Assessing the Reading Skill within the Competency-Based Approach. The Case of Third Year Pupils in Mohamed Dkhissi Secondary School _Maghnia_

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Abstract:

As teachers decide what learning goals students should achieve, what content should be taught to students and what prior knowledge students have: parallel decisions should be made regarding how to operate within the whole teaching and learning process. presently, teaching is built on the premise that students are just as responsible as their teachers in the process of education. Teaching languages, be they foreign or second, has been considered as the set of activities which are intended to help the learners acquire certain knowledge, bearing in mind that its aim is to facilitate the process of learning. The present dissertation aims at shedding light on the "assessment of the reading skill within the CBA.The Case of Third Year Pupils in Mohamed Dkhissi Secondary School-Maghnia-". The purpose of this study focuses on how to assess the reading skill? The present work also suggests some reading assessment tasks that help both teachers and learners. The handling of this issue is embodied into 4 chapters. The first One focuses on the place of the reading skill within the CBA. The second chapter attempts to give a global picture to the concept of classroom assessment, it also gives a definitions to the different types and linear steps of assessment, its tools and techniques. As it focuses on the assessment of learners reading skill and the techniques which in a better way help to assess the components of this skill. The third chapter represents the research instruments for data collection which are: students 'questionnaire and teachers 'interview. Both qualitative and quantitative methods for data analysis were used in this research work to analyze these data. In the final chapter, some practical suggestions and proposals for EFL teachers and learners are made in order to improve the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA.

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General Introduction

General Introduction:

English is the international language of commerce, banking , travel, transportation, finance , post doctoral and many other key sectors. Algeria, like the other non English speaking countries in the world is well aware of the key role the English language plays in virtually all domains. Today, English has a status of Second Foreign Language and it represents an important facet in the Algerian education system.

It is well-known that reading is a fundamental skill for success in today's globalized world. However, it is often noticed that too little attention is devoted to this skill in the Algerian secondary schools, though it is the skill which is most needed. One important aspect of the teaching of any foreign language is the assessment of learners 'progress. Reading and assessment are closely linked. Teachers utilize assessment as an integral component of classroom instruction. It guides them step by step to recognize good reader behaviors and assess learners 'strengths and weaknesses. In addition to this, assessment helps teachers identify areas of instruction to meet every learner's individual needs.

The aim of the present dissertation is to explore the different ways to assess the reading skill within the CBA framework. Accordingly, to cover the scope of the present research, this dissertation tries to answer the following questions:

> ➢ What are the goals of assessing the reading skill within the CBA?
> ➢ How is assessment utilized to improve the reading skill within the CBA?
> ➢ Do The CBA principles allow for a good assessment practise of the reading skill?

The answer to these questions may raise the following research hypotheses:

➢ Teachers assess the reading skill in order to assign marks, inform parents of students 'progress and to identify students with reading difficulties.

➢ Teachers use different standardized reading assessment tasks to assess the reading skill: gap filling, multiple choice questions, matching, ordering, dichotomous items, editing, short answers, summary, gapped summary and information transfer.

➢ The CBA principles allow for a good assessment practise.

This research work is divided into four chapters. The first chapter focuses on the place of the reading skill within the CBA. It attempts to give a background and definitions about both the reading skill and CBA in order to provide a description of this skill within the CBA. Moreover, the chapter deals with the importance of English Language Teaching in Algeria and with some other aspects related to ELT in Algeria.

The second chapter attempts to give a global picture to the concept of classroom assessment. It also gives definitions to the different types and linear steps of assessment, its tools and techniques. It focuses on the assessment of the learners 'reading skill and the techniques which best help to assess the components of this skill.

The third chapter deals with the methods, procedures for data collection; it describes the two research instruments used in this study. The chapter is also about data analysis and interpretation.

The last chapter is devoted to suggestions and recommendations. It attempts to propose some solutions in order to enhance the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA framework.

All the suggestions and recommendations mentioned in this chapter are based on the results obtained from the previous chapter.

Chapter One

Chapter One:

Status of the Reading Skill in the Algerian Context.

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1.1 Introduction:

The objective of this chapter is to give a bird's eye view on the situation of the English Language in Algeria with a reference to the teaching and learning processes. Light will be shed on the English Language Teaching at Secondary School level focusing on the reading skill and its place in the newly implemented CBA. In this chapter, special attention will be given to the theoretical definitions of the CBA, its characteristics and its principles, in addition to the different approaches and methods that have been implemented to the teaching of English in the Secondary Schools in Algeria.Thus, chapter one proposes a variety of reading definitions with reference to both intensive and extensive reading, as an attempt to show how to clarify the complexity underlying this skill.

1.2 ELT Situation in Algeria*:*

The widespread use of English as a conquering means of global and international communication, has placed a huge need to learn it either as a second language in non-English speaking countries or as a foreign language as it is the case in Algeria. By the way, English is seen from an educational standpoint as the second foreign language.

In fact, the English language has always had the same status as the other foreign languages mainly: French, Spanish and German. Indeed the important role of English in the political, economic, educational and commercial life with the world outside and its emergence as a unique language of science and technology has increased struggle and motivation among people to learn it. English was given the status of a second foreign language by the government, after the French language.

It has been noticed that, learners all over the world show a great preference for the English Language , at the expense of the other languages of wider communication.They learn it in order to persue the following aims :

➢ Improve their capacities to understand material written in English (Books, newspapers, magazines, etc …..)

➢ Keep pace with the latest scientific and technological development.

➢ Develop their cross communicative skills.

➢ Be able to exchange ideas and information across nations.

(As cited in the syllabus).

However, Harmer (1993) notes that: ***"Many students study English because they have to; English is part of the school curriculum, because a decision has been taken by someone in authority that it should be so".*** (Harmer, 1993, p. 02).

For the aforementioned reasons, Algeria has undergone great changes in its education system and given more importance to English. Consequently, the teaching of English in Algeria has received a great deal of reinforcement.

The following table illustrates the different school levels, the age of the learners, the weekly teaching load and the textbook used.

Secondary Education	Class level	Age	Weekly time allotment	Textbooks
First Year	1st year Literary srteam	15_16	4 hours	At the Crossroads
	1st year Scientific stream	15_16	3 hours	At the Crossroads
Second Year	2nd yearE.G Scientific sream	16_17	3 hours	Getting Through
	2nd year F.Lges	16_17	5 hours	Getting Through
	2nd yearL.ph	16_17	4 hours	Getting Through
Third Year	3rd year Scientific stream E.GMaths	17_18	3 hours	New Prospects
	F.Lgesl.ph	17_18	4hours	New Prospects

Table 1.2 ELT in Algeria: Levels, Ages, Time allotment and textbook in use.

From the above table, we notice that we have limited time access for an English class.

1.3 Secondary School Level:

The teaching of English, as a second foreign language, in the Algerian secondary schools, within the newly implemented approach the competency based approach implies a whole process going through an exhaustive work plan of designing syllabuses, devising accompanying documents and conceiving new textbooks.

1.3.1 The New Syllabus:

The syllabus is a teaching tool. It is a guide which is very necessary to both teachers and learners. It is also: *"a plan of what is to be achieved through teaching and learning"* (Breen, 1984 as cited in Carter and Nunan, 2001, p.151). The syllabus is an official document in the Algerian secondary schools. It can also be seen as: **"a statement of what is to be learnt"** (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p.87). Robinson (1991) notes: *"The syllabus is a plan of work and is thus essentially for the teacher, as a guideline and context of class content. That is, the syllabus acts as a guide for both the teacher and the learner by providing some goals to be attained".* (As cited in Robinson, 1991, p. 34).

In the same respect, Yalden (1987) notes*: " The syllabus is now seen as an instrument by which the teacher, with the help of the syllabus designer can achieve a certain coincidence between the needs and aims of the learners and the activities that will take place in the classroom" .* (Cited in Yalden,1987, p.86). Moreover, Ibid (1986) notes: *"A syllabus is a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translates the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level"* (Ibid, 1986, p.35).

Today, new syllabuses are being introduced in the Algerian education system, selected and devised on the basis of the following criteria: learnability,

frequency, usefulness and coverage. The newly built syllabus requires the implementation of the following competencies:

➢ Interacting orally in English.

➢ Interpreting oral and written texts.

➢ Producing oral and written texts.

(As cited in Teacher's book, 2005, p. 4).

Concerning secondary education, a general survey of what the learners should be able to do after three years of study have to be made.

1.3.2 The New Textbook:

The textbook is an important element in the teaching and learning process.It plays an important role in developing learners'competence and increasing their performance.It is regarded as **" The visible heart of any ELT programme"** (Sheldon, 1988, p.237*)* and **" An almost universal element of ELT teaching "** (as cited in Hutchinson and Torres, 1994, p.315).

The importance of the textbook refers to the direct practice of the English teaching material.It reflects the objectives of the syllabus, depending on the method and techniques used by teachers. ***"The role of the textbook is to present new material that must be adapted by the teacher to cover the syllabus".***(Pedagogical instructions, Inspectorate of English/ M.E.N, 1982)

The textbook may be considered as the major material used in the classroom. The educational authorities have directed textbook commissions of language specialists to design classroom ELT textbooks taking into account the learners'needs and their educational streams.

The changing needs of the Algerian schools made it imperative that ELT textbooks must be revised and updated. In 2005, Algeria has been involved in a large scale textbooks-design programme for secondary schools. Attempts were made to revise the national curricula on the basis of the Competency-Based

Approach. In fact, the Algerian newly designed ELT textbooks represent a considerable improvement over the previously used textbooks.

In 2005, the Ministry of National Education released new textbooks: ***At the Crossroads*** for first year, ***Getting Through*** for second year and ***New Prospects*** for third year.The three textbooks contain a number of units. Each unit is built upon the four skills which are taught in an integrative way. Its aim is to make teaching and learning less daunting, more fruitful and certainly more interactive. In addition, carefully selected texts and interrelated activities are suggested to foster motivation and provide better opportunities for language development.

The following table illustrates unit one content for third-year secondary school level as presented in « ***New Prospects*** » (Book Three).

Themes	*Functions*	*Grammatical Structures*	*Vocabulary Building*	*Pronunciation_Spelling*
Ancient Civilization	Narrating

Informing

Comparing | Past simple of 'to be'(was/were)w/ ordinary verbs(in statements + questions) w/ ago

Past perfect (w/ when, as soon as, until, after,before)

Used to

Although/though

In spite of the fact that/ despite the..

Was/ were able to

Had to Articles : use + omission (nothing before abstract nouns : mankind, progress, culture)

Quantifiers : Few /little

Not as many as : fewer than

Not as much as/ less than

Comparatives/ superlatives (the most/ the least | Prepositions:adj+ prep(good at/ interested in) . verb + prep(contributeto/rely on/depend on/believe in)

Adverb+noun+ed(well-mannered)

Prefix'dis'to form opposites (disappear)

Formadjw/al: practical/cultural

Formnouns.w/ment: achievement/enrichment/improvement

Formnoun.w/tion: invention/civilisation

Forma dj w/ ed:devoted/dedicated/

Committed Form adj w/ able: hospîtable/ reasonable;

Form nouns w/ ic: optimistic/ realistic

Form nouns w/ y: honesty/responsibility | Stress in compound words

Pronunciation of final 'ed'

Shift of stress : noun-verb

Syllable stress : civilisation/civilised

architecture : ch=k but church : ch=tch |

Table 1.3.2: Unit one content of third year secondary school textbook. *« New Prospects»* (book Three).

1.4 Teaching Methodologies in Algeria:

Language teaching approaches and methods have cast light on the language teaching theory and practice. The history of language teaching in Algeria, as we know, has a long tradition. The Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching and the Competency-Based Approach are among the methods used commonly by the teachers of English in Algeria. An attempt, therefore, has been made to review these methods as below:

1.4.1 Grammar Translation Method:

It is the most classical method which is used for the teaching of foreign languages.This method was advocated by Roger Acham in the 16th century.Its aim was to make the students understand the grammar of the foreign language.The emphasis was put on accuracy rather than fluency. Translation was used to develop the students' lexis (lexical competence). The *key features of the Grammar Translation Method are as follows:*

> ➢ *Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language.*
> ➢ *Much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words.*
> ➢ *Long elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given.*
> ➢ *Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words.*
> ➢ *Reading of difficult classical texts is begun early.*
> ➢ *Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis.*
> ➢ *Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue.*
> ➢ *Little or no attention is given to pronunciation".*

(As cited in Prator and Celce-Murcia, 1979, p.3).

The Grammar Translation Method was introduced to the teaching of English in Algeria after the independence.

1.4.2 Direct Method:

The Direct Method was an answer to the dissatisfaction with the grammar translation method. The main cause which helped to the appearance of the direct method was the expanding of colonialism by the early 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century. In the direct method, the learning of grammar and translating skills should be avoided. The focus is on fluency rather than accuracy and grammar is taught gradually and inductively through practice. Rivers (1968) summarizes the characteristics of the Direct Method as: ***"Students learn to understand a language by listening to a great deal of it and that they lean to speak it by speaking it associating speech with appropriate action".*** (Rivers, 1968, p. 18).

The main characteristic of the Direct Method was that the emphasis was on speaking rather than reading and writing. Learners should learn to speak and understand the target language in everyday situations. Richards and Rodgers (2001) describe the main principles of the Direct Method:

- ➤ *Classroom instructios are conducted exclusively in the target language.*
- ➤ *Only everyday vocabulary and sentences are taught.*
- ➤ *Oral communication skills are built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question and answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.*
- ➤ *Grammar is taught inductively.*
- ➤ *New teaching points are introduced orally.*
- ➤ *Concrete vocabulary is taught through demonstration, objects and pictures; abstract vocabulary is taught by association of ideas.*

> ➢ *Both speech and listening comprehensions are taught.*

> ➢ *Correct pronunciation and grammar are emphasized.*

> ➢ *Student should be speaking at least 80٪ of the time during the lesson.*

> ➢ *Students are taught from inception to ask questions as well as answer them.*

(As cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 12).

In the early 1970's, the Direct Method was first implemented in ELT Algerian Middle School Classrooms with the introduction of a new ELT textbook « ***Success with English***» **Coursebook One.**

1.4.3 Communicative Language Teaching:

Communicative Language Teaching or CLT in short came as a result to the failure of the Audio_Lingual Method. It emphasizes the use of real_life situations that necessitate communication. The broad objective of this approach is to enhance learners'communicative competence as it focused on the real use of English in class. Thompson (1996) notes: ***"The term Communicative Language Teaching is a broad and contested term".*** (Thompson,1996, p.207). Littlewood (1981) notes: ***"One of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language".*** (Littlewood,1981, p.120).

Under this « umbrella » definition, Communicative Language Teaching is beneficial for good instruction. In the classroom, the communicative approach often takes the form of pair and group work requiring negociation and cooperation between learners.This leads or encourages learners to develop their confidence, role-plays in which learners practise and develop language functions, as well as judicious use of grammar and pronunciation.The main principles of CLT are:

- ➤ *The communicative principle*: activities that involve real communication promote learning.
- ➤ *The task principle*: activities in which language is used to carry out meaningful tasks promote learning.
- ➤ *The meaningfulness principle*: language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

<div align="center">(As cited in Richards,1980,p115)</div>

1.4.4 Competency-Based Approach:

The methodology of language teaching has been moved by various steps. Some methods are eliminated since they can not fulfil the learners' needs and the changing situation from time to time. Among the latest methods of the 21st century, we have the competency based approach *__What is the competency-based approach?__

Before defining the Competency-Based Approach, a quick definition of the two terms 'competency' and 'approach' is in order here:

A 'competency' is the use of knowledge, skills and abilities to perform successfully in a given work. Norton and Huaan (1996) define competency as follows: ***"Competency refers to achievement of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform a given task".***(Norton and Huaan, 1996).

On the other hand, for Hermann (1990), a competency does not simply imply perfection: ***"It implies performance at a stated level or criterion (which) needs to be specific for each occupational area".*** (Hermann, 1990, p. 46). As far as the word 'approach' is concerned, Anthony and Allen (1965) define it as: ***"A set of correlatives assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning".*** (Anthony and Allen in Campbell 11,1965, p.94). This means that an approach is a combined theory, involving both language and learning process.

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The Competency-Based Approach has been involved by the Ministry of National Education as a new approach in order to teach English as a second foreign language in the Algerian schools. This new approach allows the learner to be competent not only in the classroom. It is a problem solving situation which places learners in situation that check their ability to overcome obstacles. The emphasis in the CBA is on learner's ability to perform rather than only the learner's knowledge. Richards and Rodgers (2001) notes*:*

> *"The competency based approach focuses on the outcomes*
>
> *of learning. It addresses on what the learners are expected to*
>
> *do rather than on what they are expected to learn about. The*
>
> *CBA advocates defining educational goals in terms of*
>
> *precise measurable descriptions of knowledge, skills and*
>
> *behaviors that students should possess at the end of a course*
>
> *of study".* (Richards and Rodgers,2001,p.202).

As a matter of fact, the Competency-Based Approach means 'learner-centered learning' and 'assessment of learner learning outcomes'. The learners will be capable of assessing their learning progress. In case they notice weaknesses, they can overcome them and avoid them later on in their learning process. This is important, as it shows that the learners are made responsible for their learning.Thus, the crucial point about the Competency-Based Approach is that it encourages the learner to use, develop and demonstrate the competencies required in the performance of his learning.

Consequently, he will find himself involved in a process of "learning how to learn", i.e. the learner will be provided with opportunities to rely on himself rather than on his teacher. Therefore, the Competency-Based Approach relies on three main components:

1) Assessment of learner needs.

2) Selection of competencies based on those needs.

3) Evaluation of learner performance in those competencies.
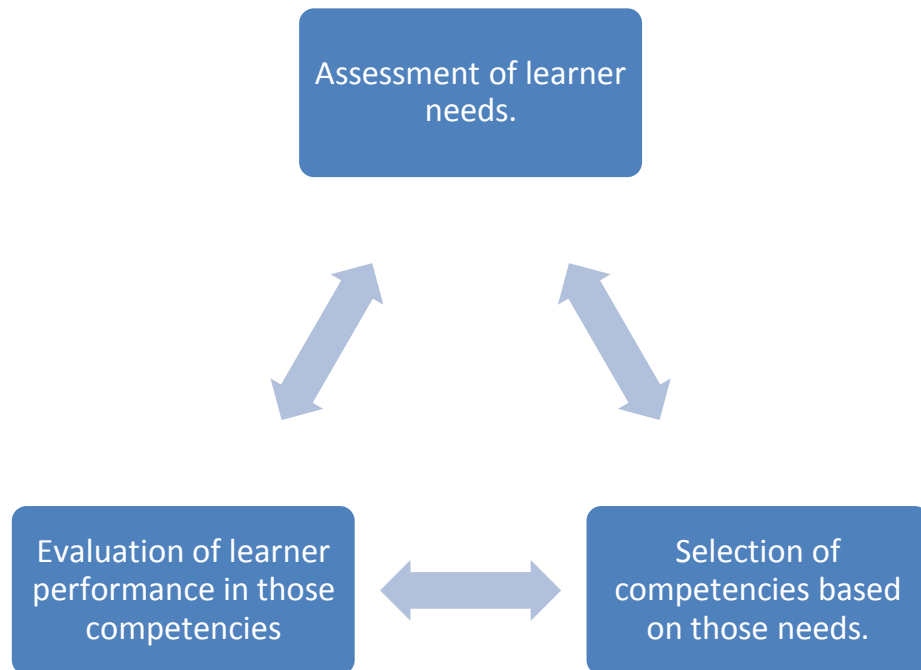
Figure 1.4.4 Components of the Competency based approach

1.4.4.1 Characteristics of Competency Based Approach:

It is teaching that combines perception, memory and conception which help to think clearly, read and listen critically and write convincingly for self-expression in speech and on paper. It is a creative act and a process through which a learner puts together feelings, attitudes, thoughts and words in a way that makes it impossible for someone to be misunderstood. Each time a learner communicates, he invents a message that projects a part of his experience and part of himself. This approach is characterized by the following:

_ It is action oriented:

It brings about language learning to the acquisition of know-how fixed in functions and skills. It allows learners to be effective and competent language users in real life situations outside the classroom.

