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INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF EFL IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN ALGERIA

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This Dissertation
is dedicated
to my Children,
and to EFL learners.

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Ali. BAICHE
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ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTATIONAL CONVENTIONS

1 AM	1st Middle-School Year
4 AM	4th Middle-School Year
1 AS	1st Secondary-School Year
3 AS	3rd Secondary-School Year
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CBA	Competency-Based Approach
CEG	Collège d' Enseignement Géneral
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ENS	Ecole Normale Supérieure
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
FLES	Foreign Languages in the Elementary School
FLT	Foreign Language Teaching
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
ITE	Institut de Téchnologie de L' Education
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LAD	Language Acquisition Device
LMD	Licence-Master-Doctorat
PPP	Production, Practice, Presentation
SE 1	Secondary Education, Year One
SE 2	Secondary Education, Year Two
SE 3	Secondary Education, Year Three
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Others :

- In the quotes, and unless stated otherwise, the underlining renders my own emphasis.

ABSTRACT

The issues raised in this dissertation at length below constitute the field of inquiry into innovation and change in English language teaching (ELT) in secondary education in Algeria. Many teaching programmes, materials and methodologies have been the subject of criticism and abandoned. The main question, however, in this research work is why 'innovation and change' has not brought about the expected improvements in pupils' achievements. For this purpose, the present research work is concerned with description, situation analysis and evaluation of the relative merits and shortcomings of how EFL curricula and prescribed ELT textbooks have been used in this country over nearly the past 50 years. It is also an opportunity to identify some educational policy options for a probable effective management of EFL education programme in secondary education.

This dissertation is also based on an evaluation of three other central elements that either lead to success or failure: teaching materials, teachers and learners. The aim here is to provide a source of information to be used in the improvement of English language teaching and learning. In the same line of thought, this research work attempts to see where the problems lie when we come to think about the causes of the dissatisfaction. Is it the pupils who are often viewed as lacking motivation for foreign languages? Is it the inadequate teaching and learning materials? Or are we only sheer consumers of imported teaching methodologies that are incompatible with our EFL realities? Or still the teachers' insufficient and/or inadequate training and teaching staff competencies ?

For these and other issues, a critical reflection on the teaching and

learning of English in Algeria and its relation to the concept of innovation and change is expressed in chapter one. But the major concern here is a brief review of the literature on how educationalists see innovation in FLT and the difficulties that are linked to its acceptance and implementation; and also the impact of the more recent innovative trends such as information communication technologies (ICT) and learning autonomy, etc.

Chapter two is a description of the different methodologies that have been used in ELT in Algeria. The chapter is also extended to a situation analysis where the selected method or approach is succinctly surveyed from adoption to abandonment and change.

Chapter three is concerned with research on strategies for change in foreign language teaching and learning. Teacher education development here is a central issue in the preparation of a staff made for the teaching profession. In order to raise school attainment, provision of suitable teaching materials and learners' development are also of equal importance.

Chapter four handles an issue that concerns an evaluation of ELT in secondary education. This includes three dimensions: a textbook evaluation, a teachers' survey and finally pupils' characteristics and their attitude towards English.

On the basis that a foreign language can be developed through conversational exchanges and reading practice, a *'reading for speaking and writing purposes'* is proposed in chapter five as an alternative approach for ELT in secondary education. The premise upon which this chapter is based is the assumption that 'speaking' and 'writing' are considered signs of success in foreign language learning.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Through the exploration of foreign language teaching in secondary education in Algeria we cannot fail to note that this field has like many others witnessed innovation and change. In fact, the English curriculum today is very different from that of the sixties (the grammar-translation method), the seventies (the structural approach), the eighties (the communicative approach) and finally the competency-based approach (CBA for short) with the advent of the new millennium and more precisely in 2003. This concept of innovation and change will be discussed at some length in chapter one of this dissertation. At this stage, and in order to prevent possible misunderstanding, an inevitable question poses itself whether there has been any innovation or change in secondary education. In practice, there have been many if we consider the adoption and abandonment of different methods, approaches and programmes that were designed according to the grammar-translation method and the structural approach on the one hand, and presented in English language teaching (ELT) textbooks of the 1960s and 1970s such as L'Anglais par la Littérature, Practice and Progress, and Developing Skills . On the other hand, in contrast to these procedures Algerian designed syllabuses and ELT textbooks under communicative teaching methodology in the 1980s

the 1980s and presented in <u>Spring One</u>, <u>Spring Two</u>, <u>New Lines</u>, <u>Midlines</u>, and <u>Think it Over</u>. More recently with the adoption of the competency-based approach, other Algerian ELT textbooks have been designed such as <u>Spotlight on English</u> 1, 2 and 3, <u>On The Move</u> for EFL in middle schools, and in parallel <u>At the Crossroads</u>, <u>Getting Through</u> and <u>New Prospects</u> in secondary education. But how has innovation and change been carried out ? An attempt to answer this question is the object of subsequent chapters.

Now it is crucial to comprehend what is meant by innovation and change as these will serve our purposes as reference points by which we will estimate whether and where we can talk of innovation and change . In fact, the two terms are sometimes used to mean the same thing though innovation implies a planned change such as the introduction of a new programme or a new textbook or use of new technologies, usually resulting from an evaluation to introduce something new; while change happens in an unsystematic way as it is not based on a planned enterprise. However, despite the slight difference between 'innovation' and 'change' the two terms are used interchangeably in this dissertation.

The issue of what constitutes innovation and change in foreign language teaching (henceforth, FLT) has always generated continuous and indeed quite heated debates over many years in many parts of the world. It is a field that never ceases to arouse field researchers' interests in the hope of seeing changes that eventually lead to effective teaching and learner development and that of education in general.

The present investigation is intended to serve as a point of departure for

curriculum development, materials construction, teacher education which according to Widdowson (1984) is directed at developing the trainee's intellectual capacity and not only training that provides formulae to solve classroom problems [1]. In fact, if training is viewed as providing teachers with ready made answers, teacher development permits to teachers to develop reflection upon any problem that may arise or any change that may occur. It is also a research that aims at developing a culture of innovation where educational policies in their turn aim at quality education and student's success. Innovative proposals are then first based on theory which is the outcome of research and evaluation (see 1. 6. 4). However, changes are not based on theory alone. Teachers and students reactions have to be considered as far as the theoretical bases of any innovation and their possible suggestions for improvement and modification. This is to say that innovations do not occur at random. There are reasons that make practitioners and educational policy makers seek changes that hopefully work . In fact, behind any innovation we seek change that upgrades learners' skills and knowledge; but this in turn needs preparation, training and development.

No doubt our educational institutions where teacher training takes place (i.e. ITE, ENS, Université) [2] provide a training that has been established since the late 1960s but not always ready for innovation and change to be in complete harmony with the teaching/learning of English in our schools. It is generally scheduled over a short period of time where trainees receive more prescriptive teaching hints and ideas than any practicalities which are more difficult to organize. And even when practical in-service training exists, it is not

sufficient and is quite often unrelated to what goes on in the classroom as the coordination between the training institutions and practical pedagogy is not evident. The academic training on the other hand, is lecture-form delivered where the focus is on the ideal teacher's behaviour and less directed at the trainee's professional development. The result is that these pre-service teachers hampered by insufficient pedagogical training, in addition to reluctant in-service teachers influenced by a psychological heritage (the weight of familiar methods) sink into routine and carry on their teaching in the same way that they received their own learning in the past.

This is in fact, the case in secondary education in Algeria where after the adoption of the communicative approach in 1981, teachers never really applied communicative principles in their classrooms and continued to teach according to the structural approach. This nonconformity to the adopted approach is very indicative that the teacher's attitude in classroom practice is an important aspect to take account of. As an example of this reluctance, first it is undoubtedly the design and content of unattractive locally developed textbooks that do not have any 'pedagogical appeal'. Second, and though no textbook is perfect, the contents of <u>New Lines</u> or <u>Midlines</u>, for instance, are of those kinds with which teachers claim they have not been able to develop an affinity. Third, the cultural aspect of the textbook is thoroughly local, the fact that has decreased the learners interest because they are in general inquisitive as concerns the target language and its culture. Though it is an asset for learners to be able to speak about one's culture in the target language, this does not exclude that some of them are integratively motivated and desire to know more

about the foreign cultural aspects for future needs or simply by empathy for the target culture. In fact, it is generally admitted that language cannot be isolated from its culture. The latter is an aspect that undoubtedly reinforces the link between the learner and the language.

Another recent example of teachers' reluctance towards innovation and change concerns the newly adopted competency-based approach (2003) for all curricula from primary to secondary education. It is perhaps the first time to see common concerns over an approach that is badly understood and on which plenty of questions are posed. Do educational authorities really realize how much our success depends on our understanding of what we are doing and what we want our learners to achieve? Here we find ourselves confronted with grounds of pessimism when we hear teachers qualifying themselves at a loss when they come to speak about the competency-based approach. In fact, it is an approach for which they received neither an in-service support nor a theoretical explanation and not even a help in the form of documents.

Nevertheless, some signs of optimism are – because of obligation for the mandated curriculum- manifested in their will to understand this newly adopted approach in our schools and see how it is viewed in the context of foreign language teaching in general. About a situation like this, it is perhaps not an overhasty response to claim that this way of introducing a change is rather professionally irresponsible. This brings us to say, from the outset, that there has never been real preparation for any educational change and even less for an innovation. In most cases, one would rather speak about authoritarian instructions that usually come after a top-down decision for such

and such change while the teachers, at best, have always continued their own way using somewhat eclectic procedures in classrooms than anything else. However, in spite of the advantage of being eclectic in teaching in terms of the great number of methods and approaches from which teachers can draw ideas, it is not really the panacea as sometimes the teaching objectives are unclear, vague and risk mixture.

The overwhelming need in our schools is for specialized educational departments that provide an education whose purpose is to better engage language teachers from across the country (i.e., not only a selected number) in a process of continual professional development . In such a way, there will be this possibility of having and, even developing, a teaching staff who is professionally aware of progress, convinced and whose reaction - we foresee- to new challenges is more positive and scientifically-oriented. A staff that considers change as a necessity that follows social and technological progress. In other words, we should move from 'unplanned' to more 'planned' things for any educational change to be effective, and at the same time to narrow down the causes of resistance. Teachers, in fact, need to have practice in the handling of new concepts without any preconceived ideas. They need to develop how to think and not how to reject everything new. Unfortunately our teachers are made to resist changes though resistance is actually a part of human nature. The result is that, first innovative ideas will not easily find their way into the classroom because as mentioned above the majority of teachers are not familiar with. Second, they are always given instructions to apply so and so (via official pedagogical instructions, directives, etc.) and rarely, if not never,

invited to take part in decisions about changes. In this context, Waters and Vilches (2001) regretfully observe that the agents who are supposed to implement 'the innovation' are usually not involved in consultations [3]. The situation is that, more often than not, decisions for reforms are politically decided and therefore imposed. In confirmation of this, Miliani (2000) describes the Algerian educational system as a top-down approach where methods, textbooks and the whole educational philosophy are imposed [4].

There is no doubt that advances in language teaching stem from individual teachers in their classrooms. In this way, teachers are more inclined to promote their own development and consequently move towards being innovative and up- to- date professionally. In fact, things are more made to work when teachers are consulted and feel personally as participants in decision-making. In other words teachers are more willing to experiment with an innovation when they feel what is proposed as 'theirs' (Palmer, 1993) [5]. But unfortunately, as is too often the case, teachers have little say or almost nothing as concerns curriculum design and teaching materials. The latter are in general controlled by ELT designers who act according to what is in vogue and has a commercial success. As a result, there is a plethora of EFL teaching materials on the world market. However, these do not constitute any guarantee for educational success.

Many issues arise from the previous discussion. In fact, many dissenting voices on this matter of innovation and change lead us to the following research questions:

1- Is innovation (or change) based on broad consensus among teacher educators, researchers and classroom practitioners or on top- down policy?

2- Is the adoption of communicative-oriented courses and t he abandonment of structural-oriented courses a successful innovation or a transitory fashion?

3- What are the conditions and strategies for innovation and change to take place?

4- Why is evaluation of ELT (including teaching materials, teachers, learners, physical conditions, etc.) a necessary condition in the planning of an innovation?

5- What alternative (s) could possibly work for the teaching and learning of English in Algeria ?

These are but a few questions that arise when one poses the problem of innovation and change in our educational system. All in all, the above questions can be summarized in a general question whether the operated changes have worked in our educational system. The answer to this question concerns mainly two levels: the first one is concerned with the description and analysis of the English course in secondary education, and the second one with the requirements for efficient changes in education. These two elements govern the general layout of this research work through which we will try to provide evidence for the following research hypotheses:

- Innovation and change that have been operated in this country have always met continuous resistance among the agents of change.

- The materials of innovation have not contributed to better achievements with the learners.

- Innovation and change cannot be carried out because of new trends and fashion.

- Strategies for innovation and change in ELT are necessary to guarantee implementation and success of educational changes.

- Evaluation of teaching materials, teachers, and EFL learners in order to innovate pedagogical practices is not sufficient if foreign language educational policy continues to be top-down approach in orientation.

This research work is also an attempt to contribute in the growth and expansion of awareness concerning the difficulties that are linked to innovation and change. In fact, changes in education are necessary; however, they sometimes cause more frustrations among teachers and learners than produce positive results. This is why we strongly advocate full involvement of practitioners as they are in the best position, in fact the agents of change, to see how well innovations work in practice, and researchers in the decision-making process in any educational change.

In order to carry out a reflection upon these issues, this research study attempts to comprehend the way the Algerian educational authorities and the agents of change in general have dealt with educational improvement in ELT

through innovation and change in our educational system.

Chapter one succinctly explores how language teaching has evolved. How is innovation perceived and understood in different educational settings? Why it is often resisted and difficult to implement is the main object of his part. It also concerns recent areas of innovation and development in language teaching/learning that favour different competencies and skills in English. How world wide web and technology-based learning have offered new means and new perspectives for learning in general. How independent learning styles are particularly emphasized whereby students can make their own choices and assess their own progress. These are today's issues that have severely challenged traditional methods where the focus was on the teaching of items in isolation.

Chapter two describes and analyses the different changes that English teaching has gone through since Algeria's independence in 1962. In fact, from structurally oriented courses with the inherited grammar translation method from the French educational system followed the first change and the adoption of the structural approach in 1971 . It was until 1981 that the first major innovation came with the introduction of Algerian designed textbooks (Spring 1 & 2, New Lines, Midlines, Think it Over) along with the communicative approach to language teaching. Whether or not it was an innovation will be partly the object of this research study. Our objective is, in fact, to argue whether this innovation has been implemented as widely and as successfully as it might have been.

Chapter three is concerned with research on strategies for change. Here

the teacher is advised to keep in line with the more recent innovations and trends in ELT that lead to self professional development. There are, in fact, a number of ways that practitioners can develop and adhere to in order to improve their classroom practices. This chapter also includes other issues that explore the roles of teacher education development in the preparation of practitioners whose teaching will serve learners' interests and needs; and also foster an ongoing learning among the pupils for better achievements.

Chapter four handles a fundamental issue to be considered before any implementation of an ELT innovation: it is the evaluation of teaching materials. A questionnaire for teachers has been designed for this purpose in order to determine whether the teaching materials are suitable for learners. This is followed by the evaluation of teachers which is now the centre of many recent debates in the teaching professional circles. Its importance lies in the fact that it is an incentive to teacher's action research, and a contribution to professional development. Of no less importance, the chapter ends with the learners' evaluation which is first a part of the school curriculum and also essential to see whether pupils improve with innovative English teaching methodologies.

Chapter five is about an alternative that could possibly work in the Algerian environment for specific reasons that are known in this country. However, the chapter is not so pretentious as to propose a solution to our foreign language teaching/learning problems. At any rate, there is no magical method in the field to solve such problems. The alternative in question here is a modest proposal where we favour the combination of *reading, speaking* and *writing*. First, this idea stems from our belief that there can be no language

learning without speaking, and second, there is a universal agreement that reading constitutes an essential part in any learning. The chapter first deals with a description of this alternative referred to as *"reading for speaking and writing purposes "*, and second explains the rationale behind such a choice. Then the possible advantages at the level of teaching materials that favour learners' aspirations and expectations from simply retelling a story to an e-learning, etc., as a preparation of pupils for university studies and its requirements for spoken and written forms. Additionally, it is a method that perpetually encourages teachers to make 'speaking and conversational exchanges' in the target language a priority among the pupils, and be pertinent in the choice of accessible and graded reading material for vocabulary development (Krashen's 1985 'comprehensible input'). These two elements will in turn help in the development of writing skills since learners in general find it easy to write on what they have practised in speaking in order to know " *How to do Things with Words*" to quote Austin (1962).

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. " ... training is directed at preparing people to cope with problems anticipated in advance and amenable to solution by the application of formulae...But education, is directed at developing general intellectual capacity, cognitive sets, attitudes, dispositions ... to deal with any eventuality that may arise".

(Widdoson, 1984 : 207)

2. Educational institutions where teacher training usually takes place :
   Ex-ITE : Institut de Technologie de L'éducation (Former teacher training institutes for primary and middle school teachers; now closed).
   ENS : Ecole Normale Supérieure.
   Université : Didactique des Langues en 4eme année d'Anglais.

3. " in most cases those who will actually design and implement the innovation, and those who will form the majority of its 'end-users', are not involved in these consultations".

(Waters and Vilches, 2001:133)

4. Original text: " L'approche globale du système est descendante (top- down approach). Il y a imposition des méthodes, manuels et philosophie éducative à tous les niveaux ".

(Miliani, 2000 : 146)

5. "Teachers...were found to be more willing to experiment with an innovation when they were given the opportunity to make the idea 'theirs' ".

(Palmer, 1993 : 170)

C H A P T E R   O N E

INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN FOREIGN

LANGUAGE TEACHING : A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Notes to Introduction

CHAPTER   ONE

INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN FOREIGN
LANGUAGE TEACHING : A LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Language teaching and investigation in the field of methodology are progressing rapidly. And though innovations in teaching are necessary, many teachers show no enthusiasm and are quite resistant to change. This is why in language teaching, change is a difficult business and it sometimes creates ambiguity and confusion rather than clarity of the objectives and stability of the educational system, and may finally lead to failure. For these reasons, speaking about an innovation entails many factors for its success. Among other things, the human factor is an important one for the simple reason that, if teachers do not develop in teacher education what is known as culture of innovation and change, it will be hopeless to think of introducing any innovation. On the other hand, innovation is always needed in education as it allows us to take stand against passivity and stagnation. The purpose of this chapter then is to present some findings of the literature review on innovation and change with regard to foreign language teaching in general, and EFL in particular.

1.2 Innovation in Education

The term innovation is applied quite differently in various sectors of life. In education too, it should be pointed out from start that there is no consensus on the concept of innovation. There are a wide range of understandings of innovation in related literature. Some see it as an improvement of an existing form or procedure though what differs innovation from improvement is still posed as a question. Others see it as an implementation of something new, where **"Innovation may relate to the introduction of something large in scale, such as a new textbook...[or] something much smaller in scale such as a new procedure"** according to Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992: 8). Another view advocates a radical shift of doing things from the preceding forms. Besides, it is difficult to differentiate change from innovation since change also aims at improving existing practices. Another category prefer to talk of innovation as a change, a development, or solving a problem in a new way. To some extent innovation and change are operated to improve a situation and make it better. In any case, broadly speaking, a new idea, a development or improvement is an innovation particularly when it is put to use and effectively brings the expected results. Further details on innovation and how it is distinguished from change are supplied in the section below in relation to the purposes of this dissertation on foreign language teaching/learning concerns.

1.3 Innovation in Foreign Language Teaching

A fundamental trend in the last decade in education has been that frequent debate around the concept of innovation, a topic of great interest to

many institutions. In fact, innovation comes in many forms, and going through literature is an enormous task as there is a great deal of conceptual ambiguity associated with the term 'innovation' that exhibits a domain of definitions which is rich and diverse. To cite but a few, Miliani (1998 : 12) has come to the following conclusion which could be roughly translated as follows: " **Could we then say that innovation implies change? On the contrary the reverse is not true: change does not necessarily entail innovation**" [1]. This point of view is also shared by Johannessen *et al* (2001 : 20) when they state that " **all innovation presupposes change, but not all change presupposes innovation**".

Several authors emphasize the idea of newness and maintain that innovation may be a new way of teaching a course, or the introduction of a new subject in the curriculum, or a new way of testing , etc. In education, it is not a matter of creating a new product. However, the fact that teachers are always trying to do things differently is considered as an innovation. In fact, it is essential for teachers to innovate or they stagnate professionally. Besides, an innovation is not necessarily something new for the first time in an institution, i.e., it may have been used before as explained by Rogers.

> **It matters little whether the idea is "objectively" new as measured by the lapse of time since its first use or discovery. The perceived newness of the idea determines his or her reaction to it. If the idea seems new to the individual, it is an innovation.**

> **(Rogers, 1983: 11)**

This is the case of communicative language teaching in Algeria as put by Miliani, (1998 : 14) " **What <u>was</u> innovation in other countries is applied in our educational system**" [2]. In this context, and more precisely, the example of communicative language teaching in secondary education was an innovation in Algeria in 1981 (see 2.3.1). However, by comparison, it was not ' an innovation' since it was introduced for example, a decade earlier in Britain and a decade later in China as we understand from the following quotation.

> **Communicative language teaching (CLT) is an innovation in English language teaching (ELT). CLT emerged as a new teaching approach in Britain in the 1970s. When it was first introduced in China in the 1990s, it met with a considerable resistance.**
>
> **(Liao, 2000 : 1)**

Others see innovation as not necessarily the creation of successful ideas since they are not evidence -based, and explain this on the basis that not all new ideas are destined to succeed. But whatever the aim of innovation in foreign language teaching is, it is in general driven by a commitment for continuous improvement (Hannan and Silver, 2000). It is a challenge to the situation in which it is applied and therefore aims at improving the status quo.

Over and above these definitions, and for a variety of purposes of their own, many academics find it convenient to simply say that innovation is defined as a change, or the other way round "**change may be described as the adoption of an innovation**" (Credaro, 2006 : 1). Much more could be said on

these terms of innovation and change, but in the end there are rather more similarities than differences that unite the above definitions. For our own purposes, innovation as used in this dissertation includes the notions of adoption, implementation, new teaching programme, approach, method in order to bring about positive changes.

The conclusion that one may draw from the above views is that innovations are positive in their intention since they are based on qualifications such as planned, improvement, better, new, etc. However, there is a world of difference between theory and practice. There is no guarantee for an innovation to come off to success. For success to be possible, certain conditions must exist before embarking on an innovation.

1.4 Stages of Innovation

Innovation cannot be easily adopted or implemented in an educational sector without the prior participation of the pedagogical partners who are supposed to make the change possible. This participation, in fact, succeeds or fails according to whether or not certain conditions exist. Without the efforts of the teachers in particular, innovations do not bring any change. Rogers (1995) while dealing with the diffusion of an innovation, a work that has become a reference on diffusion studies, explains that there are five stages through which an individual passes from first hearing about an innovation to its final adoption. These stages are presented under quite different terminology but refer to the same process :

- knowledge of innovation, also referred to as awareness or information

- attitude about the innovation, persuasion or interest

- decision, adoption or rejection

- implementation or trial

- confirmation or evaluation.

For our own purposes and in order to comply more with our work, we have adapted the following stages: information, acceptance, implementation, and evaluation.

1.4.1 Information

The term information is used here as it is commonly understood, i.e., to be informed about something, to know about the use of something. This is very essential in anything that we want to put to use, to adoption, to existence, etc. It is a basic condition for an innovation to take place. Most precisely in education where not only teachers but also administrators and students may react against change. This is why before launching any innovation it would be wiser to prepare the field where it is going to be implemented.

In fact, people react differently to change and in many cases it is quite too often considered a threat to their feeling of security. In the case of innovation in teaching, and in order to welcome the idea and sustain their appreciation, teachers should not only be informed but also invited at least to make their views known about the intended innovation. Informing the teaching

staff about the innovation and trying to share their visions about the impacts on the programme load, learners' attitudes, the results, etc. is very informative for the policy makers as it should arouse their curiosity and increase or decrease their doubts for the subsequent stages of the innovation. In this context, Fullan (1993) speaks about 'initiation' and explains that in this stage participants need to understand why a change is proposed, its relevance to needs and appropriate resources through advice, support and training.

In sum, the lack of information is an obstacle to the possibility of innovating. In this stage, it is also very important to bring teachers together in regional and national seminars, conferences to talk and exchange their views, opinions, doubts on the experiment in order to reach common ideas. The idea behind this stage is to bring the people concerned to the feasibility and acceptance of the idea of innovation.

1.4.2 Acceptance

This stage depends very much on the policy that has been adopted for the innovation. The latter is generally accepted when the decision makers opt for an approach where all educational professionals are really made to feel concerned. In other words, it could be a good policy to proceed according to a down-top approach to the idea, also known as a grass root policy. By following this way in the elaboration of an innovation, the latter is more likely to end up with success rather than failure. The question, then, becomes that of whether or not the teachers have their say in the innovation. In this respect, Hargreaves (1989 : 54) says that " **What the teacher thinks, what the teacher believes,**

what the teacher assumes – all these have powerful implications for the change process, ...". When an innovation has been through this process, changes are likely to happen and the innovation grows in popularity through interaction and is ready for general acceptance. In this case we can talk of teachers as being receptive to change because the users do not consider the innovation as an invasion, and it is rather welcomed positively.

In general, teachers show resistance when they are not sure of the benefits that the change is supposed to bring, or when there is some administrative authority to ensure acceptance. In fact, it is the individual's attitude to the innovation that either leads to acceptance or resistance according to whether the innovation facilitates the individual's profession or job or makes it more complex. It is also an important factor whether educational authorities display the necessary conditions for an innovation to take place. Questions that arise here concern suitable teaching materials, well-designed and attractive textbooks: clear, not close-packed with activities, or having plenty of tasks and sections that follow each other in an uninterrupted way. <u>On The Move</u>, the new Algerian designed ELT textbook (2006) for the fourth-year middle school is, in fact, a clear picture of those close-packed textbooks where the teaching units are up to twenty six (26) pages long with no place for the lighter side, and a potential risk of boredom for the teacher and learner in the end (see Appendix 2). The teaching units in <u>New Prospects</u> for third-year pupils (3.A.S) in secondary education are even longer and exceed thirty (30) pages each (see 4.3.2.2).

Consequently, educational authorities should think of some incentives

for teachers in order to minimize the risk of resistance and rejection. These will be presented, for instance, in the form of professional conferences, seminar holidays for sustaining interest and explaining the reasons why a change is undertaken, etc. Finally, it is perhaps true that everyone has a personal view on how change proceeds, but it is always the teachers who have a direct impact on the implementation of an innovation.

1.4.3 Implementation

When the two previous stages exist, implementation will be carried out without any contestation. However, even when teachers are convinced, the challenge of implementing something new is great. It is a critical phase because the teachers as implementers may be confronted with unpredicted challenges. This explains why change is quite often considered as an intruder and viewed as a disruption of the status quo. In fact, as mentioned earlier moving from theory to practice is a difficult task. It is generally admitted that implementing innovations is difficult and long in time and costs a lot. This is most likely to occur when teachers are not genuinely motivated, when there is no willingness to accept the inevitable difficulties of change.

A direct consequence of situations like these, is that implementation becomes more resisted especially with conservative teachers who find the task rather demanding in time, energy and continuous preparation as put in the diagram below :

Fear of
Loss of Employment

Fear of
Loss of Status

**Why Change
is Resisted**

Fear of
Loss of confidence

Demands Time

Demands Energy

Diagram 1.1: Resistance to change ("Managing Change in U.K schools").

(file://f:/change/managing change in schools.htm).

A persuasive way to avoid resistance is by suggesting and perhaps even supplying observable data (how to deal with the new thing, demonstration classes, etc.) in order to convince the most retracting members of the staff. In some cases, it is the inability to implement something new itself that leads the teacher to anxiety and confusion: it is the fear of losing one's confidence. Many middle school teachers in this country have experienced this situation with the introduction in 2006 of the fourth and last textbook On The Move.

This is why in order to obtain approval, some strategies of use and recommendations such as accessible resources to the teachers engaged in the innovation/change process should accompany implementation ranging from continual in-service teacher training to professional conferences, passing by classroom observations and other forms of pedagogical assistance. For instance, the inspectors' role is not to criticize teachers but to appreciate what worked well and discuss what is still in need of improvement. It is very important

for inspectors to show their implication by pointing out the difficulties of implementation and therefore, attempt to reduce fear, anxiety and resistance among participants. Unfortunately, inspectors are always feared because of their behaviour which is generally that of teachers' evaluation rather than support and assistance. Ideally, the ultimate and possible aim here is by creating a shared sense of responsibility between teachers and inspectors and a unified view for innovating, learning, and evaluating.

1.4.4 Evaluation

In this stage, evaluation must be distinguished from classroom assessment or what is known as summative evaluation whereby students are given tests and grades. Here evaluation is rather formative since it is meant to collect some information on how the implementation of the innovation is carried out [3]. It actually concerns factors and conditions that help in the accomplishment of innovation. Here, we want to know whether the innovation has not been rejected and whether there has been no resistance to its implementation. The intention behind this stage is also to inform that the operation has been effectively done. This is to provide information to policy makers, researchers and practitioners to study the progress of the innovation in order to supply advice whenever need is manifested. There should be a link between the members of the innovation to ensure effective communication as concerns the difficulties that might come up during teaching practice. In fact, understanding what the innovation is all about guarantees encouragement and may lead to success. It is considered a rewarding experience when rejection of

innovation is not general. Rogers (1995) explains that when we reach this stage we have different adopter categories of people ranging from innovators to laggards as shown on an updated description of the 'Innovation Adoption Curve' below:
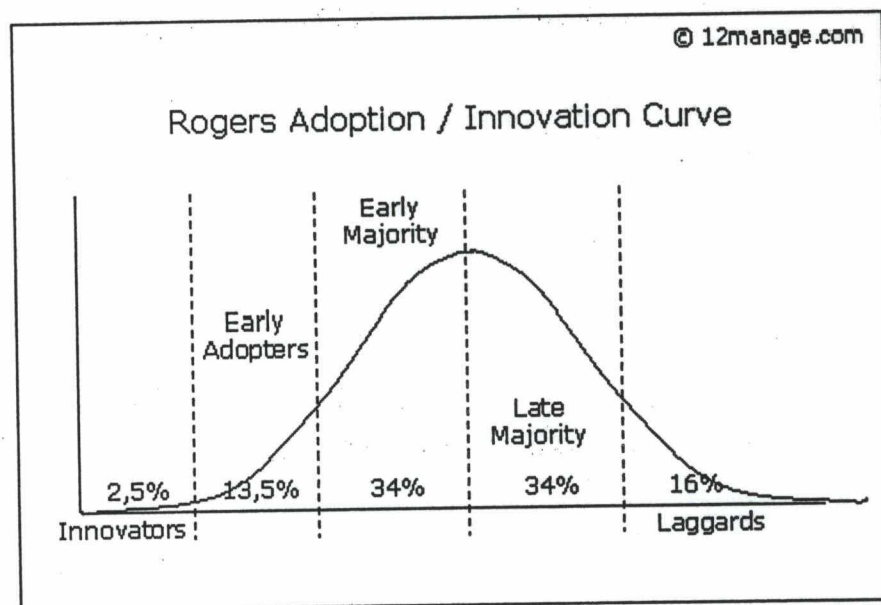
Diagram 1.2 : Multi- Step Flow Theory or Diffusion of Innovations Theory. (Rogers, 2009 : 1).

(http://www.12manage.com/methodsrogersinnovationadoptioncurve.html)

Rogers (1995) further explains that adopters of innovation are classified into categories where some people according to the rates below are more willing than others as concerns the adoption of innovation as put down:

- innovators (daring and risky) : 2,5%

- early adopters (social leaders, educated) : 13,5%

- early majority (deliberate before adopting a new idea) : 34%

- late majority (skeptical, lower socio-economic status) : 34%

- laggards (suspicious of innovation) : 16%

Even at this level of evaluation there might be some resistance. On the one hand, it is not easy to make all the teachers collaborate in evaluation. On the other hand, it is a general rule for many to advance arguments such as evaluation is unnecessary, time-consuming and having no impact on their job (see diagram 1.1). Research in the field, however, indicates that evaluation helps to find out whether or not the objectives have been met on the evidence of benefit or drawbacks; and how to adjust the process or go for a more strategic approach in future decisions. This is why before embarking for an educational change, an evaluation process should be carried out about the situation that needs innovation or change. For this purpose, questions are posed and answers analyzed. This stage is somehow that of reflection and should eventually lead to the conclusion on how to go for a change. This point is further highlighted in the following terms:

> ...when we undertake some form of evaluation we should be in a good position to, for example, recommend the continuation of a project or an approach, make important changes to a set of materials or make suggestions as to how an innovation become (even) more effective.

> (Mann, 2004 : 2)

Unfortunately this issue of evaluation has received little attention (or rather non-existent) in foreign language teaching/ learning in Algeria. In this connection, Miliani (2000) in a comparison between two educational systems (in Algeria and in the USA) summarizes the situation as shown in the diagram below :

Algeria ⌐ →Policy of urgency ⟶ Unsystemic Reforms ⟶ End-of-course

POLICY DESIGN⌐

USA └→Policy of perspectives ⟶Systemic ⟶Mid-course ⟶ Academic
Reforms adjustments Standards
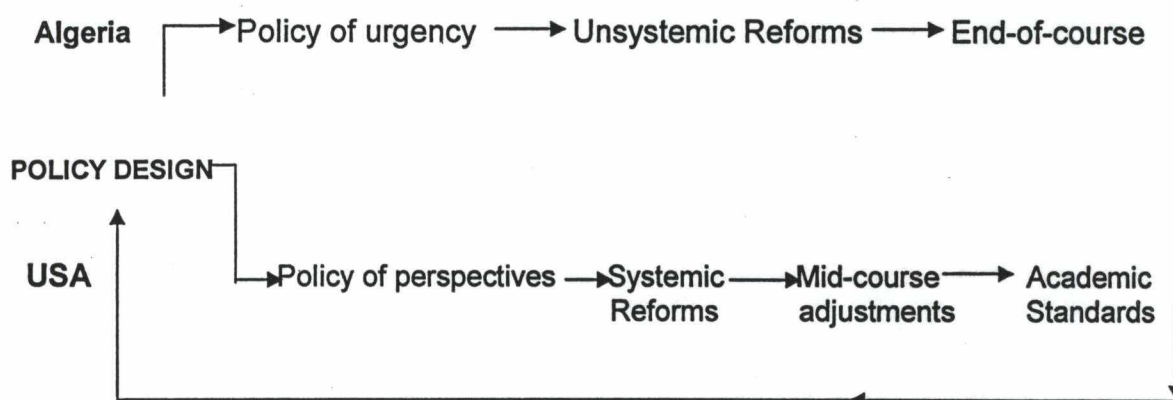
Diagram 1.3 : Key characteristics of the educational systems in Algeria and in USA.

(Miliani, 2000 : 147)

This situation in Algeria as negatively qualified of 'Policy of urgency', 'Unsystemic reforms', and 'End-of-course' without evaluation is unfortunately quite prevalent in our educational fields. What is certain is that a situation like this does not lead to any positive and stable outcomes in education. In fact, as mentioned above without an educational policy that is based on learners' needs and interests (which are in fact societal needs) and appropriate reforms on which there is common agreement, our pupils will continue to underachieve in

exams and leave the school without retaining the slightest idea of having learnt English in their school life.

1.5 Recent Areas of Innovation in FLT

Technology has always been present in the teaching of foreign languages since the advent of the language laboratory in the 1960s, and even before with less sophisticated tools compared to what we have today. In recent years, educational policy makers have more than ever before attempted to bring new technologies into the classrooms. In fact, the widespread use of computers in schools today shows how things have changed and there is no doubt that educational institutions will all the time follow the technological progress. The impact of technology on the teachers is certain as concerns the availability of resources that are needed in daily tasks and in the provision of a variety of activities for any subject matter. The same impact is also observed among students in the use of computers for various purposes, in addition to the internet and web-publishing that offer to them a rich source of information and details for research and studies in general. Today, schools are moving towards new trends as models for teaching and learning and include things like information and communication technologies (ICT), e-learning, online learning, in addition to a development of cooperative learning and learning autonomy, etc.

1.5.1 ICT and Foreign Language Teaching

First at the level of terminology, in 'Definitions of Terms' Davies and Hewer (2008) say that ICT (Information and Communications Technology) is

nowadays one of the most widely used abbreviation :

> **ICT is a term that is currently favoured by most businesses and educational institutions worldwide to describe new technologies. The "C" reflects the important role that computers now play in *communications*, e.g. by email, the Web, by satellite and mobile phone (cellphone).**
>
> **(Davies and Hewer, 2008 : 1)**

The purpose of this section is to see how ICT from e-learning to podcasts, wikis and web tools in general have contributed to the development of English language teaching/learning and in the same time the difficulties in working with the new multimedia.

In fact, ICT has been introduced in foreign language teaching and learning in many parts of the world since the 1980's. However, in this respect, numerous studies suggest that computerized media has not evolved to the expected pedagogical level. Many teachers still believe that advances in ICT have not changed the situation in the classroom because the manipulation of computers, CD-ROMs, and access to the internet is not only complex but also unavailable. Besides, not all teachers are skilled at computer technology and find this tool quite often used at the expense of language courses that emphasize interaction between pupils and their teachers. This explains why many EFL teachers consider the use of computers rather as burdens that add extra work in time of preparation and manipulation since machines of the new technologies need technical service and maintenance. This reluctance could

also be explained by the fact that the efforts spent on machines have not had a significant impact on the level of pupils. This observation is linked to the fact that computers are not used in complete relation with courses. In other words, computers can bring some more help and motivation to the learners if the software is directly related to the textbooks that are used in the classroom.

There is no doubt that ICT use has opened large areas for learning, and the potential benefits that are brought to foreign language teaching and learning are certain. The internet, for instance, is a real access to a vast range of information and learning opportunities. Among these one may cite the possibility for learners to have direct connection with authentic materials, with other learners and other schools all in the target language. The use of English at this level develops communication experience where pupils learn how " **to practice specific skills such as negotiating, persuading, clarifying meaning, requesting information, and engaging in true-life, authentic discussion**". (Aydin, 2007 : 1). This constitutes a number of beneficial impacts on EFL learning and mainly facilitates intercultural awareness, that's being the most wanted element in nowadays foreign language teaching/learning.

Podcasting is also a practice that has recently been developed in EFL instruction whereby learners can individually upload audio programmes over the internet for playback on mobile devices (cellphone, mp3, iPod, etc.) or personal computers. Pedagogically, podcasts are more and more used in the classroom and allow the teacher to act on current pupils' interests. In other words, it is another technique that brings a native note to pupils in order to develop their listening skills and pronunciation through the use of authentic materials (texts,

stories, songs, etc.) that can - as an innovation, increase pupils' intrinsic motivation and develop their oral abilities.

Yet, doubts are being increasingly expressed about the use of this wealth of ICT resources in foreign language teaching. The inevitable question is whether this sort of technology can be integrated into classroom practice. On the one hand, there are teachers who have embraced this new idea of incorporating ICT in their classrooms and have perhaps developed different ways of using multimedia and its rich information resources and enormous range of materials for the benefit of their courses and their learners. On the other hand, reports about ICT and foreign language learning say that many teachers view the latter with apprehension. In other words, they still have some sceptical attitudes towards computers and other high-tech gadgets and see them as rather a disturbance and nuisance in their classrooms. In this context, Watson (2006) says that teachers have often resisted educational changes and ICT is no exception, adding that teachers are even uneasy when faced with new technology. In fact, pedagogical practices of ICT show that language teachers do not have any training in the use of ICT and almost - at least now - do not have opportunities to use ICT skills. Most teachers are uninformed about the use of ICT and thus professionally unprepared to develop such learning with their pupils. The subject of ICT is not included in pre-service teacher education. As mentioned earlier, nearly all teachers do not go beyond the requirements of school exams.

This is why, in the use of ICT in foreign language teaching, it is recommended that computers (probably the most used technological tools) are

to be used for didactic purposes. Computers in an English class can bring an added value and an interest and perhaps more motivation to the routine. In other words, they are supposed to improve the learning process though many teachers and educationists continue to believe that learning is before long time still going to be developed more through human-to-human interaction. In this context, Walter (1997) in " Dissertations Abstracts 14" explains the situation in the American classroom in the following terms:

> **Despite the sustained growth in hardware, software and telecommunications in schools and improved achievement through their use, research shows that the promise of technology is not being met in today's classrooms and will not be until teachers use computers, networks and multimedia tools as naturally as they use chalk, paper and pencil.**
>
> **(Walter, 1997 : 1)**

Nevertheless, if computers are well used they will undoubtedly facilitate project work and research for students, exchange of ideas and views on topics, communication among learners in class and outside class; and most importantly they will have an impact on cooperative learning and learning autonomy.

1.5.2 Cooperative Learning

ICT, indeed favours both cooperative learning and autonomy. When groups of students are set to work together with computers for instance, their interaction and negotiation of ideas develop the idea of capability in the individual learner in the sense that each member wants to do the same or

better than the other. This has been proved as rewarding for students in preparation for exams, project works or writing reports, etc. Situations like these have a positive impact for sociability when students grow up and come to work together because they have been trained to do this all during their studies. Even more, cooperative learning should be encouraged quite early from primary school when teachers can do whatever they like with children who are more receptive at that age. In fact, many people have experienced this situation with their own children, brothers or sisters when, for instance, they bring an information from their teacher that one cannot change even if it is incorrect [4].

Additionally cooperative learning is a good opportunity at an early age for pupils to learn how to do things with words, how to work together, just like singing together. The idea behind such an early start is to involve all children in class work with no one lagging behind. For this purpose, some conditions are necessary from suitable tables and chairs to adequate and well-designed teaching materials within every pupil's reach in the classroom, etc. And most importantly if the teachers are appropriately trained to make cooperative learning a pedagogical priority when necessary, its implementation will be possible. Nevertheless, it should be noted that sometimes learning and specifically some activities are more efficient if carried out either individualistically or competitively.

To illustrate this case of cooperative learning at school, a teacher in primary education asked her 2nd year pupils to write a summary of a story she has just read for them. *A priori* no one is going to write the summary especially after only one reading. What is amazing is that many pupils (15 out

of 40) have indeed managed to reconstruct the story from start to finish. A second reading has given more chance to some other ten (10) pupils to complete their summaries. It is quite a big challenge for kids, but their curiosity and desire to learn are so great at this age that the summaries could have been written had they been given the chance to work cooperatively to complete the little bits they remember or which they have scribbled all over their pieces of paper. This vivid example has been taken from some interviews with primary school teachers for the purpose of eliciting whether or not cooperative learning is possible with the pupils in primary education who are generally known for their sense of selfishness and also that of sharing if they are guided in this way [5].

Cooperative learning is advised for many reasons because it develops communication skills among the learners when they try to explain their ideas. In unclear situations, pupils generally understand better their peers' explanations using their own 'techniques' than those of their teachers. This mutual helpfulness has in fact proved quite efficient among learners that many have adopted this learning strategy after classes. On the contrary, when learning is structured on the basis of competition the winner in the end is only one individual. With cooperative learning it is the whole group, in other words, a bigger number of pupils will have the feeling to have achieved some good results. Even when the pupils form heterogeneous groups, quick learners will like it to behave as teachers and help the slower ones.

