowledge of the reading process rather than simply to poor skill development or ability", and this again may be due to the lack of time devoted to reading skill.

Students need to practice reading inside their classrooms and emphasize tasks related to comprehension of main ideas, supporting ideas, linking text to prior knowledge, vocabulary building, reading strategies and the ability to read accurately (Grabe 2009). The students should be exposed to a set of reading strategies through regular practice and modeling (Lems et.al 2010).

2.8.7. Rhetorical Patterns

A common problem faced by readers is that they can understand single words in the text but they cannot understand the text as a whole, this phenomenon is related to microstructure and macrostructure of discourse (Kintsch and Van Dijk 1978). The former denotes “the local level of the discourse” i.e., the word-by-word relations while the latter is about the “global nature, characterizing the discourse as a whole” (Kintsch and Van Dijk, 1978: 365).

Students also face difficulties to comprehend texts because they treat words individually rather than in the whole context, they “have an explicit understanding of every word... to apprehend meaning” (Been 1975 Qtd in Brutton 1981: 66), and this, in fact, hinders comprehension. This point is highlighted also by Revell and Sweeney (1993: iv) who state that: “learners all too frequently read a foreign language text with painstaking dedication to deciphering every word in a linear fashion, frequently spending more time looking in a dictionary than reading the text”, and this results in imperfect translation, frustration and thus incomprehension.

Text comprehension therefore is a tough task, and it requires a set of competences in order to have fruitful outcomes.

2.9. Text Comprehension Competences

Text comprehension requires a set of competences as stated by Graesser (2007: 4) “deep comprehension requires inferences, linking ideas coherently, scrutinizing the validity of claims with a critical stance, and sometimes understanding the motives of

authors”. In order to have a profound understanding of the text, the reader should master a series of competences. These competences can be clearly tested in relation to the different models of language ability including: Canale and Swain (1980), Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996). These models are highlighted in the following sections with a close reference to Bachman and Palmer’s model and how this model can be applied to text comprehension. Bachman and Palmer’s model is opted for as it covers all the competences needed for a good comprehension of the text, besides it covers both the higher level and the lower level processes.

2.9.1. Chomsky’s Model

Chomsky’s dichotomy (1965) of competence and performance was a landmark in the area of language learning. Linguistic competence refers to tacit knowledge that members of society possess regarding their language and which assist them to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences; linguistic performance is related to encoding and decoding processes i.e. it is the actual language use in real situations. Chomsky has put aside performance and dealt only with competence as he considered the linguistic theory as a homogeneous pure one which is far from any heterogeneity or grammatical irrelevance (Chomsky 1965). However, linguistic theory is concerned not only with pure language and grammar; it is rather the combination of both performance and competence which makes the core of the language. In 1972, Hymes took into consideration performance as a focal part in the language system because for him if performance is neglected, then all the difficulties that children particularly and adult generally confront are swept away from view (1972). Hymes proposed the term communicative competence which refers not only to inherent grammatical competence but also to the use of this competence in a variety of communicative settings (Bagarić and Djigunović 2007). According to Hymes (1972: 278) “there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless”, for him language use (performance) is as important as grammar rules (competence). Hymes’ claim paves the way for many researchers to explore the scope of the newly coined term “communicative competence”.

Indeed, different models were proposed to deal with the intricacies of communicative competence. Yet, one can distinguish two outstanding models: the one of Canale and Swain (1980), later elaborated by Canale (1983), and the one of Bachman and Palmer (1996).

2.9.2. Canale and Swain's/ Canale's Model

Canale and Swain (1980: 7) posit that the term competence refers to the “underlying knowledge in a given sphere”; this knowledge can encompass different aspects: grammatical, sociolinguistic etc. They further claim that communicative competence is not “the highest or broadest level of language competence that can be distinguished or that is relevant for second language teaching purposes” (1980: 7), communicative competence rather interacts with other systems of human knowledge such as world knowledge to achieve certain purposes in language teaching and learning. Thus, communicative competence is part of language competence as it helps for better assimilation of the language, i.e., full mastery of the language necessitates an understanding of how its different components interact and communicative competence is one of these components. In this way, then, a full command of the language competences is responsible for good achievement in the different language areas including text comprehension.

In the initial model, Canale and Swain (1980) distinguish three categories of communicative competence: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Canale (1983) further elaborates the model and adds discourse competence.

- ***Grammatical competence***: is related to knowledge of lexical items and the rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology” (Canale and Swain, 1980: 29), this type of competence is concerned with the different levels of language analysis. Grammatical competence is useful to instructors whose main

goal is to provide students with the necessary knowledge about how to accurately determine and express the literal meaning of an utterance.

- ***Sociolinguistic competence***: refers to the relationship between language and nonlinguistic context, knowing how to use and respond to the different types of Speech Acts. It is concerned with the knowledge of what forms of language to use with specific persons and in specific situations (register, style, level of formality). Canale and Swain (1980) point out that there are two sets of rules within sociolinguistic competence: sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. The former are concerned with appropriate production and perception of utterances in a given situation taking into consideration different parameters such as: the style, the register, the interlocutor and so on. The latter is related to cohesion and coherence: the ability of the speaker to keep the discourse coherent and cohesive in terms of production and perception. The two rules assist the person in interpreting the message accurately especially when there is low level of transparency between the literal meaning and the speaker's intention.
- ***Strategic competence***: refers to the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies used to compensate breakdowns and weaknesses in communication because of insufficient competence. Canale and Swain (1980) highlight two types of these strategies: strategies that relate to grammatical competence and strategies that relate to sociolinguistic competence. Examples for the former include: paraphrasing grammatical forms that the speaker cannot master or cannot remember during discourse; the latter can be related to role play e.g. how to address a person whose social status is unclear for the speaker. Students of second and foreign language should be taught about these strategies and how to use them as they are more likely to encounter breakdowns of communication. Moreover, these strategies can be best assimilated through real life communication situations instead of immediate instruction.

- *Discourse competence*: Canale (1983) adds this competence which is in fact derived from the second set of rules in sociolinguistic competence, i.e., rules of discourse. Thus, discourse competence “concerns mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres” (1983: 9), it is related to the knowledge of different types of discourse: political, poetry etc. In addition mainly to coherence and cohesion in utterances and sentences, coherence concerns the relationship between different meanings in the text, while cohesion refers to the structural link between utterances which facilitates interpretation of the text.

Canale and Swain’s model serves the area of language learning and teaching; it has been influential in terms of defining the main facets of communicative language use, it helps also to enlarge the scope of language instruction and also paves the way for further research in this area. Subsequent years witnessed the emergence of another significant model developed by Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996).

2.9.3. Bachman and Palmer’s Model

On the basis of research in the area of language learning in the late 1980’s, Bachman proposed a new model of communicative competence which she called communicative language ability; then the model was more elaborated with the assistance of Palmer, and the first model was replaced by the second. The model that Bachman and Palmer (1996) envisage is more elaborated than that of Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). Bachman and Palmer point out that language use is based upon different components. These components should be taken into account when assessing language use; these are: individual characteristics and strategic competence. The former includes a set of sub-components including: Personal characteristics, topical knowledge, affective schemata and language ability (Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 63). While the latter is concerned with the ability of individuals to employ the individual characteristics effectively in a given setting. Stated differently, strategic competence links between

individual characteristics and the language use in a given setting or task, i.e., how individuals use these components (individual characteristics) and how these components help individuals to achieve communication in a given setting of language use. Accordingly, this model is seen as a comprehensive one as it consists of both competence (including all the individual characteristics) and the capacity for implementing this competence in a given language setting including language assessment settings, and this capacity is interpreted in strategic competence as stated by Bachman (1990: 84): “strategic competence is... the mental capacity for implementing the components of language competence in contextualized communicative language use”, the term “language competence” in Bachman’s quote denotes that strategic competence is mainly related to language ability, yet it is also concerned with the other individual characteristics. These components come into play in different settings of language use mainly in language testing; a brief representation of each component is offered in what follows.

2.9.3.1. Individual Characteristics

The first component in individual characteristics is related to personal characteristics, Bachman and Palmer posit that personal characteristics are “individual attributes that are not part of test takers’ language ability but which influence their performance on language tests” (1996: 64). These personal characteristics include: age, gender, nationality, resident status, native language, level and type of general education, and type and amount of preparation or prior experience with a given test. Cohen (1994 cited in Bachman and Palmer 1996) adds other components to this list including; foreign language aptitude, personality, language use strategies, and multilingual ability.

The second attribute in Bachman and Palmer’s model is related to topical knowledge (knowledge schemata or real-world knowledge) which means the knowledge that the student has in his long-term memory and which enables him to perform well in a given setting of language use or in language testing, Bachman and Palmer (1996: 65) suggest: “certain test tasks that presuppose cultural or topical knowledge on the part of

test takers may be easier for those who have that knowledge and more difficult for those who do not”.

The subsequent aspect is concerned with affective schemata which are related to the test taker’s emotions towards the test; these emotions are based on previous similar experiences. Affective schemata are highly responsible for students’ response to the task, these schemata “may influence the ways in which test takers process and attempt to complete the test tasks” (Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 65, 66). Affective schemata concern also the choice of the topics i.e. the emotionally-charged topics. Therefore, the emotional state of the test taker may influence positively or negatively the test as stated by McKay (2006: 56): “emotional responses can either help or hinder a test taker’s performance on a task”, this help and hindrance concern both topical content of test tasks and type of test task (Bachman and Palmer, 1996). McKay goes further and includes also the classroom atmosphere within this area especially for young learners.

The last component according to Bachman and Palmer deals with language ability; it is based on Bachman’s model (1990) and is related mainly to language knowledge. This latter is concerned with the information found in memory and which are available to use in creating and interpreting discourse in language use (Bachman and Palmer 1996). Language knowledge includes two broad categories: Organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. Bachman and Palmer (1996: 67) view that: “the design of every language test, no matter how narrow its focus, should be informed by a broad view of language ability”, hence any language test should include the two main areas: organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge.

- a. **Organizational knowledge**: knowledge related to the structures of the language and the ability to produce grammatically correct utterances and sentences, and the ability to organize them to form a text; it is composed of:
 - **Grammatical knowledge**: similar to Canale and Swain’s grammatical competence, it involves the production and comprehension of formally accurate sentences and

utterances. It includes knowledge of vocabulary, knowledge of syntax, and knowledge of phonology.

- *Textual knowledge*: includes knowledge of conversational and rhetorical organization, in addition to coherence and cohesion. Knowledge of conversational and rhetorical organization is involved in “producing or comprehending organizational development in written texts or in conversations” (Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 69).
- b. *Pragmatic knowledge*: refers to the ability to relate sentences and utterances to their exact meaning, to the goals of language users, and to the relevant characteristics of the language use context, it includes:
- *Functional knowledge*: Bachman (1990) refers to it as illocutionary competence, it is the relationship between language utterances and the intentions. This type of knowledge entails the language users’ background knowledge of the language use context. Accordingly, functional knowledge is based on the following aspects: knowledge of ideational functions¹, knowledge of manipulative functions², knowledge of heuristic functions³, and knowledge of imaginative functions⁴. These functions are provided by Halliday (1973, 1976 cited in Bachman and Palmer 1996) who describes these functions in relation to child language acquisition, yet they can be applied to foreign/ second language learning. These functions do not occur in isolation but they interact in a given discourse.

¹: Knowledge of ideational functions means the person’s ability to interpret and express meaning in terms of his experience in real world. Descriptions, classifications, explanations and expressions of sorrow and anger are examples of ideational functions.

²: enables the person to affect the world around him, it includes a set of other sub-functions: first, instrumental functions which are performed to get other people do things for you e.g. requests, suggestions, commands and warnings. Second, regulatory functions: are used to control what other people do e.g. rules, regulations and laws. Third, interactional (interpersonal) functions: are used to establish, maintain and change interpersonal relationships e.g. greetings, compliments, insults and apologies.

³: is the use of language to extend one’s knowledge e.g. in teaching and learning situations, for problem-solving (e.g. in writing where the writer goes through different processes), and in the retention of information (the memorization of words, facts, laws, etc.).

⁴: is the use of language to create an imaginary world or to extend the real world for humorous or esthetic purposes e.g. jokes, figurative language and poetry.

- *Sociolinguistic knowledge*: enables the person to relate language to the appropriate context. It includes knowledge of dialects and registers, idiomatic expressions, cultural references and figures of speech.

2.9.3.2. Strategic Competence

The second component of Bachman and Palmer's model is concerned with strategic competence or knowledge. This component acts as a link between individual characteristics and the language use context, it is mainly concerned with language ability, i.e., how individuals use language strategically in different communicative settings. However, it is concerned also with the other individual components, and this explains Bachman's view when she states that strategic competence is not only an aspect of language competence but rather "a general ability which enables an individual to make the most effective use of available abilities in carrying out a given task" (1990: 106). According to Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), strategic competence is regarded as a set of strategies used by the individual to compensate breakdowns in communication, Bachman comments on this definition and states that it does not provide a framework of how strategic competence operates in language use situation, she views strategic competence as an important part of all communicative language use, not just that in which language abilities are deficient and must be compensated for by other means" (1990: 100). Accordingly, Bachman and Palmer see strategic competence as a set of metacognitive components which are "thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive management function in language use, as well as in other cognitive activities" (Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 70), strategic competence is, therefore, the combination of metacognitive strategies and other components mainly language ability in order to respond to different language manifestations either in everyday language use or in language tests. These metacognitive strategies operate in three areas (Bachman and Palmer 1996): goal-setting, assessment and planning.

In any language setting in general and in language test in particular, the individual goes through these strategic processes. Bachman and Palmer (1996: 67) state that "it is

this combination of language knowledge and metacognitive strategies that provides language users with the ability to create and interpret discourse, either in responding to tasks on language tests or in non-test language use”. In the same vein, Bachman (1990) states that there are some language tasks that cannot be fulfilled adequately without strategic competence, it is compulsory for the success of the task. Moreover, strategic competence can help the test taker to successfully complete the task.

In a nutshell, Bachman and Palmer offer a platform over which language use and language testing operate, this model assists teachers in their assessment by providing the main components found in language testing. A detailed demonstration of Bachman and Palmer’s model is offered in the figure below:

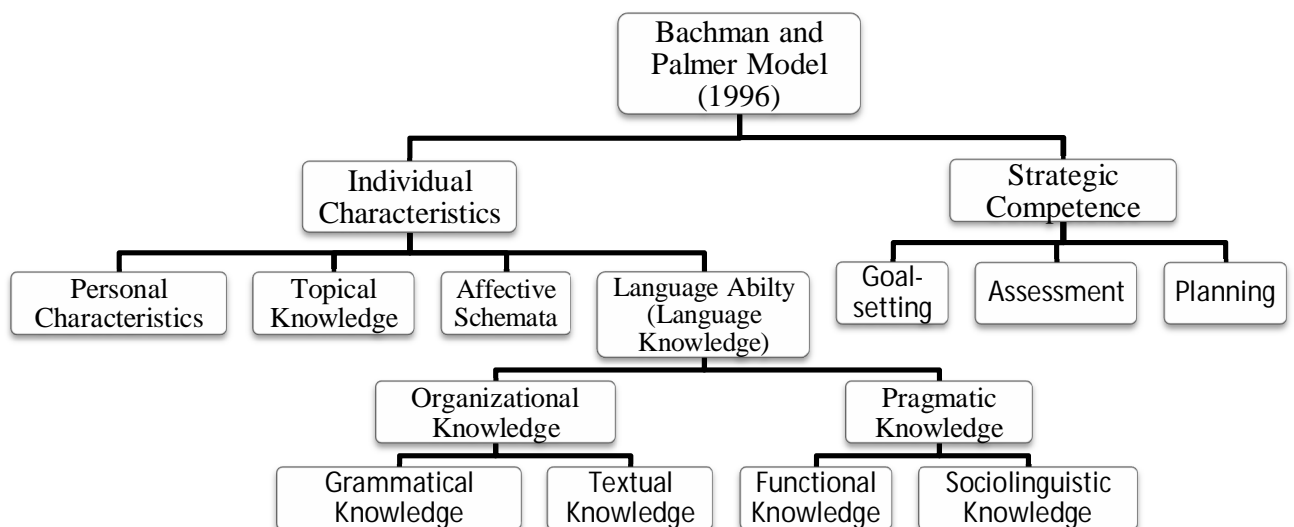


Figure 2.4: Description of Bachman and Palmer’s Model

These components are important and necessary for effective language use whether in different language use settings or for language testing. Accordingly, Bachman and Palmer’s model can be applied to different language areas including reading.

2.9.4. Bachman and Palmer’s Model Applied to Reading

As highlighted before, text comprehension requires a multitude of skills to interact together to achieve better assimilation of the text. Many researchers call for the interaction between bottom-up and top-down processes in reading (the interactive approach). Thus a consideration of the different language competences is necessary when reading, the other components are equally important for effective reading comprehension; these components are applied to reading in the following section.

2.9.4.1. Individual Characteristics in Reading

Regarding the first attribute which is individual characteristics, it can be thought of in reading as the factors that affect reading performance of the student e.g. type of general education or the language status (first, foreign etc.).

Topical knowledge is also an important aspect in the different language tasks including reading since “a reading passage that included a great deal of information specific to a particular culture might be more difficult for individuals who do not possess the relevant cultural knowledge than for those who do not” (Bachman and Palmer 1996: 65). Therefore, topical knowledge is a focal point in reading because if the reader lacks topical knowledge and mainly the cultural aspect, then he will not be able to interpret the text correctly.

Affective schemata in reading lie in the fact of the topic involved in the text, whether it is emotionally-loaded, interesting, boring, etc. for that reason the choice of the topic is among the factors that influence reading comprehension performance, the test should be designed in a way that “promote feelings of comfort or safety in test takers that will in turn facilitate flexibility of response” (Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 66). Giving the test takers texts within their reach can also be part of affective schemata.

Regarding Language ability, it can be thought of in relation to McKay’s explanation of how the components of language ability can be applied to reading (2006).

She views that both organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge are activated when one reads, below is a brief demonstration of how components of language ability are applied to reading:

- ***Grammatical knowledge in reading***: involves the ability to decode letters and words, large vocabulary and accurate grammar, and the ability to understand a range of structures.
- ***Textual knowledge in reading***: is related to the ability to distinguish different text genres and the ability to comprehend organizational development in a text. Accordingly, it is through textual knowledge that the person can understand the meaning of the text and also to predict what comes next and what is the purpose behind the text.
- ***Functional knowledge in reading***: the ability to relate words, sentences and texts to their exact meaning, in addition to the intention behind.
- ***Sociolinguistic knowledge in reading***: is concerned with the ability to depict and understand the cultural references in the text.

McKay (2006) further posits that assessment of reading should be based on these areas in order to achieve certain goals including mainly developing students' reading knowledge and skills. The application of Bachman and Palmer's language ability on reading is offered in the figure below:

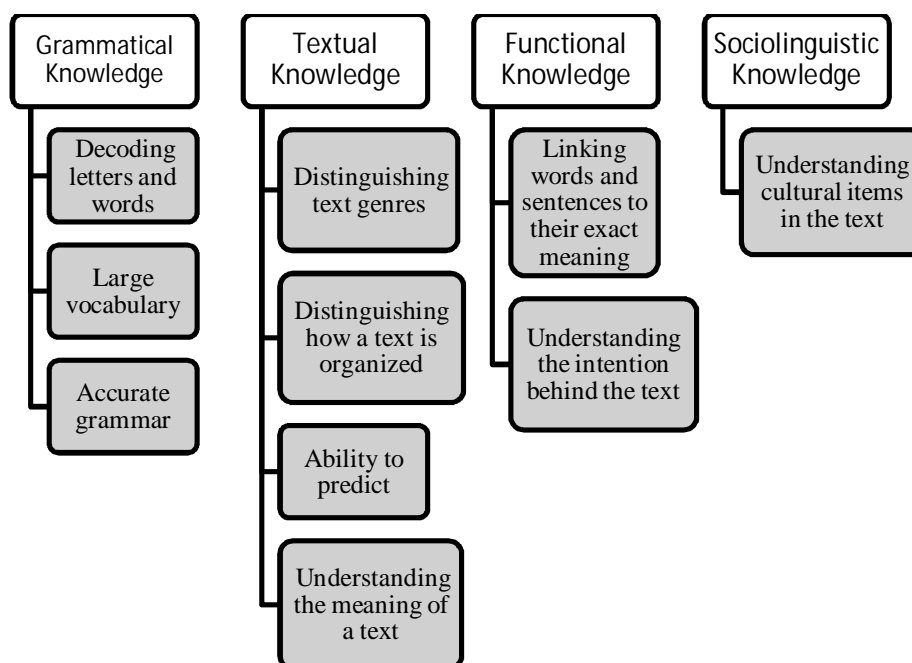


Figure 2.5: Application of Bachman and Palmer’s Language ability on reading

While reading, the person should possess these competences for a better interpretation of the text.

2.9.4.2. Strategic Competence in Reading

Bachman states that in reading comprehension tests, the tasks include questions that require inference, such type of questions require strategic competence to be correctly answered because the test taker “must recognize what information outside the discourse itself is relevant to answering the question, and then must search for that information in his memory” (1990: 105). Moreover, in a reading task the students employ different strategies which enable them to comprehend and better respond to the task. Therefore, strategic competence may entail the different language strategies that the learner employs in order to achieve text comprehension. The elements stated in Bachman and Palmer’s model in relation to strategic competence (1996), i.e., goal-setting, assessment and planning are mainly concerned with metacognitive strategies which play a focal role in reading. This idea is highlighted by Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) whose model of reading strategies is based upon metacognitive strategies, they see the development of

metacognitive strategies as the best way to develop readers' comprehension skills, they state, in this regard: "increasing students' awareness of their comprehension processes while reading is an important first step toward their becoming constructively responsive, strategic, and thoughtful readers" (2002: 256). In previous sections, the metacognitive strategies offered by Mokhtari and Reichard are highlighted in details (see 2.7. above).

Worth noting is the fact that in the present study personal characteristics, topical knowledge and affective schemata are not included because they are difficult to observe, the focus is put mainly on language ability and strategic competence, and how these two interact for a good performance in the different language tasks including reading.

2.10. Conclusion

The aim of the present chapter is to shed light on the reading skill and the relevant areas. Reading can be seen as a process and as a product depending on the situation and also depending on the purposes. When reading, there are different purposes in the reader's mind, these purposes are essential in the success or failure of the reading process especially in the foreign language context. Reading in the foreign language context represents a major pillar as it is one of the language skills; besides it constitutes the major tool through which language can be best taught and learned. Accordingly, teaching reading is a difficult task for the teacher; he needs to be aware of different areas and should also be knowledgeable about his students' level, so that he can teach them the necessary skills for reading development.

Text comprehension is characterized by different features which are critical in the process of comprehension; among these features is the use of strategies which play a major role in reading. The process of reading can be also affected by certain factors which influence its flow and have an impact on comprehension. However, a good mastery of the different competences needed when reading will generate a fruitful comprehension process; these competences can be thought of in relation to Bachman and Palmer's model

of language ability, thus the reader has to possess grammatical, textual, functional and sociolinguistic knowledge in order to proceed smoothly and effectively in the text.

CHAPTER THREE: Situation Analysis and Research Design

3.1	Introduction.....	99
3.2	Situation Analysis.....	99
3.2.1.	ELT in Algeria.....	99
3.2.1.1.	ELT Approach.....	101
3.2.1.2.	ELT Objectives.....	103
3.2.2.	ELT in the Secondary School.....	104
3.2.2.1.	Time and Coefficient Distribution.....	105
3.2.2.2.	Textbook Design “ <i>New Prospects</i> ”.....	106
3.2.2.3.	Reading in “ <i>New Prospects</i> ”.....	110
3.2.3.	Assessment in the Secondary School.....	113
3.2.3.1.	Formative Assessment in the Algerian Secondary School.....	113
3.2.3.2.	The “Bacalaureat” Exam.....	115
3.3.	Research Design.....	118
3.3.1.	Research Objectives.....	118
3.3.2.	Type of Research	118
3.3.3.	Research Instruments.....	121
3.3.3.1.	The Questionnaire.....	121
3.3.3.2.	The Interview.....	125
3.3.3.3.	The Tests.....	128
3.3.4.	Sample Population.....	131
3.3.4.1.	Pupils’ Profile.....	132
3.3.4.2.	Teachers’ Profile.....	133
3.3.5.	Research Procedure.....	134
3.3.6.	Data Analysis.....	134
3.3.6.1.	Qualitative Analysis.....	134
3.3.6.2.	Quantitative Analysis.....	135
3.4.	Conclusion	136

3.1. Introduction

The present chapter represents the framework of the research work as it offers a review of the teaching-learning situation with regard to the different parameters included in the present work, and also gives an overview of the research design. Accordingly, the chapter embraces two parts:

The first part is initiated with a quick review of English language teaching (ELT) in Algeria, in addition to its underpinning objectives; then the scope is narrowed to English teaching in the secondary school. The design of the textbook “New Prospects” is portrayed with a close reference to the reading skill. The researcher also examines assessment in the secondary school, with emphasize on formative assessment and the baccalaureat exam.

Regarding the second part, it starts with the main objectives of the study. A systematic review of the research design including the instruments and the sample population. Subsequently, the research procedure is described, and finally the procedure of data analysis is exhibited.

3.2 Situation Analysis

The Algerian educational system has evolved throughout the years after independence; the Algerian government has tried to offer opportunities for better learning focusing on foreign language learning. Below is an overview of this evolution with a close reference to the teaching of the English language.

3.2.1 ELT in Algeria

The English language has gained a higher status worldwide for the recent decades; it is spoken as a mother tongue in many countries of the world, and operates as a second or foreign language in the remaining ones. The importance given to English nowadays is a result of several factors related to: economic development and technological

advancements. Accordingly, many countries draw their objectives on the basis of this idea i.e. learning English has become a must in order to be an active partner in today's world.

Algeria is a case in point, from independence (1962) onwards, it has undergone different periods and took a set of decisions mainly intended to maintain the Algerian identity and heritage. Yet, Algeria has acknowledged foreign language learning as a gate to globalization and modernity as stated by the national committee of syllabi (2009: 42): “teaching children one or two widely used foreign languages from a young age means providing them with tools of success for the future. Teaching and learning foreign languages enable Algerian pupils to have direct access to the global knowledge, and be open to other cultures”¹. Therefore, foreign languages function as a means which enables first: students to enter the world of global thinking, and second the country to compete in the world of economics. In view of that, the Algerian government wanted to be integrated with the modern society, this integration has necessitated the implementation of the English language as a global language of international communication along the Algerian educational spectrums mainly in the middle and secondary education. Indeed, syllabus designers view that: “the study of English must imperatively be conceived with the objective of helping our society to get harmoniously integrated in modernity” (Programme d'Anglais 3 AS, 2006:2). During the colonial era, English was regarded as a first foreign language where French was the official language, and just after independence English has been introduced into the Algerian educational system as a foreign language, French being a second language, then as a second foreign language whose teaching is compulsory, and French being the first foreign language.

¹ : my translation of :

إنّ تعليم الأطفال منذ الصغر لغة أجنبية أو لغتين واسعتي الانتشار هو تزويدهم بأدوات النجاح في عالم الغد. فتعليم وتعلم اللغات الأجنبية يمكن التلاميذ الجزائريين من الاطلاع المباشر على المعرفة العالمية، والتفتّح على ثقافات أخرى

3.2.1.1 ELT Approach

English language teaching in Algeria has undergone different methodologies. The first one used after independence is the “Grammar Translation Method”, then the Direct method. Subsequently, the Algerian government opted for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and finally the Competency Based Approach. The table below presents each method/ approach with its main characteristics and the textbook which corresponds to it at the secondary school level:

Table 3.1: The teaching methods, characteristics and the textbook

Method/ Approach	Characteristics	Textbook
The grammar translation method 1962-1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of the mother tongue in the classroom • The study of long lists of vocabulary • Explicit presentation of grammar rules • Translation exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L’Anglais par la Littérature
The Direct Method (1970-1980)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the target language should be used • Reading and writing are taught after speaking • Grammar should be taught inductively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice and progress • Developing skills
Communicative Language Teaching (1980-2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicative use of language • Authentic and meaningful communication • Emphasis on both accuracy and fluency • Integration of different skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New lines • Midlines
Competency Based Approach (2002- till now)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on real-life situations • Learner-centered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the Crossroads • Getting Through • New Prospects

Since 2002, the Algerian educational system has opted for the Competency Based Approach which is defined as “an approach to teaching that focuses on teaching the skills and behaviours needed to perform competencies. Competencies refer to the student’s ability to apply different kinds of basic skills in situations that are commonly encountered in everyday life” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 94). This approach is, therefore, based upon learning outcomes since it focuses on developing students’ competencies in real life situations by applying the points taught in the classroom. This approach is regarded as a shift in paradigms from the traditional teacher-centered approach to the new learner-centered approach. Indeed, the teacher in this approach is regarded as a mediator between the pupil and knowledge, his role is to guide, help, and encourage the pupil to take part in the learning process and fulfill his own objectives (Document d’ Accompagnement 3 AS 2011: 10). The major tenet of this approach is not to equip the learner with knowledge but rather to provide him with the necessary competences for real life situations as Docking (1994, Qtd in Griffith and Lim, 2014: 2) puts it the competency based language teaching “is designed not around the notion of language 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 and assessment”. Accordingly, the teachers’ responsibility is higher in the sense that they not only have to teach the different language components mandated in the textbook, but also they have to opt for an appropriate teaching strategy that leads them to fulfill the principles of the competency based approach. This approach came as a result of educational reform in the various educational stages where new textbooks were introduced.

The syllabus designers state that this approach is based upon the integration of competences. Moreover, the pupil will have the opportunity to discover, observe, apply, reformulate and control. Such an approach therefore permits to:

- **Give a sense to learning:** it is not based on theories but rather gives the pupils the ability to use language in real life situations including professional life later on.

Moreover, the content is effective in terms of problem solving situations and learning situations as well.

- **Prepare for further learning:** competences are acquired gradually from simple to more complicated, through situations of exploration (projects, group work...etc.) and situations of integration (using authentic materials, solving problems, self-assessment and peer assessment etc). In addition to developing pupils' responsibility and autonomy.

3.2.1.2 ELT Objectives

When designing the English syllabus, the ministry of education offered a set of objectives upon which the teaching of English in secondary school operates. The major objective is to integrate the Algerian society into the global village. Moreover, the teaching of English in the Algerian secondary schools ultimately aims not only at developing linguistic competence of Algerian pupils, but also focuses on developing other focal points including: critical thinking, attachment to national values, and respect of universal values through tolerance and open-mindedness. The objectives stated for teaching English in the secondary school generally and the third year particularly are put under the following headings (Programme d'Anglais 3AS, 2006):

a/ Linguistic and communicative objectives:

- Provide the pupil with a solid linguistic platform (grammar, syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, mastery of written and spoken language).
- Permit the pupil to comprehend and communicate easily using the foreign language.
- Permit him (the pupil) to follow his studies with success at university or in the professional life.

b/ Methodological/ technological objectives:

- Develop pupils' intellectual capacities such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation through a set of pertinent activities.
- Provide the learner with learning strategies and self-evaluation strategies which permit him to enlarge his competences.
- Reinforce the thinking skills acquired previously in the primary and middle school.
- Encourage reflective learning.
- Teach the pupil how to rationally utilize the English written and oral sources whether scientific, economic, or literary in order to prepare them for the university and professional life.
- Teach the pupil how to utilize technological tools (ICT's) to use them for studies and research (inside and outside the classroom).

c/ Socio-cultural and socio-professional objectives:

- Encourage interdisciplinary learning by relating themes from other disciplines to be integrated in order to achieve full acquisition of knowledge.
- Stimulate pupil's curiosity and contribute to his open-mindedness by exposing him to a variety of contexts of English culture (English, American, African, Indian, Australian, etc.).
- Permit the pupil to be an active participant in life at the end of his studies.

3.2.2. ELT in the Secondary School

Algerian pupils learn English for seven years before entering university: they are introduced to the English language in the first year middle school, and learn it for four years before sitting for a national exam (BEF). Then, three years at the secondary school, these three years consolidate the pupils' gained knowledge along the previous years and prepare them for the "Baccalaureat" exam. During these seven years English is taught as a compulsory subject matter. However, because of the lack of exposure to English in the

Algerian society, the Algerian pupils' motivation towards learning English is often instrumental.

3.2.2.1 Time and Coefficient Distribution

As far as third year secondary school pupils are concerned, the teaching time load and coefficient of English vary in relation to the streams, below is a demonstration of the time allotted to English teaching in relation to the different streams:

Table 3.2: The English teaching time load and coefficient in relation to the streams at the secondary school

Year	Stream	Hours per week	Coefficient
1 st year	Scientific stream	3	2
	Literary stream	4	3
2 nd year	Literature and philosophy	4	3
	Foreign Languages	5	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics • Experimental sciences • Technical mathematics • Economy and Management 	3	2
	Literature and Philosophy	4	3
3 rd year	Foreign languages	5	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics • Experimental sciences • Technical mathematics Economy and Management 	3	2
	Literature and Philosophy	4	3
	Foreign languages	5	5

As far as the investigated sample (third year foreign languages stream) is concerned, the pupils learn English for five (5) hours per week, and the coefficient is five (5). As the English language is important in this stream, it is given more time and a higher

coefficient than in the other streams. The main teaching aid in English teaching is the textbook which is regarded as a map which guides the teacher and the pupils.

3.2.2.2. Textbook design “*New Prospects*”

Before digging into the design of the textbook, it is necessary to offer a definition of the textbook and the main roles it plays. To begin with, the textbook in the English teaching context represents the guide through which the teacher and the learner can follow a logical framework. Moreover, it represents a framework and assists the teacher to manage his time; the textbook plays different roles including:

- A resource for presentation materials (spoken/written)
- A source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction
- A reference source
- A syllabus
- A resource for self-directed learning or self-access work
- A support for less experienced teachers. (Cunningsworth 1995: 7)

“*New Prospects*”, the third year secondary school English textbook is designed with the tenet of developing three main skills among pupils: First, interaction where the pupil can interact orally in English; second, interpretation which enables the pupils to interpret authentic texts, and finally production which gives the pupils the opportunity to produce oral and written texts. As the goal is to pass the ‘Baccalaureat’ exam, the textbook is based on the written mode and it emphasizes thematic orientation.

The organization of the textbook falls within six units. Each unit is concerned with a given theme. The six units contain a set of focal language areas including language functions, grammatical structures, language skills and the different learning strategies. At the end of the book, listening scripts, grammar references and resources portfolio are offered. The aim of these is to: give the pupils useful information about their learning, to

provide the teacher with texts and scripts which are useful for teaching the skills and strategies, and also to encourage the pupils to read for leisure.

As far as the six units are concerned, they are related to different themes: Ancient civilizations, Ethics in business, Education in the world, Advertising (consumers and safety), Astronomy and the solar system, and finally Feelings and emotions. Every unit deals with a set of tasks aiming at providing subject-matter knowledge, cognitive and metacognitive skills, reading strategies and compositional skills. Worth noting is the fact that the teaching of units depends on the streams, i.e., there are units which are taught to a given stream while they are not taught for another, the table below exhibits the units division in relation to the streams:

Table 3.3: Taught Units in relation to the streams

Units	Literary streams	Scientific streams
Ancient civilizations	+	
Ethics in business	+	+
Education in the world	+	
Advertizing (consumers and safety)		+
Astronomy and the solar system		+
Feelings and emotions	+	+

All the units have the same structure as displayed below, each unit contains two parts: language outcomes and skills and strategies outcomes.

Part one: Language outcomes

This part contains two sequences: “listen and consider” and “read and consider”, the two sequences aim at teaching different points including: grammatical structures, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling. The two sequences follow the same set of sections, these include:

- *Language outcomes:* this part reminds the learner about the main objectives to be reached at the end of the different tasks.

- *Getting started*: set the floor for the main task (either listening or reading) by giving the pupils a set of pictures and ask them to guess, the aim is to draw pupils' background knowledge.
- *Let's hear it (in Listen and Consider)*: this rubric includes a set of listening tasks where the pupils listen to a listening scripts provided at the end of the book and answer a set of questions.
- *Taking a closer look (in Read and Consider)*: where the pupils are asked to read the text provided and answer a set of questions.
- *Think, Pair, Share*: this part consists of tasks in which the pupil work either individually or in pairs or in groups, the aim of this section is to make the pupils put into practice the items they have learned throughout the sequence; it encourages interaction and discussion.

Within these rubrics the pupils are introduced to grammar items through a section called "Around the text", vocabulary items through "vocabulary explorer" and there is also a section dealing with pronunciation and spelling. The second sequence "Read and Consider" ends up with a section called "Take a break", as its name suggests this part includes jokes, songs and so on, it invites the pupils to relax in order to go to the second part. The last rubric in the first part is called "Research and Report", in here pupils are given a task to be fulfilled outside the classroom, it is some kind of training to the last part of the unit i.e., the project.