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_ It is a problem-solving approach:

It puts learners into situations where they check/test their capacities to overcome obstacles and problems. Problems make learners think and they learn by thinking. In order to achieve these objectives, the learners are trained through the following activities or tasks:

- Activities related to interaction: in pairs, in groups
(Communicative activities)

- Activities related to interpretation of messages:
(Dialogues, conversations, role play)

- Activities related to project work.

- Activities related to problem solving situation :
  (As cited in Teacher's book, 2005, p.11)

The last point deals with the proves itself identifying its different stages:

Stage 01 : Setting the problem
➢ Step 01: Assessing the situation :   • Uneasiness   • Need   • Satisfaction   ➢ Step 02 : Describing the situation   • Diagnosing   • Analysing   • Interpreting   ➢ Step 03 : Formulating the problem   Eg. Since there is something wrong I must take the necessary steps to.   ➢ Step 04 : Looking for solution   • Write an inventory

Think of the different possibilities

- Select one or several possibilities

- State priorities according to feasability and efficiency

Stage 02 : Acting

➢ Step 05 : Stating objectives

Consider constraints and resources

➢ Step 06 : Planning

- Decide about deadlines

- Tasks distributions

➢ Step 07 : Acting through doing

Coordination and regulating

➢ Step 08 : Assessing (evaluation what has been done)

- Readjust

- Identify the differences

Stage 03 : Evaluating

➢ Step 09 : Evaluate each step first

➢ Step 10 : Evaluate each stage

➢ Step 11 : Evaluate the whole process

(As cited in Michel Hiberman, 1987).

_ It is a social constructivist:

Through the competency based approach, learning can occur through social interaction not only within the pages of the copybook or the walls of the classroom.

_ It is a cognitive approach:

It is indebted to Bloom's taxonomy. Bloom claims that all educational objectives have to do with attitudes, values and emotions, he says that cognitive objectives from a hierarchy by which the learner must achieve lower order objectives before he can achieve higher ones.

(As cited in Teacher's book, 2005, p.12).

1.4.4.2 Principles of Competency-Based Approach:

The newly implemented Competency Based Approach relies a great deal on the active part taken by the pupil in the process of learning a foreign language; it is based on learner centred. Thus, it is designed in order to help pupils in their learning, it develops in them cooperation and competition. In addition to this, it relies on learning that aims to create a link between the different aspects of learning, acquired at school and the context of use outside the classroom. It narrows the gap between school life and real life.

The teacher's role in the CBA is to facilitate the process of learning. He decides on the appropriate methods, assessment tools and types of remedial work that he is going to choose. In sum, the competency based approach came to enlighten the teaching staff and to facilitate learner autonomy.

1.5 Definition of Reading:

Reading is one of the basic language skills. It is the primary channel of learning a language. It is regarded as the most important activity in any language course and at any level, not only as a means of consolidating an extended one knowledge of the language but as a source of information and pleasurable ability. Nuttal (1996) notes: ***"Reading is the process of getting out of the text as nearly as possible the message the writer put into it"*** (Nuttal,1996 , p.4).

In the same respect, Goodman (1967) says***: "Reading is a psychological guessing game in which the reader reconstructs as best as he can a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display"*** (Goodman, 1967, cited in Samuals and kamil, 1998, p.23). It is difficult to define reading in a word, Ransom (1978) notes: ***"Reading is a conversation between the writer and the reader. The writer is trying to convey some messages to another person"*** (Ransom,1978 , p.50). Albert.J.et al notes: ***"Reading is the meaningful interpretation of written or printed verbal symbols and a result of interaction between the perception of graphic symbols that represent language and the reader's language skills, cognitive skill and knowledge of the world"*** (Albert.J.et al as cited in Thao Le Than, 2010).

Moreover, the reading skill is the most important skill in English Language from other language skills in acquiring language because if students are good in reading they will be good in other language skills. For this reason, teachers should focus on this skill. Grabe and Stoller (2002) note: ***"Reading is the ability to understand information in a text and interpret it appropriately"*** (Grabe and Stoller, 2002, p.17).

Reading is a very essential and vital skill because it develops the mind, the imagination of learners and it improves their spelling. It involves the interaction of various cognitive, metacognitive, linguistic and sociolinguistic elements. The importance of the reading skill in the Algerian Secondary Schools

can not be denied because reading is the most important activity. This is why it is very essential to improve the students'reading skill.

For this reason, there are two types of reading which have been used in order to develop the reading skill known as: intensive and extensive reading.

1.5.1 Intensive Reading:

Intensive reading is an effective tool for improving the reading skill. The reading purpose in intensive reading is to skim, scan, reading between lines, analyzing extracts or parts and seeking for different points of view. It is the type of work which is done in the classroom under the teacher's supervision for a high degree of comprehension. Brown (1988) notes: ***"Intensive reading is a classroom-oriented activity in which students focus on the linguistic or semantic details of a passage. It calls students' attention to grammaticalforms, discourse makers and the surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, rhetorical relationships and the like"*** (As cited in Brown,1988, p.400).

Nuttal (1982) says: ***"The intensive reading lesson is intended primarily to train students in reading strategies"*** (Nuttal,1982 ,p.23). In the same line of thought, Long and Richards (1987) suggest: ***"Intensive reading is a detailed in class analysis, led by teacher, of vocabulary and grammar points in a short passage"***. (Long and Richards, 1987, p.125).

Through intensive reading, learners can go through different activities:

- ✓ Identify main ideas and details.
- ✓ Looking at the order of information.
- ✓ Identifying words that connect one idea to another.
- ✓ Identifying words that indicate change from one section to another.

(as cited in Davies,1995, p235).

In sum, intensive reading is a means of increasing learners'knowledge of language features and their control of reading strategies. It is the most typically taught method of teaching the reading skill in the Algerian Secondary Schools as it is the case in the book of Third Year *"New Prospects".*

Now, let us move to the second type of reading: extensive reading.

1.5.2 Extensive Reading:

Extensive reading has been defined in various ways by educators and reading specialists. It refers to all the readings that learners do it outside the classroom for leisure and enjoyment without teachers' supervision. It is a lifelong reading habit; it helps students to develop reading fluency. Bamford et al (2002) notes: ***"Extensive reading is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of easy material in the new language"***. (Bamford, 2002, p.1). In the same line, Carell and Carson (1997) notes: ***"Extensive reading is a rapid reading of large quantities of material or longer reading for general understanding"*** (Carrell and Carson, 1997 as cited in Richards, 2002).

Extensive reading is essential for success in acquiring a foreign language because students have the choice to select their own books to read it at their own pace. Through extensive reading, learners can develop their positive attitude toward reading in a foreign language and they gain more vocabulary and grammar knowledge. In addition to this, thanks to extensive reading, learners can improve their writing skill. Grabe (1991) notes: ***"Longer concentrated periods of silent reading build vocabulary and structural awareness, develop automaticity, enhance background knowledge, improve comprehension skills and promote confidence and motivation"*** (Grabe,1991,p.396).

As a matter of fact, through Extensive reading learners can go through various activities for example: interview each other about their reading, write a book report or a summary. In this respect, Smith (1985) notes***: "learn to read is by reading"*** (Smith, 1985, p.70).

In sum, both intensive and extensive readings are complementary to teach each other and both of them can be beneficial for achieving reading goals at different levels.

1.5 Teaching the Reading Skill through the CBA:

The reading skill is considered as the major mean and the essential tool in the process of teaching and learning. It is one of the most significant human skills because it involves so many different elements. It is also one of the most fruitful skills to teach. *"To teach foreign or second language reading well, we need to know as much as possible about how the reading process works and how to integrate that knowledge effectively into our reading pedagogy "*

(Barnett, 1989, p. 1).

Teaching the reading skill through the Competency-Based Approach is not as easy as it seems to be. It makes heavy demands on both teacher and learner because to teach reading means to train the learners to read effectively to get information or meaning from written material with full understanding. Rivas (1999) notes: *"Several factors now influence the selection of reading texts for the EFL classroom a part from read ability other criteria taken into account include authenticity and reader interest"* (Rivas,1999,p.12). Moreover, Eskey (1983) notes: *"The point of the reading course should be reading, not reinforcement of oral skills, not grammatical or discourse analysis and not the acquisition of new vocabulary".* (Eskey, 1983,p.130).

Moreover, the teaching of the reading skill within the CBA is learner centred rather than teacher centred because teacher places learners in situations that test and check their capacity to overcome obstacles and problems. It is no more monopolized by the teacher and the text context. Learners are made aware of their active participation. They are not only taught to read in order to learn but they are also taught how to read. Learners are no more guided in reading; it is the teacher's tasks which show them how to cope with different readings. In this respect widdowson (1983) notes: *"A pedagogy that does not involve learner participation is not likely to be as effective as one that does".*

(Widdowson, 1983, p. 76).

Thus, teacher's role necessarly changes and vary according to the approach adopted, he as the role of a guide, co-ordinator, an observer and an assessor. ***"These changes strengthen teachers'roles making them more varied and more creative.Their status is no longer based on hierarchical authority, but on the quality and importance of their relationship with learners"***

(As cited in Oxford, 1990, p.11).

In sum, the teaching of the reading skill within the CBA might have a positive influence on learners'performance inside and outside the classroom.

1.7 Problems in Teaching the Reading Skill through the CBA:

Teaching the reading skill within the CBA is seen by most EFL teachers as a very difficult task. It is no more monopolized by the teacher and the text context; it shifts from teacher centered to learner centered. Harmer (2007) notes: "Reading is useful for language acquisition the more they read, the better they get. Reading has a positive effect on students'vocabularyknowledge, on their spelling and their writing" (Harmer, 2007, p.99).

Both teachers and learners face several problems. The following lists represent some problems:

> ➢ Teachers misunderstanding of the process of shifting from a teacher centered to the new one learner centered.
> ➢ Lack of adequate teaching materials.
> ➢ Pupils do not read outside of the classroom.
> ➢ Pupils'wrong idea about what reading is.
> ➢ Selecting appropriate text.
> ➢ No reading culture.
> ➢ Designing reading task.
> ➢ Lack of schema activation.
> ➢ Limited time access for an English class.
> ➢ Unfamiliar context to the students.

Consequently both teachers and learners need to progressively alter their traditional views about the reading skill. In order to achieve this, the former must adopt and adapt them to the new methodology and the latter must be more attentive to the skill they are learning rather than to the content of what they read. Goodman (1967) notes: "Reading is more than just picking up words, phrases, and sentences written in the text; it is, an activation of the prior knowledge that we already have in our mind. When we read any text, we use our

knowledge of the world to understand the text. Reading is, therefore, a 'psycholinguistic guessing game' (Goodman, 1967, as cited in Hedge, 2010).

1.8 Challenges of the Reading Skill:

Learning to read is one of the essential skills for learners. In this vein, Trudell *et al* say*:" Of all the core competencies recognized to contribute to lifelong learning and sustainable development, none is quite as central as the ability to read".* (Trudell et al, 2012, p.8).

Teaching the reading skill within the CBA is a complex process that draws upon an extensive knowledge base and repertoire of strategies. However, in Algeria, the assessment of teaching this skill face several difficulties. The changes related to the assessment of teaching the reading skill within the CBA are not only faced by learners but also by some teachers. This means that students weak performance in a reading lesson, or in reading assessment is reflected by the teachers' weak performance in teaching the reading skill. This observation implies that there are teachers who are not fully prepared to face the changes involved in the assessment of teaching the reading skill. Indeed, it is difficult for teachers to properly manage reading when they themselves have some difficulties with reading tests.

The following list represents the challenges of teaching the reading skill in the Algerian Secondary Schools:

➢ *Large and overcrowded classrooms*. The size of the classroom in many secondary schools varies between 35 to 40, The teacher cannot have a full control over the classroom. Unfortunately, the teacher cannot reach his aim to provide his pupils much practice in reading activities. Indeed, overcrowded classes are a problem for teaching the reading skill.

➢ The students cannot understand the meaning of the reading passage because they try to understand the word meaning rather than the gist.

➢ The students do not understand the pronunciation of the majority words.

➢ Unfamiliar context to the students.

➢ Limited time access for an English class.

➢ All students cannot read properly.

1.9 Conclusion:

In sum, the competency based approach makes the learners learn by themselves. It is a very effective method of teaching English. It fulfils the learners'needs and makes them participate in their own learning.

Learning to read in a foreign language within the CBA is a formidable task, involving time and efforts on the part of the pupils and teachers alike. Both have to be aware of the fact that reading requires process and product that are closely related to meaning which can be acquired through silent reading. In short, the reading skill has a great importance within the CBA.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two:

Assessment of the Reading Skill within the CBA.

2.1 Introduction.

2.2 Definition of Assessment.

2.3 Types of Assessment.

   2.3.1 Diagnostic Assessment.

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2.1 Introduction:

Teaching the reading skill in the Algerian schools has developed according to the changes that have occurred in ELT methodology, teaching techniques as well as in the teacher training service throughout the years since independence. Indeed, assessment of learners reading skill in the classroom has been an integral component of the teaching and learning process.

In this chapter, special attention is given to the different types and steps of assessment, its tools and techniques. As it focuses on the assessment of learners reading skill and the techniques which best help to assess the different components of this skill.

2.2 Definition of Assessment:

The term *"Assessment"* has become a buzz word in the Algerian Educational system. It focuses on learning, teaching and outcomes. It is an integral part of instruction that enhances, empowers student learning. *"Assessment is the systematic collection, review and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development"* (as cited in Marchese, 1987). In the broadest sense, assessment is concerned with learner's progress and achievement. *Black* and *William* define assessment broadly as a task which includes all activities that teachers and students undertake to get information that can be used diagnostically to alter both Teaching and Learning. Under this definition, assessment encompasses teachers' observation, classroom discussion and analysis of learners work including homework and tests. *Carr* and *Harris* (2001) note: *"It is an integral part of instruction ….effective classroom assessment is relevant to immediate learning ".* (Carr and Harris, 2001, p.35).

Assessment is one of the most powerful educational tools used to improve effective learning and one of the most significant areas of an educational system. *Rowntree (1987)* notes : *" If we wish to discover the truth about an educational system we must look into its assessment procedures ".* (Rowntree, 1987, p.1). In addition, assessment is important because students cannot avoid it, as Boud (1995) posits: *"Students can, with difficulty, escape from the effects of poor teaching, they can't escape the effects of poor assessment".* (Boud, 1995, p. 35). On the other hand, assessment is an ongoing process which lies in a much wider domain. Every time a student answer a question, gives a comment, or tries to pronounce a new word, phrase or concept the teacher unconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance. According to Brown, a good teacher never ceases to assess students, whether those assessments are incidental or intentional. In other words, *"Assessment is the process of gathering data. More specifically, assessment is the ways instructors gather data about their teaching and their students 'learning".* (As cited in Hanna and Dettmer, 2004, p. 200). In brief, assessment helps teachers to obtain useful feedback on what, how much and how well their students are learning and if the teaching methods are effectively relaying the intended messages.

2.3 Types of Assessment:

  There are various types of assessment:

2.3.1Diagnostic Assessment:

Diagnostic assessment is a type of assessment which examines what a student knows and can do prior to a learning programme being implemented. It is an essential device in a teacher's 'tool kit'(Boud,1995). It can be used to diagnose strengths and areas of need in all students. It occurs at the beginning of a year or unit of work and enables a teacher to:

> ➢ Assess the skills, abilities, interests, experiences, levels of achievement or difficulties of an individual student or a whole class.

> ➢ Establish students' prior knowledge.

> ➢ Identify misconceptions.

> ➢ Make informed planning decisions.

> ➢ Differentiate learning needs.

(Boud, 1995).

Consequently, diagnostic assessment is used for learning, where taking action to adjust teaching plays a significant role in improving learning outcomes for all students.

2.3.2 Formative Assessment:

Formative assessment is a tool that teachers can use it to collect detailed information about student comprehension and learning needs during a lesson, unit or a course. It is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides explicit feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students 'achievement of intended instructional outcomes. An important element of formative assessment is feedback. Feedback makes the biggest impact when it occurs during the learning process *Black* and *William* (1998) point out the value of formative assessment that high quality formative assessment has a powerful impact on student learning. Formative assessment is a continuous process which aims at knowing about how students are progressing and where they are having troubles. *Harlen* and *James* (1997) notes: ***"formative assessment is essentially positive in intent, in that it is directed towards promoting learning, it is therefore part of teaching"***. *(Harlen* and *James, 1997, p. 93)*.

Formative assessment encompasses a variety of strategies, used selectively to accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

➢ Monitor student learning and provide feedback to students and parents.

➢ Identify areas of growth.

➢ Motivate students and provide incentive of study.

➢ Help focus attention and effort.

➢ Emphasize what is important to learn.

➢ Provide practice in applying, demonstrating and extending knowledge, skills and attitudes.

➢ Encourage goal setting and monitor achievement of goals.

➢ Reflect on programmes structure and effectiveness, and modify or adjust teaching as necessary.

(As cited in the value of formative assessment, 2009).

2.3.3 Summative Assessment:

Summative assessment or assessment of learning is commonly constrasted with formative assessment, it is typically used to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programmes and services at the end of an academic year or at a pre-determined time. The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Summative assessments are often high stakes which means that they are a high-point value. It can take many forms. Here are some possible types of summative assessment that can be used in the language classroom: performance ask, written product, oral product, a final project, examinations (major, high- stakes exams), final examination (a truly summative assessment). Popham (2009) notes: ***"summative assessments are used to make decisions about students 'learning and to measure the extent of their achievement of the instructional program learning outcomes".*** (James popham, 2009). In the same line of thoughts, Crooks suggests: ***"Summative assessment is intended to summarize student achievement at a particular time ".*** (Crooks, 2001).

In brief, summative assessment is measuring the outcome of an educational programme for the students who participated in that programme, that is, what skills and knowledge, relevant to the programme, do they have at the conclusion of the programme.

2.3.4 Self-Assessment:

Self-assessment is a valuable assessment tool. It emphasizes the learners' responsibility. It is a way for students to become involved in assessing their own development and learning. It is arguably the most powerful means which provide teachers with useful information about learners' expectations and needs. It plays a significant role in developing self-perceptions that lead to greater motivation. Harris (1997) posits: ***"self-assessment is seen as one of the pillars of learner autonomy, one of the fundamental elements of self-directed language learning is the opportunity for learners to assess their own learning".*** *(*Harris,1997 p.180). In the same line of thoughts*,* Boud (1991) defines self-assessment as: ***"The involvement of students in identifying standards and/or Criteria to apply to their work, and making judgments about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards"***. (Boud, 1991, p. 5). He adds: ***"It normally involves drawing upon the criteria and judgement of others, but leaves decision-making in the hands of the student".*** (Boud, 1994, p. 50).