There are certainly other advantages in cooperative learning for the proponents who see it as an opportunity to learn, to understand, to express

one's views for all learners and particularly for the weaker ones. In fact, it is generally recognized that working in large groups is one way to overcome shyness, anxiety and stress and other feelings of giving low evaluation to oneself. However, many other educationists see it as rather vague and having no learning objectives. They even consider cooperative learning as a way to avoid teaching and an inability to explain and make things clear for learners.

Though this objection is repeated in educational circles, it has had no effect on the proponents of cooperative learning on the basis that nowadays teaching is not the ability to teach but rather the ability to make the others learn and ideally become autonomous in their learning.

1.5.3   Learning Autonomy

Learning autonomy has recently been the subject of intense debates in foreign language teaching circles. A great number of questions have been posed as far as the concept of learning autonomy is concerned and its innumerable definitions, different understandings and interpretations among field specialists. Commonly understood, learning autonomy is first learner-centred and refers to learners who are able to study on their own inside and outside the classroom. In other words, the teacher is not supposed to transmit knowledge but create possibilities for production of knowledge. In fact, the term has come to be used in at least five ways according to Benson and Voller :

- for situations in which learners study entirely on their own;
- for a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning;

- for an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education;
- for the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning;
- for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning.

(Benson and Voller In Thanasoulas, 2000 : 1)

This concept of 'learning autonomy' is quite reminiscent of the questions that have been posed on what the concept of 'communicative competence' entails, and how to teach it and develop it with learners. The purpose here is not to discuss communicative competence at length below but to show the complexity of concepts such as these and how they are sometimes inadequately used in our EFL syllabuses, textbooks and teachers' guides, etc. To illustrate this, 'communicative competence' as an aim of the English course has neither been attained with learners nor understood and implemented during the communicative approach in Algeria (see 2.3.1). It is in fact, clearly specified in this preliminary note 'to the student' in New Lines as if it were for the students to decide. The note addresses the student as follows: " **You will notice then, that the aim of New Lines is to develop your communicative competence in English.**" (1981-1982 : 3). Such an aim is in the same time very much demanding and perhaps pretentious for the simple reason that even native speakers of English are not communicatively competent in all domains. In this context, (Harmer 1983) confirms this and explains the concept as follows:

> Communicative competence is often talked about but seldom defined in terms of level. For example, are all native speakers communicatively competent ? The answer would surely be no if we consider that part of this competence is knowing what is appropriate in certain situations.

> (Harmer, 1983 : 23 - 24)

In the light of communicative competence experience in our schools, learning autonomy then, is not something that learners can develop by simply opting for the tendency to be autonomous. Debates about this quite innovative tendency in foreign language learning are various and frequently conducted by specialists without really reaching in the end what learning autonomy one is to follow or adopt. Nevertheless, efforts to resolve these disparities have recently led some to state that autonomy is " **the ability to take charge of one's own learning.**" (Holec, 1981: 3), while others insist on the fact that it is rather a matter of behaviour that teachers can develop in the pupils even from an early age. For this purpose, Cotteral (2000) reports that learning autonomy has been tried in many European countries and results indicate encouragement.

What is particularly noticeable is that more and more teachers are convinced of the importance of incorporating principles of learning autonomy in their courses. She also cites Lee (1998) who is in favour to help learners become more autonomous and argues that:

> ...learner autonomy should not be seen as a goal only for highly committed students completing optional courses, or for students operating within selected educational or

cultural contexts. Rather, it should be seen as an essential goal of all learning.

(Lee 1998, In Cotterall, 2000: 109)

Now what is agreed on is that the learner's responsibility is engaged in the fulfilment of learning activities. To this end, motivation is mostly expected in foreign language learning so as the target language will not remain at a static level. It is particularly significant when learners have or develop some intrinsic motivation. In fact, this sort of motivation is characterized by pupil's strong needs that allow him to seek the best understanding of his subject matters or skill development, etc. Unfortunately, this is not the case of pupils in our schools because intrinsic motivation is found only among a very limited number of pupils who can really venture to go autonomous. Others, representing the great majority are generally of mixed-abilities ranging from quick learners to slow ones and those who do not want to learn at all. It must be also observed that the teaching system in Algeria is teacher-centred and students rely heavily on teachers' explanations and examples. Students' participation in classroom's activities is very low due to many other factors. First, classes are generally overcrowded and any research work leading to autonomy is practically unrealizable. Second, students do not have the necessary equipment (reference books, dictionaries, without mentioning computers and the internet) at home to carry out their assignments, preparations, projects, etc.

A recent example of this is the adoption in 2003 of competency- based education in our schools and the idea of 'project work'. Though the ultimate aim

of the former is to reach learner autonomy, the outcome is at least for the moment incongruent with autonomy. The teachers continue to teach in the way they have always practised, and our educational system does not prepare pupils to be autonomous. Even pupils' projects which are supposed to develop autonomy are mere compilations of written documents ordered in cyberspaces for money (see 2.5). In this context, and while explaining that LMD pedagogy implies more autonomy for students, Miliani in a newspaper interview (In *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, December 12th 2007) expresses his concerns by stating the following about students : " **Are they ready to take on this autonomy? The school does not prepare them to this autonomy, thus a pedagogy of support to get these students build their knowledge,...**" [6] (In Abbad, 2007 : 20)." This why nowadays proponents of learning autonomy are encouraged to develop it from start in the children. As a matter of fact this requires some changes in teacher's education that comply with such a concept. Once more, educational policy-makers cannot innovate or propose any change without the prior training or sufficient information on the proposed matter or the policy that one has to follow, and particularly in terms of teaching and learning.

Learning autonomy also entails a learner-centred approach in the learning process. Once more learner-centredness is not a new concept since it has been devised as a basic element with communicative language teaching. This emphasis on the learner being as the centre of interest is not really developed as teachers continue to think that their job is to teach the whole class. In fact, many teachers consider working with all pupils as the best policy to avoid certain problems of favouring only the most able ones. Besides

teachers are always afraid of situations where only few pupils take part in the classroom as this may create a negative attitude and perhaps a total disinterest and even a general neglect of the English course.

1.6 Pedagogical Implications

1.6.1 Innovation and Teaching

Teaching is qualified as an active skill in addition to an art. On the basis of this qualification, teaching is often dynamic and evolves just as the people who are in charge of this task, and must either progress or stagnate. In fact, because of technology advancement whose basis is research and education in general, one is inclined to think that educational innovation goes hand in hand with technology. The urge to know more and make technology progress pushes researchers in the field of education to explore more so as teachers can make use of the new technology and think more of the future even if the past is not to be ignored.

Innovation in English has recently become today's teacher concern. There are innovations at many levels, and propositions for the teaching of language skills and how they are approached have enlarged foreign language teaching literature. A great number of approaches, methods, techniques and innovative strategies that have outgrown from the internet and referred to as connectivism, e-learning and web-based instruction, etc., are printed everyday. Regardless of their validity or effectiveness, practitioners are exposed to a rich and immense literature on the art of teaching and learning a foreign language. Indeed, as a reaction to this situation, the literature bears out an increasing

conviction among professionals in the field of FLT who are in favour of innovation. They think that the latter is necessary and seek change from tiresome and boring classroom practices. It is because they know that advances in technology can provide them with unlimited opportunities that facilitate teaching and enhance student's learning. While other teachers do not want to hear about innovation and are not willing to accept the inevitable difficulties of change in general. They perceive everything linked to innovation and change rather as a disorder. They think that the best policy is to keep doing the same old practice which seems to be working and where they feel at ease and more comfortable.

1.6.2 Innovation and Learning

Learning English has become more than ever before a necessary instrument in research and in education in general. However, this may be the case where the people are aware that English (whatever one might say about the pronouncing difficulties of the language) is the international language *per se* either in science, education, economy, finance, politics, etc. In fact, **"over 80 % of the information stored in the world's computers is in English, more than half the scientific journals are in English, it's the main language on the Internet, and so on"**. (http://www.ezydictionary.com/e/english/Learning English-I149.htm). This status of English as a widely used language in the world is not denied in Algerian official English syllabuses. The general objectives of learning English are clearly stated (see Appendix 1) and stipulate that the learning of English in secondary education is compulsory in order to

permit to Algerian learners to keep up with advances in technology that are now mostly delivered in English. In fact, as mentioned above more than 80 % of research work is now carried out in English in every domain.

The problem of learning English in Algeria is, however, linked to a lack of awareness and neglect. First, learners are not aware of the importance of English in the world, not only in the economic and political spheres but also as a tool of research, and therefore, very little interest is taken in the study of this language. In fact, only the far-sighted pupils recognize the advantages of English and find it very helpful whenever they come to dwell upon even sophisticated areas of research in their higher studies. For the great majority, it is only very late, at university level that they realize what valuable instrument of research they miss. Teachers and students at the university have come to the conclusion that foreign language learning is now more than ever before the centre of interest in education, namely, for research as well as in many other fields of life. With the advent of new technology, English has become essential and practically no one denies the impact it has on students' success or failure in higher education.

This innovation concerning for example the use of computers and the website advantages should be expanded to all levels or at least in secondary education to make the learners enjoy the benefits of modern technology. If learners are exposed to electronic learning in its general use, they will become aware that English is very much used on the internet in all domains of science and commerce and politics, etc. and will therefore give it its due value during their studies.

The second problem is at the level of physical conditions in the school and particularly in the classroom. The latter is more often than not a place where learners are kept against their will because English is a compulsory subject. Classes are in general overcrowded and any attempt to learn English is rather demotivating. What worsens the situation is that English is often scheduled during hours when learners are tired, i.e., after having studied the main subjects in their syllabus. Another factor that does not attract learners is linked to stilted teaching materials (see Appendices 4 & 6) and lack of technical equipment for the teachers to use now and then some authentic material and make their learners hear native speakers of English. In fact, in spite of the undeniable progress that has been made in the field of printing, the Algerian designed textbooks need a great deal of improvement at the level of quality and attractiveness that pupils appreciate a lot to see in their textbooks.

1.6.3 Necessity of Innovation

In order to improve foreign language learning and achieve better results with the learners, teachers practitioners, researchers and FLT policy makers have always combined their efforts for such a purpose. Thus, FLT has through time tried to use contemporary technology from the time of record player and tape recorder in the 1950s to language laboratory and video cassette in the 1970s, and more recently to multimedia and particularly computer assisted language learning (CALL). This has also been expanded to the world wide web (www) and its numerous advantages in research work whereby the learner can locate, send and retrieve or store information. Research in this

latest technology pertaining to learning with the 'www' is evident. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to provide a review of this literature. Suffice it to say for the moment that new future jobs require new knowledge and the latter has a direct impact on teaching and learning. And consequently learners need to possess this knowledge.

Innovation in the field of education is necessary. In fact, education and research constitute the foundation of innovation. There has always been a great interest to develop and experiment classroom practices in order to design new syllabuses and teaching materials for more effective ways of teaching languages in order to meet the ever lasting challenges of the future. For this purpose, it is very important to imagine the world of tomorrow and look directly ahead, read and understand current trends and what surrounds us to envision the future.

There are multiple reasons why innovations have become necessary. In general when the learners' overall performance is still in need of marked improvement. It becomes quite imperative to tackle the problems that hamper low achievement in foreign language learning. On the other hand, changes are needed because technological advances are continuous and ongoing and therefore cannot be ignored. Parallel to this, there is a need for more efficient and effective education. Students nowadays (as modern generations want it) have themselves developed the idea of fashion and modernity and have therefore become consumers of what technology can offer to them. There is no doubt that the young today can better manipulate multimedia aids and new forms of interaction. Thus, they are more and more informed about the varieties

they can be offered in learning a foreign language as in every subject of the school curriculum. A great number of learners have access to internet information landscape and use e-learning not only in schools but also at home or in their living environment. Information and learning have become available through the web site education services at any time, and this has developed in them a trend towards curiosity, a good thing indeed in learning.

Consequently, in this time of rapid change in technology and availability of information and knowledge throughout the world, clinging to our ways of doing things is now something outdated. There is a universal need to embrace change and innovation in order to cope with the new challenges. Gone is the time when innovation was considered as perilous and hazardous and innovators as dangerous (13th -18th century) having led to the stagnation of many centuries according to Sultana (2001). Now innovation is seen as life and is synonymous of human advancement and the association of 'danger' with innovation has disappeared (Sultana 2001). It is perhaps very wise to remind ourselves that in every era, technological advances have – despite our resistance- an impact on the school in particular and on the society in general.

1.7 Conclusion

Though we sometimes hear teachers insisting on innovation and change of some old-fashioned and unnecessary educational practices, innovation in foreign language teaching/learning has never been an easy enterprise. Perhaps resistance to new teaching approaches is part of human nature. The thing is more complicated when the agents on whom the change

depends are not engaged in the elaboration of the innovation. As soon as classroom implementation is different and requires more efforts for preparation and more involvement of teachers, the latter show more resistance. The introduction of communicative language teaching in the 1980s and more recently of competency-based education to EFL in 2003 in our schools are good examples of resistance to change. Indeed, insufficient teacher education and lack of in- service teacher development, top-down decisions of changes in programmes and examinations on the one hand, and teachers clinging to old familiar practices on the other threaten implementation of new ideas. This is why sufficient information about innovation has to be widely known and shared with the people concerned. Information must focus on the benefits that innovation is supposed to bring to all the people who are supposed to make changes work. Studies suggest that understanding innovation is a condition for the acceptance of new ideas and their implementation. In fact, an educational change will not reach its maximum potential unless the human factor is given priority. Moreover, its success is based on individual efforts that result from personal commitment to change by developing a culture of innovation in teacher education.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Original text : " **Aussi pourrions-nous dire que l'innovation implique un changement. L'inverse n'est par contre pas vrai : le changement n'entraîne pas nécessairement une innovation**".

   (Miliani, 1998 : 12)

2. Original text : " **Ce qui était innovation sous d'autres cieux est appliqué dans notre système éducatif**'".

   (Miliani, 1998 : 14)

3. "Formative evaluation is a type of evaluation which has the purpose of improving programmes. It goes under other names such as **developmental evaluation** and **implementation evaluation**". Online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/formative_evaluation. While " Summative evaluation refers to the assessment of learning ,the learner sits for a test and then the teacher marks the test and assigns a score". Online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/summative_assessment.

4. School children do not generally accept to correct any information that comes from their teacher even if it happens to be -by inattention, erroneous.

5. In interviews with teachers in primary education, the respondents have confirmed that cooperative learning works quite well in the sense that pupils learn quickly from their peers. However, the number of pupils generally over-exceeding 40 and the noise it generates makes cooperative learning an impossible operation among the children.

   <u>Source</u> : Ecole Mohamed Boudiaf. Ain-Temouchent. May 2007.

6. Original text : "**Sont-ils prêt à assumer cette autonomie ? L'école ne les prépare pas pour cette autonomie d'où une pédagogie de soutien pour amener ces étudiants à construire leur savoir**".

   (Miliani, in Abbad, 2007 : 20)

CHAPTER   TWO

ENGLISH IN SECONDARY EDUCATION :

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CHAPTER TWO

ENGLISH IN SECONDARY EDUCATION:
BACKGROUND AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

2.1   Introduction

This chapter is concerned with a systemic description of the teaching and learning of English in Algeria, and a situation analysis of the different methods and approaches that have been used in the educational system in this country. The main purpose of this study is to put our thoughts on innovation and change about the historical antecedents to the current approach (competency- based approach). In fact, accessible and reliable information about our past experiences deserves serious consideration. It is perhaps even, the most valuable basis for any innovation and change to take place. We may then, for practical reasons distinguish two broad parts in the present chapter. The first one is referred to as 'structural-oriented courses' and during which ELT was carried out under the grammar-translation method (1962-1971); and then the structural approach (1971-1981). The second part is labeled 'communicative-oriented courses' as an umbrella term during which the communicative approach was officially adopted in 1981. In 1993, an innovation in the educational system in Algeria concerns the introduction of English as an experiment in some primary schools throughout the country. And more recently,

the adoption of the competency-based approach in 2003 in the teaching/learning of English in middle and secondary schools as shown in figure below:

English Course

Structural-Oriented Courses   Communicative-Oriented Courses

Grammar-Translation Method   The communicative Approach
(1962-1971)   (1981)

The Structural approach   Competency-Based Approach
(1971-1981)   (2003)
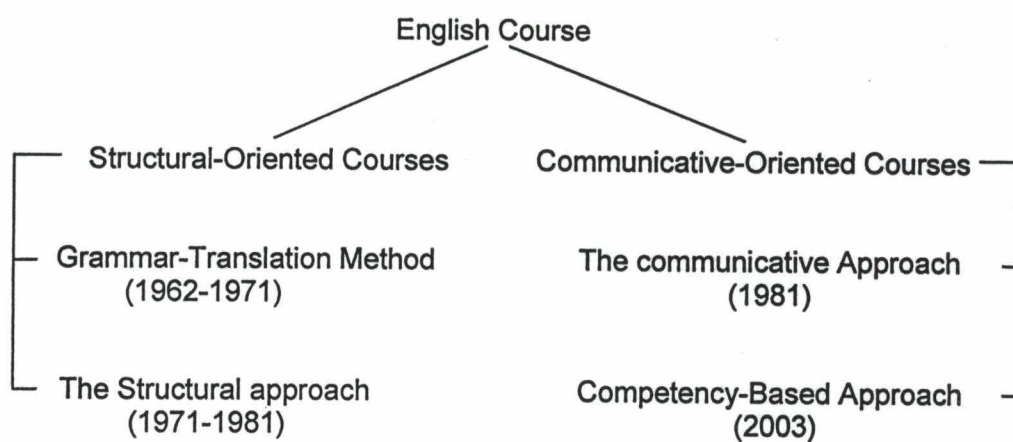
Figure 2.1: Approaches to EFL in Algeria since 1962.

As we go through these different language teaching methodologies, we try to understand the motives of change and find out whether there has been any needs analysis for this purpose or simply following changes that happen elsewhere. Anyway this is not the case of Algeria alone for there many researchers in the world who invent, create and innovate; and others to consume while waiting for their own creations and innovations.

2.2 Structural- Oriented Courses

The teaching/learning of languages has always been influenced by the developments in the fields of linguistics, psychology and sociology as shown in the theoretical framework below:

Theory of man

Sociology   Linguistics   Psychology

Sociolinguistics   Psycholinguistics

Classroom inter-action   Language
Teaching-learning   learning ———— Learning
situation, etc

(The situation)   (The subject)   (The child / the teacher)
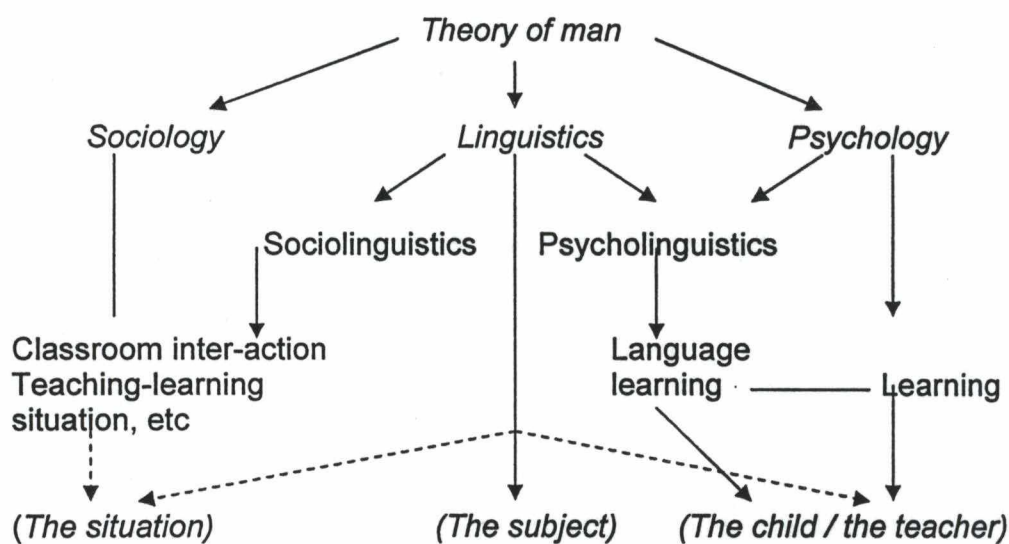
Figure 2.2 :   A theoretical framework for language education.

(Brumfit, 1980 : 55)

This is why foreign language teaching methods have always reflected

prevailing linguistic theories. Thus from the fifties to the seventies, structuralism

was a field of academic interest and had a great influence on language

teaching. Language teaching at that time was directly influenced by structural

linguistics. In this connection Stern (1983 : 163) explains the situation in the

following terms:

> ... the influence of structuralism on
> language pedagogy was pervasive and
> powerful and can be clearly identified in
> teaching materials, teaching methods,
> language tests, and in the writings of
> language teaching methodologists,...

(Stern, 1983 : 163)

Grammar was then so much focused on in the school curricula. In fact, structural-oriented courses also referred to as traditional and grammatical take the forms of the language as the starting point in the teaching methodology. The predominant view at that time, based on the work of Bloomfield in the 1930s and 1940s in linguistics, was primarily concerned with the teaching of forms as noted by Brumfit and Johnson:

> **The proclaimed characteristic feature of Bloomfieldian and neo - Bloomfieldian American Structuralism was its careful concern to restrict itself to the study of form, and the classification of the forms of a language, without reference to the categories of meaning.**
>
> **(Brumfit and Johnson, 1979 : 2)**

The study and knowledge of grammar was then considered the safest way to understand and use a language. In fact, structural syllabuses are associated with cognitive methods of language teaching such as the audio-lingual method, the grammar translation method, the direct method, etc. Our purpose is not dwell on this matter any further since in-depth examination of the various types of syllabuses is dealt with in subsequent sections. At present, as mentioned in figure 2.1 above, this part includes the very beginning of English teaching methodology in Algeria through the grammar translation method.

2.2.1 The Grammar -Translation Method

Though the grammar translation method is different from what is later

known as the structural approach, it is purely structural in orientation because its characteristics put a great emphasis on the learning of grammar and vocabulary. It is referred to as traditional or classical method that was used in the teaching of Latin and Greek in the 19th century and even throughout the 20th century. In the free encyclopedia, it is defined as follows :

> **The method requires students to translate whole texts word for word and memorize numerous grammatical rules and exceptions as well as enormous vocabulary lists. The goal of this method is to be able to read and translate literary masterpieces and classics.**
>
> **(The Free Encyclopedia, 2008 : 1)**
> (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/grammar-translation)

What is perhaps surprising is that it is still used in many parts of the world even nowadays on the basis that many teachers keep to their teaching traditions and are often resistant to change.

The assumption behind this method is that since language is a formal system, it is learning the rules that govern the language system that matters. The learner finds himself with plenty of training in mental manipulation of verb paradigms, grammar rules, vocabulary and applying these to translation both into and from the mother tongue. As far as our educational system is concerned, the teaching-learning of English was carried out through this method from the independence of Algeria in 1962 up to the early 1970s. The prescribed textbooks, L'Anglais par l'Action by Richard and Hall (1960) for middle schools (known as CEG at that time), and also L'Anglais par la

<u>Littérature</u> for secondary schools by the same authors Richard and Hall (1969) were designed according to the principles of the grammar translation method: plenty of grammar introduced in French, vocabulary and translation (see Appendices 3, 4, 5). In fact, grammar was taught deductively as well as long lists of isolated vocabulary words and their native language equivalents along with grammatical rules and conjugations that the learners had to memorize. The practice in the classroom was teacher-centred methodology where the teacher was the only authority and did everything from questions to answers. Even the teacher himself did not develop his speaking ability since instructions and explanations, corrections, etc. were also done in French.

2.2.1.1 Course Analysis

As mentioned above, teachers were frustrated by the limits of the grammar translation method. A course that emphasizes translation and language usage along with vocabulary memorization on the one hand, and very little or no attention is reserved for pronunciation and communicative aspects of language on the other. Thus, the inability for the learner to express himself in the target language is perhaps the greatest drawback of this method. In this context, Rivers says the following :

> **Students taught by this method are frequently confused when addressed in the foreign language and may be very embarrassed when asked to pronounce anything themselves.**

> **(Rivers, 1968 : 16-17)**

The amount of time that was spent on translation, grammar and so on was done at the expense of oral skills. And although this method provided the learner with a good grounding in grammar, one learns a foreign language in order to communicate in that language (except perhaps in an ESP case) not only to sharpen one's skills of grammar or translation or understanding literary texts. In the late 1960s, teachers started to realize that learning about language was not effective in preparing students who wanted to use their English as a job requirement. The new emphasis in foreign language learning is not to read and understand the foreign literature but the ability to use the target language.

2.2.1.2   Discontent and Change

The old established attitudes and practices of this kind of language teaching created a number of objections. Common criticism was around the idea that neither translation nor rote learning of grammar and vocabulary could alone make the learner use the target language when necessary. This was clearly stipulated in official documents.

> **Traditional methods which use, among other things, translation and systematic grammatical analysis leave the pupils little time to practice the spoken language and do not lead to a sufficient consolidation of the language items learnt.**
>
> (<u>Directives et Conseils Pédagogiques,</u> 1971-1972 : 3)

A further complication for the learners was immediate error correction in the sense that only right answers were accepted. This created some inhibition in

the learners to the point of not daring to initiate any conversation during the English class. More than this, learners were afraid to speak because of their hazardous pronunciation due to a lack of practice. It is a learning that is qualified as passive where students absorb what is presented to them. However, a word of caution is necessary here : passive learning is not to be interpreted negatively in the sense that receptive skills are also important for many learners in their daily tasks.

As a result, the teaching methodology had to change to be in harmony with changes in technology, economy, and world trade, etc. In fact, things started to change, namely in Europe where more pragmatics and communication skills were introduced in foreign language teaching. By 1971 the first official change in English teaching was applied in secondary education in Algeria. The change was a top-down model: new pedagogical instructions and new prescribed textbooks were 'put at the disposal' of teachers and learners whose involvement in the change process was only confined to the implementation of the prescribed teaching materials. About this sudden change, many teachers of English and pupils of the 1970s still recall how they were asked to drop out Richard and Hall's textbooks and adopt Alexander's <u>Practice and Progress</u> and <u>Developing Skills</u>.

2.2.2   The Structural Approach

The structural approach is a syllabus that is described as a language course which is based on units that are defined in grammatical terms. During the 1970s, the teaching-learning was more about language usage than

language use. In fact, the structural view is based on a theory of language that assumes that learning a language involves internalizing its grammatical system through understanding of grammar, pattern practice, drills, etc. This view remained unchallenged for more than a generation and "...**throughout the 1970s, linguists have found themselves concerned with the context of linguistic patterning**." in the words of Brumfit (1985 : 19).

The assumption behind this is to develop a knowledge of the English system in the learners. Such a focus on grammar, it was claimed, would install a sound knowledge of the grammatical rules that lead the learners to language use. However knowing the grammatical mechanisms of a language does not necessarily mean speaking or developing performance in that language. In this context, Littlewood says that '...**it is not sufficient on its [grammar] own to account for how language is used as a means of communication.**' (Littlewood, 1981: 1). In fact, we often read in ELT articles about people who have learned the whole English grammar and remain unable to communicate in English because of the lack of use of the language in different situations of life.

2.2.2.1 Course Survey

The framework adopted in this course is structural linear grading where the different steps are ordered in terms of increasing difficulty that mainly stress the teaching of forms. This is undoubtedly one weakness for which the structural syllabus has been challenged by other alternative syllabuses such as the communicative approach (see 2.3). In fact, the criticism that has been put to the structural syllabus is of similar concerns to that of the grammar- translation

method. Though with this kind of syllabus there is no use of the mother tongue in the classroom, learners are always busy with a contrived reading passage, unnatural where a compilation of sentences focus such and such usage all along the text. Besides, the reading passage is always followed by the same sections from start to finish on new vocabulary, comprehension questions, composition, key structures and exercises, and special difficulties as in Alexander's Practice and Progress (see Appendix 6). In classroom practice, the lessons were teacher-centred (i.e. , the teacher presents and controls every everything, grammatical explanations, repetitions, drills, correcting errors, etc.). In other words, the teacher's work was concerned with teaching rather than making pupils learn. Here again there is an overt dependence on grammar based on the belief that linguistic competence is the only way to master a language. The problem with such an approach is contained in the danger of cramming the learners with too much grammar and very little practice of how it is used in everyday communication.

2.2.2.2 Approach Discredited

If there were not continual changes in foreign language methodology we would perhaps stick to this syllabus because Algerian teachers and learners alike have a tendency to consider very important any language learning that is based on discrete grammatical teaching. This is quite embedded in our social culture where educated people either in French or Arabic see 'grammar' as an entity pertaining to logic and accuracy, and therefore essential in expressing oneself appropriately. To give but a few examples, overt grammar teaching

nowadays constitutes the backbone of nearly all the courses of English that are not directly linked to the Ministry of Education : English for students at the university of continuing training (Université de la Formation Continue), English in professional schools, most private English courses, etc. (see Appendix 7). Nevertheless, with all this grammar around, ' the order of abandoning the approach' (the 'ship' in other circumstances) was given and the structural approach was in its turn discredited.

The main reason , it is said, is the very low results that pupils repeatedly scored year after year in the baccalaureate exams. An example of these scores (see Appendix 8) in English papers at the 'Baccalauréat exam of June 1980' in the western part of Algeria indicates that 85.95% of pupils scored less than 10 out of 20. In other words, out of 8759 candidates, 7529 had less than the average in English. As a consequence, the pedagogical authorities felt the necessity for a change in the teaching and learning of English in Algeria. This change happened in 1981 with the adoption of the communicative approach in secondary education. It must be observed that the change did not happen in the beginning as teachers were very reluctant to change their structural teaching styles of years behind. But the change took place in the end for one reason : specimen copies of 'English' at the 'Baccalauréat exam' were sent from the Ministry of Education and, as a matter of fact, teachers could not disobey the mandated samples because their pupils need them in preparation for the official exam. However, in spite of the merits of the structural approach, some weaknesses were observed at the level of productive skills. With this kind of syllabus, pupils had difficulties to express themselves orally and in writing. Even

the textbooks that were used at that time did not foster communication and were designed to develop vocabulary and grammar (see Appendices 3, 4). This failure at the level of productive skills is due to the intense formal English teaching of which Widdowson says :

> **The problem is that students ... who have received several years of formal English teaching, frequently remain deficient in the ability to actually use the language, and to understand its use, in normal communication, whether in the spoken or written mode.**
>
> **(Widdowson, 1972 : 15)**

Communication skills are brought into focus as a reaction to the structural teaching which has left the learners lacking communicative capacity. Achieving such an aim with the learners is apparently the cogent reason for the adoption the communicative approach in the teaching of English in Algeria. In the early eighties then, teachers of English were once more asked to drop the structural syllabuses and textbooks that have been used for a decade (1971-1981) to adopt newer instruments. In fact, for the first time Algerian textbooks : Spring 1 and Spring 2 in middle schools; New Lines, Midlines and Think It Over in secondary schools, all designed according to different functions of language (describing, instructing, narrating, etc.) were introduced along with new syllabuses graded in the same way. It is also the first Algerian EFL innovation at the level of syllabus and textbook design. Now, as mentioned in the introduction, how much this new material has been applied according to communicative language teaching principles is all the question.

2.3 Communicative-Oriented Courses

The new tendency is that language should not be learned as an abstract system of rules but in a meaningful social context with no stronger emphasis on the formal properties of language. The aim of language teaching with the communicative view is to direct the learners from the foundations to use the target language as a means of communication. In other words, language should be learnt by use.

In this context Allen and Widdowson (1979) explain that in foreign language learning, students want to use English as a tool in their specialist studies. They believe that students' difficulties in communication arise much more from their unfamiliarity with English use than ignorance of its system. Consequently, they see the need for a new approach that gives priority to the communicative properties of language, that is, one in which the learner develops an awareness of the ways in which the language system is used in the performance of acts of communication. They also consider such an approach of better advantage for the learner over a course which simply provides further practice in the composition of sentences. This different orientation in the teaching/learning process **"represents an attempt to move from an almost exclusive concern with grammatical forms to at least an equal concern with rhetorical functions."** (In Brumfit and Johnson, 1979 : 124).

2.3.1 The Communicative Approach

Assuming that learning a foreign language primarily means the ability to use it, the communicative view gives priority to speaking among the four

conventional language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Unlike its predecessors this view puts communication as the starting point in language teaching and then forms are used to carry out acts of communication. Important works have been done in this field and many proponents of this view have advanced ideas that stress this shift from the study of language as such to language use in order to develop communicative abilities in the learners. For this purpose, new curricula were developed with the communicative approach as a novelty in foreign language teaching. And as mentioned earlier, the communicative approach was comparatively introduced quite early in Algeria in 1981 since its introduction in Britain in the 1970s and in China in 1990s (see 1.5). What was perhaps strongly neglected was the preparation of teachers to such an important enterprise and thus the problems that followed this change. Haste or vogue, the same situation is described by Lopez *et al.* (1993) in Mexico in the following terms:

> In August 1992, after almost 20 years of teaching according to a structural approach, teachers of English in secondary schools in Mexico found themselves with a new communicative syllabus. What a change! Unable to get the training needed in such a short time and having to begin immediately, the teachers' only help to cope with the innovation was an <u>appropriate</u> textbook.

> (Lopez *et al.*, 1993 : 12)

The problem, however, with the communicative approach to ELT in secondary education is not only the appropriateness of the textbook but also whether it is communicative or not as is the case with <u>New Lines</u> (see 2.3.2),

how the content has been selected, its organization and layout and quality in its very broad sense. All in all, a real case of vogue, haste and perhaps even unprepared change since everything is going to be criticized an abandoned to leave the place for another change characterized by the introduction of competency-based education (see 2.5).

2.3.2 Approach in Question

On the basis that the central concern of the communicative approach is leading the learner to the ability to use the foreign language or what has been known as communicative competence, the approach according to Wilkins (1976 : 19) " **is potentially superior to the grammatical syllabus because it will produce a communicative competence..."** This qualification which is in fact the ultimate aim of foreign language teaching has had an enormous impact on language learning in the 1980s. However, the gap between theory and practice is great in the sense that theory is not always applicable to classroom realities : the example of the communicative approach and the development of communicative competence as stated in <u>New Lines</u> (p.3) : "...**the aim of New Lines is to develop your communicative competence in English..."** is an illustration of this gap. In fact, communicative competence that partly includes the ability of being appropriate both in speaking and writing in different real life situations has never been reached with the learners. It is even a difficulty in many developed parts of the world where teaching materials and technical equipment may contribute to this end. This could be possible when EFL learners study the target language (English) in a target language community

(England) which is not the case of the great majority of learners throughout the world (Harmer, 1983).

More often than not, syllabus designers forget about the classroom specificities. Many things remain unpredictable in the classroom situation (pupils' educational background, language difficulties, large classes, etc.) and therefore cannot be thought of in advance. It is for these reasons and many others that communicative competence has remained an ideal aim. In fact, Hymes who coined this concept insisted on the social appropriateness of language use by stating that **"there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless"** (Hymes, 1972 : 278). In fact, as explained below, being appropriate in language use in different situations is not even an easy thing for a native speaker. In classroom practice, teachers had difficulties to reach with their learners even what Harmer (1983) modestly labels 'communicative efficiency', a possible and feasible aim which is getting a message through a little amount of English that a learner may possess. Again, because of this matter of appropriate language use that foreign language learners cannot attain, Harmer (1983) and Maley (1986) respectively use the terms "doubtful" and "nagging doubt" about the teaching of communicative competence in an EFL classroom. In our situation, from start the communicative approach was difficult to apply due to many factors such as the physical conditions in the classroom. Large classes usually working in lockstep where the teacher controls everything and does more teaching than letting the students have a chance to speak. Once more, Harmer concludes that **"communicative competence, then, may be not only an impossible goal,**

but also an unnecessary one in the classroom". (Harmer, 1983 : 24). In fact, though we manage to communicate at ease in our mother tongue, we are not perfect users of our native language and consequently our communicative competence is relative. This perhaps explains why such an aim remains 'an impossible goal' as expressed above. In addition, one should mention the problems posed by the production of communicative teaching materials. For example New Lines which consists of eighteen (18) teaching units that present different language functions are first of all too many to be covered in an academic year. This is why after the use of the textbook in the classroom and the claims of practitioners for many years, a decision from the Ministry of Education has come to reduce the number of the teaching units. In the end only twelve (12) units have been selected and retained for literary streams and nine (9) for scientific streams. Second, the textbook contents do not exhibit and encourage communication such as in 'Unit 12' where in the description of a process, the students find themselves mainly concerned with reading about a process and filling diagrams and tables that follow each text in the unit (see Appendices 9, 9-a, 9-b, 9-c).

2.3.3 Misapplication of CLT Methodology

With communicative methodology, the teacher is supposed to provide the conditions (i.e., by means of practice and training for language use) for communication to take place. Though in the 1980s, communicative methodology was " still largely unexplored" in Morrow's terms (in Johnson and Morrow, 1981), the communicative approach requires more emphasis on

certain techniques that are congruent with language use. For this purpose, course writers and also practitioners in the classroom should demonstrate an awareness of some of the strategies that an instrument (CLT methodology) of this type requires. For instance, introducing and reintroducing teaching material known in technical terms as 'cyclical technique' (Wilkins, 1976). Consequently, teachers are urged to create opportunities for learners to develop an adventurous spirit in the use of the target language while trying to convey their meanings to others and understand them. Besides, they should select learning activities in a gradual manner so that communication is developed early in the learners. Establishing a warm understanding with students is also of paramount importance. If students are encouraged to express themselves in simple and straightforward ways under the guidance of teachers who intervene only when the learners hesitate, then interaction will become possible. If, on the contrary students are not given opportunities to try out what they have been learning, or they are stopped whenever they make a mistake, then a growing inhibition and hesitancy may lead them to lose the power of developing spontaneous speaking. In this context , certain features of communication output are sketched out by Harmer as follows:

> **Instead of concentration on accuracy, the focus will be on the success of the communication. The teacher's attitude to error and mistake will therefore be completely different. If, for example, he stops students every time they make a mistake and points this out, then he will be destroying the communication that he is supposed to be encouraging.**
>
> **(Harmer, 1983 : 37)**

Unfortunately, teachers in secondary education in the early eighties were following a teaching method that was grammar-oriented and used for long decades by generations before. The slogan that emphasized " fluency first and grammatical accuracy second" did not work, and this is one of the reasons why the adoption of the communicative approach as an innovation in the teaching/learning of English did not work either. In the end, there were two teaching situations : teachers who never detached themselves from old practices and continued their teaching of grammar, and others who had difficulties to integrate necessary grammar in the development of learners' communication skills.

2.3.4 Approach Abandoned

It would be not be true to claim that communicative language teaching has not brought any improvement in foreign language teaching. The dominance of this methodology now exceeds a quarter of a century, and up till now it is still used in many parts of the world. It is generally acknowledged that CLT has produced relevant and motivating activities for language interaction in the classroom. In fact, many learners have developed some ability (not communicative competence as pretended) to try out their ideas and views especially where the conditions have permitted this (teachers who believed in CLT, suitable teaching materials, small groups of learners, etc.). A simple comparison with the structurally-oriented approaches shows that with the communicative approach, it is fluency that is given priority over accuracy. Teachers have found themselves more concerned with finding communicative

situations for their learners to interact in the target language than an emphasis on grammar, translation or drilling.

However, the communicative approach has also been subject to extensive discussion and criticism. Some say that the communicative principles have not been well understood and therefore neglected or badly put into classroom practice. It is the case of grammar for instance which has been included in support of language functions, but has not been activated in the learner's interaction. With the focus on use and meaning, as is the case of the communicative approach, little or no time is spent on the discrete parts of the language, and therefore, learners face enormous difficulties in the production of language. In other words, it is the generative capacity that the learner lacks when emphasis is put on a certain way of learning ready made phrases and expressions such as: 'Could you show me the way to...?', 'Would you mind if I open the window ?', etc. In other words, there is a neglect of the cognitive side (now claimed to be reintroduced with CBA, see 2.5.1) which is an essential element in the learning process that helps in raising the learner's awareness of language. When the learner is aware that form contributes to meaning he can expand his ideas and views and therefore, develop his generative capacity. This apparent weakness in the learner has constituted a strong reaction to the communicative approach as stated below:

> **Questions about the nature of linguistic knowledge, its different features, the ways in which it is organized, stored and recalled, especially in respect of the vocabulary are very much at the centre of ongoing research in the**

fields of cognitive psychology, second language acquisition/learning and foreign language teaching.

(Klein, 2002 : 8)

Swan (1985) on the other hand, in two articles entitled ' *A critical look at the communicative approach* (1)' strongly states that the **'communicative revolution' is little different from its predecessors in the language teaching field."** (1985 : 2). As for skills and strategies, he explains that that there is no need to teach any kind of strategy (i.e., predicting, negotiation of meaning, guessing, transferability of communication skills from L1 to L2, etc.) for the simple reason that students have been doing this all their life in L1. Under the same title ' *A critical look at the communicative approach* (2), Swan qualifies 'real-life use of language' as 'real-life fallacy' and says that :

... the classroom is not the outside world, and learning a language is not the same as using language. A certain amount of artificiality is inseparable from the process of isolating and focusing on language items for study, ...

(Swan, 1985 : 82)

Though the approach is learner-centred in methodology, the seating arrangement in our schools (large classes) makes learning rather teacher-centred as the latter continues to behave as the dominating person in the classroom, the one-source from whom all the information comes and with whom interaction is carried. In fact, there has been a variety of interpretations of

the communicative approach and many deviations from what it is originally. Some teachers have even never followed the instructions and pretend to be rather *eclectic* and believe in the use of diverse teaching methods, but again diversity of teaching methodologies cannot be regarded as a panacea. While passing, and as mentioned in the outset of this dissertation, a word of caution is necessary here about eclecticism on which Stern says that **"There is no agreement as to what the different methods precisely stand for nor how they could be satisfactorily combined."** (1983 : 482). Put in other words, it is not simply to " **take the best from a hotch-potch of methodologies and dump the rest"** (Tuck, 2003 : 1) [1]. As a result of this deviation or misunderstanding of the communicative approach, student-student interaction – for instance, to express their feelings, emotions and views, etc. is ignored.

What has also caused some concern is the ordering of language functions (describing people or describing a process first, or planning future activities, etc.) according to their degree of difficulty and what levels of formality in grammar should be used. In the end, it is not only a matter of whether or not the approach is learner-centred for the success of any method or approach. It depends more on the people who carry out the educational enterprise and know how to apply it. What is sure is that without adequately prepared teachers and suitable teaching materials, it is useless to think of introducing any change or innovation in the educational system. There must exist a general implication of all the pedagogical partners in order to avoid guaranteed failure. In this context and about the communicative approach in Algeria, Miliani makes the following observation which could be roughly translated as follows :

> **Practice shows us that traditional methods continue to be used in spite of the progress achieved in methodology. thus, it seems that methodological routine continues more than ever before as it is subject to superficial presentation of new labels whose philosophies are only rarely interiorized by teachers. [2].**

(Miliani, 1998 : 14)

The result is that communicative language teaching has not led the pupils to the expectations that were set by the educational authorities. It is also the teachers' views in general because the learners did not, in fact, show any acceptable standard of English either in classroom tests or in official exams (i.e., below average with 32% and 39.39%) as can be seen on table 2.1 below :

Institution	Academic year	Exam	Section	Pass rate
Lycée El Ibrahimi	2006	Baccalauréat	languages	34.21%
Lycée El Ibrahimi	2007	Baccalauréat	languages	39.39%

Table 2.1 : Baccalaureate pass rates for 2006 and 2007.

Source : *Foreign Languages Stream*, Lycée El Ibrahimi. Ain-Témouchent.