Part two: Skills and strategies outcomes

This part comprise two sequences namely: "listening and speaking" and "reading and writing", this part is set with the purpose of developing compositional skills and communication strategies. The first sequence includes:

- *Skills and Strategies outcomes*: this rubric set the main objectives the sequence intends to develop.

- *Before Listening*: it consists of a set of pre-listening tasks aimed at making the pupil predict the topic to be dealt with.
- *As you listen*: within this rubric the pupils first check their predictions in the first rubric, and also it allows them to answer the different tasks by listening to a listening script of the teacher.
- *After listening*: this post-listening part aims at exploring other language skills including: reading, writing and speaking on the basis of the listening script.
- *Saying it in writing*: this part introduces the pupils for the next sequence by giving them a written task.

Worth noting is the fact at the beginning of each task, the language outcomes which the pupils are likely to reach at the end of the task are presented. The second sequence is related to the two remaining skills: “reading and writing”.

At the end of the unit, the pupils are given a project to work on; the project is related to the main theme of the unit and explores the acquired skills within this unit. The last part of the unit is devoted to assessment where pupils are given a checklist containing different skills with a scale of three options “very well”, “fairly well”, “not well” and they have to tick the option that corresponds to their case as a way of self-assessment. This phase is “the visible and assessable manifestation of the students’ competencies, i.e. the end result of their command of language and of the skills and strategies they have acquired throughout the unit” (Teacher’s book 2013: 18)

In sum, “New prospects” gives a real opportunity to practice grammar, vocabulary and the related language items within the language skills framework. However, the main concern is to develop grammar as it is regarded as the cornerstone of good command of English (Teacher’s book 2013). Yet it is up to the teacher to focus on whatever point he sees more appropriate according to his pupils’ needs whether on vocabulary building and grammatical structures or on reading and writing skills (Teacher’s book 2013). Drawing

from the objective of the present work, it is necessary to have a closer look on the reading skill in the textbook.

3.2.2.3 Reading in “New Prospects”

Reading is among the main skills in the language learning process and in the foreign language learning process as well. Reading is regarded as one of the pillars of successful language learning, it constitutes together with listening the receptive skills of the language which provide the pupils with the necessary input needed for the production of the language (speaking and writing). Accordingly, the reading skill is among the focal areas that the teacher tends to develop in his classroom, a point that is guided by the textbook.

As it has already been mentioned, the language skills are dealt with in the textbook both in the first part: “language outcomes” and the second one “Skills and Strategies Outcomes”. In the section “Reading and Writing”, for instance, reading is presented through a set of activities put under three phases: pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading. This rubric is initiated by a number of questions intended to make pupils use prediction strategies; i.e., they are given some pictures and are asked to predict what the main topic of the text is. In the second part: “As you read”, the pupils are asked to read the text silently and then check their predictions, at this level they use their skimming strategies and scanning strategies to answer the questions found at the end of the text. In the last rubric “after reading” or “post reading”, the pupils are introduced to some reading strategies such as summarizing, in addition to activities intended to enforce pupils’ coherence and cohesion skills, and some theoretical points concerning the different discourse types. Below is an exhibition of a reading lesson in one of the units of “*New prospects*” (taken from the first unit “Ancient civilizations”):

✓ **Before reading:**

- Look at the pictures 1-3 then answer the following questions.

✓ **As you read**

- Have a look at the coping box then do task one that follows

The coping box contain a definition of the “skimming” strategy

Task one: Skim through the introduction and the conclusion of the text below and pick out four key words.

Text (Ancient Egyptian Civilization)

Task two: use key words you have picked out in task 1 to give a title to the text.

Task three: Now, skim through the whole text and match ideas below with their corresponding paragraphs.

Task four: Have a look at the coping box and do the task that follows:

The coping box contains a definition of the “scanning” strategy”

Task: Scan the text and answer the following questions

✓ **After reading**

Task one: have a quick look at the coping box below. Then decide which type of discourse the text you have studied belongs to.

The coping box deals with the different discourse types (descriptive, expository .etc)

Task two: Write a short summary of the text (about one-fifth of it) you have studied. Your teacher will tell you about the strategies for making a summary

Figure3.1: A sample of reading lesson in “New Prospects” (2017: 36-40)

These reading activities are intended to enhance certain language outcomes including: skimming, scanning, identifying referents of reference words, recognizing types of discourse, and summarizing. A point worth mentioning at this level is that some of the mentioned outcomes need much time to be developed mainly summarizing.

Moreover, the pupils practice reading also in the rubric known as “Read and Consider”, in this section pupils are given a set of questions in a rubric “Getting started” where they are provided with a pre-reading task which is intended to make the pupil recall

the background knowledge and discuss the main topic of the text. The next rubric within “Read and Consider” is called “Taking a closer look” asks the pupils to read the text given silently and then answer the tasks provided. These tasks are related to text comprehension (true/ false, comprehension questions), and grammar where the pupils are asked to pick some grammar items from the text provided.

After exhibiting the ways in which reading is introduced in the textbook, one can posit that the major aim is to enhance pupils’ reading skill as it is “one of the demanding achievements not only for this final year of English study at school, but also for future studies at university” (Teacher’s book, 2013: 14). Additionally, the reading rubrics in the textbook aim at developing pupils’ understanding of the text by introducing a set of reading comprehension strategies: skimming, scanning, predicting, summarizing etc., these strategies are portrayed smoothly within the text provided. Moreover, different language points including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation are inculcated through the reading passages, and hence reading offers the framework on which the other language components operate. An important point to raise is whether the time given to English is sufficient to fulfill all these tasks and to reach the stated objectives.

Each unit needs approximately between one month to one month and a half to be finished (between 25 to 30 hours), added to that the holidays and the exams including also the tests “*devoirs*”. So it is difficult first for the teacher to deal with all these points and to teach them adequately to each individual pupil; and second for the pupil to grasp all these points. Moreover, the teacher’s role as it has already been stated is not only to teach but also to carry out the principles underpinning the teaching approach which calls for the integration of the learner in every step of the learning process. As a result many teachers prefer to stick to the traditional methods of teaching where the teacher is the only active actor who spoon-feeds the learners rather than the new approach which is a learner-centered one.

3.2.3 Assessment in the Secondary School

Assessment is a central part in the teaching-learning process, “it permits to determine the competence level of the learner as he progresses” (Programme d’Anglais 3AS, 2006: 21)¹. There are different types of assessment in the secondary school curriculum including: diagnostic assessment, summative assessment, and formative assessment.

- **Diagnostic assessment:** is delivered at the beginning of the year, its aim is to identify pupils’ points of strengths and weaknesses, so that the teacher adapts the teaching materials on the basis of these points; such kind of assessment is not based on marks, it enables the teacher to know his pupils individually.
- **Summative assessment “Certificatrice”:** this type of assessment is the most known and the most practiced one within the educational system; it is based on selection and orientation. Summative assessment comes at the end of the semester or the year and it is based on tests (*les devoirs et les compositions*) and exams (official exams: Bacalaureat). Within this type of assessment the pupils’ work is evaluated and marked, hence it allows the teacher to make decisions such as: classification, passage to a higher level, success or failure in tests and exams.

There are three exams in the secondary school, each term ends up with an exam, in addition to two tests taken during the term. The exams should be congruent with the taught content and learning objectives.

3.2.3.1 Formative Assessment in Algerian Secondary School

The heightened emphasis on the importance of formative assessment in educational arenas makes its integration in the Algerian educational system a must. Indeed, formative assessment becomes an integral part of the teaching learning process. Syllabus designers

¹ : My translation of: « Elle permet de déterminer le niveau de compétence atteint par l’apprenant au fur et à mesure qu’il progresse »

proposed that formative assessment should be done once every three weeks. Formative assessment carries the following characteristics:

- It is not based on marks.
- It involves the pupil in different oral and written tasks.
- The assessment's criteria and procedures should be clear for the pupils who, in turn, will develop a sense of responsibility towards their learning.
- The pupils will be acknowledged about their progress and their weaknesses (Programme d' Anglais 3 AS, 2006).

The importance of formative assessment dwells in the fact that it takes errors into account, regulates and adapts the learning materials in accordance with the learning realities in order to reinforce success (Programme d'Anglais 3 AS, 2006). Accordingly, the assessment phase is followed by a remediation phase on the basis of the gaps encountered; the remediation activities should help the pupils overcome their difficulties. Formative assessment allows the verification of whether or not the pupils attain the different language points (lexical, grammatical and so on). The syllabus designers posit that: "the regular assessment of oral and written comprehension and oral and written expression can possibly detect the errors' origins through remediation strategies which enable the pupil to overcome the obstacle and carry on his progress" (document d'Accompagnement 3 AS, 2011: 14). Formative assessment can be done through different means including: portfolios, Journals, questionnaires and interviews, discussion and debate between the teacher and the pupils. A point worth being mentioned is that within formative assessment there is another type of assessment which the syllabus designers call "Formatrice assessment", in the accompanying document, "Formatrice assessment" is regarded as an independent type of assessment; however, this type with its different means is a sub-type of formative assessment as it draws on its main principles namely: peer assessment and self-assessment. This type of assessment takes several forms including:

- Tutoring: the evaluation of the teacher of individual learners; the pupil compares between his own assessment to that of the teacher and then correct the wrong answers.
- Peer assessment: the pupils assess the work of each other using the teacher's assessment criteria.
- Self-assessment: the pupil assesses his own work through e.g. portfolios and journals. As the competency-based approach is a learner-centered one, self assessment is given an important status. This type of assessment is believed to enhance pupils' sense of responsibility towards their learning and raise their awareness about their progress.

Self-assessment in third year secondary school is exposed through six logs provided at the end of each unit, this part is known as “assessment”. Through this step the pupils tell their teachers about the points they have achieved and the points they could not reach, the pupils are asked to fill these logs and hand them back to the teacher who will know which points to be reinforced. Accordingly, the pupils are exposed to assessment at the end of each unit, therefore, this corroborates with the point raised earlier where the syllabus designers state that formative assessment is done once per three weeks. However, though these assessments are intended for a formative function they perform a summative one as they are implemented at the end of the learning unit, in a time where formative assessment should be done on a regular basis. These assessments can be also seen as interim assessment since they are implemented at the end of the unit that is to say every six to eight weeks.

3.2.3.2 The ‘Baccalaureat’ Exam

The baccalaureat exam is a national exam in which third year secondary school pupils are evaluated at the end of the year, success in this exam allows the pupils to carry on their studies in the tertiary level: university.

As the approach utilized is the competency-based approach, the focal objective of examination in secondary school in general and third year (Baccalaureat exam) in particular is to provide the examinees with opportunities to learn and re-use even during examination, hence the exam should revolve around the same topic, and in accordance with the points tackled in the syllabus.

The ministry of education (cited in Baccalaureat exam guide: English, 2016) sets a number of principles upon which ‘Baccalaureat’ exams are designed, these include:

- *Secrecy*: the exam should be kept secret
- *Originality*: it should not be given previously
- *Correctness*: it should be mistake-free.
- *Acceptance by all*: the text should not be insulting or hurting.
- *Meaning*: the exam should be meaningful, relevant, and coherent
- *Global scoring scale*: indicate the scoring scale for each section of the test

a. Exam Objectives

The ministry further highlights the objectives of the examination; the main purpose of the examination is to evaluate:

- The pupils’ ability to understand and do tasks in relation to an authentic or adapted reading passage, based on a topic related to the taught syllabus.
- The pupils’ ability to utilize the appropriate resources to express themselves in a correct and reasonable way.

b. Exam content/ Design

English in the ‘baccalaureat’ exam is timed three hours and a half for Foreign Languages stream. The ‘baccalaureat’ exam is composed of two main parts: reading and written expression. The first section comprises: *text comprehension* and *text exploration*. In text comprehension, pupils are given a reading passage with a set of comprehension questions; it is based on detailed understanding of the reading passage. Text exploration is

related to a set of activities based on the reading passage; it is based on activities related to language knowledge and use. The second part named *written production* is mainly concerned with students' writing skill; the pupils are given two main topics from which the pupils have to choose: the first topic is guided and the second one is free.

As far as the reading rubric is concerned, the reading passage ranges from 150 to 200 words. The text should go hand in hand with the stated goals of national education. The text is followed by a set of activities, generally five activities for Foreign languages stream, these may include: type of text (a letter, a conversation...), true/ false statements, paragraph identification (in which paragraph is it mentioned....?), comprehension questions, cohesive markers (who or what do the underlined words refer to?), title of the text, general idea of the text, and type of discourse (narrative, descriptive).

Regarding text exploration, the aim is to contextualize language knowledge within a reading framework, and to relate communicative competence with linguistic competence. The number of activities in this sub-section generally is five (foreign languages stream), they may embrace: lexis (synonyms and antonyms), morphology (complete the table, divide the following words into root, suffix and prefix, give the opposite of the following words keeping the same root), grammar, phonology, and discourse (fill in the gaps, reorder the sentences, or complete the dialogue).

The two parts of the English exam aim at developing two main competences: interpretation and production. As far as interpretation is concerned: "the candidate is called to comprehend and interpret a text in order to understand and answer reflection questions in situations of communication in the section "text comprehension and text exploration"¹ (Baccalaureate exam guide 2016: 16), thus the examinee will be able to interpret the text in an appropriate way that allows him to reply to the main questions

(¹) : My translation of : « le candidat est appelé à comprendre et interpréter un texte pour s'informer et répondre à des questions de réflexion dans des situations de communication dans la partie « compréhension du texte et fonctionnement de la langue. »

found in the section of reading. The production competence is concerned with the ability to produce a piece of writing either descriptive, narrative, expository or argumentative.

3.3. Research Design

Providing an answer to the research questions, and testing the research hypotheses necessitate a terse research plan including the research design, the instrumentation and the sample population to be investigated, in what follows is a detailed description of all these points.

3.3.1. Research Objectives

The impact of formative assessment within educational arenas has been proved by many researchers in various contexts all over the world. The non-judgmental nature of formative assessment allows the teacher to gather enough data about his learners' strengths and weaknesses and permits also the pupils to benefit from intensive feedback on their work and their progress. Accordingly, Formative assessment is meant to enhance pupils' achievements and develop their proficiency level. The present research is carried out to see the extent to which formative assessment has an impact on the Algerian secondary school pupils' achievement mainly in terms of text comprehension. The aim is, therefore, to examine the impact of formative assessment on text comprehension among third year foreign languages' pupils in Mohammed Mchernen in Ben Sekran, Tlemcen. Yet before doing so it is important to explore third year secondary school pupils' main difficulties in text comprehension and the sources of these difficulties. Therefore, the researcher uses a set of data collection instruments in order to fully explore these points.

3.3.2. Type of Research

In conducting any research, the investigator should follow a research design which will allow him/her to glean information in an efficient way, and to follow a terse path to obtain valid and reliable data. As such, the research design is "the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection,

measurement and analysis of data” Khotari (2004: 31), in this way, then, the research design is characterized by a set of parameters among which the research purpose constitutes the most eminent one. Therefore, the research design used should work in conjunction with the research purposes and objectives as stated by Cohen et.al (2005: 73): “the purposes of the research determine the methodology and design of the research”. There are different types of research designs including, but not limited to, exploratory research, descriptive research and experimental research design.

The present study is an experimental research which is defined by Dörnyei (2007: 116) as follows: “the common feature of experimental designs is the fact that certain consciously manipulated processes take place in a tightly controlled environment in which only the target variables are varied while other are kept constant”. The experimental research is viewed as a good method and among the valid approaches to conduct research in educational arenas as it allows the investigator to have control upon different variables, and to truly test hypotheses (Moore and McCabe 1993; Gay 1992).

Denscombe (2007: 48) defines the term experiment as “an empirical investigation under controlled conditions designed to examine the properties of, and relationship between, specific factors”. These factors can be thought of as variables which can be defined as a “property whereby the members of a set or group differ from one another” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 576). In the experimental research, there are a number of variables including independent and dependent variables, the former is a variable which is said to have an influence upon the latter, Richards and Schmidt (2002, 150) put it this way: “in empirical studies, one or more variables (independent variable) may be studied as a cause or predictor that is hypothesized to have an effect on another variable (the dependent variable)”. In addition to these two variables there are other variables which can be found within an experimental research including: extraneous variable¹, intervening

¹: refer to “independent variables that are not related to the purpose of the study, but may affect the dependent variable” (Khotari 2004, 34), the effect of this variable upon the dependent one is not regarded as part of or plus to the experimental research but rather it is an erroneous act that leads to the failure of the experiment because the independent variable is the one which has the entire effect on the dependent one.

variable¹, control variable². Researchers such as McDonough and McDonough (1997) have stated that it is quite a challenging and a difficult task for the researcher to have control over these variables. As a matter of fact, it is the existence or inexistence of these variables which determines the level of reliability of the experimental research.

Campbell and Stanley (1963) distinguish between two types of experimental research: true experimental design and quasi experimental design. In the former, the experimenter assigns two groups randomly: a control group and an experimental group, the control group is exposed to usual conditions and the experimental group is exposed to new or special conditions (Khotari, 2004). Then the researcher gives the experimental group a certain special instruction while the control group receives the standard instruction, the researcher assigns a test prior to the intervention to both groups, this test is known as the pretest and after the end of the intervention/ instruction the experimenter assigns another test which is named posttest. The researcher finally compares between the students' scores in the pretest and the posttest to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and the effect of the independent variable upon the dependent variable in relation to the two groups. Stated differently, the treatment or the independent variable is the condition or set of conditions that are said to have an effect on the results of the experimental group in comparison with the control group. The latter is similar to the former in every detail except for the fact that the groups are not randomly assigned. Within this category there is another type of experimentation which is known as one group pretest-posttest experimental design or what Cohen and Manion (1985 cited in Nunan, 1992) call "a pre-experiment", in this design only one group is assigned instead of two groups, the assigned group passes a pretest, then receives the treatment and at the end passes a posttest, the level of the assigned group will be measured before and after the treatment in order to see the effect of this treatment over the group. Such type of

¹: also called mediating variable, it is a variable which may have an influence upon the dependent variable in addition to the independent one, such variable therefore can complicate the results (Mackey and Gass 2005)

²: refers to the fact that extraneous variables are controlled by the researcher i.e. the researcher control extraneous variables for a successful experiment.

experiment is similar to that of true experiment, but it is included within quasi experimental research designs.

The present study, therefore, has been carried out under a quasi experimental research design, as the purpose is to investigate the effects of formative assessment on text comprehension, bearing in mind that the dependent variable is text comprehension and the independent variable is formative assessment. The researcher has opted for a one group pretest- posttest experimental research design where there was only one group who received the treatment. The reason behind opting for this kind of experiment is because the head of the secondary school allows the researcher to take only one group. Below is a description of the research instruments used in this study.

3.3.3. Research Instruments

To answer the first research question which is concerned with pupils' difficulties in text comprehension, data were collected through the use of pupils' questionnaire and teacher's interview, in addition to the pretest. These instruments were also employed to identify sources of pupils' difficulties which constitute the core of the second research question. Research question number three was investigated through the intervention in addition to the posttest and the post-intervention questionnaire. Finally, the fourth research question was researched through a post-intervention questionnaire addressed to pupils in addition to the intervention and the posttest.

3.3.3.1. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is among the rapid means for data collection. Brown (2001 Qtd in Dorriyei 2003: 6) defines questionnaires as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting them among existing answers". The questionnaire is mainly effective because it allows respondents to report data about themselves such as their opinions, strategies, difficulties, motivation and so on. It is a popular means of data gathering in educational contexts in general and ELT research in particular (Nunan, 1992;

McDonough and McDonough, 1997; Dörnyei, 2003). The questionnaire is beneficial chiefly because it affords a great deal of precision and clarity as the questions deal mainly with the needed knowledge, and it can be used on a small scale and large scale as well, besides it is economical in terms of time and money and easier to arrange (McDonough and McDonough, 1997; Denscombe, 2007).

According to Dörnyei (2003, 2007), the questionnaire permits to gather three types of data: factual, behavioral and attitudinal. It is very likely to find all these types in one questionnaire.

- ✓ Factual questions: which elicit facts about the respondents such as age, gender, level of education, occupation, etc. as for L2 the researcher may ask questions like learners' language learning history, the L2 coursebook.etc
- ✓ Behavioral questions: related to respondents' behaviors including habits, lifestyles and actions.
- ✓ Attitudinal questions: used to elicit participants' opinions, attitudes, interests, etc.

As far as the design of the questionnaire is concerned, there are mainly two types of questions: close-ended questions, and open-ended questions. The first category enables the respondents to choose between possible answers available to them. This category embodies "yes" / "no" questions (dichotomous questions), and multiple choice questions where the researcher supplies the participants with a variety of answers from which they have to select the answer that suits their case. The close-ended questions are easily quantified and analyzed, and simple to answer (Mackey and Gass, 2005; Khotari, 2004; Siniscalco and Auriat, 2005). Open-ended questions, on the other hand, require free answers i.e. the respondents have to offer their own answer to the question or they justify their answers.

These types complete each other and hence it is advisable that these three types be present in the questionnaire as suggested by McDonough and McDonough (1997: 177):

“the designer has to choose a mix of question types that will maximize the range and detail of the information elicited”.

The layout of the questionnaire is also important as Dörnyei (2007: 110) posits: “an attractive and professional design is half the battle in motivating respondents to produce reliable and valid data”, when designing the questionnaire the researcher should pay attention to several points. First, the questionnaire should be comparatively small and simple in terms of wording. Second, the questions should follow a logical sequence from general to more specific items. Third, the questionnaire should not be crowded but rather separate different items into rubrics or sections for instance. Moreover, the quality of paper and the colors used are also important as stated by Khotari (2004) because they attract the attention of the recipients.

In the present study, the researcher employed two questionnaires: the first one was a preliminary one which preceded the intervention delivered to 39 pupils at Mohammed Mchernen secondary school, and the second was a post-intervention questionnaire which followed the intervention addressed to 16 pupils.

a. Pre-intervention Questionnaire: Design and Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to Third year secondary school pupils at Mchernen Mohammed secondary school in Ben Sekran Tlemcen after taking the permission from the head of the school. The permission procedure is very important and focal when administrating the questionnaire, though it takes time but it should be done for ethical purposes (Denscombe, 2007). The questionnaire was delivered in February 2017, the total number of participants was 43 however only 39 of them (13 male and 26 female) responded to the questionnaire, the remaining four participants were absent. The questionnaire was administered during two sessions where the respondents were instructed how to answer because: “it is worth being meticulously careful in giving instructions on how to complete the answers” (Denscombe, 2007: 160). The administration lasted for more than two hours and students were asked if they found any

ambiguity in the questions and everything was clarified. Every single item was clarified and the participants were allowed to use other varieties in addition to English: French, Arabic in order to facilitate the task for them. The reason behind administering the questionnaire during the lecture was to avoid misunderstanding problems. The preliminary questionnaire was taken as a first step and it was intended mainly to check some points and factors that are crucial in text comprehension. It consisted of a variety of close-ended, open-ended and multiple choice questions.

After a small introduction concerning the aim of the work, the questionnaire started with some informative questions namely intended to draw the profile of the participants, and to elicit pupils' attitudes towards the English course. The questionnaire was composed of four (4) rubrics (see appendix A).

Rubric one: (items 2-6) Pupils' difficulties.

The first rubric aimed at extracting pupils' difficulties in the English course in general and English text comprehension in particular. It consisted of five (5) questions.

Rubric two: (item 7-15) Sources of difficulties

The second rubric dealt with sources of difficulties. In this rubric the researcher attempted to identify the sources of pupils' difficulties in text comprehension. It embodied nine (09) questions.

Rubric three: Pupils' strategies

This section contained reading strategies inventory. The inventory was composed of a set of strategies used by pupils while reading academic materials. The pupils were asked to circle the answer that corresponds to their frequency of use of the strategies provided. The aim was to find out what kind of strategies pupils use and their frequencies in using them.

Rubric four: (item 16) suggestions

The last rubric offered pupils a free space to give what they think best for a better achievement in text comprehension.

b. Post-intervention Questionnaire: Design and Procedure

At the end of the intervention, pupils were given a questionnaire which was mainly concerned with the intervention they received. The questionnaire was administered in May 2017 at the end of the posttest, it was written in Arabic so that to help pupils understand better as the researcher was not able to explain the questionnaire items because of the time constraint. It embodied three sections: pupils' attitudes, pupils' difficulties and pupils' strategies (see appendices F- G).

Rubric one: Pupils' attitudes (item 1-4)

The first rubric was composed of four questions mainly intended to draw pupils' attitudes towards the intervention they have received.

Rubric two: Pupils' difficulties (item 5, 6)

In this rubric the aim was to check pupils' difficulties after the intervention. It contained two questions.

Rubric three: Pupils' strategies (item7)

The last rubric was devoted to pupils' use of strategies after the intervention.

3.3.3.2. The Interview

The interview is another way of questioning through the use of face to face interaction; it is “ a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information” (Cannell and Kahn 1968, quoted in Cohen et.al 2005: 269), often used in qualitative inquiries (Dörnyei, 2007). According to Cohen et.al (2005: 267): “interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretations of

the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view”, therefore, the interview gives the respondents more freedom to express themselves in relation to a given issue or concept. The interview offers more in-depth information about the subject being investigated because the respondents become more involved and motivated to answer. Furthermore, the participants can benefit from explanations and clarifications about ambiguous items (Cohen et.al, 2005).

There are three kinds of interviews according to the degree of structure: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interview. In the structured interview the researcher uses a pre-determined list of questions which are administered face-to-face with the respondents. The structured interview is characterized by a “tight control over the format of questions and answers” (Denscombe, 2007: 175), it is more like a questionnaire. As for the semi-structured interview, “the interviewer provides guidance and direction, but is also keen to follow up interesting developments and to let the interviewee elaborate on certain issues” (Dörnyei, 2007: 136), that is to say the interviewer has a clear list about the points to be addressed but he is more flexible in terms of responses i.e. he can elaborate new items in relation to participants’ answers, or give the floor for the respondents to develop their views freely. The unstructured interview is “more like a natural conversation” (Mackey and Gass, 2005: 173) where there are no predetermined questions, but rather the interviewer raises key issues in a conversational style (Cohen et.al, 2005). Therefore, the interview is guided by the respondents’ answers, and this makes the direction of the interview unpredictable (Nunan, 1992).

In the present research work, the researcher has relied upon a structured interview because such kind of interviews allow for more systematic coverage of issues (Dörnyei, 2007). The interview was addressed to a group of teachers to ensure an in-depth data concerning the research issues and also to crosscheck data along with the pupils’ questionnaire. The aim behind choosing the structured version of the interview was to have precise data related to the main research points. The structured interview was administered in March 2017 in their teaching institutions. The study included six teachers:

three novice teachers and three experienced ones. When interviewing the teachers, there was no need to record the participants because most of the items were direct questions.

The interview was composed of seventeen items in addition to two introductory questions asked mainly to draw the teacher's profile. The interview was divided into sections comparatively related to those found in the pupils' questionnaire. The aim here was to consolidate the data obtained from pupils. Teachers' interview addressed three areas (see appendix B):

- ***Rubric one: Difficulties (items 1- 3)***

It comprised three questions which aimed at exploring teachers' views about their students' proficiency level and difficulties.

- ***Rubric two: Reading (items 4-12)***

It was dedicated to the reading skill in which teachers were asked about their frequency of practicing reading in the classroom, their views about the time allotted to reading, their proceeding when they teach reading comprehension including their explanations of the text. Within this rubric the researcher also attempted to explore teachers' views about the importance of reading and whether they encourage students to read outside the classroom, whether they teach them to use strategies and whether they assess their reading skill, and the way through which they assess it.

- ***Rubric three: Formative assessment (items 13-17)***

The third rubric dealt mainly with formative assessment, it embraced five questions. The aim was to know teachers' views about formative assessment and whether they use it in their classrooms, in addition to their roles in this process and finally their hindrances when implementing formative assessment in the classroom.

3.3.3.3. Tests:

A Test has been defined by Brown (2003: 3) as: “a method of measuring a person’s ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain”, it is a kind of assessment which is intended for a given purpose. The different purposes of the test dictate the type of the test. There are several test types: placement tests, proficiency tests, and diagnostic tests (Brown, 2003). Cohen et.al (2005) mention different parameters which should be taken into account when designing a test among these two have already been mentioned the purpose and the type; there are also the objectives, the content, the construction and the format of the test. The objective stands for the fact that each part of the test should be targeted towards certain objectives and hence the content should be precise. The construction of the test is related to the level of difficulty of the different items found in the test, and the format deals with the layout including clear instructions.

In the arena of research, a test is a powerful method of data gathering which provides numerical rather than verbal data (Cohen et.al 2005, 317). In the present research work, the researcher used two tests: a pretest and a posttest since the work is experimental in nature. As for the pretest, it was also considered as a diagnostic test. Brown (2003: 46) states that the diagnostic test is “designed to diagnose specified aspects of a language”, he carries on his definition by stating that the diagnostic test “should elicit information on what students’ need to work on in the future” (Brown, 2003: 74). Thus, such type of tests allows the investigator to collect data about the participants’ proficiency level, difficulties, and weaknesses in order to design appropriate teaching remedial tasks.

a. Pretest: Design and Procedure

As the work adheres to an experimental design, it was necessary to assign a pretest. Actually, this test had two objectives: first it was a pretest which preceded the intervention and second it was at the same time a diagnostic test which offered an overview about the pupils’ needs and diagnosed their difficulties, in addition to checking their proficiency level and baseline knowledge in the different language areas related to

text comprehension. This diagnostic test allowed the researcher to know pupils' level "before beginning a language course to better provide an efficient and effective course of instruction" (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 155). The pretest was launched before the treatment as Cohen et.al (2005: 321) put it the pretest "is conducted prior to the commencement of a programme, and will identify starting abilities and achievements".

The pretest was administered in February 2017; as a matter of fact, the second term exam was taken as a test since it first met the research objectives and second the time constraint as the investigator wanted to launch the experiment in the third semester. The sixteen participating pupils were given a text with comprehension questions, vocabulary, grammar and coherence items, in addition to written expression. These items except written expression were based upon Bachman and Palmer's model (1996), i.e., they were based on the four language competences. The other components were not included because they are difficult to observe namely: personal characteristics, topical knowledge and affective schemata. Pupils were given two hours to fulfill the provided tasks. The researcher then corrected the test, evaluated pupils' performance and analyzed the data obtained in relation to the research objectives.

The pretest items fell within the following organization: first, text comprehension where pupils were asked to read the text carefully and then answer the tasks given. These tasks included the type of the text, comprehension questions, true/false section, and a question related to identifying specific ideas in the text, and extracting what different items in the text refer to, and finally giving a title to the text. These items were intended mainly to test pupils' textual competence under which sociolinguistic competence was included. Second, text exploration in which pupils were provided with a set of activities consisting of: vocabulary items (synonyms) where the researcher attempted to explore pupils' functional knowledge, morphology items (complete the table: noun, verb and adjective) and grammar items which attempted to check pupils' grammatical knowledge and coherence item (reorder the sentences to make a coherent paragraph) which aimed at checking pupils' textual knowledge. Finally, pupils were given a paragraph to write in the

last section named written expression. Worth noting is the fact that the present study excluded written production as the researcher was mainly interested at investigating text comprehension and exploration, hence it was also excluded in the pretest and the scores were related only to the first two sections: text comprehension and text exploration (see appendix C).

b. Posttest: Design and Procedure

At the end of the instruction, the researcher opted for another test known as the posttest which was mainly intended to check the efficacy of the intervention, and to identify the differences in pupils' performance in relation to the pretest, hence, it was meant to compare pupils' scores. The post test was administered in May 2017; it was the test of the third semester. Worth noting is the fact that, in the third year secondary school, pupils are generally given two exams from which they have to choose one in the third semester as an experience to the real 'Baccalaureat' exam, this procedure is done with all the subjects including English. Accordingly, the pupils were given two texts each with a set of tasks from which they have to choose one. The researcher has chosen one of these exams in advance, modified some points in it in order to check similar points as the pretest, and when the pupils finished the official exam, the researcher gave them the modified version with the new questions (only few of them not all the questions) and asked the pupils to answer the different tasks. Fortunately, there were many pupils who have already chosen this text in the official exam so they just added the modified points, while the pupils who chose the second text were required to answer all the tasks. As far as the last rubric (written production) is concerned, the researcher took the paragraph of both texts into account since there was no time for the pupils to write a new paragraph, and second because this section was excluded from our analysis. The pupils were given one hour to answer the different tasks because the majority of the pupils have dealt with this text. The aim behind this step was to ensure that all the pupils answered the same tasks.

The posttest was composed of a text with two parts: the reading part and the written production one (see appendix E). As far as the first part was concerned, it

compromised two phases: text comprehension and text exploration. In the first phase the pupils were asked to answer a set of tasks related to their comprehension of the text provided, they include: the type of the text, true/false section, comprehension questions, a question related to in which paragraph a specific idea was mentioned in the text, finding out what different items refer in the text, and giving the general idea of the text. The second part “text exploration” embodied: vocabulary items (synonyms), morphology (complete the table) grammar items, phonology (syllables) and a section related to discourse (reorder the sentences). Worth noting is the fact that, the second part i.e. written production was not included in our study. The grading of the posttest was similar to that of the pretest: seven (7) points for text comprehension, seven (7) points for text exploration and six (6) points for written production.

3.3.4. Sample Population

Among the significant aspects to take into account when conducting a research is sampling, Richards and Schmidt (2002: 465) define a sample as: “any group of individuals that is selected to represent a population”, it is therefore the investigated community which the researcher chooses among a whole population and applies his/her research on. Accordingly, the researcher has to select a sample which is reliable and appropriate for the research objectives (Khotari, 2004). The sample should be similar to the target population in every detail including age, gender, educational background, L2 learning background and so on in order to have representative data for the whole population as Milroy and Gordon (2003, qtd. in Dörnyei 2007: 96) suggest “the strength of the conclusions we can draw from the results obtained from a selected small group depends on how accurately the particular sample represents the larger population”. In this way, then, the sample is very important in any research and it is a focal point in the success or failure of the work as Dörnyei posits: “sample can fundamentally determine the success of a study” (2007: 96).

For the sake of gathering data and investigating the research questions, a group of subjects were assigned to participate in the study. The investigated population comprised

teachers and pupils in four secondary schools in the wilaya of Tlemcen. The researcher has used a non-probability sampling, more exactly, purposeful convenience sampling which means “besides the relative ease of accessibility, participants also have to possess certain key characteristics that are related to the purpose of the investigation” (Dörnyei, 2007: 99). Indeed, the sample under investigation has been chosen for a number of reasons: first, the secondary school has been chosen because it achieved low success percentages in the ‘Baccalaureat’ exam for the last years. Second, the teachers were assigned purposefully according to their experience for the sake of obtaining a variety of views and opinions of experienced and novice teachers. Third, also the sample of the pupils has been chosen due to some factors (see the following section).

3.3.4.1. Pupils’ Profile

The subject pupils were third year pupils at Mchernen Mohammed secondary school in Ben Sekran, about 33 kilometers far from the center of the wilaya of Tlemcen. The number of pupils involved in the preintervention questionnaire constituted 39 participants (males and females) whose age ranged between seventeen (17) and twenty (20) years old. They were enrolled in the literary stream, more exactly Foreign Languages stream. The researcher chose this sample for some reasons: first, the secondary school itself has been chosen because it achieved low scores in the baccalaureat exam during the three last years compared to other secondary schools in Tlemcen as afore-mentioned. Second, the sample of the pupils was purposefully selected because they were in the third year which means at the end of the year they would sit for an important exam, i.e. ,the ‘baccalaureat’ exam, besides they were specialized in foreign languages and hence English represented an important course with the coefficient five (5). Thus, the investigator believes that the sample chosen was more aware of the importance of the English language in general and the English language exam in particular with its different components including text comprehension.

As far as the experiment was concerned, only one group was assigned randomly to participate in the study. The group belonged to third year pupils at the previously

mentioned secondary school; it was under the specialty of foreign languages. The experimental group consisted basically of 25 pupils, however only sixteen (16) participated in the experiment. Regarding the pre-intervention questionnaire, it was administered to 39 pupils at the afore-mentioned secondary school, while in the post-intervention questionnaire only those who participated in the intervention were given the questionnaire, i.e., sixteen (16) pupils.