The following figure represents the advantages of Self-Assessment:
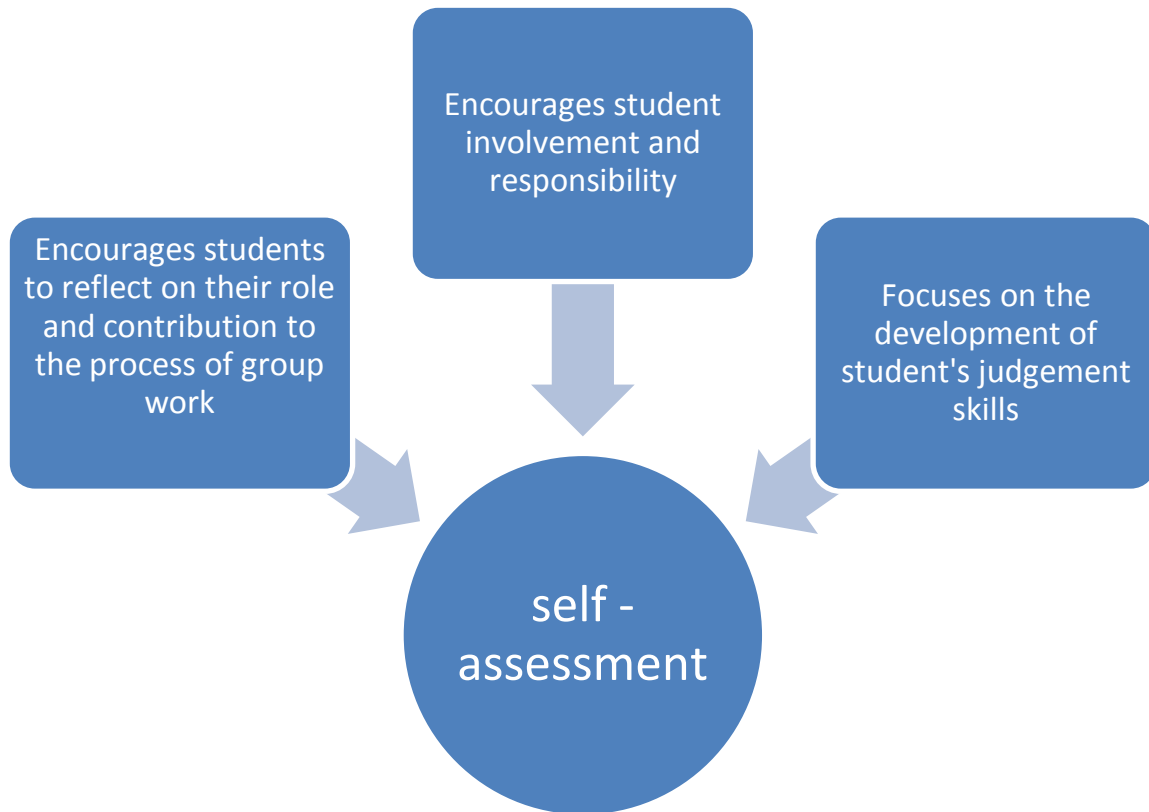
Figure 2.3.4: Advantages of self-assessment.

In fact, self-assessment occurs when a student assesses and makes judgments about his or her own work.

2.3.5 Peer Assessment:

Peer assessment is one form of innovative assessment, which aims to improve the quality of learning and empower learners. It occurs when students make assessment decisions on other students work. Orsmond (2004) notes that peer assessment can be useful in helping students to develop their ability to make judgments on the performance of other students. Strybos and Sluysmans (2000) note: ***"Peer assessment is an educational arrangement where students judge a peers 'performance quantitatively and /or qualitatively and which***

stimulates students to reflect, discuss and collaborate". (Strybos and Sluysmans, 2000, p.265). In another definition, Robert (2006) states: *" Peer assessment is the process of having the readers critically reflect upon, and perhaps suggest grades for the learning of their peers ".* (Robert, 2006, p. 80). Falchikove (2005) refers to another aspect of peer assessment and reports that in peer assessment: *"Students use criteria and apply standards to the work of their peers in order to judge that work".* (Falchikove, 2005, p. 27) .

Brown et al (1998) have described some potential advantages of peer assessment for students as:

➢ Giving a sense of ownership of the assessment process, improving motivation.

➢ Encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning developing them as autonomous learners.

➢ Treating assessment as part of learning, so that mistakes are opportunities rather than failures.

➢ Practicing the transferable skills needed for life-long learning, especially evaluation skills.

➢ Encouraging deep rather than surface learning.

(*Brown et al, 1998).*

2.3.6 Alternative Assessment:

Alternative assessment is widely defined as any type of assessment in which student creates a response to a question or a task. It has become important part of learning and teaching foreign Languages. It is a cover term that covers any number of alternatives to standardized tests. It is one of the most effective ways for classroom assessment. Alternative assessment is not a paper-and-pencil test. Rather, it is an interactive process between the teacher and the student. While the traditional paper-and-pencil tests may be effective to assess some of

the skills (such as listening), they are not sufficient to assess the productive skills of speaking and writing. Hargreves et al (2002) note: *"Alternative assessment are designed to foster powerful and productive learning for students"* (Hargreves et al , 2002*).* Macias (1995) notes*: "Alternative assessment asks students to show what they can do, that is to say, students are evaluated on what they integrate and produce rather than on what they are able to recall".* (Macias 1995 as cited in Coombe et al/2007).

2.3.7 Continuous Assessment:

Continuous assessment is a way to ensure that all learners have opportunities to succeed in school. It is a classroom strategy implemented by teachers to ascertain what the learner has gained in terms of knowledge, thinking, reasoning, character learning activities using various instruments like: tests, assignments, projects, observation, interviews and questionnaires. Yoloye (1984) define CA as follow: *"It is a method of evaluating the progress and achievement of students in educational institutions. It aims to get the truest possible picture of each student's ability at the same time helping each student to develop his or her abilities to the fullest".* (Yoloye, 1984, p.189). It is a powerful assessment tool because it enables learners to understand the areas in which they are having difficulty and to concentrate their efforts in those areas and at the same time it allows teachers to monitor the impact of their lessons on pupils understanding. This means that continuous assessment could be used to predict future students performance in the final examinations. The major purposes of CA are to improve the results of pupils' performance on tests and exercises, and to help pupils to develop effective learning and work habit. Quanash (2005) notes: *"The major purpose of continuous assessment is to improve the results of pupils 'performance on tests, exercises and to help pupils to develop effective learning and work habit"* (Quanash,2005 as cited in Dudley,1998,p.253).   In the same line of thought, Dudley et al (1998) say:

"Continuous assessment is important because it provides teachers and learners with the feedback and grades of the activities done in the classroom or as homework". (Dudley et al, 1998) **.**

In brief, Continuous assessment refers to ongoing process which takes place throughout the whole learning process.

2.4 Assessment of Learners Reading Skill:

Reading is one of the most important skills in learning a foreign language. Arguably, teaching reading is a complex process that draws upon an extensive knowledge base and repertoire of strategies. One important aspect of the teaching of any foreign language is the assessment of students' progress. Assessment and reading are essential to student learning. According to Grabe (2009) : *" Reading assessments are meant to provide feedback on the skills, processes and knowledge resources that represent reading abilities ".* (Grabe, 2009, p. 253)**.** Generally speaking, assessment of the reading skill is one of the essential practices to both teaching and learning. Teachers use various tools and techniques that help them to understand their learners' needs, wants and worries. In addition to this, teachers can make decisions about the most useful and constructive classroom instruction.

Ongoing, varied and accurate reading assessment help teachers to:

➢ Build on students' prior knowledge.
➢ Decide at what level to begin reading instruction.
➢ Determine the pace at which instruction should proceed.
➢ Spot gaps in oral language and in specific reading skill.
➢ Determine student grouping in your classroom.
➢ Identify the need for programmes adaptations for individual students.
➢ Assess students' progress over time.

➤ Involve students in goal setting and self assessment. (as cited in Alderson,1997).

In sum, because of the great importance of the reading skill as a primary channel of learning a language, teacher need to plan reading assessment carefully, first setting their goals, which do not always consist in assigning marks, but can often include monitoring skills development in order to verify teaching effectiveness and possibly to improve reading instruction. Aebersold and Field (1997) claim the need for: ***"Reading teachers to become thoughtful, attentive, reliable assessors, able to use both alternative and traditional assessment measures that are beneficial to all".****(*Aebersold and Field 1997,p.167*). EFL teachers should be aware of the possibilities that traditional and alternative assessment bring to their classrooms. It is not a matter of choosing one over the other, but of being able to recognize the benefits each one has for making informed decisions.

2.5 Assessment methods:

Assessment methods are range of methods, strategies, techniques, tools and instruments that teachers use it in order to assess the reading skill and student learning outcomes. These methods are the following: journals, portfolio, homework and classroom observation.

2.5.1 Journals:

Journals are another effective assessment tool that teachers can use it to examine student learning in the affective and cognitive domains. Journals are tools which are designed to cause students reflect on what they have learnt; it offers many useful benefits to both teachers and learners. Journals (audio and written) used to keep learners involved in the processes of monitoring comprehension, making comprehensive visible, fitting new knowledge, applying knowledge and gaining language proficiency.

Teachers can use journals as a kind of window into how students are thinking about what they are learning. Journals can be an important source of information about learning difficulties, strengths and weaknesses. According to Bowman (1983)*: "One of the most engaging uses of personal student journals is a mirror of the mind. In this mode, journals invite learners to find language deep within self to array one's hopes, dreams, disappointments concerns and resolves".* (Bowman, 1983, p.125) .Similarly, Holly (1991) posits that :*"Keeping a journal is a humbling process. You rely on your senses, your impressions and you purposely record your experiences as vividly, as playfully, and as creatively as you can. It is a learning process in which you are the learner and the one who teaches".* (Holly,1991, p. 4). In brief, journals are a powerful tool for encouraging students to reflect on their experiences and a very effective assessment tool of student learning and it is helpful to the teacher in establishing the pace of instruction during problem-based learning. Burchfield (2005) represents the advantages of using journals in the following list:

➢ Help students pinpoint what they know and do not know.

➢ Connect previous knowledge with what the student is currently studying.

➢ Summarize what the student understands and their knowledge on the topic.

➢ Help students understand important questions to ask.

➢ Help student keep his or her thoughts more organized.

➢ Support and interdisciplinary approach to education.

➢ Help student see in a more visual approach to learning.

➢ Allow student to take a tentative idea and make it more permanent.

(as cited in Burchfield, 2005, p. 128).

Consequently, Students with a journal generally have clearer thoughts and an increased ability to explain a concept while the teacher can truly grasp the type of learner that student really is.

2.5.2 Homework:

Homework is the most common and valuable assessment tool that teachers use it to review and reinforce the lessons taught in school. It is an important link between the school and parents because it helps students to learn inside and outside the classroom... Good and Brophy (2003) say: ***" Homework is an important extension of in school opportunities to learn"*** . (Good and Brophy, 2003, p.393).in the same line of thought Frydenberg (2003)suggests*:* ***" Homework provides an important link between school and home, a vehicle for communication about what is expected and what is being taught at school…..homework also provides an opportunity for the development of autonomy and helps to develop an understanding in students about when they need assistance ".*** (Frydenberg, 2003, p.120).

In brief, homework reinforces and helps learners to retain information taught in the classroom as well as increasing their general understanding of the language. Homework is seen as a valuable resource for teaching and assessment. It has a great value. Here are some benefits of homework:

- ➢ Preparation for next class.
- ➢ Revision of work done in that day's or previous classes.
- ➢ Reaffirm the role of parents as partners in education.
- ➢ Consolidation and practise of work done in that day's class.
- ➢ Extension of language knowledge.
- ➢ Further skill practice.
- ➢ Acquisition of further language, style, …etc from extensive receptive skills work.
- ➢ Provide parents with insights into what is being taught in the classroom and into the progress of the students.

➢ Finishing off work started in class or to save class time for more communitive activities.

➢ To allow students to work on their own pace.

➢ To allow us to check that students have understood what we have tried to teach.

➢ As a diagnostic tool to identify gaps in students knowledge.

➢ Strengthen home-school links.

(Cooper 2001as cited in Buell2007).

In sum, homework bridges the gap between school and home. Students, teachers and parents can monitor progress. It can be a useful assessment tool because it is used to let students learn what they don't know or what they need to ask questions about; this can be a valuable part of an assessment plan in a classroom.

2.5.3 Project:

The project is a valuable tool of assessment. It plays an important role in the process of teaching and learning. It provides opportunities for students to develop their confidence and independence. ***"Projects are tasks of research and development which are limited in time and with which students, individually or in groups, are introduced to the contents and methods of the subject and to autonomous work".***(Eckstein, 1978, p.134 as cited by Burdewick,2003). In the same line, Collins (1987) notes: ***"An idea or plan that you intend to carry out in the future or that is being carried out at present. It is a detailed study of a particular subject".*** (Collins,1987, p. 189) .A project is characterized by the following***:***

✓ Complex and numerous activities.

✓ Unique-a one-time set of events.

✓ Finite- with a begin and end date.

- ✓ Sequenced activities.
- ✓ Goal oriented.
- ✓ End product.

(As cited in Weiss and Wysocki, 1992, p. 145).

Project is part and parcel of learning strategies. It is learner-centred. Legutke and Thomas (1991) notes: ***"A project is a theme and task-centred mode of teaching and learning which results from a joint process of negociation between all participants"*** (Legutke and Thomas,1991, p.160 as cited in Turnbull,1991, p.550). It gives a great freedom for actions inside and outside the classroom. And, in the same manner, the behavioral objectives in the project work put the learner into situations in which he is a social being, a citizen and whatever other roles he finds himself in. They boost his sense of achievement resulting in self confidence and autonomy. It is an education towards the ability to decide and get along in the community. In brief, Project is a very useful tool of assessment because assessing projects helps teachers create assessments that address twenty first century skills and provides strategies to make assessment an integral part of their teaching and help students understand content more deeply, think at higher levels and become self-directed learners.

2.5.4 Portfolio:

A portfolio is another tool and form of authentic assessment. It is a collection of teacher and student work. Its aim is to see teaching and learning across contexts and over time. It illustrates efforts, progress and achievement. Arter and Paulson (1990) note: ***"A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that tells the story of the student's efforts, progress or achievement in a given area. This collection must include student participation in selection of portfolio content; the guidelines for selection; the criteria for judging merit; and evidence of student self-reflection"***. (Arter and

Paulson,1990, p.36). Arter and Spandel (1991) suggest: *"A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits to the students, or others, her efforts in one or more areas".* (Arter and Spandel, 1991, p. 136). In the same line, Collins (1992) identify portfolio as*: "A container of collected evidence with a purpose. Evidence is documentations that can be used one person or group of persons to infer another person's knowledge, skill or disposition".* (Collins, 1992, p.452). Portfolio is a very effective tool of assessment. It has several of advantages:

➢ Promoting student self-evaluation, reflection and critical thinking.

➢ Measuring performance based on genuine samples of student work.

➢ Providing flexibility in measuring how students accomplish their learning goals.

➢ Enabling teachers and students to share the responsibility for setting learning goals and for evaluating progress toward meeting those goals.

➢ Giving students the opportunity to have extensive input into the learning process.

➢ Facilitating cooperative learning activities, including peer evaluation and cooperative learning groups.

➢ Providing a process for structuring learning in stages.

➢ Providing opportunities for students and teachers to discuss learning goals and the progress toward those goals.

➢ Enabling measurement of multiple dimensions of student progress by including different types of data and materials.
(As cited in Gibbs, 1992, p.229).

In sum, portfolio assessment is a mirror which allows students to see themselves overtime. It is a valuable assessment. Thus, it enables students to learn during assessment and to be assessed during learning. Indeed, portfolios

provide a number of elements that could serve as a part of the evaluation of the students 'work in the reading course.

2.5.5 Classroom Observation:

Classroom observation is one of the most important methods that teachers can use it as ongoing assessment. It plays a central role in the process of teaching and learning. It is used in order to check on the effectiveness of instruction or to change it, as well as, it is another form of collaboration between colleagues. Bailey (2001) notes*: "A classroom observation is the purposeful examination of teaching and/or learning events through the systematic processes of data collection and analysis".* (Bailey 2001,p.36) Additionally, Kolawole (2005) suggests: *" Classroom observation is an act that entails watching closely with interest to detect certain qualities, attributes or traits in students".* (Kolawole 2005,p.158).

Classroom observation is a very effective tool that teachers can use it as a guide. It allows educators and administrators to improve not only classrooms but also schools. In sum, classroom observation is an informal assessment technique of watching students to identify strengths and weaknesses, patterns of behavior and cognitive strategies. Classroom observation helps determine which students need additional support and how to adjust instruction to encourage more and better learning.

2.5.6 Testing:

Test is a method to determine a student's ability to complete certain tasks or demonstrate mastery of a skill or knowledge of content. Thus, testing is a set of techniques of questioning and observing to find out how far learning is taking place, it is also used to assess the knowledge of the students in order to compare one individual to another individual in the same group. According to Spolsky (1989): *"Language tests involve measuring a subject's knowledge and*

proficiency in the use of language".(Spolsky, 1989,p. 40). In the same line of thoughts, Brown (1980) posits that: *"Testing is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given area".* (Brown, 1980,p. 80).

Testing in language learning as a whole is described as a device or instrument, which measures the linguistic knowledge or competence of the learner. According to Ingram (1974): *"Tests like examinations invite candidates to display their knowledge or skills in concentrated fashion, so that the result can be graded".* (Ingram,1974, p.313). In the same vein, Flavell notes: *"A test as a natural extention of classroom work, providing teaching and student with useful information what can serve each as a basis for approvement".* *(Flavell,1983, p.1).*

In sum, testing is one of the most important assessment tools. It plays three important roles: define course objective, stimulate students' progress and evaluate classroom achievement. (Valette1977).

In order to judge the effectiveness of any test, it is sensible to lay down criteria against which the test can be measured as follows: Reliability and validity. Test *reliability* and *validity* are two technical properties of a test that indicate the quality and usefulness of the test. These are the two most important features of a test. You should examine these features when evaluating the suitability of the test for your use.

2.5.6.1. Reliability:

It is the degree to which a test gives consistent results. Nunan (1992) argued: *"Reliability refers to the consistency of the results obtained from a piece of research".* (Nunan,1992, p. 14).

A good test should give consistent results for eg if the same group of students took the same test twice within two days without reflecting on the first

test before they set it again, they should get the same results on each occasion. If they took another similar test the results should be consistent if two groups who were demonstrably alike took the test the marking range would be the same. According to Joppe (2000): *"**Reliability** is viewed as the extent to which results are consistent over time".*(Joppe, 2000,p.198).Crocker and Algina (1986) view *: " Test developers have a responsibility of demonstrating the reliability of scores from their tests" .* (Crocker and Algina,1986,p.106).

In sum, reliability is one of the most important elements of test quality. It refers to the degree to which a test is consistent and stable in measuring what is intended to measure.

2.5.6.2 Validity:

It is the degree to which a test measures what is supposed to be measured. Validity is arguably the most important criteria for the quality of a test.

Validity is merely the first step toward understanding the complex issues of measurement because without test validity teacher's decision about learner's work could be harmful. It is defined as: *"the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores entailed by the proposed uses"* (As cited in the Standards for Educational and psychological Testing). In sum, validity refers to the ability of a text to show that it really serves the purpose for which it has been designed. For instance: when students are faced with a reading text, they should be confident that it will efficiently measure the reading abilities.

2.6 Benefits of Assessment:

Assessment is a familiar part of classroom instruction. Teachers use a wide variety of assessment activities which aim at measuring what students

know and can do to help them achieve higher standards. Most of assessments procedures are teacher-made and tailored according to daily instructional needs. Assessment is supported to provide teachers with immediate feedback about students' mastery of a subject area of a specific skill. Assessment is a tool which provides information about knowledge and skills students have as they enter a course. It also provides a reliable data on students learning. Moreover, assessment can be seen as a tool of gathering richer data about the effects of the teaching approach on the teaching learning process. Though assessment, teachers can have a larger view of learners' needs and accomplishments and can identify directions for future instructional developments and make reliable decisions about innovations and adjustments, and yet, they can enjoy greater satisfaction in their work as educators.