This observation is also mentioned in the official <u>Programme of English as a Second Foreign Language</u>.

> **The experiment of the communicative approach, in force during the last decades, has shown that even if the pupil has reached a <u>certain mastery of the language</u>, the fact is that in practice his performance has remained at a very <u>low level</u>. That is why a <u>change</u> in the teaching of English has become a <u>priority</u>.**

(<u>Programme of English as a Second Foreign Language</u>.

1ere.A.M. 2003 : 5)

However, an observation should be made about this quotation concerning the expression '**a certain mastery of language**' which would be rather more suitable if it were 'a certain ability of communication' as the aim with the communicative approach was to develop 'the ability to communicate' and not 'mastery of the language', a slogan that pertained to the structural approach and the concept of linguistic competence. It must be also mentioned that the adoption and abandonment of the communicative approach is not whether the pupil has reached or not any mastery of the language. It is in fact wide currency that the teacher's attitude towards the approach was itself the cause. The approach was imported and top-down implemented without any teacher preparation and the whole operation was somehow 'putting the cart before the horse'. The result in the end was a great disparity between the communicative principles and classroom practice in the sense that though the teachers were supposed to be 'communicative', they continued to teach according to the structural approach.

A change has then taken place, but it is not linked to pedagogic factors alone as competency education is now in vogue in many parts of the world.

Besides, the globalization phenomenon has also had some political impacts to universalize education. Thus, the adoption of the competency-based approach to English teaching and learning in middle and secondary education became official in 2003.

Now before dealing with this competency-based education in the next section but one, another experiment with English took place in primary education ten (10) years earlier in 1993 and deserves examination.

2.4 English as a First Foreign Language in Primary Education

In 1993, the Ministry of Education started an experiment with the teaching of English as a *first* foreign language in parallel with French in some pilot classes in primary schools. It was an innovation in primary education, indeed an ambitious enterprise that lasted nearly a decade as an experiment since it had not been tried at a large scale in the schools of the country. Unfortunately the experiment failed, particularly because of insufficient preparation at many levels as explained below. And also because it was considered in the end a waste of money and time according to many educationists and even parents' observations concerning the outcomes of their children's English. They all agreed that the efforts could have been spent otherwise on teaching materials for instance, or on teachers' guides and teaching aids, etc.

On this matter of an early start of ' Foreign Languages in Elementary Schools' (referred to as FLES), many specialists claim that it is quite beneficial for children. This view is based on theories that were advanced in the

1920's by Piaget and his theory of cognitive development for an early start to learn a foreign language on the basis that everything new for a child serves as a catalyst for new thinking and therefore learning. And later in the 1960's by Chomsky and his language acquisition device (LAD) which asserts that humans are born with an innate facility of acquiring language. A theory that has developed into what is known as "critical period hypothesis" which refers to the learner's best age (before 12) to achieve a native-like proficiency in a foreign language. Yet, in spite of the emphasis put on this period, the question about the optimal or sensitive age for learning a language is still hotly debated among researchers. On this basis, many countries tried this experiment and dropped it soon when they realized that such theories perhaps worked only under certain conditions. It was also the case in Algeria - though probably for different reasons - since the experiment was stopped in September 2002 because of many social, pedagogical, and organizational problems to cite but a few.

2.4.1 Social Dimension

First, at the social level and from the beginning, many parents expressed their disagreement or rather refusal for English in primary education as a choice with French for their children. They claim that although English is an international language it has no social function in Algeria, and therefore did not want to compromise their children's future. In contrast, French is a language that is spoken outside the classroom, and has also a social function in Algeria though not officially recognized. In fact, it is considered as a language of widespread use along with Arabic in conversational exchanges between

people, as well as in many administrations, international trade, universities, research, newspapers, magazines, and specialized journals, etc. This view was that of literate and educated parents who were not favourable for English as a choice for their children; while those who had no views and had no idea about the choice or had not even been asked were generally those whose children went for the experiment.

As a result, there is a unanimous observation among teachers in secondary education as well as in the university that the pupils who chose English in the primary school were of the same level when they reached secondary education and later on at the university. The pupils themselves regretted having chosen English in option when they realized that they were not any better in the four language skills compared to the pupils who started English in the middle school five (5) years later. The latter were in addition, more advantaged in French because it was their first choice in primary education. In connection with the idea of childhood as an optimal age for foreign language learning, Van Els *et al.* (1984) explain that neurophysiological and psychological arguments about FLES are not very strong. They further confirm that "**research has not shown childhood to be a better age for learning foreign language skills than adolescence or adulthood, except perhaps in the area of pronunciation**". (Van Els *et al.*, 1984 : 170). However, from our teaching experience, children may be good at pronunciation if they are exposed to teachers who have a standard correct pronunciation.

2.4.2 Pedagogical Dimension

At the pedagogical level such an enterprise really needs a serious study to determine how the innovation will be accepted in the society. When the idea is mature enough and appeals for innovation are nation-wide, only then the experiment could be launched. Still syllabuses, textbooks, and teacher training for the teaching of children (i.e., not only how to teach but mostly how to treat children) should be carried out simultaneously for a smooth implementation of the whole operation. These, unfortunately were received as pedagogical instructions for the teachers to apply with or without the means for such an experiment. Instead of teaching English, many of them were rather teaching Arabic on the well-known model : " this and that in Arabic" is " this and that in English". A teaching that goes from L1 to L2 and vice versa of different items in isolation. This is not to undermine the translation method or whatsoever, but in this experiment an overwhelming gap in teachers' pedagogical training has been observed among the staff. As might be expected, the results were unsatisfactory according to many English language teachers, school administrators, inspectors of English, etc.

Teaching children is a serious matter, and teaching English in particular requires teachers with sufficient abilities in the subject matter in addition to some experience in foreign language pedagogy, namely for speaking and reading skills as these will have a direct impact on the learner. It is also very important at this level to be technically skilled as this language is completely different from Arabic. As mentioned in the quote above (Van Els *et al.*, 1984), childhood may be a good age for pronunciation; however, if it is not adequately

taught by teachers, correction will be quite difficult at a later stage. The emphasis on these characteristics is crucial for many a time educational authorities try to apply new things on the basis that the teachers will find their way alone but this is not always true. It is a big mistake to neglect teacher education especially for teachers who are supposed to deal with school children. This is why several components must be considered in advance with special care as these have either a positive or negative impact on children's learning. Among these, there is a need for teachers with sufficient language skills and qualifications, adequate programmes, suitable teaching materials with accompanying teacher guidelines and books at their disposal, and everything that makes teaching enjoyable for children. In other words, all the partners in education are concerned for the success of an operation of this scale. Unfortunately, these are the components that were missing or inexistent in our elementary schools.

On the other hand, though pedagogical instructions are usually sent to the teachers for such purposes, it is the follow-up and pedagogical support that generally have never been well structured, and teachers are quite often abandoned to their own practices. Besides, though it is not the purpose of this study to go in-depth analysis of the syllabus and the teachers' textbook and guide, these have – in addition to the learning contents – to include some detailed information on instructional strategies as far as the teaching of children is concerned. A look at the textbooks designed for such a purpose (My Book of English), three successive books, 1, 2, 3, shows that the preparation was in great need of time for better design and layout, namely at the level of

attractiveness of pictures , drawings, writings, and activities.

In fact, the textbooks do not show a good design, the print and illustrations are in black. This makes them unattractive for children who are known for their pleasure and appreciation of colourful illustrations and glossy pages. A glimpse at the textbooks also shows that the contents have been worked out in hurry and in response to the experiment (see Appendix 10). Moreover, while considering the impact that textbooks have on children's learning development, the former have to be given all the necessary conditions before the final print. In particular, textbooks should for instance, exhibit those things that are related to the child's experiences of life within his family surroundings, playgrounds and school. Other observations concern the lack of little dialogues that pupils appreciate repeating just like songs. On this matter, the selected songs in My Book of English 3 (Billy Boy, Old Mac Donald, Clementine, etc. pp. 96-105) are undoubtedly helpful in the teaching process, and they would certainly enhance children's motivation for the language if the were accompanied by musical notes. In fact, practically all teachers in the primary schools as well as those in the middle and high schools confirm that songs make learning enjoyable but as referred to above they need necessary equipment to sing these songs. Many other things have also been the object of criticism in the above mentioned textbooks. For instance, why should contents in My Book of English 1 mostly be limited to vocabulary, successive questions and instructions in isolation as listed below ? For the sake of illustration, and as originally written, the following excerpts are taken from My Book of English 1.

2.12. reorder the word cards below

example :

Are = 1   how = 2   ? = 3   you = 4

write one number on your slate

2	1	4	3

2.13. reorder the wordcards on your worbook [sic]

2.14. match jumbled letters and words on your workbook

example : epn   pen

2.15. reorder letter cards to make words

example :

four   f6   o15   u21   r18

2.16. underline the words that contain "e" on your workbook

example : hello – my – your

2.17. circle the words that contain "r" on your workbook

- orange - slate - workbook

2.18. colour the word that contains "t" on your workbook

- one - two - four

2.19. underline the common letter on your workbook

example : one – three

- four – one – two

2.20. cross the odd one out on your workbook

example : three - thrre

2.21. wordsearch on your workbook

2.22. use letter cards to make these words (work in pairs)

- hello - three - book - please.

2.23. use letter cards to make these words (work alone)

- one - two - slate

2.24. game

Follow "please" instructions.

2.25. complete with letter cards (e – o – t)

- s l a . e   h . l l o   . n e   s a . ch . l

(<u>My Book of English</u> 1, pp.12-13)

A simple analysis of the contents above shows that children are going to learn a number of decontextualized words. Though vocabulary is necessary in language learning, it is now a long time since educationists insist on the fact that children are capable of learning whole chunks of language provided the presentation and exposure are adequate. In fact, children are able to build hypotheses and ideas and test themselves in limited topics within their reach, suffice it to make this at their disposal with teachers who are adequately trained for such a purpose.

2.4.3   Organizational Dimension

At the organizational level, and in an interview with the first-year EFL students in the Department of English at the university of Tlemcen who started English in the primary school [3], the following observations were reported:

1-   when they reached their fist year (1.A.S) in secondary education they had to follow their English course with the pupils who started English in the middle school five (5) years later.

2-   they were supposed to be in special classes with different English programmes and textbooks but these were not available.

3-   they felt below standard in French compared to their peers who chose this language in primary education. What is more, they realized that the things were not any better in English since they were in the same classroom with the pupils who started learning English five (5) years later in the middle school.

4-   this last observation (3, above) was also confirmed by the teachers when students of this experiment arrived in the Department of Foreign Languages in September 2002.

Finally the decision to make an end to the 'Experiment of English as a First Foreign Language in Primary Education in Algeria' was because of the fact that educational authorities were expecting some outperformance from the pupils who started English earlier, but this was not the case compared to their peers who did not go through the experiment. In other words, though the pupils of the experiment studied nine (9) instead of usually five (5) years of English by the time they reached the university, they did not display any better performance in their studies.   However, it sounds easy to speak about an experiment than implement it, and the first observation here is that learning must not be left to chance. In fact, it is very surprising to see that so little is known about the whole experiment; but the lack of collaboration among the partners in charge of the operation on the one hand, and the lack of training and experience of teachers in terms of professional qualifications to teach in a primary school on the other have certainly a great deal of responsibility in the failure of the experiment. More often, many promising innovations do not go beyond their implementation because of hostility and resistance, and sometimes lack of preparation of

teachers as agents through which an experiment generally succeeds or fails, and other times there is no follow-up of the operation or pure neglect.

2.5 Competency – Based Approach

2.5.1 Approach Characteristics

As a point of departure in the official <u>Programme of English</u> mentioned above (2003), a competency-based approach integrates a set of capacities and skills in addition to knowledge that are to be used efficiently in solving problem-situations. Competency education is now applied to all subjects in the school curriculum from primary to secondary education in Algeria . Originally the notion of competency was first thought of and developed in America by the end of the 1950s and also referred to as performance-based approach. This is indeed how it originated since the underlying idea was to link the labour market to education where competencies are assessed on the basis of demonstrated performance. This diversity of terminology is known under the name of competency-based education and relies on the teaching/learning conception that is both cognitivist and socio-constructivist. It is, in other words, an integration of two perspectives : cognitive and socio-cultural theories. This refers to strategies by which learners relate, for instance, the dictionary and grammar meaning of utterances to their communicative value in the social context. More practically, it is to enable learners to develop competencies needed in future professions in the society and be open to new learning and new knowledge or what is known as lifelong learning.

For this purpose, learning at school should lead to the ability to perform

tasks in real life situations. For the learner, it is not a matter of absorbing linguistic knowledge or socio-cultural knowledge but rather a process of 'learning how to learn'. This is reminiscent of a famous quote by the American historian and educator Adams (2008 : 1) who says that : " **they know enough who know how to learn**". In other words the learner is going to use cognitive and metacognitive strategies in language learning tasks, and be able at finding information either by using previously learned procedures or strategies in front of problem-solving situations. In sum, he is going (or at least supposed) to learn things that lead to self-reliance and autonomy. In this approach the key words are knowledge and skills: learners are expected to develop and practise these two components in areas of work outside the school through simulations, interviews, visits, reports, and most important of all by developing communication skills. It is also a task- based approach where learners are either required to use their knowledge, attitude, behaviour to know how to act in different situations, or use motor functions in the manipulation of instruments and equipment (also known as manual or physical skills).

2.5.2 Arguments Against

Competency-based education as applied to English teaching and learning in Algeria is in its very beginning a real problem. A very common element is that all the newly designed textbooks, both for middle and secondary schools are stuffed with different sections that present plenty of information, data and knowledge to the learner. The question, however, is that the great majority of teachers who are supposed to carry out this change have worked for a long time

with the previous approaches (i.e., structural and communicative) and unanimously find that the prescribed textbooks are overloaded with things that cannot be covered in the time allocated to the teaching of English. This shows that there is no coordination between textbook designers and teaching practitioners for the simple reason that the same thing – an overburden system - happened with the preceding series of Spring (1& 2), New Lines, Midlines and Think it Over where never have the teachers been able to finish all the teaching units in these textbooks. The only somewhat positive element in the innovation is perhaps at the level of local printing of the new textbooks for middle and secondary education where a slight progress is noticeable in what concerns the quality of the pupils' textbooks and pictures.

These new textbooks consist of a   series of ELT textbooks, Spotlight on English, (1, 2, 3) for the first three years, and On The Move, for the fourth year in middle schools. Likewise, At the Crossroads, Getting Through, and New Prospects,   are respectively designed for the first, second and third year in secondary education. What is new about these textbooks is that they all include a project work as the final step of the file (' file' is the new term for 'unit' in middle school textbooks). This project work is, in fact, a novelty in Algerian textbooks and alone requires more than the weekly programmed time for the English course. This supposes a new time should be allotted to English but the number of subjects in our schools usually does not permit any extra hours for English. As a consequence, another innovation should consist of changing the educational system into one that relies on subject specialization to allow more hours for the pupils to concentrate on the main subjects of a given

stream. Though this is not the place to develop this idea, it would be worth mentioning that limiting school subjects according to specialties is developed in further perspectives in the last three paragraphs of the general conclusion of this dissertation. It is as a proposal for the restructuring of our school system in order to make the learner develop more what he knows best as concerns academic subjects, and still have time for extra-curricular activities that have become essential in any learning and where the learner can develop his skills and gifts.

The idea of *project work* is considered one of the most important parts of the competency-based approach that pupils have to do at the end of each file. A project work is at the same time process and product oriented. It is a process because it involves the learners in an a number of cognitive skills where the latter have to think about the theme they have to develop, plan and discuss what elements are to be considered. It is also product - oriented because it is supposed to lead to some production, a written document based on the previous steps. It is also recognized that among the things a project can develop in the learner is undoubtedly a better understanding of what has been learned during the file as the content is generally thematic. The pupils' collaboration in a work such as this is, in fact, a rich opportunity as it stimulates curiosity and real life investigation. When this action is repeated after each file, such an operation is supposed to develop in the learners a certain learning autonomy though as mentioned earlier (see 1.5.3), Miliani (In Abbad, 2007) considers that the Algerian school does not prepare pupils to learning autonomy. However, if this operation is used and supported by teachers, the

pupils are going to learn how to collect information from different sources and create the bases of doing things without the help of the teacher. Besides, they learn how to rely on themselves and gain some confidence in their work. The aim is to show some independence and responsibility in the project work because the learners are themselves going to decide what to work on and how to carry it out. This encourages 'cooperative learning' among pupils in the sense that diversity of ideas and views is shared and makes everyone involved in the learning enterprise, etc.

Yet in spite of the importance attached to the project work to the assertion that it is extremely beneficial for learners, the question at issue now is whether or not pupils from primary to secondary education benefit from these projects that are to be done every two or three weeks after the completion of each file. This is the actual situation that pupils live throughout the school year at the expense of other courses and activities.

A priori the project work is not dealt with in the way it is described in the official programmes. In fact, teachers seem to have no willingness to take part in the innovation and even show no interest in the operation. This has resulted in implementation difficulties that could be qualified as a failure. Consequently, learners at all levels find themselves always talking about projects (in the sense of a compulsory thing to do) and rarely working on them. They do so until they bring their parents under pressure to provide internet expenses and have, unfortunately, someone else (usually the cyberspace manager) to do the project in their place for an amount of money in return for any topic of their choice. However, the greatest problem lies in the fact that the selection of the

information for the project is going to be made by someone who has nothing to do with teaching and learning. This means that the cyber manager is not going to effectively find out what the learners are looking for. The manipulation of the computer and the internet are not sufficient for appropriate selection of the materials. In the end, the majority of pupils have their projects done for them in this way [4]. The result is, however, neither the learners nor the teachers are going to benefit from these projects which are generally beyond everyone's level (see Appendix 12). This is, in fact, the situation that all pupils confront, and this is why the project work has to be reexamined in its organization.

A direct implication of this situation is the availability of sufficient computers and the internet at disposal in schools so as the projects would be worked in the school environment with the teachers or other specialized staff for this purpose. Faced with these difficulties on a daily basis as the project work is not only a requirement of the English course but also that of other subjects in the school curriculum, the pupils are always busy doing something and this situation has posed new frustrations. A daunting task in fact and a daily preoccupation because of the accumulation of projects that are to be handed in to different teachers. The pupils' attitude towards the project is manifestly irritation not because they frequently have to do this 'so-called research' work but also the way it is dealt with. Just another thing to do. Thus, they have become exhausted and quite stressed to say the least with these successive projects: today's project is for English and tomorrow for Arabic and History, and then the turn of Biology and Physics, etc. Regretfully, this is the situation that continues to prevail in our schools although many teachers and students have

expressed their concerns. Apparently, no one seems to bother as if all wait and see and foresee another change since the most concerned people seem to have complaints about the competency-based approach. Consequently, instead of expecting a rise in educational achievement in the different subjects of the curriculum we might witness a drop in standard. On the one hand this is due to learners' passivity, and unfortunately teachers' *laisser-aller* policy that demonstrates neither any enthusiasm for pupils' projects nor for competency education on the other.

2.5.3   Current Difficulties

There are a number of shortcomings which are engendered by the textbooks (Spotlight on English series, On the Move,) in many ways : first as such and second in the way they are used in the classroom. While passing, it is perhaps worth mentioning, at least from the point of view of distinction that the first title Spotlight on English (2004-2005, 2nd edition) has appeared on the cover without any indication in English to whom it is designed for. It should be "Book one" since we have Spotlight on English, Book two. And because it is a second edition this missing information must be corrected. The other observations concern the following points.

- Textbooks are still used in a traditional way, i.e., in a linear way and practically each activity is carried out in isolation. Such a practice shows how the idea of change is always apprehended unless there is a consensus on the matter.

- Lessons are still delivered on grammar and vocabulary basis as teachers themselves evaluate heir progress with their pupils in terms of how much grammar and vocabulary they learn or rather how much they cover in an academic year [5].

- Activities that are difficult in preparation are left apart because teachers do not have any guides with key answers.

- As the activities are new and different from what they have been used to, pupils need plenty of explanations that the teacher should provide. This procedure is not only time consuming but also sends the teacher back to the old practice of presentation, practice and production (PPP) or what is known as a deductive approach.

- Quite the opposite of what was anticipated, pupils' participation is not better than before (if not worse) because they do not understand textbook instructions.

- Teachers themselves have plenty of complaints, to enumerate but a few :

1 - very ambitious programmes, and particularly overloaded contents often beyond pupils' reach, for instance, in New Prospects for the learners to follow and finish on time (see 4.3.2.2).

2 - textbooks are overloaded. Therefore, they have become a heavy burden in preparation both for teachers and pupils. The teachers have always repeated that the contents of the textbooks and programmes in general are too long and cannot be covered in a school year. To corroborate this, pupils of 'Terminale' (3.A.S) classes are protesting at present (January 2008) against the

lengthy new syllabuses of the whole school curriculum. According to the Algerian daily newspapers, the pupils are in fact organizing demonstrations throughout the country in support of their claims, namely, the reduction of lengthy pedagogical programmes which according to them cannot be finished before the 'Baccalauréat Exam in June 2008'. Some of these are expressed in the following words: **"The programmes are so long that we cannot follow, and teachers themselves, under the obligation to finish them before the end of the academic year cannot teach at ease."** [6] (Benachour, 2008 : 10).

3 - teachers have not been prepared for this change. They have no understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the innovation. Thus, they have found themselves psychologically discouraged and the whole atmosphere about the innovation is rather negative.

4 - lack of documentation (no reference books, no up - to - date dictionaries, the internet for school administration only), etc.

5 - all novice and veteran teachers have plenty of questions on many issues on competency- based approach, and do not know what to do in many different steps of a given file.

6 - teachers recognize that pupils' projects are not dealt with seriously. As mentioned above, the preparation takes place in cyberspaces for money, and no one bothers whether it is of any help to the pupil.

7 - teachers feel a great pressure to deal with different and successive tasks that leave no place for the lighter side: games, songs, puzzles, etc. which are generally recognized to bring some variety

to teaching and learning in the sense that they offer a change from routine, stimulate discussion among learners and help in the creation of a relaxed classroom atmosphere.

8 -the lighter side, consequently, deserves to be given more importance. For instance, by the end of each teaching unit, there should be some language games, jokes, riddles, from easy to challenging crosswords (with solutions in the teacher's book) and songs, etc.

As concerns the last observation, it would be better if it were scheduled in the official timetable otherwise teachers in their great majority tend to think that the lighter side is a waste of time. On the contrary, it is widely known among specialists and practitioners that quite often songs, games, puzzles, etc. offer a change from routine classroom activities and develop learners' motivation which remains for teachers the most valuable factor that leads to successful learning and better results. Kids, pupils, university students, adults learning a foreign language, all like the language classroom where the atmosphere is enjoyable and different from any other place in the school. This is, in fact, what all teachers ought to develop to make their classes interesting in order to create intrinsic motivation in the learners.

2.6 Conclusion

This part has been concerned with a description and an analysis of the major changes in English language teaching in Algeria since the 1960s. In general, these ranged from synthetic approaches with an emphasis on the

teaching of discrete grammatical items, vocabulary, translation, etc. to more analytical approaches where the emphasis is on the learner in order to train him to communicate, develop skills, and lead him to learning autonomy, etc. In any case, a superior or good or even a satisfactory theory of language is something that applied linguists prefer not to mention. However, the thorny point for educational authorities in this country is that the learners' results were neither satisfactory with the structurally-oriented nor with the communicatively-oriented courses. In reflection, little has been done to increase the motivational levels of pupils. And although the communicative approach has attempted to involve learners in activities that promote communication, teachers have only exceptionally reached some communicative ability with their learners. Communicative competence as an aim of this approach has remained something unattainable with learners. This is why it is really doubtless whether pupils can reach this aim of being appropriate in the use of English since they are not even appropriate in their own native language. Besides when the reputation of a school is based on exam results, teaching is also directed towards this end and teachers tend to prepare pupils for examinations rather than developing their communication skills. Other factors that do not even help the pupils to reach a certain amount of acceptability in the four language skills are linked to such things as large classes, inadequate teaching materials, pre-service insufficient professional preparation and in-service development of teachers. In addition, there is an overwhelming majority of teachers who always have a negative attitude towards change and prefer to stick to their familiar practices. As was the case with the communicative approach in the early

1980s, now it is competency-based approach that is - to say the least — reluctantly accepted (see note 5 to this chapter) and teachers continue to measure their progress in terms of grammar.

In consequence, a revision of our practices is recommended : more classroom research involving teacher-practitioners, syllabus designers, textbook writers, teacher education and development institutions, educational policy makers should all be concerned before opting for an educational change in order to ensure successful ELT in Algeria.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. Further details on eclecticism are supplied in this quotation from Tuck : " **Eclecticism must be principled. From the many EFL methodologies of the past we must choose to adhere to the most academically accepted theories of language and language learning and select from a mosaic of ideas, materials and activities what is most relevant to the particular needs of the learners"**.

    (Tuck, 2003 : 1)

2. Original text : "**La pratique nous montre que les méthodes traditionnelles continuent de sévir en dépit des progrès méthodologiques réalisés. Il apparaît ainsi que la routine méthodologique continue de plus belle car soumise seulement à l'habillage superficiel de labels nouveaux dont les philosophies ne sont que rarement intériorisés par les enseignants"**.

    (Miliani, 1998 : 14)

3. In the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen, the number of students who started English as a first foreign language in primary education were only about 20 students who came from some schools in the town of Tlemcen where the experiment was carried out.

    (Department of English, 2001-2002)

4. In our questions about the way the pupils prepare their projects or rather have them made in cyberspaces, teachers say that lengthy programmes, time constraints, large classes, noise and lack of documentation do not permit to prepare pupils' projects in the classroom.

5. This observation is also reported by general inspectors of English who strangely hear the teachers qualifying their progress with the pupils in terms of grammar (i.e., how many grammar lessons they have done so far).

    The observation is, in fact, strange since at present it is competency-based approach that is adopted in Algeria from primary to secondary education and not a grammatical syllabus. This also explains the importance of grammar in the teachers' eyes, and that change occurs only on paper not in their mind.

6. Original text : *"Les programmes sont tellement chargés que nous n'arrivons pas à suivre et les professeurs eux-mêmes, soumis à l'obligation de les terminer avant la fin de l'année, n'arrivent plus à enseigner correctement".*

    (Benachour, 2008 : 10)

CHAPTER THREE

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE IN FLT POLICY

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CHAPTER THREE

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE IN FLT POLICY

3.1 Introduction

As mentioned earlier innovation requires a thorough knowledge of the situation where the change is going to take place. In the case of ELT, three main components are very important to consider, namely, teachers, materials construction, and learners. In fact, for teachers as well as for the two other components, strategies for preparation in advance are necessary. First, teachers are unanimously considered the agents of change in education, and for this purpose, they have to be aware that such things as innovation and change are quite frequent in FLT. Thus, in order not to reject innovation, teachers need to develop some educational strategies in their theoretical bases. These include for instance, reflection on teaching, and some ongoing research that allow teachers to evaluate what is new and either adopt it or reject it on a scientific basis. It is all the same for materials construction that cannot be designed separately from the whole pedagogical framework. Some strategies that concern content and organisation as well as layout and coverage are important before designing any textbook. And above all, how to make the learners aware, interested, motivated in the course is perhaps the most important strategy that teachers need to develop.

3.2 Teacher Education: Pre-Service / In-Service Development

If we take it for granted that teaching rests on theory, teachers will then need to know about teaching in theory before going to practice. In fact, theoretical bases in foreign language teaching and learning in teacher education are necessary and intended to equip the student teachers with the development of ELT methodologies and particularly with those related to EFL throughout time. There are many issues where theoretical knowledge is also very useful when dealing with specific problems such as introducing new words or discipline problems, etc. This is why teacher development is considered as a continuous process that begins early in pre-service teacher education and continues in the teaching career. When student teachers know how the history of a given field has developed they can handle better the present and the future. At any rate, the more the trainees know about the domain of foreign language teaching and learning, the better they feel in the classroom.

To have an overview of traditional and current methodologies, to know the reasons why such and such method or approach has gained respect and lasted for decades, or has been abandoned after some time or just after experimentation is another way of directing oneself in the profession. Reading about the reasons of success or failure alone may bring the teacher trainees to a number of questions on the teaching and learning of languages. Questions that are mainly linked to the reasons why some students are successful and others not, and why innovation is inevitable in FLT, etc.

These questions, in fact, enable the teachers to build up some knowledge that can serve as a reference for effective teaching. It is more than

that since it helps in the development of reflective teaching (see 3.2.3) and therefore leads to professional development. With theory, the teacher is also supposed to acquaint himself with some issues and options in language teaching development. In other words, he is supposed to have the opportunity to be aware of themes that concern language acquisition and learning. This is to be done without too much formal theory because teachers – as it is argued throughout this dissertation- are better informed by practical experience. What matters most are theoretical indications that are in relation with the language learning in general. It is then essential for teachers to attend lectures and also workshops which investigate the teaching/learning dynamic and expose situations of reflection. Ideally, this should be done during pre-service training sessions where the trainee is exposed to a variety of EFL techniques and methodologies to help him in his professional career. He will have notions on the teaching of language skills as well as items of grammar, language functions, how to plan and present a lesson, etc. These points will be better developed while the teacher is in the classroom, yet theory remains a support in the undertaking of action research.

3.2.1 Action Research

On teaching and learning strategies, Reed (2002 : 1) says that " **Action research gives teachers the skills needed to work on problems specific to their classrooms and their schools**". In fact, action research is now an important component of pre-service education programme. The aim is to make the trainee aware how teaching and learning difficulties could be first avoided

before finding ways how they could be tackled and solved. On the other hand, while in- service, action research in the field of foreign language teaching and learning has more than ever before become a necessity if the teacher is professionally oriented and want to reach effectiveness in teaching. In fact, with the advances of technology, resources that teachers could not find easily are not any more a problem. Most schools are now equipped with more and more computers and the internet has become at the disposal of great number of teachers. The teacher here acting alone or collaboratively with colleagues is an opportunity for ongoing research for the purpose of identifying and solving teaching/learning problems and also improving teaching practices and knowledge. In a report about an "Action Research Network at the University of Kansas" (2005 : 1), the following observation is made :

> **If done carefully and thoughtfully, Educational action research can improve an individual's teaching. If done by multiple teachers at a single school, it has the potential to enhance the overall quality of the school.**
>
> (http://actionresearch.altec.org/)

By doing so, the teachers actually find themselves in perpetual research in order to improve the teaching-learning process. This practice also helps teachers to change for instance classroom procedures that do not work. When this operation is conducted with other colleagues it becomes in the long run a basis in the proposition of innovation and change. For example, what contents textbooks should include, what skills are to be more emphasized, what sort of

English syllabus would be more suitable in the country, etc. If teachers are accustomed to research in such a way and particularly at interdisciplinary dimension, contents of different subject matters could be complementary in themes and topics and in the same time very helpful for the learners general understanding. This is the best time where teachers have the possibility to share their experiences. In case of any future proposal for innovation and change, teachers find themselves ready to participate because they are aware of their concerns. The contribution here is from grass-roots or down-top oriented. Now, if teachers act individually and do not collaborate in the study of their concerns, decisions for innovation and change at the level of educational authorities are taken without their views because they might have nothing to propose and are therefore top-down oriented. Thus, resistance and rejection are inevitable and implementation of any change is not without any difficulties as is the case today with the school reforms and the introduction of competency-based education in Algeria. Consequently, action research is a valuable form of professional development and constant reflection.

3.2.2 Reflective Teaching

Reflective teaching as developed here concerns two phases, respectively, during pre-service and in-service teacher pedagogical development. The purpose is to make the teacher aware of this process of self-observation and self-evaluation on how things work in the classroom. It is in fact providing teachers with suggestions that help in teaching practices. As a matter of fact, there is no exhaustive list for such strategies as the teacher himself is

encouraged to reflect upon his teaching either for the purpose of improving his daily tasks or how to proceed in case of change.

What is reflective teaching ? How can it be developed ? Is it important in educational programmes ?

Reflective teaching is also referred to in literature as 'reflection' and 'critical thinking'. Put simply it is reflecting on one's teaching in order to bring some improvement to teaching practice difficulties. In this context, Richards says that " reflection is a response to past experience and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action". (In Miller de Arechaga, 2001 : 3). While "Pennington (1992) defines reflective teaching as deliberating on experience, and that of mirroring experience". (In Miller de Arechaga, 2001: 2). Most writers in the end consider reflective teaching as an essential component of teacher professional development. Now what matters most in this section is the ability for programme designers and policy makers to be aware of the importance of including "reflective teaching" as a basic component in education development. Therefore, it is important to think of drawing student teachers' attention during two periods of extreme importance in the teacher's career. First in pre-service while the trainee is learning to become a teacher: here the trainee is given the opportunity to go through a programme that concentrates on the teaching practices in EFL classrooms in order to facilitate the development of reflection in this preparation phase. In other words, the student teacher is supposed to find himself in institutions that do not only impart traditional stilted programmes that stress the ways of

keeping the learners under control but also how to react to the various teaching situations. To this end, experienced teacher trainers may be of great help on the basis that experience and practice are better than the best theory. The trainers are going to put the student teacher in situations where he has to think about a complex teaching situation. By doing so often this practice, the trainee feels more confident to go to the classroom.

Among the strategies that promote reflection, trainees have to go through research work about different topics such as learners' educational and social backgrounds, attitudes towards languages, motivation, discipline problems, etc. The aim behind such projects is to engage the trainees in some research where they discover by themselves some facts and views that are specific to schools, teachers, learners and classrooms. When they have sufficient information and understandings about these elements, microteaching is the most indicated strategy that can prepare the trainees to the classroom. The training institutions mentioned earlier in the general introduction (ITE, ENS, Universities) should make teacher education as the most important part of teacher preparation where the trainees alone and in cooperation with their peers should show their abilities that allow them to go into the teaching profession.

Once more the most crucial point now is the staff preparation. In fact, it has become a general concern of school directors, headmasters, and inspectors to report on the teachers in need of adequate training because they encounter many difficulties in the teaching profession. This evaluation is itself to be re-examined but as it is not the object of this section, suffice it to say for the moment that this side of pedagogical administration exerts a negative impact on

teachers, and really prevents many novice teachers to use their potential. A change is necessary at this level and should be advice-oriented all along a sufficient period of time during which the prospective teacher will have time for information about his new job and a good amount of practice. It is the only way if we want to keep prospective teachers who are convinced and devoted to the teaching job which is nowadays often qualified as unattractive compared to other professions. Unfortunately, many university graduates go (not as a choice) to teaching because they have not found jobs of their choice. While waiting for better prospects they somehow 'fill in the gaps' to quote a teaching activity that is quite used by foreign language teachers. This is perhaps also one of the causes of a category of completely disinterested teaching staff.

The second part of reflective teaching is the time of in-service development where the teacher finds himself in situation and context. The place is the classroom where he is going to have enough time for reflection on his preparation, competence, behaviour, personality, and most importantly on the learners' feedback. Here the teacher has the opportunity to develop professionally if he is motivated. Whatever praise or criticism of the teaching method or approach that is adopted in ELT, it is always possible for a teacher to find his way through. Now he has at his disposal, in a general way, the learners' textbooks and some reference books such as the teacher's book, the syllabus, pedagogical instructions and perhaps some teachers' guides. In addition, the teacher has also his colleagues to turn to for advice, and staff meetings in order to exchange and share ideas. In this context, Miller observes this mutual consultation and help among colleagues by stating that :

> **Conscientious professionals are always looking for solutions to problems and most colleagues are likely to be sympathetic and suggest solutions or encourage their peers to look for their solution.**
>
> **(Miller de Arechaga, 2001 : 2)**

Reflective teaching in this phase develops a lot as the daily informal exchanges between colleagues are frequent before going into classrooms. This practice is quite developed and has become a common routine through which certain difficulties are solved. As an example, when teachers started using the new textbook <u>On The Move</u> in 2006 in the middle schools, teachers did not have any idea in advance of what the textbook would be like : many sections were new and caused plenty of problems to teachers who did not know how to deal with many activities. The only way for them was through informal exchanges to sort it out, and up to now the majority of teachers still complain about the contents of the textbook as mentioned earlier (see 2.5.3). In corroboration to this statement, Wallace (1998) says the following about teachers:

> **In fact, most of us tend to use a wide variety of strategies for our professional development, some formal some informal. One informal but very <u>effective</u> strategy is discussions with our colleagues on classroom experiences...This 'talking shop' can have useful functions: accessing background information, articulating possible solutions to everyday classroom problems, improving self- esteem, relieving tension, and so on.**
>
> **(Adapted from Wallace, 1998 : 5)**

Though perhaps all difficulties can be solved with time, this does not mean that the innovation (i.e., <u>On The Move</u>) is a success, and therefore it is very important for syllabus designers and textbook writers to opt for a down-top approach before any teaching materials are written. On the other hand, submitting drafts of a new textbook to classroom experimentation for suggestions and improvements - whether teachers are for or against any educational change, fosters professional development and practitioners feel they are doing something for themselves and for the learners.

3.2.3 Team Teaching /Work

Team teaching is interpreted and applied quite differently among teachers. There are those who work together either for the same group or for different groups of learners in what concerns planning as well as conducting and evaluating the classroom activities. Other forms concern some collaboration among teachers who share and exchange ideas about teaching and learning problems and generally function independently. Some of these forms are particularly practised in secondary schools in Algeria and generally referred to as team work. Here the teachers of the same subject matter collaborate in order to share and deepen their understanding of issues related to students such as syllabuses, textbook contents, evaluation systems, teaching difficulties, discipline problems and remedial works, etc. to end up with solutions. With this sense of collective spirit, team work is undoubtedly a form of professional development since these teaching related activities and interactions between the teachers contribute to more efficiency in teaching. The problem, however, is

that in our schools this interaction between teachers does not happen very often due to the lack of preparation in this sort of professional activities. In fact, novice teachers are in need to learn from their more experienced colleagues but sometimes because of timidity and fear of criticism they do not seek any help from experienced teachers. On the other hand - because of having not been asked or simply because of pride and selfishness, quite often experienced teachers refrain from offering advice and help and even less some partnership to share their experiences.

Although it is not easy to gather teachers and have them work in groups, there is much to gain for everyone when team work is organised as a strategy for development in schools. Ideally, in order to overcome the isolation inherent in teaching, all teachers are supposed to contribute in such a strategy for the benefit of learners. This has been verified by students as well as by school administration and parents that students achieve far better with teachers with a greater ability to interact and create a collaborative environment with people than those who are known to be not collaborative and interactive. This is actually a strategy which is probably of considerable personal benefit if it takes its roots back during pre-service education development when the student teachers are still fresh and accept the idea of working together in their different preparations. While in-service, as often repeated in educational circles and from teachers' experience in general, practitioners hesitate to engage in team work because very often multiple points of view on some issues come into conflicts and disagreements might happen. It becomes then difficult to get teachers to collaborate in their teaching tasks as many think they can do the

job individually. Though relying on one's competence is a proof of professional development, experience shows that team work has proved profitable to all who practise it. It is only by working together that individual teachers realize their weaknesses, and can therefore manage their diverse classroom difficulties. In this way, teachers find themselves better equipped for classroom work and develop more and more confidence in their teaching. It is also a way of really caring about the students and going into the classroom well prepared to make the learners learn.

3.2.4 The Place of Culture in Teacher Education

Learning a foreign language is not merely limited to the knowledge of its grammatical system or what is referred to as linguistic competence, nor is it limited to the ability to communicate as it has been claimed by the proponents of the communicative approach to language teaching. In fact, foreign language learning is generally conceived as learning a foreign culture. From departure then, teachers should be aware that culture is an important dimension in the teaching/learning of foreign language. In other words, language cannot be dissociated from its cultural context. This is why the teaching of culture is to be incorporated in foreign language curricula and acculturating learners is part and parcel of language teachers' mission. For this purpose, ELT textbooks seem to be the most indicated teaching materials that can best carry out such a mission for learners.

Thus, in teacher education, it is very important for the students as future EFL teachers to develop a knowledge of the social conventions, attitudes,

customs and beliefs and so many other things from history , geography and literature, etc. of the target language to which they can have resource if need be. In other words, this helps the teachers to develop some cultural competence which would be probably very useful to them in the classroom in order to develop the learners' motivation and build on their positive attitudes towards other cultures. To be able to provide the students with convincing explanations adds more interest to the course and develops even more learners' curiosity in the sense that they want to discover the differences and similarities with their own culture. It is an opportunity because cultural diversity is more likely to produce a positive effect on pupils, at least learning how to avoid conflicts that are generally due to cultural differences. In this way the learners become aware that there are other ways of doing things and therefore come to accept other cultures. Unfortunately, the situation in our educational institutions is referred to as one where:

> At a time when there is much emphasis on the cultural component, with the purpose of developing cultural awareness and ultimately cross-cultural competence, culture teaching has remained peripheral.

> (Benmoussat, 2002-2003 : 227)

In fact, successful language learning is now extended to the development of cross-cultural competence. Put differently, it is the ability to understand and communicate with people of different cultures. In practice, it is the inclusion of diverse cultures, customs and life styles, etc. in learning

materials. This has become an integral part of foreign language learning, and an aim of educational language learning policies in order promote interaction among the cultures of the world. However, to corroborate the above quotation the situation has been quite the 'adverse' in Algerian English syllabuses according to an observation by Miliani who further explains that:

> ... in our educational institutions, foreign cultures were simply discarded without justification from the official syllabi..., hence the use of English texts using situations belonging to the Algerian context thus providing culturally-barren situations in which foreign language learner had very little chance of developing his awareness of the Other, or increasing his knowledge.

(Miliani, 1998 : 78)

In fact, the use of 'one' culture and protection against foreign cultures and their influences is nowadays useless and rather considered a handicap with the phenomenon of globalization. Learning about another culture does not mean in any way abandoning or diluting one's culture. Quite the reverse, in order to prevent cultural shocks and isolation, it is very important for learners to be exposed to a multicultural environment where they learn about other people and other cultures that become with time a source of knowledge either for cultural exchanges or planning visits abroad, etc. In fact, it is quite common thing to hear particularly about young learners who plan their travelling around the world after cultural influences and attractions that they heard about or learned in classroom from teachers and textbooks that present the target language

communities in very picturesque ways. If these things are neglected, the least that can be said is that something of value will be missed and perhaps will never be learned through other channels than those of the teacher, classroom and textbook.

3.2.5 Information Literacy

In this section the purpose is to attract the teachers' attention to the importance of information literacy and raise their awareness towards new technologies. " **Information literacy is usually described as the ability to locate, manage and use information effectively for a range of purposes**". (Bruce, 1997 : 1). It is also a means by which educators avoid to be scientifically and technologically illiterate. As a strategy in teacher education development, it is a concept that is linked to innovation in the sense that it enables teachers to use the technology in the classroom though, for the moment, new technology is not of widespread in schools throughout the world. However, things will change as technology in the future will probably be the only instrument through which documentation is found and retrieved. In fact, society today is becoming more and more what is known as 'knowledge society' where new technologies are used everywhere and education is no exception. Perhaps such a novelty is not so developed nowadays in educational systems since teaching is still carried out and even survive in many parts of the world with blackboard and chalk, the eternal essential elements of the classroom. However, it has become necessary for teachers to expand their knowledge on information literacy so as to develop an innovative spirit towards online information and other new technologies.

On the other hand, information literacy cannot be denied the fact that it is a significant means of help for practitioners in lifelong learning. If technological equipment is available in schools, teachers who are aware of the technological importance will find such an opportunity of a paramount complementary support in their daily tasks and an extra curricular activity to create interest in the learners. On the contrary, if teachers are not aware, they will find themselves somehow lagging behind as digital manipulation is now quite common among the learners at all levels. What is almost true is that : if teachers are not information literate they cannot prepare their students to be information literate. Consequently, teacher education should include information literacy as a strategy in teacher education development because the increase of new emerging digital technologies has created new learning criteria that require both teacher and learner to develop information literacy skills.