3.3.4.2. Teachers' Profile

In addition to pupils, the researcher has also relied upon teachers in this research work. The aim behind was to have an in-depth knowledge about pupils' difficulties in text comprehension in addition to teachers' views about certain points relevant to the study. In accordance with this aim, a group of teachers was selected. The sample teachers in the present study comprised six participants including three experienced and three novice teachers with varying experiences ranging from one year to twenty years, and their degrees were either Licence or Master in English. The rationale behind this purposeful sampling was to benefit from a variety of views. Teachers' degrees and teaching experiences are displayed in the table below:

Table 3.4: Teachers' degrees and experiences in teaching

Teachers	Degrees	Experience
Teacher 1	Licence in English	Twenty (20) years
Teacher 2	Licence in English	Fifteen (15) years
Teacher 3	Licence in English	Eight (08)years
Teacher 4	Master in English	Three (03) years
Teacher 5	Master in English	Three (03) years
Teacher 6	Master in English	One (01) year

3.3.5. Research Procedure

The present research work went through different yet intertwined steps to reach the research objectives. As a first step, the researcher administered a questionnaire (pre-intervention) to pupils and an interview to teachers to: first, identify pupils' main difficulties in text comprehension and the possible sources of these difficulties; second, to spotlight pupils' text comprehension strategies; and finally to have an overview about teacher's views about formative assessment. Moreover, a pretest was submitted to pupils to evaluate their proficiency level. This step allowed the researcher to map out the main points to be addressed in the phase of the intervention. Accordingly, the second step in the process of data collection was mainly devoted to the intervention where the researcher took the pupils for five weeks in cooperation with their teacher; the number of the participating pupils was sixteen (16), this small scale study actually served the researcher since she was able to reach each individual pupil in the group. The third step was devoted to the posttest in order to assess the efficacy of the intervention. The final print was concerned with a post-intervention questionnaire where the sixteen participating pupils were asked about their attitudes and views about the intervention they received.

3.3.6. Data Analysis

Once the data are gathered, the following step is to analyze these in order to explain the nature of the points being studied and to arrive at a set of principles that can be used elsewhere (Denscombe, 2007: 247). In the field of research, there are different types through which data can be reported and analyzed, however, the qualitative and the quantitative approaches are the most commonly used in educational research.

3.3.6.1. Qualitative Analysis:

This type of analysis is based on "words or images as the unit of analysis" (Denscombe, 2007: 248), the data gathered in this approach are transformed into words. Accordingly, qualitative data is concerned with explanations since it is based on opinions and interpretations. Qualitative approach to data analysis is used in the present study to

analyze the pupils' pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaire and the teachers' interview.

3.3.6.2. Quantitative Analysis:

This type of analysis, on the other hand, is based on “numbers as the unit of analysis” (Denscombe 248); this approach generates data that are numerical by transforming participants' answers into quantifiable units. Accordingly, it can take different forms including: figures, tables etc.

In the present research work, quantitative analysis concerns the pupils' questionnaires, and the tests (pretest and posttest). Within the tests, the researcher employed the statistical measure known as central tendency which includes: the mean and the median. The former is the average of the scores, it is the sum of all the scores divided by the total number of items, it is the most common descriptive measure as it takes all the scores into account (Dörnyei, 2007: 214); the latter refers to “the value of the middle item or score when the scores in a sample are arranged in order from lowest to highest” (Richards and Schmidt 2002: 325). In addition to the standard deviation which is the degree to which scores vary from the mean, if the standard deviation is low the scores are close to each other, and if it is high the scores are far from each other, i.e., “the more the scores spread from the mean, the larger the standard deviation or vice versa” (Richards and Schmidt 2002: 507), therefore, the standard deviation determines the heterogeneity or homogeneity in the groups' scores.

As it has been afore-mentioned, the researcher employed different tools for data gathering, the variety of the data gathered necessitates the use of two types of data analysis namely: qualitative and quantitative, the use of the two approaches together is beneficial as stated by Denscombe (247): “good research tends to use parts of both approaches”. For a clear view about the research design, check the following figure:

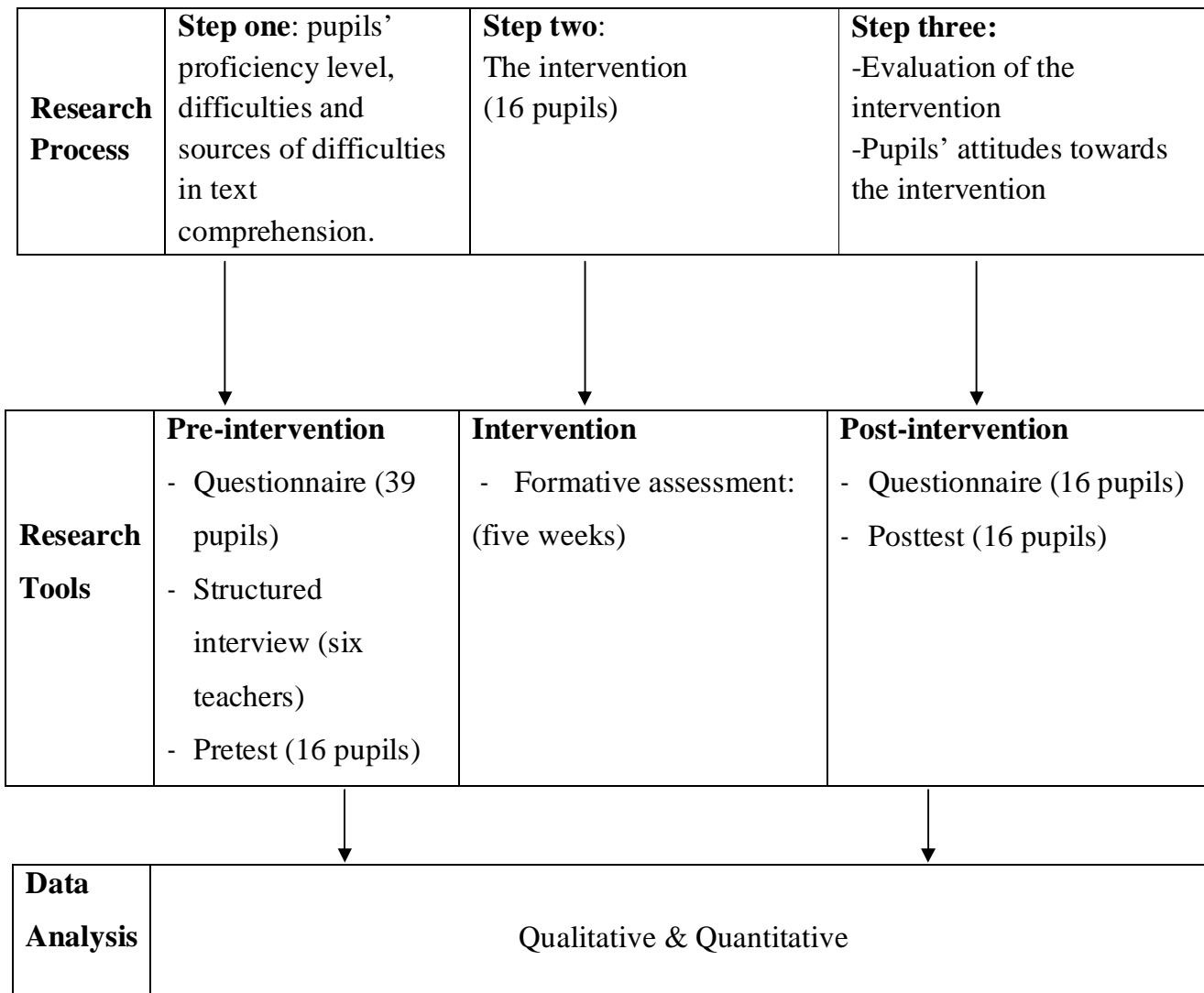


Figure 3.2: Research design

3.4. Conclusion

Within this chapter, the researcher attempts to give a closer view about the teaching situation in Algeria mainly in relation to secondary school. Additionally, the researcher portrays the research design employed in the present research work.

For the sake of examining the research questions and hypotheses the researcher opted for a quasi experimental research design namely one group pretest posttest experimental design, the number of pupils within this group comprised basically twenty five pupils, however, only sixteen pupils participated in the experiment. The

experimental design was supported by a set of research instruments including two questionnaire for pupils (pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaire), and an interview for teachers. Accordingly, the employed research instruments provided the researcher with qualitative and quantitative data. Indeed, the pupils' questionnaires and pupils' tests supplied quantitative data, besides teachers' interview together with pupils' questionnaire provided qualitative data. The analysis of the data yielded is provided in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1	Introduction	139
4.2	Pre-intervention phase.....	139
4.2.1.	Pupils' Pre-intervention Questionnaire.....	139
4.2.1.1.	Results.....	139
4.2.1.2.	Interpretation.....	150
4.2.2.	Teachers' Interview.....	152
4.2.2.1.	Results.....	152
4.2.2.2.	Interpretation	158
4.2.3.	Pretest.....	161
4.2.3.1.	Results.....	161
4.2.3.2.	Interpretation.....	166
4.3	The Intervention Phase.....	167
4.4	The post-intervention Phase.....	173
4.4.1.	Pupils' Post-intervention Questionnaire.....	174
4.4.1.1.	Results.....	174
4.4.1.2.	Interpretation.....	178
4.4.2.	Posttest.....	180
4.4.2.1.	Results.....	180
4.4.2.2.	Interpretation.....	186
4.5	Discussion of the Main Results.....	188
4.6	Conclusion.....	193

4.1. Introduction

After collecting data with the help of pupils' questionnaire, teachers' interview and tests, the next step was to analyze the results obtained. The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The quantitative data analysis is related to statistical analysis including calculating the mean, percentages, test scores and so on. Qualitative data, on the other hand is concerned with explanations, it is more complicated data based on opinions and interpretations. Initially, here is a map for the reader about the content of the chapter.

At the inception of the chapter the results of each research instrument were displayed followed by the interpretation of each. Then, the data obtained were discussed in relation to the research hypotheses.

4.2. Pre-intervention Phase

In this phase of the research, the investigator employed a set of research instruments to figure out the main difficulties faced by students in English exams, in addition to the sources of these difficulties. Below is an exhibition of the main results obtained.

4.2.1. Pupils' Pre-intervention Questionnaire

The first step in the present research work was a questionnaire delivered to 39 third year foreign languages pupils at Mohammed Mchernen secondary school. The aim of this research instrument was to identify the main difficulties encountered by those pupils in text comprehension. The researcher also attempted to highlight the sources behind these difficulties.

4.2.1.1 Results

Item one: pupils' attitudes towards the English course.

The first item in the questionnaire aimed at detecting pupils' attitudes vis-à-vis the English course. The responses revealed that the majority of pupils (92.30%) expressed a positive attitude towards the English course. When asked about the reasons, approximately all the pupils' answers fell in two main categories: first "*because of the teacher*", and second "*it is an important and an international language*". Others reported that "*it is their favorite language*", and also "*it is a new language through which we can learn new words*". While the remaining participants (7.69%) expressed a negative attitude towards the English language and they justified their opinions by stating that: "*English is a difficult language*" or "*a boring one*".

Rubric one: (2-6) Pupils' difficulties.

The first rubric in the questionnaire aimed at exhibiting pupils' difficulties in the English course, and exam, it consisted of five (5) questions.

Item two: pupils' difficulties in understanding the English course.

The yielded answers showed that more than half of the participants (58.97%) did not face difficulties in understanding the English course; most of these participants linked this to the teacher's technique in explaining the lesson. Besides they stated that "English is an easy language, all what is needed is to focus and concentrate with the teacher in order to understand well". While the other pupils (41.02%) revealed that they faced difficulties; the majority of them stated that their difficulties in understanding the English course lay in the fact that they did not focus during the lesson while others stated that they encountered difficulties because of grammar difficulty and lack of vocabulary.

Item three: pupils' difficulties in the English exam

Regarding difficulties in the English exam, only a minority of pupils (12.82%) answered that they did not face difficulties. The remaining pupils (87.17%) had much difficulties. The pupils were subsequently asked to pinpoint the section which was more

difficult to them. The options given at this point were related to the sections found in the English exam (see section 3.2.3.2). The results are displayed in the graphs below:

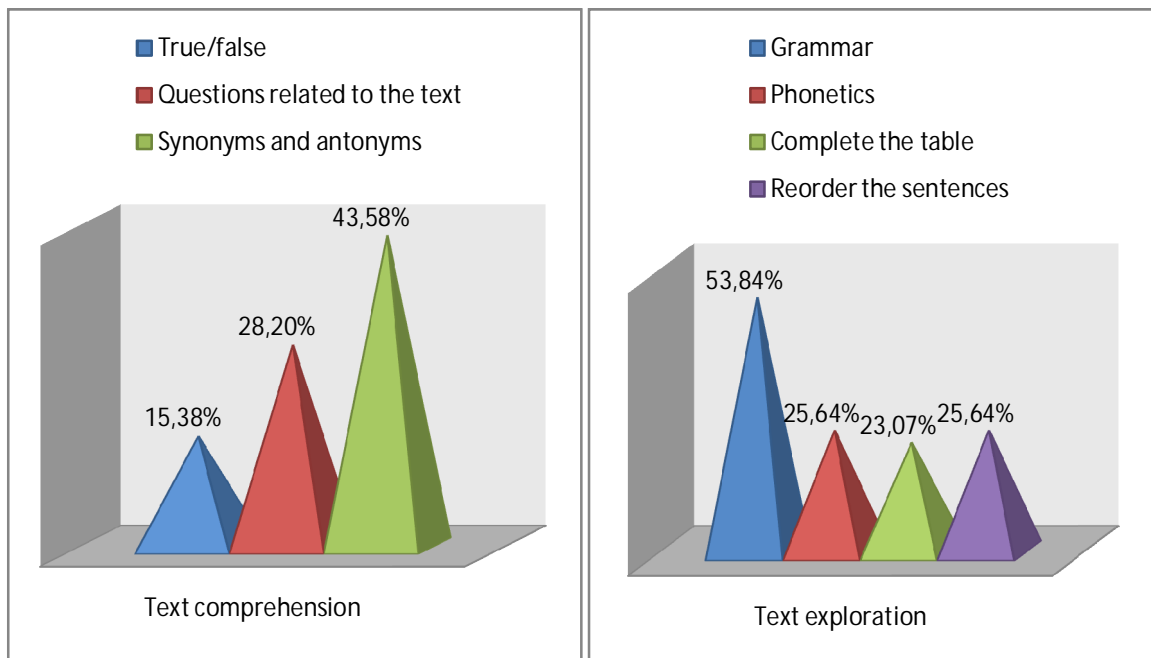


Figure 4.1: Pupils' difficulties in the English exam

As the graphs show, regarding the first rubric which is text comprehension, the task which was viewed as the most difficult by the majority of the pupils was synonyms and antonyms with a percentage higher than 43%. The questions related to the text came at the second place with a percentage estimated at 28.20% and finally few pupils (15.38%) claimed that they faced difficulties in the true /false section. As far as the second rubric is concerned, i.e. ,text exploration, the responses exhibited above revealed that the most difficult task for the majority of the pupils (53.84%) was grammar, while no significant difference was found between the remaining tasks in terms of difficulty: 25.64%, 23.07% and 25.64% for phonetics, 'complete the table' and 'reorder the sentences' respectively. Surprisingly enough only two participants (5.12%) claimed that they faced difficulties in the last rubric which is written expression.

Item four: pupils' difficulties in understanding English texts.

The present study is based on text comprehension so it was necessary to identify pupils' difficulties in order to provide solutions. Accordingly, the third question in the first rubric sought to explore pupils' difficulties in understanding the English texts. A huge number of pupils (74.35%) seemed to have difficulties in understanding English texts, while the other participants (25.64%) reported that they did not encounter difficulties.

Item five: types of pupils' difficulties in text comprehension

This question was a follow up to the previous one. The pupils were asked at which level they found difficulty to comprehend a text. The pupils here were supplied with a set of alternatives; these alternatives fell within four major categories: grammatical, textual, functional and sociolinguistic difficulties. These difficulties were inspired from Bachman and Palmer's model of language ability (1996), besides they covered the points targeted in the present study. Students' answers are exhibited in the table below:

Table 4.1: Pupils' difficulties in text comprehension

Competence	Difficulty	AF ¹	RF ²
Grammatical	Vocabulary (you don't know the words) (grammatical/functional competence)	12	30.76%
	Grammatical structures found in the text	08	20.51%
	You don't know how to pronounce words	03	07.69%
Textual	You understand words, but you don't understand the text as a whole	07	17.94%
	You don't distinguish the different discourse genres	05	12.82%
Sociolinguistic	You don't understand cultural items in the text	09	23.07%
Functional	You don't have enough knowledge about the topic of the text	08	20.51%
All of them		01	02.56%

¹ : Absolute Frequency

² : Relative Frequency

The results clearly show that the majority of participants lacked grammatical competence compared to the other competences. Sociolinguistic competence came in the second place followed by functional and textual competence. Only one participant posited that he lacks all the competences.

Item six: pupils' views about text comprehension

The last question within this rubric was an informative one concerning whether pupils thought that text comprehension helped them in their exams. Pupils' responses to this question were almost all positive (94.87%) claiming that text comprehension helped them in the exam, while only two pupils (05.12%) yielded a negative response.

Rubric two: (items 7-15) sources of pupils' difficulties in text comprehension

The objective behind this rubric was to explore the sources of pupils' difficulties in text comprehension. In this rubric the investigator wanted to have a clear picture of the main factors that can be responsible for pupils' low level in text comprehension.

Item seven: pupils' opinion on the importance of reading

Approximately all the responses were positive, i.e., 89.74% of pupils agreed on the fact that reading is an important skill. At this level pupils were asked to justify their answers, and their arguments were:

- It enriches our knowledge and develops our way of thinking.
- It helps us to understand and pronounce difficult words.
- It helps us to understand different kinds of texts, enrich our vocabulary, and answer questions.
- It enriches our English which is an important language.
- It helps us to write.

Only few pupils (10.25%) answered negatively to this item, one pupil justified his answer by stating that “*reading takes time, and we don’t have enough time*”, and another one stated that “*we don’t need reading if we understand our lessons*”.

Item eight: pupils’ opinion on the difficulty of the reading skill.

This question aimed at exploring pupils’ views about the difficulty of the reading skill. Pupils’ answers revealed that only 28.20% of them found reading a difficult skill, then the researcher asked for the reasons of this difficulty, and the participants answered that: they had problems in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The vast majority of the participants (71.79%) stated that reading is not a difficult skill and they justified their answers as follows:

- I like English and I like reading in English so I don’t face difficulties.
- Reading is easy except for some difficult words.
- I know how to pronounce words.
- Reading is easy but grammar is difficult.

Items nine and ten: frequency of reading comprehension in the classroom

The aim behind this question was to know the frequency of using reading inside the classroom. Pupils’ here were divided into two categories: 35.89% answered that they *often* practiced reading in the classroom; and 64.10% who answered they *sometimes* practice reading.

The tenth question was an informative one concerning whether the time given to reading was enough to develop reading skills. Around half of the participants (41.02%) viewed that it was not enough, whereas 58.97% stated that this time was enough to develop reading skills.

Item eleven: assessment of the reading skill

This item was put forward to elicit whether the teacher assesses the pupils' reading comprehension. The participants' answers were all positive; all the respondents stated that the teacher assessed their reading comprehension. However, this assessment was not done on a regular basis (it was done sometimes).

Item twelve: teacher's help in text comprehension

This question was an informative one concerning the ways in which the teacher helped the pupils to comprehend the text. Pupils' replies to this question were quite similar, they stated that the teacher first asked them to read the text silently and identify the difficult words and then he explained these difficult words to them by giving examples.

Item thirteen: the focused points in assessment

Through this item, the investigator attempted to figure out which point the teacher focused more on in his assessment of reading comprehension. Approximately all the answers fell within two areas: grammar and vocabulary. Some of the participants reported that the teacher focused on all of the aspects.

Item fourteen: Pupils' reading in front of their classmates

By this question we attempted to know pupils' attitudes towards reading in front of their classmates. The scores yielded demonstrated that a considerable number of the participants (46.15%) did not like to read in front of their classmates, when they were asked about the justification, the most quoted answer was: "*I feel shy*", in addition to other reasons including: "*I feel stressed, I don't feel at ease*" and "*I have a bad reading*". While the other half of the respondents (53.84%) replied that they liked reading in front of their classmates.

Item fifteen: pupils' reading outside the classroom

The last question in this rubric dealt with whether pupils read outside the classroom. The obtained results showed that 58.97% of pupils did not read English texts outside the classroom. On the other hand, (41.02%) reported that they practiced English reading outside the classroom.

Rubric three: pupils' reading strategies

This section of the questionnaire was mainly devoted to pupils' strategies in reading. Pupils were given an inventory composed of a set of strategies and they were asked to tick the appropriate answer according to their frequency of use of these strategies. The strategies were adapted from Mokhtari and Reichard (2002); they were grouped under three headings: global reading strategies, problem solving strategies and support strategies. The results obtained revealed that pupils used a variety of reading comprehension strategies; these are summarized in the tables below:

Table4.2: Pupils' use of global reading strategies

Global Reading Strategies: 10 items	Scale				
	never	occasionally	sometimes	usually	always
a) I have a purpose in mind when I read	7.62%	/	28.20%	20.51%	43.58%
b) I think about what I know to help me understand what I'm reading	5.12%	10.25%	28.20%	20.51%	35.89%
c) I preview the text to see what it's about before reading it	35.89%	10.25%	10.25%	10.25%	33.33%
d) I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization.	28.20%	20.51%	23.07%	7.69%	20.51%
e) I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	12.82%	17.94%	25.64%	12.82%	30.76%
f) I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading.	20.51%	7.69%	28.20%	17.94%	25.64%
g) I use typographical aids like boldface type and italics to identify key information.	23.07%	23.07%	23.07%	20.51%	10.25%
h) I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.	15.38%	28.20%	25.64%	23.07%	7.69%
i) I check my understanding when I come across conflicting information.	12.82%	20.51%	33.33%	15.38%	17.94%
j) I try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	2.56%	5.12%	33.33%	12.82%	46.15%

According to the scores obtained, the pupils stated that they used a set of global reading strategies among which purposeful reading and contextual guessing (items (a) and (j)) constituted the most frequently used. While strategies such as drawing inferences, critical analysis and use of typographical aids (items (f), (h) and (g) respectively) were less recurrently used by pupils.

Table4.3: Pupils' use of support reading strategies

Support Reading Strategies: 6 items	Scale				
	never	occasionally	sometimes	usually	always
k) I take notes while reading to help me understand what I'm reading	10.25%	12.82%	38.46%	25.64%	12.82%
l) When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I'm reading	25.64%	2.56%	23.07%	20.51%	28.20%
m) I write summaries to reflect on key ideas in the text.	51.28%	10.25%	23.07%	10.25%	5.12%
n) I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	10.25%	17.94%	28.20%	20.51%	23.07%
o) I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I'm reading.	17.94%	10.25%	25.64%	5.12%	41.02%
p) I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.	12.82%	10.25%	33.33%	28.20%	15.38%

The results obtained for the support reading strategies indicated that the pupils employed these strategies mainly those related to paraphrasing (item (o)) and reading aloud (item (l)); while the remaining strategies were not used frequently by the pupils especially summarizing.

Table 4.4: Pupils' use of problem-solving reading strategies

Problem-solving reading Strategies: 5 items	Scale				
	never	occasionally	sometimes	usually	always
q) I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading.	10.25%	10.25%	10.25%	12.82%	56.41%
r) I adjust my reading speed according to what I'm reading.	7.69%	10.25%	25.64%	23.07%	33.33%
s) When text becomes difficult, I begin to pay closer attention to what I'm reading.	7.69%	12.82%	30.76%	23.07%	25.64%
t) I stop from time to time to think about what I'm reading.	15.38%	7.69%	30.76%	7.69%	38.46%
u) I try to picture or visualize information to help me remember what I'm reading.	15.38%	15.38%	43.58%	10.25%	15.38%

Pupils' use of problem-solving strategies while reading seemed considerable mainly slow reading (item (q)).

A quick glance at the tables above reveals that the global strategies were much used (usually/ always) compared to other strategies. Problem-solving strategies were *sometimes* used while support strategies were not much used (never/ occasionally). The results obtained from this reading strategies inventory will be compared to the test results later on to verify whether pupils really employ these strategies or not.

Rubric four: suggestions

The last rubric in the questionnaire consisted of one item; it was an additional one to extract some pupils' suggestions and views concerning an effective text comprehension. Pupils were asked to offer suggestions that they thought were useful to improve their text comprehension. The respondents here offered a variety of answers but the majority fell within the same points namely: reading English books and newspapers, in addition to watching English movies, listening to English songs. Participants offered also a set of other suggestions including:

- Try to focus in the classroom and listen carefully to the teacher.
- Read the text slowly and carefully and take your time, and try to understand the difficult words.
- Look for difficult words and do research on the internet.

4.2.1.2. Interpretation

The pre-intervention questionnaire results revealed that secondary school pupils in foreign languages are still struggling to overcome their difficulties especially in English. Indeed, the questionnaire submitted to third year pupils at Mohammed Mchernen secondary school examined some of these issues more systematically. Though pupils had positive attitudes towards the English course and the teacher, they still faced many difficulties mainly regarding vocabulary (synonyms and antonyms) and grammar in addition to comprehension questions; this was related to the pupils' lack of concentration and lack of vocabulary which were viewed as an obstacle to comprehension and understanding. Accordingly, pupils' difficulties were of grammatical and functional nature. Besides, pupils' difficulties in comprehension question were due to lack of reading outside the classroom and lack of practice of reading inside the classroom. As a matter of fact, reading inside the classroom did not focus on comprehension and reading strategies but rather on grammar as many participants reported and this was among the major contributes which affected pupils' low comprehension. However, despite the fact that the teacher focused on grammar in his assessment of reading, pupils still lack grammatical competence in addition to textual competence. Pupils also showed lack in other language competences including functional and sociolinguistic competences.

The results obtained also revealed that pupils were aware of the importance of reading in enriching their language knowledge in general and in text comprehension in particular, besides they showed a positive attitude towards reading in English, yet most of them did not read English books outside the classroom and this was one of the main sources of their difficulties. Surprisingly enough many participants reported that reading was not a difficult skill; what made reading difficult was difficult words, grammar and

pronunciation, a point that was shared also by those who saw reading a difficult skill. This result correlated with the previous one which stated that pupils' main difficulty in reading laid mainly within grammatical competence.

Another important point to mention is that pupils apparently were not aware of the skills needed for effective text comprehension; this idea was drawn from their responses to the tenth item where many participants reported that the time given to reading was enough, and they practiced reading only sometimes not on a regular basis and hence the time given was not enough to develop their reading skills as they thought.

In the same vein, the assessment of the reading skill was also not done regularly as the pupils reported, and this is another factor behind pupils' weak text comprehension. Stated differently, lack of practice of the reading skill in the classroom was one of the sources behind pupils' weak level in text comprehension. Additionally, the teacher's explanation of the text was restricted to the explanation of difficult words and grammar while no teaching of reading comprehension strategies was included, this result stems from the fact that teachers were unaware of the importance of teaching reading strategies in their classrooms, besides the time was not sufficient as the syllabus was quite long, this in turn lead to poor reading comprehension among pupils. Another factor which can be also regarded as a constraint to pupils' reading and poor comprehension was of a psychological nature, this was related to pupils' reading in front of their classmates, many pupils reported that they cannot read in front of their classmates because of their shyness, this in fact can be also attributed to lack of reading practice in the classroom and teacher's methodology in the reading session where pupils were asked to read the text silently instead of reading loudly. As a matter of fact, reading loudly can break pupils' shyness and raise their self-confidence especially when it is done regularly; such practice leads pupils to develop some reading strategies that pave the way for high comprehension skills and hence successful text comprehension.

Regarding reading strategies, pupils reported that they used a set of strategies mainly global strategies. However, the most scored frequency of using these strategies was “sometimes” which means that pupils did not use these strategies regularly whenever they read a text. The reason again dwells in the fact that pupils did not read outside the classroom and did not practice reading frequently inside it.

4.2.2. Teacher’s Interview

A structured interview was addressed to six teachers from different secondary schools in Tlemcen. The teacher’s interview carried the same aim as the pre-intervention questionnaire. The researcher wanted to have a closer look on pupils’ main difficulties in reading and the sources of these difficulties as well. Besides, the researcher aimed at exploring teachers’ views about formative assessment.

4.2.2.1. Results:

After a small introduction about the gist of the research and its objectives, the researcher asked the teachers about their teaching experience and the degrees they hold.

Rubric one (item 1-3): pupils’ difficulties

Item one: pupils’ proficiency level

The first question of this rubric attempted to find out teachers’ views about their pupils’ proficiency level. Teachers’ responses to this question varied between proficient and low proficient. Precisely, two teachers reported that their pupils were proficient while the remaining ones stated that their pupils were low proficient. Surprisingly, none of the teachers reported that his/her students were high proficient.

Item two: pupils’ difficulties in exams

This item aimed at exploring teachers’ views about their pupils’ difficulties in exams since they are more aware of these difficulties as evaluators. All the responses to this question were affirmative, i.e., all the teachers claimed that their students faced

difficulties in exams. Teachers were asked to identify the main rubric which pupils faced more difficulties in; teachers' responses to this item varied. Three of them reported that written expression was among the most difficult rubrics in addition to grammar and phonetics. The three remaining teachers stated that the first rubric which is related to text comprehension is the most difficult one especially questions related to the text and synonyms and antonyms in addition to items from the second rubric: text exploration, these items were mainly grammar, complete the table and reorder the sentences.

Item three: pupils' sources of difficulties

In accordance with the previous question, teachers were asked to map out the reasons behind their pupils' difficulties in exams. One teacher offered a number of reasons, he reported that: first, new words are seen by the pupils as a great obstacle. Second, pupils' inability to recall the information found in the text, and this is due to lack of reading. Third, the type of text, some texts are easy to understand while others are very difficult. The answers yielded by other teachers constituted a variety of reasons, among these the teachers mentioned:

- Lack of English vocabulary is a point that was shared by three teachers maintaining that pupils do not have enough vocabulary to express their ideas.
- Lack of concentration, pupils do not pay attention
- Pupils are not very interested in studying; they want to have good marks without any effort.

Rubric two (item 4-12): Reading**Item four:** the frequency of reading inside the classroom

Three teachers stated that they *often* practiced reading in their classrooms, while the three remaining ones said that they *sometimes* practiced it.

Item five: the sufficiency of reading practice inside the classroom

In relation to the previous question, teachers were asked whether the time given to reading was enough to develop pupils' reading skills. All the teachers' responses were negative i.e. they all reported that the time given to reading in the classroom was not sufficient.

Item six: teacher's procedure in reading comprehension session

In fact, teachers' procedures in the reading comprehension session did not vary widely, pupils were asked to read the text silently that is to say to skim the text, and then the teacher explained the difficult words and the new vocabulary, one teacher stated in addition to that that she asked them to re-read the text carefully to answer the questions. One teacher reported that he first identified the purpose of reading in addition to the type of the text (pre-reading stage); then pupils read the text carefully and in details i.e. scanning in order to be aware of the different types of texts and how they are organized. Another teacher said that she gave students some hints about the text e.g. pictures and so on, and then she asked them to read and check their predictions.

Item seven: teacher's help for text comprehension

Two teachers stated that they helped their pupils by giving the general idea of the text. Two teachers reported that they explained the difficult words. Two other teachers expressed that they helped their pupils through a set of activities including mainly comprehension questions.

Item eight: teachers' encouragement of pupils to read

This question was an informative one concerning whether the teachers encourage their pupils to read outside the classroom, all the answers yielded were strongly affirmative, and all the teachers sustained their answers by saying "*of course*". Teachers then were asked to give more explanations, all the teachers interviewed confirmed and emphasized the importance of reading; their answers are summarized in the following points:

- To develop and enrich their vocabulary.
- Reading is the first source of learning.
- To ameliorate their level in reading and writing.

Item nine: pupils' use of text comprehension strategies

Teachers' answers to this question were approximately all negative, only two teachers stated that a few number of the pupils used strategies.

Item ten: teaching of reading comprehension strategies

As a consolidation to the preceding item, teachers were asked whether they taught their students to use text comprehension strategies. Four of the respondents stated that they taught their pupils to use strategies among them one teacher reported that she sometimes did this. The remaining two informants posited that they did not teach their pupils to use strategies. The teachers who responded positively to this item were further asked about how they taught their pupils to use strategies, their responses are listed below:

- To choose simple and attractive texts with comprehension questions.
- I tell the pupils that it is not necessary to understand every single word but try to understand the meaning from the context and get the general idea, and sometimes I ask them to try to translate English words to Arabic. In addition to using background knowledge in other subjects for scientific texts for instance. Sometimes they can use illustrations and pictures in the text (if they are given) to understand the reading passage.
- First, identifying what pupils have understood and what they have not and ask them to use information found in the text or their background knowledge to understand better.

The respondents who reported that they did not teach their students to use strategies when reading a text related this to lack of time and class size.

Items eleven and twelve: teachers' assessment of the reading skill

The last two items in the present rubric were mainly concerned with reading assessment, teachers were asked first whether they assessed their pupils' reading skill, and second how it is assessed. Four of the respondents stated that they assessed their pupils reading skill and when they were asked about the frequency of assessment, their responses ranged between '*often*' and '*sometimes*'. Concerning the way in which they assessed reading, they stated that they assessed their answers to the questions given; besides one teacher stated that she asked her pupils to re-read the paragraph different times. The two remaining others reported that they did not assess them.

Rubric three: formative assessment

At the inception of this rubric, teachers were given a brief definition concerning formative assessment to ensure their understanding of the concept.

Item thirteen: teachers' views about formative assessment

The teachers were given two options from which they had to choose: useful or useless. All the participating teachers stressed the fact that formative assessment is useful in the teaching-learning process. Subsequently, teachers were asked to justify their views, the answers varied from one teacher to the other; an exhibition of the main points given is offered below:

- Formative assessment identifies the main difficulties faced by the pupils.
- Formative assessment is the most powerful type of assessment.
- Formative assessment improves pupils' understanding and performance.

Item fourteen: teachers' use of formative assessment

The aim behind this item was to know whether teachers use formative assessment in their classrooms. One respondent replied negatively to this item and reported that this was due to lack of time, and viewed formative assessment as waste of time. Three

teachers stated that they *sometimes* used formative assessment in their classrooms while another teacher reported that she *always* used it and the last one posited that he used it *often*. Subsequently, teachers were asked about the way in which they use formative assessment, four teachers stated that “it *depends on the context*” while the two remaining teachers answered this item, the results obtained are disclosed below:

- Either by giving the pupils a text followed by questions or by giving them a writing task including some grammar and lexis points.
- Offering pupils relevant, comprehensible and actionable feedback and bridging the gap between students’ actual level and desired outcomes.

Item fifteen: teacher’s role in formative assessment

This question attempted at exploring what role teachers play when they implement formative assessment in their classrooms. Three of the respondents stated that they acted as evaluators in the process of formative assessment; they said that through evaluation you can know their level and then help them to do better. The remaining others said that they mainly provided feedback to their pupils in this process and prompted them as well.

Item sixteen: pupils’ improvement in the light of formative assessment

This item was an informative one concerning whether teachers saw any improvement in their pupils’ outcomes when implementing formative assessment in the classroom. All the responses were affirmative. The researcher required from the teachers further clarifications, their arguments include:

- Most of the pupils will not repeat the same mistake.
- Positive feedback gives them somehow confidence and negative feedback gives them a push to face their weaknesses.
- Pupils will be more motivated and cooperative.

Item seventeen: teachers' hindrances when implementing formative assessment

The last item in teachers' interview was related to the main hindrances that teachers face when they implement formative assessment in their classrooms. Teachers mentioned that the main hindrances include: time insufficiency because one hour was not sufficient and the syllabus was long and the large number of pupils who most of the time exceeded thirty students per class and hence you cannot follow all the students.

4.2.2.2. Interpretation

Quite similarly to the results obtained from the pupils' questionnaire, teachers' interview results showed also that pupils' main struggle lied in text comprehension activities in addition to grammar and vocabulary. These results led the researcher to claim that pupils' lack of reading was the major factor behind these difficulties, a point that was shared by most of the teachers who linked their pupils' difficulties to: first, lack of vocabulary, and second, lack of concentration and low motivation. This actually may account for pupils' unawareness of the importance of English in their university life as the different branches are highly associated to this language in terms of articles and books also. Furthermore, the researcher strongly views that the reason behind these difficulties can be also associated to lack of practice of such kind of activities, i.e., activities found in the English exam since pupils encounter them only in exams and tests, so they do not receive feedback on their performance. Pupils' lack of reading and lack of practice were responsible not only for their weak text comprehension, but also for low performance in the exam and poor grammar and vocabulary as well. These claims are supported by the fact that teachers did not practice reading regularly in the classroom and if it was practiced they followed a methodology which was based on silent reading without paying attention to reading strategies. Nevertheless, there are some teachers who used other strategies including mainly global strategies (prediction and reading for a purpose), and this is quite motivating. Regarding this specific point the sections allotted to reading in the textbook are quite considerable, these sections are based on the idea of text reading

and then extraction of different language points (grammar, vocabulary etc.), however, teachers preferred to teach these points separately rather than linking them with the provided text and this what explains the lack of reading in the classroom. The teacher's position can be explained in terms of lack of time and the big number of pupils. The researcher concludes that if teachers are given much time and enough teaching hours, the results of pupils' reading will be improved. In the same line of thought, the results will be encouraging if teachers are trained to teach reading strategies, and pupils are trained to use and are exposed to a set of global, support and problem-solving reading strategies which they can accordingly use in their exams smoothly. Worth noting is the fact that all participant teachers encourage their students to read but this encouragement will be much fruitful if it is guided by regular practice inside the classroom.