2.6 Conclusion:

In this piece of research, two major themes have been highlighted namely: teaching the reading skill and its assessment in the Algerian Secondary Schools. Thus, the findings showed the close relationship between the two concepts: teaching the reading skill within the CBA and the assessment of this skill. Consequently, assessment of learners reading skill is one of the essential pedagogic tasks that learners need to carry out in the classroom. It plays a significant role for the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

Then, the researcher has brought into light clarification about reading and assessment and the various instruments and techniques that help learners assess their learners and know about their levels, weaknesses and strengths. In sum, the second chapter has tried to cover the vast area on the learner's assessment in classroom stressing its crucial role in the process of teaching the reading skill.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three:

Research Methods and Data Analysis.

3.1 Introduction.

3.2 Methodology of the Research.

3.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses.

3.4 Description of the Sample Population.

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   3.5.2.2 Analysis and Interpretation of the Interview.

3.6 Conclusion.

3.1 Introduction:

This research work is conducted in order to investigate the assessment of teaching the reading skill within the CBA framework. Furthermore, it seeks to find out the difficulties faced by both teachers and learners in this specific skill.

Different instruments for data collection have been used in order to confirm the research questions and hypotheses stated previously. These instruments are questionnaire for students and an interview with teachers. Thus, this chapter focuses on the description of the research instruments and the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Accordingly, both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to analyze data.

3.2 Methodology of the Research:

This dissertation was conducted in the form of a case study. Cohen et al (2007) assert: ***"The case study searcher to draw is a specific instance designed to illustrate a more general principle, this approach enables the researcher to draw conclusions and make generalizations from the analysis of a particular phenomenon or situation"***. (Cohen et al,2007). In the same vein, Yin (1984) quoted in Nunan (1992) argues : ***" A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context ;when the boundaries between phenomenon and context of evident are not clearly evident, and which multiple sources of evidence are used "*** (Yin,1984,p.22/ quoted in /Nunan,1992, p.76).Thus, through case study research, there is a phenomenon studied in real life context.

This research work uses both qualitative as well as a quantitative method. ***Scott*** and ***Morrison (2006)*** say: ***"Quantitative research refers to those approaches that are based on the assumptions of scientific investigation. It***

puts the emphasis on patterns, causes and consequences by applying the rules of positivism. It relies on data collected from tests, experiments, questionnaires and interview".(Scott and Morrison, 2006). As far the qualitative method, Wiersma (1995) posits that: *"Qualitative research investigates the complex phenomena experienced by the participants by examining people's words and actions in descriptive ways…..It uses the researcher as the data collection instrument and employs inductive analysis"* .(Wiersma,1995). In the same line, Creswell (2012) posits that: *"Qualitative research uses different principles strategies of inquiry and methods of data gathering and treatment. It relies heavily on data in the form of texts such as field notes, journal and diary entities, documents and images".* (Creswell,2012) . Therefore, quantitative research is said to be based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is, then, applicable to the study of phenomena that can be expressed in terms of numbers and statistics. As it is illustrated by Kothari (2004)*,* the quantitative research involves: *"The generation of data in quantitative form which can be subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis in a formal and rigid fashion".* (Kothari, 2004,p.5).

In this study, two research instruments were used to collect data in order to confirm the research hypothesis stated before about "The Assessment of the Reading Skill within the CBA " **:** 'a questionnaire' addressed to Third year-students and a 'semi-structured interview' with English teachers.

3.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses:

The Assessment of the reading skill within the CBA in the Algerian Secondary Schools is a complex process. It is considered as an evidence of learners 'achievement, and at the same time, it is a database for reflection and change in one's teaching. This is why the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA is seen by most EFL teachers as a very difficult task. It remains an

elusive challenge for many teachers. This dissertation tries to answer the following research questions:

➢ What are the goals of assessing the reading skill within the CBA?
➢ How is assessment utilized the reading skill within the CBA?
➢ Do the CBA principles allow for a good assessment practice of the reading assessment?

The above research questions have led to the formulation of the following hypotheses:

➢ Teachers assess the reading skill in order to assign marks, inform parents of students 'progress and to identify students with reading difficulties.
➢ Teachers use different standardized reading assessment task to assess the reading skill: gap filling, multiple choice, matching, ordering, dichotomous items, editing, short answers, summary, gapped summary and information transfer.
➢ The CBA principles allow for a good assessment practice.

3.4 Description of the Sample Population:

The population is the sampling frame; it is ***"The totality of person's events, organizations units…..with which the research problem is concerned".*** (Ibid, 1999). It is a subgroup of a population selected to participate in a research work. In addition to this, it is a method of data collection. This research work involves five Secondary School Education teachers and thirty students at Mohamed Dkhissi Secondary School- Maghnia- the following sections give an idea for the profile of both the learners and teachers:

3.4.1 Learners 'Profile:

The sample population included relating to this work is aged between 17 and 18 years. I chose third year foreign languages secondary students because they are advanced in their studies and consequently have most experiences with English Language Teachers.

This research work includes thirty students. They have studied English for 4 years at middle school level and are at the third year at Secondary School Level, which means that they are at their seventh year in learning English.

3.4.2 Teachers 'Profile:

This research work involves five teachers. Their teaching experience in teaching at secondary school varies from 5 to 20 years. All of them hold a Licence Degree in English, however, one of them hold a Master's Degree.

3.5 Research Instruments:

Seaman notes that: ***"Data collection instruments refer to devices used to collect data such as: questionnaire, tests, structured interview schedules and checklists"*** . (Seaman,1990 ,p.42). So as to collect data about "The Assessment of the reading skill within the CBA ", two data collection techniques were used in this research work: Questionnaire to students and an interview with Teachers.

3.5.1 Questionnaire to Students:

A questionnaire is a means of collecting data from informants (Our informants are third year students). Richards and Chameral (1980) state that***: "Questionnaires are structured instruments for the collection of data which translate research hypothesis into questions"***. (Richards and Chameral, 1980, p. 59). Brown (2001) defines a questionnaire as: ***"Any written***

instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting them among existing answers" (Brown, 2001, p.6). In the same line of thoughts, Anderson (1990) notes that: ***"Questionnaires allow the gathering of reliable and valid data, relatively in a short time".*** (Anderson, 1990).

In fact, the aim beyond choosing the questionnaire as a research tool is that it provides the researcher with an ample sampling in a more or less quite short period of time. Furthermore, the questionnaire brings under control the dimension of self-report. That is, no one can better reveal what he thinks, feels and experiences than the person to whom the questionnaire is addressed. The main objective of the present instrument is to identify some of the reading problems and difficulties they may encounter in the practice of this skill when working in the classroom. Indeed, we put forwards such a questionnaire to collect data upon which this study is prepared and the results are discussed, because statistics can't be given at random or generalized from one case.

3.5.1.1 Description of the Questionnaire:

This questionnaire was given to thirty students. It involves fifteen Questions (see Appendix A).These questions are described as follows:

Question One: is about the number of years students have been learning English.

Question Two: wonders if students enjoy English lessons or not.

Question Three: intends to know the reason for learning English and there are three suggestions.

Question Four: is about their favorites aspect of the Language.

Question Five: deals with students' opinion about the texts offered in the textbook.

Question Six: asks pupils if they read outside the classroom.

Question Seven: is about the choice of the reading material.

Question Eight: wonders if students use dictionaries when they read or not.

Question Nine: asks about the importance of the reading material.

Question Ten: deals with the problems that face students when reading a text.

Question Eleven: asks students if teachers give them the opportunity to assess themselves after a reading lesson.

Question Twelve: asks students when their teachers give them feedback on their assessment.

Question Thirteen: wonders if students have assessed their classmates after a reading lesson.

Question Fourteen: asks if assessment develop students 'reading skill.

Question Fifteen: is about the activities they like most.

   The questionnaire (Appendix A) uses a combination of three types of questions in order to provide both qualitative and quantitative data:

Close-ended questions (Yes /No questions), multiple choice questions and open ended questions.

   _Close-ended questions: This type of questions is easy to code and very useful for quantitative treatment and analysis, it limits the students' answers by proposing various and different possibilities.

Examples:

- Do you enjoy your English lessons?

   Yes   No

- Do you find the texts in the book easy to read?

  Yes   No

-    Multiple choice questions: it provides choices or alternative.

Examples:

- What are the problems you encounter when you read a text?

    □ Difficult and unfamiliar words.

    □ Difficult ideas.

    □ Analyzing a text .

    □ Unclear questions or exercises.

    □ Lack of appropriate reading materials.

    □ Grammatical structures included in the text.

_Open ended questions (wh questions) : This type of questions allows students to answer in their own words and styles. It helps them express themselves freely. According to Cohen et al (1989)*: "Open ended questions seeks to obtain personalized data about views, attitudes and perceptions along with reasons for why such answers are given".* (Cohen et al, 1989).

Examples:

- What are the activities that you like most (when your English teacher assesses your reading skill)?

**-** When do your teachers give you feedback on your assessment?

3.5.1.2 Analysis and Interpretation of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaire is: ***"Useful for surveying a lot of people in many different locations".*** (Bloomer, 2006, p.158).

This has been the aim for choosing questionnaire as the aim was to involve maximum number of Third Year Secondary Students. The general aim behind this questionnaire is to collect data to answer the research questions and set out to test the proposed hypotheses. The fifteen questions of students 'questionnaire are analyzed and discussed in the following way:

Question One: How long have you been learning English?

The intended purpose of this question is to discover the number of years students have learnt English Language. Zero percent have been learning English for 5 years and sixty percent have been learnt English 7years and forty percent from thirty say more. The pie- chart below better illustrates the result.
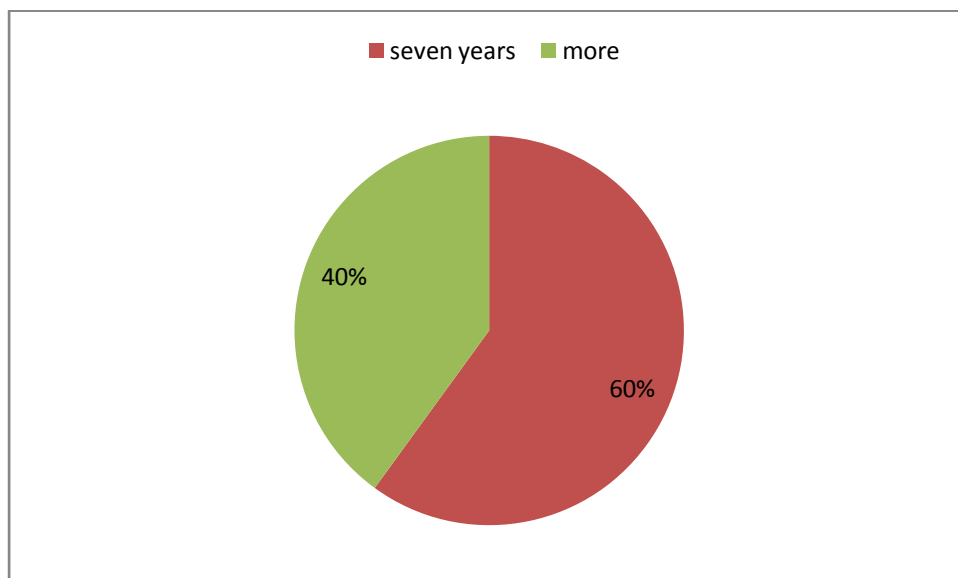

Pie-Chart 3.1: Students 'Period of Learning English.

Question Two: Do you enjoy your English lessons?

This question illustrates the choice of the pupils on whether they enjoy

their English lessons or not. The responses revealed that eighty percent enjoy their English lessons, whereas twenty percent showed a negative attitude towards their lessons.

The interpretation of the lack of enjoyment towards English lessons may be due to the fact that learners are sometimes tired because of the lessons scheduled before the English ones. The way of teaching can also have a negative effect on the learners, in addition to other factors, especially those related to the English teacher and the English lessons or the misunderstanding of one lesson or two can make the following lessons boring and less interesting. The following pie-chart shows that:
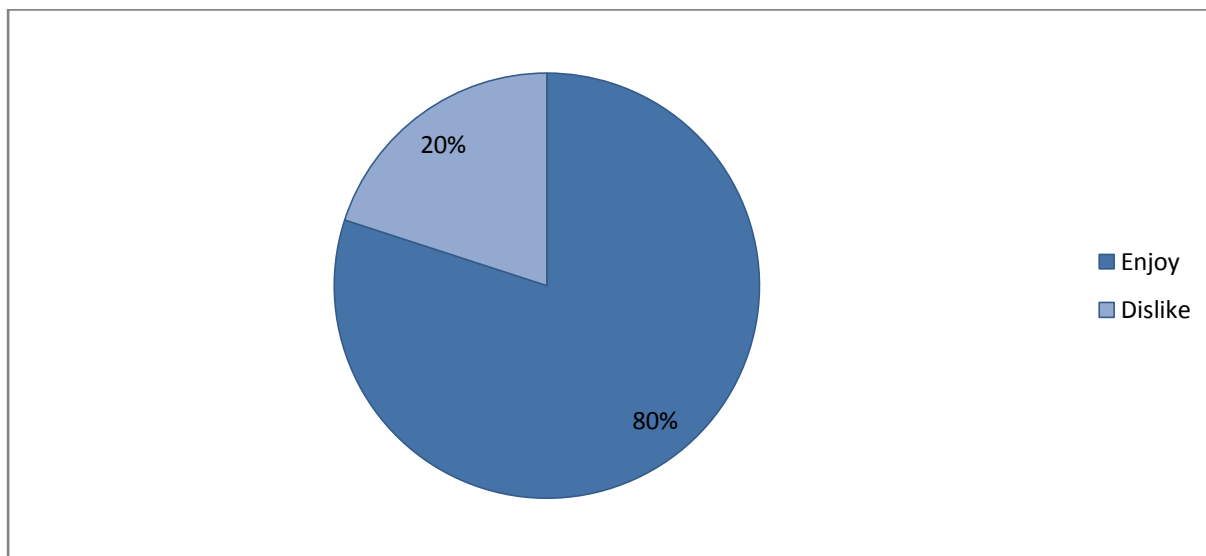
Pie-Chart 3.2: Enjoyment towards English lessons.

 Question Three: Why do you learn English? (Learners can choose more than one answer).

This question is about the reason of learning English and there are three suggestions, in addition the pupils have the right to choose more than one answer. Forty percent are studying English for their University Studies. Seventy percent are studying English for reading purposes. Forty percent are studying English for no obvious reason. The answers are in the following bar-graph:
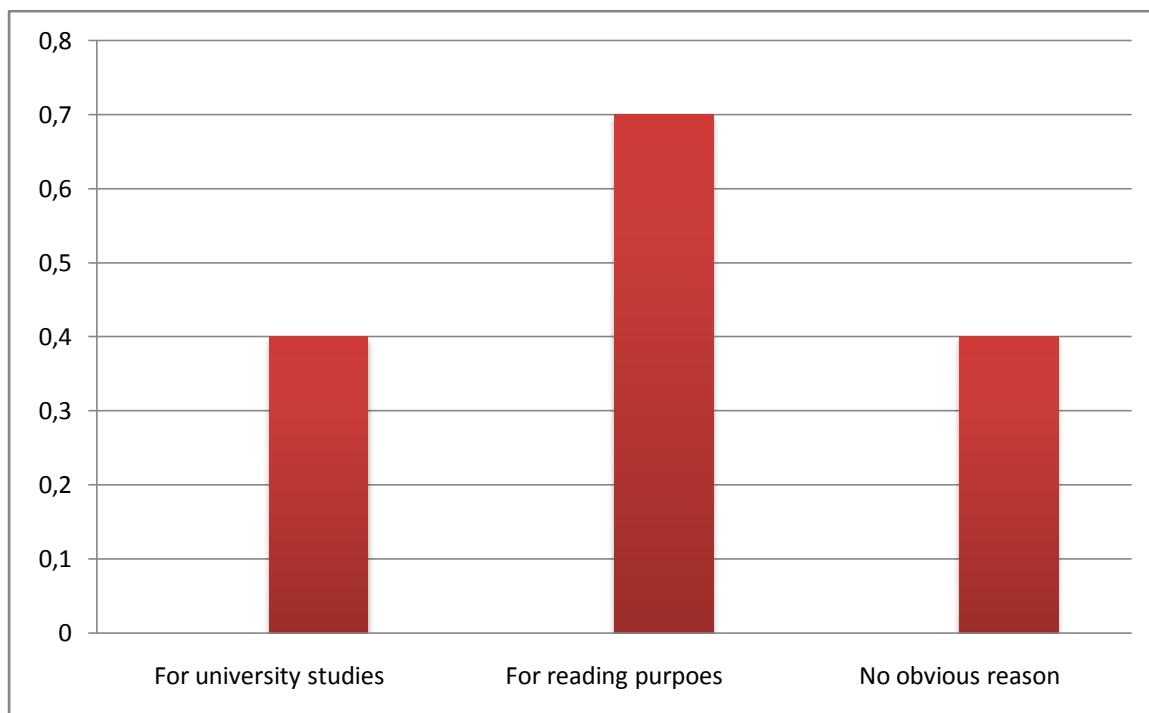
Bar-Graph3.1: Reasons of learning English.

Question Four: Which aspects of the language do you enjoy most?

The emphasis in the fourth question is put on the skills or language activities which are perceived as a big issue for the students. Learners were asked about their favorite skill, in other words, the aspect of the language they enjoy more. The results showed that the most enjoyable skills according to the informants are respectively as follows:

- *Listening:* Thirty percent/ *Writing:* Twenty six percent/ *Speaking*: Twenty four percent/ *Reading*: Twenty percent.

It can be noticed that learners enjoy more listening and writing activities. Thus, reading is considered as the most difficult followed by the speaking skill. Due to the lack of interaction and oral practice, the speaking activities are perceived as less easy to handle. Listening and writing are more interesting for them, because they are performed most of the time by the teacher, or with his

help and guidance. According to these results, teachers should devote more time to oral practice, because: *" The more we talk, the more we know ourselves ; the more we know ourselves, the more we understand life".* (Ellen Greenland,1990). Teachers should also encourage the pupils and help them to develop their reading skill outside the class. The results may well be presented in terms of percentages as shown in the following pie-chart:
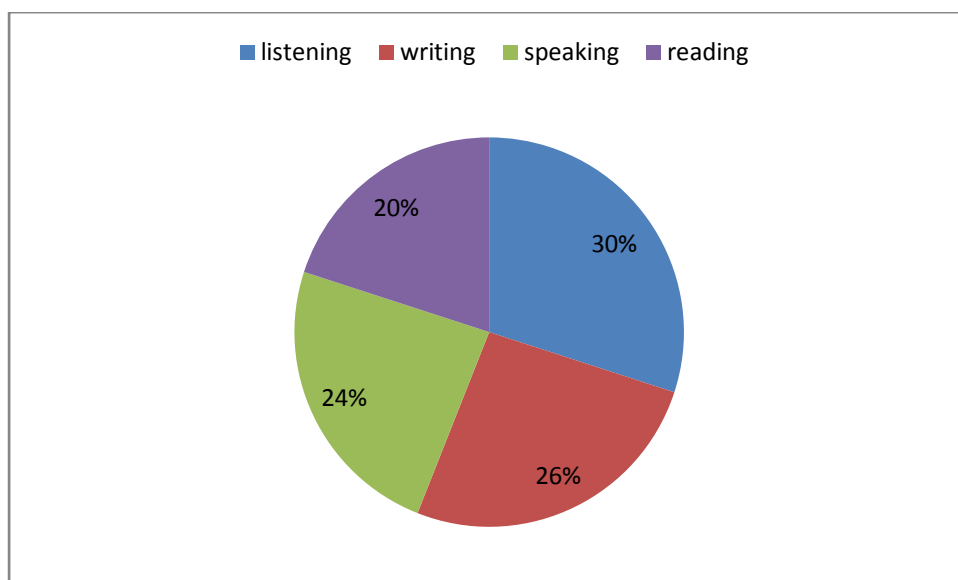
Pie-Chart 3.3: Classification of Skills according to students 'preferences.