3.3 Textbook Development as a Strategy for Change

The aim of this section is not an evaluation of any textbook but as a strategy that helps in innovation and change in foreign language teaching policy on the basis that the textbook constitutes the main backbone of the course. This is why the textbook is often the subject of debates among teachers and learners at their level too. It might be praised for its content and accepted as a source for everyday courses or severely criticized and neglected. For this reason before deciding on what the textbook is going to contain and to look like, it is very important for the textbook writers to work in close relationship with teachers who are actually practising at the moment of the textbook construction.

Teachers who act on pupils' needs and aspirations and know what syllabuses are useful for different pupils in different streams within the whole school curriculum.

3.3.1 Textbook Primary Guidelines

In fact, the choice of textbook content is crucial as it has a great impact on the learners' understanding of the knowledge that is presented to them. For instance, the selected texts that a foreign language textbook is supposed to incorporate should be of various types and themes to suit all the learners. More than that, it should be the object of real study (often requiring deep understanding) of the matter, well planned in advance and be the object of experimentation for preliminary analysis among practising teachers before its general use. The aim behind this 'prior test' somehow before general release of the textbook is, in fact, on purpose in order to see the teachers' reactions and feedback, comments and corrections if need be, etc. Such an enterprise is actually supposed to be the result of a team effort of all the pedagogic partners that are very close to the learner. In doing so, there should be no place for random work among the textbook writers, nor should there be a top-down decision as far as the content is concerned because the textbook represents the major part in the success of innovation and change in the teaching/learning process.

It is indeed the first thing to which teachers (and learners afterwards) reserve the greatest interest for the simple reason that it is often qualified as the mirror of the language policy, the place of the foreign language, the syllabus, the

learning objectives, etc. that are put in the hands of the teachers and learners. If the content is not particularly relevant for learners, teachers will soon realize the pupils' disinterest and the whole teaching/learning business of English will drop out and the textbook becomes rather a burden that learners have to do with it. As a result, textbook design is a complex process that requires textbook writers to strive for perfection at many levels. It is not only a matter of getting right either spelling and grammar or meaning and appropriateness but also every information that is put down in the textbook. Further details on textbook concerns are developed in chapter four under textbook evaluation.

3.3.2 Coverage

The topics that an EFL textbook covers are particularly of great importance to learners. First, what really matters in an EFL setting is the teacher as he can be everything (the source of information, the textbook, the topics, etc.) to the learners if he knows how to select and adapt teaching materials that relate to his learners' interests and aspirations, and most importantly his ability to 'handle with care these creatures in front of him'. The second significant and most probably undeniable thing is the textbook. After the first look at the design, it is browsing that comes next in the learners' hands to see what is in. What is captivating here is perhaps more the quality of pictures than the titles of the different units or files that build the textbook. Still, if the titles cover familiar topics or others that learners expect to see then it is generally a positive reaction. On the contrary, if there are no themes with which learners can identify themselves, then this will negatively affect their reaction and the textbook is

from start qualified as 'not good'. In terms of content, for instance, an EFL textbook nowadays should reflect topics that appeal to pupils, so to speak, those that generally deal with fashion: 'mobiles', 'internet and chat' 'brand new cars', 'clothing', 'singers and songs', 'travel', 'money' [1], etc. In any case, the textbook that emphasizes only the sections that are on the exam lists is not welcomed and remain ignored like any other textbook in the school curriculum. This comparison shows how pupils in middle and secondary schools expect English textbooks to be different to include topics they enjoy talking about. Other factors of potential interest concern graphics and pictures which are to be clear, meaningful and selected so as to promote understanding, thinking and problem solving. Whether textbooks are also available and within pupils' reach deserves consideration before speaking of innovation and change.

3.3.3 Availability and Appropriate Prices

At the level of administrative concerns, strategies for change in FLT in the areas of teaching materials and aids related to availability and cost presuppose the availability of ELT textbooks for the learners on the one hand and appropriate prices on the other. In fact, at this level an educational innovation cannot be introduced without sufficient textbooks. The role of administration is to act upon the requirements of the innovation for adequate provision of teaching materials at the beginning of the academic year so as the pupils start their course on time. This explains why access to textbooks is paramount in the implementation of any change. In fact, any delay in the provision of textbooks not only disturbs the start of the course but also puts the pupils in a situation of

struggle to catch up. Therefore, it is of first need for a pupil to have a textbook in the classroom and at home. In this regard, the textbook constitutes the learner's source of information that completes and clarifies his understanding. In case of insufficiency of textbooks, the classroom lessons are disturbed when it comes to applications and activities. Moreover, learners cannot continue their work in case of assignments and extra activities that are related to textbooks; and even less develop any learning autonomy.

As a consequence, the availability issue adversely affects the learner's studies and therefore his success. This is why in order to promote interest in EFL that hopefully leads to successful teaching and learning, textbooks supply should be regular and within each pupil's reach. The learner, in fact, feels more secure to go the classroom when he is equipped with teaching materials rather than the reverse.

3.4 Learner Development

It is important to bear in mind that innovation and change are proposed for the purpose of developing some abilities in the learner. When a new idea is taken into consideration , the learner becomes the centre of interest in theory before practice in terms of what the implemented innovation, for instance, aims at developing in the learners. In fact, what matters most is how to increase the motivational level of the learners for an interest in foreign language learning. The idea is to go beyond involvement in the classroom activities where the learners routinely follow the different traditional receptive and productive skills. Learner development is beyond this level in the sense that the teacher is

responsible to develop language awareness in the learner more than anything else. The latter should unconsciously be aware of what he is doing, why he is studying English for instance and what aims he wants to achieve, etc.[2]. The learners are somehow driven in a way to think for themselves and be able to measure their progress. On the other hand, it is the teacher's responsibility to get involved with the learners' works and show real interest in what they are doing be it in projects, portfolios or journals and activities that generally lead to learners' development.

3.4.1 Developing Learning Strategies

By the time they reach secondary education, pupils will have already developed a number of learning strategies in different subject areas of studies. As English generally represents a new introduced subject, it becomes the teacher's responsibility to first develop some particular strategies in the learners to make their English learning more efficient. In this context, and in an article about the necessity to teach learning strategies, Miliani explains that:

> The teacher should then provide a 'procedural knowledge' to the learner so that he could employ metacognitive aptitudes and procedures to use the target language data for its acquisition and judicious and profitable use.

(Miliani, 1998 : 18)

What comes after is part of the learners' responsibility, and in fact, many

learners are known for their ability pick up quickly the new learning strategies if they find them convenient to the way they wish to learn. In fact, even if it is generally acknowledged that teachers can make their learners do any classroom task, there are times when factors such as the choice of a given topic or the method or the teacher's techniques might work with some pupils and not with others. This is to say that the importance of learning strategies cannot be denied and perhaps remain the only way through which learners develop and increase their motivation for further learning beyond the classroom which is ideally the aim of any learning. In other words, it is helping the learner to take charge of his learning in order to become autonomous from his teacher.

3.4.2 Towards Learning Autonomy

The major problem with our learners is that they often take English for a secondary subject except perhaps for those in ' Foreign Languages' streams in secondary education. Yet, even these pupils do not really know whether English will be their choice at the university since this depends on the grade they have at the 'Baccalauréat exam' [3]. This situation shows how our pupils make no effort in the learning of English and do not bother about the level they have in this subject. In fact, usually having a very low grade in English or even in French is nowadays not considered a bad thing in the school milieu because these languages are not 'ours' as the learners say, or a 'normal' thing as often repeated in their jargon in this case. They actually limit themselves to what happens in the classroom and feel that the teacher is responsible for their learning. Though perhaps, it is one of the teacher's roles to help learners

become responsible, the major principle of autonomous learning is that learners should feel more responsible for their learning. The problem, however, of the teaching/learning of English in Algeria is basically one-way process or instructional where the teacher transfers his knowledge to the pupil. This explains why leading the learners to be autonomous should constitute an inherent part of the teacher's pedagogical strategy. The learner has to accept this responsibility because teaching has much evolved today that learning autonomy is an inherent part of the teacher programme load.

3.4.3 Portfolios

As defined quite commonly a portfolio is a collection of students work that has been produced and selected over a period time for its value and interest. To quote from *TeacherVision.com*, " **A portfolio in the context of the classroom is a collection of student work that evidences a mastery of a set of skills, applied knowledge, and attitudes".** (http://www.teachervision.fen.com/experimental-education4530.html). Brown, on the other hand describes a portfolio as " **a container that holds evidence of an individual's skills, ideas, interests, and accomplishments".** (Brown, 2007 : 10). The purpose is to review one's work and have an idea about the progress that has been made. In EFL settings, portfolios have recently become a valuable tool for learners who intend to achieve better, however, as pedagogical tools they need preparation, planning and management for their success. Because they are often initiated by teachers, the latter not only need to bring their help and guidance to the learners in order to know how to go about

portfolios but also necessary information that concerns their organisation, purpose and content, etc. When learners become aware that the purpose of portfolios concerns their progress and eventually their evaluation during time, they become more and more motivated and show more commitment to their learning because they are made to feel their progress and generally expect satisfactory results.

Portfolios are divided into two groups: process-oriented and product-oriented. The former are more used at lower grade levels and tell about the growth of a learner. The latter are more appropriate at secondary levels and concern learners' best collections of work. (Brown, 2007: 9-10). There are also various types of portfolios for different purposes in the classroom activities. Some of these are for instance:

- "*Documentation Portfolio* : this type involves a collection of work over time showing growth and improvement reflecting students' learning of identified outcomes.

- *Process Portfolio* : this type concerns the phases of the learning process useful in documenting students' overall learning process. It emphasizes students' reflection upon their learning process and includes the use of reflective journals, think logs, and related forms of metacognitive processing.

- *Showcase Portfolio* : is used for summative evaluation of students' mastery of learning curriculum outcomes....It includes students' very best work, determined through a combination of student and teacher collection."

(http://www.pgcps.org/~elc/portfolio 2 .html)

Portfolios evaluation, in fact, takes into account the learners' efforts and their capabilities over a period of time. This procedure allows more easiness for learners during which they can review their work and bring necessary changes. At any rate, this type of evaluation seems to be more appreciated compared to traditional assessments that are based on grades that do not reveal objectively what learners specifically know. Unfortunately, the latter continue to prevail in the examination system and ignore learners' internal and external distractions in terms of noise disturbances, test anxiety and personal problems, etc. In other words, whether learners are ready or not when tests are upon, they cannot do anything about it, and it is either 'Pass or Fail' evaluation. With portfolios, the teacher cannot only learn about the pupils' competences but also diagnose both their strengths, weaknesses and learning styles in order to bring improvements where necessary.

In recent years, the use of portfolios in schools and universities has increased. *Electronic* portfolios are also being developed via electronic links where students may use their websites to send their works, experiences, pictures, exhibits, etc. For Barrett (2001 : 2) " **An electronic portfolio uses electronic technologies, allowing the portfolio developer to collect and organize portfolio artefacts in many media types (audio, video, graphics, text)** [4]. In this regard, the benefits of developing electronic portfolios for students and teachers are various according to Barrett (2001):

- easy to create back-up files

- portability and accessibility

- long shelf life

- learner-centred

- increases technology skills, etc.

Portfolios also develop pupils' metacognitive skills and in general enhance the learners' awareness. Yet, what probably makes teachers refrain from developing portfolios in classrooms is the efforts required from teachers to follow up this enterprise. As mentioned earlier- and to cite but one reason, the limited hours (two for scientific streams and three for literary ones per week) that are reserved to the teaching of English in the schools timetable constitute the first obstacle. Additional time is, indeed, necessary for these development activities to organise. Unfortunately the time allocated to foreign language learning has been reduced to minimum for decades back.

To solve this problem it is perhaps necessary to 'radically' change the general educational system where the pupils have too many subjects, too many textbooks, copybooks, etc. that make too many programmes and heavy school bags for the pupils to carry everyday. With time this situation has a negative effect on the pupils' outcomes who spend more time with electronic gadgets and online games than on school programmes. At health level too, many pupils suffer from backache because of faulty posture as reported by specialists in the field. Though speaking about the most probable solution to this problem is not the object of this section, the idea is the adoption of an educational system that is based on specialization in secondary education where the learners would have a maximum of three (3) or four (4) subject matters in their stream curriculum. This idea of systemic change is further developed as a perspective in the general conclusion of this dissertation as an open question that deserves

consideration and research among all the pedagogic partners.

3.4.4 Poster Exhibits

Poster exhibits is not only interesting for learners but can also be an experience of performance and contest where the pupils display their works. With this kind of activities, quick and slow learners both have the opportunity to show their abilities during the school year. In classroom activities, some learners do well in written productions while others feel better at collecting photos, diagrams, drawings etc. and are somehow complementary in their preparations.

In any case, whether displaying classroom activities for consolidation or pupils' productions of different topics, poster sessions provide opportunities for the pupils to present their preparations and share their ideas. It is perhaps a very promising way to develop learners' abilities in writing while they search for necessary information, and also orally when they present their work in mini classroom conferences. By frequently doing this, learners will develop their oral performance. A skill that students in departments of English at Algerian universities need to develop for topic discussion, debating and oral presentation of their mini-projects, theses, etc. [5].

Furthermore, poster sessions give learners some confidence in their presentations and begin learning quite early how to participate in conversational exchanges. It is in general a moment of creativity and fun for pupils who are always ready to hang up their productions on the boards and show their abilities. These are moments that teachers should not miss to motivate their

pupils and encourage them. Praising learners' works is known to be one of the best ways to make them interested in foreign language learning.

3.4.5 Story Telling

Many people still regard story telling as one the most valuable pedagogical technique in learning in general. It is perhaps because of its link to reading and even to rote learning which is regarded by many specialists as helpful in many situations. This reminds us of situational teaching and Situational Dialogues by Ockenden (1972) that students used to learn by heart in the 1970s in order to apply in real life situations. Ready made tailored dialogues, texts and so forth that students repeated until complete memorization to retrieve in case of necessity (see a sample dialogue in Appendix 11). With time and changing teaching methodologies , situational teaching has been severely criticized on the assumption that one cannot foresee all real life situations. Yet, whatever the criticism that has been directed to this approach, it remains a common practice (at least in eclectic approaches to EFL) in many levels of education, in schools of tourism, etc. throughout the world.

In what follows, we see how story telling in foreign language learning is particularly helpful in many ways. Apart from the criticism cited above about the situational approach to language teaching and rote learning, story telling is not necessarily learning stories word for word. On the contrary pupils are encouraged to paraphrase or use their own words as far as they can get their ideas across and the story till the end. Reading the story many times silently and loudly with some dramatization with peers is a good practice in the

development of oral abilities. These communication strategies have proved quite efficient in the development of imagination in the learner, and later on in the ability to produce acceptable pieces of writing. At present, there is a growing body of research on the use and usefulness of stories in EFL situations (Pedersen 1995; Wright 2000). Reading stories has always been considered to be an excellent basic way to further reading in general. In practice, the first positive thing is that before deciding which story to present in the classroom, for instance, a pupil is going to read perhaps many stories before making up a final selection and that is 'the good side of the story' as it' s often said.

3.5 Conclusion

The main idea in this chapter has been to show that innovation and change can, in fact, happen in the teaching/learning of English in this country. However, there must be some preparation before any change takes place. Among other things, and of primary importance- we have said that teacher development initiated by the teacher himself and intended for professional empowerment is basically a condition for change to happen. Teachers' action research and reflective teaching are particularly advised for teachers to be aware and informed about innovative teaching practices that might facilitate teachers' everyday classroom tasks. The most noticeable innovative practice is 'talking less' for teachers, and letting the learners do the job towards learning autonomy. Textbook development is another factor on which any educational change relies. It is perhaps the first problem to solve before thinking of any change. How to construct a textbook is actually the whole problem. What

topics, structures, cultural aspects, etc. should be included? Finally, equally important is learner development characterized by the development of some learning strategies in the classroom where learners are supposed to be guided in order to be able to follow the various teaching tasks. Some types of activities such as projects and portfolios have a considerable impact on pupils' progress and achievement when they are really involved in ' Do it Yourself ' policy.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. These topics are selected in this order according to an interview with pupils in the middle and secondary schools.

2. In general, pupils in secondary education have no idea of what their needs are. Learning English for them is limited to knowing more vocabulary (in order to write) and grammar for cohesion. To some extent, pupils are right and a lexical approach to ELT in Algeria seems to be very indicated, but sometimes vogue imposes things differently. In any case, the lexical approach is described as follows:

   > "When Michael Lewis' (1993) book entitled *The Lexical Approach* was published, it focused upon a cluster of problems, ELT today, and a solution, the Lexical Approach. Geoff Hall, a lecturer at University of Wales College of Cardiff, wrote a review (Hall, 1994) of the book in which he acclaimed its ambitious scope and the plea it put forward for a new centrality of lexis. In particular, lexical phrases were seen as a productive resource for learners, aiding in the production, comprehension, and necessary analytical reflection on the forms and meanings of the target language" [My emphasis].

   (in TESL-EJ. Vol.3. No.1 November 1997)

3. The registration at 'Departments of English' in Algerian universities is accessible to baccalaureate holders who have the required minimum grade in English (often around 12) in their baccalaureate exam grades report.

4. Artefacts : also artifacts, a term used to refer to the learner's works in a portfolio.

5. Oral performance is one of the most necessary language skills in language proficiency. Teachers in our departments of English find that students mostly lack this skill. For this purpose, and as preliminary preparation to English in higher education and for real life situations, it would be a good "investment" if pupils in secondary education were given more opportunities to develop their oral skills.

CHAPTER FOUR

ELT IN SECONDARY EDUCATION :

A MULTI – DIMENSIONAL EVALUATION

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Notes to Chapter Four

CHAPTER FOUR

ELT IN SECONDARY EDUCATION:
A MULTI – DIMENSIONAL EVALUATION

4.1   Introduction

Evaluation is considered a central enterprise in educational change in the sense that it is an opportunity to have information about programmes, teachers, learners, schools, etc. As far as this part is concerned, the purpose is an attempt to assess primarily the teaching materials since they are viewed as the most important elements before setting up any foreign language policy. Then, teachers who among other things in the field of didactics, need to be adequately prepared to know how to deal with EFL textbooks. Thirdly, learners can also be either a supporting element in successful foreign language learning or quite the opposite if conditions do not exist for foreign language teaching. In other words, these three elements are complementary in so far as if one element does not function, the others will not do without. In the subsequent sections, these elements are dealt with in turn. First, New Prospects, the newly-designed textbook along competency-based approach for secondary education has been selected for evaluation purposes. This is followed by an evaluation of teachers at work in the same level, and finally the learners' characteristics and attitude towards English.

4.2   Evaluation Purposes

The main purpose of evaluation in education is to promote leaning and improve educational programmes . It is to provide educational authorities for instance, with information concerning the strengths and weaknesses of a number of components that constitute an educational system. These are particularly curricula, textbooks and teaching materials in general, examination systems in addition to human factors embedded in learners and teachers. In its broad sense, evaluation is also extended to many other factors that are linked to administrations, schools and environment, etc. This is why evaluation should represent an ongoing process through which all pedagogical staff and policy makers get continually informed about teaching practices, materials and learning concerns in order to bring modifications if need be. This point is highlighted by Kizlik in the following terms:

> **Inherent in the idea of evaluation is "value". When we evaluate, what we are doing is engaging in some process that is designed to provide information that will help us make a judgement about a given situation.**
>
> **(Kizlik, 2008 : 2)**

On the other hand, evaluation is comparative by nature where generally the present situation is compared to the preceding one and where questions and answers contribute to analysis and reflection in order to bring better changes. In our situation, questions such as the ones below are always repeated among practitioners particularly when no sensible positive results are

observed in case of an educational innovation. More often by comparison of pupils and students' levels of the 1970s in Algeria, teachers wonder why new educational changes have not brought about any better levels of achievement. Questions that quite frequently come along are, in fact, based on comparison.

- *Is the new approach/method more effective ?*

- *Has the learners' achievement improved ?*

The nature of these questions is quite suggestive about the information (i.e., the answer) that is actually known in our educational circles as it is usually inferred from pupils' outcomes. The most used reference is the baccalaureate results which have been for a long time below average if we take as an example the 'foreign languages stream' results indicated in table 4.1 below:

Institution	Academic year	Exam	Section	Pass rate
Lycée El Ibrahimi	2006	Baccalauréat	Foreign languages	34.21%
Lycée El Ibrahimi	2007	Baccalauréat	Foreign languages	39.39%
Lycée El Ibrahimi	2008	Baccalauréat	Foreign languages	72.97%

Table 4.1 : Baccalaureate pass rates for 2006, 2007and 2008.

Source : *Foreign Languages Stream*, Lycée El Ibrahimi. Ain-Témouchent.

However, there is an exception this year (2008) where the baccalaureate results for this section have considerably improved to reach 72.97%. Questions are posed here : *is the adopted approach (CBA, now) more effective? Or do educational authorities want it to be effective through ministerial decisions embedded in shortening school programmes for revisions after pupils demonstrations against lengthy programmes ?* (see 2.5.3).

The target of achieving better results with pupils having learnt English along the competency-based approach has now been reached in the Baccalaureate exam if we take into consideration the pass rate (72.97%) of the institution in the table above. There is even a significant increase in results by comparison to the previous 'Baccalauréat' results (2006 and 2007) where the pass rates were respectively 34.21% and 39.39%.

At national level, the new approach (CBA) has also brought some improvement compared to previous years. In terms of numbers, we have the following statistics :

     - Baccalauréat 2006 : 51.15%

     - Baccalauréat 2007 : 53.27%

     - Baccalauréat 2008 : 55.04%

                 (**Source** : algerie-dz.com)

This improvement can be explained by the fact that pupils have exceptionally benefited from a special education review of lengthy programmes just a term before the baccalaureate exam in June 2008. It seems then, quite plausible that the second reason concerning the shortening of programmes has had a positive effect on the pupils' results. In this connection, secondary school

teachers (P.E.S) confirm that this exceptional review of programmes has been significant in this year baccalaureate results, and continue to believe that school curricula are indeed too long and need reviewing (see 2.5.3). This situation should, in fact, remind educational policy makers, programme and textbook designers to definitely review all lengthy curricula that continue to prevail in the Algerian school system. To take the example of English, in the 1990s it was the case of New Lines and its eighteen (18) units that had never been covered in a school year to be reduced in the end to half the number of units (i.e., 9 teaching units) and even less for scientific streams. For this purpose, cyclical review and evaluation of ELT textbooks after classroom use should remain an institutionalized practice that indicates to materials writers where to bring necessary improvements. When textbooks are reviewed and corrections are made, they facilitate the practitioners' tasks and pupils' independent use of the contents in general.

4.3 ELT Materials Evaluation

The following evaluation is inspired from two current studies on textbook evaluation by Ansary and Babaii, (2002) and Jahangard, (2007) which are in turn based on a checklist of common criteria proposed by various researchers on textbook evaluation. The checklist mainly comprises the following names : Chastain 1971, Tucker 1975, Cowles 1976, Daoud and Celce-Murcia 1979, Candlin and Breen 1979, Rivers 1981, Williams 1983, Sheldon 1988, Skierso 1991, Ur 1996 (In Ansary and Babaii, 2002; and In Jahangard, 2007).

These criteria regarding textbook evaluation include questions on "layout

and design" and "content" are put down in a questionnaire (see Appendix 13) for an evaluation of New Prospects , a textbook that is currently used in 'terminale' classes in secondary education. The questions are adapted from Jahangard (2007) and concern the criteria under the following list.

1. Clear attractive layout, easy to use and includes appropriate visual aids.

2. Quality of the material.

3. Textbook objectives laid out in introduction.

4. Topics and tasks.

5. Content clearly organized and graded.

6. Vocabulary explanation and use.

7. Grammar presentation and use.

8. Pronunciation.

9. Culture and interculturality.

10. Regular review of tests.

11. Project work.

12. Encourages learners' autonomy.

In what follows, New Prospects is dealt with in relation to the questions above successively under two headings : 'layout and design' and 'content'.

On this matter a 'Textbook Evaluation Form', under the form of a questionnaire was addressed to teachers in some secondary schools in the western part of Algeria (Ain-Témouchent, Béni-Saf, Tlemcen) for an evaluation of New Prospects. This evaluation form is composed of five (5) columns in this order:

"excellent – good –acceptable –weak –lacking" in addition to a column for additional comments (Appendix 13) from which the teachers can choose a column for each question on '**layout and design**' and '**content**' in this textbook.

4.3.1   Layout and Design

4.3.1.1   Is the Textbook Attractive ?

Though some educationists say that whether or not textbooks are attractive is of little importance compared to contents because the elaboration of a textbook is a complex issue. There is no doubt that contents require a multiplicity of skills in the production of an EFL textbook particularly when we think that it is 'content' that promotes learning. However; practitioners in the classroom see the situation otherwise because unattractive textbooks where appropriate characteristics of presentation and clarity are not present can be demotivating, and are therefore an obstacle to teaching and learning.

Among the forty (40) respondents who use New Prospects (i.e., teachers who have 3.A.S classes), a large proportion (80%) of teachers qualify the textbook as 'lacking' attractiveness and other related aspects of clarity of the text, appropriate level, enjoyment and interaction. The other eight (8) respondents or 20% do not think that much either since they classify the above features under the 'weak' column. We suppose that the classification of the above aspects under this column (lacking) is due to the fact that New Prospects is not attractive in the sense that there is no real progress in textbook design viewed in this world of enormous technological possibilities. In fact, when we go through the pages of New Prospects, we feel that there no features that

attract pupils for their difference. On the contrary, pupils are always busy with receptive tasks and learning different aspects of language, and practically no stances where pupils enjoy some browsing through their textbooks and developing some interaction with contents that illustrate their views and interests through teenagers conversational exchanges and interviews.

4.3.1.2 Quality of the Material

EFL textbooks in general should have characteristics of quality that appeal to learners. Textbooks that are appropriate in format and in contents because the quality aspect is nowadays a criterion that has a great influence on quality of education. First, teachers' workload is made easy and in general pupils enjoy learning in well-designed textbooks. Why should they not be with all the modern technology around ?

New Prospects compared to actual norms of what modern technology is offering at the level of textbook physical make-up is still far behind, though on the one hand some improvement has been done in terms of quality, for example, by comparison to the 1980s production of New Lines , Spring 1 & 2, etc. On the other hand, New Prospects includes a number of geographic maps, spider maps, fishbone maps, tables and diagrams, etc. which are adequately presented and specially designed to help and consolidate pupils' understanding of the different sections of the textbook. In terms of font size, clarity, the textbook is also acceptable though once again there are very few pictures but rather unclear and fuzzy as shown in the next two pages below. In fact, once more the respondents' choice at this level is not very high since 32.5% of the

the quality of the material as 'acceptable' while 67.5% find it rather 'weak'. This disparity of opinions among teachers is explained by the fact that there are those who see some progress in local printing quality vis-à-vis previous textbooks, while others by comparison to current day textbooks in advanced countries find the local school textbooks of a low quality. However, according to educational authorities more expenditure is needed for editing quality textbooks and pupils will not be able to afford them.
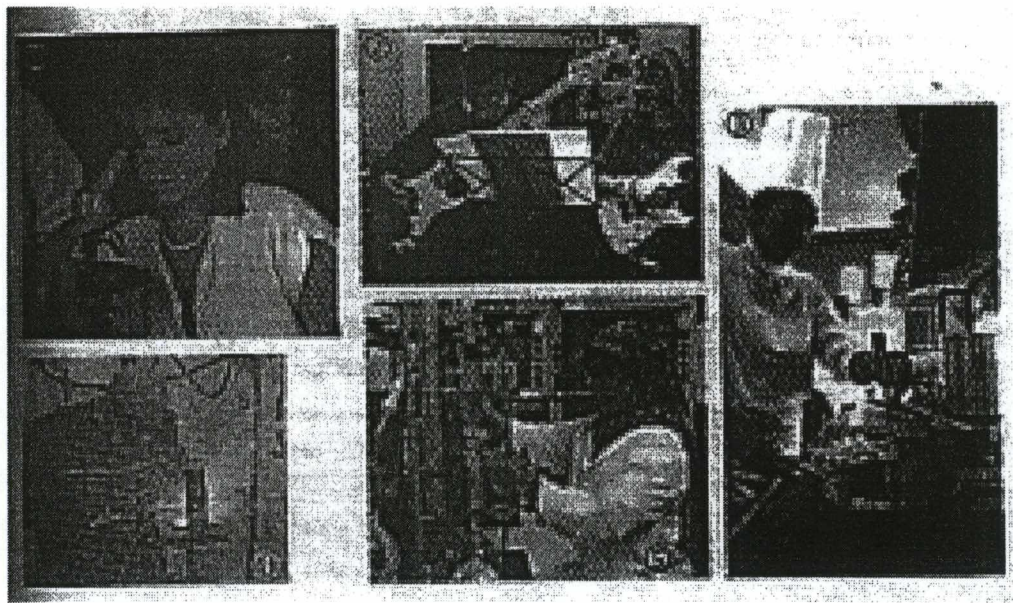
(New Prospects, p. 75)
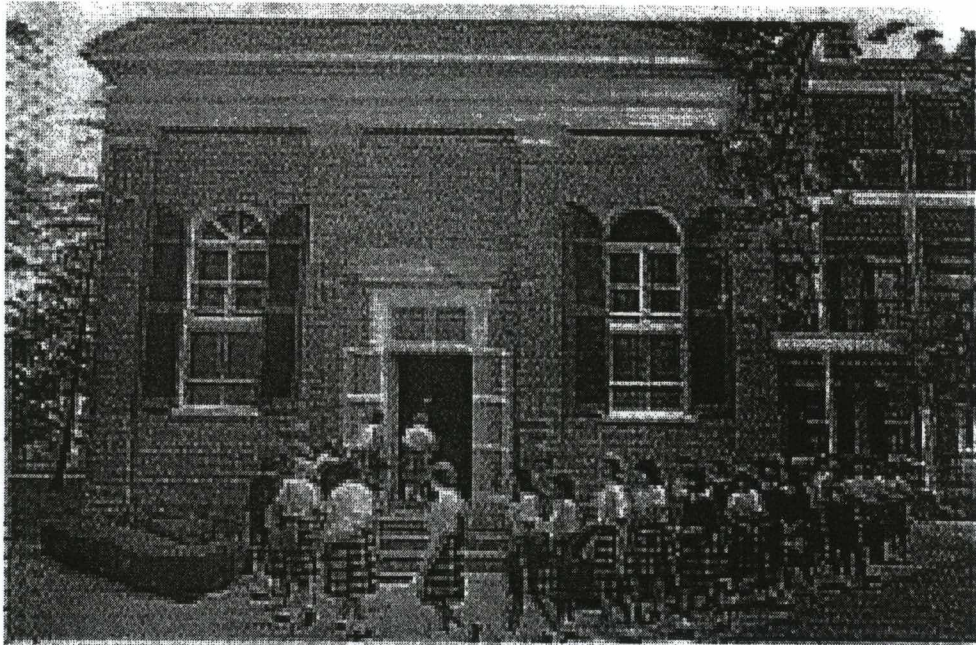
A secondary school in Britain

(New Prospects, p.92)

In this context an evaluation of New Prospects was carried out in 2007 by a team of secondary-school teachers under the supervision of a General Inspector of English (see Appendix 14, under 2) confirms this observation by stating that the book design is not attractive, the colours are to be re- examined and the cover is of bad quality. In fact, the textbook pages are only glued and therefore easily come loose though at the level of binding it is generally known that a textbook exceeding 120 pages should be thread sewn in order to guarantee its durability with the pupils.

4.3.2   Content

4.3.2.1 Textbook Objectives

The objectives in <u>New Prospects</u> are stated in a 'forward' note to the teacher (most probably to the teacher though not specified) that explains in a brief way the textbook aims in the following words:

> The first part, **Language outcomes**, is divided into **Listen and consider** and **Read and consider**... What is aimed at is getting the students to internalise the thematic and linguistic 'tools' they will make use of, more naturally so to speak, in the second part of the unit.
>
> The second part of the unit, entitled **Skills and strategies outcomes** ...They are aimed at getting the students to eventually concretise in the **Saying it in writing** and **Writing development** rubrics what is termed in the official syllabus as ' l'objectif terminal d'integration'.

<div align="right">(<u>New Prospects</u>, p .V)</div>

There is also a 'Book Map', a book outline in other words, that indicates what the <u>New Prospects</u> teaching units contain in terms of the language items that have to be covered throughout the academic year. Each unit mentions the topic and the language outcomes which are divided into language functions, grammar, and vocabulary and sound system. An example of units 1 and 2 from the book map is scanned on the next page.

The way 'objectives and book map' are presented in the textbook introduction seem to be insufficient since they do not include any directions on how to go about the course. This explains why the majority of teachers (90%) find objectives as laid out in introduction rather 'weak'. The remaining four

respondents (10%) see no stated objectives since their answers come under

the column 'lacking'.

BOOK MAP

Unit	Topic	Functions	Language outcomes — Grammar	Vocabulary and sound system — Word building	Pronunciation
1 — EXPLORING THE PAST	ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS	• informing • narrating • expressing concession • comparing	• past simple of be questions with ago • past perfect with when, as soon as, until, after, etc. • used to ● had to • was/were able to • though, although, in spite of the fact that, despite the fact that • the comparatives and the superlatives of quantifiers : much-more- the most, little-less- the least, etc. • articles : use + omission before abstract nouns • well+past participle E.g well-preserved	• adjectives + preposition E.g good at, dependent on • verb + preposition E.g believe in • negative prefixes: dis- and de- • suffixes: -tion, -ment -ed, -able, -ic and -ty	• weak forms of was and were • pronunciation of final -ed and -ch • stress shift E.g. civilize, civilization) • spelling rules E.g doubling of consonants, begin, beginning
2 — ILL- GOTTEN GAINS NEVER PROSPER	ETHICS IN BUSINESS: FIGHTING FRAUD AND CORRUPTION	• describing • advising • expressing obligation and necessity • expressing cause and effect • expressing condition • expressing opinion • expressing wish and regret	• present simple and present continuous passive • should, ought to, had better+bare infinitive • must, have to, mustn't • due to, for, as, since, so+adjective+that, such+adjective+noun+ that, so, as a result, consequently, thus • as long as, provided that, providing that if-conditional (type 2) • verbs for expressing opinion (think, believe...) • I wish, it's high time+subject + past simple and past perfect	• suffix -ty : E.g honest - honesty, responsible, responsibility • prefixes dis- il- E.g legal , illegal, honest - dishonest approve - disapprove	• Stress shift E.g. economy- economics, econonmic • pronunciation of words ending in -cs E.g. economics, politics

(New Prospects, p. VIII)

This high percentage concerning insufficient textbook objectives can be explained by the fact that, in general, teachers expect to see the teaching objectives clearly stated in ELT textbooks. In particular, textbooks where long and short term objectives are set down explicitly as well as those of the teaching units according to the contents order.

Ideally, in this connection there could have been a section in the learner's textbook to direct teachers on how to use the textbook as is the case in some textbooks where we see in the preface necessary information addressed to the 'teacher' and to the 'student'. There are, for instance, some general principles of language learning, directions about the course, a description of the course, etc. In general, teachers find introductory notes as well as hints and cues about the different sections of the textbooks quite practical. Indeed, handy incorporated textbook documents whereby teachers know what to do about any given course is always welcomed while preparing a more personal 'method' that suits their learners' needs.

For New Prospects, objectives are stated in a separate document known as Guide du Professeur (Appendix 19) and where the following guidelines are developed :

I - Pedagogical principles
II- Organisation of the coursebook
III- Unit description
IV- Sequence description
V- Saying it in writing
VI- Conclusion

Here the objectives are more explicit and quite detailed for the teacher to know what to do with the course. However, the criticism that can be put to this document is that it is presented in a booklet of low quality that does not hold together even after one day use to see the pages gone loose. What is more , the way the teacher's book is presented with other subject matters (see Appendix 19) is not practical to say the least. As for the contents, the language used to explain the different sections needs some knowledge in the field of didactics to fully understand.

4.3.2.2 Topics and tasks

The topics in <u>New Prospects</u> are of various types including reading passages from history to modern economics and astronomy. There are six long teaching units about the following topics :

'Ancient Civilizations'. Unit One (pp.14-44).
'Ethics in Business : Fighting Fraud and Corruption'. Unit Two (pp. 45-73).
'Education in the World : Comparing Educational Systems'. Unit Three (pp. 74-105).
'Advertising, Consumers and Safety'. Unit Four (pp.106-134).
'Astronomy and the Solar System'.   Unit Five (pp. 135-164).
'Feelings, Emotions, Humour and Related Topics'. Unit Six (pp.165-195).

What is common about all these types of topics is their level of difficulty as shown on the scanned copies of the original texts (see Appendix 17). It is doubtful whether third-year secondary school pupils (3.A.S) can understand the selected texts without the teacher's help. This view is also that of the team of teachers who evaluated <u>New Prospects</u> (see Appendix 14 under 3.b). In

addition to this, the teachers' opinions after the questionnaire qualify the choice of ' topics and tasks' as 'acceptable' and 'weak' in the following percentage : 37.5% and 62.5% respectively. Their comments insist on the fact that the topics in New Prospects have not been well selected according to the pupils' levels and aspirations, except for 'Unit Three on Education in the World' with which pupils easily identify and show their interest for other educational systems in the world, and 'Unit Six' on feelings and emotions because adolescents like to deal with topics on love, happiness, sadness, fear, etc. On the same question, the teachers observe that the topics on 'Ancient Civilizations' and the others mentioned above do not attract pupils' attention. What is more, pupils are presented the same tasks all through the textbook on the following pattern:

'Consider sentences 1and 2 below and answer questions A-D that follow:
Task: link the pairs of sentences below using…
Consider sentences A-E and do the task that follows.
Rewrite sentences A-D below using…
Respond to each of the situations below …
Consider sentences 1 and 2 below… Insert…, Complete…, Consider… etc.

(New Prospects, pp.47-51)

Nowadays learners' needs are so different with the inexorable march of technology. Teachers explain that their major conversations turn around technological progress and innovation in the domains of mobiles, brand new cars, videos, screening films and DVDs, etc. None of these things are dealt with and nearly all pupils show no interest in what the textbook includes. They get

into their classrooms in order to finish with the 'lesson and the place' for more attractive gadgets. Strange as it is but the situation is directed this way, and pupils give the impression that their interest is elsewhere with songs and mobile phones, etc. Such a disinterest in foreign language learning has already been mentioned in chapter one (see 1.6.2) where only very few pupils, the far-sighted ones - are aware of the importance of English in their future studies.

4.3.2.3 Content Organization

If we take into consideration the table of contents, <u>New Prospects</u> is apparently clearly organized but there are reservations emanating from teachers as far as content grading is concerned. As mentioned in the section above, on the question of ' content', teachers in their great majority, i.e., 32 out of 40 respondents or 80% have put 'content' under 'weak' while 20% under 'average'. When asked about this evaluation they explain that the material is not adequately presented in terms of difficulty and wonder why the content has not been arranged in a more logical way of complexity. They all find that 'Unit One' on ancient civilizations (see Appendix 17) is not only difficult for pupils but also inappropriate in the first position of the textbook. A demotivating start as they often repeat and both teachers and pupils add that the teaching units are too long, interminable and often lead to boredom. In fact, one of the main concerns here is this very idea of length of the teaching units that sometimes exceed thirty (30) pages (31 pages for Unit One, 29 for Unit Two, 32 for Unit Three, etc.).This makes the amount of teaching/learning materials in each chapter rather unreasonable. A different order might have been used and arranged according

to the difficulty of the language in the selected reading texts. Thus, 'Unit Three' (Schools : Different and Alike) on a comparison of educational systems in the world seems to be more attractive to pupils than ancient history in 'Unit One'. It is not easy sometimes to know which language items or functions to begin with in a textbook but at the level of attraction and developing pupils' interest and motivation, the first unit in a textbook ought to be attractive at all levels (design, quality cover, glossy paper, pictures, topics, etc.) to the pupils.

4.3.2.4 Vocabulary Explanation and Use

Throughout New prospects, 'Vocabulary Explorer' is presented under a section of its own and sometimes in relation to the reading passage when there is one. However, many activities that introduce new words in this section are often presented in isolation and their meanings are either guessed or looked up in a dictionary as in the examples below.

Vocabulary Explorer

- There is a logical connection among **three** of the four items in each of the groups of items below. Which is the odd one ? Get help from your dictionary.

    A. fraud – corruption – business – money laundering
    B. false accounting- creative accounting – auditing – tax evasion
    C. to smuggle – to bribe – to trade – to counterfeit
    D. auditor – accountant – economist – customs officer
    E. probity - honest – loyalty – abuse

(New Prospects, p. 50)

- Form opposites by adding appropriate prefixes to the words in the box.

Honest (adj) – approve (v) – agree (v) – approval (n) – legal (adj)

Moral (adj) – fair (adj) – responsible (adj) – appear (v)

(New Prospects, p. 57)

Perhaps it is vocabulary development in this textbook which is interesting when we see the number of the newly introduced words in each unit. This also explains why 70% of the respondents find this section 'acceptable' in New Prospects. However, the other 30% of teachers whose qualification comes under 'weak' are also right because it is generally known that newly introduced words without context might be limited to some 'vocabulary learning' and quickly forgotten after the classroom since " **language happens in situations...and in order for students to be able to use it they should realise in what situations certain pieces of language are used**". (Harmer, 1983 : 25). The other observation concerns some reduplication of the questions that introduce vocabulary and tasks, i.e., nearly the same pattern is kept throughout New Prospects as in the format below:

- Fill in the blanks...p.18.
- Copy the table below on your exercise book and fill in the missing...p.26.
- Fill in the blanks with...p.27.
- Complete the blanks...p.50.
- Form nouns...p.57.
- Form opposites...p.57.
- Fill in the blanks...p.57.

It would be perhaps more captivating if some variety of styles were used to introduce new words in various situations and contexts such as learning vocabulary through authentic reading materials, examples, idiomatic expressions, quotes, and proverbs, etc. In fact, vocabulary is best remembered when learners manipulate words in different ways. Via this indirect vocabulary learning pupils have opportunities to integrate the newly learned words in their lexicon and ensure some guarantee of use after the school. In fact, it is generally known that mentally memorized expressions and proverbs are well remembered and perhaps even for ever. In this way, pupils are somehow prepared for future use of the language be it as students or in real life situations, etc.

4.3.2.5 Grammar Explanation and Use

Grammar teaching has always been the most debated issue in ELT. Views concerning its introduction, explanation and use differ from one method to another. In general it is presented either in an inductive way or what is known as bottom-up approach whereby learners discover by themselves the rules of grammar through exercises and activities. Or in a deductive way, also referred to as top-down approach to the teaching of grammar where learners are given grammatical rules before application. Concerning this question, 24 teachers, i.e., 60% classify grammar presentation in New Prospects as 'acceptable' and 16 teachers or 40% put it under 'good'. However, even if this section can be considered acceptable in presentation some teachers' comments are made at length below about the introduction of more than one grammatical

point at a time.