Still under the umbrella of reading strategies or text comprehension strategies, some teachers posited that they taught their pupils strategies, however what has been understood from their claims was the fact that they only told them about the strategies and how to use them instead of giving them concrete examples and training them to use the strategies in a practical way rather than a theoretical one. Moreover, even when pupils' reading skill was assessed teachers tended to rely on comprehension questions only. An important point to mention here is that, although reading comprehension strategies were emphasized in the textbook, teachers did not teach them in their classrooms. This reflects that the teachers focused on other language points separately in a time where the textbook offers a variety of reading strategies which can be taught in conjunction with the different language components. What can be concluded from this point is the fact that, though the textbook offered a platform upon which the teacher can teach the language skills inductively and easily, it is seen as an additional teaching material, a burden if one may say so, this may be due to the double role that the teacher has to play i.e., the competency based approach emphasizes the role of the learner in the teaching learning process. So the teacher has to deal with the language points and also to make the learner an active actor in the classroom by involving him in the different tasks. Taking into account the time load

and the length of the syllabus, it seems impossible to deal with each individual pupil. Accordingly, many teachers, if not all of them, prefer to stick to the traditional teaching methods based on teaching different language items (grammar, vocabulary and so on) separately rather than extracting them from texts.

The interviewed secondary school teachers seemed to be aware of the importance and the effectiveness of formative assessment. However, some of them seemed not really acknowledged with its main parameters mainly their roles in this process. Stated differently, the major role that the teacher has to play in the process of formative assessment is to provide his pupils with corrective feedback and then comes other roles including prompter and evaluator, the participating teachers considered themselves as mainly evaluators in the process. Additionally, what was apparently observed from the teachers' interview was the fact that teachers were not really interested in implementing formative assessment in their classrooms for a number of reasons: the first reason is related to pupils in the first place as those were not interested in feedback to improve their level but rather in the marks, a point that was highlighted out by some participating teachers. Second, teachers were not aware of the importance of using formative assessment in their classrooms as most of them reported that they sometimes use it while others said that it is a waste of time. Third, teachers view that formative assessment needs much time and preparation, two things that teachers lack as the time given to the English course is still not enough in relation to the long syllabus where they prepare mainly lesson plans of four units (more than 22 hours for each), in addition to tests and exams preparations and correction and holidays, hence they have no time to dedicate to formative assessment. As a matter of fact, formative assessment needs much time as it is quite based on repetition, i.e., the teacher assesses his pupils, supplies them with corrective feedback and if there are points that need further clarifications the teacher has to re-explain the lesson or the weak points that students show.

4.2.3. Pretest

The pretest (see appendix C) was set forward to crosscheck data in relation to the two previously mentioned research instruments, i.e., pre-intervention questionnaire and teacher's interview. The pretest was delivered to 16 third year pupils in February 2017; the results obtained are shown below.

4.2.3.1. Results

Many of the pretest results were covered earlier by pupils' questionnaire and teachers' interview. Pupils' responses to the test were used as a measure of their understanding of the given items and their difficulties.

The results obtained from the pretest are interpreted in terms of central tendency in the table 3.5; the values were obtained manually (see the steps below) then they were confirmed through the use of Excel:

The mean:

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where:

Σ is the sum of; X is all the scores, and N is the number of the sample scores: $M = 189,75 / 16$

$$M = \frac{189.75}{16} = 11.85$$

The median:

Is the middle number in a set of scores put in a numerical order.

Standard deviation:

$$sd = \frac{\Sigma (X - M)^2}{n - 1}$$

Where Σ is the sum of, X is all the scores, M is the mean, and n is the number of the sample scores.

Table 4.5: The central tendency for the pretest

	Experimental group
Mean	11.85
Median	11.25
Standard deviation	3.16

The results show that the group's mean was quite within the average. Indeed, we notice that the mean of the group was average which implies that half of the pupils (56.25%) had reached a score of 10, and their scores ranged from 10 to 17, while the remaining pupils (43.75%) did not achieve high scores; these results are summarized in the figure 4.2 below. The same thing can be concluded from the median which was within the average i.e. the middle score of pupils exceeded eleven (11), and the scores did not vary largely from one another, this can be concluded from the standard deviation. The standard deviation was quite low which indicates that the values which the pupils scored were close to the mean, i.e. there was some kind of homogeneity in the scores yielded, and there was no outliers.

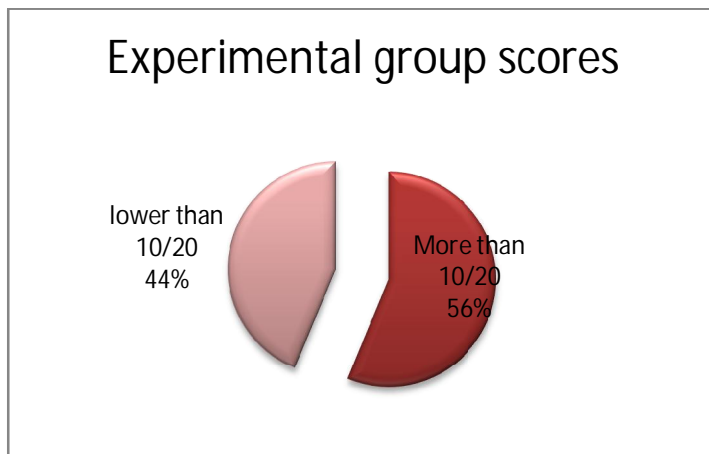


Figure 4.2: Pupils scores in the pretest

Below is a detailed description of the different aspects dealt with in the pretest. The first tasks related to text comprehension were scored seven (07) points and hence the average was three points and a half (03.5), the same for the second rubric named text exploration which was also given seven (07) points. The last section related to written production was given six (06) points, and its average was three (03) points. Therefore, the whole mark was twenty (20). As a matter of fact, the researcher excluded the third part which was related to written expression because it was not taken into account in the present study. However, this last part was included here just to inform the researcher about which part of the test was the most difficult one. Thus, in the following table, there is a succinct exhibition of the scores yielded in the three tasks. The scores were divided into two categories: those who scored more than the average and those who scored lower than the average in the three parts (text comprehension, text exploration and written production). Through this procedure the investigator ultimately aimed at identifying the areas of difficulties.

Table 4.6: Pupils' scores in the three sections of the pretest

Tasks	Pretest scores	
	More than the average N=16	Lower than the average N=16
Text comprehension	12	04
Text exploration	14	02
Written production	11	05

What can be observed from the table above is the fact that pupils' scores in the two first sections were above the average especially in text exploration, while the scores yielded for the last rubric reveal that pupils face difficulties in written production. This actually can be attributed to weak text comprehension and text exploration because in the two previous sections, the tasks were mainly related to direct answers, while in the last section (written production), the pupils were required to write a whole paragraph; so this uncovered their weak level in grammatical and textual competences. However, the present work did not consider this section so the focus was put on the two first sections.

Regarding the main aspects found in the test, the different tasks were examined in relation to the four language competences (Bachman and Palmer 1996). Only two aspects were dealt with because the last part was not taken into account in this study as it had been already clarified. The results are presented as follows: pupils who answered correctly to the task were considered as proficient; pupils who partially answered the question were put under the category of partially proficient, and pupils who did not answer or answered wrongly the question were seen as not proficient. The aim was to have an in-depth view about the pupils' scores in each section.

Table 4.7: Pupils scores in the pretest tasks

Pretest results: Aspects of text comprehension and text exploration					
		Proficiency	Proficient/16	Partially proficient/16	Not proficient/16
		Tasks			
TEXT COMPREHENSION		Task one: type of text (textual knowledge)	14	/	02
		Task two: true/false (textual/ functional knowledge)	02	11	03
		Task three: questions related to the text (textual/ functional knowledge)	01	12	03
		Task four: in which paragraph is mentioned the idea (textual knowledge)	14	/	02
		Task five: who or what do the underlined words refer to (textual/ functional)	03	08	05
		Task six: give a title to the text (textual knowledge)	06	07	03
TEXT GRAMMAR		Task one: definitions (synonyms) (grammatical/ functional knowledge)	08	05	03
		Task two: complete the table (grammatical knowledge)	02	08	06
		Task three: grammar (grammatical knowledge)	03	07	06
		Task four: phonetics (grammatical knowledge)	10	05	01
		Task five: reorder the sentences (textual/ functional knowledge)	09	05	02

The table above reveals that pupils' scores in the pretest fell mainly within the category "partially proficient", i.e., though pupils scored high in the different sections, their scores in the separate tasks were quite low. As far as the first section was concerned, pupils' textual and functional competences were assessed, the results clearly show that the majority of the participants' answers to the different tasks within this section ranged

between proficient and partially proficient, yet there was also some pupils who wrongly answered items in this section.

Regarding the second section of the test that is text exploration, the main intention was to assess students' grammatical competence. The scores obtained from this section reveal that a high proportion of the participants partially answered the different tasks. The following table will summarize the pupil's overall scores in relation to the different language competences.

Table 4.8: Pupils' pretest scores in terms of the language competences

	Proficient	Partially proficient	Not proficient
Grammatical competence	03	06	04
Textual competence	11	07	02
Grammatical/ Functional competence	08	05	03
Textual/ functional competence	03	09	03

The results obtained reveal that the testees scored low mainly in two main areas: tasks related to grammatical competence and those related to textual/ functional competence since the majority of pupils did not answer correctly items related to these two competences. Moreover, pupils' answers to the items were also wrong in terms of spelling and sentence structure and hence this confirmed their low grammatical competence. Pupils' scores in tasks related to the functional/ grammatical category also were not encouraging.

4.2.3.2. Interpretation:

The pretest allowed the researcher to crosscheck the data yielded by the pupils' questionnaire and teachers' interview. Indeed, many of the results were confirmed through the pretest including pupils' problems with grammatical competence, in addition to functional and textual competences. Another point was clarified through the results yielded by the pretest; it is related to the fact that pupils' low achievement in tasks related

to textual competence (mainly textual/ functional) was directly related to their use of reading strategies. Therefore, when pupils were required to infer answers from the text they lacked the necessary strategies to achieve this. Moreover, in items which required background knowledge (mainly items related to grammatical competence) the participants scored low. This reveals that pupils did not make use of the different strategies which they claimed they used in the questionnaire.

As far as the pupils' overall performance in the pretest is concerned, the mean value was medium. This result first uncovered the real level of pupils who face a set of difficulties in text comprehension, and second confirmed their answers in the questionnaire and also corroborated teachers' claims about their pupils' proficiency level. Moreover, the standard deviation was low which means that the scores were not far from each other. Worth noting is the fact that though pupils' overall scores in the two sections dealt with (text comprehension and text exploration) were high, their answers to the tasks separately were not encouraging as the majority of the answers were partially proficient, i.e., they did not answer the different tasks correctly.

In brief, the data yielded by means of pupils' questionnaire, teachers' interview and the pretest reflect a set of important points which were crucial to determine the next steps of this research. Though the group's scores were higher in some areas still there were some points which need to be further reinforced for better achievements. The second step in the present research was devoted to the intervention which was based upon pupils' answers to the questionnaire and the pretest, in addition to the teachers' answers to the interview.

4.3. The intervention Phase

After identifying the main weaknesses that pupils encountered in the previous phase, the researcher launched the intervention which lasted a whole semester (third semester). The group under study consisted basically of twenty five (25) pupils; however, only sixteen (16) pupils participated regularly during the intervention phase because some

of the pupils were excluded by the administration. During the intervention, the researcher focused on developing pupils' achievement in text comprehension through formative assessment. The intervention started in March and ended in May 2017. This specific period actually served the researcher very well since pupils at this period started their revisions so they were motivated and eager to participate in the intervention. During this period the researcher took the pupils regularly for two hours every Wednesday; the researcher originally decided for more sessions, however because of the spring holidays and the end of the year, the intervention was shortened to five weeks. The researcher initially clarified the purpose behind the intervention in general. The intervention was a set of sample "baccalaureat" exams which were given as formative assessments regularly (each Wednesday) (see appendix D). The sample exams were mainly related to the first two parts of the Baccalaureate exam, i.e., text comprehension and text exploration, as for the last part (written production) it was excluded because our main concern was to examine the impact of formative assessment on text comprehension. Every Wednesday there was an exam to deal with, pupils were given one hour to answer the different tasks, in the second hour, the researcher corrected the test given and supplied the pupils with remedial work on the basis of their performance. For a clear presentation of the intervention, see the figure below:

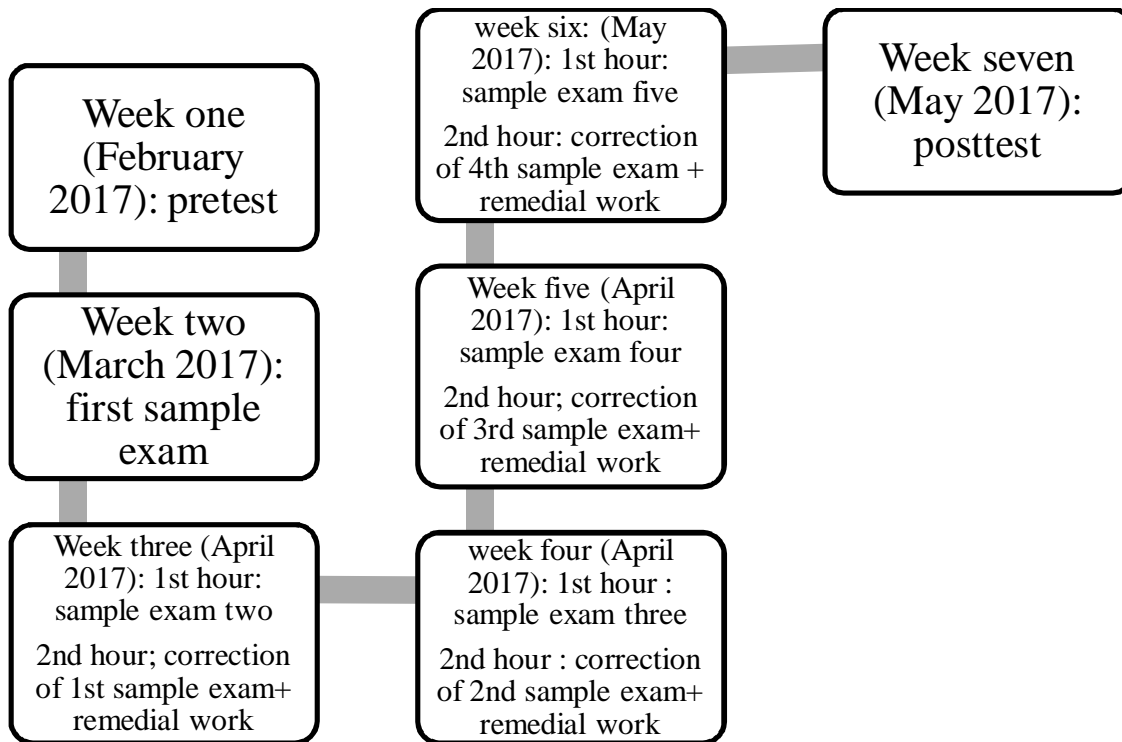


Figure 4.3: Description of the intervention phase

These sample exams were designed on the basis of the four language competences (Bachman and Palmer model 1996), and were intended to develop them as well. The texts selected were familiar to the pupils and within their reach and constituted a variety of themes in relation to the textbook units. As a matter of fact these texts were selected purposefully so that to provide the pupils with opportunities to use their background knowledge as the latter is crucial to comprehension. The topics selected were related mainly to: Ancient Civilizations and Education in the World, topics related to these two units frequently occur in the Baccalaureat exam; the aim was to make pupils' accustomed to these topics. Pupils were exposed to intensive feedback, i.e., they were guided by corrective feedback which was provided on the spot to each individual pupil during the activities, besides she communicated the goals of each activity with the pupils. Moreover, some written comments were provided to the pupils on their papers. The researcher also used guided instruction during these sessions, she monitors pupils' answers throughout the tasks through constructive feedback, and she provided them with positive feedback

including encouragement, the aim was to raise their motivation in answering the different tasks. During the correction session, the researcher corrected the test given focusing mainly on the main difficulties detected in the pupils' answers through remedial work or what has been referred to by Allal and Mottier Lopez (2005) as regulation since it was based on differentiated instruction to each individual pupil. Additionally, the intervention was based on re-teaching mainly the difficult points faced by pupils, i.e., the points which were unclear or ambiguous for pupils were re-taught as a kind of reinforcement and consolidation. The activities provided were mainly intended to develop the four language competences mainly grammatical and textual/ functional (including sociolinguistic and functional) ones as pupils showed lack in these two areas. Accordingly, the sample exams provided were composed of a set of activities: each activity was designed for a given competence (see table 4.9):

Table 4.9: The intervention activities and their aims

Type of the activity	Aim
Give a title to the text Give the general idea of the text	Developing textual competence through grasping the main idea of the text
True/false	Developing textual competence through checking pupils' comprehension of a set of statements, in addition to checking their ability to relate the different ideas in the text to their exact meaning.
Comprehension questions	Enhancing pupils' textual and functional competence by targeting their full understanding of the text. In addition to sociolinguistic competence through examining pupils' understanding of cultural items in the text
Put the following statement according to the order they appear in the text	Developing pupils' textual competence by focusing on coherence and cohesion
Type of the text	Developing pupils' textual competence in relation to the different discourse genres
Cohesive markers (who or what do the underlined words refer in the text) / paragraph identification (in which paragraph is it mentioned)	Developing textual competence through identifying cohesive markers in the text in addition to enhancing the pupils' strategy of making inferences which enable the pupils to identify the meaning of the different stretches in the text
Synonyms/ antonyms	Developing pupils' grammatical and functional competences through guessing the meaning of unknown words and phrases
Complete the table	Developing pupils' grammatical competence by focusing on one of its aspects which is morphology
Grammar	Developing grammatical competence, besides developing pupils' strategy related to using background knowledge.
Ask questions	Enhancing pupils' grammatical competence
Phonetics and phonology (syllables, final /s/, final /d/, stress)	Developing pupils' grammatical competence through focusing on pronunciation
Fill in the gaps/ reorder the sentences	Enhancing pupils' grammatical and textual competences through focusing on discourse

As table 4.9 shows, the main focus was put on two main competences: grammatical competence and textual competence. Worth noting is the fact that, the two remaining competences namely: sociolinguistic and functional were also introduced but implicitly within activities such as comprehension questions and vocabulary for sociolinguistic competence and functional competence respectively. The nature of the activities provided included the different language areas: grammar, vocabulary, semantics and so on, thus the interactive approach to reading was provoked. Moreover, the researcher was teaching some text comprehension strategies within each session. The strategies taught came under the heading of strategic competence in the afore-mentioned model (Bachman and Palmer 1996), below is a brief explanation of the taught strategies:

Table 4.10: The taught reading comprehension strategies

Text comprehension strategies		The way
Global reading strategies	Reading for a purpose	The pupils were asked to have a purpose in mind while reading, in our case the purpose was to answer the different tasks
	Using background knowledge	The pupils were asked to recall the information they have seen in the lesson and try to relate them to the tasks for a better understanding
	Contextual guessing	The pupils were asked to guess the meaning of unknown and difficult words according to the context
	Skimming	The pupils were asked to have a quick review on the text to identify its topic
Support reading strategies	Drawing Inferences	The pupils were introduced explicitly to this strategy through a set of activities including mainly tasks in which pupils answered according to the text
Problem-solving reading strategies	Scanning	The pupils were asked to read the text carefully and slowly to understand the meaning of words separately and the text as a whole and hence be able to solve the different tasks

These strategies were not taught separately but rather in combination, these strategies are among the important strategies used in reading, besides they are the most frequently used; they were taken from Mokhtari and Reichard's model of reading strategies (2002). Worth noting is the fact that the intervention was also designed with an attempt to reduce pupils' sources of difficulties, hence the researcher took these sources of difficulties into consideration and instructed pupils accordingly, for instance pupils posited that they cannot read in front of their classmates, so the researcher asked them to read the text loudly in front of their classmates.

Worth noting is the fact that formative assessment is highly based on classroom cultures, and in order to be effective the teacher should select and adapt the assessment that really correlates with his context. Accordingly, self and peer assessment were not used in this experiment, because pupils were not really involved to assess themselves or their peers except when they had the chance to listen to each others' responses and comment on them as a kind of peer-assessment; or when they were asked to check their answers in their copybooks as a kind of self-assessment. These practices were not emphasized nor were they structured because they require time and practice to be developed and the researcher had no time to do so.

In a nutshell, the intervention given to third year subject pupils at Mohammed Mchernen secondary school allowed the researcher to gather the necessary data as a step to interpret the efficacy of formative assessment on text comprehension. At the end of the intervention, the pupils were given a questionnaire mainly related to the course they received and a posttest to check their scores in relation to the pretest.

4.4. The Post-intervention Phase

The post intervention phase was mainly intended to check the efficacy of the intervention pupils received. This phase was composed of a questionnaire and a posttest.

4.4.1. Pupils' Post-intervention Questionnaire

At the end of the intervention, a questionnaire was delivered to the 16 pupils with the aim of checking their opinions about the intervention they received, and the points they learned through this intervention.

4.4.1.1. Results**Rubric one: Pupils' attitudes****Item one:** Pupils' satisfaction with the intervention

The aim behind this question was to elicit pupils' satisfaction with the intervention they have received. The answers yielded were all positive i.e. all the participants were satisfied with the intervention.

Item two: Helpfulness of the intervention

This question was asked to figure out the extent to which the intervention was helpful to the pupils. Approximately all the respondents (13) stated that the intervention was very beneficial while few of them (03) posited that it was beneficial and none of them chose the last option: "not beneficial".

Subsequently to this item, pupils were asked about the ways in which the intervention helped them, the responses include:

- I understood the difficult points which I was not able to grasp during the lesson.
- I learned new vocabulary and things which I did not know before.
- It made me accustomed to the baccalaureate exam and the ways how to answer the different questions and tasks.
- I understood the grammar rules very well in addition to the way of pronouncing words.
- I learned different points concerning text comprehension.

- It enlarged my knowledge concerning English words and their meaning, and deepened my understanding of texts.
- It guided us to success.

Item three: Pupils' likes about the intervention

The third item was posed to know what the pupils liked about the intervention. They gave different points, these are exhibited below:

- The way of explanation of every single word and the repetition of points for better understanding.
- The way it was presented.
- The way baccalaureate sample exams were dealt with: in a clear and good way, besides the understanding of grammar rules.
- We recognized many things.
- New words and vocabulary.
- I liked the reading section.

Item four: negative points of the intervention

Contrarily to the previous item, this one aimed at exploring pupils' dislikes about the intervention. All the answers provided fell within one point: "*I dislike nothing about the intervention*".

Rubric two: pupils' difficulties**Item five:** Overcoming English exam difficulties

Through the sixth question the researcher attempted to know whether the intervention helped the pupils to overcome their difficulties in the English exam. All the answers yielded were positive. The respondents were then asked to identify the rubric in which the intervention helped them; their answers are displayed in the graph below:

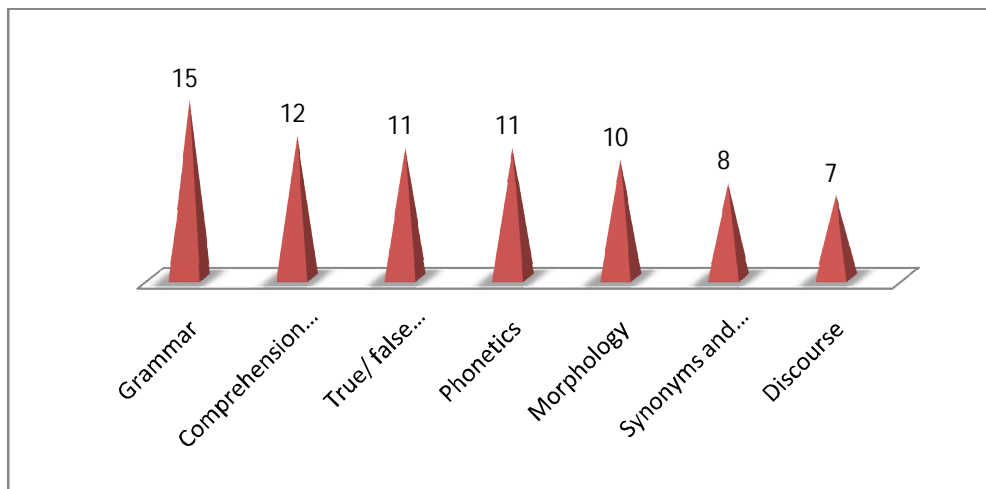


Figure 4.4: Pupils' developed rubric

Thus, the pupils developed approximately competences in the different tasks. However, the majority stated that they developed textual competences including: comprehension questions, true/false section, and discourse, in addition to grammatical competence including: grammar, phonetics and morphology. Moreover, the pupils developed also competences of functional nature including: synonyms and antonyms but lesser than the other points. As far as sociolinguistic competence was concerned, it was integrated within textual one, hence it was also developed.

Item six: Overcoming text comprehension difficulties

This item was mainly concerned with text comprehension; pupils were asked whether the intervention helped them in overcoming their difficulties in text comprehension, all the respondents replied affirmatively to this question. Subsequently, the participants were asked to identify the difficulties they overcame through the intervention. The text comprehension difficulties were related to the four language competences similar to the pre-intervention questionnaire. The answers provided are displayed in the table below:

Table 4.11: Pupils' competences development in relation to text comprehension

Alternatives	AF
Vocabulary (know the words) (grammatical/functional competence)	14
Grammatical structures found in the text (grammatical competence)	10
Distinguish the different discourse genres (textual competence)	09
Having enough knowledge about the topic of the text (functional competence)	09
Knowing how to pronounce words (grammatical competence)	08
Understanding words separately and the text as a whole (textual competence)	07
Understanding cultural items in the text (sociolinguistic competence)	06
All of them	/

As the table shows the great majority of pupils stated that the intervention helped them in overcoming difficulties related to vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation in addition to discourse identification. Hence, they developed grammatical and textual competence, in addition to developing functional competence through background knowledge and vocabulary also.

Rubric three: Pupils' strategies

Item seven: Developing pupils' text comprehension strategies

The last item of the questionnaire was concerned with whether the pupils developed any text comprehension strategies through the intervention, all the respondents confirmed this fact, i.e., they all learned some reading strategies. However, only one respondent replied negatively to this question. The respondents were then asked about which strategy they developed; the answers given are displayed in the table below:

Table 4.12: Pupils' developed strategies

	Strategies	AF
G L O B A L	I have a purpose in mind when I read	09
	I think about what I know to help me understand what I'm reading	04
	I preview the text to see what it's about before reading it	09
	I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization.	06
	I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	07
	I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading.	08
	I use typographical aids like boldface type and italics to identify key information.	04
	I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.	03
	I check my understanding when I come across conflicting information.	07
	I try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	13

S U P P O R T	I take notes while reading to help me understand what I'm reading	12
	When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I'm reading	05
	I write summaries to reflect on key ideas in the text.	07
	I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	11
	I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I'm reading.	05
	I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.	10
P R O B L E M	I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading.	09
	I adjust my reading speed according to what I'm reading.	08
	When text becomes difficult, I begin to pay closer attention to what I'm reading.	08
	I stop from time to time to think about what I'm reading.	06
	I try to picture or visualize information to help me remember what I'm reading.	07

As noted from the table above, the participants developed a set of text comprehension strategies mainly those related to global strategies and support strategies.

4.4.1.2. Interpretation

The post-intervention questionnaire addressed to third year pupils at Mohamed Mchernen secondary school in Ben Sekran, Tlemcen, revealed that the pupils were very satisfied with the intervention they received during the third semester. Moreover, the pupils showed positive attitudes towards the intervention, and this clearly reflected their benefits from it. Indeed, the intervention helped the pupils to overcome their difficulties in different areas including mainly grammar, text comprehension, morphology, phonetics and vocabulary items. Hence, the intervention met its goals as it was mainly intended to enhance grammatical and textual competences since the pupils showed a considerable lack in these two areas. The pupils were exposed to intensive feedback during the experiment, and this helped them to interact with the teacher (researcher) easily and to talk about the ambiguous points which they encountered during the lesson. Hence these sessions were viewed as a second chance to pupils to understand the different learned points.

The intervention paved the way for pupils to learn grammar rules and consolidate them by repetition and regular practice. Additionally, each individual pupil had the chance to interact directly with the teacher and benefit from timely feedback on the items he found difficult or unclear. Additionally, the pupils developed their skills in morphology and phonetics. Furthermore, the participating pupils learned a set of vocabulary items through: first, the activities related to vocabulary (synonyms and antonyms) and second through teacher's explanation of new and difficult words in the text. In this line of thought, the teacher (researcher) was sometimes giving the equivalent of the difficult words and other times trying to give hints to the pupils as a way to develop contextual guessing reading strategy.

The pupils also developed their understanding of the text through the use of different text comprehension strategies; these strategies were taught explicitly and collectively during the intervention. The researcher focused on text comprehension strategies that are mostly used by successful readers, they included: scanning, skimming, drawing inferences, reading for a purpose, using background knowledge and contextual guessing. The pupils stated that they developed a set of reading strategies including these. However, it should be noted that because of time constraint the researcher could not teach other strategies and could not focus on each strategy separately as well, the strategies were rather taught in combination.

The data obtained also showed that the pupils learned how to interact with the text in hand through ongoing practice. These practices had many benefits for the pupils: first, they were allowed to deal with a set of text genres (descriptive, narrative, argumentative and so on) and to know the specificities of each genre. Second, the pupils knew how to deal with the different type of texts and how to extract information from the given text through feedback and explicit employment of strategies (drawing inferences). Moreover, the ongoing practice of texts allowed the pupils to know different types of questions and how to deal with them, besides, they knew how to answer different tasks related to text including comprehension questions, true/false section, and so on.

Finally, the results yielded also revealed that the intervention motivated the pupils in the sense that they became eager to answer the different tasks. In addition, they became accustomed with the type of questions they are likely to encounter in the Baccalaureat exam.

Put briefly, the major aim behind the intervention was to develop two main competences: grammatical competence and textual competence because the pupils showed a lack in these two competences. What was relevant from pupils' answers was the fact that they developed the different items related to the afore-mentioned competences, including: text comprehension items and grammar, vocabulary, morphology and phonetics items. In what follow, there is the analysis of the posttest where all the above mentioned claims of the pupils will be either confirmed or disconfirmed.

4.4.2. Posttest

At the end of the intervention, the researcher also gave the pupils a posttest which aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention, and checking pupils' progress in relation to the pretest.

4.4.2.1. The results

The posttest results played a focal role in determining the efficacy of the intervention and what were the new points it had brought. The results obtained through the posttest are displayed in the table below in terms of central tendency:

Table 4.13: The central tendency of the posttest

	The experimental group
Mean	14.37
Median	14.5
Standard deviation	3.03

The pupils' mean is high which indicates that the great majority of the participants had the average, and the median reveal that the average of the pupils' scores was high too.

Indeed, approximately all the participants (15) scored above the average and only one pupil scored lower. Regarding the standard deviation, it is low which means that the values were close to the mean, and this indicated that there was homogeneity in pupils' scores.

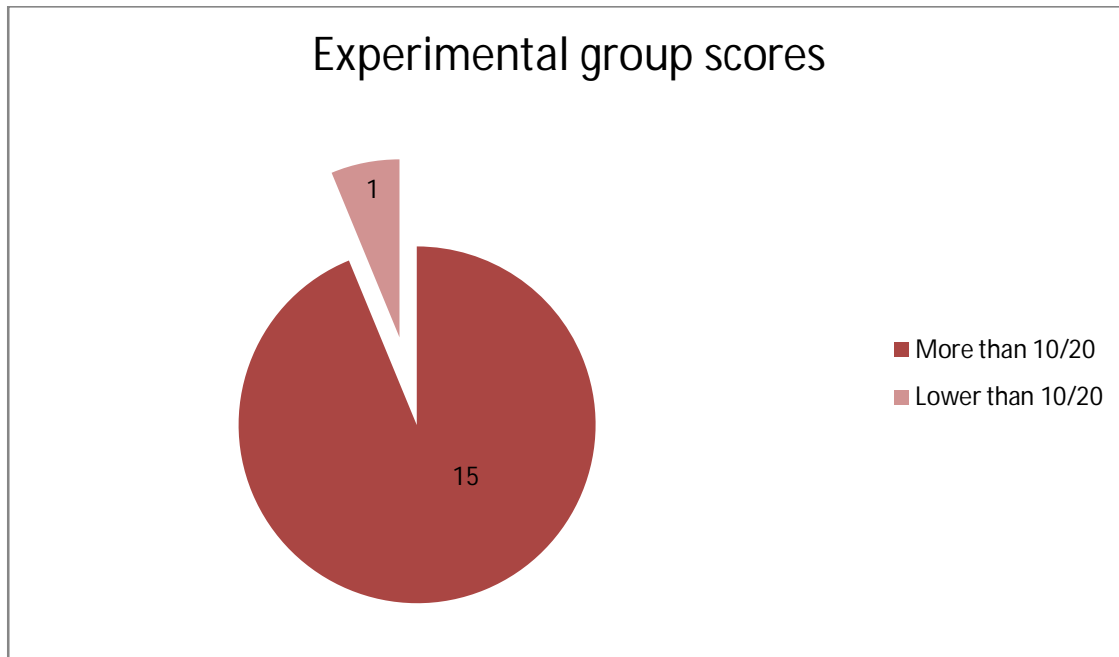


Figure 4.5: pupils' scores in the posttest

The pupils' answers of the posttest are shown in the table below; they are displayed in terms of two categories: those who scored above the average and those who scored below. The pupils scoring above the average were those who scored more than three points and a half (3.5) in each phase: the text comprehension and the text exploration phase since they were out of seven points.

Table 4.14: Pupils' scores in the three sections of the posttest

Tasks	Posttest scores	
	More than the average N=16	Lower than the average N=16
Text comprehension	16	00
Text exploration	16	00
Written production	09	11

The results displayed in the table reveal very satisfactory results; the pupils’ scores in the two first sections were all more than the average. Concerning the last section, more than half of the participants (09) scored more than the average while the remaining pupils scored lower than the average.

In what follows, the pupils’ scores in the different tasks are presented; the way of classification of scores (proficient, partially proficient, and not proficient) was similar to that of the pretest:

Table 4.15: Pupils’ scores in the posttest’s tasks

Posttest results: Aspects of text comprehension and text exploration					
		Proficiency	Proficient	Partially proficient	Not proficient
		Tasks			
20-02-01-02-03-04-05-06-07-08-09-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100		Task one: Type of the text (textual knowledge)	15	/	01
		Task two: true/false (textual/functional knowledge)	14	01	01
		Task three: questions related to the text (textual/ functional knowledge)	13	03	/
		Task four: in which paragraph is mentioned the idea (textual knowledge)	13	/	03
		Task five: who or what do the underlined words refer to (textual/functional)	13	03	/
		Task six: general idea of the text (textual knowledge)	13	/	03
20-01-02-03-04-05-06-07-08-09-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100		Task one: definitions (synonyms) (functional/ grammatical knowledge)	10	04	02
		Task two: complete the table (grammatical knowledge)	11	04	01
		Task three: grammar (grammatical knowledge)	12	03	01
		Task four: phonetics (grammatical knowledge)	12	04	/
		Task five: reorder the sentences (grammatical/ textual knowledge)	11	04	01

The table above demonstrates that pupils' scores ranged between proficient and partially proficient. However, the highest proportion was concerned with the first option, i.e., '*proficient*'. Moreover, only few of the participants replied wrongly to the tasks, mainly those tasks related to textual knowledge. On the table below, the pupils' overall scores in relation to the language skills are examined:

Table 4.16: Pupils' posttest scores in terms of the language competences

	Proficient	Partially proficient	Not proficient
Grammatical competence	11	03	01
Textual competence	13	/	02
Grammatical/ Functional competence	10	04	02
Textual/ functional competence	12	02	01

The table demonstrates that the pupils' scores in the different language competences were very high, mainly textual competence.