Question Five: Do you find the texts in the textbook easy to read?

It is about the texts offered in the textbook and studied in the classroom. The answers show that twenty six percent of the informants find them easy to read; few of them fifteen percent regard them as difficult and not easy at all, whereas, the majority fifty nine percent considers some of them easy and the rest difficult.

The above results show that the majority fifty nine percent of the students judge some of the texts in the book easy and interesting while the others difficult. This indicates their positive attitudes towards reading and that they practice reading. However, it is the kind of texts at their disposal which makes

their reading tasks a little bit complex. In this case teachers have to select texts that suit their learners 'needs and interests and have also: ***"To create the right conditions for reading to become a valued part in every student's life".*** (Nuttal, 1996, p.127).The below pie-chart better explains the results.
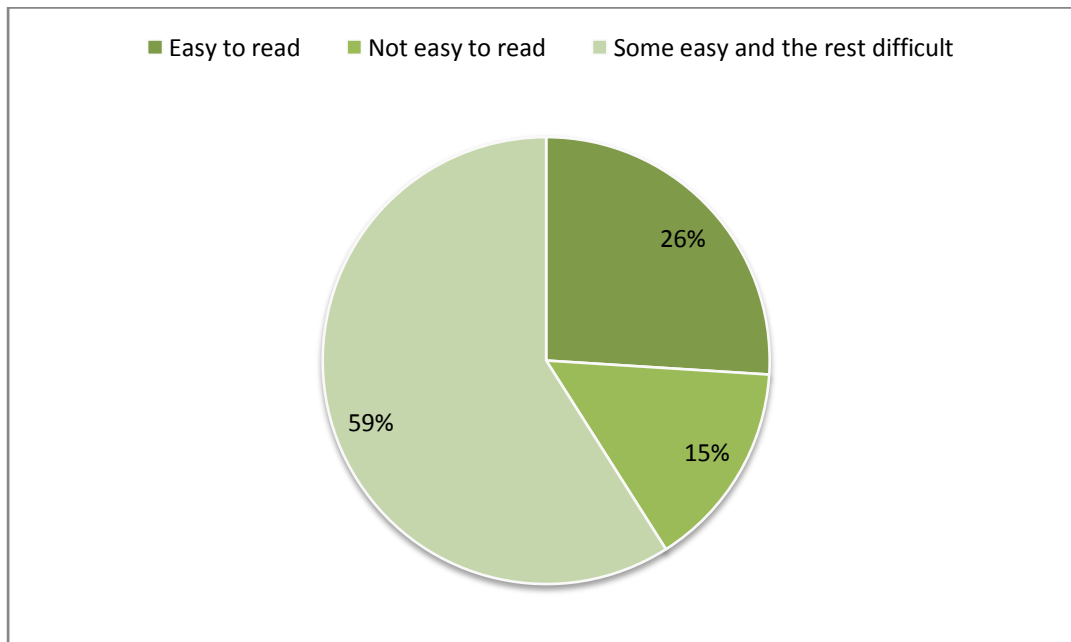
Pie-Chart 3.4: Students 'Opinion about Texts in the Book.

Question Six: Do you read outside the classroom?

The answers show that a great number of the informants fifty four percent do not read outside the classroom. Twenty four percent of them read mainly before exams, and only twenty two percent of the students are irregular in their reading habits (sometimes they read and most of the time they do not). Due to the lack of reading materials that suit the learners 'level, age and interests, a great percentage (fifty four percent) of informants do not read at all outside the classroom. Because of the absence of libraries, except the school library where

time for reading is restricted, and the chance of having books available for all learners is rather rare.

According to these results, teachers should motivate learners and encourage them to read outside the classroom to enhance their reading habits and competencies, especially at this stage of development. The below pie-chart better explains the result.
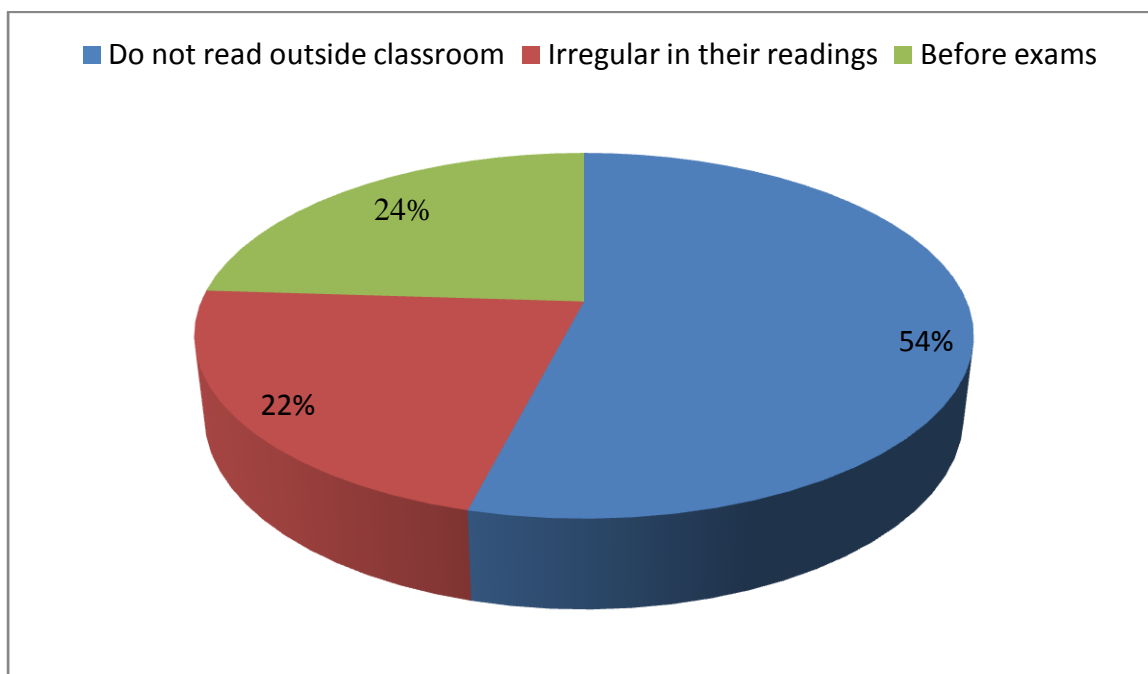
Pie-chart 3.5: Students 'Reading outside Classroom.

Question Seven: What do you like to read?

This question shows the pupils 'choice of their favorite and preferable reading material. The results reveal that the majority seventy five percent of the informants show an important interest in selecting stories as their favorite reading material, seventeen percent of them prefer magazines and the rest, represented by the minority only eight percent, choose newspapers.

Teachers should propose some reading materials to their students, taking into account their level, age, needs and interests as adolescents. The informants age may be considered as a key interpretation for their selection of stories, *and "The*

more meaningful the material to be learned, the greater the facility in learning and retention ". (Carrol,1966, p.105).

The below pie-chart better explains the result:
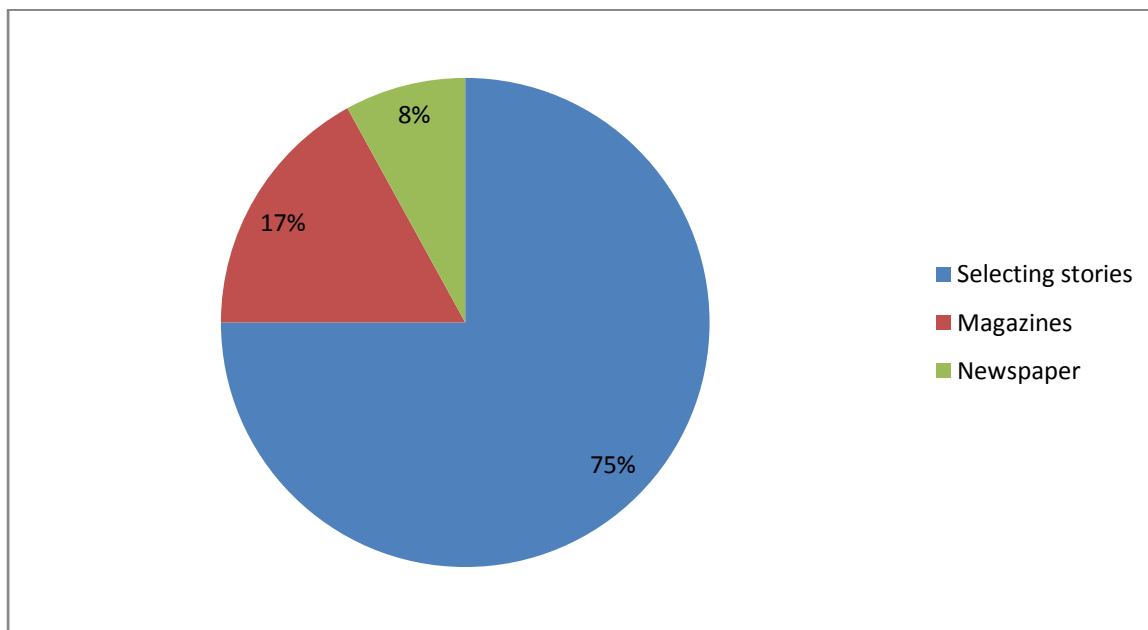
Pie-chart 3.6: Pupils 'Choice of Reading Material.

Question Eight: Do you use dictionaries for your reading?

The objective of this question is to know whether the pupils use a dictionary for their readings or not. The majority forty five percent do not use the dictionary in reading, twenty eight percent use it but not frequently, and the rest twenty seven percent uses it regularly.

This can be explained as follows: the majority of the informants do not have a dictionary, and some do not know how to use it. Therefore, the teacher should show the learners the correct way of using a dictionary while reading, and make them aware of its importance in facilitating their reading task and developing their knowledge of the language. But students must get *"Into the habit of reading daily and out of the habit of looking everything up in the dictionary"* (Duppy et al, 1995,p.02).The below pie-chart better explains the result :
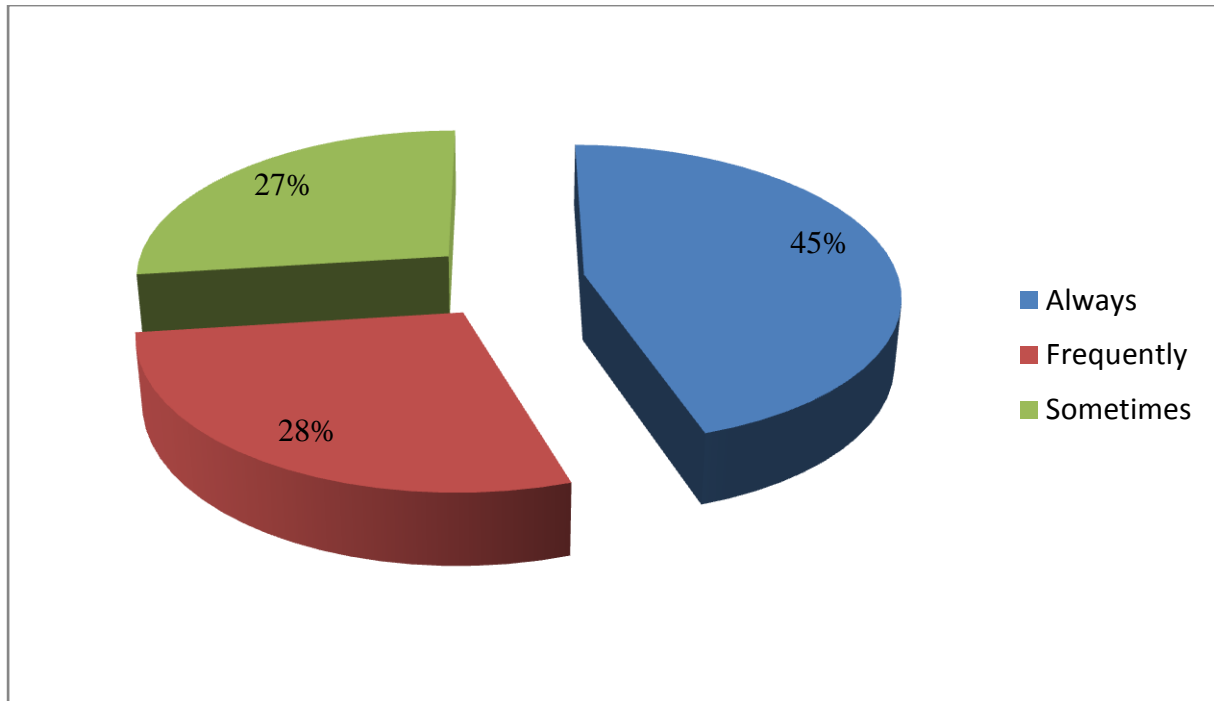
Pie-chart 3.7: Pupils 'Use of Dictionaries.

Question Nine: Why do you think reading is important?

This question aims mainly at investigating the students 'opinion as far as the importance of reading is concerned: twenty four percent think that reading is important to get information; nineteen percent to practise the language and fifty seven per cent to improve pronunciation.

Thus, the majority of the students are aware of the importance of reading and are able to identify it. For many of them, improving pronunciation is one of the major positive points in reading. They are beginners, they give more importance to how to utter words and how to pronounce them, neglecting what they can learn from their reading. At this level, the teacher's role is utile in making them more responsive to their reading, clarifying the advantages of reading and developing their motivation for it. ***"A well-motivated student badly taught will probably do better than a poorly-motivated student well taught".*** (Cunningsworth, 1984, p. 59). The below pie-chart better explains the results:
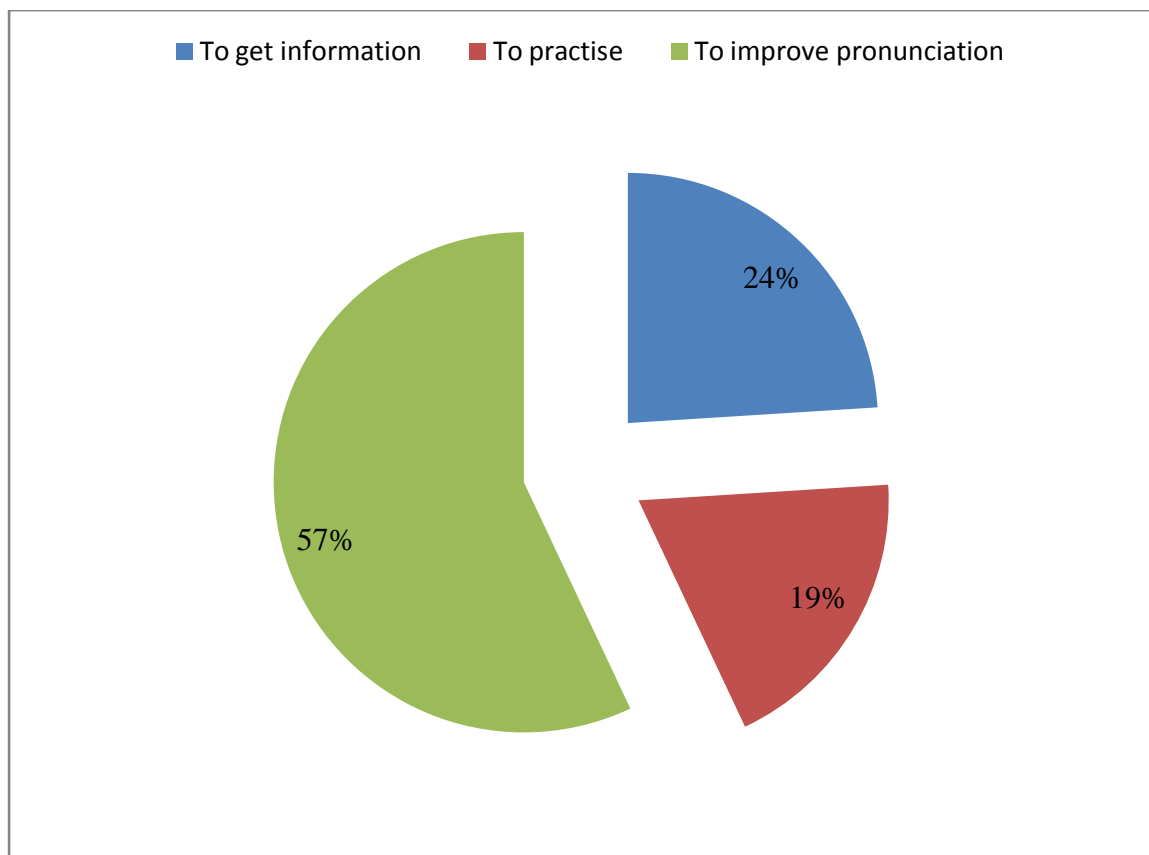
Pie-Chart 3.8: Importance of Reading.

Question Ten: What are the problems you encounter when reading a text?

This question is about the problems that face students when reading. Students have the right to choose more than one answer. The answers show that a great number of the informants fifty percent face the problem of the difficult and unfamiliar words; twenty three percent have a problem with unclear questions or exercises; twenty percent have a problem with the lack of appropriate reading materials; thirty percent have the problem with grammatical structures included in the text and thirty percent have a problem with analyzing texts..

The below bar-graph better explains the results.
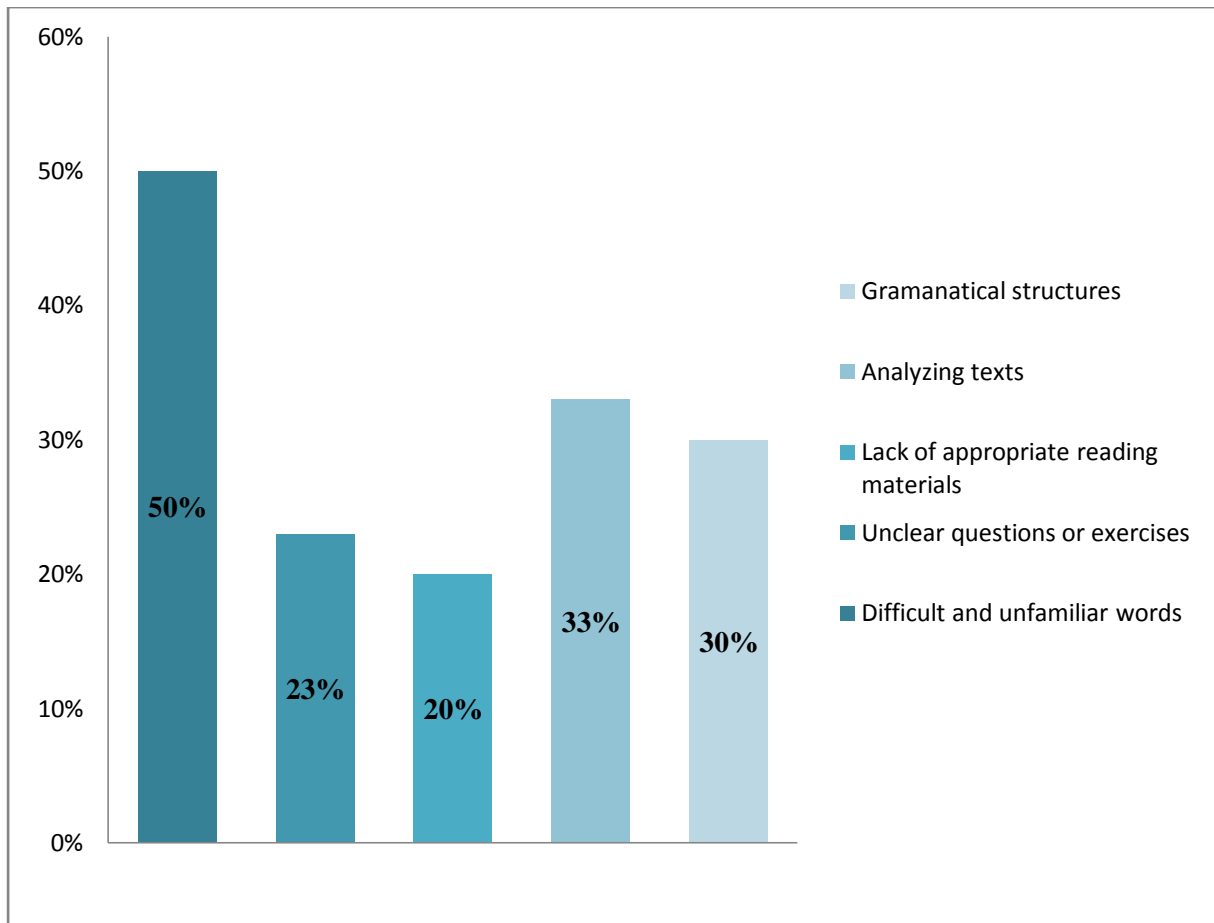
Bar-graph 3.2: Problems face students when reading a text.