In <u>New Prospects</u> , grammar is presented according to the first principle in the rubric ' Grammar Explorer' where the learners are asked to consider some excerpts from authentic texts in the textbook or other specially written examples to illustrate such and such form. The attention is focused on the target structure and its use or different uses as in the examples below from "Unit Three" in <u>New Prospects.</u> The first observation, however, concerns the number of different grammatical structures that are introduced in the same teaching unit by way of " Grammar Explorer" I, II, III, and IV (pp. 76-78) which teachers find a real overload that sends back to the teaching of grammar in isolation. Part of these grammatical structures are on purpose copied down below to show how successive and long they are both for teachers and learners. What is more, in the same unit, only 5 pages further, another series of 'Grammar Explorer' I, II, II, IV (pp. 84-86) respectively deal with quantifiers, comparatives and superlatives, comparison/ contrast and the passive voice. No comments, some teachers observe!

Grammar Explorer I

Consider sentences 1-4 and do tasks A and B that follow:

1. If he went to an Art School there'd be no guarantee that he could get a job afterwards
2. He wouldn't be a teacher even if it were the last job in earth.
3. I wouldn't have been a teacher myself if I'd had my way.
4. If he wants to be an artist, he'll have to decide what sort of artist he wants to be.

A. Arrange the sentences above according to the conditional type which they belong to: type1, type2, or type3.

B. Explain what each conditional type expresses and draw the rules governing the forms and uses of the various conditional types.

Have another look at **if-conditional** in **SE2** Grammar Reference, pp.201 -2.

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1. Consider situations A - G below and write sentences with **if.**

A. I am not tall and strong enough to be a policeman or firefighter.
B. He didn't get the required marks to go on a training course to be a doctor. So he took a course in computer science.
C. Work hard, and you will succeed.
D. Get your baccalauréat and I will offer you a motorcycle.
E. She failed her baccalauréat because she had not worked hard.
F. Farida is jobless. She regrets not having taking into account the job market at the time of her enrolment at university.
G. You must study harder, otherwise you won't pass your baccalauréat with distinction.

2. In four sentences of your own, tell your partner what you would do to improve our educational system if you were the Minister of Education.

(<u>New Prospects</u>, pp. 76-77)

Grammar Explorer II

Consider the following sentence and answer questions A-C that follow.

- **Unless** you let him make his own choice, he will reproach you for any of his study failures later.
  A. What tense are the verbs preceding and following **unless**?
  B. Which of the following can be used in replacement of unless?

<div align="center">

a. **except if**   b. **if + not**
c. **even if**   d. **only if**

</div>

C. what does **unless** express ?   a. **promise**   b. **wish**   c. **warning**

See Grammar Reference p.220.

- **Task:** Rewrite the sentences below using **unless.** Make the necessary changes.

    A. You must study more or you won't pass your baccalauréat.
    B. You must listen carefully or you won't know what to do in your exam.
    C. We must hurry or we'll miss the school bus.
    D. She must get more information or she won't complete her project.

    (New Prospects, p. 77)

Grammar Explorer III

Consider sentences 1-5 below and answer questions A-D that follow.

1. I wish he weren't so set on it.
2. I wish there were an art school in my neighbourhood.
3. I wish I have taken your advice six months ago.
4. I wish I could help you with the math's lessons.
5. I wish William would change his mind soon.

    A. which sentence expresses a wish about the past? What tense is used?
    B. Which sentences express a wish about the present?
    C. which sentence expresses a wish about the future?
    D. which tense is used to express a wish about the present and the future?

    See Grammar Reference pp. 218-219

- **Task:** fill in the wish chart below with sentences expressing a wish. Use the verb **wish + were, had, could** or **would.**

WISH CHART	
Physical appearance	**You:** I wish I were taller. Then_____
Character/personality	
Abilities	
possession	

(New Prospects, p.78)

Grammar Explorer IV

" **If I were you,** I'd let him decide for himself.
I think he **ought to** take up something more secure.
I don't think you **should** stand in his way.
I **must** admit my wife and I would have felt much happier if he'd chosen
something else".

1. what do the underlined words in the sentences express?[sic]. No underlining.
2. which modal is synonymous with **have to**? Are the two modals similar or
   different in meaning when they are in the negative? Explain.

(New Prospects, p. 78)

In fact, teachers observe that the way successive grammatical items are introduced in one teaching unit do not help pupils to retain and remember all the items. What is not practical is also these instructions as in the frames above (Have anther look at..., see grammar reference pp...) that send pupils to other references in the previous textbooks (SE 2 refers to 2.A.S, sometimes it is even SE 1, i.e., 1 A.S) where pupils are supposed to find additional theoretical information and examples.

The problem here is that pupils do not have these textbooks at their disposal, and even if they have kept them from previous years which is quite improbable, they will not carry them to the school.

And then other types of instructions 'See Grammar Reference pp...' send pupils to the last part of New Prospects for complementary information on the structures and rules of grammar. The criticism that can be put to this way of presenting grammar is that the theoretical parts need the teacher's explanation, the very thing that innovative pedagogy tries to avoid. What is the use of asking pupils to understand the subjunctive the way it is defined on page 225 in New

Prospects? : " *Subjunctive* is a term used for a verb in situations where we use the **infinitive without to** or **the plural form** instead of an **–s form**. The subjunctive is not commonly used. It belongs mainly to formal and written English". Do pupils understand definitions like these anyway when sent to 'Grammar Reference'? It is really doubtful, and there is very little chance that pupils at this stage would be interested in such abstract terms .

4.3.2.6   Pronunciation

"Pronunciation and Spelling" in New Prospects as its preceding sections of grammar and vocabulary is dealt with as such in a section of its own in the textbook. By comparison to previous textbooks (Spring 1, New Lines, Midlines, etc.) and foreign language teaching methodologies in our schools where pronunciation was only implicit in speaking and reading aloud, pupils are now gradually introduced to some phonetics. Examples that attract pupils' attention of standard pronunciation with phonemic transcription, word and sentence stress, vowels and consonants and so many tips that make pupils aware of the importance of pronunciation in English are now part and parcel of the textbooks that are used in middle and secondary schools, and particularly in On The Move and New Prospects . As far as this question is concerned, teachers seem to be quite satisfied by comparison to previous programmes since for the first time we see 55% of the respondents' answers under 'good' while 45% favour 'acceptable' which is next to 'good' in the questionnaire columns. What follows are selected excerpts of 'Pronunciation and spelling' from New Prospects.

Pronunciation and spelling

- Classify the words in the box below in the table that follows according to the pronunciation of the letters **ch**.

> Archives- church- architect- coach- architecture- arch- alchemy- archaic-
> archipelago- archetype- epoch- archer- archaeology- artichoke- Archimedes-
> archway- archduke- archangel

/ t □ /	/ k /	/ t □ /	/ k /
Church			

(<u>New Prospects</u>, 28)

- Listen to your teacher reading aloud the words in the table below. Put a stress mark on the syllable you hear most in each of them. What do you notice?

verb	nouns	adjectives
economize	economy economics economists	economic economical uneconomical

(<u>New Prospects</u>, p.57)

- **Task :** *Listen to your teacher reading aloud the sentences below and note how s/he pronounces the modals in bold. Then practise saying them.*

- **Would** you come here, please ?   you **should** stop talking.

- You **ought to** respect him.   Mind ! You **could** hurt the teacher !

(Ibid, p.81)

- Go back to the text and pick out all the words ending in **s** and classify them in the table below.

/s/	/z/	/i z/

(Ibid, p.88)

- Transcribe the verbs in the box putting a stress mark ( ) where appropriate.

Verbs	Transcription	Verbs	Transcription
rotate		begin	
believe		occur	
transmit		revolve	

(Ibid, p.140)

- Read Princess Diana's life story very quickly and write the verbs in bold in the table below according to the pronunciation of the **–ed** ending.

/d/	/id/	/t/

(Ibid, p. 179)

However, the teachers' comments on this section concern the teaching of pronunciation that presents some difficulties in the sense that teachers are unfamiliar with phonetics and therefore lack confidence in this area. Many of them tend to avoid teaching pronunciation because they have no idea of the features of pronunciation (stress, intonation, word divisions, etc.), others fear phonetic transcription because they find it complicated as they are not familiar

with the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Even when this is not a real problem, teachers are not equipped with the materials needed for the teaching of pronunciation. This is a challenge as many others in the teaching profession, that forces teachers towards lifelong learning and research in order to develop necessary skills and knowledge wherever needed.

This section is perhaps to be encouraged since there is common agreement that pronunciation is an essential ingredient in foreign language learning. Both the teacher and the learner are in need of such ingredient in the development of oral skills. What is more, better pronunciation of English is very likely to lead to improvements in all skills. In fact, when there is confidence, learners' motivation is high and achievement is better.

4.3.2.7 Culture and Interculturality

If we take the concept of culture as the way of life of some people and their social practices, then in <u>New Prospects</u> this aspect is not really representative of the local culture. This is the reason why a significant proportion (60%) of teachers' reaction to this question comes under 'weak' and observe in their comments that topics that are related to trends and issues in "ethics in business and astronomy" are so general to illustrate any cultural aspects of countries. Pupils are generally eager to read about texts or dialogues that involve people of diverse societies and regions of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, the remaining topics on "ancient civilizations, advertising, education, feelings and emotions" do not really deal that much with foreign cultural aspects and even less with local cultures. The other teachers'

choices are 30% for 'acceptable' and 10% with no choice.

In our analysis, the first category of teachers is to some extent right since in New Prospects, there are no illustrations or reading passages that are really related to issues of everyday life in Algeria. There is only one text about the history of "Algeria at the Crossroads of Civilizations" (pp. 22-23), while the scenes featured in the illustrations below of " a customs officer showing counterfeits of famous European paintings" (p.53) and " a lecture at the amphitheatre and a computer room" (p.74) are not representative of the local culture. As referred to earlier (under 4.3.1), these illustrations are unclear and fuzzy.

(New Prospects, p. 53)

Project outcome

Designing an
educational
prospectus
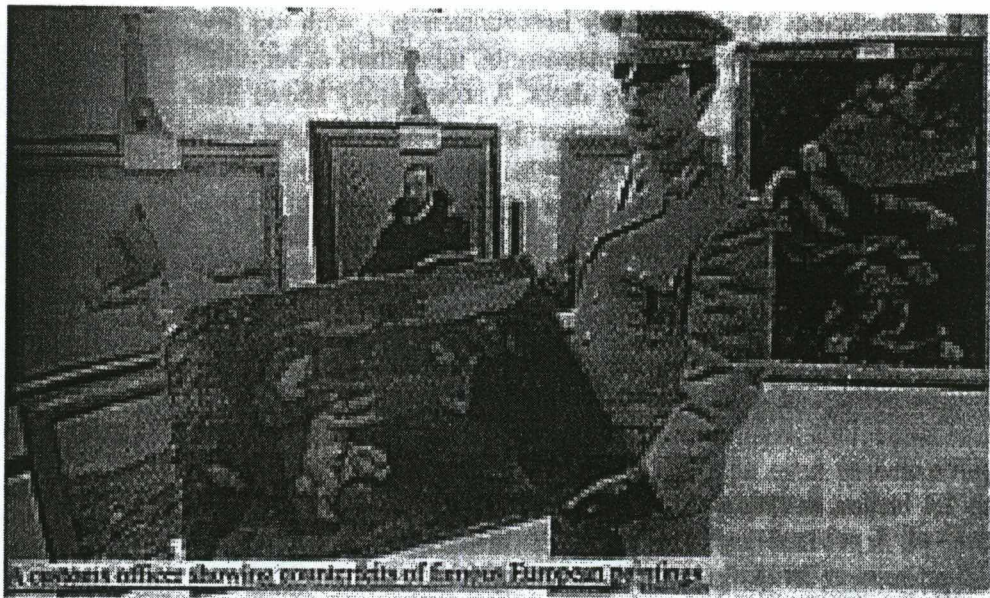
For further information,
have a look at page 103.
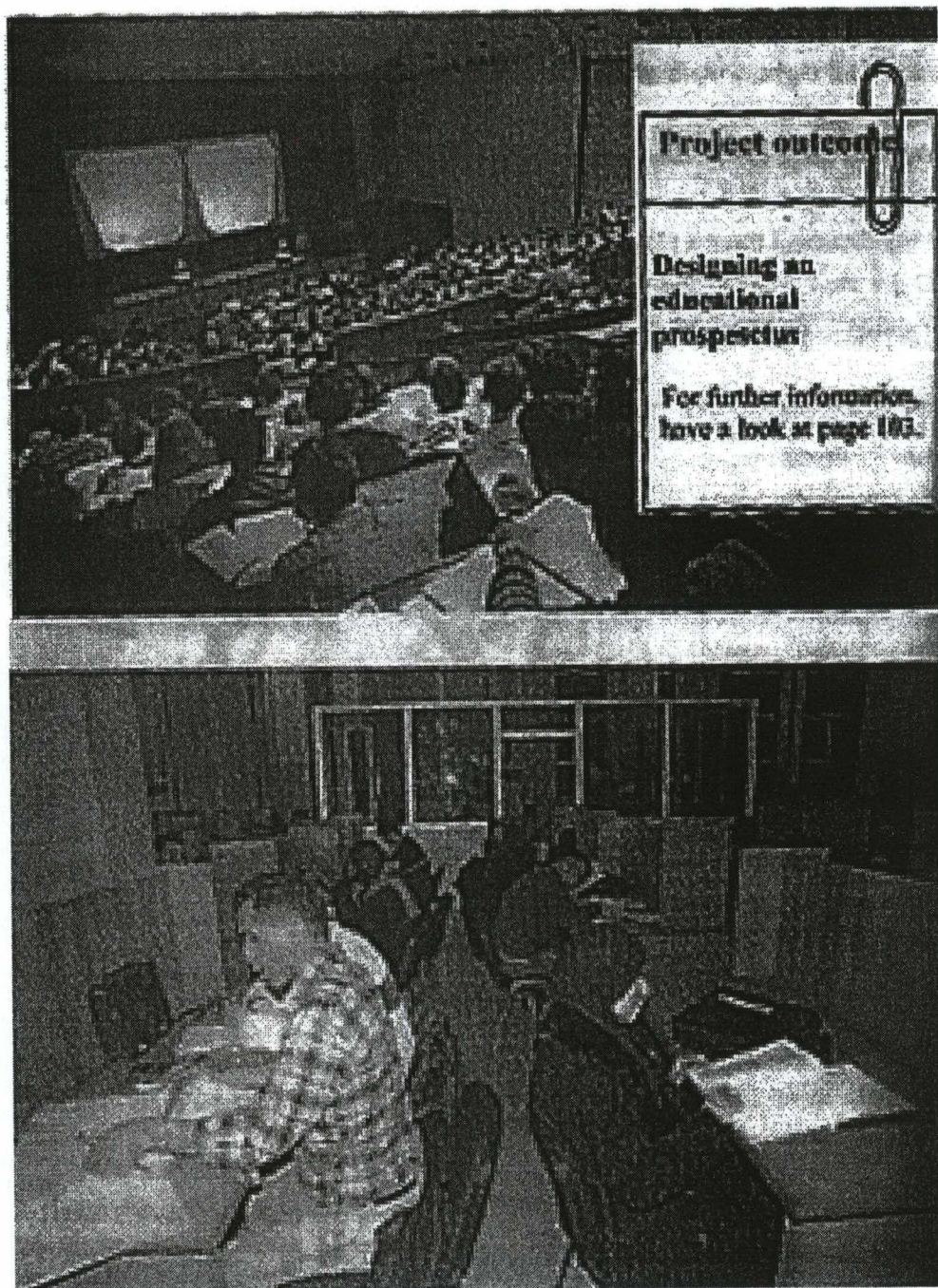
(<u>New Prospects</u>, p.74)

There is also one particular illustration that has been qualified by teachers'
evaluation as offending vis-à-vis faith and cultural heritage on page 40 about

'Saint Joseph' (see Appendix 14 under 2). But on the whole, <u>New Prospects</u> is a textbook that incorporates some other aspects of world cultures in texts free of biases that are likely to be unacceptable to teachers and learners. In other words, there are no such things as 'good' or 'bad', or 'developed' and 'primitive' comments on foreign cultures and customs. Additionally, in the selected texts one does not feel that some specific culture is being imposed on learners nor are they made to react negatively towards any local or a foreign culture. However, most textbooks are often criticized because of linguistic biases such as gendered English and sexist language which are still common practice and <u>New Prospects</u> is no exception.

4.3.2.8 Regular Review of Tests

In <u>New Prospects</u>, there is no section that is reserved to testing or any reference to examinations in general. This explains why teachers' answers for this question seem to come spontaneously as 'lacking'. In numerical figures, 90% of respondents see no review of tests while the remaining 10% observe in 'comments' that there are no tests in the true sense of the word, but the textbook has other devices that present many exercises and activities in concordance with secondary education official exams.

In fact, a prototype of official exams seems to be necessary particularly when the same model keeps on turning (see Appendix 14 under 3. e). It is not only of interest to pupils who - in most cases, only think of exams but also a motivating factor to keep in mind the idea of examination. In this connection, teachers often repeat that pupils give more importance to activities and

exercises that are linked to the baccalaureate exam than any other sections of the textbook, and not even to project works that teachers usually require to improve pupils' grades. In this context, Brown (1998 : 1) makes an interesting observation when he says that "...**very few textbooks come with tests. Whether you use the tests or not, the development of tests is a "good sign", which often indicates more careful preparation of the textbook".** Indeed, learners are more involved in textbooks that develop all throughout the teaching units tests and exams of the types that may be encountered in official evaluation. This is particularly remarkable in scientific textbooks (maths, physics, chemistry, etc.) where pupils are exposed to a great number of challenging exercises and problems. ELT textbooks could very attractive if the tasks and activities were presented in the same way as in exams.

The idea that working for exams exerts a negative impact on pupils' development of skills is generally ignored while in preparation for official exams. On the contrary, tests indicate precise areas of difficulties where teachers can bring assistance and additional practice. Teachers, in fact, see that test materials provide opportunities for the pupils to practise before exams in order to know about their level and have an idea about their performance. It is also an opportunity for the pupils to opt for remedial work with their teacher, or cooperatively with their peers, or still individually for those who are autonomous enough in order to catch up and make up for the weaknesses. However, mention should be made that throughout New Prospects, questions on the teaching materials are presented in similar ways to those used in official exams as it is shown below under A and B.

A- Questions in : New Prospects.

Question 5

-   " Circle and link the words written in bold in the text with the items
        they refer to. E.g.

| the people of Egypt became united under the rule of a single king. |

(This) made Egypt the first nation in history. (§1)

(New Prospects, p.39)

Question 3.

  - Form opposites by adding appropriate prefixes to the words in the box.

Honest (adj) – approve (v) – agree (v) – approval (n) – legal (adj)
Moral (adj) – fair (adj) – responsible (adj) – appear (v)

(Ibid, p. 57)

Question 1.

 - Go back to the text and pick out all the words ending in s and classify them in
    the table below.

/s/	/z/	/i z/

(Ibid, p.88)

B- Questions in : Baccaluaréat exam June 2008 (integral copy in Appendix 18)

Question 3 / page1.

 -- What or who do the underlined words or phrases refer to in the
    text ?

a) period of <u>their</u> lives…(§. 1)
b) During <u>this</u> <u>period</u>… (§. 3)

<u>Question 3 / page2</u>.

- Give the opposites of the following words keeping the same root.

a) experience   b) legal   c) impatient

<u>Question 5 / page 2</u>.

- Classify these words according to the pronunciation of the final 's'.

a) shoes   b) works   c) houses

/s/	/z/	/i z/

However, in spite of the similarities that can be seen between A and B, questions in <u>New Prospects</u> do not appear one after the other as in official exams. For this reason, teachers observe that the way tasks and activities are used throughout the textbook do not constitute the exam format , and therefore, have not the impact that a prototype exerts on pupils.

4.3.2.9 Project Work

We have already dealt with the way projects are organised in our schools (see 2.5.2), and we have reached the conclusion that the only person who benefits from the project work is the cyber manager because he is paid to do it. In fact, when someone sees the example we have in Appendix 12, we understand that the project is not carried out seriously, and seems to be a

useless work altogether. However, there are teachers who consider that <u>New</u> <u>Prospects</u> basically develops in the learners the idea of working towards a project and, therefore, 75% of the respondents have selected 'good' for projects. Nevertheless, comments either from this category or the other 25% selecting 'acceptable' in their choice insist on the lack of resources in schools for projects.

The project work, indeed, represents an activity of considerable interest and it could perhaps be qualified as one of the best possible ways that works for the development of learners. Its structure as a mini-research is par excellence an effort on the part of the learner to put his abilities in practice. Thus, in this view a project that is carried out in the classroom even with very limited materials that pupils might have at their disposal is still an effective way to learning. If the operation is followed regularly in this way with the help of the teacher it will become effective with time as emphasized by Papandreou.

> **Effective use of the projects approach for teaching English depends on the teacher. From the beginning, the teacher should motivate the students to set up the right environment for this type of work.**

> **(Papandreou, 1994 : 41)**

However, teachers in secondary education commonly observe that they cannot teach, finish their programmes and still have time to work and direct pupils in their project work. The operation itself requires more than the three or

four sessions of the time allocated to English per week. Viewed in this light, a project work in the classroom needs time from start to finish. In this context, the same writer contrasts the roles of the teacher and student to include the following parameters in the preparation of a project as shown in figure 4.1 below:

	STUDENT	TEACHER
TOPIC	selects topic	describes parameters and suggests
OBJECTIVES	sets final objectives	helps in setting objectives
PREPARATION	directs	advises
PLANNING	directs	contributes ideas
TIME	plans schedule	makes suggestions
RESEARCH	coordinates and implements	observes and/or facilitates
RESULT	analyzes	observes
PRESENTATION	performs	listens as a member of the audience
EVALUATION	participates in self evaluation	provides feedback

Figure 4.1 : Teacher's and students roles in projects.

(Papandreou, 1994 : 42)

The other difficulty with the projects in our textbooks is the lack of information and documents that practically do not exist in our schools. The

inevitable thing then at this level is that pupils are indirectly sent to cyberspaces as mentioned earlier. An example of this situation is given in the proposed projects in table 4.1 below from <u>New Prospects</u>.

Making the profile of an ancient civilization **(E.g. Greece)**

Your profile should include the following:

. Information about the place where and the time when Ancient Greek civilization flourished

. Information on two Ancient Greek major cities (E.g. Athens, Sparta)

. A short account of the life styles, beliefs, customs, myths, and laws of these cities

. Information on the contributions made by Ancient Egypt and Phoenicia to ancient Greek civilization

. A summary of the major achievements of this civilization in science, philosophy, government, etc.

. Information on the civilization that saved the Greek cultural heritage for mankind.

N.B Illustrate your profile with maps, pictures of monuments, etc.

Alternative projects

. A booklet/leaflet/guide book about the cultural heritage of your region (monuments, ruins, crafts…)

. Making a time line from the most ancient civilizations (Chinese, Egyptian, Aztec, Arabic, etc.) to the most moderns ones, highlighting their most important contributions to mankind

. Drawing the wheel of civilization

. Making the profile of one civilization of pre-Columbian America

Web sites

www.civilization.ca   **www.kidadoweb.com**   **www.historyforkids.org**

www.jeuxvideopc.com   **www.samizdata.net**   **www.skyminds.net**

Table 4.2 : An example of project work in <u>New Prospects</u>. (p. 42).

A look at the questions in the projects above shows that the information required for 'research' need very special references that neither the teacher nor the pupils possess. The only way is the use of web sites which are not available (even non-existent) in the great majority of schools. Consequently, cyberspaces remain the only places to go to but they are public and commercial in nature and pupils will have to pay to have a project concocted for the circumstances.

Furthermore, the proposed projects such as in the above table are sometimes not well adapted to our learners. How can they use internet resources if access to internet is very limited even in fortunate schools ? In fact, the situation is not that evident since computers in secondary schools in Algeria are not at the disposal of pupils at least at present. Up to now, it is still even a great difficulty for students at the university where we have 20 internet-connected computers for 2150 students in the " Departments of Foreign Languages" [1]. In other words, it is 1 computer for more than 100 students, a very little chance to use internet resources. Textbook designers should always bear in mind the level of pupils and the lack of documents, and most importantly the first project should be of those kind where information is easy to find and collect. There is no doubt that a project such as the one above is beyond 'terminale' pupils reach to prepare in the classroom, and needs very specialized information that is often beyond pupils' level of understanding (see example in Appendix 12). In fact, this opinion is also confirmed by the teachers' evaluation of New Prospects (see Appendix 14 under 3.c).

4.3.2.10 Textbook and Learning Autonomy

The conception of EFL textbooks today is more and more directed towards textbooks that focus on learner autonomy. Textbooks whose purpose is not only to develop learning autonomy in the learners but primarily textbooks that can be used by the learners themselves without the teacher's help. This is the question on which teachers are unanimous since all answers (100%) come under 'lacking'. In addition to this, many comments stress that the textbook is too difficult for the pupils to use alone. To corroborate teachers' answers and comments, a direct question in the pupils' questionnaire in this context (Can you use New Prospects independently ? in Appendix 15), also confirm by 95% that they cannot use the textbook contents without the teachers' help.

Unfortunately, New Prospects is strongly teacher-centred for the pupils to use on their own, and so is the situation with physics and maths textbooks and others as repeated by many teachers of different subject matters. The ostensible contradiction about textbooks is the fact that they are designed for pupils who cannot use them without 'external' help. Challenging content or 'comprehensible input' as put by Krashen (1985) where he states that one acquires language by understanding input that is a little beyond one's current level of competence undoubtedly improves the learners' level. For this purpose, pupils need then to start from what is easy and within their reach before moving towards more challenging input. It seems to be the opposite direction in New Prospects when pupils open their textbook to find questions such as below on ancient "Sumerian, Egyptian, Greek, Indus valley and Chinese civilisations" (Unit 1) that need some reason to be interested in such questions:

1. What ancient civilizations are represented in the map?

2. Which civilization, do you think, is the oldest?

3. Why do you think these civilizations first flourished in these areas?

4. What's your definition of civilization? What do you associate with it?

(New Prospects, p. 15)

Interestingly, as referred to above, in a survey of 80 pupils in high schools (see Appendix 15), 76 respondents or 95% say they do not understand New Prospects contents and cannot use it without the teachers' help. Indeed, it is practically difficult even with the teacher's help. This view is also expressed in the evaluation by the team of teachers (see Appendix 14 under conclusion). In other words, all pupils cannot work on the textbook on their own. The ability to work *autonomously* in New Prospects is then by concrete evidence *almost nil* since the great majority (4 pupils or 5% did not answer) of pupils cannot use the text book independently.

Ideally, an EFL textbook should incorporate texts that are extremely appealing to pupils of this age (teenagers) even if the starting texts are below their level, and preferably with questions and key answers at least in the beginning, and then gradually move towards challenging contents. This technique, just like the one adopted in 'exam annals booklets', will attract and encourage pupils to be inquisitive about their textbooks; and may in the same time develop some learning autonomy in the pupils.

4.4 Teachers' Survey

EFL teachers in secondary education are graduate of the Algerian and other universities whose degrees are equivalent to those in this country . In any case, the qualifications are based on a four-year degree of which the fourth year is devoted to an integration of theory and practice of teaching for those who choose to go into the teaching profession. A course where students receive a training that includes theoretical knowledge and practice by way of micro-teaching in their institutions or directly in some cooperative high schools (see 4.4.1). However, the whole problem with EFL teachers is perhaps the insufficient preparation during pre-service teacher training on the one hand and most probably the lack of continuous development and research during in-service teaching on the other. The question that poses itself here is in fact whether or not would be teachers really follow an established teacher training ? What is it like ? How is it imparted ?

4.4.1 Teacher training

In an earlier study of a 'Magister' thesis [2], we mentioned the necessity of teacher training in the Algerian universities and specialized teachers' schools (ENS, ITE) to be in coordination with secondary schools through official channels of the Ministry of National Education at least for two main reasons. First, though teacher training is concerned with many areas of pedagogy, it should be in harmony with the approach or method that is adopted in EFL teaching and learning in secondary education. Second, and perhaps the most

important part is to allow would be teachers to practise some observations and teaching practice directly with pupils in the classrooms.

For some time, this practice (known as 'stage') was carried out with some cooperative high schools, and though perhaps some schools still offer this possibility for students, the coordination between universities and high schools at this level is not well established and the whole operation has been dropped out. Micro-teaching that has for a long time existed in parallel to this practicum continues to be practised as the panacea before joining the teaching profession. Micro-teaching at university level certainly lacks the advantages of classroom observation, but it is an opportunity for students to transform theory into practice. In this way students can attend many lesson presentations and demonstrations that provide them with information and ideas on teaching and learning. Viewed in this light, micro-teaching contributes a great deal to the development of would be teachers in the sense that after the trainees' performance (lesson presentation), feedback from peers and teacher trainer occurs on the spot, and it is the best moment for observations and comments that help students to improve all along their peers' presentations.

4.4.2 Teacher Aptitude

Teacher aptitude is particularly practised when the hiring school or institution is private and requires qualifications, experience, and references. In our public institutions, recruiting staff has always been based the degrees that are obtained in this country. Occasionally nowadays, as the teaching posts are

more and more limited, a system of selection has been introduced by way of competitive examinations.

While in-service the teacher can effectively develop in the teaching profession if there is some will. The teacher aptitude, in fact, can be acquired and developed while in teaching especially if there is some cooperation between teachers and sufficient EFL resources at their disposal. However, the problem in our schools is that quite often teachers complain about the lack of readily available resources such as teachers' textbooks and guides, computers printing materials, libraries and internet access, etc. As a matter of fact, this does not mean that it is the only way to develop professionally as many teachers of bygone days developed perfectly right without any technology. The know-how is something teachers acquire with various readings in the field and teaching practice where individual teachers accept and share ideas and advice.

4.4.3 Teacher Classroom Practices

How does an EFL teacher spend his time in front of his/her class? In order to know what goes in the classroom, the teacher's logbook as one of the most important documents reflects the different activities and the objectives that the teacher is supposed to reach in a teaching session. The information one can have from the teacher's documents on teaching during a period of time indicates whether or not there is some proof of development. In any case, teaching is based on preparation and the teacher who goes to his classes unprepared will sign his own failure and his reputation will drastically fall. On the other hand, it is generally acknowledged that teachers who develop professionally are those

who have chosen the teaching job by conviction. As they progress in teaching, they develop more confidence in themselves and know how to confront challenges, overcome stage fright and accept generally stressful classroom observation for the sake of professional development.

However, in our secondary education there are those who are devoted to teaching and constitute a minority of professionally- oriented teachers. Others see teacher development based on whether or not the school is well-equipped with necessary resources. Still others link their development to the status of the teacher in the social stratification. In other words, the more consideration in terms of financial easiness the better the teacher will be at work.

The most noticeable observation that one can do about the teachers in secondary education is : even if teacher education and training have not been sufficient before opting for the teaching job, this does not constitute any obstacle to effective teaching abilities. It is generally the conditions where the teaching/learning of English takes place and most importantly teacher adequate salary that affect the aptitude of the teacher. In fact, things have so much changed in schools throughout the world that our teachers do not expect to survive in a classroom where the only equipment is a blackboard. Teachers by section at least need an office where they have sufficient furniture to host teachers, necessary equipment where they can develop teaching resources, planning their courses and attending academic events, etc. In this way one can expect the teacher to be at the level of his mission. Still as mentioned in the outset of this study, it is not only the teacher who is expected to change and improve if the pedagogical partners continue to act according to top-down

policies in terms of educational innovations and changes. The teacher can in fact develop more when he finds his ideas and views put into practice.

4.4.4 Teacher and Pupils' Results

More often than not the teacher is judged by the results he obtains with his pupils. Though evaluating a teacher on his pupils' results is not based on evidence, this view remains of widespread reputation among teachers, school authorities, parents. etc. In fact, teachers who generally get satisfactory results with their pupils are considered 'good' teachers. Whether or not pupils have studied sufficient lessons for exams or finished their programmes, it is the final results that really matter. Viewed in this light, one wonder why teachers should not limit themselves to exam preparations. But do only results matter ? Another question that many educationists answer negatively. However, in the end everything comes to results because they separate between success and failure. In secondary education in Algeria, results are now considered among the best evaluation for teachers and distinctive institutions. By invoking this criterion, recent ministerial instructions even mention praise and rewards and also sanctions respectively for the first and the last places. This policy has had, indeed, some effect on teachers. But what can be done for learners who lag behind for various reasons ? Who is to blame here, the teacher, the learner or the system ?

These questions imply that a number of decisions have to be taken before teachers are imperatively required to have good results. While waiting for satisfactory results, the provision of suitable working conditions are necessary.

Teachers cannot continue to survive only on textbooks particularly when the contents are beyond pupils' level, and with topics such as those on " ancient civilizations and ethics in business, astronomy, etc." that do not interest young people (see 4.3.2.2). Other conditions concern modern technical equipment of teachers' offices with reference materials such as dictionaries, Encyclopaedia, and internet facilities (as a panacea for inexistent reference libraries) that support teachers in everyday preparations and also offer a chance for long life learning and research for the benefit of learners. As for learners, they have to be made confident from star that they can learn to speak and write a foreign language like any other learner in the world. Topics that are difficult and risk to inhibit them should be simplified or completely changed by teachers in order to raise pupils' motivation. This point has to be emphasized because many pupils in lower levels of education, unfortunately, suffer from teachers' rude remarks on their inability to learn languages.

4.5   Learners' Characteristics

In this section the aim is to know about the characteristics of the Algerian learner and more specifically his behaviour towards the learning of English. In fact, the information about the starting age for English, the environment where the language takes place, the cultural background, etc. help curriculum designers and textbook writers to have an idea about the learners and could, therefore, approximately decide what they like and dislike. Though each learner is unique and with different abilities and disabilities, needs and interests, we usually tend to group them under common preferences and disinterests. From

start, some pupils are very interested in English while others have no desire to study foreign languages at all. It all depends how they come to the school, their social background, how they have been prepared in their environment, etc. It is also true that many learners have no idea of what the foreign language is, but provided the atmosphere is enjoyable while in the classroom, at certain age pupils tend to develop an intrinsic motivation for language learning.

4.5.1   Optimal Age for EFL Learning

Does it really matter at what age a child starts learning a foreign language? Though there is no convincing evidence whether to start learning a foreign language early in the primary school or later in the middle school, the Algerian experiment in this domain (see 2.4) shows that starting English in primary schools has many disadvantages at least in this country. To mention but a few, first there is no environment for English to develop among pupils, and any use of English in the society is seen as a sign of 'exhibitionism'. Second, the introduction of English was not generalized and its limitation to some schools gave it a sign of failure in advance as there was no real follow up of what was going on in the classrooms. As a result, pupils who started English in the primary schools found themselves in the same classrooms in secondary schools (1.A.S) with pupils who started English in the middle schools. There was also no difference between these students' levels when they arrived at the university in 2002-2003 (see 2.4.3). Third, qualified teachers of English for the primary school were not available, and on the basis that children acquire (and learn)

language through massive amounts of input and exposure, the whole operation failed and was therefore abandoned.

Back to age , pupils now start learning English in the first middle-school year when they are 11or 12 years old. What perhaps makes this age more appropriate is the fact that all pupils expect to study English and are, therefore, psychologically prepared. All pupils follow the same course and are quite enthusiastic for learning a foreign language. Now whether or not they succeed depends very much on other variables that can affect learning such as the social background, pupils' aptitude, and learning styles, etc.

4.5.2   Social Background

Each pupil has a unique background if we consider the value of affective support in family environment. However, in Algerian schools pupils have more or less the same social background in general. It is in fact, quite difficult to qualify a society where people are in continuous struggle for social status change not to belong to 'low-income families'. Everybody's aspirations is to improve socially, to be part of the 'middle class' indeed. But can we really speak of such a class ? It is perhaps possible for a category of people in terms of wealth but not at other levels - for instance, in education, social behaviour, etc. Though this is beyond the scope of this study, one can mention that despite the fact that many people in this country are financially better off, this is not reflected in the society in terms of education, behaviour, good manners, and mutual respect. Besides, with all the budget that has been put into education and the possibilities for every Algerian to reach secondary education, one would expect

in return citizens to show some level of instruction and, therefore, know how to behave in the society. Unfortunately we daily witness plenty of unaccepted actions - in public institutions, in streets, in markets, everywhere indeed - that sadly demonstrate that our people lack a great deal of education.

Back to our issue, in schools pupils have the same rights to education and follow the same courses whatever their social background. However, there are some pupils who are better in aptitude mainly because they have the necessary educational equipment for the school, while others cannot even afford to buy textbooks. This explains that there are different social backgrounds where some families can afford private tuition for their children and even put them in private schools which are developing in Algeria.

What is also noticeable is that parents are more and more interested in their children schooling. They all want their children to be in the schools that score well in official exams and where the quality of teachers is unquestionable. However, according to recent research it is rather the social background that is the most crucial factor in children's academic performance than the school or the teacher. This point is highlighted in Taylor (2006) in the following words:

> **A study by academics at University College London (UCL) and Kings College London has given statistical backbone to the view that the overwhelming factor in how well children do is not what type of school they attend- but <u>social class</u>.**
>
> **(Taylor, 2006 : 1)**

In other words, the social background determines pupils' success. The

parents' earnings and living conditions generally have an impact on children's achievements, just as it is the other way round for children living in more deprived areas where there is some concentration of poverty and disadvantage.

4.5.3 Attitude towards English

Teachers' view about pupils' attitude towards English learning in our schools is not what pupils think of themselves though their results and behaviour in the English course are very much left to be desired. In fact, except for very few pupils who are aware of the use of English in their future studies, the teachers unanimously speak of complete pupils' disinterest towards English. The teachers' view is based on the evidence of pupils' repeated unsatisfactory results in written and spoken form of English. Conversely, pupils have somehow a 'positive' view since in their eyes English is an important subject in the curriculum, but do not really do their best to score well in this subject. This attitude is accentuated by the fact that English has for a long time been assigned a very low coefficient of 1 in official exams for scientific streams and 2 for literary ones. Now, it is 2, 3 and 5 respectively for 'Scientific Streams', 'Literature and Philosophy' and 'Foreign Languages'. However, according to teachers this change cannot yet explain its impact on English learning despite some improvement in the 'Baccalauréat exam' in June 2008 (see 4.2). The reasons were first due to the exceptional programme shortening : pupils had only two (2) teaching units to revise and their chance of having a high grade was great. Second, eight (8) alternative ways were

suggested to accept answers in favour of the pupils during the 'Baccalauréat Grading' of English papers in June 2008 . In fact, according to examiners pupils were presented two subjects for choice on the same double sheet of exam questions and numbered in Arabic order as follows: 4/1 , 4/2 , 4/3 , 4/4. Some pupils inattentively did not follow the order and started with page 1 and went to page 4 instead of page 2, while others started the second subject on page 3 and answered questions on page 2 and so on and so forth. Therefore, a mixture happened between reading comprehension texts and related questions. Consequently, examiners had to consider all the possible answers due to this confusion.

However, to illustrate the impact of coefficients on pupils, "Arabic" has recently been assigned a new coefficient of 6 and more class hours for "Arabic" in 'Literature and Philosophy', thus creating more motivation in the pupils. Consequently pupils are now even paying for private courses to improve their level and grades in exams. Teachers of Arabic unanimously agree that the new coefficient has had a positive effect on learners, and do not see any disinterest that existed among pupils for years. They say that this new impetus has generated more academic interest for Arabic language and literature in the learners.

4.5.4 Learning Styles

Pupils from primary to secondary education in Algeria mainly rely on the teacher for the provision of lessons and necessary explanations. Pupils on the other hand, have to go though many classroom exercises and activities as well

as home assignments. However, with the newly adopted approach, i.e., competency-based approach in all the three levels, new pedagogical instructions require teachers to support and guide pupils in the development of learning autonomy. As a matter of fact, even before the implementation of CBA, many learners have always relied on themselves and probably reached high levels of achievement in their learning. However, these exceptions have been very few throughout generations and do not actually prove the rule as it is generally acknowledged.

Now, if it is ever developed, learning autonomy will generate in the pupils some life long learning, and on the other hand it is a way for the teachers to limit their assistance to pupils. As mentioned earlier, Algerians' learners have for a long time received information and skills with some over-reliance on the teacher's explanation, dictation and provision of correct answers and solutions. This spoon-feeding is in the long run a great disadvantage for learners because there is a risk of continuing this passivity even after graduation. This situation of passivity and dependence is, unfortunately, quite general in the Algerian schools. Indeed, pupils have plenty of difficulties in the understanding of their lessons and cannot work independently on their textbooks and particularly with the more recent ones (On The Move and New Prospects). In consequence, demands for private courses after school hours have tremendously increased from primary to secondary levels. This private tuition is now so widespread among pupils that it has become a common practice for pupils to do in order to understand their lessons. This means that school curricula are overloaded and pupils need more time for ample explanations of their different courses. As a

result, the only way to complete their weaknesses is to pay for private tuition outside the classroom.

In order to overcome these problems, it is not only crucial for programmes and textbooks to be reviewed at the level of contents but also be within pupils' reach and level, and then smoothly and gradually become challenging so that pupils learn to develop some self-reliance and autonomy towards all learning contents.

4.6   Suggestions and Recommendations

Writing and producing a textbook is an extremely intensive and painful task, and the production of <u>New Prospects</u> is perhaps doubled as is often the case with EFL textbooks. It is indeed quite difficult to write materials that suit everybody's taste. There are always imbalances in the representation of males and females, fairness, bias issues, culture diversity in addition to the treatment of purely linguistic items and language skills, etc. In other words, the textbook writers in this country have to be very cautious at many levels since neither the teachers nor the learners are native speakers of English and this creates difficulties in the choice of contents. For this reason, there are many elements that have to be taken into account before a definite textbook is published. Therefore, some recommendations revolve around the following issues.

- Being sure that the contents are comprehensible and match the pupils' level.

- Textbooks should reflect learners' interests and needs: i.e., materials writers should not choose topics and activities in their place.

- Topics should be of various types and attractive to pupils. For this purpose pupils should be involved in the choice of contents.

- Be sure the textbook contents can be understood (and used) by the learner without an over-reliance on the teacher.

- Language items should be well structured throughout the textbook, i.e., not too many grammar, vocabulary or whatsoever at a time.

- Cyclical technique for language items consolidation is preferable to cross-references that send pupils to previous textbooks as it is often the case with New Prospects.

- The textbook quality at all levels should reflect what the pupils expect their textbook to be.

- At another level, there should be a coordination between secondary education and the institutions where pre-service training for future EFL teachers usually takes place. Finocchiaro (1982 : 11) insists on this issue and explains on the other hand that " **In-service programs should be offered (a) automatically every five or six years to keep teachers abreast of new developments in the field , and (b) whenever an innovative curriculum, a new type of text, or unfamiliar equipment... is to be introduced.**" In fact, teacher

training remains one of the best ways to acquaint teachers with the developments in English teaching methodology and also to introduce educational innovations and ensure their implementation and success.

Bearing in mind the above suggestions we recommend that the teachers should privilege a teaching that involves learners during all the teaching session. It is not a matter of adopting communicative language teaching or competency-based education or any other 'old' or 'modern' methodology to EFL teaching and learning. First, the idea is to make the EFL teacher aware that he is not supposed to do everything in the classroom but the aim is to make them his pupils learn. The lesson could simply be based, for instance, on a reading passage that includes some comprehension questions to be sure the pupils have understood the selected text. Then comes the turn of grammar in context and activities and finish with vocabulary if need be. In other words, during one session, the pupils will have practised silent <u>reading</u> to store and develop information for later stages; some <u>writing</u> with comprehension questions and grammar activities; and <u>speaking</u> while reading aloud and practising some oral reconstruction of the text, or giving oral answers to short and long questions on the text. In short, in a simple English session the pupils will have practised all the necessary skills in integration to learn a foreign language.