In order to have an overview about the pupils' results in the two tests, the results obtained from them are summarized in the table below. The results include the different tasks that the two tests dealt with:

Table 4.17: Comparison of pupils' scores in the different tasks between the pretest and the posttest

		Two tests results: Aspects of text comprehension and text exploration					
		Proficiency		Proficient		Not proficient	
				Partially proficient			
Tasks		Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
20-122122200-1XmH	Task one: type of text (textual knowledge)	14	15	/	/	02	01
	Task two: true/false (textual/functional knowledge)	02	14	11	01	03	01
	Task three: questions related to the text (textual/functional knowledge)	01	13	12	03	03	/
	Task four: in which paragraph is mentioned the idea (textual knowledge)	14	13	/	/	02	03
	Task five: who or what do the underlined words refer to (textual/ functional)	03	13	08	03	05	/
	Task six: give a title to the text (textual knowledge)	06	13	07	/	03	03
	20-1220F2XmH	Task one: definitions (synonyms) (grammatical/functional knowledge)	08	10	05	04	03	02
Task two: complete the table (grammatical knowledge)		02	11	08	04	06	01
Task three: grammar (grammatical knowledge)		03	12	07	03	06	01
Task four: phonetics (grammatical knowledge)		10	12	05	04	01	/
Task five: reorder the sentences (textual/ functional knowledge)		09	11	05	04	02	01

The main point which can be grasped from the results above is the fact that the difference in the scores was significant between the pretest and the posttest. Additionally, the pupils' responses to the different tasks varied widely between the pretest and the posttest. As far as the first part was concerned i.e., the part concerned mainly with textual and textual/ functional competence, the great majority of the pupils achieved well in

comparison to the pretest's results, the percentage of the "proficient" category exceeded the average in approximately all the tasks which indicated that the majority of pupil answers were correct. On the other hand, the "not proficient" category reached very low rates with only a few number of pupils not exceeding three. The overall scores of the language competences were compared in the table below, the significant development in pupils' answers in relation to the pretest can be clearly observed.

Table 4.18: Comparison of pupils' scores in the language competences in the pretest and the posttest

	Proficient		Partially proficient		Not proficient	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Grammatical competence	03	11	06	03	04	01
Textual competence	11	13	07	/	02	02
Grammatical/ Functional competence	08	10	05	04	03	02
Textual/ functional competence	03	12	09	02	03	01

In order to compare the pupils' overall scores in the pretest and posttest, the scores are displayed below with a comparison between the two tests and the level of pupils' progress, in addition to the mean.

Table 4.19: Comparison of pupils' overall scores in the pretest and the posttest and the mean value

Pupils	Pretest	Posttest	Progress
P 1	09.5	12	+2.5
P 2	07	09	+2
P 3	09.25	10	+0.75
P 4	14.25	16.5	+2.25
P 5	15.5	17	+1.5
P 6	14	15	+1
P 7	09.75	13	+3.25
P 8	09	11.5	+2.5
P 9	11.5	17	+5.5
P 10	13.5	17	+3.5
P 11	09.75	14	+4.25
P 12	08.25	11.5	+3.25
P 13	11	14	+3
P 14	17.25	18	+0.75
P 15	17	19.5	+2.5
P 16	13.25	15	+1.75
Mean	11.85	14.83	+2.98

The results displayed in the table above represent the overall pupils' results in the pretest in comparison to the posttest. What can be clearly inferred is the fact that all the participants achieved progress with varying percentages. Accordingly, the results yielded were positive.

4.4.2.2. Interpretation:

The posttest administered to pupils detected many points which have already been claimed by the pupils' in the post-intervention questionnaire. The pupils' achievements in the different tasks of the posttest progressed significantly compared to the pretest, this was relevant from the fact that all the participants scored above the average in the two first sections. Additionally, the number of pupils who scored more than the average was very high (15). As far as the pupils' answers to the tasks related to textual competence, the results were very high including: task one, four and six in the first section, especially task six where the scores changed from 6 correct (proficient) answers in the pretest to 13 correct answer in the posttest, this confirmed pupils' claims when they stated that the intervention helped them in the ways how to handle a text; besides the text comprehension strategies which were introduced during the intervention phase gave a good result mainly skimming and scanning. Moreover, the answers to the first and fourth tasks did not vary widely from the pretest, yet the low proficient category was reduced to only one wrong answer in both tasks.

Regarding the tasks related to textual/ functional competence, the pupils' scores increased in a satisfactory way, a considerable number of pupils answered correctly to those tasks, in task number two and three for instance, the pupils' scores increased from 02 and 01 correct answers in the second and third task in the pretest to 14 and 13 correct answers in the posttest respectively. Notably the answers to these two tasks revealed an important fact which is the development of inferring strategies so that pupils were able to detect what a given idea refer to in the text. Indeed, the inferring strategies that the pupils learned were reflected also in their answers to the first task of the second rubric where

they were asked to give the synonyms of some words through inferring from the text, the pupils' correct answers to this task increased from 08 in the pretest to 10 in the posttest, while wrong answers in this task decreased from 03 to 02. The results obtained from the first task in text exploration confirmed the pupils' answers in the post-intervention questionnaire where all of them stated that they developed their vocabulary knowledge, and confirmed also the high percentage of the use of the global strategy concerned with "contextual guessing", and of course it proved that the strategies that were taught during the intervention had an influence on the pupils' responses. The last task in the second rubric was also concerned with textual/ functional competence; the pupils' scores in the posttest also outperformed the pretest's scores, and this developed to some extent their ideas about cohesion and coherence.

The third category of tasks was designed to assess pupils' grammatical competence; the tasks involved included those of the second part "text exploration". The majority of pupils answered correctly to these tasks when compared to the pretest; in the task related to grammar, for example, more than half of the pupils' answers were correct, as opposed to the small number of correct answers in the pretest; while pretest's wrong answers exceeded 06 answers and in the posttest were limited to 01 answer in these tasks. This result again confirmed the pupils' responses when they said that they learned many grammar rules, and proved the benefits of intensive feedback which pupils received during the intervention in the different grammar items. Regarding other aspects of grammatical competence presented in the posttest namely morphology, the scores also increased considerably in relation to the pretest: the pupils' correct answers in the pretest were limited to 02 correct answers while in the posttest the scores exceeded 10 correct answers, this considerable increase in the scores was due to the formative assessments which the pupils received and which were based chiefly on corrective feedback. The feedback which pupils received enhanced also their scores regarding the fourth task in the second section: phonetics where the pupils' scores in the pretest were 10 and increased to

12 correct answers in the posttest. Accordingly, pupils' scores in the different language competences increased significantly.

In a nutshell, when answering the post-intervention questionnaire the pupils stated that the intervention was very beneficial, the posttest's results confirmed their claims. As a matter of fact, the intervention was settled with the aim of enhancing pupils' text comprehension on the basis of the four language competences: grammatical, functional, textual and sociolinguistic. What can be grasped from the results yielded by both the post-intervention questionnaire and the posttest scores is the fact that the intervention met its stated goals in a satisfactory way.

4.5. Discussion of the Main Results

During the last decades and drawing from the colossal work of Black and William (1998), formative assessment has been proved to be among the main factors leading to high achievements in educational arenas. Lending credence to Black and William's work, researchers and teachers all over the world attempted to test the efficacy of formative assessment within their contexts. Moreover, formative assessment has been linked to different areas including the language skills. Accordingly, the present work has been carried out with the aim of checking the efficacy of formative assessment in the Algerian secondary school context; the focal aim was to check the effects of formative assessment on pupils' text comprehension. Additionally, the researcher set a number of sub-goals for the study including: first, identifying pupils' main difficulties in text comprehension because these will pave the way for the researcher to design an appropriate intervention. Second, the researcher also attempted to extract pupils' sources of difficulties regarding text comprehension. Accordingly, a set of research instruments were employed in order to crosscheck data and to ensure valid results.

As far as the first hypothesis is concerned, the researcher employed a number of research instruments to assess its validity. First, the pre-intervention questionnaire addressed to third year pupils at Mohamed Mchernen secondary school in Tlemcen

showed that though these pupils had positive attitudes towards the English language, they still faced difficulties in it. Moreover, the pupils faced a number of difficulties in the English exam in general and in text comprehension in particular, these difficulties were mainly associated with lack of vocabulary and difficulty of grammar, in addition to lack of comprehension of tasks related to the text. Pupils' problems with text were due to misunderstanding of either the words found in the text (vocabulary), or the grammatical structure of the text. Cultural items found in the text also were seen as an obstacle for pupils in text comprehension. Additionally, pupils' lack of knowledge about the text topic was among the difficulties which they encountered when dealing with a text. Second, the teachers' interview, on the other hand, revealed a set of points similar to those obtained by means of pupils' questionnaire; the interviewed teachers stated that the majority of pupils ranged between proficient and non-proficient, besides their pupils struggled in different areas mainly those related to grammar and tasks related to the first part of the exam, i.e., text comprehension. In the same vein, the pretest confirmed the points already stated by the pupils themselves and the teachers. The pupils' weak points were mainly concerned with tasks related to text comprehension and tasks related to grammar and vocabulary in text exploration. On the basis of these results and drawing on Bachman and Palmer's model (1996), the researcher came to assert that pupils' main weaknesses in text comprehension were related to the four language competences: grammatical, functional, sociolinguistic and textual; yet compared to other competences, grammatical and textual competences took the lion's share regarding pupils' difficulties, and this was relevant from the three research instruments employed. Accordingly, the three afore-mentioned data gathering instruments allowed the researcher to confirm the first hypothesis which stipulates that pupils' main difficulties in text comprehension are related to the four language competences and mainly grammatical competence.

Concerning the second hypothesis, pupils' pre-intervention questionnaire revealed another important point which is pupils' weak use of reading strategies; the pupils asserted that they used strategies; however, their use of strategies was restricted to global

strategies while problem-solving strategies were not frequently employed by pupils. Problem-solving strategies are meant to enhance pupils' achievement in text comprehension, these strategies "provide readers with action plans that allow them to navigate through text skillfully" (Mokhtari and Reichard 2002: 252); hence lack of use of such kind of strategies may lead to weak comprehension of text. Additionally, what was uncovered by means of the pretest revealed that the pupils did not use the reading strategies as they claimed, i.e., there was a mismatch between their claims and what they truly do when they encounter a text. Pupils' loose use of strategies was attributed also to lack of practice of reading in the classroom, pupils' answers to the questionnaire revealed that the practice of reading was restricted to few times only. A point that was shared also by the teachers who stated that they practised reading sometimes in their classrooms.

Teachers viewed that the time dedicated to reading was not enough to develop pupils' reading skills, while pupils viewed that this time was sufficient for reading development. The pupils' views about the sufficiency of the time allotted to reading reflected their unawareness of the importance of reading. Indeed, though pupils stated that reading was an important skill and offered many benefits of reading, they were not aware of its importance; this fact was drawn from their answers to the tenth question in the questionnaire where half of them posited that the time given to reading was sufficient for their reading skills development. Moreover, the vast majority of pupils stated that reading was not a difficult skill; however, their answers to the different tasks during the intervention proved the contrary, i.e., a huge number of participants were facing difficulties either to read a text (in terms of pronunciation and punctuation) or to understand the words found in the text.

What was also drawn from the pupils' questionnaire and partially from the pretest was the fact that pupils did not read English texts outside the classroom, which means that pupils were exposed to English texts only in the classroom and not on a regular basis. Furthermore, the teacher's procedure in the reading comprehension session was restricted to silent reading and explanation of difficult words. However, the teaching of reading

strategies and the ways in which the pupils treat the text in hand was apparently absent. Moreover, the text given was restricted only to comprehension questions, while in the exam pupils encountered a set of activities to which they were not accustomed in the classroom. These activities were related to the different aspects of the text including areas of weaknesses that the pupils and the teachers alike agreed on. These results come down to the side of the second hypothesis which states that the major factors behind pupils' problems in text comprehension are due to lack of practice inside the classroom, lack of reading outside the classroom and poor use of reading strategies.

Regarding the third hypothesis, the pupils' scores in the posttest revealed many points. Pupils' achievement increased considerably in comparison to the pretest. This increase was clear first in pupils' overall scores and second in their correct answers to the different tasks of the posttest. What has brought this satisfactory end was the intensive feedback which pupils received during the intervention. Indeed, feedback represents one of the cornerstones of formative assessment upon which it operates effectively and leads to enhancement and progress in pupils' outcomes. Gipps (1994: 129) highlights this fact by stating that feedback "contributes directly to progress in learning through formative assessment". Additionally, the feedback that pupils received during the intervention helped them widely and wisely in overcoming their difficulties in text comprehension since it was based on error correction and guiding comments. Such type of feedback is believed to be the most effective one mainly for low achievers as Boston (2002, 1) puts it: "the most helpful type of feedback on tests and homework provides specific comments about errors and specific suggestions for improvement and encourages students to focus their attention thoughtfully on the task rather than on simply getting the right answer". Feedback that formative assessment offers is meant to reshape pupils' understanding of the different areas and realign their acquired competences in a correct manner. Accordingly, the role that feedback plays in the process of formative assessment is crucial, in the present study for instance formative assessment allowed the researcher to know the different problems pupils encountered when dealing with a text, this in turn

helped her to offer appropriate feedback related to these problems, and the pupils also felt free to ask about the ambiguous points which they were unable to understand during the lesson, and also to interact freely with the teacher (researcher), in this vein of thought, Cizek states (2010: 15): “the focus of formative assessment is on obtaining fine-grained information about student strengths and weaknesses in a non-evaluative context”. Accordingly, formative assessment allowed pupils to communicate their problems in text comprehension, and this step was good for their self-monitoring and self-evaluation skills. Therefore, the researcher came to assert that the data gleaned by means of the intervention, the post-intervention questionnaire, and the posttest confirm the third hypothesis which stipulates that formative assessment highlights learners’ difficulties in text comprehension and this helps the teacher to assist his pupils to overcome their problems through intensive feedback, and the learners to monitor their progress.

Concerning the last hypothesis, the pupils’ responses to the post-intervention questionnaire revealed that they liked the intervention they received. Moreover the majority of them found it very beneficial since they learned many things including: grammar rules, new vocabulary, some reading strategies and the way how to deal with a text and how to answer different questions. As a matter of fact, this is the main concern of formative assessment, it improves learning in general through “helping students see the connections and clarify meaning in small, successive steps as new knowledge is related to existing understanding” (McMillan, 2007: 1). As far as text comprehension is concerned, the pupils’ scores in posttest items revealed that they developed their understanding of text through the sessions that they have received; these sessions were based on feedback as clarified before. The pupils were taught how to deal with the text and the strategies used to handle the different tasks linked to it. The results of the post-intervention questionnaire and the posttest demonstrated that pupils’ text comprehension developed considerably after the intervention, this was attributed mainly to the regular practice of texts. Furthermore, the pupils stated that the intervention helped them in answering the different tasks related to text comprehension, besides it made them accustomed with the

text and its tasks and how to answer them through guided instruction, hence the pupils became more opened to these tasks and more importantly they developed a positive attitude towards them. Finally, the correlation between the results obtained through the post-intervention questionnaire, and the posttest led the researcher to confirm the fourth hypothesis which suggests that the formative assessment enhances pupils' achievement through regular practice of text reading and comprehension; therefore they will develop their language competences and this will develop their positive attitudes towards text comprehension.

Put briefly, the present study ultimately aimed at checking the effects of formative assessment (independent variable) on text comprehension (dependent variable) among third year foreign languages pupils at Mohammed Mchernen secondary school in Tlemcen. In order to test this idea, the pupils were introduced to an intervention which lasted a whole semester. The intervention was based on pupils' weaknesses and problems in text comprehension. The researcher opted for a "one group pretest-posttest experimental design", as the name suggests only one group was put under experimentation, and the results of the pretest and the posttest were used as a measure to see the efficacy of the intervention. The results obtained from the posttest were considerably higher than those of the pretest. Moreover, the difference in the means between the pretest and the posttest was convincing enough to say that the pupils' scores increased. Accordingly, by means of the data collected we proved that formative assessment has a great effect on pupils' text comprehension.

4.6. Conclusion

The present chapter was dedicated mainly to analyze and interpret the data gathered by different means: pupils' questionnaire, teachers' interview and tests. The researcher analyzed the data qualitatively and quantitatively and then the main findings were discussed in relation to the research hypotheses. The research came to the following results: first, pupils faced a set of difficulties in text comprehension; these difficulties

were related to the four language competences mainly grammatical and textual competences. Second, the pupils' problems in text comprehension were due to some factors including: lack of reading outside the classroom and lack of practice inside it, in addition to the poor use of reading strategies. Third, the intervention that the pupils received helped them in overcoming their difficulties through formative assessment and intensive feedback targeted to pupils' weak areas in text comprehension. Finally, formative assessment enhanced pupils' achievements regarding the different tasks of text comprehension, besides it developed their positive attitudes towards text comprehension and improved their overall performance in the different related areas. The data obtained and the reached results led the researcher to suggest a set of points regarding the effective use of formative assessment in the classroom to promote effective learning in general and successful text comprehension in particular. Accordingly, the following chapter is devoted to some suggestions and recommendations in parallel with the main findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: Suggestions and Recommendations

5.1.	Introduction	196
5.2.	Implementing Formative Assessment in the Algerian Classroom.....	197
5.2.1.	Teacher's Role.....	197
5.2.1.1.	Goal Setting.....	198
5.2.1.2.	Students' Involvement.....	198
5.2.1.3.	Increasing Motivation.....	200
5.2.1.4.	Guided Instruction.....	202
5.2.1.5.	Providing Feedback.....	202
5.2.2.	Students' Role.....	205
5.2.2.1.	Peer Assessment.....	206
5.2.2.2.	Self Assessment.....	207
5.2.3.	The Process of Formative Assessment.....	208
5.2.3.1.	Feed-up.....	209
5.2.3.2.	Feedback.....	211
5.2.3.3.	Feed-forward.....	216
5.2.4.	Criteria for Effective Formative Assessment.....	218
5.3.	Developing Text Comprehension through Formative Assessment.....	220
5.3.1.	Regular Practice.....	221
5.3.2.	Guided Instruction.....	222
5.3.3.	Raising Students' Motivation.....	223
5.3.4.	Goal Setting.....	226
5.3.5.	Extensive Reading.....	227
5.3.6.	Developing Strategic Competence (Explicit Instruction).....	229
5.3.7.	Designing Reading Tasks.....	236
5.4.	Developing Language Competences through Formative Assessment.....	238
5.4.1.	Grammatical Competence.....	239
5.4.2.	Textual Competence	240
5.4.3.	Functional Competence.....	241
5.4.4.	Sociolinguistic Competence.....	242
5.5.	Further Pedagogical Implications.....	242
5.5.1.	Classroom Management for Effective Assessment.....	242
5.5.2.	Time Load, Syllabus Length and Class Size.....	243
5.6.	Conclusion.....	244

5.1 Introduction

Throughout the previous chapters, we have highlighted the importance of formative assessment, and drawn attention to its contribution to the educational arenas. We have linked formative assessment to a critical component of language learning which is reading comprehension. In this chapter the researcher seeks to offer suggestions and recommendations for effective implementation of formative assessment in the Algerian classroom, in addition to a framework for text comprehension. Thus, the essence of this concluding chapter is to provide pedagogical implications relevant to the core of the work and the data obtained. The chapter is purposefully divided into four main sections: formative assessment, text comprehension, language competences and further pedagogical implications.

Regarding the first section, the suggestions offered call for the implementation of formative assessment in the Algerian classroom not only in the area of text comprehension, but rather a general framework which can be implemented for the different areas of language teaching and learning. It is initiated with description of the main components which make a good formative assessment. Then the researcher offers a framework for formative assessment based on three main phases. The section is concluded by the major criteria for effective formative assessment.

As far as the second section is concerned, the researcher highlights some important elements which are more likely to improve students' text comprehension. The third section is mainly devoted to the four language competences which constitute one of the pillars of the present work. The researcher offers recommendations for the development of these skills in relation to formative assessment. In the last part, the researcher focuses on further pedagogical suggestions which are suitable for the development of formative assessment practices in the Algerian classroom.

5.2. Implementing Formative Assessment in the Algerian Classroom

Drawing from the results of the present work, formative assessment has a considerable impact on pupils' achievement in general and text comprehension in particular. Thus, the implementation of formative assessment within Algerian educational arenas is advisable. In the following section, we will exhibit the main components of formative assessment on the part of the teacher and the learner with a close reference to our findings, and then we are going to suggest a formative assessment framework which is likely to enhance the formative assessment practices in the Algerian classroom. First, the teacher's role and the student's role are discussed.

5.2.1. Teacher's Role

Aside from the roles already stated in the theoretical phase concerned with formative assessment (see section 1.10), the Algerian teacher has to possess certain characteristics for a successful implementation of formative assessment in the classroom.

First of all, the teacher needs to be trained, i.e., he needs to be familiarized with formative assessment practices. The researcher believes that many teachers want to make changes and opt for the formative assessment regimes in their classrooms but they lack knowledge to do so in addition to lack of time and the large number of students, a point that was highlighted in the teachers' answers to the interview. Teachers learn how to teach without learning much about how to assess (Heritage2007), and this is a major point which is neglected in the Algerian teacher training programs. These programs are mainly concerned with theoretical patterns of teaching. Algerian teachers need to know the principles of assessment and the role of formative assessment in enhancing their students' learning outcomes; besides they need to be trained to use formative assessment and informed about how it can be best implemented in the classroom. In addition to being trained, the teacher needs to take different parameters into account once he decides to implement formative assessment in his classroom; in order for this implementation to be fruitful, the teacher needs to set clear goals, afford constructive feedback, involve students

and raise their motivation towards learning and finally offer instruction which is suitable for each individual learner.

5.2.1.1. Goal Setting

The first thing the teacher needs to be aware of is goal setting; it is essential to set goals at the inception of formative assessment and learning in general. Goal setting will help the teacher and the student as well; the student can clearly see the learning journey more clearly. Stated differently, pupils with well stated goals achieve better results and progress more quickly; and lack of clear goal is likely to lower pupils' motivation and make the learning process as a whole less fruitful. Goal setting helps also the teacher not to get off topic. It is unfair to assess students on things without well-established goals, "students deserve to know the purpose of each lesson and why that information is important and relevant" (Frey and Fisher, 2011: 33). What is observed from teacher's responses to the interview is the fact that they do not set goals that are clear to the students, i.e., they do not communicate the learning goals with their students. A point that is also shared by the pupils' answers to the questionnaire when being asked about the teacher's proceeding in the reading comprehension session none of them mention goal setting. Formative assessment can meet its objective more fruitfully when linked with goals; it is based on clear learning goals which should be communicated to students at the inception of the process. Goal setting and communication of these goals constitute one of the major pillars for formative assessment practices. At the inception of the intervention, the researcher clearly stated the goal behind and this made the pupils more motivated and more involved in their learning, and this can be clearly revealed through their answers in the posttest and the post-intervention questionnaire. Therefore Algerian teachers need to be conscious about the importance of this point for an affective formative assessment in their classrooms. Communicating goals with the students involves them in their learning. Students' involvement is a significant part of the formative assessment process.

5.2.1.2. Students' Involvement

The teacher needs to help the students feel safe in the classroom so that they can negotiate different points, discuss the difficult or the unknown points. Making students involved and engage them in their own learning develops their communicative competences. The teacher needs to take into consideration not only the brilliant students but also the low achievers. Students' involvement can be best achieved through scaffolding; the teacher assists students throughout the process of formative assessment and helps them to clearly visualize the learning goals. Scaffolding is based upon different principles including (Larkin 2002):

- **Pre-engage the student and the curriculum:** the teacher links curriculum goals to students' needs and design tasks accordingly.
- **Establish a shared goal:** the teacher needs to communicate the learning goals with the students.
- **Actively diagnose students' needs and understandings:** the teacher needs to have an idea about the students' prior knowledge and level in order to check their progress.
- **Provide tailored assistance:** this includes prompting, questioning, modeling and discussing, the teacher uses these techniques in order to meet students' needs.
- **Maintain pursuit of the goal:** the teacher constantly asks questions in relation to the stated goals to ensure that students are focusing on these goals.
- **Give feedback:** the teacher constantly provides students with feedback about their progress, this assists students to monitor their own learning.
- **Control for frustration and risk:** the teacher helps students to take risks and try different alternatives in the learning environment.
- **Assist internalization and independence:** the teacher needs to help his students to be less dependent on him, and assists them to develop strategies for monitoring their own learning.

These techniques of scaffolding assist the teacher to effectively involve his students in the learning process in general and formative assessment process in particular. Involving students in the process of learning raises their self-confidence and self-esteem and accordingly they become more motivated to participate in the different tasks with eagerness and enthusiasm. Additionally, they develop their self-regulation strategies so that they become active participants in the teaching learning process in general and in formative assessment process in particular. Third year Foreign Languages pupils were able to communicate their problems with the teacher (the researcher) during the intervention and this allowed them to develop positive attitudes towards text comprehension. Accordingly, involving students in their learning paves the way for raising their motivation.

5.2.1.3. Increasing Motivation

Formative assessment is a tool which raises students' motivation; the results reached in the present study confirm this point as the participants' scores increased considerably after receiving formative assessment, besides they posited that they liked the intervention they received. This fact is also highlighted by Moss and Brookhart (2009: 5) who see formative assessment as a windmill in the sense that the windmill "intentionally harnesses the power of moving air to generate energy, the formative assessment process helps students intentionally harness the workings of their own minds to generate motivation to learn". A point worth mentioning at this level is related to the teachers' answers to the interview when they stated that their pupils faced difficulties because they were not interested in studying, they just wanted to have good marks. Thus low motivation and interest in the subject can generate difficulties and problems of understanding, and this point can be solved through ongoing assessment and intensive feedback.

In the same vein, formative assessment cannot be well established in the classroom with low motivation on the part of the students, i.e., formative assessment needs

motivation to achieve its intended goals and when it is well established in the classroom it raises students' motivation towards their learning, so the two complete each other. The participating pupils were also motivated for formative assessment as the intervention took place during the last semester, i.e., the semester which preceded the "Baccalaureat" exam; and this was clearly reflected on their results.

Different factors interfere in increasing students' motivation including competence, i.e., making students see themselves as competent learners, this can be achieved through encouragements and also providing a comfortable atmosphere for students to express themselves freely, an atmosphere which is based on interaction and communication. This fact was also confirmed through the intervention as it was based upon ongoing interaction.

Worth noting that sometimes students' instrumental motivation can act as a barrier towards their learning achievements during the process of formative assessment in the sense that students are more motivated about things that contribute to their grades rather than points that contribute to their progress. Accordingly, the instrumental motivation of students' hinders the effectiveness of formative assessment though the latter contributes very widely to their progress and therefore contributes indirectly to their final mark in summative assessments. Therefore, students' need to be acknowledged with the role formative assessment plays in their learning achievements, and the culture of formative assessment needs to be introduced in the classroom. Therefore, students need to be motivated and aware about the importance of formative assessment through relating it to the learning goals and also to make this link clear to the students in order to make them motivated and aware of the importance of formative assessment and involve them in the learning process. An important component for raising students' motivation towards learning and assessment is guided instruction.

5.2.1.4. Guided Instruction

Clear instruction makes the process of formative assessment transparent, and targeted towards learning objectives and goals. The teacher can check for students understanding, if there are unclear points he prompts students through scaffolding. If the scaffolds do not work, he uses direct instruction and modeling. Thus when students fail the teacher make use of guided instruction to help them overcome this failure. Teacher's guidance helps the students to increase their learning abilities and hence increases their motivation. The importance and effectiveness of guided instruction was clearly revealed through the intervention the pupils received where the teacher provided them with clear instruction and whenever they faced difficulties she interfered and explained things clearly to them; this operation helped pupils to develop their language competences and also raised their motivation towards their learning.

Therefore, guided instruction helps the teacher to raise students' motivation towards learning; during a given task the teacher models a given point to his students, then in the phase of practice, the teacher can guide his students and motivates them through providing constructive feedback and helping to overcome their difficulties in the task. Thus, guided instruction can be felt in terms of the teacher role as a guide where the teacher provides his pupils with guidance throughout the assessment process. However, this guidance differs from one student to another depending on individual student's needs and difficulties. Therefore, the debate about motivation and guided instruction leads us inevitably to highlight the importance of feedback and its crucial role in the process of formative assessment.

5.2.1.5. Providing Feedback

Feedback is the leading force and a key cornerstone in the process of formative assessment. The pupils were exposed to extensive feedback throughout the intervention, and this revealed very satisfactory results; these results confirm the focal role which feedback plays in learning in general and formative assessment in particular. Indeed,

feedback helped the researcher to diagnose the main problems and involved the learner in his learning to achieve better results. The role of the teacher as feedback provider is therefore crucial. Teachers need to be trained to give affective feedback; the training that teachers receive prior to their entrance to the teaching field should focus not only on surface areas but also deep areas among which providing feedback represents a focal part.

Feedback should be seen as an inseparable part of the formative assessment classroom, teachers need to make their students aware of its importance and also make them able to recognize that criticism is part of learning and constitutes significantly to their progress. The feedback provided by formative assessment can be delivered during the task and at the end of it, yet feedback generated at the end of the task is by no means a judgmental one. The major aim of formative feedback is to instruct and help students achieve better results and overcome their difficulties. Feedback generated, therefore, should go hand in hand with students' needs and proficiency level.

Providing students with feedback is the core of formative assessment, yet the feedback provided needs to be differentiated, i.e., the teacher needs to give feedback which is suitable to each individual learner rather than giving collective feedback. Feedback which may lead one student to progress might be also seen as a source of frustration for another. One way to do this is what is known as conferencing; this method of providing feedback is defined as: "a semi-structured face to face conversation between a teacher and a student or small group of students in which work being undertaken is discussed" (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 105-106), semi-structured denotes that the teacher does not have a fixed set of questions to ask the students about but rather the conversation evolves according to the students' needs and main weaknesses. Moreover, the teacher can have this conversation with one individual student or with a group of students, the idea is that this group of students should have common points, common weaknesses for instance so that the feedback provided can benefit all the participants. Conferencing, therefore, aims at providing students with individualized feedback relevant

to their level. Conferencing is also beneficial in terms of making students able to discuss different points and to set purposeful conversations with their teachers.

As far as the Algerian classroom is concerned, differentiated instruction and conferencing are quite impossible because of the large number of students in the classroom. However, the teacher can assign extra hours where he invites pupils who face difficulties and offers them differentiated instruction related to their weaknesses; the feedback provided during these sessions can be either collective one or individual depending on the students' problems. The teacher can also communicate with his students by other means including the internet; he can contact individual students via social networks such as facebook and provides them with instruction relevant to their weaknesses. Providing students with feedback online is beneficial in the fact that it is private. To that point, then, one important characteristic of feedback is that it should be private; the privacy of feedback is beneficial first, in terms of giving the student individualized feedback and second giving students feedback in a private way prevent the issue of low self-confidence, i.e., when the students are given feedback in front of their classmates, they feel themselves as low-achievers and their self-esteem is going to decrease, in this line of thought posits Brookhart (2008: 48): "giving feedback in private means that the student will not have to worry about what peers' reactions may be", so giving feedback in a private manner is beneficial for the student.

An important step which can be linked to differentiated instruction and feedback is that of remediation and regulation. This step is a critical component which determines the success of the process. As a matter of fact, remediation and regulation take place throughout the process of formative assessment as it is based on timely feedback. Remediation and regulation which take place at the end of the process can be thought of mainly in terms of re-teaching. The teacher checks for understanding for the whole group and for individual students as well, he then decides whether the re-teaching is good for the whole group, for a small group or for individual students depending on the difficulties encountered by students. Remediation and regulation is an important component of

formative assessment, this result is reached through the intervention where the researcher focused on weak aspects of pupils' learning and re-taught them, and the results were higher in relation to the pretest.

To put it briefly, effective formative assessment requires efforts on the part of the teacher; he needs to set clear goals, provide feedback involve students' in their learning and increase their motivation. However, the teacher is not the only active participant in this process, the students also need to be active and they have to engage in different activities because formative assessment is an interactive process between the teacher and the students.

5.2.2. Student's Role

The role of the students is focal in the process of formative assessment; however, in the Algerian context the culture of students' involvement in the teaching learning process is absent due to several factors including factors related to students themselves and factors related to the teaching learning situation as a whole (see 5.5 below). Students' role in the process of formative assessment can be thought of in terms of goal setting where students set goals both for the learning process and the outcomes, i.e., they set goals for the learning process and the outcomes they are likely to reach at the end of the process. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007) there are two main types of goals which learners need to set in their learning: challenge goals and commitment goals. Challenge goals where students are required to reach a certain level which they did not reach before for example: earning a good score in the next test, in our case as formative assessment is not based on marks, challenge goals can be thought of in terms of achieving good results in the next task. Commitment goals entail the steps followed to achieve the challenge goals; they are concerned with planning where the students set plans to achieve a certain goal. The plans which the students set prior to their learning may change during the learning process depending on the context, needs and other factors, yet these plans are important as a starting point. The teacher's role in this arena is to help learners to set goals

for their own learning by modeling and practice, this in turn assist students to develop self-regulation learning skills and raise their involvement in their own learning. This idea was also portrayed in the results of the study where the students were encouraged to ask questions and communicate with the teacher about their level.

Apart from goal setting, the involvement of students in the process of formative assessment can be best portrayed through peer and self-assessment. The teacher needs to involve his pupils in the process through guided practice on both self and peer-assessment.

5.2.2.1. Peer Assessment

In the present work, peer assessment was restricted in the intervention because of time constraint. Peer assessment requires time because it is based on modeling. Feedback generated by peers fosters fruitful interaction between them, besides it fosters “mutual problem solving and experimentation as students try out potential solutions” (Frey and Fisher, 2011: 83). Simmons (2003) offers a set of techniques through which the teacher can develop his students’ peer-assessment strategies; they are demonstrated in the following points:

- **Sharing a specific task:** the teacher shares with his students a specific task for example a piece of writing and asks them to comment on it.
- **Modeling specific praise:** the teacher shows his students how to tell what they liked; and the students understand that cheerleading is not the only way to show praise.
- **Modeling understanding:** the teacher shows the students how to tell what they understood from the task given (the answers).
- **Modeling questions:** the teacher shows the students how to ask questions about the things they have not understood, and the students become aware that asking questions is purposeful and helpful.

- **Modeling suggestions:** the teacher shows the students how to make and offer suggestions.
- **Whole class response:** the teacher moderates response by class to one classmate's piece; the students then offer response, hear response from other classmates.
- **Partner response:** the teacher pairs up students in class to respond to a given task; and students practice response learned in the previous phase, i.e., whole-class response.
- **Comment review:** the teacher reads the comments of peers and suggests better techniques; and the students get teacher's feedback on their comments.
- **Response conference:** the teacher speaks individually with students who responded inappropriately; therefore the students reinforce their response techniques.

These techniques are based mainly on modeling and practice; once students see these techniques in a practical way, and practice them by themselves they are going to develop peer-response techniques more effectively and therefore they will be able to assess their peers.

5.2.2.2. Self-assessment

In the intervention, self-assessment was also limited because of time. Self-assessment promotes motivation for learning. It is used to help students to develop a set of important strategies relevant to their success, these are self-regulation strategies where the students can plan, evaluate and monitor their own learning. In this way, then, self regulation strategies are crucial not only in the learning process but also for life-long learning, besides these strategies prepare students for professional life.

Regarding self-assessment in reading, the above mentioned techniques for peer assessment can be also applied to self-assessment. Moreover, the teacher can assign home works to students and asks them to assess themselves according to a given set of criteria,

for example: giving students a text to summarize and ask them to check their summaries in relation to a set of criteria: the characters, the setting and so on. This helps students first to understand the text given and second to develop their self-assessment skills. The teacher then can use students' responses as an indicator of whether they have understood a given reading strategy, in this case it is summarizing.

Self-assessment and peer assessment practices may be bewildered at the beginning for the Algerian secondary school teacher and the pupils also, yet through teacher's coaching, modeling and practice pupils can engage in these two practices more confidently and more accurately. Therefore, pupils will be able to assess their own work and the work of their peers and also provide constructive feedback if they are guided by the teacher over a period of time.

In a nutshell, the process of formative assessment is based on interaction between the teacher and the students, it should be well-structured for effective results; the following section is set forward to highlight the process of formative assessment on the basis of the points stated earlier.

5.2.3. The Process of Formative Assessment

On the basis of the afore mentioned points and the results of the experiment the researcher comes to assert that formative assessment as a process entails the presence of different component and it is characterized by a set of criteria. Accordingly, if we are to suggest a comprehensive framework for formative assessment, it can be thought of in terms of Hattie and Timperley (2007) proposed system of formative assessment. Hattie and Timperley (2007) propose a formative assessment process which is based on three main levels viz. feed-up, feedback and feed-forward. The researcher relied on these components in the intervention, and she had effective results by applying them since they helped in building a thorough interaction between her and the participants. This interaction assisted in helping the students to communicate their needs and the teacher to diagnose individual students' needs and weaknesses, and offer individualized feedback

for each one. Indeed, the three components represent the core of formative assessment, and the absence of one of them makes the process weak. When these three levels are present learning will be more effective and easy as they promote interaction between student and teacher, and the absence of one component may lead to loose formative assessment and learning as well. Accordingly, formative assessment occurs in a continuum at the one end there is feed-up and at the other is feed-forward. Yet, these components can occur also in a cyclical way. This process offers a more systematic framework for formative assessment. Below is a closer examination of each of the three components:

5.2.3.1. Feed-up

This level is concerned with the question “where am I going?”, it is based on students’ understanding of the purpose of the assessment task or lesson. The teacher needs to first set the goal of the assessment and make it visible and clear to the students. Goal setting is crucial as we have already clarified, it is important for the remaining levels (feedback and feed-forward) because without goal setting feedback will be meaningless and feed forward will be unclear and ambiguous. The assessment goal should be intertwined with feedback, i.e., when the teacher provides feedback, it should be relevant to the goal stated as pointed out by Frey and Fisher (2011: 7): “when the teacher checks for understanding, the feedback is aligned with this purpose”, thus goal setting assists the teacher in his role as feedback provider. Feed-up is responsible for setting goal and increasing motivation. Accordingly, it is regarded as the core of the formative assessment; it is also responsible for differentiated instruction for individual pupils. Within this phase the teacher needs to identify his students’ level of proficiency in order to link these with the stated goals, besides this identification explains the level of motivation of each individual learner, and what works for one student and does not work for another. Feed-up is therefore the component which paves the way for learning, it indicates the destination of the learning process by stating clearly and precisely the goals intended and raising motivation to meet these goals. On the other hand, having obvious goals is likely

to increase students' motivation. Thus, involving the student in the process as an active partner cannot be achieved without sharing the goals and objectives of the different tasks.