Question Eleven: Does your teacher give you the possibility to assess yourself after a reading lesson?

In this question, the researcher asks students if the teachers give them the opportunity to assess themselves after a reading lesson. The answers showed that a great number of pupils ninety three percent say yes while seven percent say no. The below pie-chart better explains the results:
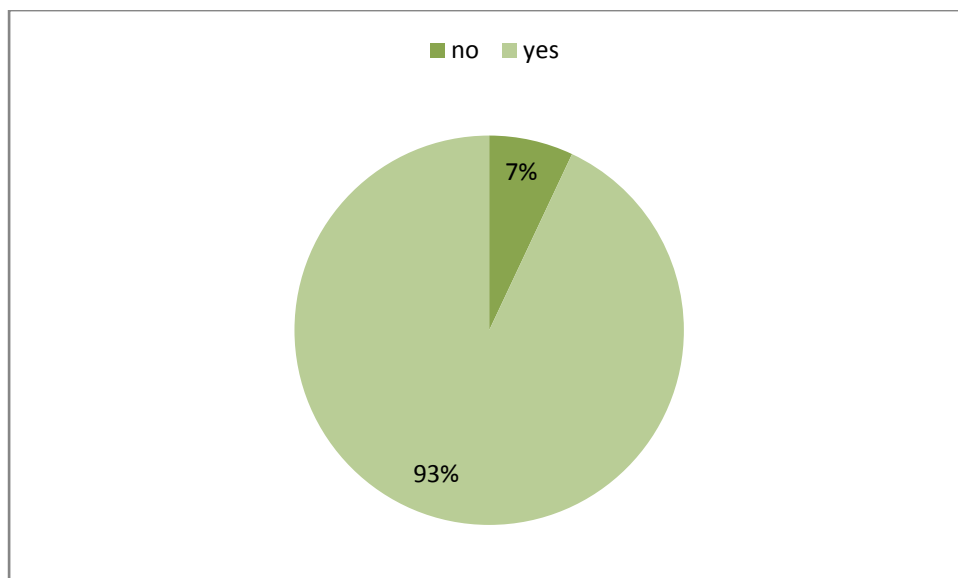
Pie-Chart 3.9: Student's Self-Assessment.

Question Twelve: When do your teachers give you feedback on your assessment?

In this question, the researcher asks students when their teachers give them feedback on their assessment. The answers show that a great number of the informants sixty seven percent confirm that teachers give them feedback on their assessment after the unclear tests, i.e. twenty three percent say after homework, seven percent say after self-assessment, three percent say after preparing the summary.
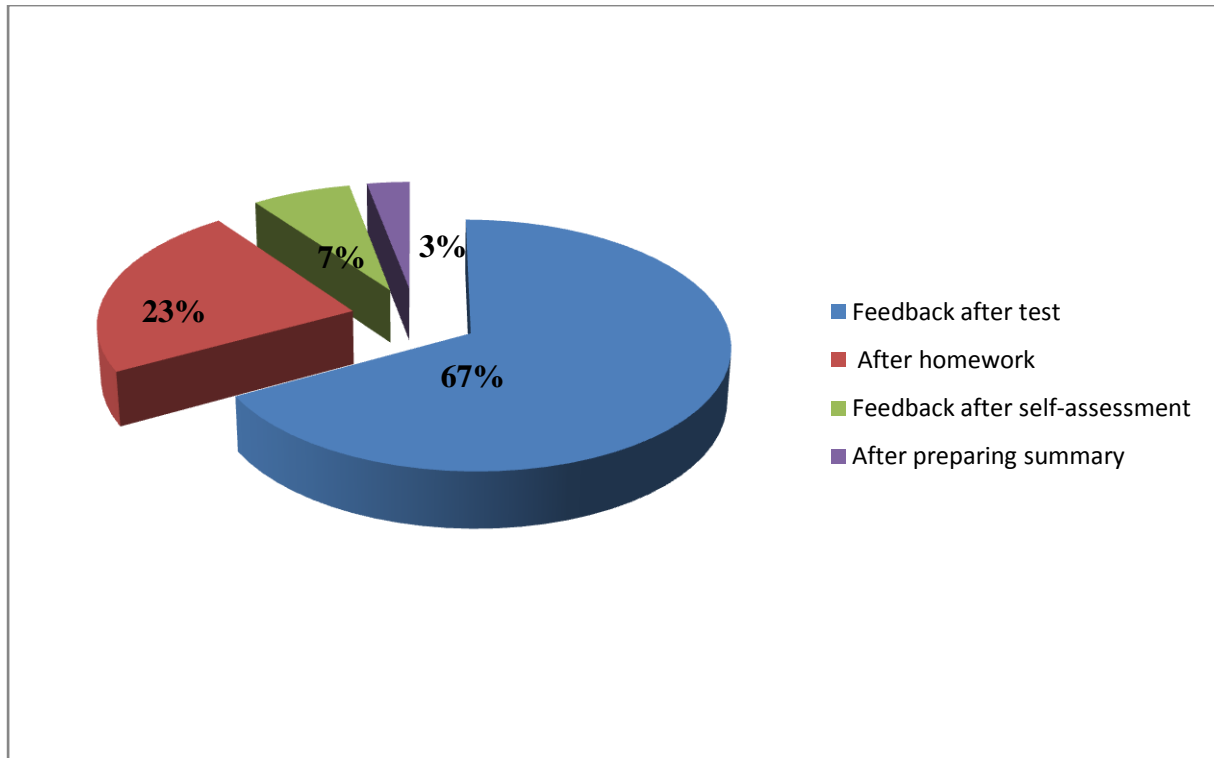
Pie-Chart3.10: Feedback on Assessment.

Question Thirteen: Have you ever assessed your classmates after a reading lesson?

In this question, the researcher wonders if pupils have assessed their classmates after a reading lesson. The majority eighty percent confirm that they have assessed their classmates after a reading lesson; twenty percent they have not. The below pie-chart better illustrates the results:
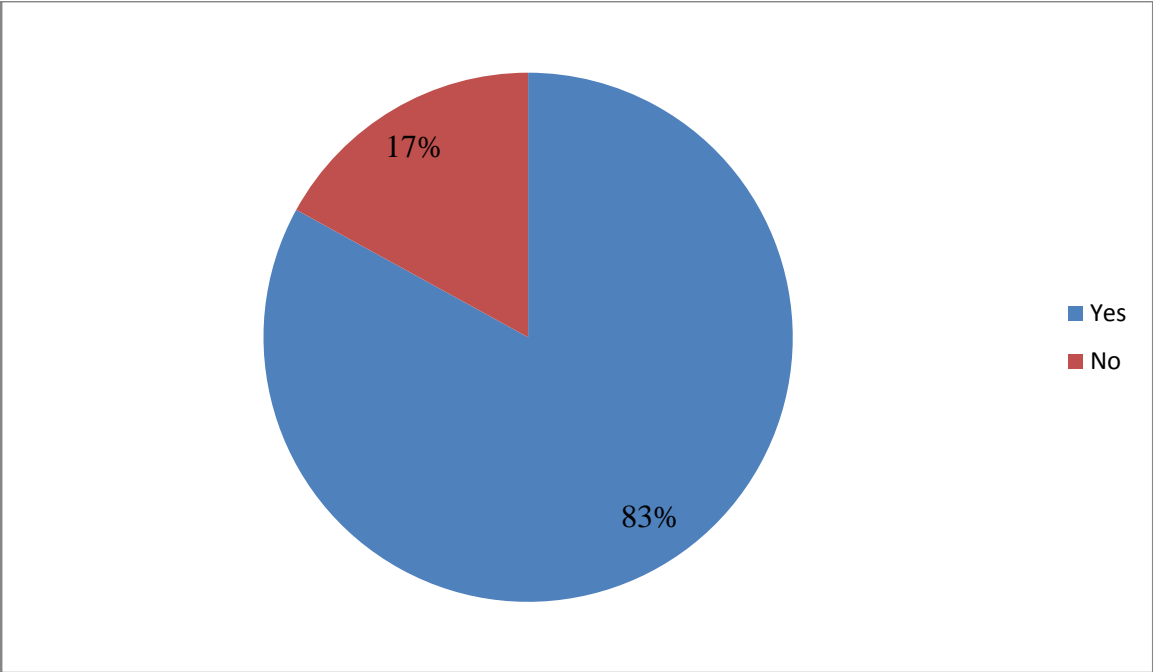
Pie-Chart 3.11: Peer Assessment.

Question Fourteen: Does Assessment develop your Reading Skill?

In this question the researcher asks if assessment develop learners 'reading skill. The majority of the informants, i.e. eighty percent say yes, and only twenty percent say no. The following pie-chart better displays the results:
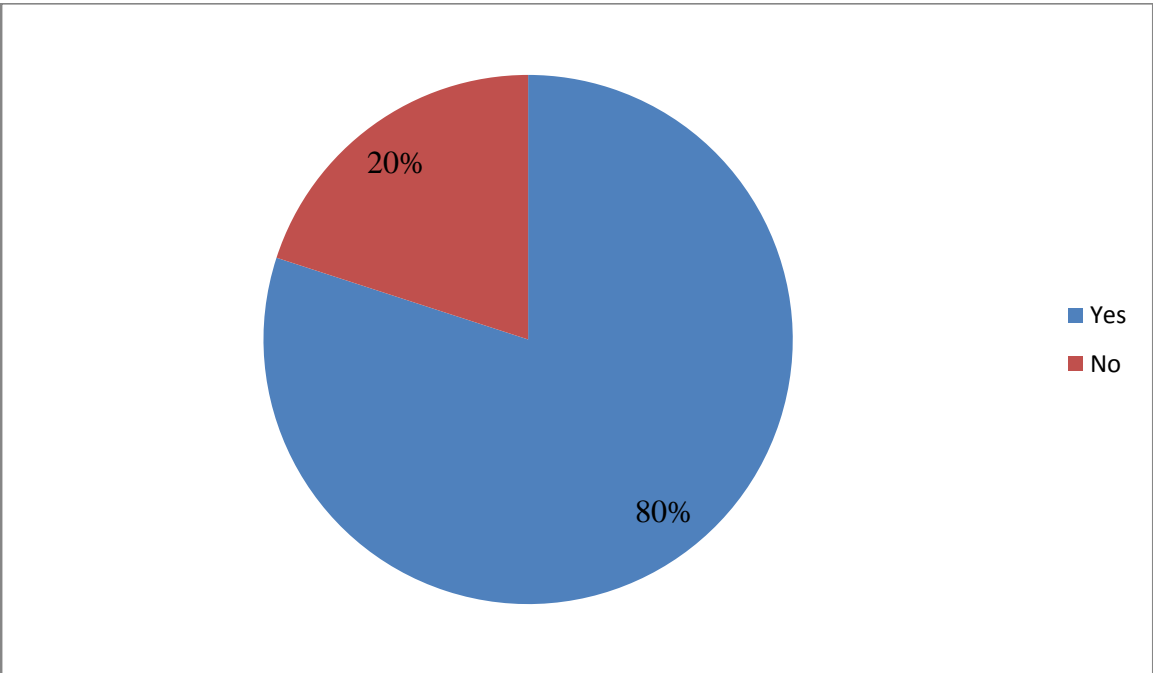
Pie-chart 3.12: Assessment of the Reading Skill.

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Question Fifteen: What are the activities that you like most (when your English teacher assesses your reading skill)? (Learners can choose more than one answer)

This question is about the activities they like most during assessment. The majority of the informants seventy seven percent choose Yes/No questions; thirty three percent choose gap-filling; thirty seven percent say short answers; twenty seven percent say matching; twenty three percent say multiple choice questions; sixty seven percent say scanning; thirteen percent say summary and matching; seven percent say sentence completion and three percent say skimming. The below bar-graph better explains the results:
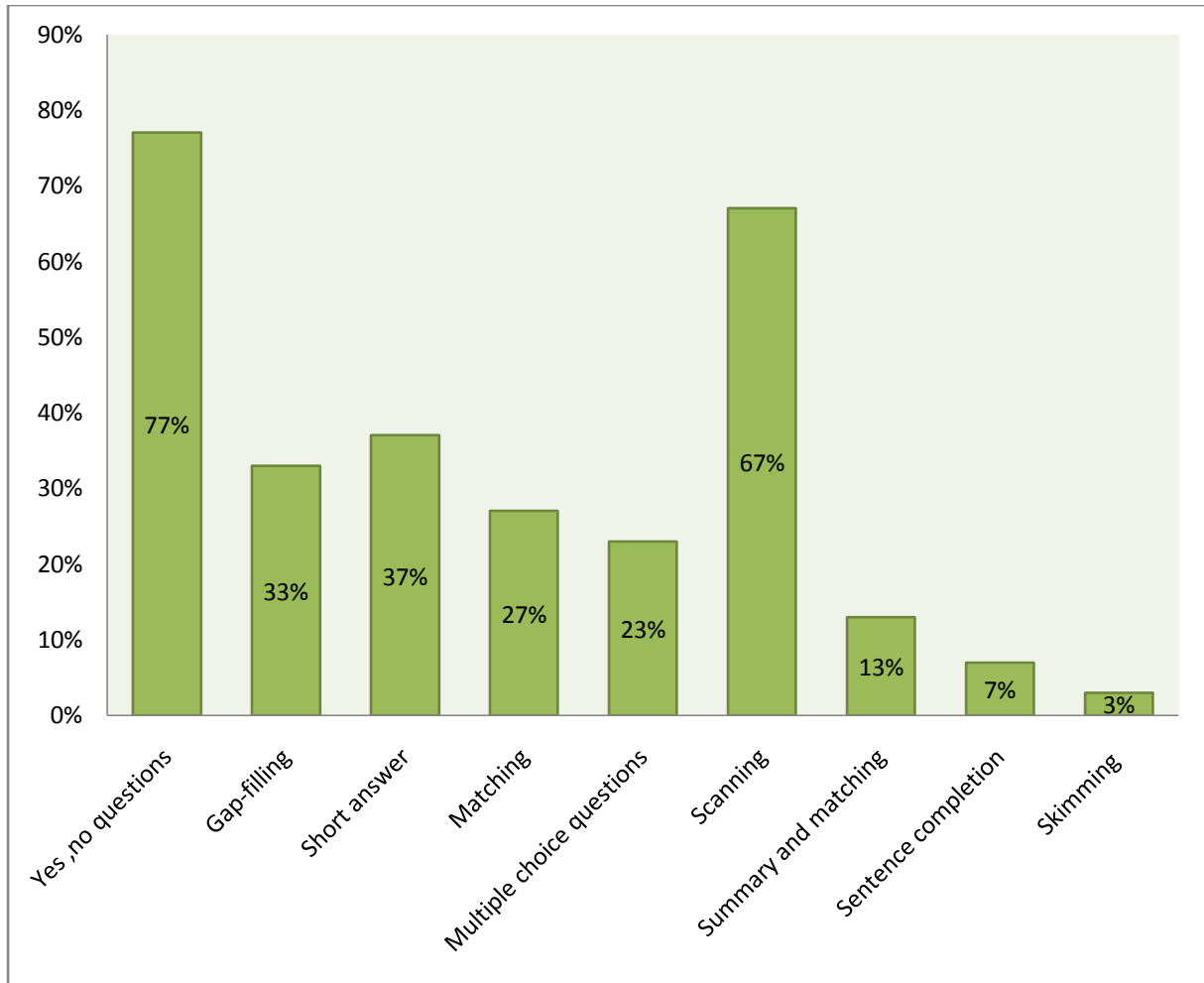
Bar-Graph 3.3.: Reading Activities.

3.5.2 Interview with Teachers:

An interview is usually defined as a conversation with a purpose specifically; the purpose is to gather information. Polit and Beck (2006) define an interview as: ***"A method of data collection in which one person asks questions to another person interviews are conducted either face to face or by telephone ".*** (Polit and Beck, 2006). Richards (2001) asserts that: **" *Interviews allow for a more in depth exploration of issues than is possible with a questionnaire, though they take longer to administer and are only feasible for smaller groups ".*** (Richards,2001, p.61). In the same line of thoughts, Kothari (2004) posits that: ***"Interview involves the presentation of an oral verbal response replied by the interviewee ".*** (Kothari, 2004).

The interview is one of the best tools to collect data. In general, there are three main types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

1) **Structured interview:** it takes the same the same form as a questionnaire but it is administered orally. It provides quantitative and qualitative data. It involves the use of a set of questions that are prepared in advance and administered to all the respondents in the same order and formats. In sum, structured interviews are: ***"designed to elicit the subjects 'thoughts, opinions and attitudes about study-related issues".*** (Berg, 1989,p.32).

2) **Unstructured interview:** It takes the form of general discussion. Since, the researcher explains the topic of the researcher to the interviewer who has to provide his opinions. Thus, it helps to get qualitative data. This type of interview does not follow planned interview questions, but rather selects participants based on their knowledge or role within a particular setting or situation.

3) **Semi-structured interview:** It relies on the use of an outline. It provides qualitative data.

3.5.2.1 Description of Teachers 'Interview:

In this research work, the researcher uses a semi-structured interview addressed to five EFL teachers in four Secondary Schools in Maghnia (see Appendix B) whose experience in teaching English for third-year Foreign Languages students may make their suggestions and observations valuable for the aim of the research. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) claim that a semi-structured interview is the suitable type for case study research especially when the researcher has a clear idea about the studied phenomenon. Therefore, it has been chosen for the study.

The semi-structured interview included eleven questions, evolving around the Assessment of the Reading Skill within the CBA. Each interview lasted about twenty minutes. These questions are described as follows:

Question One: is about teachers 'experience.

Question Two: is about the hours of teaching English weekly.

Question Three: is about the training courses which dealt with reading instruction.

Question Four and Five: aim at getting information about the most important goals of the reading activities in the classroom.

Question Six and Seven: deal with the implementation of the CBA in Teaching the Reading Skill and identify the steps that teachers use in teaching this skill within the CBA framework.