The above idea is the object of the next chapter where we try to demonstrate that it is not really necessary to think of the most modern or sophisticated approach to ELT, or adopt one because it is in vogue for the success of foreign language teaching and learning. What matters most is

finding out what works or could better work with our learners. On the basis of the large number of pupils in our classrooms, and the lack of modern suitable equipment such as language teaching resources, and language school libraries, etc., it would be more advisable then to put some emphasis on the design and elaboration of more suitable teaching materials. These should focus on contents that prepare pupils for their needs in classroom activities and official examinations, and also expose learners to a varied input of English in real life situations. Pupils are in general inquisitive and knowing about other learners of their age, cultures and customs in ways that are attractive and within their reach usually raises their motivation. Details of this idea in an alternative approach to EFL in secondary education is further developed in chapter five below.

4.7 Conclusion

As it is known in educational circles, without suitable teaching materials, adequately trained teachers and motivated learners no change can ever work even if it is tailored according to the individual and societal needs and interests. Therefore, before designing any textbook educators should take into account the pupils' realities and levels at different stages. Difficult contents discourage pupils' involvement and may in the end lead to a complete neglect of the subject. However, challenging contents could be introduced gradually and pupils should be made to feel this progress by way of comprehensible input to tackle learning materials that require some reflection and critical thinking. Though this is perhaps too demanding, experience shows that everything is

possible if introduced smoothly with learners. As for teachers, we have said that inadequately trained teachers cannot provide a teaching of quality and this has probably a negative effect on learning outcomes. From start teachers should be 'resourced' and urged to work cooperatively for their professional development. In this way , they can have a considerable impact on pupils' motivation and develop their awareness as far as language learning is concerned.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1.   There are 20 internet-connected computers for 2150 students in the Departments of Foreign Languages (French and English) at the university of Tlemcen.

        Source : computers office. Nov. 2008

2.   Baiche, A. (1992). <u>An Assessment of The Communicative Approach in Secondary Education in Algeria (1981-1991)</u> Unpublished Magister Thesis in Applied Linguistics and TEFL. University of Oran. 1992.

CHAPTER FIVE

READING FOR SPEAKING AND WRITING PURPOSES :

A PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE APPROACH FOR ELT

IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

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5.1 Introduction

This chapter is comparatively shorter than the four previous ones as it is a presentation of an alternative approach to the teaching of English in secondary education. Therefore, it is a modest proposal where we try to show that reading can be at the basis of improving pupils' level in English during their three years in secondary education. If developed in the learners, reading can serve many purposes in the world of schools and later in adult life. Furthermore, on the basis that everything around us needs reading for comprehension, we try to show that reading can, in fact, help our learners to speak and write acceptable English. The idea is based on a teaching unit that consists of a reading comprehension passage with 'one' grammar point at a time to serve as input for pupils to develop their oral and written abilities. For this purpose, the proposal would appear in a textbook that does not neglect modern technology (design and layout, topics of pupils' choice, etc.) where teenagers somehow find

themselves in 'print' and can identify with. As a matter of fact, we depart from the idea that no one method bears the whole truth, and this is only an alternative that may suit our pupils' profile if we take into consideration the idea already discussed above on the importance they give to grammar and vocabulary in each English lesson. It might be argued that this is a traditional approach because it is product-oriented (from input to output) but the question nowadays with a task-based approach is that in the end pupils will have also to do something with words. The example of "situation of integration " that is practised as the end product of CBA in secondary education is nothing else than the ability to write on something, and this is the objective of the proposed alternative above. This is to say that the procedure is different but the end product is the same at least for productive skills. If only we could develop these two skills in our pupils no matter what the approach is.

5.2 A Suggested Teaching Unit Structure

The choice of the textbook as an instrument to carry out the above alternative is based on the assumption that the textbook is the centrepiece in EFL learning in the classroom. It is indeed generally acknowledged that no teaching/ learning is complete without an appropriate textbook. The proposed alternative model in this chapter would contain a number of teaching units according the number of English hours for pupils per week. Each unit contains three (3) main parts that cover all language skills in integration (in this order : reading that presupposes listening, then speaking and writing), and other areas in between these parts that expose pupils, for instance, to new words, songs,

games, riddles in order to create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere. These three parts are outlined below under A, B and C and put down in table 5.1.

A - a *reading passage*, from easy to more challenging texts. Before Reading, pupils first listen either to the teacher or ideally to a native speaker (via technological resources). Each text contains comprehension questions, arguments for and against, etc.

- One *grammar point* (one per unit to avoid confusion) and in relation to *the reading passage* with tasks and activities.

- *Vocabulary* in context as it is essential for the learner to express himself. It is, in fact, viewed as **"an appendix of the grammar"** to quote Bloomfied (Bloomfield, 1933). In this phase, pupil s are also initiated to the idea of portfolio and start by selecting and collecting bits and pieces of information (from input) to be used in later phases of speaking and writing activities.

B - a section concerned with *speaking* and based on previous input (e.g. a reading passage) or other proposed topics on the same or related themes. During this session each pupil is given the opportunity to try out his abilities by having a look at his portfolio contents in order to put in use what he has learnt.

C - this section is reserved to *writing* and based on what pupils have practised in speaking. Pupils will write on what they have practised orally, and then gradually move to free writing. The use of

portfolios here is to put down one's best works either for later evaluation or other purposes such as 'artefacts' exhibition or school competition, etc.

Schematically, the features outlined above would appear in a textbook teaching unit in the format below:

← A →		← B →	← C →
UNIT ONE	**Reading Topic(s)** **- Initiation to "Documentation Portfolio"** **+ Grammar in connection with Reading Topics**	**Speaking/ Use of Portfolio contents**	**Writing/ Use of Portfolio contents**
Example: Education in the World **N.B** : A Unit consists of various reading texts on selected/or related topics.	Example: 'Schools in Great Britain': practice of silent and loud reading. +Comprehension questions of various types : true/false, short, full questions, proposing titles, general ideas, etc. Use of Portfolios : ordering text ideas and events, summarizing, etc. to be used in speaking and writing tasks.	One grammar point per session in relation to input +Activities to illustrate grammar in various contexts including new vocabulary	Focus on speaking skills : use of previous input+ new vocabulary, etc. in conversations, summaries, role-playing activities, etc. Use of portfolios contents: pupils use their documents in discussions.	Pupils write on familiar input : e.g. on what they have learnt / practised in previous steps (can use their portfolios). +Introducing gradual free writing now and then.

Table 5.1 : A structure of a 'teaching unit' in textbook design according to the proposed alternative to ELT in secondary education.

All in all, the pupils will have to develop three things in each unit: *reading, speaking* and *writing*. Reading comprehension here is meant to contribute to pupils' exposure to different types of 'input' that bear essential grammar and vocabulary. These in turn will favour speaking and writing through various techniques and strategies some of which are outlined at length below (see 5.4.1, 5.4.2 and 5.5.1, 5.5.2, 5.5.3). What is practical in this alternative is that both teachers and pupils know what they have to do and what the expected output is. In any case, this way of teaching and learning needs neither a theoretical explanation nor how to go about it, especially by comparison to competency-based approach which is up till now a misunderstood approach among teachers from primary to secondary education.

5.3   Why Reading

Due to the lack of readings in English, our EFL students encounter a number of problems in their first year at the university level and find themselves in need to catch up a great deal to say the least. Though they studied English for 5 years (now it is 7 with CBA) in secondary schools, students' major problems are linked to limited vocabulary and awkward grammar. This is why an approach that is based on readings to develop the other skills in integration is highly recommended in secondary education.

A teaching of a foreign language that is based on reading is first of all a familiar thing to almost every teacher. Even if the teacher has not been sufficiently well trained he will be able to find his way through. In fact, as teaching is in general based on preparation, it is then a matter of preparing

oneself before going into the classroom. There is no doubt that teachers' daily preparations and choice of teaching materials constitute one of the best ways for teachers to progress professionally. What is more, professional development and lifelong learning are nowadays considered among the most required criteria in the quality of teaching and teachers.

Reading here is not a requirement that is imposed on pupils to read either intensively or extensively. With extensive reading, pupils are asked to read large quantities of books and other materials to develop general skills. Intensive reading, on the other hand is often introduced beyond one's current reading ability for concentration and deep meaning. Neither is it to be confused with ' the reading method' that " **was designed for schools whose only objective was a reading knowledge of the language.**" (Mackey, 1965 :152).

For this purpose, reading is supposed to include a range of reading passages that are selected according to their interests and usefulness for the target learners. The texts are also introduced according to the learners' level and then move on through all the textbook units in a more challenging way. In this context, the adoption of Krashen's (1993) comprehensible input "i+1" is recommended for the reading materials to be neither far below the current learners' ability of understanding nor beyond their level in order to avoid discouragement. The aim is to develop in the pupils the habit to read (ideally after listening to native readers' recordings when possible) sufficiently in their textbooks which will in turn help them to improve their communicative and writing abilities. In this way, pupils will actually develop both receptive and productive skills which is indirectly an 'integrated skills' learning whose merits

productive skills which is indirectly an 'integrated skills' learning whose merits need no longer to be demonstrated in general English.

5.3.1   Reading as Essential Input

Research has shown that reading is a valuable source of input in the learning of a foreign language. It is through reading that learners at all levels have access to information on past and current issues, and knowledge of all sorts. For this reason, reading should be developed and emphasized from an early age. Pupils who develop reading early are known to be among the learners who always score well in their studies. Through reading learners become aware of a number of things that first concern the language itself. How language functions grammatically and how words are used in different contexts are perhaps the most important elements that help readers to understand the language system. This knowledge is indeed essential in the development of learning autonomy. When trained to read from an early age, learners will automatically do it themselves provided appropriate levels of difficulty are respected.

For this purpose, pupils in secondary education need to be oriented towards developing further readings in English in school libraries. The problem, however, is that even when they exist school libraries are limited to the sales of prescribed ELT textbooks. The librarians and the school administration may , in fact, acquire some reference books, novels and specialized magazines and newspapers in Arabic and French but the idea of getting English references for pupils in secondary schools has never been a priority. Even teachers of English

do not insist on such a thing for the simple reason that everyone tends to think that books in English are not available in this country. Indeed, except for EFL students in universities very few people (and perhaps none) are interested in English books . In order to develop this idea of reading among our pupils, a place for English in school libraries is unavoidable.

One way of developing this idea would be the creation of an English corner in school libraries to include, for instance, ELT textbooks that have been used with previous teaching methodologies, in addition to short stories that are sometimes on sale in Algerian bookshops, and Baccalaureate annals and other exams, etc. With time, diverse resources will be acquired and every school will have its own library for English. Getting pupils to this English corner is another difficulty but this can interestingly be developed with the teacher's presence according to some fixed hours that are allocated for this purpose on pupils' time-table to ensure regularity and creation of reading habits. For instance, pupils could be asked to keep a list of their readings and their summaries or other preparations in a special portfolio that can be used for oral presentations in classroom sessions. What really matters is to keep the whole operation as a compulsory session on pupils' official time-table to install it as a habit in the learner, and in the same time to allow the teacher to find appropriate ways and materials for the procedure [1].

5.3.2   Appropriate Reading Materials

One of the basic things for the success of this alternative relies on the

choice of appropriate reading materials. What is actually meant by appropriate is that the selected reading passages should be at the level of the learners. We have already seen under 4.3.2.2 how linguistically difficult texts do not encourage pupils to read and may even develop frustration, demotivation, and consequently lead them to avoid reading altogether. In this context, an observation is made by Reading Rockets (2001) where it is explained that fluency develops with texts that are relatively easy for students to read and classified under 'independent level', and then move towards more 'more challenging and manageable' texts as put down below:

Independent level	Relatively easy for the students to read
Instructional level	Challenging but manageable for the readers
Frustration level	Difficult texts for the students to read

Table 5.2 : Reading levels of fluency.
Online. Adapted from Reading Rockets (2001).

Therefore, in order to develop pupils' motivation and interest, it is essential for the contents , and particularly the first units of any ELT textbook to be within pupils' reach. Illustrations and visual aids must also appear according to the quality that modern technology uses in advertising fine products. In fact, unclear and fuzzy illustrations as mentioned earlier (see 4.3.2.7) decrease the value of textbooks and do not stimulate pupils' curiosity. These are the elements (pictures, cartoons, clear diagrams, etc.) that learners try to find in textbooks

when they are for the first time in their hands, and then comes the turn of the choice of topics and their level of difficulty. If the topics are introduced in a way that pupils understand without a heavy dependence on the teacher's help things will move on naturally, otherwise a feeling of frustration and inability is developed from the beginning and may unfortunately lead to neglect and disinterest.

5.3.3   Reading as Source of Knowledge

Knowledge is a well-known fact that leads to human progress, and this knowledge is generally obtained from various sources. In fact, knowledge is preserved in books and nowadays in more sophisticated forms (websites and multimedia) of storage that provide instant information; however, the key to this knowledge is and will probably remain through reading. No matter whether one reads in his native language or in foreign language (though recent knowledge is often delivered in English), it is reading that helps learners to gain knowledge of the world. Though in EFL settings it may not be knowledge (i.e., in search of knowledge as such) that directly interests the learner, reading still basically remains one of the most indicated way to improve language skills which are part of the learner's academic competencies. The latter make significant difference either in classrooms, during exams, or in real life situations between pupils who possess these competencies and those who do not.

Reading is also considered the source of hints and cues that foreign language learners turn to in order to find ways how to express themselves in spoken and written skills. After the teacher, the classroom tasks and activities,

and other sources of knowledge such as websites and electronic media devices, reading remains the most practical way that helps learners to develop their language proficiency. In addition, reading is known to be one of the most attractive ways to raise learners' interest and motivation in foreign language learning. For this purpose, the selection of reading materials should be done according to what pupils of a given level would expect. Imposing adults' selections on teens are often rejected because the young people generally want to know about their time and the ways the youth sees the world.

5.3.4 Implementing a Portfolio System in the Classroom

As mentioned earlier (see 3.4.3), portfolios are more and more introduced in EFL learning and evaluation. Their adoption is particularly received with enthusiasm in institutions where they are used for the purpose of improving pupils' learning. What is making portfolios successful is easiness with which they can be accomplished. Learners have all the time they need in order to complete, correct, add or change the works to be presented or submitted to evaluation. As for evaluation, a learner may know in advance whether or not the contents of the portfolio match the topics under research. If examinations are known to exert stress and anxiety on students , portfolios evaluation allows more freedom for the learner to take a second look, make necessary adjustments to his works and act towards better achievement.

On this matter, research has in general shown that students fail exams for several reasons such poor performance, lack of studying, stress and poor time management, etc. (Ling *et al.*, 2003). In fact, some learners are quick to

provide answers in exams while others are slow and need time to act, and others still, cannot answer at all because of mind wandering. In answer to all these situations the adoption of portfolios can be favourable to all types of learners. Slow learners have enough time to complete and check their works, while it is an opportunity for quick learners to think about how they can improve the quality of their works. In any case , there is no place for any pupil to lag behind, and this is why keeping a portfolio is a practical idea where each learner does something personal and quite independently. Besides, as mentioned earlier, it is different from 'project work' that most pupils have it made in cyberspaces.

In secondary education, the idea of portfolio is feasible because at this level pupils are aware that they have to rely on themselves in many subject areas. In English, for instance, all too often pupils read a text and forget all about it, and therefore, find themselves short of ideas when they come to speak and write. Keeping a portfolio for this purpose is helpful in the sense that pupils have just to browse through their notes and documents for necessary information. This is perhaps the most interesting side of the portfolio when it comes to solve pupils' lack of ideas to take part in classroom activities. If pupils are known to be proud of their intervention in the classroom particularly when there is some praise from the teacher, then the portfolio can be the source of t this pride.

5.4 Reading in the Development of Speaking

As the title of this section implies, this part is deliberately referred to in the

sample above (table 5.1) as ' speaking' to make the pupils aware that it is time to speak English. It is a section that is reserved to oral abilities where pupils are urged to use the language. In fact, speaking and taking part in classroom conversations can be easily initiated with pupils who have been prepared for this purpose through selected readings. Unfortunately, oral skills have often been neglected all throughout the adopted ELT methodologies in secondary education. They were not even developed under the communicative approach that lasted for more than two decades in secondary education (1981-2003, see 2.3.1). It is not only because pupils knew in advance that they would not be orally tested in exams, but the selected reading comprehension texts and readings in general in the prescribed ELT textbooks (see New Lines, Midlines, etc.) have neither been of great attraction to pupils nor to teachers due to the poor quality of the textbooks and their contents of the 1980s (see 4.3.1.2).

With the alternative above, pupils can practise speaking by way of various procedures. First, it is reading that is going to be the starting input for further elaboration of the same ideas and views in a thematic way. For instance, the use of portfolios here is helpful in the sense that while there is a classroom discussion on a familiar topic, pupils are more likely to participate because they are supposed to have some necessary information stored in their documentation portfolios. Indeed, quite often teachers repeat that pupils cannot generate any discussion without having something under their eyes, but with some ideas at their disposal they are more daring and learn how to take part in classroom speaking activities. A further argument in favour of learning to work with portfolios is the fact that pupils become unconsciously aware of the

importance of preparation for this phase of speaking. In other words, pupils' intrinsic motivation develops and their active involvement in the selection and collection of information is a step towards learning autonomy.

How much pupils participate in speaking and how well they do it, will constitute an overall evaluation by the end of each teaching unit which is scheduled to last about two weeks, or even less if the pupils have English regularly everyday during the week. The teacher may use this evaluation as an incentive for pupils to do their utmost to take part in oral skills. Besides, It is also generally known that when teachers opt for some way of doing things, pupils will adopt it very quickly. If teachers make them speak they will certainly do it. There are also some techniques that help in the development of speaking as explained in the subsequent sections.

5.4.1   Reading Aloud

Reading aloud is an old practice that has been abandoned for decades now. However, " **Research has shown that reading aloud is the best way to prepare children for learning to read and to keep them reading as they learn and grow**". (Cormier, 2008 : 1) . Indeed, children who practise reading aloud are always ready to read in imitation of the teacher's reading or whenever the teacher asks for a volunteer. This has also an influence on the ability to speak. What encourages learners to speak is first of all what to say and this comes from reading. Unfortunately the time allotted to reading nowadays in EFL in our schools is insignificant and even not practised at all in many classes.

Teachers tend to think that reading aloud is only a waste of time and that pupils can be occupied otherwise with more intellectual skills.

On the contrary, practice has shown that usually after silent reading in order to understand the content, reading aloud is not only an effective process to improve reading skills in general but is also a device to develop speaking skills. For instance, many orators, lecturers and other people find themselves in need of reading aloud for communication purposes while addressing and speaking to others. In this context, Brumfit (1980 : 4) explains the necessity of "The mechanical skills" in the reading processes in the following diagram:

| Ability to derive concepts from printed or written symbols | Ability to read fast | Ability to vary speed in accordance with reading aims and needs | Ability to read aloud so as to achieve meaningful communication with one's listeners |
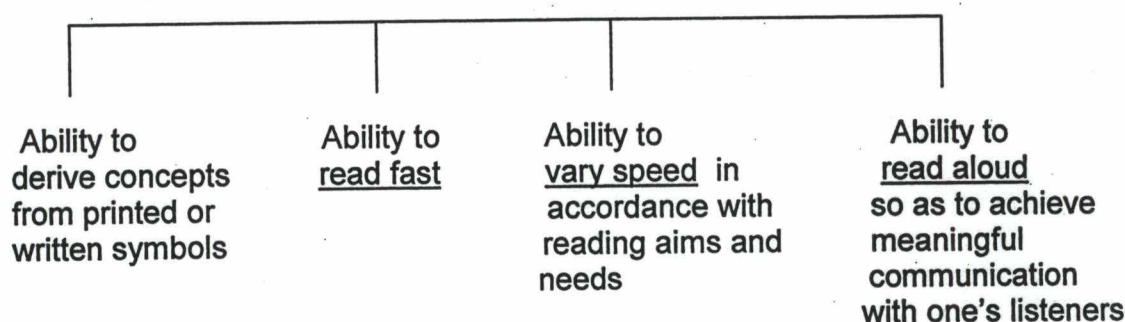
Diagram 5.1: Reading processes : the mechanical skills.

(Adapted from **Brumfit, 1980 : 4**)

Besides, many lecturers in charge of oral expression in our department of English [2] also practise reading aloud with students, and quite unanimously agree that students' oral communicative abilities get better (and reading too) after some period of time of practice.

Another technique known as 'shadow reading' where learners use a tape

to record their reading, listen again to see how they sound and compare it with the original version if there is one. By extension the tape can be used in order to improve pronunciation, stress and intonation, a task that can be repeated quite often for more confidence. The only difficulty that may affect the learners' endurance in this activity is looking for new resources and preparation, but this can be worked out with incentives that teachers use in order to motivate learners for this type of activity.

5.4.2   Oral Reconstruction of Input

One way of promoting speaking among pupils is by practising oral reconstructing or retelling the texts or stories or whatever input pupils have just read. Retelling is an activity that helps pupils to communicate to others what they have learnt. The fact of acting in groups and trying to reconstruct the different parts of a text or a story in chronological order increases oral language use. Repetition of this practice will increase pupils' attention for future use of the same activity: first it teaches them how to order ideas in their minds before speaking, and second it increases their ability to memorize and retrieve information and make generative use of it. In general, this activity is within pupils' reach because the input becomes familiar through previous practice during reading comprehension and reading aloud. In consequence, with oral reconstruction pupils are more confident because they know what they are going to speak about, and therefore, have no fear to get something wrong. In other words, this activity is a post reading ability where pupils somehow assess their comprehension of the previous input. Besides, it is during this practice that

pupils become more fluent in speaking with teachers who intervene only on points of English pronunciation if need be.

5.4.3 Thematic Topics

Thematic topics are advantageous in the sense that pupils find themselves working on a theme that is familiar to them. When all pupils decide which topic to work on (either of their choice or proposed by the teacher), they set in groups and list down the ideas to develop in their individual participation. They should be taught, for instance, to list down as many ideas as possible so that all the members of the group will have something to say. When a discussion is started, the teacher intervenes gently in case a pupil is in need of a word, otherwise he might help with sequencers, joining words or expressions for argumentation, etc. In this way pupils are indirectly taught some communication strategies that are necessary " **to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence**". (Canale and Swain, 1980 : 30). In this context, Tarone (1983) also mentions that learners need to develop strategies such as paraphrasing, approximation, word coinage, circumlocution, literal translation,, appeal for assistance, etc. in order to bridge communication gaps.

This practice is supposed to be regular since there is a whole session reserved to speaking in each unit of the textbook. The more topics pupils go through , the more their chance of speaking is frequent. The teacher here does not hold the floor as is often the case with teacher-centred methodologies. When pupils feel free in their interaction they develop some confidence and

familiarity with a number of themes on which they can speak and write in case of writing activities.

5.4.4 Role-Playing Activities

Role-playing activities constitute a learning experience through which pupils act out different things either individually or with their peers. These may, for instance, include dialogues, interviews, short stories, adapted short plays, etc. that learners prepare with their teacher, in groups and even alone before any 'acting out' in the classroom. The teacher's involvement in this type of activities is quite demanding if one considers the amount of materials that he has to provide for his pupils and the time needed at least in the beginning of role-playing . It is perhaps quite difficult for the teacher to set up and manage these activities, but their success depends on preparation. For this purpose, as mentioned above the idea of 'portfolio' could serve as a data bank for the teacher and his learners where role-play materials can be stored, retrieved and frequently renewed with pupils' works that are suitable for such activities.

As for learners, acting out is an opportunity to speak and try out some of the activities of their choice where they feel comfortable while performing in the classroom. If learners are encouraged whenever they produce something before their peers, they will become more confident and the problem of 'communication apprehension' characterized by reluctance and shyness to talk (Horwitz *et al.,* *1986*) that many EFL learners tend to have in speaking a foreign language will disappear with time. In order to learn to speak, learners have to practise speaking while activities that involve role-playing are said to develop this ability

in the learners according to many teachers practitioners [3]. In fact, the value of role-playing is when learners are immersed and identify with the different types of learning materials for classroom performance. What is more, because the activity (i.e., role-playing) as such permits to the learner to express his ideas (or at least what he likes from others), it reduces anxiety while speaking to others either in the classroom or in real world situations. It is also an activity that promotes interaction between learners while preparing their presentations, during dramatization, and when explaining or giving some clarifications to classmates' questions. In any case, it is an activity that pupils generally like and particularly when it is carried out at their level and includes topics of their choice.

5.5   Reading in the Development of Writing

The question whether or not reading contributes to 'writing' does not have to be demonstrated anymore. But writing as an academic activity, remains one of the most difficult tasks for foreign language learners to master. It is, in fact, a requiring difficult activity for all those who are concerned with academic writing from a little composition to a research article or a book. However ,there are methods that help learners to write. For those who start reading early in their infancy, they generally have no difficulties when it comes to 'writing skills' and can manage the activity be it in their native language or in a foreign language. Others, as it is often recommended by teachers will have to "read in order to write" . This quite often repeated cliché is to some extent right for the simple reason that while reading learners become familiar with the language. It is, however, not easy to make the pupils read, but it is not impossible either if due

care is taken by the teacher's provision of selected reading materials that offer opportunities to speak and write. In this context, and for writing purposes, Ourghi (2001-2002 : 242) explains that " **By choosing a topic that involves the students the teacher is providing a context within which effective learning on the target <u>writing</u> aspect can be undertaken**". Learners, indeed, identify more with the topics of their interest in the sense that they can speak and write about the things they are familiar with or want to know about. Once more, if pupils are initiated right from start to use a portfolio where they keep information about their readings for writing purposes, writing activities will not be particularly difficult. This procedure will later on lead pupils to gradually write on free topics, quite autonomously.

5.5.1 Reading as Primary Input for Writing

Pupils might not be aware that reading helps them to write but teachers can by way of practice make the pupils aware of the relationship between reading and writing. In the classroom, the procedure goes from input which is as mentioned above 'reading comprehension' to the first output which is 'speaking'. Practically, during this phase pupils are supposed to have done sufficient reading (silent and aloud) before moving to speaking where they consolidate previous input in different ways as a pre-phase preparation for writing. Put differently, on the basis of reading aloud, reconstruction of texts, role-playing activities, etc., pupils will have stored enough ready materials to put down in their writing tasks. In any case, it is generally acknowledged that when pupils

have ideas and vocabulary their attempts to write present no major difficulties. Even if this practice is to some extent guided, the purpose is deliberate to show to the learners that language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) are complementary and serve each other.

Besides, with computers, networks and multimedia being everywhere nowadays, many learners by curiosity or interest use these tools as an extension of classroom activities to read on the subject of their concern for writing purposes. Though perhaps this practice is not generalised but when pupils compare their outputs and see the difference at the level of teacher evaluation of their works , they feel the obligation to follow the same procedure. In the end, one may say that with appropriate resources and teachers' guidance, pupils can be led to read in order to write.

5.5.2 Reading Teaches Writing Techniques

Reading helps pupils to develop the ability to write acceptable pieces of writing. What is interesting here is that reading includes everything the learners need in writing: grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and so many other things. Quite often pupils come across words and expressions that attract them and are happy to pick up for future use in spoken and written English. Unconsciously pupils store a number of techniques about the organisation of paragraphs and the way they are connected and coherently put together. Besides, while reading, pupils learn to develop curiosity and often think of applying what they have read. If in writing activities (from guided to free) they are asked to put this in practice, pupils will increase their readings due to the need of ideas and vocabulary, etc.

They generally reach a level where they use different strategies to remember, take notes, quotations, and idiomatic expressions, etc. for writing purposes. It is an opportunity for the pupils to see how tenses are used and how writers choose appropriate vocabulary ,etc. Pupils may miss all these things but quite often teachers remind learners of reading techniques to draw their attention particularly for the things they need in writing.

5.5.3 Exposure to Diverse Reading Materials

A textbook that is designed according to the proposal above (table 5.1) would include a wide range of texts because the proposed teaching/learning units are only about 6 pages long from 'the reading passage to the writing phase'. This length allows enough room for exposure to a variety of resources compared to what we have now in New Prospects where ' Unit one ' for instance is as long as 30 pages. Even by normal standards the teaching/learning units in this textbook are too long and often the cause of boredom and disinterest. In consequence, teachers as well as learners have expressed their concern about this length in favour of shorter teaching/learning units that allow more diversity in content (see Appendix 14, under 3.b & 3.c).

Now, on the basis that the teaching/learning units are limited in length to include only four sections (reading material, grammar, speaking and writing), we suppose it is an opportunity for textbook writers to select and propose a variety of texts to cater for the diverse pupils' interests. If the textbook is well designed in layout and content it will be a sort of attraction to pupils who will be

curious to go through its contents. There is no reason why such a textbook cannot be designed if, for instance, language teaching practitioners under the supervision of field specialists and textbook designers are all concerned in the elaboration of textbooks. The assumption underlying the variety of texts and themes is to help pupils broaden their lexis, ideas and views they so much need in speaking and writing tasks. Unfortunately, this variety is quite undervalued now in ELT textbooks in secondary education at the expense of a large number of successive tasks and activities that are involved in the prescribed textbooks (At The Crossroads, Getting Through, New Prospects). To illustrate this, one might cite New Prospects where, for instance, in 'Unit two' (pp. 74 – 105) the number of sections and tasks in 'Grammar explorer I, Grammar Explorer II, III, IV; Vocabulary Explorer, Pronunciation and Spelling' exceeds that of the reading passages which comparatively consist of only a two-page text (83 - 84) and another one of three (98 -100) in the thirty-two pages (32) long teaching unit. What is more, the whole organisation of the textbook is made redundant because the same format is kept repeatedly all throughout the textbook.

In summary, exposure to a variety of texts guarantees pupils' identification with input, and each pupil will try to defend what he/she likes best. For this purpose, an ELT textbook should serve the pupils' interests and be the point of reference whenever they want it. In other words, it is a way – just like clear attractive pictures, songs, riddles, etc., for ELT teaching materials to attract pupils and get them involved in foreign language learning. In this way, pupils enjoy the use of their English textbooks and find themselves unconsciously (i.e., autonomously) using their learning materials.

..... and four and so on and so forth. Though the idea may seem simple, this

5.5.4 Writing Practice

As mentioned above, EFL learners need to develop regular readings in English in order to be able to write acceptable written compositions. For this purpose, ELT textbooks must comply with this requirement in order to provide learners with a good range of reading materials that attract them in form and content. In practice, a teaching unit should in addition to the main reading passage include other related texts so as to expose pupils to various types of discourse. Moreover, as ELT textbooks will be the only resource that learners will turn to as a reference book, this means that textbook designers must take this fact into account to provide the users with sufficient information on a given topic before delivering ELT textbooks to schools.

In parallel to this activity, regular writing practice is also a technique that develops writing abilities. This practice can be started at any level where the teacher, for instance, writes 'one simple sentence' in plain English on the board, and then asks pupils to write one of their own in the same way. When they get this sentence right, the teacher moves to 'two sentences' in the same way, then three and four and so on and so forth. Though the idea may seem simple, this practice is going to take some time before the learners reach the ability to write about 10 lines independently. However, when they reach this level, one may say that the learners are able to write an acceptable paragraph. On the basis that practice makes perfect, learners move from guided to free writing as indicated in the last step of the proposed alternative in this chapter.

5.6   Conclusion

In this part we have tried to show that 'reading in order to speak and write' is an opportunity for the pupils to develop both receptive and productive skills. Therefore, efforts to increase pupils' competence in speaking and writing depends on the creation of a classroom atmosphere that fosters appropriate readings and learning situations. In order to compensate somehow for the lack of an 'English environment' (no real life situations) for EFL in this country, the provision of selected appropriate reading materials in well-designed textbooks in form and content is necessary to have an attractive effect on pupils and raise their motivation. There is also a need for learning materials that exhibit both local and world cultures in some comprehensible authentic language in order to attract pupils and make them inquisitive about their textbooks. Once more, the purpose is to get pupils in the same time interested in their textbooks, and be happy to make 'new acquaintances' with its teaching units. If we can get pupils to this point , then there is hope for change to take place and for our pupils to improve their standards in English.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. In general, 'reading for leisure' is not practised . Nearly all Algerian ELT textbooks include a section of some selected readings, but it is rarely (if not never) used by the learners. First, the latter need some guidance on how to use these readings, and second the pupils' time- table is so overloaded that extra things are neglected.

2. In an interview with six teachers from the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen about 'Reading Aloud' as a practice with their students in oral expression, teachers confirm that this practice develops fairly acceptable reading abilities and improves speaking and pronunciation. However, they all observe that reading aloud is time-consuming and needs regularity and perseverance.

   Source : Department of English, University of Tlemcen
   January 12th 2009.

3. In an interview with six teachers from the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen about 'Role-Playing Activities', teachers confirm that are this type of practice develops students' oral performance. Besides, many students like the activity and quite often propose their 'adapted plays' and 'short stories' for dramatization.

   Source : Department of English, University of Tlemcen
   January 12th 2009.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Innovation in foreign language teaching and learning has never been an easy enterprise. The situation is even more complicated when the agents of change have not been involved in consultations, and particularly when the proponents of change are over-enthusiastic about their proposal success. As soon as classroom implementation is different and requires more efforts for new programmes, lesson plans, new resources and preparations, teachers show more resistance to change and cling to their familiar habits and practices. However, this resistance could be explained by the fact that change is always top-down decision for which teachers have not been prepared, and are quite often completely ignorant of what the innovation is going to be. This is why sufficient information about innovation and change has to be known and shared among the agents who are supposed to make changes work. In fact, studies suggest that understanding the reasons of change is a condition for the acceptance of new ideas and their implementation. In brief, an imposed change is generally unsuccessful especially if the proposed change is not perceived by the teachers as a solution to their concerns and problems

What is more, innovations are more often than not imported and sometimes do not suit our pupils' learning styles. We are, in fact, consumers of what is produced elsewhere and it is a fallacy to take for granted what works in other countries under other circumstances. In this context, we argue for a closer relationship between field researchers, and academics in education, university

teacher trainers, EFL practitioners, materials writers, etc. in this country to work out this problem of adopting foreign educational innovations. There is a need for a method, or not necessarily a method but an EFL learning that could be more suitable for pupils in secondary education, and where adjustments will be made whenever necessary in harmony with progress in the field of language education.

Although today one has to be cautious in the search of a more suitable method or approach, English teaching and learning in Algeria works well when it combines the techniques of several ELT methodologies according to the teaching practitioners. In other words, an approach based on insights drawn from the Algerian classroom experience for an EFL learning that goes with modern requirements and helps pupils, in the long run, to be able to carry on working independently in their textbooks. It is this learning autonomy that pupils cannot develop at the moment with the current competency-based approach because most teachers continue to stick to their old familiar habits that measure progress in grammar. On the other hand, it is the difficulties of the prescribed textbooks (i.e. On The Move and New Prospects) in middle and secondary schools as stated by teachers themselves. In fact, in spite of a significant progress that has been made by textbook writers in terms of language and cultural content, there is reason for concern. It is an unfortunate reality to see teachers quite forced to practise spoon-feeding because of the textbooks' difficult contents for pupils. Indeed, it is quite a paradox when we come to compare the contents of the above textbooks and the pupils' level in English. How can materials writers design textbooks that are beyond pupils' reach and

expect them to develop learning autonomy ? In consequence, to answer the question in the outset of this research, innovation and change in ELT has not brought the expected results in terms of pupils' speaking and writing abilities. This is to say that ELT changes were not based on needs analysis and pupils' real levels and interests, otherwise textbooks would be more appropriate to pupils' understanding abilities and more selective in topics. In brief, little has been done to increase the motivational levels of pupils. On the contrary - not on purpose though - some <u>New Prospects</u> contents are neither attractive nor interesting for today adolescents.

Furthermore, the problem of English language teaching in Algeria is linked to many other variables of which the teacher represents the central part. On the one hand, changes remain inefficient without significant teachers' involvement in decision-making in reforms. On the other hand, changes cannot be operated without teachers' training development and participation in the implementation process. Other factors also concern the lack of ELT resources in schools and the limited teaching hours on pupils' time table, in addition to the English language having no social function in the Algerian environment. In other words, if there are no other avenues than the teaching profession where English is required for use such as in tourism, foreign services, foreign trade and industrial companies, etc. learning English will unfortunately remain just another compulsory subject in the school curriculum. Therefore, it is not only a revision of our EFL teaching and learning practices which is recommended before opting for an educational change, but there is also a pressing need for a reorientation of ELT policy towards societal needs in order to motivate learners, and let them

feel the necessity to prepare themselves for the market requirements outside the classrooms. On this basis, pupils are made to feel the reasons for learning English and, consequently, the chances to ensure successful ELT in Algeria will be possible.

Nevertheless, even if there are abundant ways to destroy innovation in education it is also not difficult to make it possible, but as explained throughout this dissertation, some strategies for change are necessary. These concern teachers, teaching materials and learners. First, teacher development initiated by the teacher himself for professional empowerment is a condition for change to happen. For instance, reflective teaching and action research should constitute the teacher's long life learning in order to be continually informed. In fact, access to publications in professional journals, attendance and participation in seminars and coming close to field specialists in national and international ELT conferences about innovative practices are valuable resources for EFL teachers' development.

Second, textbooks are to be considered central elements in educational changes because they support teachers in their daily classroom tasks, and have a great influence on the learner's quality of education. For this purpose, they should be worked out and designed according to pupils' level of understanding, and include learning tasks that are appealing to learners, and finally progress in challenging ways to promote pupils' learning autonomy.

Third, equally important is learner development which is characterized by the development of learning strategies. If learners receive sufficient guidance from start how to learn within their understanding abilities and adequate

programmes they will be actively engaged in the learning process. If they are -
on the contrary, either criticized or qualified as unable in their attempts to learn
English then pupils will develop frustration and inhibition towards any learning
change. A few years ago, pronunciation and phonetics were completely
neglected in the classroom because of inadequate presentation. Now, pupils are
more respondent because pronunciation is made clearer with tips and directions
through different tasks that are made easy in tables and dialogues, etc. Other
strategies that help educational innovations and changes rely on the necessary
equipment and sufficient time for pupils to study and prepare in order to avoid,
for instance, what is happening now with lengthy programmes in secondary
education.

Hopefully, the three elements outlined above should undergo some
evaluation before educational policy makers engage in innovation and change
in order to be informed about the strengths and weaknesses of current
teaching and learning practices. Thus, before designing and writing a textbook
educators should take into account the pupils' realities and levels at different
stages. Challenging contents should be introduced gradually and pupils should
be made to feel this progress by way of comprehensible input to tackle learning
materials that require reflection and critical thinking. Classroom experience has
shown that everything is possible if introduced smoothly with learners. As
for teachers, we have said that inadequately trained teachers cannot
provide a teaching of quality and this has probably a negative effect on
learning outcomes. From start teachers should be 'resourced' and urged to
work cooperatively for their professional development. In this way , they can

have a considerable impact on pupils' motivation and develop their awareness as far as language learning is concerned.

In connection with the concept of innovation and change in education, we suggest a further alternative for a change of the whole educational system in Algeria. The idea is systemic, i.e. , it involves restructuring the system and concerns a curriculum based on subject specialism from the first year (1.A.S) in secondary education. The 'innovation' if it may be so called is not limited to the English syllabus but to the whole school curriculum as well. Here, pupils will somehow specialize only in three subjects in addition to an optional one (e. g, Arabic, French, History + Option : e.g. music or computer training, etc. / or Maths, Physics, Chemistry + Option : e.g. English, etc.) to take place in morning school sessions. Afternoon sessions are reserved for sporting events, recreation and cultural activities (see Appendix 16) where collaboration and individualism co-exist, thus creating opportunities for pupils to exhibit and develop their different skills, gifts and talents.

In this context, researchers have found out that pupils cannot go through an entire school day without practising some other extra-curricular activities in a more relaxed way than the classroom atmosphere. In fact, learning through relaxation and fun are known to raise confidence. It is high time educational authorities thought about bringing some solutions to overloaded programmes, textbooks and timetables. At this very moment (February 2009), inspectors of English for middle and secondary schools are not only urging teachers to finish their programmes before mid-May 2009 but also organising study days and seminars in order to shorten programmes and textbook teaching units. This

insistence does not only concern English but also all other subject matters. Another convincing evidence that explains teachers' and learners' complaints about lengthy programmes.

Moreover, the idea of subject specialism is feasible at the level of practicality : this split of the school day to start with academic subjects and finish with sports and cultural events is in itself very attractive, and is intended to create learning-centred and relaxing environments for pupils. According to pupils it is music and sport that they like best in the school, most probably, because of learning relaxation. On the other hand, the implementation of the idea is only a matter of organization that can be worked out locally (see example in Appendix 16). Needless to mention the numerous problems of the current general education, but this system includes too many subject matters (*twelve* in middle schools and *ten* in secondary schools at present). Therefore, too many textbooks and copybooks of excessive weight which often cause back pain and even backbone twist for many pupils according to medical professionals. Besides, all day long teaching hours (8a.m to 5p.m) and too many learning hours (now 32 hours/ week) in addition to remedial classes every week and during winter and spring holidays. In sum, this makes teachers and learners feel under pressure to get through generally overloaded syllabuses.

The most interesting profile of a curriculum designed along specialist system is also to provide the learner with sufficient knowledge and in-depth learning experience of the selected academic subjects. As referred to above, the curriculum should be extended to include some opportunities for sports,

creativity, talent and proficiency in order to pave the way for more specialism in higher education. Academically, studying and progressing through speciality enables pupils to get rid of their feelings of inferiority in some subjects where their grades are so low, and realise their full potential and aspirations in subjects of their choice. Socially, learning to work together, practising different sports, games and cultural activities in groups develop a spirit of inter group relations, mutual respect, maturity and responsibility in order to acquire the skills required to make headway in and be prepared for the challenges of the labour market competition and globalisation that are so necessary in today's society.

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A- General Theoretical References.

B- Official Documents and ELT Textbooks.

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A P P E N D I C E S

Appendix 1: ELT General Objectives in Secondary Education

O B J E C T I F S - G E N E R A U X

L'enseignement de l'anglais dans le cycle secondaire s'inscrit dans le cadre de la politique nationale des langues étrangères ainsi définie dans la charte nationale: "La connaissance de langues de culture ( ) nous faciliterait la constante communication avec le monde extérieur, c'est-à-dire, les sciences et les techniques modernes et l'esprit créateur dans sa dimension universelle la plus féconde. (charte nationale)

L'anglais étant perçu comme outil de communication notre enseignement se propose d'asseoir et de développer une compétence linguistique qui permette de réaliser des objectifs de comportement dans les quatre aptitudes linguistiques fondamentales (« language skills ») , à savoir :

- Compréhension orale
- Expression orale
- Compréhension écrite
- Expression écrite

La maitrise de ces « skills » implique la compréhension de discours authentiques et la production spontanée d'actes de langue corrects et pertinents, dans le cadre du programme et en fonction des objectifs des différentes filières. Le programme comprend :

a- Des objectifs scolaires

-Préparer dans les bonnes conditions, les élèves aux examens scolaires.

-Les doter d'une base pour entamer des études supérieures en anglais (Licence d'anglais).

b- Des objectifs socio-professionnels

Leur permettre de tirer profit des différents en anglais (littéraires, économiques, techniques, scientifiques ….) qu'il seraient appelés à consulter dans leurs recherches universitaires ou dans leur vie professionnelle.

Leur permettre, après un renforcement linguistique de courte durée, de suivre avec profit un stage de formation en anglais dans secteur économique.

Appendix 2 :   **An Example of an Overloaded Textbook File**

File Two : <u>**On The Move**</u> pp. 41- 64.

FILE TWO

YOU CAN DO IT!