At the inception of the intervention, the researcher told the participants about the purpose of the intervention, i.e., the goals were clearly stated before the intervention took place. Additionally, the aim of each activity was communicated with students. The researcher also attempted to raise students' motivation by relating the activities of the intervention with those of the "baccalaureat" exam. The results obtained by means of the intervention, the posttest and the post-intervention questionnaire revealed the importance of feed-up in the formative assessment process.

Within feed-up, the teacher needs also to know certain points about the learners, he can assign diagnostic tests at the beginning of the year in order to know the students' level including their weaknesses and strengths, their lacks, their needs. All these points help the teacher to design a suitable assessment which is likely to meet the different needs of students as well as the learning objectives. In the present study, for instance, the pre-intervention questionnaire, the teachers' interview and the pretest allowed the researcher to know students' weaknesses and proficiency level, and this in turn helped her in designing the intervention. The teacher needs also check for understanding, i.e., ask questions about the clarity of the tasks given, give clear instructions; this operation in fact had satisfactory results in the intervention, i.e. th researcher was instantly asking students for the clarity of the tasks and explaining ambiguous points. The teacher can use other methods including, for instance, writing, i.e., the teacher asks students to take a sheet of paper and write about the things which seem unclear or ambiguous for them, this method is especially useful for that type of students who shy away from asking questions. Additionally, it helps the teachers who have big number of students and also those who suffer from time constraint. The teacher can also check for understanding through projects.

To put it briefly, the phase of feed-up is concerned with both what to do and when to do it. It clarifies the learning path for both the teacher and the student by setting goals and increasing motivation. Well-defined goals and high motivation assist students to follow a terse learning path relevant to their progress, what is needed then is the external assistance in this journey to reach the intended level. This external assistance is portrayed in feedback which is generated mainly by the teacher and also by other sources including peers or internal sources, i.e., self-assessment.

5.2.3.2. Feedback

This component has already been mentioned, it represents the focal point of formative assessment. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback is concerned with “how am I going? It is related to information provided to students about their actual proficiency level and progress. Providing the pupils with the necessary feedback about their performance helps them to clearly visualize the learning path towards success. Feedback assists students to set further goals as the previous goals are attained, and this in turn helps in “establishing the conditions for ongoing learning” (Hattie and Timperley, 2007: 89). Indeed, the results reached in the intervention reveal the importance of feedback in the formative assessment process. However, in their answers to the interview, most of the teachers stated that their role in the process of formative assessment is evaluator, this answer reflected the fact that teachers are not aware of their role in the process and second they are not aware of the importance of feedback in the process. Thus, teachers need to be acknowledged with the effective role which feedback plays for the progress of their students. The training which is offered to teachers prior to their entrance to the teaching profession should also include feedback mainly its importance and how it should be delivered including type, timing and so on, in this vein of thought state Frey and Fisher (2011: 64): “the act of providing feedback needs to be approached as purposefully as other aspects of instruction”. Brookhart (2008: 1) also stresses this fact by pointing out that “giving effective feedback is one of the skills teachers need to master as part of formative assessment”. Feedback can have two manifestations: written and oral.

- *Effective written feedback*

Written feedback is as important as oral feedback and both types complete each other. Written feedback is mainly found in written assignments, the characteristics of written feedback are the ones stated below where the teacher needs to respect students; it should be timely, actionable and so on. Brookhart (2008) states a set of characteristics in order to make written feedback more effective, these include: first, clarity: teacher's written comments need to be clear so that students can understand the intention behind them. Clarity is concerned with both the language and the meaning. In order to be clear, feedback should have clear simple vocabulary and sentence structure and should be relevant to students' level. Moreover, the teacher needs to check again with his students to see whether feedback is clear or not and explain the ambiguous points. Second, specificity, i.e., the comments need to be somewhere in between "too narrow" and "too broad", the teacher needs to give feedback which spots a given point rather than general feedback, for example, comments like "*write more*" or "*try harder*" (Brookhart 2008) are considered as bad feedback as they confuse the students rather than guiding them. Motivating comments such as "very good, carry on" are useful and important, yet the teacher needs also to give specific feedback on the different points done by the students. Specific feedback is characterized by description where the teacher gives clear description about the points he provides the students with. Third, the tone: in written feedback, the teacher's tone is symbolized in word choice and style; the tone can either inspire the student or discourage him. The teacher needs to "choose words that imply that students are agents, active learners, the captains of their own ship of learning" (Brookhart, 2008: 34), the words used should encourage students to monitor their own learning. Lastly, teacher's feedback should not be sarcastic, and this characteristic is related to both written and oral feedback.

- *Effective oral feedback*

Oral feedback can take different forms, and it ranges from most formal (conferencing) to less informal including “a few whispered words as you pass a student’s seat” (Brookhart, 2008: 47). Moreover, oral feedback can be delivered to the whole class when the same mistake is committed. The underlying principles of oral feedback are the same principles stated earlier including: clarity, specificity, and so on.

According to Brookhart (2008) written feedback is different from oral feedback in the sense that in the former the teacher has enough time to write comments while in the latter he says words on the spot so he cannot take them away, and this in fact is what makes oral feedback more sensitive than the written one. It is at this critical point that the teacher’s competence comes into play, i.e., skillful teachers know what to say, how to say and to whom it is said. Oral feedback can be quick and quiet (informal feedback given to students during the task) or conferences (planned conversation with individual students at the end of the task).

Frey and Fisher (2011) suggest a number of principles upon which oral feedback can operate more effectively, these include:

- **Choose an appropriate setting:** the teacher needs to choose a setting which is removed from peers when providing feedback to individuals, this helps students to concentrate and pay more attention to what is said. Getting closer to students when delivering feedback makes them feel safe and more willing to learn.
- **Structure the response:** the feedback provided needs to be well structured and clear to the students, demonstrating what was done well and what was not. A good structure of feedback entails a description of the results, the steps to be done to overcome the weaknesses and an encouragement to persist (Zwiers 2008). Feedback with such structure paves the way for the student to carry on their learning process more safely and confidently.

- **Use a supportive tone:** similar to written feedback the tone used for oral feedback is important and decisive in determining students' response to feedback. Additionally, the teacher needs to choose appropriate words when delivering feedback. Frey and Fisher (2011: 78) include strategies within the heading of tone when providing feedback and posit: "simple strategies such as saying "please" and "thank you" make the listener more receptive to the message", hence the teacher needs to be careful when providing feedback to his students.

The feedback generated through formative assessment needs to possess certain criteria: first of all, it should be tightly related to the goals stated in the previous phase. Second, the feedback provided should focus on students' weaknesses as an attempt to remediate and decrease them. Feedback should also provide information about one's progress in relation to the target goals. Thus, the teacher needs to be careful when providing feedback. Additionally, the feedback provided by the teacher should be individualized, i.e., the feedback which assists certain student to progress can be regarded as not useful for another. This fact draws us to re-shed light on the importance of differentiated instruction. If formative feedback does not meet these criteria, it will not be beneficial and students' responses to it are likely to be inadequate.

Feedback should be comprehensible and within students' reach. Moreover, it should carry certain characteristics in terms of: timing, amount, mode, and audience (Brookhart, 2008). As for timing, feedback should be immediate, and provided very often; during the intervention, the researcher provided the pupils with feedback on the spot, and this allowed them to negotiate the ambiguous points and hence understand them; the results obtained revealed the effectiveness of timely feedback. The second parameter for effective feedback is the amount; feedback needs to be provided on the most important areas which relate directly to the learning objectives and help the students to develop significantly. As far as the mode of feedback is concerned, the teacher needs to provide his students with a variety of feedback types including oral and written as a way to promote interaction between him and his students; the mode of feedback depends on the

task type, i.e., there are tasks which need written comments while there are others which provide oral comments, yet it should be noted that the two modes complete each other; oral feedback, for instance, can be used to consolidate written feedback. In the intervention, the pupils benefited from both types, oral feedback was given directly on the spot while written feedback was offered on their papers. The last point raised by Brookhart is the audience, this point is related to whom the teacher gives feedback, i.e., either to individual students or to the whole group; of course this depends on the students' understanding of a given point, if the whole class understand the lesson and only one student does not then the teacher gives individualized feedback to this student, if the whole class does not grasp a given point then the teacher gives collective feedback, i.e., feedback to the whole class. During the intervention, the researcher provided timely feedback for individual students on the spot in the first session, and in the second session which was concerned with correction, she offered collective feedback for the whole group.

These points are highly recommended when providing feedback. The teacher needs also to possess knowledge about the task given and also the different types of knowledge stated in the first chapter (section 1.10). Feedback can also be thought of in relation to the afore-stated goals that is: challenge and commitment goals. As far as the former is concerned, feedback permits students to “set reasonable goals and to track their performance in relation to their goals so that adjustments in effort, direction, and even strategy can be made as needed” (Locke and Latham, 1990 Qtd in Hattie and Timperley 2007: 88). For the latter, students seek feedback which assist them to reach their goals, i.e., feedback which they see as relevant to their progress. Additionally students with commitment goals receive feedback open-heartedly.

Drawing from the above discussion, feedback needs to have certain criteria in order to be effective and fosters students' achievements and assists them in their journey to reach the learning goals. Feedback can be ineffective when it is not timely, when it is not understandable, when students do not know what to do with this feedback and when it

is not actionable. Thus, the task of providing feedback is equally important to other crucial points in the teaching learning process, for that reason it is recommended that the teacher needs be aware of the importance of feedback and also they need to know the main principles for providing feedback. As far as feedback generated from other sources mainly peers, it is based mainly on modeling (see 5.2.2).

5.2.3.3. Feed-forward

This phase asks: ‘where am I going next?’ it guides students’ learning. This level is mainly concerned with addressing misconceptions and errors encountered in the previous phase. Error analysis represents one of the cornerstones of feed-forward; the errors that students commit in their tasks allow the teacher to have a clear image of the main difficulties they face. Accordingly, they assist the teacher to decide on the coming steps to be undertaken. In the formative assessment classroom, error identification is not enough to make students overcome their difficulties; it is rather the identification of the sources of these errors which has the massive impact in the process. In the pre-intervention phase, the researcher identified the main difficulties encountered by pupils and the strategies they used in text comprehension. Moreover, throughout the intervention the researcher attempted to identify the main difficulties pupils encountered in the different tasks, she offered instruction relevant to this identification. Feed-forward is, hence, based upon error analysis by the identification of pupils’ strategies, difficulties and sources of difficulties, this is highlighted by Richards and Schmidt (2002: 184) who posit that error analysis can be carried out for three main reasons:

- To identify strategies which learners use in language learning.
- Try to identify the causes of learners errors
- To obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid to teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

In the last level of the formative assessment process that is feed-forward, error analysis can cover all these areas together, i.e., the first point, for instance, can be done at

the beginning of the process. The second point can take place during the task and the last point is more likely to occur at the end of the task. These points are intertwined and complete each other in the feed-forward process, therefore, the teacher needs to identify the main errors and mistakes students commit when doing a given task as a preliminary step for subsequent instruction. Identification of the main errors helps the teacher to deal with the most salient students' errors and he can group students on the basis of their committed errors and mistakes through small-group instruction (Frey and Fisher 2011). The teacher then re-teaches the students on the basis of the errors and mistakes committed. Referring to the present work, the identification of pupils' difficulties and strategies helped the researcher to design the intervention and to help pupils throughout this intervention. Accordingly, one of the cornerstones of feed-forward is guided instruction; this latter as highlighted earlier is based upon guidance of students during the different tasks, in addition to modeling and practice to help students overcome their mistakes and errors. The first step in this process is checking for understanding, i.e., the teacher asks students about whether a given point is clear or not, he then prompts students and guide them to reach the intended goals (scaffolding) and then he provides practice and modeling, and he re-teaches to help the students achieve better results.

To put it briefly, there is no recipe for affective formative assessment practices as formative assessment depends on a number of factors including the context, students' learning styles and strategies. However, there is a set of questions which are frequently asked in the formative assessment classroom. These questions need to be present in the formative assessment Algerian classroom. Clear goals, effective feedback, students' involvement, differentiated instruction, remediation and regulation represent the major pillars leading formative assessment in different circumstances and in varying contexts. They help the teacher to plan their lessons, monitor their teaching and enhance their students' self-regulation strategies. Indeed, when these points were used in the intervention, the results obtained were satisfactory.

5.2.4. Criteria for Effective Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is best practised in an informal way as in formal tests and quizzes students will be anxious, and this can lead to low achievements. Besides the feedback generated through these tests and exams is less beneficial than the one generated in informal settings. In such settings, students feel more comfortable in committing mistakes and more opened to feedback than formal instances. Here, the researcher is not calling for the exclusion of formal tests in the Algerian classroom; formal tests are more convenient because of the large number of students in the classroom. However, the informal tests stated above are easy and not previously designed, i.e., these tests can be thought of in terms of everyday interactions between the teacher and the students, for example, asking the students questions like: “*have you understood?*”, or “*is it clear?*” is a way of informal testing. The students’ answers to these questions allow the teacher to provide timely feedback to individual students. Yet, with the large number of students the teacher cannot provide individualized feedback for each one. This problem can be solved by providing online feedback.

Formative assessment, therefore, needs to be well-established in the classroom for effective results. According to Herman and Baker (2005), there are six criteria which determine the validity of formative assessment: (1) alignment, (2) diagnostic value, (3) fairness, (4) technical quality, (5) utility, and (6) feasibility. Below is a description of each.

- ***Alignment to standards:*** which means that the content of formative assessment should be related to the curriculum and do not go beyond the aligned goals and objectives. Otherwise, the formative assessment results will “tell us little about whether students are making adequate progress toward achieving the standard” (Herman and Baker 2005, 49). For the English language learners, formative assessment is based on the fact that students’ proficiency level should be aligned with the standard English language proficiency.

- **Diagnostic value:** Formative assessment major aim is to improve students' achievements; hence it should be based upon diagnostic feedback. Herman and Baker (2005: 52) emphasized this fact by stating: "a test with high diagnostic value will tell us not only whether students are performing well but also why students are performing at certain levels and what to do about it", therefore, formative assessment should offer diagnostic comments in order to help students to improve.
- **Fairness:** formative assessment should offer fair comments on students' progress.
- **Technical quality:** formative assessment should be accurate in every aspect so that it offers high quality assessment relevant to the learning objectives and standards.
- **Reliability and Validity:** formative assessment needs to be reliable in terms of results' consistency and valid with regard to what we want it to measure: it should be related to the objective of measurement and should not go beyond e.g. a test which examine English language proficiency should not include points related to content area such as mathematics or sciences i.e. instead of fulfilling the assessment tasks, the learner will be confused with other points that are irrelevant to the subject being assessed. Moreover, it is not only the content of assessment which determines its validity and reliability but also the language used for the instructions, in this regard posits Abedi (2010: 188): "linguistic factors may seriously affect the validity of inferences drawn using assessment", hence, the language used in the assessment tasks should also be valid and reliable in order not to confuse the students; the language used should be understandable and within students' reach.
- **Utility:** formative assessment needs to provide useful information to teachers and students, as already stated the results should be diagnostic in nature and provide constructive feedback, such feedback says Abedi (2010: 188) "will help teachers to revise instructional and assessment materials to address EL students' academic needs". Bloom et.al also emphasize the point of utility when they posit: "in

formative evaluation one must strive to develop the kinds of evidence that will be most useful in the process” (1971 Qtd in Cizek, 2010: 6).

- **Feasibility:** this criteria is related to the time offered for formative assessment, it should be given enough time as Abedi suggests: “assessments should be worth the extra time and resources that are needed for conducting them” (2010, 188). As a matter of fact, formative assessment requires much time on the part of the teacher and the learner as well, the teacher’s role, for instance, is based on teaching and re-teaching in order to check the weak points of the students and try to remedy them and consolidate the learning outcomes. Regarding the learner, he should be aware of his level and know how formative assessment operates in order to be fully involved in the teaching learning process.

These criteria represent the ethical value of formative assessment; therefore, they need to be present in any classroom provoking formative assessment.

5.3. Developing Text Comprehension through Formative Assessment

Developing students’ reading comprehension skills is crucial not only for their learning but also for their professional life, the results reached in the present study reveal that text comprehension skills can be developed through formative assessment. Indeed, summative assessment is not the appropriate way to develop students’ reading skills because the conditions under which reading takes place are highly responsible for the outcomes, i.e., if the teacher sets a frightening test-like atmosphere for reading, he will obtain less fruitful results than when the atmosphere is cooperative and based on feedback and monitoring of students. Indeed, the formative assessment regimes have unleashed the conundrum of good learning practices in different context and with various areas including the four language skills. Therefore and on the basis of the data gathered, the researcher views that formative assessment is among the best ways to develop text comprehension among Algerian secondary school pupils, she recommends a set of points

which are tightly related to the process and which are more likely to enhance Algerian pupils text comprehension skills.

5.3.1. Regular Practice

The well-known proverb “*Practice makes perfect*” describes the essence of this section. Language learning is based not only on learning but more importantly it is based on practice, and reading as a language skill is not an exception. Regular practice of the reading is responsible for its development as stated by Duke and Pearson (2002: 207): “All the explicit instruction in the world will not make students strong readers unless it is accompanied by lots of experience”. Thus, ongoing practice of the reading skill leads inevitably to its development. Indeed, regular practice of the reading skill together with assessment of students lead to many benefits: first, it develops effective reading strategies responsible for solid comprehension of different texts. Regular practice of reading also makes the students accustomed to the different text genres and the way they are organized as stated by Perfetti (1994. Qtd. in Grabe: 2009: 324): “the only way to learn how texts are organized is to read a lot of them”; it is through ongoing practice of texts that students can develop their reading comprehension habits more effectively. All these points were already proved by the results of the present work which revealed the effectiveness of regular practice in developing the Algerian secondary school pupils’ competences in text comprehension.

Regular practice of reading needs not to be based on single text genre but rather a variety of types in order to make the students more accustomed to different text genres and their structures. Providing students with texts and assessing them through follow-up activities (as in the intervention) is a good way to develop students’ reading skills. Practice can be done also outside the classroom where pupils are given a short text with comprehension questions and other activities of grammar, vocabulary and others (similar to those of the exam) to be accustomed with them, this can be done since the time is not enough in the classroom so they just have to do this outside the classroom.

There is a considerable body of literature addressing the characteristics of what good readers are; drawing from the set of characteristics stated in the literature (see section 2.6), the teacher can develop some of these reading behaviours in his students. It is definitely regular practice which enables the teacher to develop these behaviours. Finally, regular practice develops students' reading comprehension strategies both for learning and for their whole life (professional reading, reading for pleasure and so on). Regular practice alone, however, is not enough to develop students' text comprehension, in order to be effective this practice must be guided by certain points including guided instruction.

5.3.2. Guided instruction

During reading tasks the teacher needs to provide guidance to his students throughout the task. This guidance includes feedback which helps students to overcome their difficulties. Guided instruction is also based on scaffolding and modeling and these practices help students to develop their reading skill more effectively. Accordingly, guided instruction can be closely linked to explicit instruction (see 5.3.6). The reading tasks provided in the intervention were supported by clear instruction and the researcher was instantly checking for understanding, and looking for unclear items for students in order to explain them. Guided instruction in reading entails also purpose setting where the teacher sets and clarifies the purpose behind a given reading material. Teachers most of the time choose a given text for students to read. Yet instead they can set the purpose behind the reading activity and make the students choose by themselves the text or book which meets the stated purpose, by doing this students' motivation to read will be increased. Indeed, guided instruction and motivation are complementary since guided instruction leads to students' motivation, and motivation is a crucial part of guided instruction; Thompson (2009: 428) states that the teacher can do different activities to increase motivation during guided instruction including: "acknowledging that the task is difficult; using humor; providing positive and negative feedback; reinforcing correct responses from students by repeating them; helping students maintain motivation", these

activities are part of guided instruction and their purpose is to increase students' motivation in a given task including reading. As a matter of fact, the researcher offers guided instruction throughout the intervention, and it proved its effectiveness in developing students' outcomes.

Therefore, if the reading skill is assessed formatively and this assessment is driven by guided instruction, students will be more motivated and more engaged in their learning, yet raising students' motivation towards reading is not an easy task.

5.3.3. Raising Students' Motivation

One point to start with in the discussion about motivation and reading is the quote stated by Guthrie et.al (2004: 417) who suggest: "a finite set of instructional supports explicitly targeted to motivational development in reading can facilitate engaged reading and reading comprehension", drawing from this claim one can posit that motivation plays a crucial role in developing students' reading abilities. The development of students' motivation to read is tightly related to the teacher's instructions. Raising students' motivation to read is crucial for their reading progress, regular practice of texts should be initiated by motivation, as suggested by Eskey (2005: 574- 575): "to engage in something as challenging as reading regularly in a second or foreign language, learners must be highly motivated". Providing students with a variety of text genres with various activities and guide them throughout these activities is likely to increase their motivation towards text and text comprehension. Indeed, the results yielded reveal that the variety of texts and activities which the pupils were exposed to raised their motivation towards texts and this can be clearly revealed through the results obtained by means of the posttest and the post-intervention questionnaire.

Highly motivated students tend to use more strategies to comprehend texts and are more engaged in reading than other students. The teacher can formatively assess his students' use of reading strategies by providing them with texts to read either inside or

outside the classroom. Guthrie et.al (2006) identified a set of instructional practices to raise students' motivation for reading and reading comprehension:

- a. Content goals: well stated goals raise students' motivation and sparks their interests, thus they focus more on their reading and develop their knowledge and build their deep understanding of the text. At the beginning of the reading task the teacher needs to state clear goals and communicate these goals with the students. The goals stated should be relevant to the development of the reading skill, i.e., what students will be able to do at the end of the reading task including strategies, skills and so on. The statement of goals helps students to gain knowledge from the text, and also develops their autonomy in the sense that they become aware of the learning objectives and this assists them for life-long learning. In the Algerian secondary school textbook "*New Prospects*", the goals of any task are stated at its inception including reading, yet teachers and students' answers to the interview and the pre-intervention questionnaire respectively revealed that the teacher starts directly the reading task without stating the goals or informing the students about these goals. The teacher needs to assign reading tasks as formative assessment and make the students knowledgeable about the goals behind each task. Having clear goals at the inception of the task is likely to enhance students' motivation towards the text.
- b. Affording students choices in the classroom: offering students choices about what they want to read is a good practice to raise their motivation towards reading and reading comprehension. Imposed texts may not be as efficient as texts chosen by students themselves. Guthrie et.al (2006: 233) point out that "when students can choose (a) the texts they read, (b) the tasks they perform with the texts, or (c) their partners during instruction, their intrinsic motivation for reading increases". The texts mandated in "*New prospects*" go hand in hand with the learning objectives and the units provided, so the teacher cannot replace them with new texts, however the teacher can state the goals clearly to the students and then asks them to choose

texts relevant to these goals. Or, he may ask them to read texts chosen by themselves and do some activities such as: summarizing, inferring the main idea, explain difficult words, etc. and assess their performance in these tasks and offer relevant feedback and instruction to help them overcome the difficulties encountered and to develop their reading strategies. The researcher views that engaging students in choosing texts by themselves is a good step to develop their self-regulation learning in which metacognitive strategies represent the core. Accordingly, this allows the students to develop metacognitive strategies in reading, and these strategies represent the pillars of strategic competence proposed by Bachmand and Palmer (1996).

- c. Text properties: the texts chosen should be interesting to students; the teacher also needs to take other criteria into account when choosing a text including length, organization, difficulty of words and so on. Texts which are within students' reach increases their motivation and willingness to comprehend the text. In the intervention, the selected texts were within pupils' reach and the topics selected were related to the learning units, so that to make the pupils use their background knowledge to solve the different tasks.
- d. Social goals: texts which have a close relation to students' everyday life are more likely to increase their motivation. For the Algerian context, teachers are asked to follow the learning units and the texts provided should have a relation with the theme of these units. Yet the teacher can ask his students to choose texts or short stories by their own and ask them to summarize them, or answer certain tasks related to them.
- e. Teacher's involvement: which means that the teacher takes into consideration his students' views about the text, their understanding and the things they could not understand in the reading task. During the intervention, the researcher was assisting the pupils to understand the different tasks, and this had fruitful results in their outcomes.

- f. Extrinsic rewards and praise: giving students rewards for their success in a given reading task increases their motivation and enhances their achievements. Success in a reading task means success in answering correctly activities related to the text after its understanding. Rewards may include assigning additional marks to students in the summative assessment, or simple encouraging words to students in front of their classmates.

Highly-motivated students can easily manipulate different comprehension strategies available to them to achieve good comprehension of the text provided; besides they know exactly the purpose of their reading and have clear goals at the beginning of the task, Fisher and Frey (2010: 111) posit: “motivation is thought to be closely linked to one’s ability to set goals”, therefore only highly motivated students can set goals for their learning.

5.3.4. Goal Setting

Early in the present work the researcher has spoken about goal setting in the reading process; having a purpose in mind at the outset of the process is crucial and an important point which determines the success or failure of the comprehension process. Moreover, the results yielded from the intervention revealed the importance of goal setting, i.e., during the intervention, the researcher dealt with goal setting as a reading strategy and this was reflected in the pupils’ results.

In their discussion about the characteristics of good readers, Duke and Pearson (2002) point out that good readers have clear goals in their minds, and continuously check whether they are meeting these goals throughout the reading process. The teacher needs to set clear goals at the onset of the reading lesson; what is expected from the students, what skills they will develop, and what strategies they will acquire? All these questions should be raised by the teacher before the lesson takes place. Additionally, the teacher needs to adapt the learning goals according to his students’ needs. The teacher needs also to help

students to set their own goals; this helps them to understand their learning more and to develop their self-regulation skills.

5.3.5. Extensive Reading

Extensive reading is defined as “reading in quantity in order to gain general understanding of what is read. It is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 193-194); the main aim of extensive reading is, therefore, to develop reading habits among students in addition to developing their knowledge and motivation towards reading. Indeed, extensive reading is one of the major points responsible for the development of reading skill among students. Colin Davis (1995 cited in Harmer, 2001) posits that reading skills will not develop effectively in the absence of extensive reading; he further suggests that extensive reading help students to improve their vocabulary, overall comprehension skills and help them to develop positive attitudes towards reading. In the same vein, Harmer (2001) posits that extensive reading is by far the best way to develop English students’ reading (and writing) skills. In the intervention, ongoing practice of texts inside the classroom helped the pupils to develop their outcomes and also their reading strategies. However, the teachers pointed out that the time devoted to reading is not sufficient to develop their students’ reading skill; hence they can ask students to read texts or short stories outside the classroom and to summarize these or answer a set of tasks related to them. Then, they ask the students to present their summaries orally in front of their classmates and provide them with feedback relevant to their presentations, this is likely to improve both reading and speaking skills together, in addition to eliminating their shyness, i.e. they will be able to read in front of their classmates (one of the sources of difficulties found in the present study).

Extensive reading is generally chosen by students themselves to improve their knowledge and reading skills, however, the teacher needs to guide his students through stating the major purpose and leaves the floor for them to choose texts relevant to that

purpose. The teacher needs also to take several points into account: the reading that students are exposed to needs to be comprehensible to them; if it is not then it will have a counter-effect instead and de-motivate them to read because looking for difficult word constantly will not satisfy the students and the reading will lose its pleasure (the essence of extensive reading). In this regard, Harmer (2001) points out that if the input is comprehensible, students will gradually acquire more words and knowledge, and this in turn will help them to overcome several language difficulties, thus the chosen reading texts need to be accessible to the students. Simplified versions of authentic texts can suit better Algerian secondary school pupils as authentic texts are beyond their level; these simplified versions need to be adapted by specialists so that the core of the reading task is kept and the students will not feel bored reading an over-simplified text. Once the students develop their comprehension in simplified texts, the teacher moves gradually towards authentic materials. Moreover, the content of reading needs to be interesting and the text genre has to be familiar to students, for example, providing the students with a narrative text without teaching what are the essence of such genre of text will be a tiresome task to students and will inevitably lead to failure and de-motivation. The teacher needs, therefore, to motivate the students to read by choosing relevant topics, creating interest through effective warming up activities (showing a picture for prediction for example), providing students with interesting activities, helping students make choices about what they read, etc. Therefore, the teacher's role in extensive reading is crucial as he acts as a guide and motivator of students to read, Grabe (2009) posits that extensive reading requires a significant effort to motivate students in order to be fruitful. Teacher's encouragement of students to read needs to be guided by formative assessment in order to help them develop their reading skill.

Another way to develop students' extensive reading is through setting a library (Harmer, 2001); the teacher can gather books from his students and bring his own books and forms a small library in the classroom so that the students can exchange the different books throughout the year. The teacher can guide this reading though asking students for

summaries and reports, and then feedback is provided from the teacher and peers. This initiative can take place starting from first year secondary school where students are provided with simple books, and then moves step-by-step towards more difficult books as students pass to higher levels namely: second year and third year secondary school.

Grabe (2009) offers a set of practices which can help the teacher to engage in extensive reading, the teacher needs to:

- Provide many attractive reading materials and read interesting materials to students.
- Create many opportunities for reading.
- Find out what students like to read.
- Encourage students to read magazines and comic books in class or at home.
- Talk about what you read and what makes reading interesting to you.

These practices are said to encourage students and raise their motivation to read and this is the core of extensive reading: developing students' motivation to read. These points need to be guided by formative assessment in order to develop students' reading strategies. Extensive reading is more fruitful if the students have a wide range of reading strategies available to them and are able to use them appropriately while reading, for this reason development of students' strategic competence is recommended.

5.3.6. Developing Strategic Competence (Explicit Instruction)

The use of strategies represents one of the main keys for the success of text comprehension, what has been observed from teachers' interview and pupils' answers to the pre-intervention questionnaire, and the pretest is the weak use of strategies. The process of comprehension cannot reach its intended objective if not coupled with the effective use of strategies. Thus a development of strategic competence is essential for text comprehension development. The researcher believes that development of strategic competence can be best achieved through explicit teaching of reading strategies. As a

matter of fact, one of the best methods to develop students' learning more quickly and effectively is explicit instruction, Archer and Hughes (2011: vii) state:

As educators, we all have the same goal: to help our students make the maximum possible academic gains in a positive, respectful environment that promotes their success and nurtures their desire to learn. One of the greatest tools available to us in this pursuit is explicit instruction - instruction that is systematic, direct, engaging, and success oriented

Therefore, explicit instruction assists students to directly visualize the purpose behind a given task, besides it engages students in their learning and directs them towards success. Moreover, explicit instruction is useful not only for new learning points but also to clarify the existing ones, Archer and Hughes carry on and posit: "explicit instruction is helpful not only when discovery is possible, but when discovery may be inaccurate, inadequate, incomplete, or insufficient". The effectiveness of explicit instruction covers different language areas including reading, for this latter explicit instruction is mainly concerned with strategies, i.e., explicit instruction of reading strategies.

The explicit reading instruction has been proved by many researchers as an effective tool to develop reading strategies; explicit teaching of strategies is more likely to make students solid comprehenders of different kinds of texts (Duke and Pearson 2002). We have already highlighted and proved the major effect that regular practice has on reading strategies. Indeed, pupils' answers to the posttest and the post-intervention questionnaire reveal that they develop their reading comprehension strategies considerably compared to the pretest. These strategies were taught during the intervention and regular practice of them helped the participants to develop their comprehension of texts, and this is clear from their answers. Thus, explicit instruction of reading strategies is said to accelerate students' comprehension of different texts through modeling these strategies. Indeed, the essence of explicit instruction is best described in Archer and Hughes' terms: "I do, we do, you do" (2011). Explicit instruction of reading strategies

takes the form of modeling, i.e., the teacher shows the students how to use a given strategy before starting the reading task; after modeling the teacher gives reading tasks and checks for understanding whether the strategy provided has reached students through formative assessment. In this way, then, it helps struggling learners to achieve better in their comprehension of the text.

Regarding the Algerian teacher, he needs to teach his students how to use reading strategies, i.e., when practicing reading in the classroom, each time the teacher can introduce a reading strategy, model it to students and then practice it through a given text by asking comprehension questions based on the taught strategy. There are different elements which the teacher needs to take into account when launching explicit instruction offered by Archer and Hughes (2011), the researcher links these elements to the context of reading strategies:

- Sequence skills logically: starting from general to specific and from easy to difficult strategies, the teacher also needs to take into consideration the most salient strategies before moving to the others, and separate strategies which are similar because they may seem confusing to the students, for example: predicting and contextual guessing, these two strategies are different in fact but at the first glance they may cause confusion to the student.
- Break down complex strategies into smaller instructional units: the teacher should not give the students all the strategies at once, but rather he needs to deal with one specific strategy and do not move to the other until the first strategy is well consolidated and mastered by the students through sufficient practice.
- Design organized and focused lessons and begin each lesson by a clear statement of the lesson's goal: the lessons should be focused on a given comprehension strategy and sequenced accordingly. Moreover, the teacher needs to clearly state the objective behind the lesson at its inception by saying, for instance, "*today, we will be dealing with a very important reading strategy which is skimming*", by

doing this he helps the students to clearly visualize the learning objective, and the students, in turn, will not be confused or struggle to know what the essence of the lesson is.

- Review prior skills and knowledge before beginning the instruction: this step is important in the sense that it makes the teacher knowledgeable about the students' prior knowledge because if students do not know a given basic point they certainly will not know points related to it, for example: the teacher needs to give a brief definition and explanation of reading strategies, what are they? How do they help them to comprehend the text? and so on before tackling the strategies separately. This step also allows the students to make a link between existing knowledge and new information.
- Provide step-by-step demonstration: the teacher needs to model the reading strategies clearly in front of the students through thinking aloud. Thinking aloud is a good example of explicit instruction as pointed out by Fisher and Frey (2010: 107): "the verbalization of the inner monologue that occurs in teacher's mind can significantly help students who mistakenly attribute the teacher's knowledge to "being smart"", i.e., thinking aloud helps students to clearly visualize that the teacher also goes through different steps to deal with a given task, thus they are more likely to imitate him and follow the same thinking path.
- Use clear and concise language: the teacher needs to explain and model the text comprehension strategy in a clear and easy way and simple vocabulary within students' reach.
- Provide an adequate range of examples: after modeling the strategy, the teacher needs to provide different examples to make the students understand better this strategy; giving students different texts and demonstrate how a given strategy is performed will certainly help them to develop their strategies.
- Provide guided practice: after modeling the reading strategy the teacher needs to provide students with practice and guide them throughout the practice.

- Monitor students' performance closely and provide immediate feedback: the teacher needs to be close enough to each individual student and monitor him or her during the reading task, and adjust instruction according to students' responses to the task. Additionally, he provides immediate corrective feedback which enable students to overcome their comprehension problems and use the strategies more accurately for successful comprehension.
- Provide students with enough practice: practicing a given strategy many times develops students' retention and automaticity, i.e., the use of a given strategy will be more automatic through practice.