Question Eight: is about the Assessment of Teaching the Reading Skill within the CBA framework.

Question Nine: deals with the strategies that teachers inculcate in their pupils while Teaching the Reading Skill.

Question Ten: is about suggestions provided by the teachers in order to improve the assessment of teaching the reading skill within the CBA framework.

3.5.2.2 Analysis and Interpretation of the Interview:

The main objective of this semi-structured interview is to collect information concerning the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA because teachers are, willingly or unwillingly, responsible for their students 'success or failure, as they have a central role in the teaching and learning process. The interview questions have revealed a considerable amount of information that can be reviewed as follows:

Question One: How long have you been teaching English to Secondary School Students?

This question is about teachers 'experience. It aims at gathering information about the Assessment of the Reading Skill within the CBA. Teachers 'experience in Secondary Schools varies from 5 to 20 years. All of them hold a Licence Degree in English, however, one of them hold a Master's Degree.

Question Two: How many hours a week do you teach English to Foreign Language Classes?

This question is about the hours of teaching English weekly. All the teachers state that the hours vary from 4 to 6 hours weekly. Four among the participating teachers in this study state that the hours are insufficient to third-year Foreign Languages learners.

Question Three: Have you attended any training courses which deal with «Teaching the Reading Skill»?

This question is about the training courses which deal with reading instruction. Unfortunately, all the teachers note that they have not received any kind of practical training concerning the assessment of the reading skill. However, when asked to explain from where they got their skills to use reading assessment, teachers replied that they had attended a number of Seminars with inspectors.

Question Four and Five: What are the most important goals of reading activities in class?

Why do you assess the reading skill?

Question four and five aim at getting information about the most important goals of the reading activities in the classroom. Regarding this

questions, teachers say that reading is considered as any reader interaction with a text. Two teachers confirm that the most important goals of the reading activities is to assign marks. On the other hand, the rest of the teachers in the study, representing the great majority, believe that the most important goal is to identify students' difficulties with reading activities.

Question Six and Seven: What are the steps do you often undertake in teaching the reading skill within the CBA ?

Do you apply the CBA in your teaching of the reading skill?

These questions deal with the implementation of the CBA in teaching the reading skill and identify the steps that teachers follow in teaching this skill within the CBA. The respondent answers reveal that EFL teachers have to follow three stages in teaching the reading skill within the CBA: pre-reading, while reading and post reading. Moreover, one teacher expresses an urgent need for reading aloud in the classroom which may offer help to students in order to improve their pronunciation.

Question Eight: What are the standardized reading assessment tasks do you use to assess the reading skill within the CBA?

This question is about the assessment of teaching the reading skill within the CBA. All the teachers state that assessment is very important to monitor students 'learning progress in reading lessons because reading is a very complex task. All the teachers state that they use different standardized reading assessment tasks to assess the reading skill within the CBA: Gap Filling, Multiple Choice Questions, Matching, Ordering, Dichotomous Items, Editing, Short Answers, Summary, Gapped Summary and Information Transfer. They add that their students find 'Yes/No questions' the easiest ones.

Question Nine: What are the strategies do you usually inculcate in your students?

This question deals with the strategies that teachers inculcate in their students while teaching the reading skill. All teachers state that they use different strategies. Here are some of the strategies that teachers suggested: *reading the title of a text, trying to predict what they are going to read, activating background knowledge before and while reading, underlying important information in a text, taking notes while reading, re-reading the text various times, skimming a text and then reading it carefully, scanning a text to look for the main ideas guessing unfamiliar words and using the context to understand difficult passages.*

Question Ten: What do you suggest to improve the assessment of teaching the

reading skill in the Algerian Secondary Schools ?

This question is about the suggestions proposed by the teachers in order to improve the assessment of teaching the reading skill within the CBA in the Algerian Secondary Schools. This question aims at enlightening the assessment of teaching the reading skill within the CBA. Here are some teachers' suggestions:

- Read more and take courses about how to teach reading in a best way.
- Teachers should show the three main stages of reading and the strategies of stage. Then, try to apply what they know about them.
- Encourage students to read different kinds of materials.

In addition to this, teachers should give some advice to learners:
- Take care of reading and try to improve their skills in reading.
- They should not depend on their teachers all time but they should try to read and read to become good readers.

The interview results indicated that the respondents, who are Secondary

School teachers, need some practical training courses about the assessment of teaching the reading skill within the CBA. The researcher believes that this fact has had an influence on the teacher role and more precisely on the classroom atmosphere. Therefore, it is necessary to promote teacher' reflections on foreign language reading assessment practices not only for implementing better assessment practices with students, but also for introducing new guidelines for the reading programme in the Algerian Secondary Schools.

To sum up, students 'questionnaire and teachers' interview have enabled the researcher to collect considerable amount of data concerning the assessment of teaching the reading skill within the CBA. The findings gathered in this study seem to answer the research questions and confirmed the stated hypotheses mentioned earlier in the general introduction.

3.6 Conclusion:

This chapter provides an analysis of pupils' questionnaire and teachers 'interview. They are conducted in this research in order to bring the theoretical part into practice. In addition to this, an interpretation of the data collected will be taken into consideration to make proposals in order to suggest classroom assessment tools that may improve the teaching of the reading skill.

On the light of what has been said, some suggestions and recommendations will be outlined in the next chapter in order to improve the assessment of the reading skill, iron out learners' reading difficulties in EFL classrooms and to meet the objectives stated by the syllabus.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four:

Suggestions and Recommendations.

4.1 Introduction.

4.2 Goals of Assessing the Reading Skill.

4.3 Reading Assessment Techniques.

    4.3.1 Cloze Test Items.

    4.3.2 Gap Filling.

    4.3.3 Multiple Choice Questions.

    4.3.4 Matching.

    4.3.5 Ordering.

    4.3.6 Dichotomous Items.

    4.3.7 Editing.

    4.3.8 Cloze Elide.

    4.3.9 Short Answer.

    4.3.10 Free Recall.

    4.3.11 Summary.

    4.3.12 Gapped Summary.

    4.3.13 Information Transfer.

4.4 Stages of Teaching the Reading Skill within the CBA.

    4.4.1 Pre-Reading.

    4.4.2 While-Reading.

    4.4.3 Post-Reading.

4.5 Developing the Reading Skill in the Learners.

4.6 Suggestions for Learners.

4.7 Conclusion.

4.1 Introduction:

The data analysis has shown that learners of third year Foreign Languages face difficulties at the level of the reading skill. Additionally, teachers also find difficulties to assess the teaching of the reading skill within the CBA.

This chapter will tackle some alternative solutions or rather recommendations and suggestions concerning the teaching and the assessment of the reading skill in EFL classrooms.

4.2 Goals of Assessing the Reading Skill:

Learning to read in English as a foreign language is a very demanding activity. Reading is a cognitive process of decoding symbols to derive meaning from text. Celce Mercia and Olshtain (2000) argue that reading is the process of trying to understand a written text. One aspect of the teaching of any foreign language is the assessment of students' progress. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) mention that assessment of reading must begin with the purposes of the assessment which are monitoring student progress, obtaining information not available from other sources, studying, evaluating or diagnosing reading behavior.

The Assessment tools have been recognized as "a crucial component of the effective teaching of reading ". Assessment in reading is also increasingly important in the Algerian schools effective reading assessment needs to cover a wide range of strategies, in order to provide the teachers and students with valid and reliable students learning progress. Teachers assess the reading skill in their classes for the following purposes: assign marks, modify the teaching methods, inform parents of students' progress and identify students with reading difficulties.

Reading assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from different sources in order to improve the level and the knowledge of the learners. Therefore, assessment plays a great role in identifying the students' areas of strengths and weaknesses in the reading skill.

4.3 Reading Assessment Techniques:

Assessment is an integral part of teaching the reading skill within the CBA, as it determines whether or not the goals of reading are being met. The assessment of the reading skill inspire us to ask well-targeted questions: Are we teaching what we think we are teaching in the reading skill? Are students learning what they are supposed to be learning? Is there a way to teach the reading letter, thereby promoting better learning?

Teaching the reading skill and assessing it should go hand in hand. weiss (1993) states that*: " assessment is a necessary component of effective instruction as it should help teachers answer many questions about students learning and, therefore, make it possible to prepare and implement more effective teaching ".* (weiss 1993, p.125). Grabe and Stoller (2002) state how the major goal of foreign language reading assessment should be introduced assessment practices that incorporate the following fluency and reading speed, automaticity and rapid word recognition, search processes, vocabulary knowledge, morphological knowledge, syntactic knowledge, text structure awareness and discourse organization, recall of relevant details, inferences about text information , strategic processing abilities, summarization synthesis skills and evaluation and lastly, critical reading. This is why, the assessment tasks should be based on real world reading needs and activities. Indeed, many researchers agree that one best method to assess the reading skill does not exist, but there are several techniques which could be measure their students' abilities. Due to the importance of reading assessment, many forms and strategies of assessing students reading skill are made available for teachers to choose for use

in the classroom. Alderson (2000) analyze in detail the most commonly techniques which are used in the assessment of the reading skill:

4.3.1 Cloze Test Items:

It involves a piece of text, from which a number of words have been removed. It is intended to measure students ' ability to decode interrupted or mutilated messages by making the most acceptable substitutions from all the contextual clues available

Cloze test consists of a passage in which every n th word has been deleted and students have to restore the missing words either using their knowledge or choosing from a group of words. Indeed, Cloze Test is an exercise, test or assessment consisting of a portion of text with certain words removed, where the student is asked to replace the missing words. Cloze tests require the ability to understand context and vocabulary in order to identify the correct words or type of words that belong to the deleted passage of a text. According to Weir (1990) a cloze test has the following characteristics:

- ✓ Cloze test items consist of words that are deleted from a text after allowing a few sentences of introduction.
- ✓ The deletion rate is mechanically set, usually between every 5th and 8th.
- ✓ Students have to fill each gap by supplying the words they think has been deleted (Weir,1990, p.46).

In sum, Cloze Test means that students are given a list of words to use in a cloze or students are to fill in a cloze with words that would make a given sentence grammatically correct.

Examples:

1) I saw a man lay his jacket on a puddle for a woman crossing the street. I thought that was very _____.

2) Today, I went to the _____ and bought some milk and eggs. I knew it was going to rain, but I forgot to take my _____, and ended up getting wet on the way.

4.3.2 Gap Filling:

It is similar to the cloze test, but the words deleted are chosen by the examiner on some rational basis.

Examples:

Read the text below, and chose the word which best fits each gap from the list below: *view-fail-pep-conversation-bring-aware-marked-rest-successfully-doubt.*

English in Europe

English has without a ……………….become the second language of Europe and the world. European countries which have most ………………..assimilated English into daily life are England's neighbours in Northern Europe: Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and the ……………. of Scandanavia.

The situation is so …………….that any visitor to the Netherlands will soon be ………………… of the pressure of English on daily life: television, radio and print …………….. it into every home and the schoolyard …………………. of children; advertisers use it to ………………up their message, journalists take refuge in it when their home-bred skills ………………them. Increasingly one hears the ………………….. that Dutch will give way to English as the national tongue within two or three generations .

4.3.3 Multiple Choice Questions:

A test is followed by some questions with multiple possible answers among which students have to choose the correct one on the basis of their comprehension of the test.

Example:

Choose the correct word or phrase to complete each question:

- I ……………..tennis every Sunday morning.

   □ playing.

   □ play.

   □ am playing.

- Do not make so much noise. Ahmed ………..to study his ESL Test.

   □ try.

   □ is trying.

   □ tried.

- How many students in your class……………..from Korea?

   □ come

   □ came.

   □ are coming

4.3.4 Matching:

Two sets of items have to be matched, such as headings to their corresponding paragraphs.

Example:

Match the Words in A with their definitions in B:

A	B
1) Surplus.	a) Nearness; neighbourhood.
2) Focus.	b) Distinguishing quality or characteristic.
3) Trait.	c) Give up oneself, one's time, and energy to something.
4) Rule.	d) Central or most important part.
5) Deplete.	e) Govern; have authority over.
6) Vicinity.	f) Excess; amount (of anything) inexcess of requirements.
7) Devote.	g) Use up; empty until little or none remains.
8) Core.	h) Concentrate.

4.3.5 Ordering:

Students have to put a scrambled set of words, sentences, paragraphs or texts into the correct order.

Example:

Re-order the following ideas to get a coherent paragraph:

a) Then they reach a limiting maximum extent, holding a degree of stability for a length of time.

b) Over the long term, civilizations either collapse or get replaced by a larger, more dynamic civilization.

c) Competition between states in a civilization may result in one achieving predominance over the others.

d) All civilizations start small, establishing their genesis with the creation of state systems for maintaining the elite.

e) Successful civilizations then flourish and grow, becoming larger and larger.

f) Dominance may be indirect, or may formalize into the structure of single multi-ethnic empires.

4.3.6 Dichotomous Items:

Students have to decide whether a statement is true or false according to the text it refers to; as an alternative the exercise could consist of answering yes/no questions. In brief, dichotomous items are fixed alternative questions that can only be answered in one of the two indicated ways such as "A" or "B", "agree" or "disagree", "T" or "F" and" yes" or "no".

Example:

Read the text and answer the following questions:

Pollution is the degradation of natural environment by external substances introduced directly or indirectly. Human health, ecosystem quality and aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity may be affected and altered permanently by pollution.

Pollution occurs when ecosystems cannot get rid of substances introduced into the environment. The critical threshold of its ability to naturally eliminate substances is compromised and the balance of the ecosystem is broken. The sources of pollution are numerous. The identification of these different pollutants and their effects on ecosystems is complex. They can come from

natural disasters or the result of human activity, such as oil spills, chemical spills, nuclear accidents ... These can have terrible consequences on people and the planet where they live: destruction of the biodiversity, increased mortality of the human and animal species, destruction of natural habitat, damage caused to the quality of soil, water and air ... Preventing pollution and protecting the environment necessitate the application of the principles of sustainable development. we have to consider to satisfy the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This means that we should remedy existing pollution, but also anticipate and prevent future pollution sources in order to protect the environment and public health. Any environmental damage must be punishable by law, and polluters should pay compensation for the damage caused to the environment.

- The damage caused by pollution might be irreversible.

  □ True.   □ False.

- The ecosystem.

  □ can always cope with pollutants.

  □ may not always be able to cope with pollution.

 - Pollution

  □ is always caused by humans.

  □ may sometimes be caused by natural disasters.

 - An ideal solution to prevent pollution would be to

  □ refrain the development of some countries.

□ continue developmental projects.

□ take into consideration the future generations need to live in a healthy environment.

4.3.7 Editing:

Students are presented with a passage in which a number of errors have been introduced and they have to identify them.

Example:

Rewrite the following paragraph correctly:

Civilization can also describe the culture of complex societies, not just the society itself. Every society has a specific set of ideas and customs, and a set of arts that make it unique. Civilizations have been more intricate cultures, including literature, arts and religion that are associated with the elite. Civilization is such in nature that it seeks to spread and to have more.

4.3.8 Cloze elide:

Another alternative to the cloze test consists in inserting useless words into a text which students have to recognize and remove.

4.3.9 Short-answer:

Students are asked to answer specific questions with a brief response (Different from Yes/No or True/False).

4.3.10 Free-recall:

After having read, a text, students have to write down (or orally report) all the information they can remember from the text without looking at it.

4.3.11 Summary:

Students have to summarize either the entire text or specific parts,

highlighting main ideas which are relevant. In addition to this, we have: Gapped summary which means that 'The text is already provided with a summary in which some words are missing and students have to provide them'. Finally, we have information Transfer(It consists of transferring required information from the text into graphic forms, such as diagrams, charts and tables). (As cited in Alderson, 2000).

4.4 Stages of Teaching the Reading Skill within the CBA:

Reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. Reading is an activity with a purpose. A person may read in order to gain information or verify existing knowledge, or in order to critique a writer's ideas or writing style.

Reading is as important as the other skills in English Language. If students are good in reading, they will be good in the other Language skills. For this reason, EFL teachers should not neglect this skill. Teachers have a very important role to improve the reading skill. They can follow some stages and strategies when teaching a reading text. The stages and strategies of reading that teachers should promote for their students are: Pre-reading, While-reading and post-reading. They are very important when teaching any reading text. Each of these stages has its own characteristics, although they are closely related. That is, the pre-reading stage leads to the while-reading stage and finally to the post-reading one. These stages make the students understand and comprehend text reading.

4.4.1 Pre -reading:

The text presents letters, words, sentences and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills and strategies to determine what the meaning is. In order to enable their students to understand a reading text, without their looking up every single word, teachers should employ the pre-

reading stage, as it is important in building confidence and creating a supportive environment within the learners before they approach a reading text.

The pre-reading stage helps making the next stages of reading more easily adaptable for the reader. This stage includes the following different activities:

- ✓ Using the title and subtitles within the text to predict content and organization or sequence of information.
- ✓ Looking at pictures, maps, diagrams or graphs and their captions
- ✓ Talking about the author's background, writing styles and usual topics.
- ✓ Reading over the comprehension questions to focus attention on finding that information while reading.
- ✓ Constructing semantic webs (a graphic arrangement of concepts or words showing how they are related).
- ✓ Doing guided practice with guessing meaning from context or checking comprehension while reading.
- ✓ Asking the learners to anticipate from a picture or the title.
- ✓ Introducing the topic through some key words.
- ✓ Telling a parallel story to introduce some difficult words.
- ✓ Having the learners predict information constituents.
- ➢ Review a previous lesson that is thematically or structurally linked to the new ones.
- ➢ Brainstorm.
- ➢ Make predictions.
- ➢ Activate Prior knowledge.

4.4.2 While-Reading :

The While-reading activities are defined as activities that help students focusing on aspects of the text and to understand it better. In while-reading activities, students check their comprehension as they read. The purpose for while reading determines the appropriate type and level of comprehension. This stage includes the following activities:

➢ MCQ.

➢ True/False/Not mentioned

➢ Table filling.

➢ Matching-pair activities.

➢ Sentence Completion.

➢ *Open-ended comprehension questions graded from* :

- *Reference questions*: where the answers are explicitly given in the text.
- *Inference questions*: where the pupils have to read between the lines to find the answers.

➢ Identify topic sentences and the main idea of paragraphs.

➢ Distinguish between general and specific ideas.

➢ Check whether or not predictions and guesses are confirmed.

➢ *Skimming*. It is one of the tools students can use to read more in less time. Skimming is reading quickly by skipping over unimportant words like prepositions and ignoring difficult words that you don't need to understand. Do this to get general ideas about a text or a paragraph or to intensively search for the answer to a question.

➢ *Scanning*: It is another useful tool for speeding up the student's reading. It allows finding details and other information. Scanning is a technique used when a person tries to find specific items.

4.4.3 Post Reading:

Post-reading activities help pupils understand texts better, the role of the teacher here is that of an evaluator. He checks that the objectives set, that is the activities set in the reading phase have been done to his satisfaction. These activities are corrected. This is also an opportunity to diagnose more common mistakes and offer remedial works to the whole class for mistakes made by all. There may also be followed up by written or oral activities:

- The learners can ask each other question on the passage.
- Fill in the gaps.
- They can imagine a different ending orally, to pave the way to the written expression.
- They can retell the passage from a different character's point of view.
- They can learn to summarize the passage orally first then written.

Subsequently, the reading activities are used to help students think about and respond to the texts they have read. They support students to consider what they have read and are used to help students organise and record information which they might use for other language and literacy related activities such as presentations or writing texts. Here are some benefits of post-reading activities:

- Help students to locate and record relevant information
- Support students to make connections with what they know and between texts
- Provide a framework for summarizing key ideas within a text
- Support students to make inferences and generalizations
- Help students to substantiate or reconsider their own ideas.