PREVIEW

In this unit, you will learn the following:

Language Learning

Functions
Expressing ability
Expressing possibility
Asking for and giving permission
Expressing certainty
Making requests (consolidation)
Expressing agreement and disagreement

Grammar
Modals **can, may, might** and **could**
Irregular forms of the modals **can** and **could: am able/ will be able/was able**
Agreement and disagreement patterns **So can I/ Neither can I.**
Modals **must/have to/need** (consolidation)

Words and sounds
Vocabulary related to technology and to animal life
Equivalents of defective verbs (modals): **allow to, permit to, capable of** ...
Prefixes: **il-, im- in- ir- un-** and **dis-**
Stress in words starting with prefixes
Strong forms of auxiliaries **was/were/can/do/have**

Skills-Building

Primary skills
Listening for functions (agreement and disagreement)
Listening for intonation patterns
Listening for gist
Reading for detail
Predicting and checking predictions
Transposing information to a graph
Interpreting texts with the help of an illustration
Writing a short newspaper article/a school report

Social skills
Making a survey
Managing through conversation
Drawing rules for a charter

Your Project:
Making a profile of changes in man's capabilities.

FILE TWO

YOU CAN DO IT!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
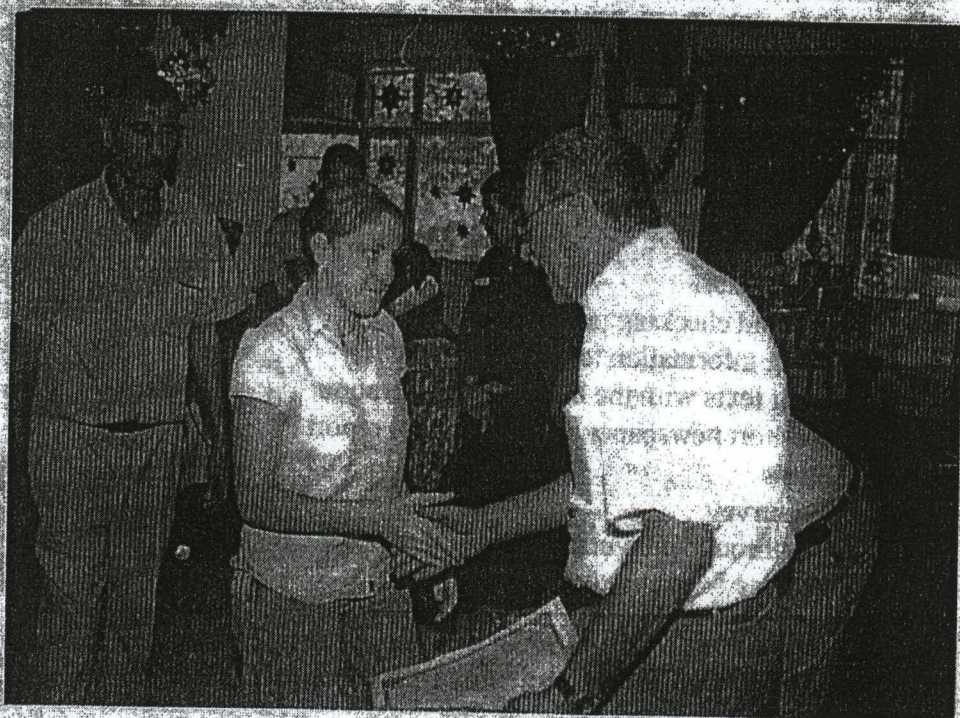
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🎧 LISTEN AND CONSIDER 💭

▶ **Before you listen**

Pair work. Look at the pictures below. Then ask and answer questions to find out what your friend can or can't do.

Example

    You: Can you dance, Said.

    Your partner: Yes, I can. /No, I can't. But I can sing well.

Sign up for the contest today.
Don't miss your chance to become a star!
TALENT SHOW
What are your talents?
Can you...
Sing? Dance? Do magic tricks?
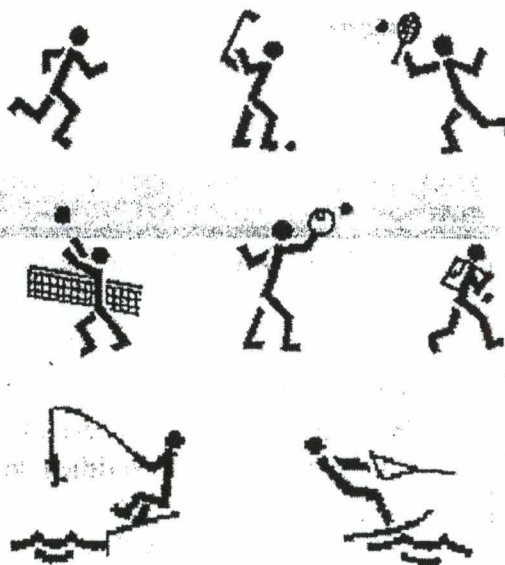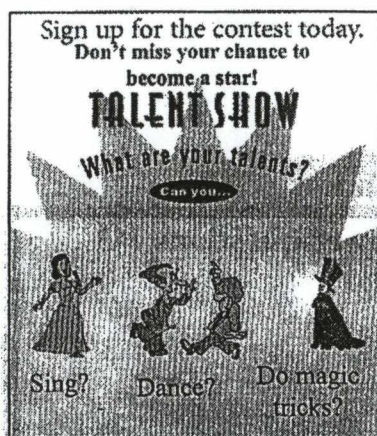
▶ **As you listen**

① Listen to your teacher reading an interview and underline the form of the modal <u>can</u> you hear in the snippets of the dialogue in the box.

Snippets of the dialogue	Strong forms of **can**	Weak forms of **can**
- Can you help me?	/kæn/	/kən/
- I can play the guitar.	/kæn/	/kən/
- Yes, I can.	/kɑːn/	
- No, I can't.	/kɑːnt/	

② **Read the questions carefully before you listen again. As you listen make notes for your answers.**

a. Bob politely requests Wendy to give him some of her time. What does he say?

b. What does Wendy say to offer help?

c. Can she sing ?

d. Can she play the piano?

e. Could she do anything she wanted with her free time when she was a child?

f. Her parents accepted to let her play music because _____ (complete)

▶ **After listening**

Grammar Window

Consider sentences a-f and answer questions 1-3 below.

a. Can you spare a moment?

b. I **can** play the guitar.

c. Can I take part in the contest?

d. When I was young, I **couldn't** do anything I wanted with my free time.

e. I **was able to** convince them.

f. When **will** you **be able** to come and register for the contest?

1. Which sentence expresses **present** ability? Underline the auxiliary in the sentence.

2. Which sentence asks for permission and which one makes a request? Do we use the same modal to ask for permission and to make a request?

3. **To be able to** is a verb idiom. When is it used and for what purpose ?

See Grammar Reference n°4 p 179

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PRACTICE

① **Pair work. Look at the list below. Say what people <u>couldn't</u> do one thousand years ago but which they <u>can</u> do today. Add other items to the list.**

Drive cars/ Live on the moon/ Go to the cinema/ Cure cancer/Take photographs/ Clone a human being/Forecast earthquakes. ...

Example

You: Could people drive cars then?
Your partner: Yes, they could. /No, they couldn't. (Say why.)

② **Look again at the list above and say what people <u>will be able</u> to do soon. Add other items to the list if you can.**

Example

You: Will people be able to live on the moon soon?
Your partner: Yes, they will. / No, they won't. (Say why.)

③ **Each of the travellers below <u>was able to</u> achieve something exceptional during his lifetime. Find out what it was and write sentences about their lifetime achievements.**

Ferdinand Magellan - Ibn Batuta - Marco Polo - Neil Armstrong

▶ **Write it up**

Group work. Imagine you are a teacher. Use the table below to make notes. Then write a small school report about a student of yours. You are supposed to read this report to your colleagues on class assessment day.

Student	Last term	Now	Expectations
Farida	spoke very little English	speaks and reads English quite well.	be able to___fluently won't be able to ___yet.

Example

Last term, Farida **could** speak __. Now she **can** __. She **was able to** get a good mark in the final test last March. If she works/studies/ hard, she **will be able to**__.

P **BRAINSTORMING**

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📖 READAND CONSIDER 💭?

▶**Before you read**

Pair work. Look at the picture and guess why the pupil has stopped taking the test. Use <u>maybe</u> or <u>perhaps</u>.

You: Why has he stopped taking his test?
Your partner: I don't know. **Maybe/perhaps** he does not know the answer.

▶**As you read**

① **Read the lead-in to a newspaper report below and check your answers to exercise 1 above.**

Most children suffer from test anxiety when they take exams. As a result, they perform below their abilities. So what can we do to help them reduce stress and score their best? To find out the answer to this question, *USA TODAY* spoke to Professor Malcolm Kane of the University of Texas. We asked him to start talking about exam preparation. Here is his answer.

② **What do you think Professor Kane will say about exam preparation?**

③ **Read the rest of the report and check your answer to question 2 above.**

Preparation for the test is very important and it starts at home. Perhaps I should explain the meaning of the term **preparation**. By preparation I mean the work that pupils do before the test. "But just how do you go about it?", you may ask. Well, the majority of pupils revise for exams alone. This method may possibly be suitable for some children, but on the other hand it may well be the cause of the failure of many others.

USA TODAY: So can pupils fail their exams just because they don't revise in groups?
No, I didn't really mean that. What I mean is that children who revise in groups may have better chances of success than those who revise alone. When they work in groups, they help one another by asking and answering questions that they might have in exams. Group preparation may also reduce stress if the children practise under test conditions, I mean if they test each other just as if they were taking an exam.

USA TODAY: Professor Kane, may I ask you a personal question?
Yes, you may.

USA TODAY: Could you please tell our readers how you felt about exams when you were a school child?

You may not believe it, but I never felt any panic during exams. ...

▶ **After reading**

Read the newspaper report again and copy down the sentences which contain <u>may</u>, <u>might</u>, <u>can</u> and <u>could</u>. Then answer the questions in the grammar window below.

Grammar Window

1. Which sentences contain an auxiliary **may** which expresses positive future possibility?

2. Which sentence contains the negative of **may**?

4. Which sentences contain the past tense form of the auxiliary **may**? Does the auxiliary in these sentences refer to the past or the future?

5. Which auxiliary does the journalist use to ask about possibility?

6. Which auxiliary does the journalist use to ask for permission? Why?

See Grammar Reference n° 5, p.180

PRACTICE

① Rewrite the lines written in bold type in the dialogue below using <u>may</u>
or <u>may not + a verb</u>. Make any necessary changes.
   Then close your books and act out the dialogue.

Said: Karim has invited me to visit him in England.
Amine: Will you go?
Said: I don't know. **Perhaps I'll go next June. I'll ask for a school leave.**
Amine: **But perhaps the headmaster won't let you go.**
Said: **Well, perhaps I'll go without asking for a leave then.**
Amine: I advise you not to do that. **Perhaps the headmaster will mark you
absent.**

② Consider the situations below, then write questions using <u>may</u> or <u>can</u> to
ask for permission to do something. Use the verbs in bold type.

   a. An English guest who doesn't know you well is in your home. He wants to
   use your telephone to give a call to his parents.

   _____please?

   b. You're in your English class. You've forgotten your dictionary at home and
   you want to **borrow** your friend's dictionary to look up a difficult word.

   _____ please?

   c. You're at the beginning of your English class. You ask your teacher for
   permission to **leave early** to visit a friend of yours in the hospital.

   _____ please?

   d. You're now in hospital. You ask the doctor for permission to **give a drink**
   to a friend of yours who has just had an operation.

   _____?

③ **Pair work. Now close your books and use your answers in exercise 2 on the previous page in dialogues. Take turns to give or refuse permission using the responses in the table below.**

Asking for permission	Giving permission	Refusing permission
Can I... ?	Yes, you can./Yes, of course. Yes, sure./Yes, all right. Yes, certainly./Yes, go ahead.	I'm afraid/Sorry, you can't. No, you can't.
May I... ?	Yes, you may./Yes, certainly. Please do./Please go ahead.	No, you may not. No, you can't.

④ **Match the sentences in column A with their functions in column B.**

Column A	Column B
1. Don't swim here. You **might** be attacked by sharks.	a. Expressing a wish
2. May you live long and have a lot of children.	b. Warning
3. There are no clouds in the sky, but it **might** rain before noon.	c. Suggesting
4. You are not good at English. Well, you **might** try these grammar exercises anyway.	d. Remote possibility

▶ **Write it out**

Use the information below to write a note in your diary to list the things that are possible/likely to happen at the end of your school year. Use **may**, **may not**, **might** or **might not**.

to work/ very hard /this year/ so /to fail/ my *Brevet* exam

to be/ still young, so /to repeat /the year

to go to/ a vocational training school instead/because /to like doing things/ with my hands.

to like drawing /a lot / so / to train as a draughtsman

when /to finish / training / to open/ a workshop. ...

Ⓟ **FACT FINDING**

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👂 WORDS AND SOUNDS 📢

① Copy the table on your exercise book and tick in the appropriate box of the prefix to form the <u>opposites</u> of the words.

Il-	Im-	In-	-Ir-	Un-	Dis-	Words	Transcriptions
						regular	/ˈregjələ/
						capable	/ˈkeɪpəbl/
						possible	/ˈpɒsəbl/
						responsible	/rɪˈspɒnsəbl/
						legal	/ˈliːgl/
						justice	/ˈdʒʌstɪs/
						probable	/ˈprɒbəbl/
						definite	/ˈdefnɪt/
						polite	/pəˈlaɪt/
						obey	/əʊˈbeɪ/
						agree	/əˈgriː/

② Re-write the new words obtained in exercise 1 above using phonetic scripts. Mark the stressed syllable as in the example below.

Example   immoral   /ɪˈmɒrəl/

③ Listen to your teacher reading the new words in exercise 2 above and check your answers.

④ Fill in the gaps with the appropriate opposite from the box in exercise 2 above.

a. Verbs can be divided into two groups. There are regular verbs and____ones.
b. "An" is an____ article. It is used before a vowel sound.
c. It is ____ to steal. You can go to prison.
d. It is _____ to arrive on time at school. It's nearly 8 o'clock.
e. This mathematical equation is difficult. I'm ____ of doing it.
f. It is ____ to interrupt people like that. Next time wait for your turn to speak.
g. Mother punished me yesterday because I ___ her orders.
h. It is ____for a horse to live for more than 30 years.
i. It is _____ to call women the weaker sex. They are as strong as men.
j. I ____ with you, Rashid, when you say that studies are not important. But I agree that they are difficult.
k. You are totally wrong when you say that teenagers are ___ of doing things right. They always try to do their best.

👉 50

TAKE A BREAK

Alchemy.

Using the clues provided, go from the first word to the last word by adding a letter at each step to from the intervening words.

From nothing to a precious metal in 3 steps.
1. Nothing
2. Move, progress
3. Deity
4. Precious metal

An alternate route
1. Myself
2. Prefix meaning two
3. Command or ask
4. Stay, continue, wait, reside
5. A woman just married or about to be married
6. Span

Idioms and colloquialisms

Discuss three or four sayings in the list below and find their equivalents in your language.

a. The leopard cannot change its spots.
b. He that cannot obey cannot command.
c. May god defend me from my friends. I can defend myself from my enemies.
d. The remedy may be worse than the disease.
e. Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.
f. You cannot sell the cow and drink the milk.
g. You may lead a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink.

RESEARCH AND REPORT

① **Find out the average life span of each of the animals below and place them on the following graph.**

Life expectancy graph

Name of
animal

5 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 50 | 60 | 75 | 100
(number of years)
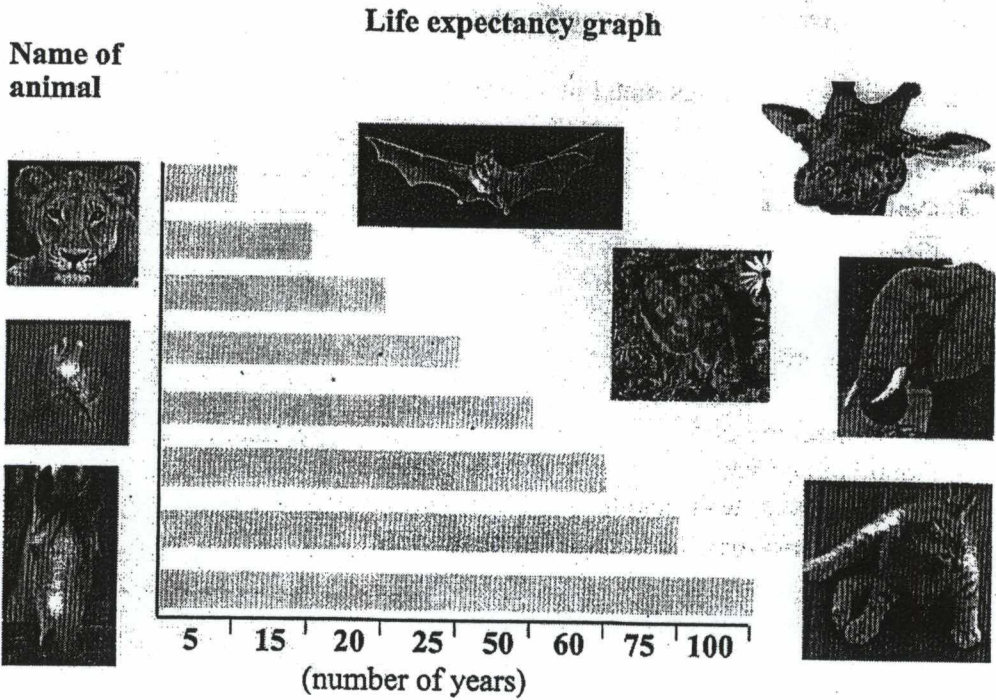
② **Discuss the maximum age to which people and each of the animals on your graph can live. Use the auxiliaries on the graph below to express degrees of possibility.**

Example

Giraffes live for 20 years on the average, but they may well live for up to__

100 —		
80 —	may well ...	(higher possibility)
60 —	might well...	
40 —	may ...	(smaller possibility)
20 —	might ...	
0 —	can't live to the age of 30.	(impossibility)

52
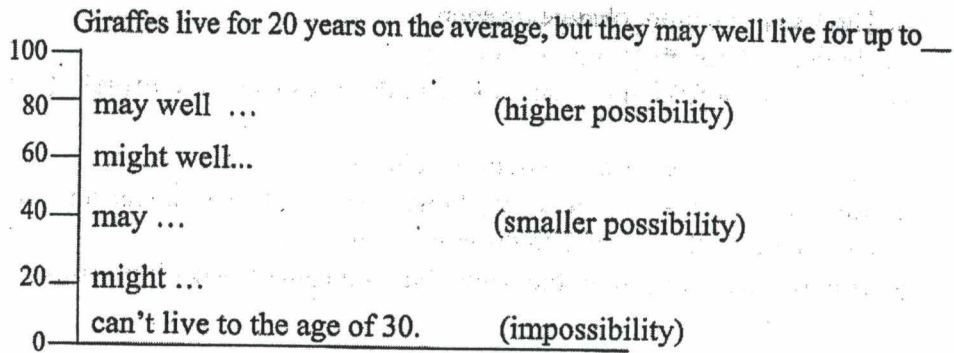
③ Think about other animals and draw another graph to show how long they can live.

④ Write a report about an animal of your choice which is in danger of extinction using the information on the report card below.

ANIMAL REPORT

- Name of animal :
- Where does it live?
- What does it look like?
- What is it like?
- What is special about it in terms of what it can do?
- How long does it live?
- What is the maximum age to which it can live?
- What may cause its extinction?
- What can we do to save it?
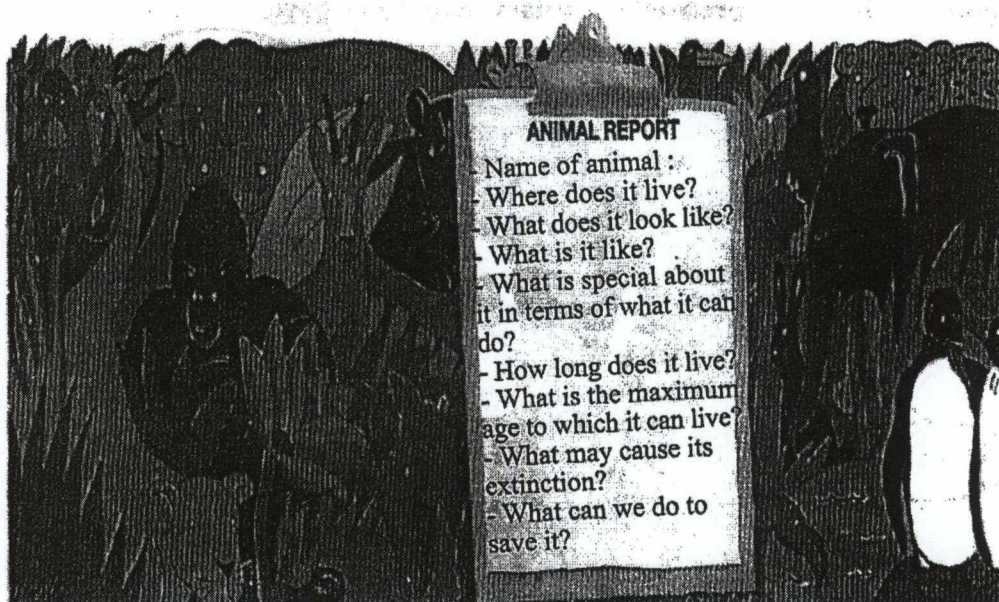
⑤ Group work.

Imagine you are a member of the World Wild Life Organisation.
Write a ten-rule charter designed to ensure the protection of wild animals using appropriate modals. (See Grammar reference n° 6, page 181.)

Take your pick from the following verbs:

> to cure - to shoot - to treat - to trap- to feed -
> to hunt - to shelter - to mistreat - to fatten

P ORGANISING

🎧 LISTENING AND SPEAKING 🗣

▶ **LISTEN AND CHECK**

① Jill (on the left) and Jack (on the right) agree with each other about many things in their conversation. Fill in each of the blanks in the speech bubbles with the appropriate auxiliary: <u>can</u>, <u>do</u> or <u>have</u>.

A — I have got a bulldog.
B — So ___ I.
C — Neither ___
D — I can't be friends with people who are cruel to animals
1 — So ___ I.
2 — I love bulldogs.
3 — I don't like people who mistreat animals
4 — Neither ___ I.
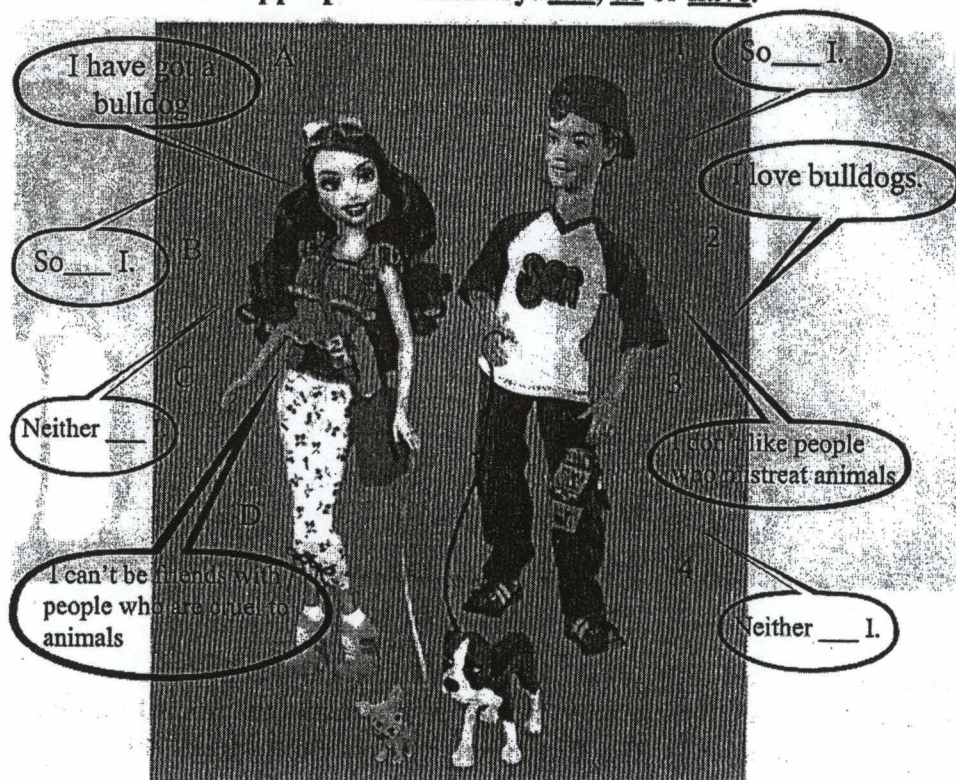
② Listen to your teacher and check your answers to exercise 1 above.

③ Listen to your teacher again and say which word is stressed most in the speech bubbles you have completed in exercise 1.

④ Listen again and note the form of the auxiliary verbs <u>do</u>, <u>have</u> and <u>can</u> you hear in the speech bubbles that you have completed. Tick in the right box.

Have		Can		Do	
Strong form	Weak form	Strong form	Weak form	Strong form	Weak form
/hæv/	/həv/	/kæn/	/kən/	/duː/	/də/

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Coping....

When participating in a discussion, you sometimes agree and sometimes disagree with what the other speaker says to you. It is not always necessary to use the verbs **agree** or **disagree** to express **agreement** or **disagreement**. You can express this in a different way.

A. Use **so + auxiliary + subject** when you respond to a <u>positive</u> statement.

Example:

| I can sing | So can I. | = I can sing too. |

B. Use **neither + auxiliary + subject** when you respond to a negative statement.

Example:

| I can't play tennis. | Neither can I. |

▶ **It's your turn**

① Group work. Speak about your capabilities. Take turns to agree or disagree with what your partners says. Use <u>neither</u> and <u>so</u>.

Example:

| I like reading Shakespeare. | I can't read Shakespeare. |

YOU :

| So can I. | Neither can I. |

Partner A:

| Oh, I can't. | Oh, I can. |

Partner B:

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② Group work. Complete the dialogues below using <u>so</u> or <u>neither</u> + the appropriate auxiliary: <u>do</u>, <u>will/shall</u>, or <u>have</u>.

> You: I have bought a bicycle.
> Partner A : _____ .
> Partner B: That's very funny. I have bought one, too. ①
>
> You: We're flying to England next Saturday at 5.
> Partner A: _____
> Partner B: How extraordinary! We're going on the same flight, too. ②
>
> You: I haven't seen Boussad since last Monday.
> Partner A: _____ .
> Partner B: There is something wrong. I haven't seen him since last Monday, too. ③
>
> You: Everybody hates snakes. But I love them.
> Partner A: _____ .
> Partner B: I love them too. ④

③ Group work. With books closed, act out the dialogues above. Then make similar dialogues using as many auxiliaries as you can.

④ Respond to the statements below using <u>too</u>.

    a. Your partner: Happy New Year Farid !   You: _____

    b. Your partner: Have a nice day!   You: _____

    c. Your partner: I can drive a motorcycle.   You: _____

► Write it up

Write a *saynette* using <u>so</u> / <u>neither</u> + <u>auxiliary</u>.

  Draw inspiration from listening script 2 (Jack and Jill). And then act it out.

P   WRITING UP
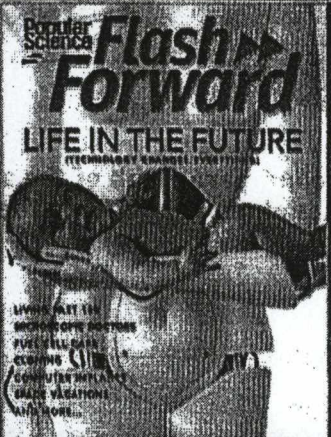
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READING AND WRITING

① Look at the picture of the cover page of the magazine below and answer these questions.

    a. What is the name of the magazine?
    b. What is the title of this issue of the magazine?
    c. Which topics does this issue of the magazine deal with?
    d. What does the illustration on the cover page represent?
    e. What do you think the most important article in the magazine will be about?

Flash Forward
LIFE IN THE FUTURE

What will your life be like in 25 years? The editors of POPULAR SCIENCE give you a sneak peek at what's next in computing, medicine, space, and more. Meet a man who thinks we can live to 200, preview cool gadgets of the future, and decide whether you want to hold your breath waiting for teleportation or a robot maid.

Get *Flash Forward* at your local newsstand today

② Read the newspaper article below and check your answer to question e in exercise 1 above.

The robot is the most amazing invention that man has ever made. For example, in 1987 an American surgeon was able to instruct a robot from a New York hospital to do an operation in Strasbourg. In the same year, astronauts were able to pilot another robot to take pictures of Mars. Robots are already capable of doing many difficult and dangerous jobs. You can see them working in car factories, in mines, in fire departments and in nuclear plants.

Many people think that robots are stupid. This may be true for the old generation robots. But the new generation robots are not stupid machines at all. They can hear and speak. They can even smell. Some day soon, I'm sure scientists will be able to invent robot cooks, which you can instruct to prepare your breakfast in the morning. They will be able to make robot maids, which will do house cleaning. They may be able to invent robot students to do your home work while you just lie in your bed listening to music. And who knows? They might even invent robot mechanics, which will repair broken robots. Can robots become the rivals of man in the future? Well, they cannot for one simple reason. They have only artificial intelligence, so it is impossible for them to be man's rivals.

③ The pictures below illustrate the article on the previous page. Read the article again and identify the sentence(s) which each of the illustrations below helps you understand.
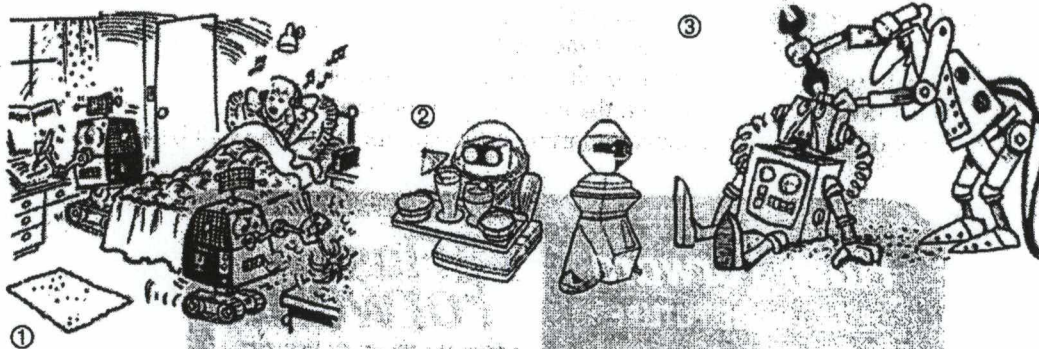
④ Read the second paragraph of the article and rank the predictions that the author makes about robots from the most to the least probable/possible. Use the graph.

Tasks to be performed (or not) by robots
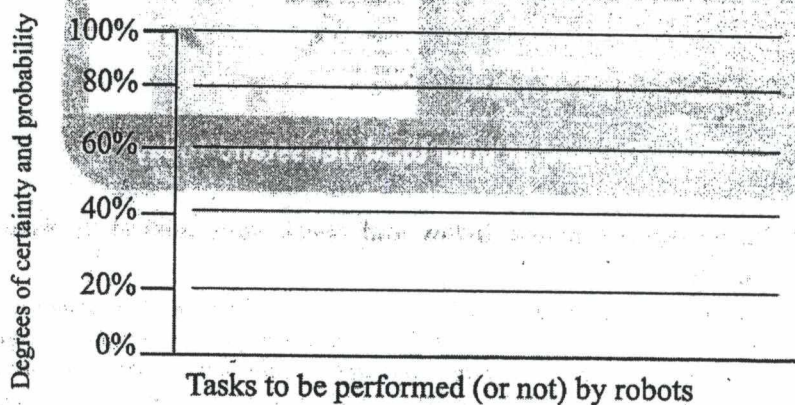
───── Coping.... ─────

It is important to look at the illustrations which accompany texts. They may help you in various ways.

1. Illustrations can help you guess the topic or the general idea of the text. So make sure you look at them before you start reading. This may help you better understand the text.

2. They can also help you understand the meaning of difficult words.

►Write it out

① **Read the jumbled predictions about the technological advances below and say how sure you are about each using will be able/ may well/ may/ might/ or won't be able + verb.**

    a. Someday/ People/to do/ all their shopping by computer.
    b. Scientists/ to invent/ a computer which can read your mind/soon.
    c. In the future/ all children/ to study at home using the computer.
    d. Scientists/ to make/ a vaccine/ against cancer/in the future.

② **Group work. Now discuss the opinions you have expressed in exercise 1 above. Use examples below as models.**

People won't be able to do all their shopping by computer.
Your partner: I think so too./ Oh, I even think people may well do all ___
Or
You: I think that scientists will be able to invent a vaccine against cancer.
Your partner: Really? I don't think so. I rather think that scientists ___

③ **Write a ten-line newspaper article to say what the NASA will/ may/might well be able to do with robots in the future. Draw inspiration from the second paragraph of the article from *Popular Science* above.**

Some ideas

  - NASA scientists/to make/a new type of spaceship.
  - Future astronauts /to be / a new generation of robots.
  - These robots/to go on missions of exploration to Mars.
  - They/to communicate with NASA specialists/ because/to speak English
  - They / to carry with them another robot, Hyperion.
  - Hyperion /to work 24 hours a day/ because/ it /to run with solar energy.
  - to find continuous sunlight in the polar regions of the planet Mars
  - to run fast over rocks.
  - Hyperion/to take pictures …

Hyperion
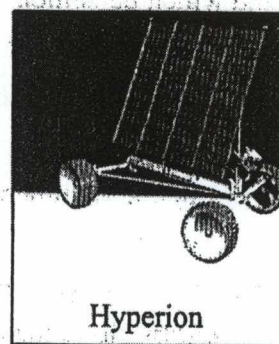
ASSESSING

PROJECT ROUND-UP

▶ *Making a profile of changes in man's capabilities*

Your project will be presented in the form of a wall sheet or a portfolio. It should include the following:

A. A list of things that man **could** or **couldn't** do six hundred years ago in the domains of ...

   a. transport   e.g., *Six hundred years ago man couldn't travel by plane, but he could travel on horseback.*

   b. medicine

   c. entertainment

   d. sports

   e. politics ...
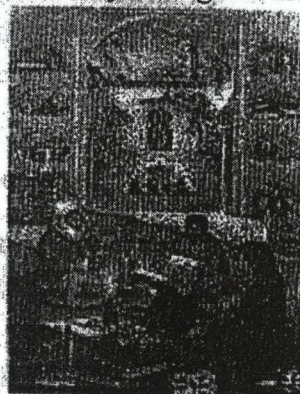
B. A list of remarkable performances that particular men and women **were able to** achieve in various fields over the last six hundred years.

   e.g., Christopher Columbus was able to sail to across the Atlantic. He ...

C. A list of things that man **can/** and **is able** to do today and which he couldn't do years ago in the domains of ...

   a. transport e.g., Today, man is able to travel to the moon.

   b. politics

   c. sports

   d. entertainment ...

   e. law

D. A list of things that man **will be able to/may well/may/ might/** do in the near future.

   e.g., In the future, man will be able to leave the Earth and settle on Mars.

E. Draw a cartoon and make your characters use **so** and **neither +auxiliary + subject.**

Note: All items in all lists should be illustrated with pictures / drawings and explanatory sentences.

WHERE DO WE STAND NOW?

Check your progress

Listening and speaking

A. Consider the situations below and choose the most appropriate modal from the modals between brackets and put it in each of the blanks.

	5

    a. A pedestrian /in the street
    Excuse me, officer, _____ (may/can/ could) you show me the way to Victoria Station please?

    b. A pupil /in the classroom
    _____ (could/can/may) I borrow your protractor, Said? I've forgotten mine at home.

    c. Immigration officer/at the airport
    _____ (can/ could/may) I see your passport?

    d. In the classroom
    Teacher: Where's Karima? Why is she absent?
    Pupil: I don't know. She _____ (can/may/could) be ill.

    e. Pupils /in the headmaster's office
    Pupils: _____(can/will/may) we leave now, Mr White?
    Headmaster: No, you _____ you (can't/may not/ won't). You haven't answered all my questions.

B. Agree or disagree with the statements in the short dialogues below using so or neither.

	1.5

{ **Your partner:** I can sing and dance.
{ **You:** _____ ①

{ **Your partner:** I can't go to school today.
{ **You:** _____ ②

{ **You:** I like bananas and peaches.
{ **Your partner:** _____ ③

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Appendix 4 : English Grammar Teaching by Translation

Les Verbes Défectifs

I can (could)	= I am able to	= je peux, je suis capable de …
I may (might)	= I am allowed to	= je peux, je suis autorisé à …
It may (might)	= it will perhaps	= il se peut que …
I must	= I have to	= je dois, il faut que je …
I shall	= auxil. du futur, I re Pers.	
(**I should**, prétérit)	= auxil. du condit., I re Pers.	
I will	= auxil. du futur, 2ᵉ et 3ᵉ Pers.	= je veux.
(**I would**, prétérit)	= auxil. du condit. , 2ᵉ et 3ᵉ Pers.	
I ought to	= **I should**	= je devrais.

les verbes defectifs ne se conjuguent qu'au **present** et, dans la plupart des cas, au **prétérit.** Pour les temps qui font défaut on utilise les tournures de remplacement données ci-dessus (2ᵉ colonne).

John **had to** leave before the end of the concert.

Jenny **will be able to** translate this passage.

You **would be allowed to** come if you asked the Headmaster, etc…

Particularité des defectifs :

a) **He can** play the piano (Pas d'**S** à la 3e Pers. Sing. Du present).

b) **Must you** go? **I cannot** stay. (Se conjuguent aux formes interrogatives et negatives sans **do.** Sont suivis de **l'infinitif sans to)**

c) **I could (je pourrais)** if Iwanted to. (Le prétérit peut avoir un sens **conditionnel**).

d) He **could have played** better : Il aurait pu mieux jouer.

He **should have spoken** before. Il aurait du parler plus tot, etc.

Les verbes défectifs, n'ayant pas de temps composés du passé, gardent la forme simple et sont suivis de **l'infinitif passé.**

(Richard and Hall, 1960:179)

Appendix 5 : **Translation**

Translate into English

Dès que Somerset Maugham eut achevé ses études de médecine, il quitta sans regrets l'Hôpital Saint-Thomas et se mit à écrire son premier roman, Liza of Lambeth. Il avait eu beaucoup d'occasions d'étudier les gens, et particulièrement les malades, pendant les cinq années précédentes, et ce là lui fut d'une grande aide dans sa carrière littéraire. Somerset Maugham n'avait pas beaucoup d'imagination, mais il possédait un sens aigu de l'observation. Il tenait un journal où il notait tout ce qu'il frappait et qu'il pourrait utiliser dans ses œuvres. Il a écrit vingt-cinq pièces de théâtre, vingt roman, et près de deux cents nouvelles, sans parler de ses essais, de ses mémoires *et de ses* souvenirs de voyage. Quatre heures de travail par jour pendant plus de cinquante années : Somerset Maugham n'a pas perdu beaucoup de temps pendant sa longue vie, car même quand il semblait inactif, il enregistrait les paroles et les gestes de tous ceux qui l'entouraient.

(Richard and Hall, 1969:166)

Appendix 6 :   A Reading Passage from <u>Practice and Progress</u>

Do You Speak English ?

I had an amusing experience last year. After I had a small village in the south of France, I drove on the next town. On the way, a young man waved to me. I stopped and he asked me for a lift. As soon as he had got into the car, I said good morning to him in French and he replied in the same language. Apart from a few words, I do not know any French at all. Neither of us spoke during the journey. I had nearly reached the town, when the young man suddenly said, very slowly, "do you speak English?" As I soon learnt, he was English himself!

Comprehension précis and Composition
Answer these questions in not more than 55 words.
1. Whom did the writer give a lift to in the south of France last year?
2. Did they greet each other in English or in French?
3. Does the writer speak any French or not?
4. Did they sit in silence, or did they talk to each other?
5. What did the young man say at the end of the journey?
6. Was he English himself, or was he French?

Key structures
 After he had finished work he went home.
 Read these two sentences:
 He finished work. He went home.
We can join these two sentences together with the word *after*. We can say: *after he had finished work he went home.*
Note how these sentences have been joined. Pay close attention to the words in italics:
The children ran away. They broke the window.
The sun set. We returned to our hotel.
As soon as the sun had set we returned to our hotel.
He finished lunch. He asked for a glass of water.
When he had finished lunch he asked for a glass of water.
I did not understand the problem. He explained it.
I had not understood the problem until he explained it.
Exercises
A. These questions are about the passage. Write a complete sentence in answer to each
   question:
1. When did you drive to the next town?
2. When did you say good morning to him in French?
3. When did the young man say "do you speak English?"?

B. Join these sentences together. Do not refer to the passage until you finish the exercise:
1. I left a small village in the south of France. I drove on the next town.

2. He got into the car. I said good morning to him in French.
3. I nearly reached the town. The young man said, "do you speak English?"

C. Join these pairs of sentences with the words given in brackets:
1. (After) She wrote the letter. She went to the post-office.
2. (After) He had dinner. He went to the cinema.
3. (When) I fastened my seat-belt. The plane took off.
4. We did not disturb him. (Until) He finished work
5. (As soon as) He left the room. I turned o the radio.
6. He was very ill. (Before) He died.

D. Give the correct form of the verbs in brackets:
1. The moment he has said this, he (regret) it.
2. It (begin) to rain before she took a taxi.
3. When all the guests had left, Derek (arrive).

Special difficulties

Words Often Confused

a - Ask and Ask for. He asked me for a lift. (1. 5)
Ask (a question): After the lesson, he asked me a question.
Ask for (something): he asked for an apple.

b - Except, except for, apart from. Apart from a few words . . . (11. 8_9)
When *except* is used at the beginning of a sentence, it is usually followed by *for*. Read these sentences:
I invited everyone except George.
Except for/ Apart from this, everything is in order.

c - which of, either of, neither of, both of. Neither of us ... (1. 10)
We use these words when we refer to *two* persons or things.
Which of the two do you want?
Either of them will do.
I like neither of them.
I bought both of them.
Exercise
Choose the correct words in these sentences:
1. (Except) (Except for) a slight headache, I feel alright now.
2. I like them very much so I bought (neither of) (both of) them.
3. (Except) (Apart from) the fact that he drank too much, he was rude to everybody present.
4. I (asked) (asked for) a question. I did not (ask for) (ask) an answer.
5. He could not answer (neither of) (either of) the questions I (asked) (asked for).

(Alexander, 1967:39-40)

Appendix   9-a

B)   READING COMPREHENSION

Exercise 1:

Read the text: **"how leather is tanned"**, then complete table on your copy-book.

Example: first the skins are delivered to the factory.

Table 1

Order of sequences	subject	Verb	Rest of the sentence	Punc-tuation
First _____. _____. _____.	the skins they	are delivered	To the factory _____. With chromium Dioxide	
Later _____. and just after _____. _____.	the water the edges it	is coloured _____. Is classified	With chromium Dioxide	;
			Its final size	,

Appendix 9-b

Exercise 2: The digestion of a piece of meat.

Read about the process of the digestion of a piece of meat, then complete the following diagram. Mention the name of the main organs, when and where the different stages of the digestion happen.

The process of digestion begins in the mouth. The piece of meat is chewed and moistened. Then it is swallowed down the oesophagus, into the stomach. There, the meat is transformed by an enzyme which is produced by the stomach. After this, the food goes into the small intestine where it is converted into amino acids by another enzyme called the protease, which is secreted by the pancreas.
These amino acids are then absorbed into the blood through the capillaries and are finally digested by the cells. The remains which are undigested in the small intestine, go through the large intestine where they are evacuated.