Accordingly, explicit instruction is based upon three main stages: lesson planning, lesson delivery, and lesson assessment (Martella and Martella, 2009), again the researcher links these steps in relation to text comprehension strategies:

- a. **Lesson planning:** this initial phase is divided to two main aspects: learning objectives and prerequisite skills. The first aspect is concerned with stating the goal behind a given taught point, in our case, it is concerned with the objective behind a given reading strategy. Explicit instruction begins with "the end in mind" (Martella and Martella, 2009). The teacher needs to set clear goals about what he wants his students to be able to do at the end of the lesson, and make this clear and visible to the students. The second aspect is related to the students' prior knowledge where the teacher asks the following question: "do my students have the required background knowledge or skills to learn this new information?" (Martella and Martella 2009: 09) this question is crucial at this phase of explicit instruction, students' with limited background knowledge will not be able to progress; as we have already highlighted if the students do not have enough knowledge about what a strategy is they will not understand the different strategies of text comprehension. On the basis of the data obtained, we suggest that the Algerian secondary school teacher may even go further and start with some basic points in reading, for example, he may develop students' grammatical and

functional competence by clarifying the pronunciation of words and providing some vocabulary tasks prior to explicit instruction of reading strategies; the vocabulary tasks prior to reading are highlighted by Harmer (2001) who calls them: pre-teaching vocabulary. Thus, the teacher needs to have a clear idea about his students' level and needs, and this can be done through a diagnostic test at the beginning of the learning course or unit. This aspect is not only concerned with the points which the students do not know but also with those already taught but they are not well-attained by the students, in this case the teacher needs to re-teach these points for consolidation in order to be able to move to something else. Prerequisite skills are important in the phase of lesson planning as they determine the essence of the learning course. Lesson planning can be thought of in two ways: first lesson planning for the whole course or unit, the teacher may say, for instance: at the end of the unit you will be able to do these strategies. Second lesson planning for one lesson where the teacher sets the objective for one lesson, for example: at the end of this lesson you will be able to do this strategy. Lesson planning is helpful to both the teacher and the student for the fact that it acts as a roadmap which facilitates the learning process and makes the journey towards attainment of comprehension strategies more clear and effective. Lesson planning helps the teacher to determine the strategies to be taught (which one comes first, and which one comes last) depending on the students' prerequisite knowledge. This phase can be actually linked to the feed-up step of formative assessment

- b. **Lesson delivery:** once the teacher sets the goals, and checks his students' level and prior knowledge, he launches his lesson: the explicit instruction of the reading comprehension strategy (only one at a time). According to Martella and Martella (2009), there are five steps in lesson delivery: opening, model, guided practice, independent practice and closing. The opening is a kind of warming up where the teacher motivates the students about the lesson, in our case he may state why a certain strategy is beneficial, in what ways does it help the students to comprehend

the text and so on. Model or modeling represents the core of explicit instruction; the teacher needs to clearly demonstrate the reading strategy to his students and the way it is used. The teacher should not provide too much modeling because it may be confusing to the students. Guided practice is similar to the point raised earlier in this section; the teacher provides tasks where the students practice the reading strategy under the teacher's supervision and control, if any mistake or error is committed by the students the teacher directly provides feedback. Independent practice is when students practice the strategy learned without teacher's control, the teacher may interfere during independent practice to prevent possible errors; the teacher may assign home works at this phase. The aim of guided and independent practice is primarily the consolidation of the comprehension strategy. The last step in lesson delivery is the closing where the teacher ends up the lesson through recapitulating the main points tackled.

- c. **Lesson assessment:** at the end of the lesson the teacher assigns assessment to students to check their attainment of the reading strategy. In the intervention, ongoing assessment of reading demonstrated good results. Providing students with timely feedback helped them to overcome their difficulties in general and develop their reading strategies in practice. When assessing, the teacher needs to take three points into account: mastery, maintenance, and generalizations. The teacher needs to check whether students have mastered the reading strategy; he needs also to make sure that the students have not forgotten the strategy through ongoing formative assessment. Finally, generalization which is concerned with whether students can transfer the learned strategy to authentic texts taken from novels or books.

Explicit instruction, therefore, acts as scaffolding to learning as it helps the teacher to effectively teach and monitor his students' learning and enables him to be close enough to them and provide relevant feedback. Moreover, it facilitates learning as the teacher deals with one point at a time, and this helps the students to grasp more the learning point

in question. Worth noting is the fact that explicit instruction will not be useful if the reading tasks are not well designed, the teacher needs to take different points into account when designing reading tasks.

5.3.7. Designing Reading Tasks

The tasks related to reading are of paramount importance, and the teacher needs to be careful when designing these tasks. Ur (1996) provides a set of characteristics upon which teachers can rely when designing a reading task:

- *Language and content:* language should be comprehensible and within the students' reach; and the content should be accessible, i.e. learners need to know enough about it in order to apply their background knowledge. If the student faces difficulties in understanding the language and the content of the text he will certainly face difficulties in comprehending the text. Difficult words can be useful in terms of enriching students' vocabulary but it is less useful in improving their reading skills. For the intervention, the texts selected were related to the learning units which the pupils dealt with, so this point helped them in comprehending the text by using background knowledge. Eskey (2005) also highlights this fact when he posits: "the reading teacher's job is to introduce students to appropriate texts – texts at the right level linguistically and texts that are both interesting to them and relevant to their particular needs"
- *Speed:* the reading process should be fulfilled in less time; in order to achieve this goal, teachers need to expose their students to reading as much as possible. Regular practice of reading, together with formative assessment "encourages 'automatization' of recognition of common words or word-combinations" (Ur, 1996: 147), so the students will not waste time in decoding different words in the text.
- *Attention:* the teacher needs to make the students aware of important ideas in the text, they need to pay attention to key ideas and skip unnecessary details, i.e., to

push the students to read selectively. If the student pays attention to every single detail in the text, the reading task will be exhaustive and time-consuming.

- *Incomprehensible vocabulary*: when the students encounter difficult words in the text, the teacher encourages them to use guessing strategies instead of looking for each word in the dictionary. This strategy was used in the intervention and it helped the students a lot in their comprehension of the text. This point is important because the overuse of dictionaries leads to slow reading and also leads to misunderstanding through selecting the wrong definition. The dictionary can be used to check one's guessing on the basis of an understanding of the overall topic of the text.
- *Prediction*: the teacher needs to encourage his students to predict by advocating a set of activities based on prediction. This strategy was also highlighted in the intervention where the pupils were asked to predict the meaning of certain words; this helped them in achieving good results in the posttest and also developed their positive attitudes towards text comprehension.
- *Background information*: the teacher needs to encourage his students to use their background knowledge through a set of tasks, and also through providing texts with topics that are familiar to students like what happened in the intervention, for instance.
- *Strategies*: students need to be knowledgeable about different kinds of strategies, and also need to be provided with a variety of reading tasks which allow for the use of these strategies more explicitly (see 5.3.6 above).

These points need to be taken into account by the teacher once he engages his student in a reading task.

Drawing from all the points raised in this section, one can come to the point that the development of reading comprehension needs much time and energy. Additionally, the classroom environment is the primary responsible for effective development of comprehension; a supportive classroom environment will definitely develop reading

skills. Duke and Pearson (2002) point out that the classroom environment needs to be rich of vocabulary, and concept development through discussion of new words and their meaning, and this point raises again the importance of feedback. The Algerian teacher can provide his students with a number of new words or expressions at the end of the session as a way to enrich their vocabulary. He can also use new words constantly in the classroom so that to make his students know new words. Additionally, the classroom environment should include a thorough discussion about the text either between students or between the students and the teacher; the discussion about the text includes interpretation of difficult words, relating text information to background knowledge and so on.

In a nutshell, the above suggested points need to be linked to formative assessment; implementing these points in the classroom and providing ongoing timely feedback is likely to improve the students' outcomes and comprehension skills. Indeed, many of the above mentioned points were introduced in the intervention and they lead to satisfactory results. Therefore, formative assessment of reading comprehension allows students to develop their comprehension skills, and allows the teacher to monitor students' comprehension and use of strategies; hence he will be able to deliver instruction relevant to the students' level and comprehension. Moreover, formative assessment gives the teacher the opportunity to know students' interest and to act accordingly so that the students' motivation increases.

5.4. Developing Language Competences through Formative Assessment

The reading skill is based upon a set of competences including: grammatical, textual, functional and sociolinguistic competence; if these competences are mastered by the students, they are more likely to achieve success in reading comprehension.

5.4.1. Grammatical Competence

The lower processes of reading represent the basis of effective reading comprehension; one of the pillars of these processes is knowledge of grammatical structures represented in the reading passage, since before all reading is a linguistic process which includes vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation, Duke and Pearson (2002: 208) posit that: “skilled decoding is necessary for skilled comprehension”. Accordingly, grammatical competence in reading requires a firm base in order to operate more effectively as part of the reading comprehension process. Activities relevant for the development of grammatical competence are grammatically-based in nature and tackle different areas of grammatical points which are likely to be encountered in a reading passage.

The grammatical structures of a given language are seen as an obstacle by many language learners; the ability to understand grammar is regarded as a difficult point and this, in fact, has been proved in the pupils’ answers to the pre-intervention questionnaire and also their answers in the pretest. The method which the researcher followed was based upon formative assessment, teaching and re-teaching of grammatical items, i.e., the pupils were given a tasks related to grammatical competence (grammar, phonetics, morphology) and during these tasks the researcher moved on from one pupil to another and checked the main difficulties encountered, the researcher provided in-spot quick feedback to individual pupils and, then in the coming session she re-taught the main items in which pupils face difficulties. This method has proved its effectiveness in developing pupils’ grammatical competence and this can be clearly observed through their answers in the posttest. Activities related to pronunciation and vocabulary also operate under the heading of grammatical competence. There are also other ways to develop the grammatical competence in a formative way, the only thing which the teacher needs to put in mind is that feedback must be present in any activity whether activities to develop grammatical competence or other competences.

5.4.2. Textual Competence

As it is mentioned in the theoretical phase, textual competence is concerned with identification of discourse type, and the organization of the text. Developing textual competence can be best achieved through regular practice of texts either inside or outside the classroom in addition to assessment, i.e., the teacher asks his students to read a given text and then assign a number of activities based on this text. Moreover, the teacher needs to guide his students throughout the practice and use scaffolding and modeling of how the comprehension process operates through thinking aloud. The teacher needs also to provide his students with a variety of text types and demonstrates how each genre is organized and the components of each genre, for example, the narrative text is characterized by a plot, setting and characters. This demonstration helps the students to know how the different text genres are organized and therefore can identify the different types easily. Then, ongoing practice of this type of texts together with timely feedback leads the pupils to understand the different text types and, hence develop their textual competence. Indeed, the results yielded revealed the effect of formative assessment on developing pupils' textual competence.

As far as modeling is concerned, the teacher can use think aloud to show to his students how to extract meaning from the text for more comprehension. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers need to introduce modeling to their classrooms. Additionally, they need to know how to use modeling effectively to improve students' comprehension of text. This modeling should be scaffolded by assessment and ongoing practice to reach the intended goals.

Still under the umbrella of textual competence, the teacher needs to acknowledge the students about the role of purpose in reading and how it helps them to better comprehend the text. When the students have a purpose in mind while reading, their comprehension is more likely to be successful, and this, in turn, helps them to visualize

the purpose behind the text. During the intervention the pupils were introduced to this strategy and it helped them in achieving better results compared to the pretest.

5.4.3. Functional Competence

In the theoretical phase the researcher has highlighted the essence of functional competence, it is concerned with knowledge of the different language functions (see section 2.9.3) and the ability to relate words and sentences to their exact meaning in the text. Regular practice of texts with emphasis on vocabulary tasks can be used to develop this competence. The teacher may also assign vocabulary activities separate from texts in order to enrich his students' baggage in vocabulary, and then he assesses their answers and provides feedback accordingly. He can start with single words, then he moves to expressions and then texts.

Drawing from the enormous effect background knowledge has on reading comprehension, the teacher can also engage his students into activities which provoke background knowledge; this will help them to relate text information to their prior knowledge, and understand the text more. Recalling the components of the lesson while reading helps students first to relate their background knowledge to new information and second it helps them to consolidate the learned points. Indeed, the results obtained from the intervention revealed the importance of background knowledge in developing pupils' text comprehension outcomes. Using background knowledge helps students to develop not only functional competence but also other competences mainly grammatical, for example, the teacher teaches the passive voice in the lesson, then in the reading passage he asks his students to identify the passive voice throughout the text, this consolidates their understanding of the grammatical item and develops their strategies of using background knowledge in new situations.

5.4.4. Sociolinguistic Competence

Sociolinguistic competence is related to culture, it is culture-oriented. Though culture is present in the English textbook and sometimes in the exam topics, teachers do not pay much attention to it. Developing sociolinguistic competence means paying attention to the target culture; ongoing practice of texts, especially authentic ones, assists the teacher to develop his students' awareness about the target culture; the teacher needs to provide his students with a variety of authentic texts inside and outside the classroom and monitor their understanding of the text through formative assessment and feedback. Additionally, the teacher can provide his students with videos and listening scripts demonstrating the target culture, this will help them to have an idea about this culture and once encountered in the reading passages they can deal with cultural items more easily, and will not face a block in comprehension.

Time limitation makes it impossible to teach cultural items in the foreign language context, however, the teacher can at least make his students aware about the cultural differences existing between their mother tongue and the target language through ongoing practice and assessment of texts.

5.5. Further Pedagogical Implications

On the basis of the Algerian secondary school situation, the researcher views that it is necessary to provide certain pedagogical implications for a better practice of formative assessment. The latter needs a well-managed classroom environment, and other pedagogical considerations which are displayed below.

5.5.1. Classroom Management for Effective Assessment

Creating a comfortable atmosphere for the pupils is one of the major keys to the success of assessment in general and formative assessment in particular. Teachers who effectively manage their classroom are more likely to succeed in implementing formative assessment. Additionally, one of the main components of formative assessment is the

interaction. Formative assessment can function much better when nested in a good classroom environment whose main characteristic is day-to-day interaction between students and teachers. This interaction is likely to increase students' motivation because they will have the chance to communicate their weaknesses with the teacher without problems, it also allows the latter to diagnose the students' weaknesses and react accordingly. The teacher, therefore, needs to provide an effective classroom environment which encourages interaction between him and students. A safe classroom environment is more likely to improve students' achievements. Regarding the Algerian context, this interaction is quite limited because of the big number of pupils and the length of the syllabus.

5.5.2. Time load, Syllabus Length and Class Size

The insufficiency in time constitutes a barrier to the different recommendations stated earlier in this chapter including self assessment and peer assessment, explicit instruction and so on. Therefore, the researcher highly recommends a reconsideration of the time allotted to the English language sessions.

The overcrowded class size is among the main problems facing the Algerian educational system; this is on the one hand. On the other, formative assessment requires individualized feedback for each student regarding his/ her level. Therefore, it seems impossible to implement formative assessment in the Algerian classroom. However, the researcher recommends that the teacher can assign extra hours for students who face difficulties and provide them with activities on the basis of the difficulties encountered. Additionally, the teacher can use group work as a teaching aid, and includes high achievers and low achievers in one group in order to assist them exchange ideas and help each other. This also helps the Algerian pupils to develop their skills regarding peer-assessment. Another way to solve the problem of large number of students is online feedback; the teacher can use social networks to provide individualized feedback to his students on the basis of their performance in a given task, such type of interaction allows

also for sending videos and other materials which can help the students to develop their level. In doing so, the teacher can reach each individual student and guide them throughout the learning process.

The researcher also recommends that the syllabus designers reduce the learning units in order to give the floor for formative assessment and consolidation of the learned points i.e. instead of learning many things rapidly and without focusing on them, it is preferable to learn one thing and consolidate it very well before moving to something new because with the long syllabus and the insufficiency of time the teacher is not able to teach and re-teach and to assess each individual learner. Moreover, the textbook offers a set of objectives many of which need a long time to be attained. Accordingly, the number of objectives needs to be reduced and the focus needs to be put on quality rather than quantity.

Put briefly, the teaching time load, class size and the syllabus together contribute to the success of formative assessment. The English module should be given more time, five hours per week are not enough to develop students' mastery of the language including reading; besides the learning units assigned in the textbook are long and take more than one month to be finished, this makes the teachers in a rush to finish the syllabus, thus they have no time to devote to other practices including mainly formative assessment which is based on teaching and re-teaching. Therefore, the syllabus needs to be condensed giving more floor to formative assessment since it needs much time and efforts. The problem of class size can be solved by online feedback and group work

5.6. Conclusion

Drawing from the data obtained from the present research work which indicates that formative assessment has a major influence on Algerian pupils' text comprehension, the present chapter is set forward to provide a framework for an effective implementation of formative assessment in the Algerian classroom. The framework is based upon different elements including: guided instruction, motivation, students' involvement, goal

setting and so on. The framework also calls for the interaction between the teacher and the students in the classroom to promote successful assessment. On the basis of these elements the researcher offers a framework for formative assessment based on three main phases: feed-up, feedback and feed-forward. These phases help the teacher for a successful implementation of formative assessment.

The researcher also provides some recommendations regarding text comprehension and how this latter can be enhanced through formative assessment; regular practice, raising students' motivation, extensive reading and strategic competence are among the elements which are likely to improve students' text comprehension skills. Ongoing assessment of students' reading is the key for their success in learning generally and in text comprehension particularly. The researcher finally provides a set of pedagogical implications regarding classroom management, time load, syllabus and class size, these points have a direct impact on formative assessment and students' learning in general. Finally, because of its higher potential to enhance students' learning outcomes and its likelihood to improve educational achievements in general, and the significant effect it has on text comprehension in particular, time and efforts should be invested on formative assessment in order to achieve better results.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Recent decades have witnessed a huge call for the implementation of formative assessment in the educational arenas for its eminent influence on developing students' outcomes. This point provokes the interest of many researchers. As far as the Algerian context is concerned, though formative assessment is mandated in the textbook its use is restricted in the classroom. Moreover, the assessment found in the textbook plays a summative role rather than a formative one. Accordingly, the motive driving this research was to explore the effect of formative assessment on text comprehension in the Algerian context namely with Algerian secondary school pupils. As those pupils face difficulties in text comprehension, the researcher believes that ongoing practice of texts can improve their comprehension skill.

The work was initiated by providing the theoretical bases underlying the research issue. In the first chapter we laid the ground for formative assessment with its different parameters. Then, we stepped forward to highlight the reading skill and text comprehension in the second chapter. The third chapter was confined to the description of the Algerian educational system; besides a detailed demonstration of the research design was offered. In chapter four, the main research findings were exhibited and discussed in relation to the research hypotheses. The last chapter was concerned with providing a set of recommendations and suggestions which are likely to develop formative assessment practices in the Algerian classroom in addition to the development of text comprehension and the four language competences.

The research adhered to a quasi experimental research design. The researcher initially assigned a pre-intervention pupils' questionnaire, a structured teacher interview and a pretest, the aim of these research instruments was to have an idea about pupils' main difficulties in text comprehension, in addition to the sources of these difficulties. This preliminary pre-intervention phase allowed the researcher to design the second phase, i.e., the intervention. The latter focused on formative assessment. The intervention was meant mainly to develop pupils' language competences (Bachman and Palmer model 1996), and reading through formative assessment to achieve text comprehension. At the

General Conclusion

end of the intervention, the researcher launched a posttest and a post-intervention questionnaire administered to pupils in order to check the efficacy of the intervention. The collected data revealed important points regarding the research issue, and provided answers to the research questions and hypotheses:

Regarding the first research question which was concerned with the most salient pupils' difficulties in text comprehension, the pupils' answers to the pre-intervention questionnaire demonstrated that they faced a number of difficulties which were mainly associated to lack of vocabulary, difficulty of grammar and lack of comprehension of the tasks related to the text (the first section of the test: Text comprehension). These results corroborated with teachers' answers to the interview. Additionally, pupils' answers to the pretest revealed that they struggled in activities related to vocabulary, grammar and text comprehension. Accordingly, the researcher concluded that the pupils' difficulties in text comprehension were related mainly to grammatical and textual competences; this result correlates with the first hypothesis which stipulates that Pupils' difficulties in text comprehension are related to the four language competences mainly grammatical competence.

Concerning the second research question asking for the factors behind pupils' problems in text comprehension, the pre-intervention pupils' questionnaire revealed interesting results. In their answers the pupils pointed out that they employed reading comprehension strategies, however this result did not correspond to their answers in the pretest where the researcher recorded lack of effective use of strategies, i.e., there was a mismatch between pupils' claims and what they actually did. This result revealed that the pupils did not use reading strategies; this can be attributed mainly to lack of practice of reading inside the classroom. Indeed, teachers' answers to the interview revealed that the time allotted to reading inside the classroom was not sufficient to develop their text comprehension strategies. What was also revealed through the pupils' pre-intervention questionnaire and the pretest was the fact that pupils did not practice reading outside the classroom. Additionally, the teachers' answers to the interview demonstrated that the way

General Conclusion

they proceeded in a reading lesson was based upon silent reading and explanation of difficult words, in other words little attention was given to the development of reading strategies. These results made the researcher come to the conclusion that pupils' sources of difficulties were mainly related to lack of practice inside the classroom, lack of reading outside the classroom and poor employment of reading strategies which are the essence of the second hypothesis.

The intervention which pupils received helped the researcher to answer the third research question on "how does formative assessment develop pupils' text comprehension? For a thorough evaluation, the researcher employed a post-intervention questionnaire and a posttest; both research instruments carried the same objective which was to check the efficacy of formative assessment to improve pupils' text comprehension. What can be clearly observed in pupils' answers to the posttest was the significant increase in their scores in comparison to the pretest. This increase was mainly attributed to the intensive feedback pupils received during the intervention. Moreover, this feedback allowed the pupils to overcome their difficulties in text comprehension. The formative assessment which pupils received throughout the intervention helped them first to know their weaknesses and the main difficulties they encountered; this in turn assisted the teacher to diagnose his pupils and to offer relevant feedback and remedial work and thus helped them to overcome the difficulties encountered. Additionally, the intervention allowed the pupils to communicate their problems in text comprehension, and this was a first step towards self-monitoring. Accordingly, the researcher came to assert that the data gathered by means of the intervention, the post-intervention questionnaire, and the posttest confirm the third hypothesis stipulating that formative assessment highlights learners' difficulties in text comprehension and this helps the teachers to assist his pupils to overcome their problems through intensive feedback, and the learners to monitor their progress.

Considering the fourth research question about the changes that formative assessment can bring in terms of students' achievements and attitudes towards text

General Conclusion

comprehension, the pupils in the post-intervention questionnaire pointed out that they liked the intervention and they benefited from it as well. They stated that the intervention helped them in developing their grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension strategies. Their answers correlated with the results of the posttest where the researcher observed significant change in pupils' scores in relation to the pretest scores; pupils' high scores and the development of their knowledge in different areas was mainly attributed to formative assessment. The intervention was also significant for the fact that it made the pupils accustomed to the different tasks given in tests and the way to answer these tests through guided instruction, thus pupils developed positive attitudes towards these tasks and text comprehension in general. Accordingly, the fourth hypothesis stating that formative assessment enhances pupils' achievement through regular practice of text reading and comprehension, and develops language competences and this, in turn, will lead them build up positive attitudes towards text comprehension was also confirmed.

The results obtained in the present study revealed the importance of formative assessment in learning in general and in text comprehension in particular. Accordingly, the researcher offered a set of suggestions and recommendations which are believed to develop formative assessment in the classroom. Formative assessment need cooperation between the teacher and the pupils; the role of the former can be portrayed in many aspects including: raising pupils' motivation, guided instruction, differentiated instruction and goal setting; the role of the pupils can be linked to two main areas: self-assessment and peer assessment. On the basis of these points, the researcher offered a framework for formative assessment based on three main phases: feed-up, feedback and feed-forward, these three phases can help the Algerian teacher to implement formative assessment in his classroom more easily and effectively. The researcher also provided recommendations for the development of text comprehension on the basis of formative assessment focusing on regular practice of texts, guided instruction, goal setting and explicit instruction. The four language competences were also highlighted.

General Conclusion

The researcher faced limitations mainly in terms of time constraint: first the intervention which lasted five weeks, the researcher wanted to extend this period, however, because of time constraint namely spring holidays and the end of the year, she was not able to do so. Moreover, the sample which received the intervention consisted of sixteen (16) pupils; this small number of participants served the researcher very well as she was able to provide individualized feedback (one of the features of formative assessment), however this small number raises the issue of generalization and whether the results obtained can be generalizable to other contexts. Moreover, this number of participants was small in comparison to the Algerian secondary school classroom. Worth noting is the fact that the researcher could not have more participants because she was allowed to take only one group and many pupils within this group were not attending especially because the intervention took place in the third term.

To put it briefly, throughout his professional life the teacher tends to search for avenues that lead to fruitful results in his classroom, formative assessment represents one of the safe avenues towards affective learning; this fact is raised from the results yielded in the present doctoral thesis which attempted to explore the effect of formative assessment on Algerian secondary school pupils' text comprehension. The research also aimed at identifying the main difficulties pupils encounter in text comprehension and the sources of these difficulties. Worth noting is the fact that, though we are calling for an implementation of formative assessment in the classroom, the traditional assessment should not be eclipsed by this implementation. In fact, it is the combination of the two types of assessment that creates good learning opportunities. The two types of assessment, i.e. summative and formative need to be used in combination and complete each other. In the Algerian secondary school context, summative assessment is used but formative assessment is restricted to the textbook, so teachers need to consider the use of formative assessment and start using it in their classrooms as it represents an interesting way to develop students' learning outcomes. Finally, future research in the area can explore aspects which were not treated in the present work for further examination of formative assessment and its effect on learning in general. An important aspect which the present

General Conclusion

research could not examine thoroughly was self-assessment and peer assessment, future research works can focus on these two focal points which constitute one of the pillars of formative assessment. Research on this area can explore effective ways to use self-assessment and peer assessment in the classroom, or linking them with the current Algerian secondary school context which is characterized by crowded classrooms, i.e. how can peer-assessment and self-assessment be used in the Algerian secondary school classroom to engage pupils in their learning and, hence, assist the teacher to avoid behavioral problems?

Bibliography

Bibliography

Abedi, J. (2010). Research and recommendations for formative assessment with English language learners. In H. L. Andrade & G.J. Cizek (Eds.), *Handbook of formative assessment* (pp. 181-197). New York: Routledge.

Alderson, C. J. & Lukmani, Y. (1989). Cognition and reading: Cognitive levels as embodied in test questions. *Reading in a foreign Language*. 5 (2), 253-270.

Alderson, J. C. (1984). Reading in a foreign language: A reading problem or a language problem? In J. C. Alderson & A. H. Urquhart (Eds.). *Reading in a foreign language* (pp. 1-27). New York: Longman.

----- (2000). *Assessing reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

An, S. (2013). Schema theory in reading. *Theory and Practice in Language studies*. 3 (1), 130-134.

Anderson, N. (1999). *Exploring second language reading: Issues and Strategies*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.

Andrade, H. L. & Brooke, G. C. (2010). Self-Assessment and learning to write. In N. L. Mertens, *Writing: Processes, tools and techniques* (74-89). New York: Nova science publishers.

Andrade, H. L. (2010). Students as the definitive source of formative assessment. In H. L. Andrade & G.J. Cizek (Eds.), *Handbook of formative assessment* (pp. 90-105). New York: Routledge.

Archer, A. L. & Hughes, C. A. (2011). *Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching*. New York: Guilford Publications.

Bachman, L, F & Palmer, A, S. (1996). *Language testing in practice: designing and developing useful language tests*. Oxford: Oxford university press.

Bibliography

Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bagarić, V. & Djigunović, J. M. (2007). Defining communicative competence. *Metodika*. 8(1), 94-103.

Bennett, R. E. (2011). Formative assessment: a critical review. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy, & Practice*. 18 (1), 5-25.

Birenbaum, M. (1996). Assessment 2000: towards a pluralistic approach to assessment. In M. Birenbaum, & F. J. R. C. Dochy (eds.), *Alternatives in assessment of achievements, Learning processes and prior knowledge* (pp. 3-29). New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Black, P. & William, D (1998a). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education*. 5 (1), 7-74.

----- (1998b). Inside the black box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment. *Phi Delta Kappa*. 80 (2), 139-148.

Boston, C. (2002). The Concept of formative assessment. *Practical assessment, Research and Evaluation*, 8 (9), 1-9.

Boud, D. & Falchikov, N. (2007). Introduction: assessment for the long term. In D. Boud, & N. Falchikov (Eds.), *Rethinking assessment in higher education* (pp. 3-13). Routledge: Taylor and Francis group.

Boud, D. (1995). *Enhancing learning through self-assessment*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

Brew, A. (1999). Towards autonomous assessment: Using self-assessment and peer assessment. In S. Brown & A. Glasner (Eds.), *Assessment matters in higher education: Choosing and using diverse approaches* (pp. 159-171). Buckingham: Open University press.

Bibliography

Brookhart, S. M. (2008). *How to give effective feedback to your students*. USA: ASCD Publications.

Brown, D. H. (2000). *Teaching by principles: an interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). London: Longman.

------(2003). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. London: Longman.

Brutten, S. R. (1981). An analysis of student and teacher indications of vocabulary difficulty. *RELC Journal*. 12 (1), 66-71.

Campbell, D. T. & Stanley, J. C. (1963). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. USA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Canale, M & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied linguistics*, 1 (1), 1-47.

Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In J. C. Richards & R. W. Schmidt (Eds.). *Language and communication*. New York: Longman.

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Massachusset: MIT Press.

Cizek, G. J. (2010). An introduction to formative assessment: History, characteristics, and challenges. In H. L. Andrade & G.J. Cizek (Eds.), *Handbook of formative assessment* (pp. 3-17). New York: Routledge.

Cohen, L. Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2005). *Research methods in education* (5th Ed.). London: Routledge Falmer.

Crooks, T. J. (1988). The impact of classroom evaluation practices on students. *Review of Educational Research*. 58 (4), 438-481.

Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your coursebook*. Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann.

Bibliography

Denscombe, M. (2007). *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects* (3rd Ed.). England: McGraw hill Open University press.

Dörnyei, Z. (2003). *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration and processing*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

----- (2007). *Research methods in Applied linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Duke, N. K. & Pearson, D. (2002). Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. In Farstrup, A. E. & Samuels, S. (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (3rd Ed.) (pp. 205-220 to check 220). USA: International Reading Association.

Dunn, K. E., & Mulvenon, S. W. (2009). A critical review of research on formative assessment: The limited scientific evidence of the impact of formative assessment in education. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*. 14 (7), 1-11.

Eskey, D. E. (2005). Reading in a second language. In Hinkel, E (Ed.) *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp.563-579). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Falchikov, N. (2005). *Improving assessment through student involvement: Practical solutions for aiding learning in higher and further education*. New York: Routledge falmer.

Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2010). *Guided instruction: How to develop confident and successful learners*. USA: ASCD Publications.

Frey, N., & Fisher, D. (2011). *The formative assessment action plan: Practical steps to more successful teaching and learning*. USA: ASCD.

Gardner, D. (2000). Self-assessment for autonomous language learners. *Links and Letters*. 7, 49-60.

Bibliography

- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers.
- Gay, L. R. (1992). *Educational research (4th Ed.)*. New York: Merrill.
- George, J. & Cowan, J. (2016). *A handbook of techniques for formative evaluation: Mapping the student's learning experience*. New York: Routledge.
- Gibbs, G. (2006). Why assessment is changing. In C. Bryan, & K. Clegg (Eds.), *Innovative assessment in higher education* (pp. 11-36). New York: Routledge.
- Gipps, C. V. (1994). *Beyond testing: towards a theory of educational assessment*. London: Falmer press.
- Goodman, K. (1967). Reading: A psychological guessing game. *Journal of the Reading Specialists*. 6, 126-135.
- Grabe, W. & Stoller, F.L. (2013). *Teaching and researching reading (2nd Ed.)*. New York: Routledge.
- Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Graesser, A. C. (2007). An introduction to strategic reading comprehension. In McNamara, D. S. (Ed.), *Reading comprehension strategies: Theories, interventions, and technologies* (pp. 3-26). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Gray, M. J. (1987). Comprehension: process or product? *Reading Horizons*. 27 (2), 146-152.
- Greenstein, L. (2010). *What teachers really need to know about formative assessment*. USA: ASCD.
- Griffith, W. I. & Lim, H. (2014). Introduction to competency-based language teaching. *MEXTESOL journal*. 38 (2). 1-8.

Bibliography

Guthrie, J. T. Wigfield, A. Barbosa, P. Perencevich, K. C. Taboada, A. Davis, M. H. Scaffidi, N. T. & Tonks, S. (2004). Increasing reading comprehension and encouragement through concept-oriented reading instruction. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 96 (3), 403-423.

Guthrie, J. T. Wigfield, A. Humenick, N.M. Perencevich, K. C. Toboada, A. & Barbosa, P. (2006). Influences of stimulating tasks on reading motivation and comprehension. *The Journal of Educational Research*. 99 (4), 232-245.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching* (3rd Ed.). London: Longman.

----- (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). London: Longman Pearson.

Hattie, J. & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*. 77 (1), 81-112.

Heritage, M. (2007). Formative assessment: what do teachers need to know and do? Phi Delta Kappan. http://easlinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/Heritage_formative_assessment.pdf (08 June 2017).

Heritage, M., Kim, J., Vedlinski, T., & Herman, J. (2009). From evidence to action: A seamless process in formative assessment. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*. 28(3), 24-31.

Herman, J. L. & Baker, E. L. (2005). Making benchmark testing work. *Educational Leadership*. 63 (3), 48-54.

Herman, J. L., Osmundson, E., Ayala, C., Schneider, S., & Timms, M. (2006). *The nature and impact of teachers' formative assessment practices* (CSE Technical Report 703). Los Angeles: University of California, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

Bibliography

Hudson, T. (2007). *Teaching second language reading*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hymes, D. H. (1972). On communicative competence. in J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected readings* (pp. 269-293). Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Irons, A. (2008). *Enhancing learning through formative assessment*. New York: Routledge.

Johns, A. M. & Dudley-Evans, T. (1991). English for specific purposes: International in scope, specific in purpose. *TESOL Quarterly*. 25 (2), 297-314.

Juwah, Ch., Macfarlane-Dick, D., Matthew, B., Nicol, D., Ross, D., & Smith, B. (2004). *Enhancing student learning through effective formative feedback*. York: the Higher education Academy Generic Centre.

Kendeou, P. Broek, P, V. White, M. J. & Lynch, J. (2007). Comprehension in preschool and early elementary children: skill development and strategy interventions. In McNamara, D. S. (Ed.), *Reading comprehension strategies: Theories, interventions, and technologies* (pp. 27-45). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Khotari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd Ed.). New Delhi: New age international limited publishers.

Kintsch, W. & Van Dijk, T. A. (1978). Toward a model of text comprehension and production. *Psychological Review*. 85 (5), 363-394.

Koda, K. (2005). *Insights into second language reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge university Press.

Krashen, S. D. & Terrell, T. D. (1983). *The natural approach: language acquisition in the classroom*. London: Prentice Hall Europe.

Bibliography

Krashen, S. D. (2004). *The power of reading: Insights from the research* (2nd Ed.). Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Larkin, M. (2002). Using Scaffolded instruction to optimize learning. <file:///C:/Users/pc/Downloads/Suggestions/Larkin%20Using%20Scaffolded%20Instruction%20To%20Optimize%20Learning.html> (21 August 2017).

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (2nd Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lee, S. & Krashen, S. (2002). Predictors of success in writing in English as a foreign language: reading, revision behavior, apprehension, and writing. *College Student Journal*. 36 (4), 532-543.

Lems, K. Miller, L. D. & Soro, T. M. (2010). *Teaching reading to English language learners: Insights from linguistics*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Linderholm, T. & Broek, P. V. (2002). The effects of reading purpose and working memory capacity on the processing of expository text. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 94 (4), 778-784.

Mackey, A. & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: methodology and design*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Martella, M. N. E. & Martella, R. C. (2009). Explicit reading instruction: important features and findings. McGraw education. <http://ecommerce-prod.mheducation.com.s3.amazonaws.com/unitas/school/explore/sites/flex/flex-white-paper-explicit-reading-instruction.pdf> (15 August 2017).

McAlpine, M. (2002). *Principles of assessment*. CAA centre: university of Luton.

McDonough, J. & McDonough, S. (1997). *Research methods for English language teachers*. London: Hodder Arnold.

Bibliography

McKay, P. (2006). *Assessing young language learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McMillan, J. (2007). *Classroom assessment: principles and practice for effective standards-based instruction (4th ed.)*. Boston:Pearson.

McMillan, J. H. (2010). The practical implications of educational aims and contexts for formative assessment. In H. L. Andrade & G.J. Cizek (Eds.), *Handbook of formative assessment* (pp. 41-58). New York: Routledge.

Mikulecky, B. S. (2008). Teaching reading in a second language. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276247709_Identifying_Correlation_between_Reading_Strategies_Instruction_and_L2_Text_Comprehension (09 September 2016).

Miller, S. D. & Yochum, N. (1991). Asking students about the nature of the nature of their reading difficulties. *Journal of Reading Behavior*. XXIII (4), 465-485.

Mokhtari, K. & Reichard, C. (2002). Assessing students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 94 (2), 249-259.

Moore, D. & McCabe, D. (1993). *Introduction to the practice of statistics*. New York: Freeman.

Moss, C. M. & Brookhart, S. M. (2009). *Advancing formative assessment in every classroom: a guide for instructional leaders*. USA: ASCD Publications.

Muñoz, A. & Alvarez, M. E. (2007). Students' objectivity and perception of self-assessment in an EFL classroom. *The journal of Asia TEFL*. 4 (2), 1-25.

Nunan, D. (1991). *Language teaching methodology: A textbook for teachers*. Wiltshire: Prentice Hall International.

----- (1992). *Research methods in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

Bibliography

O'Farrell, C. (2009). Enhancing student learning through assessment. <http://www.avondale.edu.au/Departments/Learning-and-Teaching/Enhancing-Student-Learning-through-Assessment-A-Toolkit-Approach.pdf> (09 April 2015).

Oakhill, J. Cain, K. & Elbro, C. (2015). *Understanding and teaching reading comprehension: A handbook*. New York: Routledge.

Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). (2005). *Formative assessment: improving learning in secondary classrooms*. Paris: OECD.

----- (2012). *How does class size vary around the world?* <http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/EDIF%202012--N9%20FINAL.pdf> (21 August 2017).

Perkins, K. Brutten, S. R. & Pohlmann, J. T. (1991). The effect of second language proficiency on second language reading comprehension as measured by questions from different cognitive levels. *PER LINGUAM*. 7 (1), 49-57.

Popham, W. J. (2008). *Classroom assessment: What teachers need to know* (5th ed.). Boston: Prentice Hall.

Race, Ph. (2015). *The lecturer's toolkit: A practical guide to assessment, learning and teaching* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.

Ramaprasad, A. (1983). On the definition of feedback. *Behavioural Science*. 28 (1), 4-13.

Revell, R. & Sweeney, S. (1993). *In print: Reading Business English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rezaei, A. Rahimi, M. A. & Talepaskan, S. (2012). Exploring EFL learners reading comprehension problems in reading ESP texts. *Sino-US English Teaching*. 9 (3), 982-987.

Richards, J. C. & Schmidt, R. (2002). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics* (3rd Ed.). London: Longman.

Bibliography

Rivers, W. (1981). *Teaching foreign language skills* (2nd Ed.). USA: Chicago University Press.

Ruiz-Primo, M. A., & Furtak, E. M. (2004). *Informal formative assessment of students' understanding of scientific inquiry*. Los Angeles: National Center for research on evaluation, standards, and student Testing.

Rumelhart, D. E. (1980). Toward an interactive model of reading. In Dormic, S (Ed.), *Attention and Performance* (pp. 573-603). New York: Academic Press.

Sadler, D. R. (1989). Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems. *Instructional Science*. 18, 119-144.

Scriven, M. (1967). The methodology of evaluation. In R. W. Tyler, R. M. Gagne, & M. Scriven (Eds.), *Perspectives of curriculum evaluation* (pp. 39-83). Chicago: Rand-McNally.

Serafini, F. (2000). Three paradigms of assessment: measurement, procedure, and inquiry. *The Reading Teacher*, 54 (4), 384-393.

Shepard, L. A. (2000). The role of assessment in a learning culture. *Educational Researcher*, 29(7), 4–14.

Simmons, J. (2003). Responders are taught, not born. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*. 46 (8), 684-693.

Siniscalco, M. T. & Auriat, N. (2005). *Questionnaire design: Quantitative research methods in educational planning*. Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.

Spiller, D. (2009). *Assessment matters: Self-assessment and peer assessment*. New Zealand: Waikato university.

Bibliography

Thompson, I. (2009). Scaffolding in the writing center: A microanalysis of an experienced tutor's verbal and nonverbal tutoring strategies. *Written Communication*, 26 (4), 417-453.

Topping, K. J. (2010). Peers as a source of formative assessment. In H. L. Andrade & G.J. Cizek (Eds.), *Handbook of formative assessment* (pp. 61-74). New York: Routledge.

Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Urquhart, S. & Weir, C. (1998). *Reading in a foreign language: process, product and practice*. New York: Longman.

William, D. & Thompson, M. (2007). Integrating assessment with instruction: What will it take to make it work? In C. A. Dwyer (Ed.), *The future of assessment: Shaping teaching and learning* (pp. 53-82). Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum Associates.

William, D. (2010) An integrative summary of the research literature and implications for a new theory of formative assessment. In H. L. Andrade & G.J. Cizek (Eds.), *Handbook of formative assessment* (pp. 18-40). New York: Routledge.

----- (2013). Assessment: The bridge between teaching and learning. *Voices from the Middle*, 21 (2), 15-20.

William, D., Lee, C., Harrison, C., & Black, P. (2004). Teachers developing assessment for learning: Impact on student achievement. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 11 (1), 49-65.

Zwiers, J. (2008). *Building academic language: Essential practices for content classrooms*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bibliography

Official Documents

- Document d'accompagnement 3 AS, 2011. Ministry of Education.
- National Committee of Syllabi, 2009. Ministry of Education.
- *New Prospects*. (2017). Pupils' textbook, third year secondary school. Algiers. The national Authority for School Publications.
- *New Prospects*. (2013). Teacher's book, third year secondary school. The national Authority for School publications.
- Programme d'Anglais 3 AS, 2006. Ministry of Education.
- The Baccalaureat exam guide: English, 2016. Ministry of Education.

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: Pupils' Pre-intervention Questionnaire

Dear pupils,

You are kindly requested to answer the following questionnaire related to your difficulties in text comprehension.

Age:

Gender:

1. Do you like your English course?

Yes no

- Why?
-

Rubric one: Difficulties

2. Do you face difficulties in understanding the English course?

Yes no

- Why?
-
-
-

3. Do you face difficulties in your English exam?

Yes no

- If yes, to which rubric are these difficulties related (you can tick more than one answer):

Text comprehension:

- True or false section
 - Questions related to the text
 - Synonyms and antonyms
 - Other, specify
-

Appendices

Text exploration:

- Grammar
- Phonetics
- Complete the table
- Reorder the sentences
- Other, specify:

.....

Written production

4. Do you face difficulties in understanding English texts?

Yes

no

5. If yes, what kind of difficulties do you face?

✓ Vocabulary (you don't know the words)

✓ Grammatical structures found in the text

✓ You don't know how to pronounce words

✓ You don't distinguish the different discourse genres

✓ You don't understand cultural items in the text

✓ you don't have enough knowledge about the topic of the text

✓ you understand words, but you don't understand the text as a whole

✓ All of them

✓ Other, specify

.....

6. Do you think that text comprehension helps you in doing well in your exam?

Yes

no

Appendices

Rubric two: Sources of difficulties

7. Do you think that reading is an important skill?

Yes no

- Why?

.....
.....

8. Do you think that reading in English is a difficult skill?

Yes no

- Please justify your answer:

.....
.....

9. How often do you practice reading in the class?

Always often sometimes never

10. Is the time given to reading in the classroom sufficient to improve your reading skill?

Yes no

11. Does your teacher assess your reading comprehension?

Yes no

12. How the teacher helps you to comprehend the text?

.....
.....
.....
.....

13. On what point the teacher focuses more? (circle the answer)

Questions related to the text true/false synonyms grammar All

Other:

Appendices

14. Do you like reading in front of your classmates?

Yes No

- If no, why?

.....

15. Do you read English texts outside the classroom?

Yes no

Rubric three: Strategies

Below are statements related to strategies used by EFL readers when they read academic materials. Five numbers follow each statement (1, 2, 3, 4, 5):

- 1 means “I never or almost never do this”
- 2 means “I do this only occasionally”
- 3 means “I sometimes do this” (50% of time)
- 4 means “I usually do this”
- 5 means “I always or almost always do this”

After reading each statement, circle the number that applies to you.

	Strategies	Scale				
		never	occasionally	sometimes	usually	always
GLOB	a) I have a purpose in mind when I read					
SUP	b) I take notes while reading to help me understand what I'm reading					
GLOB	c) I think about what I know to help me understand what I'm reading					
GLOB	d) I preview the text to see what it's about before reading it					
SUP	e) When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to					

Appendices

	help me understand what I'm reading					
SUP	f) I write summaries to reflect on key ideas in the text.					
PROB	g) I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading.					
GLOB	h) I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization.					
SUP	i) I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.					
PROB	j) I adjust my reading speed according to what I'm reading.					
GLOB	k) I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.					
PROB	l) When text becomes difficult, I begin to pay closer attention to what I'm reading.					
PROB	m) I stop from time to time to think about what I'm reading.					
GLOB	n) I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading.					
SUP	o) I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I'm reading.					
PROB	p) I try to picture or visualize information to help me remember what I'm reading.					
GLOB	q) I use typographical aids like boldface type and					

Appendices

	italics to identify key information.					
GLOB	r) I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.					
SUP	s) I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.					
GLOB	t) I check my understanding when I come across conflicting information.					
GLOB	u) I try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.					

Rubric four: Suggestions

16. What suggestions can you make to improve your text comprehension?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendices

Appendix B: Teacher's Interview

The following interview aims at investigating the pupils' difficulties in exams and mainly in text comprehension, in addition to the role of formative assessment.

- How long have you been teaching?
- What degree do you hold?

Rubric one: difficulties:

1. How do you evaluate your pupils' proficiency level?

High proficient proficient low proficient

2. Do your pupils face difficulties in exams?

Yes no

- If yes, to which rubric are these difficulties related:

Text comprehension:

- True or false section
- Questions related to the text
- Synonyms and antonyms
- Other, specify

Text exploration:

- Grammar
- Phonetics
- Complete the table
- Reorder the sentences
- Other, specify:

Written production

3. According to you, why do pupils face difficulties in the previous rubrics?

Appendices

Rubric two: Reading

4. How often do you practice reading in the classroom?

Always often sometimes never

5. Is the time given to reading in the classroom sufficient to develop pupils' reading skill?

Yes no

6. How do you proceed in a reading comprehension session?

7. How do you help your pupils understand the text?

8. Do you encourage your pupils to read outside the classroom?

Yes no

- Why?

9. Do your pupils use strategies when they read texts?

Yes no

10. Do you teach them how to use strategies when they read?

Yes no

- How:

If no, Why?

Class size Lack of time other:

11. Do you assess your pupils' reading skill?

Yes no

- If yes, how often?

Always often sometimes

12. How do you assess them?

Appendices

Section three: Formative assessment

Formative assessment is an ongoing assessment which is not necessarily based on marks but rather on feedback as a way to diagnose students' problems, assist them and develop their outcomes.

13. What do you think about formative assessment?

Useful

Useless

14. Do you use it in your classroom?

Yes

no

- If yes, how often?

Always

Often

Sometimes

- What form does it take/ How?
- If no, why?

Class size

lack of time

other

15. What role do you perform in formative assessment?

Prompter

feedback provider

Evaluator

other

- How?

16. Do you see any improvements in your pupils' outcomes when implementing formative assessment?

Yes

no

- Please justify:

17. What are the major hindrances that face you when you implement formative assessment in your classroom?

Appendices

Appendix C: Pretest

PART ONE: READING

A/ comprehension (7pts)

Read the text carefully then do the activities.

In Britain there are a number of different kinds of Higher Education. First of all, of course, there are universities. Can have failed to have heard of Oxford and Cambridge, the two oldest universities in England, but, of course, there are a number of other universities, many of which have opened since the war. The latest of these is the Open University, a unique institution, which, as its name suggests, is open to all. Students of the Open University are not obliged to have any previous qualifications. All the students are part-time and are taught through the medium of television and radio, although they do receive some personal tuition as well through centers located near their own homes. The first graduates were awarded their degrees in 1973.

Besides the universities, there are other institutions such as Polytechnics and technical colleges. These tend to offer courses of a vocational nature as well as academic courses. If a student wants to study management, accounting or librarianship, for example, he would be more likely to go to one of these institutions.

The vast majority of students receive grants from their local Authority, which cover tuition fees and allow a certain amount of money to the students to pay their keep and their books. Most of the colleges and universities have a good proportion of students from overseas.

1. Choose the best answer

The text is: a. descriptive b. argumentative c. Narrative

2. Are these statements True or False

- a. All British universities are more recent than Oxford and Cambridge.
- b. Qualifications are required to enter the Open University.
- c. Higher Education in Britain is free of charge.
- d. The majority of colleges and universities in Britain accept foreign students.

3. Answer the following questions according to the text

- a. Give two reasons which make of the Open University a unique institution.
- b. Are students at the Open University compelled to attend full-time lectures? Justify by quoting from the text.
- c. Who attends Polytechnic and Technical colleges?

4. In which paragraph is it mentioned that students are helped to finance their studies?

5. Who or what do the underlined words refer to?

- a. Its (§) b. their (§1) c. these (§2) d. which (§3)
- 6. Give a title to the text**

Appendices

B. Text Exploration (7pts)

1. Match the words with their definitions.

Words	Definitions
1. Degrees	a. money given by a government to help students.
2. Grants	b. connected with skills, knowledge.
3. vocational	c. given by official decision as a prize.
4. awarded	d. grades given by a university to someone who has passed an examination

2. Complete the chart as shown in the example.

Verb	Noun	adjective
to educate	Education	Educational
.....	qualification	.....
.....	.....	Specialized
To respect	.....	.....

3. Combine the pair of sentences with the connectors provided.

Provided that - Although – such.....that - whereas

1. a. In America education is considered to be the responsibility of each state. Great Britain has a national educational system.

b.

2. a. Many students receive grants. They still have financial problems.

b.

2. a. Reading is an important skill. Students ought to master it at an early age.

b.

4. Classify the following words according to the pronunciation of their final “s”

Colleges – qualifications – students – courses – suggests-kinds

/S/	/Z/	/ɪZ/

5. Reorder the following sentences to make a coherent paragraph

a. and then take special national examination

b. in order to be accepted to a university.

c. during the last two years of high school,

d. the students specialize in college preparatory courses

Appendices

PART TWO: WRITTEN EXPRESSION (6pts)

Choose ONE of the following topics

Topic one: using the following notes, write a composition of 120 to 150 words on:

- Lack of discipline/ violence
- Overcrowded classes/ students not motivated
- Impact of social media/ use of cell phone
- Rehabilitate the value of teaching
- Education shapes the future of generations

Topic two: write a composition of about 120 to 150 words on education in Algeria

Appendices

Appendix D: Tests (The Intervention)

Test Number One

Part One: Reading comprehension. (07 pts)

Read the text carefully then do the activities

The biomedical sciences of the Arabic-Islamic world underwent remarkable development during the 8th to 13th centuries AD., a flowering of knowledge and intellect that later spread throughout Europe and greatly influenced both medical practice and education.

The scientific glory of the Arabic nation originated on the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century C.E., where the preaching of the prophet Mohammed united the Arab tribes and inaugurated the Muslim religion. The Islamic state was formed in 622 AD., when the Prophet moved from Mecca to Medina.

Within a century after his death (632 AD.) a large part of the planet, from southern Europe throughout North Africa to Central Asia and on to India, was controlled by and/or influenced by the new Arabic-Muslim Empire. In 711 AD., Arab Muslims invaded southern Spain and a center of flourishing civilization (al-Andalus) was created. Another center emerged in Baghdad from the Abbasids, who ruled part of the Islamic world during a historic period later characterized as the "Golden Age" (~750 to 1258 AD.).

Actually, many of the achievements of the Islamic-Arabic Golden Age were based on previous initiatives taken by the ancient Egyptians, Hebrews, Persians, Greeks, and Romans. Therefore, translators were invited to Baghdad, where scientists and researchers studied the past and created the future. The result of their work was impressive progress in all sectors of science.

The rulers of Islamic Spain, in an attempt to surpass Baghdad, recruited scholars who made contributions of paramount importance to science, medicine, technology, philosophy, and art.

1. Choose the general idea of the text.

- a) Muslims in Baghdad. b) Islam in Andalusia c) origins of Muslim science

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

- a) The first Muslim state was created in the 7 century.
b) The first period of Islam was called "Golden Age".
c) The Greek and the Roman science have taken from Muslims.

3. In which paragraph is it mentioned that there was a competition between Muslims of the west and those of the east?

Appendices

6. Fill in the gaps with words from the list.

Spartans - time - army - obedience - emphasized – girls

Ancient Sparta gave such a big importance to its that all the boys were brought up in a way that their physical fitness, courage and Only very little was devoted to leisure or family life

Appendices

Test Number Three

A-Comprehension: (07 points)

Read the text carefully and do the activities.

All over the world, smoking in school is not isolated from what goes on in the streets and in the media. It is affected by advertising, smoking in public places and characters smoking on TV. All these are factors which show it as an acceptable part of our world. Children see parents, friends, teachers and many people doing it. So, this perception is carried into the classroom with them.

The first cigarette is easily taken in a moment of pressure from friends, or classmates. Nobody likes to be bullied, ignored or to be the odd one out. Therefore, if you are offered something, it is better to go with the flow than to say no. Though smoking is, on the surface, kept as a secret at school, it is in reality the worst kept secret at all. Clothes and body smell, hideaways are littered with cigarette-ends, toilets bear testimony with burn marks and pupils are late for lessons.

Teachers often don't know how to tackle the problem by themselves. Currently, many of them are stressed and say that time to address issues like smoking is not available. However, an anti-smoking education is an initiative **which** needs to be acted on by the whole school staff. Some schools have strict regulations which prevent and punish smokers, but never see the light of day. That's why what should be fostered and preached is a clear assumption that smoking is a real threat to pupils' health and schooling.

Jenny Jacobs. Ray. Soc. Health-February 1993 (Adapted)

1- Are these statements true or false?

- a- Imitation is the major cause that makes pupils smoke.
- b- Smoking can be kept secret.
- c- It has no harm on pupils' schooling.
- d- Anti-smoking regulations must be applied in schools.

2- Put the following sentences in the order they appear in the text.

- a- Friends' pressure is the principal factor of smoking in schools.
- b- Pupils need adults' advice and guidance to avoid smoking.
- c- Smoking cannot be hidden.
- d- Media incites adolescents to smoke.

1= 2= 3= 4=

3-Answer the following questions according to the text.

- a- Why do school boys and girls smoke?

Appendices

b- What should be done to limit smoking in schools?

4- Circle the letter that corresponds to the right answer.

The text is a:

a- letter

b- magazine article

c- survey

5-Who or what do the underlined words refer to in the text?

a- Them(\$1)=

b- it (\$2)=

c- which (\$3)=

6- Give a title to the text.

B-Text Exploration (07 points)

1-Find in the text words or phrases that are closest in meaning to the following:

a- separated(\$1)=

b- different(\$2)=

c- encouraged(\$3)=

d- menace(\$3)=

2- Give the opposites of the following words keeping the same root.

legal≠

acceptable≠

effective ≠

hopeful≠

3- Rewrite sentence (b) so that it means the same as sentence (a).

1- **a-** Governments should interfere to ban bad practices in schools.

b- It's high time.....

2- **a-** If strict measures are not taken, the educational system will deteriorate.

b- Unless

3- **a-** I have a strong desire that all governments will ban cigarettes production.

b- I wish

4- Ask the questions which the underlined words answer.

a- The headmaster is determined to ban cigarettes smoking in his school.

b- Some teachers throw cigarette ends on the class floor.

5-Classify the words according to the number of their syllables.

Schooling - policy - affected – smoke

one syllable	two syllables	three syllables

6- Re-order the following sentences to make a coherent paragraph.

a- more and more school boys and school girls smoke

b- Smoking has spread among students at an alarming rate.

c- because they imitate adults and T.V stars and want to prove their freedom.

d- In spite of its dangerous effects on health,

Appendices

Test Number Four

Part One: Reading (14 points)

- *Read the text carefully then do the activities.*

The battle of Granada was a siege of the city of Granada fought over a period of months leading up to its surrender on January 2nd, 1492. **The city** was captured by the combined forces of Aragon and Castile (recently united as Spain) from the armies of the *taifa* Muslim kingdom of Granada. Granada's forces were led by Sultan Boabdil. This relatively small campaign was of momentous consequences as Granada was the last outpost of the Moorish rule in Spain and its fall brought to an end 780 years of Muslim control in the Spanish peninsula.

Granada contains the beautiful Alhambra palace, a gem of Islamic architecture, the loss of which is mourned in the Muslim world. The fall of Granada marked the final act in the Reconquista, the campaign by the medieval Christian states of Spain to drive out the Moors. It was followed by the expulsion of the Jews and Muslims from Spain, although **some** remained by converting to Christianity. Among these, some remained secretly Muslim or Jewish (known as Moriscos and Morranos). Many, however genuine their conversion, were subject to the suspicions and interrogations of the Spanish Inquisition. In 1609, descendants of converts were also expelled.

A society that had often seen Muslims, Jews, and Christians interacting positively had ended. The fall of Granada was a factor in the Spanish and Portuguese drive to acquire overseas colonies, influencing their attitude of superiority towards the cultures and religions they encountered in the New World, for **which** Christopher Columbus set sail later in the year of Granada's defeat. Rediscovery of the richness and positive cultural exchange of the Moorish Spain before 1492, known in Spanish as *convivencia*, may provide clues on how contemporary multi-cultural societies can deal with the challenges of pluralism and of peaceful co-existence.

From *New World Encyclopedia*

A / Comprehension (07 points)

1. Give the general idea of the text.

2. Are these statements true or false? Write T or F next to the letter corresponding to the statement

- a) Granada was seized after many months of siege.
- b) The Alhambra Palace meant a lot for the Muslim world.
- c) The fall of Granada was considered as the beginning of the Requonsista.
- d) Muslims, Jews and Christians used to live in harmony together.

3. Put the following sentences in the order they appear in the text.

- a) The Muslim rule over Spain lasted for about eight centuries.
- b) The Spanish acquired many colonies after the fall of Granada.

Appendices

Defeated – captured – marked – remained.

/d/	/id/	/t/

6. Fill in the gaps with words from the list.

Declined – colonization – conquered – rulers – defeat – beginning.

The advent of the wider use of gunpowder helped the expansion of the new Muslim power. They had quite liberal and tolerant ushering an era of conquest, expansion and great civilizations. By the of the 18th century these great empires..... The European of the Muslim lands started in the mid 18th century.

Appendices

Test Number Five

Part One: Reading (14pts)

- *Read the text carefully then do the activities.*

More than half of teenagers say they have cheated on a test during the last year — and **34 percent** have done it more than twice — according to a survey of 40,000 U.S. high school students released in February by the nonprofit Josephson Institute of Ethics. The survey also found that one in three students admitted they used the Internet to plagiarize an assignment.

Some research suggests that academic cheating may be associated with dishonesty later in life. In a 2007 survey of 154 college students, Southern Illinois University researchers found that students who plagiarized in college reported that they viewed themselves as more likely to break rules in the workplace, cheat on spouses and engage in illegal activities.

A 2009 survey, also by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, reports a further correlation: People who cheat on exams in high school are three times more likely to lie to a customer or inflate an insurance claim compared with those who never cheated. High school cheaters are also twice as likely to lie to or deceive **their** boss and one-and-a-half times more likely to lie to a significant other or cheat on their taxes. Dishonest behaviours such as cheating actually alter a person's sense of right and wrong, so after cheating once, some students stop viewing the behavior as immoral.

Academic cheating, therefore, is not just an academic problem, and curbing **this** behavior is something that academic institutions are beginning to tackle head-on everywhere in the world.

A) Text Comprehension: (07 Points)

- 1. Give the general idea of the text.**
- 2. Are the following statements true or false? Write T or F next to the letter corresponding to the statement.**
 - a) According to Josephson Institution survey, most of students use the internet for plagiarism.
 - b) Cheating builds bad habits and immoral behavior.
 - c) Students who used to cheat view it as more ethical.
 - d) Academic institutions are so much concerned with the issue of cheating.
- 3. In which paragraph is it mentioned that ‘the more students cheat and plagiarize the more they see it more ethical.’?**
- 4. Answer the following questions according to the text.**
 - a) What are the findings of Josephson Institute?
 - b) What are the effects of cheating?

Appendices

c) Is cheating an academic issue?

5. What/who do the underlined words refer to in the text?

34 percent (§1)

their (§2)

this (§3)

B) Text Exploration: (7points)

1. Find in the text words that are opposites to the following.

a) Low (§ 1) (b Denied (§1) c) To tell the truth (§3) d) Encouraging (§4)

2. Complete the following chart as shown in the example:

Noun	Verb	Adjective
education	To educate	educational
Tolerance	.....	.....
.....	To express	.....
.....	.....	permissive

3. Connect each pair of sentences with one of the words given. Make changes where necessary.

(Though) - (unless) - (while) - (so....that)

a-Some teachers believe that their job has become impossible. Something is done to restore discipline in classrooms.

b- Comprehensive schools take children of all abilities. Grammar schools are selective.

c- Parents have a little to pay. They always complain.

4. Rewrite sentence (b) so that it means the same as (a).

1/ a) He didn't work seriously, consequently he failed in his exam.

b) I wish

2/ a) The problem can be solved if there is a better cooperation between the schools and the parents.

b) Unless

5. Classify the following words according to the stressed syllable.

teenager – dishonesty – correlation – released.

1 st syllable	2 nd syllable	3 rd syllable

6. Imagine what “B” says and complete the dialogue:

A: Do you like the classroom atmosphere?

Appendices

B:

A: Can you tell why?

B:

A: Do you think the teacher`s presence is necessary? Why?

B:

A: What should one do to succeed?

B:

Appendices

Appendix E: Posttest

PART ONE: READING (14 points)

A/ Comprehension (07 points)

Read the text carefully then do the activities.

The text:

South Africa has 12 million learners, 366.000 teachers and about 28.000 schools including 1.000 private schools. School life spans 13 years or grades – although the first year of education, grade 0 or “reception year” and the last three years (grade 10, 11 and grade 12 or “matric”) are not compulsory.

The educational system is characterized by diversity: schools and universities vary greatly in terms of quality, financial resources and size. Top quality schools and universities are to be found in both the state and the private education sector.

Most state schools are aided to some extent by the government that provides the minimum, and parents contribute to basics and extras in the form of school fees. Private colleges and universities are a more recent phenomenon in the country unlike private schools which have existed for centuries.

For universities entrance, a matric “endorsement” is required. The sector is vibrant with more than a million students, 21 public universities, 15 technikons and many colleges. All the universities and technikons are autonomous.

Education gets a big budget compared with most other countries. However, more money is always needed to address the backlogs left by 40 years of apartheid education, where money was pumped into white education at the expenses of black schools in the townships and rural areas.

The backlogs are immense: illiteracy rates are high, teachers in township schools are poorly trained and the matric pass rate remains low.

Redressing the resource imbalance, rebuilding the educational environment and retraining teachers is a slow and difficult process, but significant improvements have been made up to now. Orange-netcome

1. Choose the best answer:

The text is: Narrative Expository descriptive

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

- a) Private schools are a recent phenomenon in S. Africa.
- b) Universities are dependent on the government.
- c) Literacy degrees are low among blacks.

Appendices

3. Answer the following questions according to the text.

- What is meant by “reception year”?
- In what way schools and universities are different in S. Africa?
- What is the difference between private colleges and private schools?

4. In which paragraph is it mentioned that high school in S. Africa is not obligatory.

5. What or who do the underlined words refer to.

- ...both... (§2)=
- ...which... (§3)=

6. Give the general idea of the text

- Illiteracy in South Africa.
- S. African educational system.
- Public & private schools in S. Africa

B/ Text Exploration (7pts)

1. Find in the text words or phrases close in meaning to the following:

- Independent (§4) =
- huge (§6) =
- Important (§7) =

2. Complete the following table as shown in the example.

Verb	Noun	Adjective
Example: educate	Education	educative
contribute	.....	.....
.....	improvement	.....
.....	.....	trained

3. Complete sentence (b) so that it means the same as sentence (a).

- State schools are aided by the government.
 - The government.....
- I didn't revise well, I regret it now.
 - I wish.....

4. Classify the following words according to the pronunciation of the final “ed”.

Passed – aided – required – pumped - trained - existed

/d/	/id/	/t/

5. Re-order the following sentences to get a coherent paragraph.

- The first were living in poor conditions,
- But this situation changed nowadays.
- Whereas the second were rich and powerful,
- South Africa was divided into blacks and whites.

Appendices

PART TWO: WRITTEN EXPRESSION (6pts)

Choose ONE topic only:

Topic1: The number of children failing at school is increasing at an alarming rate. Using the following notes, write a composition of about 80 to 100 words stating the main consequences of school failure. Suggest two solutions to the problem.

- no future prospect
- increase of unemployment
- child labour
- illegal immigration to European countries

Topic 2: Some people argue that to study past civilizations are useless and we had better think of the future.

Do you agree or disagree with them? Write a composition of about 80 to 100 words stating your point of view and four arguments to defend it.

Appendices

Appendix F: Pupils' Post-intervention Questionnaire

Dear pupils

You are kindly requested to answer the following questionnaire concerning the intervention you have received.

Rubric one: Pupils' attitudes:

1. Are you satisfied with the course you have received?

Yes Somehow No

2. To what extent was this course helpful?

Very helpful Helpful not helpful

How?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. What did you like most about the course?

.....
.....

4. What you dislike about the course?

.....
.....

Rubric two: Students' difficulties:

5. Does the course help you to overcome your difficulties in the English exam?

Yes No

- If yes, in what rubric does it help you?

Text comprehension:

- True or false section
- Questions related to the text

Appendices

- Synonyms and antonyms
- Other, specify

.....

Text exploration:

- Grammar
- Phonetics
- Complete the table
- Reorder the sentences
- Other, specify:

.....

6. Does the course help you to overcome your difficulties on text comprehension?

Yes no

If yes, does it help you in:

- ✓ Vocabulary (you don't know the words)
- ✓ Grammatical structures found in the text
- ✓ Knowing how to pronounce words
- ✓ Distinguishing the different discourse genres
- ✓ Understanding cultural items in the text
- ✓ Having enough knowledge about the topic of the text
- ✓ Understand words separately and the text as a whole
- ✓ All of them
- ✓ Other, specify

Appendices

Rubric three: Pupils' strategies

7. Have you learned any strategies after the course?

Yes

No

If yes, which ones (you can tick more than one):

1. I have a purpose in mind when I read
2. I take notes while reading to help me understand what I'm reading
3. I think about what I know to help me understand what I'm reading
4. I preview the text to see what it's about before reading it
5. When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I'm reading.
6. I write summaries to reflect on key ideas in the text.
7. I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading.
8. I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization.
9. I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.
10. I adjust my reading speed according to what I'm reading.
11. I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.
12. When text becomes difficult, I begin to pay closer attention to what I'm reading.
13. I stop from time to time to think about what I'm reading.
14. I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading.
15. I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I'm reading.
16. I try to picture or visualize information to help me remember what I'm reading.
17. I use typographical aids like boldface type and italics to identify key information.
18. I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.
19. I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.
20. I check my understanding when I come across conflicting information.
21. I try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendices

Appendix G: Pupils' post-intervention questionnaire: Arabic version

استبيان التلاميذ

أعزائي التلاميذ، أرجو منكم الإجابة على الاستبيان التالي و الخاص بالحصص التي أخذتموها في الإنجليزية:

1. هل أنت راض بالحصص التي أخذتها؟

نعم قليلا لا

2. إلى أي درجة كانت هذه الحصص مفيدة؟

مفيدة جدا مفيدة ليست مفيدة

كيف:

.....
.....

3. ما الذي أعجبك فيها؟

.....
.....

4. ما الذي لم يعجبك فيها؟

.....
.....

5. هل ساعدتك هذه الحصص على التغلب على صعوباتك في اختبار اللغة الإنجليزية؟

نعم لا

إذا أجبت بنعم، هل ساعدتك في:

- True or false section
- Questions related to the text
- Synonyms and antonyms
- Other, specify

Text exploration:

- Grammar
- Phonetics (final's', syllables...)

Appendices

- Complete the table
- Reorder the sentences
- Other, specify:

6. هل ساعدتك الحصص على التغلب على صعوباتك فيما يخص فهم النص؟

نعم لا

إذا أجبت بنعم، هل ساعدتك في:

- معرفة كلمات جديدة في الإنجليزية
- فهم الصيغ النحوية الموجودة في النص (القواعد الإنجليزية)
- معرفة كيفية نطق الكلمات
- معرفة أنواع النصوص في الإنجليزية (descriptive, narrative...)
- تحديد الكلمات الدالة على محتوى ثقافي في النص
- اكتساب معرفة فيما يخص موضوع النص
- فهم النص ككل و ليس فقط بعض الكلمات
- أشياء أخرى

7. هل تعلمت بعض تقنيات قراءة النص بعد الحصص التي أخذتها؟

نعم لا

- إذا أجبت بنعم، ما هي هذه التقنيات (بإمكانك اختيار أكثر من إجابة واحدة):

1. يكون لدي هدف عند قراءة النص
2. أخذ بعض النقاط خلال القراءة كي تساعدني على الفهم أكثر
3. أفكر في الأشياء التي أعرفها فيما يخص موضوع النص كي تساعدني على الفهم أكثر
4. ألقى نظرة خاطفة على النص لمعرفة محتواه
5. عندما أحس أن النص صعب أقرأ بصوت مرتفع لكي أفهم أكثر
6. أكتب الأفكار الفرعية لكل فقرة لكي أفهم أكثر
7. أقرأ ببطء وتمعن لكي أفهم النص أكثر
8. ألقى نظرة على النص لمعرفة عدد فقراته و طريقة تنظيمه
9. أسطر الكلمات المفتاحية في النص
10. أغير طريقتي في القراءة على حسب الجزء الذي أقرأه (مهم، غير مهم...)
11. أخطط مسبقاً للأشياء التي أقرأها بتمعن و الأشياء التي لا أبدى اهتماماً في النص
12. عندما يصبح النص صعباً، أبدأ بالتمعن في الأشياء التي أقرأها

Appendices

13. أوقف القراءة كل مرة لكي أفكر مليا في النقاط التي قرأتها
14. أستعمل الكلمات المكررة في النص كسند لفهمه جيدا
15. أصيغ الأفكار الموجودة في النص بطريقتي الخاصة من أجل فهم النص أكثر
16. أحاول تذكر الدرس لكي أفهم النص أكثر
17. أستعمل الكلمات المكتوبة بخط عريض أو مائل في النص ككلمات مفتاحية لفهم النص أكثر
18. أحاول مناقشة الأفكار الموجودة في النص بطريقة جدلية لكي أفهم أكثر
19. أحاول ربط الأفكار الموجودة في النص من خلال القراءة مرارا و تكرارا
20. أتحقق من فهمي للنص عندما أصادف معلومة جديدة أو متناقضة
21. أحاول فهم الكلمات الغير مفهومة الموجودة في النص من خلال التخمين

شكرا جزيلاً على المساعدة و بالتوفيق في البكالوريا

ملخص

إن الدور الذي يقوم به التقويم التكويني في رفع مردود التلاميذ معترف به في العديد من المجالات، كما يعتبر من أنجع الطرق لتطوير مهارات التلاميذ التعليمية و رفع مستواهم. و عليه تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على تأثير التقويم التكويني على تلاميذ الأقسام الثانوية فيما يخص فهم النص (قسم الثالثة ثانوي لغات الأجنبية نموذجاً) من خلال دراسة شبه تجريبية. أوردت نتائج تحليل وسائل جمع المعلومات المختلفة (استبيان التلاميذ، حوار الأساتذة و الاختبارات) أن التقويم التكويني له دور فعال في تطوير مهارات تلاميذ الثانوي فيما يخص فهم النص خاصة ما يتعلق بالمهارات اللغوية الأربعة خاصة المهارة النحوية و الصرفية. على أساس هاته النتائج، بعض المقترحات أعطيت من أجل الاستخدام الأمثل لممارسات التقويم التكويني في الأقسام الجزائرية، إضافة إلى بعض الاقتراحات مرتبطة بفهم النص.

الكلمات المفتاحية : التقويم التكويني، فهم النص، المهارات اللغوية الأربعة، الأقسام الثانوية.

Summary

The role of formative assessment in improving students' outcomes has been acknowledged in many contexts; it is regarded among the best ways to develop students' learning competences and raise their level. Accordingly, the present work attempted to highlight its effects on Algerian secondary school pupils' text comprehension (third year foreign languages) on the basis of a quasi experimental research design. The analysis of the different research instruments (pupils' questionnaires, teachers' interview, and tests) revealed that formative assessment has a focal role in developing the Algerian pupils' text comprehension through focusing on the major language competences mainly the grammatical competence. On the basis of these research findings, some recommendations were proposed for an effective use of formative assessment practices in the Algerian classroom, in addition to other suggestions related to text comprehension.

Key words: formative assessment, text comprehension, four language competences, Secondary school classroom.

Résumé :

Le rôle de l'évaluation formative dans la croissance du rendement des élèves est reconnu dans divers domaines ; elle représente aussi un moyen très efficace dans le développement des compétences pédagogiques des apprenants. Pour cela nous nous sommes penchés sur l'étude de l'impact de l'évaluation formative sur des élèves de classes secondaires (troisième année langues étrangères) en termes de compréhension du texte. A partir d'une étude expérimentale nous avons recueilli différents résultats et analyses (questionnaire des étudiants, interview des enseignantes, et les tests) qui ont démontré que l'évaluation formative joue un rôle crucial dans le développement des « quatre compétences » du langage chez les élèves de seconde classe on ce qui comporte la compréhension du texte, plus précisément la compétence grammaticale. En dépit de ces résultats quelques recommandations ont été faites afin de bien conceptualiser l'évaluation formative dans des classes Algériennes en plus de quelques suggestions en relation avec la compréhension du texte.

Mots clé : L'évaluation formative, compréhension du texte, les quatre compétences du langage, classes secondaires.