Diagram 2
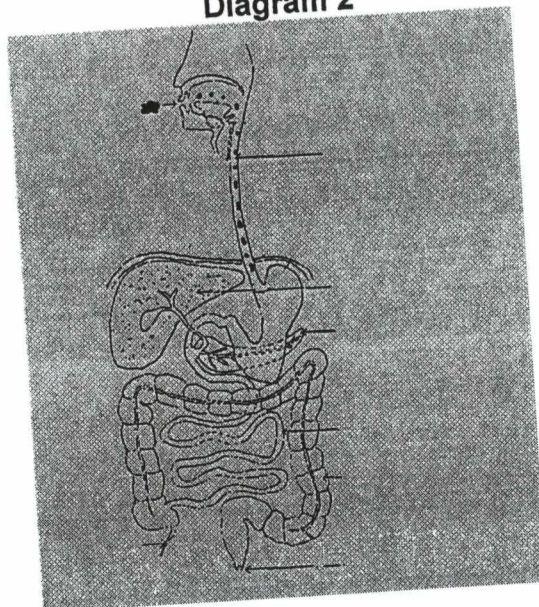
Appendix 9-c

C) MORE PRACTICE

Exercise 1:

In chemistry you learn how complex elements are decomposed into simpler components. For example, an easy experiment shows how a solution of sodium chloride (NaCl) is decomposed during electrolysis in a voltmeter.

Read the description of this experiment below, then complete diagram 3 and write the chemical formula which involved here.

A solution of sodium chloride (NaCl) is placed in a U-shaped voltmeter. The current is switched on. Immediately after, we notice that a chemical reaction happens: a yellow gas is given off from the anode and stays over the solution because it is heavier than air. This has a strong smell, and it discolours a litmus solution: it's chlorine (Cl).

At the cathode a lighter gas is given off and is collected in a test tube. It can be easily burnt. This gas is hydrogen (H).

At the same time we notice that an other substance is formed at the cathode. It is sodium hydroxide (NaOH) because a solution of red litmus is turned blue.

Conclusion: A solution of sodium chloride is decomposed through electrolysis into chlorine, hydrogen, and sodium hydroxide.

Diagram 3
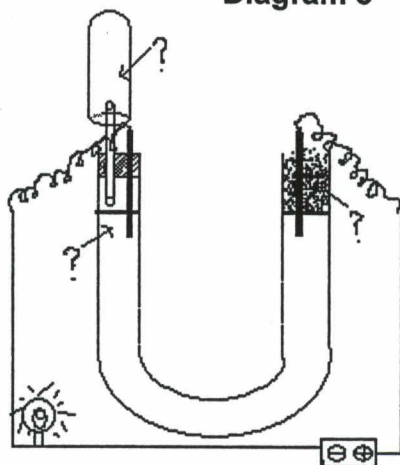
Appendix 10 : Unit 18 : <u>My Book of English</u> 1

18. unit eighteen [As Originally Written in the Textbook]

interview

18.1   **match questions and answers on your work-book**
  when do you play football?   in the bathroom.
  does she speak English?   on Thursday.
  where do you brush your teeth?   no, she speaks Arabic.

18.2.   **match name and occupation on your workbook**
  zahia belarous   singer
  michael Jackson   sportsman
  maradona   journalist
  noureddine morceli   footballer

18.3.   **guessing game**
  who am I thinking of? Twenty questions game

18.4.   **interview a person**
  name:
  nationality:
  occupation:
  age:
  address:

18.5.   **listen read and fill in the form about one person on your workbook**

name	john	ali	ann	pierre
nationality				
age				
father's job				
hobby				

. john is American. he is twelve. he plays tennis. his father is a baker.
. ali is algerian. his father is a teacher. he is ten. he reads books.
. ann is eight. her father does not work. she is english. she rides horses.
. pierre is french. his father is a doctor. he is nine. he plays cards.

18.6. **draw a "wanted" person on your work book**
. draw a "wanted" person.
. answer your friend's question about your drawing.

18.7. **listen and repeat**
. who is he?   bob
. what is he?   a postman
bob   a postman
 maradona   a footballer
 zahia belarous   a journalist
 hassiba boulmerka   a sportswoman

18.8. **match cursive and pictures on your workbook**
18.9. **wordsearch on your workbook**
18.10. **break up the words of the sentences and rewrite them on your workbook**

. whendoyoulistentomusic?
. whendoyoucleanyourteeth?
. doyouplaytennis? Idon'tliketennis,iprefervolleyball.

18.11. **complete the missing words in a sentence (where-how-when-do)**
you speak English?
is the bathroom?
do you go to school?
many girls are there
in the classroom?

18.12. **spot dictation on your workbook**
do you   football? no I
do   . I play   . when do
you play tennis? I play
tennis   thursday
afternoon.

(<u>My Book of English</u> 1, pp. 79- 81)

Appendix 11 : An Example from <u>Situational Dialogues</u>

10   Tea-time   The English drink more tea than any other nation –
7.77 pounds per year or 4.67 cups daily per head. In
times of disaster or tragedy 'a nice cup of tea' is
offered as a kind of universal cure.

(i)

A Would you care for a cup of tea?

B Only if you're having one.

A Do you take milk and sugar?

B A dash of milk and two lumps, please.

(ii)

A I expect you could do with a
cup of tea, couldn't you?

B I'd rather have a cup of
coffee, if you don't mind.

A Milk and sugar?

B A milky one without sugar,
please.

(iii)

A How about a nice cup of tea before you go?

B Yes I'd love one.

A How do you like it?

B A strong one with three spoons for me,
Please.

(iv)

A Would you like a cup of tea?

B Only if it's not too much
trouble.

A Do you like it with milk and
sugar?

B Not too much milk and just
half a spoonful, please.

(Ockenden, 1972 : 20)

Appendix 12 : **A Sample Project Prepared for Pupils in Cyberspaces**

TOPIC : **Making the profile of an ancient civilization** (**New Prospects,** p.42)

The cities of Greece : Athens and Sparta

Athens

Citizens, and Slaves

The class system in Athens was made up of two distinct classes- slaves and citizens. These classes were rarely open to any of the other classes; citizenship alone was given only to male Athenians. The same hierarchy of classes existed within other Greek city states as well (an even finer division can be drawn when looking at the social structure of Sparta). At the core of each class was a specific list of duties and responsibilities given to a member of it. Thus, citizens were expected to have attended the **gymnasium**, and **palaistrai,** where as slaves were relegated to house chores and could never attain citizenship.

Legitimacy and Marriage

During the Classical Age (500 BC - 400 BC) rules for citizenship in Athens were strengthened. This was possibly done to ensure that the essentially Athenian elements of the culture were retained during a time of turmoil, and/ or to discourage mixed marriages. During the Classical Age, conflicts with the Persians became paramount, so much so that by 479 - 480 BC, the Delian League was founded. The Delian League was made up of a counsel from numerous city states who, with combined force took up arms against the Persians and managed to reclaim their former cities. To add to the conflicts within the Classical Age, under the rulership of Pericles, Athens itself was under continual strain. A plague and a revolt continued from 430 - 404 BC, also known as the Peloponnesian war. Athens eventually surrendered to Sparta at the end of the war.

A stricter system of determining citizenship was not amicable to all former Athenian citizens from an earlier era. Many citizens found themselves at a loss of their

inheritance, citizenship and family ties. Under Pericles' rule, marriages had to be made through a legally recognized process. This process meant that in order for a marriage to be legal and the resulting children legitimate, both the mother and father had to be Athenians, and in addition the father and mother of the married couple also on both sides, had to be Athenians. The consequences of Pericles' ruling meant many citizens were no longer citizens of Athens. That in turn also meant that many had their inheritance or land taken from them. The stress the citizenship rule had upon Athens rippled through the general populace and was even felt by Pericles. Pericles, who had lost his sons in the Athens plague, was forced to ask permission from the Assembly to admit the children of his Milesian mistress, as Athenian citizens.

Citizens

Citizenship allotted many privileges to the population of Athens, thus it was difficult to attain and was only given to a male child if both parents were Athenian. Women were excluded from becoming citizens (with limited exception in the later Hellenistic period). Hereditary links however, did not just determine citizenship. From the time of their birth, young Athenian men were expected to attain an education. Based upon their birth and the wealth of their parents, the length of education was from the age of 5 to 14; for the wealthier 5 to 18, and sometimes into a students' mid-twenties. Unfortunately the above only applied to the 6th Century BC, when formalized schools were established. By the 4th Century BC in Hellenistic Greece, a potential citizen spent 2 years in the **gymnasium**, and 2 years training in the military, also known as the **ephebeia**. Citizens had rights which for the most part were limited only to themselves. Namely, a citizen could own land, have heirs, own slaves, belong to the **assembly**, and could have some political sway. Citizens also played a large part in the year-round religious festivals of Athens.

Slaves

Citizenship allotted many privileges to the population of Athens, thus it was difficult to attain and was only given to a male child if both parents were Athenian. Slaves alternately were below their citizen titled masters. They were excluded from the

religious festivals of Athens, could not own land, were denied some civil rights, could not participate in political activities. They were able to hold dominance over many of the trades. Tradework itself was appalling to most citizens. Slaves were not expected to attain anything but a basic education in Greece, but were not excluded from it. Some masters allowed their younger slaves apprenticeships in their workshops; eventually the slaves wares and income would add to their master's wealth. Some of the wealthier students in the Greek academies brought a slave with them to their classes. Slave work ranged from the light domestic work to the heavy work in the mines of Nubia, and other places. In some cases, domestic slaves were ritually welcomed into the house, by a walk around the hearth, and adoption (prior to Pericle's ruling) was not an unlikelihood with child slaves.

The Women of Athens

Compared to the women of Sparta, the status of an Athenian woman in Greek society was minimal. By comparison to present day standards, Athenian women were only a small step above slaves by the 5th century BC. From birth a girl was not expected to learn how to read or write, nor was she expected to earn an education. On reading and writing, Menander wrote, **"Teaching a woman to read and write? What a terrible thing to do! Like feeding a vile snake on more poison."** Other authors and philosophers had similar quips about women.

Most of what has been written about Athenian women comes from the 7th century BC onward, when education in Athens began to emerge. Prior to that date, it has been alluded to by some authors, that the status of women was not so glum. In particular, the rights of women in Athens and their decline may have been the direct result of political pressures brought about by Pericle's ruling on the legitimacy of marriage. Similarly there is evidence to suggest that Athenian women prior to the 7th century BC had been subject to similar rites of passage as boys. The scholar Jean-Pierre Vernant, wrote that the Arrephoroi, and many other religious celebrations of Athens, could have been reduced from perhaps an entire age grade's participation, to only a handful of girls who were chosen to participate. Even then, it was only the noble and upper class families which were considered for participation.

Athenian women can be classified into three general classes. The lowest class was the slave women, who carried out more of the menial domestic chores, and helped to raise the children of the wife. Male slaves held the task of working in the trade arts (pottery making, glass working, wood working, etc) or to educate the sons of a house. The second class was that of the Athenian citizen woman. The third class was known as the Hetaerae. The hetaerae unlike the slaves and the citizens, were much akin to the Geisha's of China. Hetaerae women were given an education in reading, writing, and music, and were allowed into the Agora and other structures which were off limits to citizen and slave women. Most sources about the Hetaerae indicate however, that their standing was at best at the level of prostitutes, and the level of power they attained was only slightly significant.

Sparta

The Culture of Sparta

Sparta was in many regards the opposite pole to Athens from a cultural perspective. Lycurgus' training and rule offered the city a formalized system of mandatory military training, as well as a constitution and social structure which allowed all Spartans some form of equality. Sparta was patriarchal (like Athens) and militaristic (unlike Athens). Lycurgus's precept required military service for nearly a person's entire life, and was excluded to the **helots** and the **perieoki**. Only the male spartiate were admitted into Lycurgus' training, where at the age of seven, a male child was taken from their mother, and until the age of 30 and possibly beyond were dedicated to their training and to their service to the state.

Growing up Spartan

When a male child was born in Sparta, they were washed in wine rather than water, to see if it induced a fit which in turn was a mandatory test for the child's strength. From then on, nurses rather than mothers, primarily brought up the child with little coddling, and only simple food. When the child reached the age of seven,

they were ready for their education and were organized into age groups or **Agelai** (relatively meaning flock or flocks of animals). Once introduced into the age groups, they were introduced to communal living with their age group and with others. From then on once assigned the **Agelai**, the children became subject to the **Agoge.** The **Agoge** was what allowed a Spartan child to become a **homoioi** or equal, which meant they were not reserved to work for the rest of their lives, and could have the political freedoms of a citizen. The training that went on throughout the **Agoge** was brutal. Always under the control of someone older than themselves, the specific **Agelai** were subjected to numerous competitive events and staged battles. Regardless, a child's education did include choral dance, reading, and writing, but athleticism and strength was stressed. No small wonder that the Spartans themselves won many of the Olympic events in Athens. After the **Agoge**, the **Agelai**, were reintegrated into society slowly, by undertaking the **krypteia**. The **krypteia** was partaken of by select individuals rather than by the entire **agelai**, during it, armed with a small knife, no shelter, clothing, or food, the youths hid during the day, and in the evening as a sort of 'secret police' patrolled the **helot** land plots in search of potential revolts, and roamed the mountainside. Once the **krypteia** was complete, the individuals who survived it were given high standing in the army, and potentially became a part of the Three Hundred Knights. After the **krypteia**, the men were expected to marry. Marriage was stressed highly in Spartan society, specifically in the proliferation of young healthy children. However, the marriage ceremony for a Spartan man and woman was not highly ritualized. The woman was abducted in the night, her head would be shaved, and she was made to wear men's clothing and lye on a straw pallet in the dark. The groom afterward would return to the barrack of young men, and would have little or no contact with the bride from thereafter, save for purely procreative visits. A Spartan male could have multiple wives, (anthropologically known as polygamy) but lived mostly amongst his mess and barrack mates with little connection to the opposite sex. Until the age of thirty or onward, a Spartan man's life was entirely dedicated to his state and to the army.

The Women of Sparta

Unlike the women of Athens, Spartan women were taught reading and writing. They were also expected to be able to protect themselves. Where in Athens, the education of a girl involved spinning, weaving, and other domestic arts, for a Spartan woman such tasks were relegated to the **helots or perioeci.** A girl's education was equally as brutal as the men's; many athletic events such as javelin, discus, foot races, and staged battles were also for both sexes. In many such events, Spartan women would run naked in the presence of their male counterparts and were respected for their athletic feats. Though women in Sparta were not subject to the same training as given by Lycurgus, Spartan women were expected and driven to produce strong and healthy children, and to be loyal to their state. Spartan girls were better fed their Athenian counterparts, and were taught writing, something which Menander (an Athenian) said, "Teaching a woman to read and write? What a terrible thing to do! Like feeding a vile snake on more poison."

Marriage for a Spartan woman was an almost non-ceremonial event. The woman was abducted in the night by her suitor, her head was shaved, and she was made to wear men's clothing and lye on a straw pallet in the dark. From there on she would meet with her husband for almost entirely procreative reasons. If she was formerly a girl, she became a woman through marriage. Any Spartan man could abduct a wife, which led to a system of polyandry (many husbands, one wife or vice versa) in Sparta. When a child was born, the woman had little to do with the his/her upbringing, rather nurses handled the child's care (in addition, a female Spartan child was subject to the same tests of strength as a male child.).

Women's roles in Sparta were not limited to marriage and procreation. Spartan women had many rights that other Greek women did not have. Namely, they could own and control their own property. They could also take another husband if their first had been away at war for too long. A woman was expected in times of war to overtake her husband's property, and to guard it against invaders and revolts until her husband returned; hence many Spartan women are pictured as warriors.

Appendix 13 :   Teachers' Questionnaire on Textbook Evaluation.

Level : Secondary-School teachers of English   **Lycée :**

This questionnaire aims at obtaining your evaluation of the textbook : **New Prospects.**
You are kindly requested to fill in the table below by putting a cross (x) in the appropriate
box and make comments whenever necessary.

Evaluation Criteria	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Weak	Lacking	Comments
Layout and Design						
1- Attractive : easy to use (style, clarity, appropriate level, enjoyable, interactive, etc.						
2- Quality of the material : appropriate visual materials, table of contents, charts, glossary, etc.						
Content						
1- Textbook objectives laid out in introduction : basic aims, components of the course, how to use the textbook, etc.						
2- Topics included						
3- Content clearly organized and graded						
4- Vocabulary explanation and use						
5- Grammar presentation and use						
6- Fluency practice in all four skills						
7- Tasks and activities						
8- Pronunciation						
9- Culture/ interculturality						
10- Regular review of tests						
11- Project work (any hints and ideas for research)						
12- Develops learning autonomy						

Source : adapted from Ur 1996, (in jahangard, 2007, Asian EFL Journal Vol.9 no2.(2007).

An evaluation of <u>New Prospects</u>

N.B: [Evaluation reprinted here as originally written by teachers]

Secondary education. Year three

Textbook evaluated by:
. Mme. Bechiri Mounia : PES in lycée Maghni Sandid – Ain Témouchent
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Under the supervision of: Lakhdar Fridi – Inspector of English

EVALUATION DE « NEW PROSPECTS »

1-Introduction

A la demande de M. l'inspecteur Général, visant à la lecture, l'Evaluation et la correction du manuel d'Anglais de 3ème année Secondaire "New Prospects", nous avons mis sur pied une commission composée de professeurs d'enseignement Secondaire qui en plus de travail fait individuellement ou en groupes, s'est réunie le 26 Novembre 2007 ainsi que les 03 et 17 Décembre 2007 pour coordonner son travail et faire une synthèse.

Parallèlement, un questionnaire (Annexe 1) et a été distribué aux PES des Wilayas de Ain -Témouchent et de Tlemcen afin de donner leur opinion sur le manuel.

Le présent rapport se fixe pour objectif de dresser un inventaire des aspects négatifs du livre d'anglais de la 3ème Année Secondaire et de proposer les solutions adéquates. Les aspects positifs seront également mentionnés. Il faudra certainement mettre en synergie les aspects négatifs corrigés et les aspects positifs améliorés pour contribuer à une meilleure prise en charge de la conception et de la réalisation du

manuel scolaire; l'impact de ce travail ainsi perfectionné sera indiscutablement visible sur le rendement de l'élève. En d'autres termes, le livre restera un des outils pour une pédagogie performante, par conséquent nous devrons consentir beaucoup d'efforts pour satisfaire les objectifs assignés. Pour accomplir ce travail, nous avons jugé utile d'examiner attentivement les anciens manuels, nous avons discuté avec nos collègues et nous avons recueilli leur avis et ceux de quelques élèves. Il reste que nous ne considérons pas ce travail comme une évaluation définitive car les contenus de ce manuel n'ont été expérimentés sur le terrain que partiellement.

2- L' aspect extérieur du livre

Bien qu'offrant un horizon optimiste pour l'apprenant (photo d'une université), la couverture n'est pas très attrayante ; les couleurs utilisées sont à revoir et le carton est de mauvais choix ; il se déchire et se corne facilement. La reliure est de qualité médiocre ; les feuilles se détachent facilement dés le début de son utilisation.

Les illustrations utilisées ne sont pas toujours pertinentes, d'une grande utilité, ne se réfèrent pas toujours à l'environnement culturel de l'apprenant, et parfois même sont offensantes vis-à-vis de la foi et l'héritage culturel de celui-ci (Illustrations de Saint Joseph page 40).

a) pertinence :

. Page 74 : la relation des 2 photos choisies n'est pas évidente avec le projet envisagé.

. Page 75 : 3 des 5 photos ne sont pas compatibles avec l'objectif de l'exercice.

. Page 129 : La publicité de la plaque chauffante (qui n'est pas claire) est à remplacer.

b) Utilité :

. Page 30 : Les illustrations représentant l'épopée d'Ulysse n'aident pas l'apprenant à faire un récit de ses mésaventures qui en outré ne sont pas connues par celui-ci.

c) Environnement culturel de l'apprenant :

. Page 53 La photo représentant la contrefaçon d'un tableau de maitre est facilement remplaçable par une autre qui relève de l'environnement direct de l'apprenant (Contrefaçons d'habillement de marques, CD, etc.). Néanmoins, les

illustrations existantes dans le manuel sont pour la plupart fonctionnelles et assez motivantes.

3- Les contenus

a) Conformité avec le Programme Officiel

Le manuel est composé de six projets (Unités didactiques) qui sont conformes au programme official.

b) Les supports didactiques :

les textes proposés sont majoritairement authentiques, de types, styles et discours variés, *mais présentent quelques difficultés dans le <u>vocabulaire utilisé qui est trop riche et trop recherché pour les élèves de 3ème AS.</u> De plus, ce vocabulaire n'est pas réinvesti en abondance dans le reste de l'unité afin de renforcer sa compréhension et son usage.*

En ce qui concerne les supports proposés pour la compréhension orale, ils sont trop longs, ce qui pose un problème de concentration pour l'apprenant et de temps pour l'enseignant.

Néanmoins, les thèmes développés dans les supports sont d'un intérêt certain pour l'apprenant, élargissent ses horizons, et parfois coïncident avec ce qui lui est enseigné dans d'autres matières (interdisciplinarité).

c) Les tâches.

Un grand nombre de tâches proposées engagent l'élève dans un apprentissage actif (Ex : 'Getting Started' , 'Research and Support'), et encouragent celui-ci à utiliser ses connaissances déjà acquises ainsi que son expérience de la vie. Les types d'activités proposés sont variés dans leur présentation (format), ce qui évite la monotonie chez les apprenants, et les motive à s'investir dans leur travail.

Cependant, *les tâches assignées sont parfois <u>trop difficiles</u> pour l'apprenant et requièrent des connaissances que peu d'élèves possèdent.* Dans certains cas, les taches sont insuffisantes pour cerner une compréhension détaillée de certains textes, ou la maitrise de certains points de langue. Dans d'autres cas (ex: Task 1 p 88) elles doivent être réduites dans la longueur.

Il est à noter en outré que les taches proposées dans le manuel ne sont pas toujours en harmonie avec l'approche par les compétences. Certaines unités sont surchargées d'exercices qui développent des connaissances d'une utilité pas toujours évidente pour le projet étudié; ce qui alourdit d'une façon considérable l'unité, et déstabilise l'élève dans sa progression.

d) Les instructions.

Quelques instructions sont ambigües ou mal formulées et doivent être revues (Ex, Task 1 p.50).

e) L' évaluation (Assessment).

Une grille d'évaluation concernant la maitrise de la langue est proposée à la fin de chaque unité, mais n'est suivie d'aucun exercice de remédiation. Le portfolio quant à lui, contient des textes qui sont sensés être une source pour mesurer les progrès enregistrés en terme de stratégies et d'habilités, mais eux aussi ne sont pas suivis d'exercices. Il serait souhaitable d'inclure quelques exercices dans les prochaines éditions afin d'encourager l'autonomie de l'élève à s'auto évaluer et remédier aux faiblesses enregistrées.

e) Erreurs :

En plus des erreurs corrigées dans le guide du professeur, d'autres ont été constatées et répertoriées dans le tableau en pages 4 et 5.

4. Conclusion

Il est très important de noter que l'évaluation de 'New Prospects' a été faite sur la base du programme officiel, mais aussi en relation avec un apprenant à qui ce programme n'est pas particulièrement destiné : le contenu du programme cible des apprenants ayant accompli six années d'études, alors que l'actuel élève de 3ème Année Secondaire n'en a accompli que quatre. En outre, un manuel ne peut être évalué avant une expérimentation réelle et entière sur le terrain. Il est donc évident que cette étude ne comporte pas tous les ingrédients nécessaires pour une évaluation et lui donne un aspect provisoire qui pourrait changer quand toutes les composantes seront réunies.
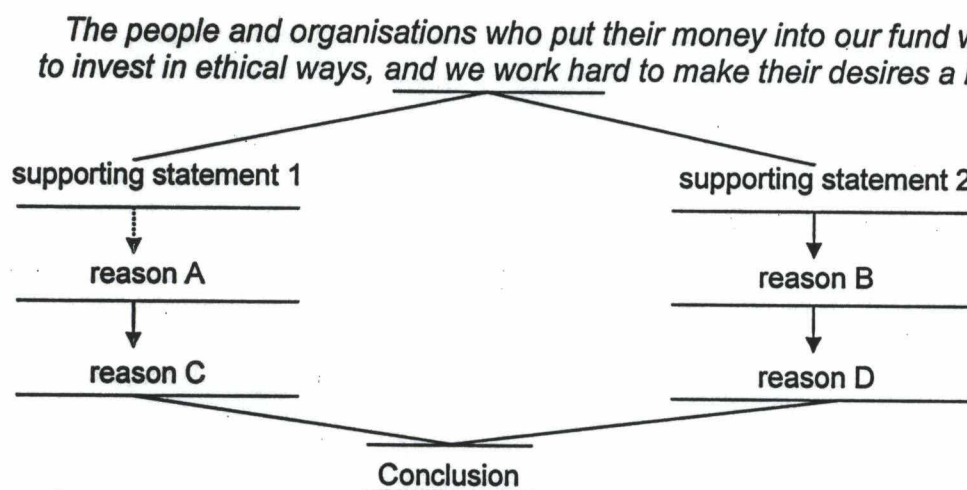
Appendix 15 : Pupils' Questionnaire on the Use of <u>New Prospects</u>

<u>Question</u> : Answer the questions by putting a circle round Yes or No.

- Can you use <u>New Prospects</u> independently (without teacher's help)? Yes   /   No
- Do you understand the texts in <u>New Prospects</u> ?   Yes   /   No
- Do you understand grammar and tasks alone ?   Yes   /   No
- Can you work on pronunciation alone ?   Yes   /   No
- Can you write on the subject below ?   Yes   /   No

Writing development   (see <u>New Prospects</u>, p.69).

- Suppose you were the manager of an ethical investment fund, i.e. a fund which invests only in socially responsible businesses. Write a policy statement to inform potential fund contributors about it. Follow the guidelines below.

- Think over the opening statement in the diagram below. Select two to four notes from the checklist of expending notes that follow and develop them into supporting statements.

The people and organisations who put their money into our fund want us to invest in ethical ways, and we work hard to make their desires a reality.

supporting statement 1	supporting statement 2
reason A	reason B
reason C	reason D

Conclusion

Expanding Notes

- Avoid companies that endanger the environment.
- Refrain from investing in certain sectors – tobacco, arms manufacturing, nuclear power, or uranium extraction.
- Not place money in companies that lack ethical labour standards (e.g. using child labour, bad working conditions...).
- Choose to invest in well-managed companies (transparent financial accounting).
- Invest in companies that balance economic growth with social responsibility.

I. Pedagogical principles

New Prospects is the last of a series of three coursebooks designed for the teaching of English to secondary school students. As one would expect, the procedures followed here are similar to those adopted for the making of the first two books. They comply with the recommendations issued in the official syllabus set down by the Ministry of National Education (2006). Its main principles rest on communicative language teaching, which engages learners in real and meaningful communication. By real, we mean that the learners are given opportunities to process content relating to their lives and backgrounds, and to develop both fluency and accuracy.

In this coursebook, we view language learning as a developmental process through which the learners make errors as a natural part of that process, and self-correct. We also regard the mastery of grammar as the cornerstone of a good command of English. This is the reason why we have deliberately foregrounded it in this book. This being said, we haven't made of it an end in itself, but a means to an end particularly through a constant 'translatating' of grammar rules into language functions, thus ensuring the learners' competencies.

New prospects provides a large number of effective learning tasks through which students are brought to notice, reflect and analyse how English is used. The tasks devised provide ample opportunities for learners to interact in the classroom and negotiate meaning. Most of these tasks involve the use of 'discovery learning' (inductive learning), and are intended to enhance individual learning as well as learning with peers.

These tasks are devised in such a way as to encourage students to use more complex utterances, more fluently and more accurately than in previous years of education. The cumulative effect of the diversity of tasks will enable students to gradually automatize their knowledge and recall the language acquired with greater control and ease during production. It is naturally up to the teacher to opt for the most appropriate tasks, in accordance with the needs of the classroom(s), i.e. whether the emphasis should be more on vocabulary building and on grammatical structures, or on reading and writing skills.

In this pursuit, there will be necessary returns to previously studied aspects of language, to skills and strategies approached during the first and second years. Teachers will expect their students to revise, practise and consolidate their knowledge in so doing. On the other hand, the present coursebook, with its six thematically based units, will be geared to raising more awareness of the complexities of the English language in terms of lexis and discourse. Thus the texts selected present language in different types and styles: radio interviews, dialogues, news reports, encyclopedia entries, newspaper and magazine articles, excerpts from works of fiction, poems, etc. The students will thus be prepared to interact with various language situations they will encounter in real life.

II. Organisation of the coursebook

New Prospects progressively develops in students the three competencies of interaction, interpretation and production that cover all areas of language (syntax, morphology, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling) through six graded units. In addition, the graded tasks are of the type to be found in the English paper of the *Baccalauréat* examination, and thus provide the students with a gradual familiarisation with the examination requirements for English. The different task types will be dealt with subsequently.

- Each unit in *New Prospects* includes the presentation and practice of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation/spelling with the four skills. This practice is related to the theme discussed in the unit.

- Each unit is followed by an evaluation grid to check on the learner's progress. It reviews students' knowledge of the language items presented in the unit and tests their ability to use the skills and strategies through reading passages/texts that appear at the end of the coursebook.

- At the end of *New Prospects*, we have included the following items:

a. Listening scripts

The listening scripts for all listening tasks in the units can be used by the students in class to correct their own work.

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b. Grammar reference

This is a rubric to which students are referred throughout the book. They should use it for revision and for checking when they are not clear on a grammar point. Checking grammar for themselves will foster autonomy and will make it easier for them to keep on learning after classes.

c. Resources portfolio

This section aims at making learners maximise their language learning experience. Working through the texts and the activities that follow will help students to consolidate the language and skills presented in the coursebook. The resources portfolio contains a number of texts which correspond thematically to the texts in the units and present topic-related reading tasks for both skimming and scanning purposes. The portfolio can be used in class as a means to providing immediate follow-up work for language practice, skills and strategies.

III. Unit description

This coursebook caters to the needs of the major *Baccalauréat* streams. We have tried to strike a balance between topics related to science and technology and others related to language and humanities. In each of the six units, we focus on an area of knowledge which develops a specific use of English. *New Prospects* is designed in such a way that each stream of students preparing their *Baccalauréat* will be able to choose (with their inspector/teacher) the **four mandatory** units which will be more directly related to their field, which means that the students needn't work on all six units. The themes in the coursebook are as follows:

A. Ancient civilizations

B. Ethics in business

C. Education in the world: comparing educational systems

D. Advertising, consumers and safety

E. Astronomy and the solar system

F. Feelings and emotions

Each unit is structured as follows:
- ❑ Presentation of the project outcome
- ❑ Two parts: Each part contains two sequences, each of them containing two or three sections subdivided in their turn into rubrics.

In sequence 1, you will find two sections:
- ❑ Listen and consider
- ❑ Read and consider

These sections are rounded off with a section wherein students are invited to take a break to better start the next sequence.

- ❑ In sequence 2, you will find five sections:
- ❑ Research and report
- ❑ Listening and speaking
- ❑ Reading and writing
- ❑ The main project and alternative ones
- ❑ Assessment

followed by another break, (Time for...) in which students will be able to relax with a song or a poem.

Let us now consider the structure of each sequence.

Sequence 1 contains the following rubrics:

- ❑ Language outcomes states the linguistic objectives
- ❑ Getting started
- ❑ Let's hear it (for the **Listen-and-consider** section)
- ❑ Taking a closer look (for the **Read-and-consider** section)
- ❑ Around the text (This rubric comprises grammar and vocabulary tasks preceded by grammar explorers and vocabulary explorers.)
- ❑ Pronunciation and spelling
- ❑ Think, pair, share

Sequence 2 starts with a **Research-and-report** section in which students individually or in groups will start re-investing what they have learnt in the first sequences in terms of grammar and vocabulary. It provides a training ground for the preparation of the project proper.

The second and third sections contain the following rubrics

❏ Skills and strategies outcomes (which states the communicative objectives)
❏ Before listening (or reading)
❏ As you listen (or as you read)
❏ After listening (or reading)
❏ Say it in writing (or writing development)

The fourth section is about the project announced at the beginning of each and every unit and signposted at strategic points of the unit. Apart for offering guidelines about how to concretise the assigned project, it offers project alternatives and useful web sites.

The fifth section, **Assessment**, is devoted to language and skills and strategies assessment. Having seen how each sequence is planned, let us now consider how each of the two sequences is articulated.

IV. Sequence description
a) Sequence One

As announced above, this sequence has two sections, each of them containing six rubrics.

Section 1, Listen and consider, begins with Language outcomes, which involves no task but is a preview of the language objectives to be achieved by the end of this section. Thus grammatical structures, vocabulary items, idioms and features of pronunciation such as word and sentence stress, are meant to be understood and used, and also being assessed in the Assessment section of Sequence 2 at the end of the unit.

This first section deals with listening comprehension. Its purpose is to lead the students to listen intently to an aural message/text, paying particular attention to features of language use described in the **Language outcome** preview. It will also make the students respond to the message orally or in writing. This type of focused listening (followed by a response) is meant to help the student develop an ability to listen for a purpose (understanding the gist of the text or the details). It is also to help him respond to an aural message orally or in writing with accuracy and appropriateness (for example, answering comprehension questions, re-ordering sentences, etc).

This listening task is realised in a two-step procedure: **Getting started** and **Let's hear it**. The student will first look at the thematic pictures, discuss the topic with peers and answer the related comprehension questions. This activity is meant to access and activate her/his background knowledge of the topic and prepare her/him for the next listening phase, **Let's hear it**, for which a number of exercises/tasks (Listen + re-order, listen + answer questions, etc.) are provided. E.g. Listen + re-order: the teacher reads the text while the students try to remember and re-order jumbled-up sentences. Listen and answer questions (orally or in writing) The students listen again to the whole text as it is read by the teacher and answer comprehension questions.

Around the text exploits the same text for language work and focuses on its grammatical and lexical content. Here the students are requested to look at language with a magnifying glass, as it were, and to focus on specific features of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling.

A variety of tasks have been provided in this connection. These tasks are typically intended for matching statements, identifying the functions of words, reflecting on word order and morphology, using content and function words correctly, filling gaps with appropriate items.

Pronunciation and spelling is a rubric which is devised to increase the student's understanding of the sound-spelling relationships that characterise English. We are not expecting students to become phoneticians or linguists, but simply aiming to 'train their ears' to be more perceptive *apropos* the subtleties of English pronunciation, stress and intonation. Spelling is a goal still worth pursuing at this final level of secondary education. The more acute the reception of an auditory message, the better its interpretation; likewise, the more intelligible the pronunciation the more effective the transmission of the message.

Communication in a foreign language relies crucially on a good listening ability. Discriminating between sounds in various utterances is the ultimate stage of competence before performance. Therefore, tasks such as 'listen for stress' and 'listen for syllable division' are provided to this end.

In the last rubric, **Think, pair, share**, the students will work individually, then in pairs, and lastly with other peers in a group.

The **think, pair, share** tasks call for an interaction with other students and their teacher, and each student will produce a piece of writing: a dialogue, a short article, a description, a narration, a poem, etc. This will be presented orally to the class.

Section 2 of the unit is **Read and consider**.

This section includes six rubrics, just like the previous one. We have paid particular attention to the development of the reading skill, one of the most demanding achievements not only for this final year of English study at school, but also for future studies at university. To this effect, we have included a large number of additional material for extensive reading in the resources portfolio.

The first rubric is **Language outcomes**. Just as in section 1, this rubric contains no tasks but reminds the student of the linguistic objectives to be achieved by the end of the section. These language outcomes can also be assessed in the assessment rubric at the end of the unit.

The second rubric, **Getting started**, invites a brainstorming session during which the topic under focus is debated; by the same token the students background knowledge is activated when some aspects of language are previewed (vocabulary, language structures, etc).

Through this pre-reading activity, the students will build schematic knowledge necessary to understand the text.

The third rubric, **Taking a closer look**, involves reading the text silently and individually, and answering comprehension questions. They may be referential or inferential questions, or they may open up a discussion on comparing native situations with non-native ones. This rubric involves not only looking at its content, but also at its form. Two types of exploring activites are provided stemming from the text studied in the **Around the text** rubric: **Grammar explorer** and **Vocabulary explorer**. **Grammar explorer** comprises up to three levels of activities (I, II, III) of graded difficulty, and its main purpose

is to study the grammar of the text; the students will be involved in awareness-raising activities related to tenses, prepositional verbs, etc. They will also be given an opportunity to produce messages in correct English. These accuracy-based activities end with a production task which is also meant to focus the learner's attention on grammatical correctness.

Vocabulary explorer (I, II, III,...) caters for the student's vocabulary building skills, and deals with word formation, the practice of idiomatic formulae, etc.

The fourth rubric, **Pronunciation and spelling** also deals with language-related tasks, specifically pointing to the phoneme-grapheme correspondence in English. The student's attention is drawn here to the discrepancies existing between the pronunciation system and the spelling system in English. The students are invited to note down these while the teacher is reading the text aloud.

The fifth rubric, **Think, pair, share**, focuses on individual work, pair work and group work, and generates interaction between group members. The teacher will act as a facilitator and guide intervening in the class when necessary.

The sixth rubric, **Take a break**, brings to an end the **Read-and-consider** section. It brings a lighter note to the activities carried out up to this point by introducing light jokes, proverbs, songs, etc. An intercultural dimension is added to this rubric, as a means to pointing to other people's experiences in their own milieus. This is a moment for students to relax before moving on to the next section.

b) Sequence 2

This sequence includes five main sections, which are **Research and Report, Listening and speaking, Reading and writing, Project outcome** and **Assessment**.

Research and report deals mainly with learners' outcomes i.e., behavioural outcomes. The tasks are assigned to students to work on (individually, in pairs, or in groups) outside the classroom, either for feedback to a subsequent lesson, or lead-in to a classroom activity. A number of written/oral tasks are suggested: newspaper articles, short

stories, poems, speeches, public statements on a specific topic, etc. Just like **Think, pair, share**, the **Research and report** section encourages interaction/negotiation of meaning, and it is a good preparation for the final major task, i.e. the project.

Listening and speaking includes four main rubrics. The first one **Skills and strategies outcomes** is a preview of the communicative objectives to be achieved by the students.

In this rubric, a number of receptive strategies are activated. They should be the focus of the students' attention throughout the second sequence. Indeed now we are moving from language-based study to discourse-oriented learning, and the student is accordingly requested to move from language analysis to discourse analysis. In this sequence, the aim is to 'unlock', or 'unpack' texts to look into relations of cohesion and coherence, at lexical chains, etc. It is the examination of the logical relations between sentences in a text that will make students discover the connotative import of discourse (E.g. mood, tone) and trace 'underside meanings'.

Before listening is a rubric that prepares the students for the understanding of an aural text through pre-listening activities, and thus allow her/him to predict content through a set of questions. These activities prepare for note taking as well.

As you listen is a rubric which includes activities requesting learners to listen for gist, for detail, and to check their expectations/inferences, confirm them or reject them.

After listening is a post-listening stage which involves activities of a more intensive nature. Unlike pre-listening activities which focus on top-down thinking through prediction of content (from a picture, for example), post-listening activities deal with bottom-up listening and help students to give shape and significance to the texts. Thus, they can construct a plan from notes and summarize the content. After listening activities, other skills such as speaking, reading and writing can be practised.

Saying it in writing

This is the natural follow-up of the previous, receptive stage, as it allows learners to build confidence through the production of material related to the listening content. This rubric prepares the students for the next section **Reading and writing**, a stage that follows logically from this one.

The **Reading and writing** section starts with **Skills and strategies outcomes**, a rubric which defines the objectives to be achieved by the students (linguistic, communicative, cognitive), and the levels of reception and production of a message expected.

Before reading, As you Read, and After reading focus on the students' use of their skimming and scanning skills to make sense of authentic and semi-authentic materials. The students will first activate their pre-existing knowledge to make predictions about the topic. In many cases, they will also be required to identify the structure of the text, to infer meaning and to pinpoint inferences from context and follow up abstract ideas.

Writing development: This is the last skills rubric in which the students will have opportunity to express opinions, give reasons, present arguments: they will have now sufficient vocabulary and grammatical command as well as the required skills and stragegies to do the writing tasks. Here, the students will demonstrate their sense of organisation, cohesion and coherence, and will draw on appropriate registers to communicate their main message.

The writing activities that we have suggested reflect real-life tasks, such as writing simple reports, brief articles, formal and informal letters, etc. Let us focus now on the ultimate learning-and-doing outcome, namely the project.

IV. About the project

As said in the foreword to the Student's Book, 'the project designing procedure runs in parallel with the unfolding of the unit'. It 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.

The project is signalled seven times in the unit: at the top of the first page, five times throughout the unit (Brainstorming - Fact finding – Organising - Writing up – Assessing) and a seventh time – in a more detailed way, towards the end of the unit. These are flash-points, so to speak, designed to chart the students' progress in giving shape and consistency to their project. This charting should take the form of monitoring sessions (twenty minutes at the end of a class meeting) during which the students will discuss and sort out the ways and means that apply to their project. The follow-up between two sessions is assumed to be done by the students, as a group, outside the classroom.

BRAINSTORMING is the first of such sessions, with the teacher acting as facilitator. The aim is to get the students to envisage and agree on the tasks involved, the possible sources of information and the format and content of the end product.

FACT FINDING

Most of the activities at this stage take place outside the classroom. The students enquire about where and how they will get the information they need (the Internet, a survey, an interview?...) and about the equipment they may want to use (cassette recorder, picture camera, drawings?...) as well as the places (a museum, a business company?...) they may have to visit. They may not have to meet in class at all.

ORGANISING

This is where the feedback of the students is made use of in a rational and efficient way. Divide the class into groups (5 studens per group to the maximum). Get each group to appoint a spokesperson who will make the final report to the class at the end of the project. Get all groups to agree on the tasks assigned to each of them. Otherwise leave it for each group to decide who does what and in what sequence. All the ensueing work will be done outside the class, or even outside the school.

WRITING UP

This activity will preferably take place between school hours provided each group manages to find a time and a place of its own. Otherwise, devote a whole class meeting to this session – time permitting, of course! – with each group working separately. This will involve writing (in correct English) but also editing (what colours to use, how much space will be devoted to illustrations, how much to text...) and negotiating (with possible opinion clashes). The teacher's role at this stage is one of soft monitoring. Move from one group to another, giving advice whenever necessary.

ASSESSING

At this stage the work of each group is assessed by a board of assessors (one from each group) chaired by the teacher, or by a student elected by his peers. Make it informal however. The session starts with the spokesperson of each group reporting to the class about the work done and presenting the 'product' realised for appreciation. The same operation is repeated for each group. The board of assessors will eventually award the First Prize to the best project.

Naturally, the indications above should, by no means, be regarded as gospel truth. It is up to you to adapt the pedagogical route which you think to be the most suitable for your class.

Finally, it may be of interest for you to note that we have proposed alternative projects, of a 'lighter' kind, designed for students who want to work on their own, as well as pertinent and helpful websites (to be complemented if need be).

VI. Conclusion

New prospects has been thought out in such a way as to instill in learners ease and confidence in their communicative use of English. The units of this coursebook offer a variety of activities reflecting real-life situations and prompting the students to practise English in creative ways. Their consolidation of skills, whether oral or written , is to be realised through a number of activities stemming from the competency-based approach. The objectives of such activities are clearly identified and explained at each stage of learning/teaching.