The following figure represents the different reading stages:

Reading Stages :

Pre-reading :   **While reading :**   **Post reading :**

-Prediction.   -Skimming.   -Asking Questions.

-Prior knowledge.   -Scanning.   -Filling in tables.

                             -Sequencing.   -Concluding a text

                   -Locating misplaced information.   -Identify author's

                   -Identify patterns of organization.   View point.

                             -Finding examples.   -Literary analysis

                             -Identifying definition.   -Summarizing.

                             -Interpreting main ideas.

   -Matching referents to references.

Figure 4.1: Reading Stages.

4.5 Developing the Reading Skill in the Learners:

Developing better reading skills is often a matter of convincing a reader that more adventurous reading is also likely to be more effective reading. In this way, the reading competence will be increased and speeded up if students are made aware of what reading really is, and what mental operations they should activate in order to become successful readers. Therefore, raising awareness about the reading process, the reading interaction and the range of possible reading strategies that may be used to enhance reading comprehension, are viewed as essential in developing the reading skill in the learner. Improving reading involves skills that the pupil must learn for himself and that the measure of the teacher's success is how far the pupil learners to do without his help.

Some people would say that reading cannot be taught, but only learnt, others claim that it cannot be developed but acquired. This does not mean that there is nothing for the teacher to do; in fact he can do a lot.

The trouble is that it is easy to give too much help, or help of the wrong kind to develop the student's reading skills. Reading problems can be caused by providing so much help that it becomes a crutch the student cannot do without.

What sort of help can teachers give to develop the reading skills in the learner?

In fact, the teacher's job is to provide first, suitable texts and second, activities that gear the student's attention on the text. The student must develop his own skills, but the teacher must make him aware of what he is doing, and interested in doing it better.

Conscious development of the reading skill is important because it is obviously impossible for teachers to familiarize their students with easy texts they ever want to read. The reading skill, once developed, is the one which can

be most easily maintained at a high level by the learners themselves without further help from the teacher. Through it, they can increase their knowledge and understanding of the culture of the speakers of the language, their ways of thinking, their contemporary activities and intellectual endeavour.

Some suggestions on how to develop particular reading sub-skills are proposed:

 * *Making use of clues*: learners should be able to use the titles, illustrations and the look of the text (bold, italics, etc…), to decide what kind of text it is, and to start making a few general predictions about its content. The strategy of « prediction » is very useful, challenging and rewarding.

- ✓ *Understanding relevant details*: learners will be looking for the details that are relevant to the writer's reasons for writing, the subject matter of the text and the reader's purpose for reading. This is called « scanning ».

- ✓ *Distinguishing main points from secondary ones*: knowing how a paragraph is structured and how the main point is often made first and then supported by less important details could help the learners find the information they need. Interpreting 'is a key strategy here.

- ✓ *Using appropriate aids*: reference books should be available and learners need to know how to use dictionaries and grammar books. These will support their learning and will help them to be more independent. This is 'coping' with difficulties and problems when learning.

- ✓ Deriving meaning from texts that contain unknown words and phrases.

- ✓ Distinguishing fact from comment.

- ✓ Identifying relevant information through interpretation.

- ✓ *Understanding gist*: this is the ability to form a general overview of a text from just making use of the clues and a very quick reading, i.e. learners should be ' skimming' texts.

4.6 Suggestions for learners:

Reading is one of the most important language skills the students would need most in their future studies and careers. Besides, it is the only skill which can be easily maintained after they have left school. Therefore, reading should be considered as the important skill in any language class. It is not only a source of information and a means for consolidating and extending pupils 'knowledge of the language, but also a means for acquiring the reading skills and strategies which would lead the pupils to direct comprehension of the text without having recourse to translation. During their studies, learners will surely have a lot of reading to do in a limited time. This section presents some suggestions that can be useful if used in the proper way to overcome some of the troubles with reading, which can also remedy their weaknesses, help them to read more effectively and to provide them with a good assessment. For this purpose, they should:

1. Be confident in their reading and have a certain motivation to read.
2. Read without constantly stopping to look up unknown or difficult words in the dictionary.
3. Establish good and relax physical environment which would support their reading.
4. Always read with a purpose: ask themselves why they are reading and what they want to learn from it. After finishing reading, they will ask themselves again what they have learnt and whether their purposes have been achieved or not.
5. Learners need to reinforce their input and enrich their language knowledge by external factors other than those taking place in the classroom such as: watching films in a foreign language/ practicing intensive reading of books, articles, magazines and novels/ consulting dictionaries whenever they are in situations of doubt…etc.

When dealing with the aforementioned suggestions, learners are in fact practicing other skills. In brief, they have to do their best to become skilled in the language they are learning, over learn it to acquire its appropriate habits and master them. A further possible suggestion for improving the reading competency is to try and try again, reading several times. Thus, students will, each time, evaluate their reading, reduce the number of mistakes, and consequently broaden their reading expertise and self-confidence.

4.7 Conclusion:

The last chapter provides some suggestions that may help to promote the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA. They may also help these learners face their weaknesses in this skill. The proposed suggestions are made according to learners' difficulties in this skill. Therefore, they can be helpful to motivate them to read, overcome areas of weaknesses in reading and develop their reading habits. In so doing, we also provided teachers, indirectly, with some techniques and pieces of advice to help them assess and teach the most common strategies for improving and developing the reading skill in their learners.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion:

If we were able to take wings and get a bird's eye view of the English language teaching and learning in classrooms across the country and even across the world, we would certainly see a vast heterogeneity of activities related to any particular language skill. Teaching English as a foreign language is rewarding, challenging, interesting and can be fun but, at the same time, a hard task. This is because teachers are decision-makers in managing classroom process whatever the educational policy of the country, whatever the syllabus, the textbook and the methodology and most importantly, whatever the level of the learners they are in charge of, when teaching them the English language.

Today, English is included as a second foreign language in the Algerian school curriculum, aiming at facilitating students' constant communication with the world, their success to sciences and modern technologies and their introduction to the avenues of human knowledge and experience. It is clear from these objectives that the assessment process has an important place in the teaching of the reading skill within the CBA. Reading and assessment are closely linked. Teachers utilize assessment as an integral component of classroom instruction. It guides teachers step by step to recognize good reader behaviours and assess students 'strengths and weaknesses.

Unfortunately, in our secondary schools, there are still some shortcomings in the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA because it seems that pupils, even after years of study are unable to read in English easily. This may be caused by many variations and difficulties encountered in the teaching /learning process.

What we attempted to do in this dissertation was to look at the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA.

This research work has primarily tried to give an assessment of the teaching of the reading skill within the CBA. It has equally been targeted towards finding the real causes behind the learners' failure in the reading skill within the CBA. This issue has been dealt with in four interrelated chapters in an attempt to provide a clear picture of the teaching and learning context. Chapter One is primary directed to the theoretical landscape of this dissertation. It has, in effect, tried to clarify the place of the reading skill within the CBA. The second chapter is about the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA. The third one is devoted to the explanation and analysis of the research instruments and data collection. The last chapter has provided some suggestions and recommendations.

The results have shown that secondary school teachers do not focus too much on the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA. Teachers face problems with pupils in designing activities to motivate them to read. In addition to this, learners face difficulties in the reading skills in terms of vocabulary level and analyzing texts. This research work has relied on two instruments to collect data: pupils 'questionnaire and teachers 'interview. Furthermore, it has followed qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the data. Finally, some suggestions have been provided that likely to enhance the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA and to overcome the areas of weaknesses and achieve better results in this skill in particular, and in other skills in general.

Finally, it may be stated that this dissertation is far from being exhaustive. It is still a tentative and modest contribution which needs much elaboration. Indeed, more practice and research need to be done to find out how it can improve the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA. It is hoped that this work will provide some contribution to the work in this field and at the

same time stimulate further research in the field of EFL in general and reading in particular.

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Appendices

Appendices :

<center>

Appendix A

Questionnaire for Pupils:
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Dear pupils,

The following questionnaire aims at collecting information about you and at making your learning easier and our teaching more responsive to your needs and preferences.

You are kindly requested to answer the following questions :

Class:
Age:

1) How long have you been learning English ?

 □ 5 years   □ 7 years   □ more

2) Do you enjoy your English lessons ?

 □ Yes   □ No

3) Why do you learn English ?

 □ For your studies.

 □ For your reading purposes.

 □   For no obvious reason.

4) Which aspects of the language do you enjoy most ?

 □ Listening activities

 □ Speaking activities

 □ Reading activities

 □ Writing activities.

5) Do you find the texts in the textbook easy to read ?

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□ Yes   □ No

6) Do you read outside the classroom ?

□ Yes   □ No

7) What do you like to read ?

□ Stories   □ Magazines   □ Newspapers

8) Do you use dictionnaries for your reading ?

□ Yes   □ No

9) Why do you think reading is important ?

□ To get information.

□ To practise the language.

□ To improve pronunciation.

10) What are the problems you encounter when reading a text ?

□ Difficult and unfamiliar words.

□ Difficult ideas.

□ Analysing a text .

□ Unclear questions or exercises.

□ Lack of appropriate reading materials.

□ Grammatical structures included in the text.

11) Does your teacher give you the possibility to assess yourself after a reading lesson ?

□Yes   □ No

12) When do your teachers give you feedback on your assessment ?

□ Whenever you prepare homework.

Appendices :

□ Whenever you prepare summary.

□ Whenever after self assessment.

□ Whenever after tests.

13) Have you ever assessed your classmates after a reading lesson ?

□ Yes   □ No

14) Does assessment develop your reading skill ?

□ Yes   □ No

15) What are the activities that you like most (when your English teacher assess your reading skill) ?

□ Multiple Choice Questions

□ Yes*No questions.

□ Gap filling

□ Matching

□ Sentence completion

□ Short answer

□ Summary

□ Skimming

□ Scanning

□ Matching.

Appendices :

Appendix B

Teachers' Interview:

The pupose of this interview is to collect data about : ***"How to assess the Reading Skill within the CBA".***

You are kindly requested to answer the following questions:

1) How long have you been teaching English to secondary school students ?

2) How many hours a week do you teach English to EFL students?

3) Have you attended any training service which dealt with "Teaching the Reading Skill" ?

4) What are the most important goals of the reading activities in class ?

5) Why do you assess the reading skill ?

6) Do you rely on the CBA principles in your teaching of the reading skill ?

7) What are the steps do you often undertake in teaching the reading skill within the CBA ?

8) What are the standardized reading assessment tasks that you use to assess the reading skill within the CBA ?

9) What are the strategies do you usually teach your students to develop their reading skill ?

10) What do you suggest to improve the assessment of teaching the reading skill in the Algerian Secondary School ?

-Thank you for your contribution-

Appendices :

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الملخص:

تتركز هذه الدراسة حول تحليل تقييم مهارات القراءة لدى التلاميذ في المدارس الثانوية و بالضبط لدى تلاميذ السنة الثالثة لغات أجنبية في ظل المقاربة بالكفاءات ، كما أن هذه الدراسة تهدف لإيجاد حلول لمشاكل التلاميذ في هذا النشاط و ماهي أهم الأسباب وراء فشلهم . كما أن الموضوع الحالي يبحث عن أساليب و طرق سهلة لتقييم أسلوب القراءة و التي تعود بالمنفعة على المعلم و المتعلم.

الكلمات المفتاحية : التقييم ، القراءة ، المعلم ، المتعلم ، المقاربة بالكفاءات

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Résumé :

Cette étude est, en fait, basée sur l'analyse d'évaluation des compétences en lecture au niveau du lycée pour les classes de Troisième année Langue Etrangère. En parallèle, il a été dirigé pour trouver des solutions pour les causes de l'échec de ces apprenants. Dans ce sens, dans ce modeste travail, le chercheur a essayé de trouver nouvelle méthodes, stratégies et techniques pour évaluer les compétences des élèves en lecture.

Mots Clefs : évaluation, L'approche par compétences, la lecture, enseignant, apprenant.

Summary:

The present dissertation tries to analyse the assessment of the reading skill within the Competency-Based Approach at secondary school level for Third Year Foreign Languages Stream. The present work has equally been targeted towards finding the real causes behind learners failure in the reading skill. All in all, this very modest work tries to seek some reading assessment tasks that help both teachers and learners.

Key words: Assessment, Competency-Based Approach, Reading Skill, Teacher, Learner.

Summary:

Title:

Assessing the Reading Skill within the Competency-Based Approach. The Case of Third Year Pupils in Mohamed Dkhissi Secondary School _Maghnia_

This dissertation is submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as a partial fulfillment for the requirement of the "Magister" Degree in Assessment and Testing in English Language Education.

Presented by:

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Academic year: 2015-*2016*

Abstract:

As teachers decide what learning goals students should achieve, what content should be taught to students and what prior knowledge students have: parallel decisions should be made regarding how to operate within the whole teaching and learning process. Presently, teaching is built on the premise that students are just as responsible as their teachers in the process of education. Teaching languages, be they foreign or second, has been considered as the set of activities which are intended to help the learners acquire certain knowledge, bearing in mind that its aim is to facilitate the process of learning. The present dissertation aims at shedding light on the "assessment of the reading skill within the CBA". The purpose of this study focuses on how to assess the reading skill? The present work also suggests some reading assessment tasks that help both teachers and learners. The handling of this issue is embodied into 4 chapters. The first One focuses on the place of the reading skill within the CBA. The second chapter attempts to give a global picture to the concept of classroom assessment, it also gives a definitions to the different types and linear steps of assessment, its tools and techniques. As it focuses on the assessment of learners reading skill and the techniques which best help to assess the components of this skill. The third chapter represents the research instruments for data collection which are: students 'questionnaire and teachers 'interview. Both qualitative and quantitative methods for data analysis were used in this research work to analyze this data. In the final chapter, some practical suggestions and proposals for EFL teachers and learners are made in order to improve the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA

General Introduction:

English is the international language of commerce, banking , travel, transportation, finance , post doctoral and many other key sectors. Algeria, like the other non English speaking countries in the world is well aware of the key role the English language plays in virtually all domains. Today, English has a status of Second Foreign Language and it represents an important facet in the Algerian education system.

It is well-known that reading is a fundamental skill for success in today's globalized world. However, it is often noticed that too little attention is devoted to this skill in the Algerian secondary schools, though it is the skill which is most needed. One important aspect of the teaching of any foreign language is the assessment of learners 'progress. Reading and assessment are closely linked. Teachers utilize assessment as an integral component of classroom instruction. It guides them step by step to recognize good reader behaviors and assess learners 'strengths and weaknesses. In addition to this, assessment helps teachers identify areas of instruction to meet every learner's individual needs.

The aim of my dissertation is to explore the different ways to assess the reading skill within the CBA framework. Accordingly, to cover the scope of the present research, this dissertation tries to answer the following questions:

- ➢ What are the goals of assessing the reading skill within the CBA?
- ➢ How is assessment utilized to improve the reading skill within the CBA?
- ➢ Do The CBA principles allow for a good assessment practise of the reading skill?

The answer to these questions may raise the following research hypotheses:

➢ Teachers assess the reading skill in order to assign marks, inform parents of students 'progress and to identify students with reading difficulties.
➢ Teachers use different standardized reading assessment tasks to assess the reading skill: gap filling, multiple choice questions, matching, ordering, dichotomous items, editing, short answers, summary, gapped summary and information transfer.
➢ The CBA principles allow for a good assessment practise.

This research work is divided into four chapters. The first chapter focuses on the place of the reading skill within the CBA. It attempts to give a background and definitions about both the reading skill and CBA in order to provide a description of this skill within the CBA. Moreover, the chapter deals with the importance of English Language Teaching in Algeria and with some other aspects related to ELT in Algeria.

The second chapter attempts to give a global picture to the concept of classroom assessment. It also gives definitions to the different types and linear steps of assessment, its tools and techniques. It focuses on the assessment of the learners 'reading skill and the techniques which best help to assess the components of this skill.

The third chapter deals with the methods, procedures for data collection; it describes the two research instruments used in this study. The chapter is also about data analysis and interpretation.

The last chapter is devoted to suggestions and recommendations. It attempts to propose some solutions in order to enhance the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA framework.

All the suggestions and recommendations mentioned in this chapter are based on the results obtained from the previous chapter.

Chapter One:

The objective of this chapter is to give a bird's eye view on the situation of the English Language in Algeria with a reference to the teaching and learning processes. Light will be shed on the English Language Teaching at Secondary School level focusing on the reading skill and its place in the newly implemented CBA. In this chapter, special attention will be given to the theoretical definitions of the CBA, its characteristics and its principles, in addition to the different approaches and methods that have been implemented to the teaching of English in the Secondary Schools in Algeria. Thus, chapter one proposes a variety of reading definitions with reference to both intensive and extensive reading, as an attempt to show how to clarify the complexity underlying this skill.

In sum, the task or act of teaching encapsulates many more than merely providing instruction and guidelines for learners. It presupposes a psychological and philosophical knowledge on the teacher's part, so as to combine techniques in class, as well as sufficient command of the basic structure of human existence, with a view to assess any situation accurately and appropriately. Furthermore, the learner when being provided with all the necessary needs inside and outside the classroom can learn more successfully. Learning to read in a foreign language within the CBA is a formidable task, involving time and efforts on the part of the pupils and teachers alike. Both have to be aware of the fact that reading requires process and product that are closely related to meaning which can be acquired through silent reading. In short, the reading skill has a great importance within the CBA.

Chapter Two:

Teaching the reading skill in the Algerian schools has developed according to the changes that have occurred in ELT methodology, teaching techniques as well as in the teacher training service throughout the years since independence.

Indeed, assessment of learners reading skill in the classroom has been an integral component of the teaching and learning process. In this chapter, special attention is given to the different types and steps of assessment, its tools and techniques. As it focuses on the assessment of learners reading skill and the techniques which best help to assess the different components of this skill.

In this chapter, two major themes have been highlighted namely: teaching the reading skill and its assessment in the Algerian Secondary Schools. Thus, the findings showed the close relationship between the two concepts: teaching the reading skill within the CBA and the assessment of this skill. Consequently, assessment of learners reading skill is one of the essential pedagogic tasks that learners need to carry out in the classroom. It plays a significant role for the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Then, the researcher has brought into light clarification about reading and assessment and the various instruments and techniques that help learners assess their learners and know about their levels, weaknesses and strengths. In sum, the second chapter has tried to cover the vast area on the learner's assessment in classroom stressing its crucial role in the process of teaching the reading skill.

Chapter Three:

This research work is conducted in order to investigate the assessment of teaching the reading skill within the CBA framework. Furthermore, it seeks to find out the difficulties faced by both teachers and learners in this specific skill. Different instruments for data collection have been used in order to confirm the research questions and hypotheses stated previously. These instruments are questionnaire for students and an interview with teachers. Thus, this chapter focuses on the description of the research instruments and the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

Accordingly, both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to analyze data.

This chapter provides an analysis of pupils' questionnaire and teachers 'interview. They are conducted in this research in order to bring the theoretical part into practice. In addition to this, an interpretation of the data collected will be taken into consideration to make proposals in order to suggest classroom assessment tools that may improve the teaching of the reading skill. On the light of what has been said, some suggestions and recommendations will be outlined in the next chapter in order to improve the assessment of the reading skill, iron out learners' reading difficulties in EFL classrooms and to meet the objectives stated by the syllabus.

Chapter Four:

The data analysis has shown that learners of third year Foreign Languages face difficulties at the level of the reading skill. Additionally, teachers also find difficulties to assess the teaching of the reading skill within the CBA. This chapter will tackle some alternative solutions or rather recommendations and suggestions concerning the teaching and the assessment of the reading skill in EFL classrooms.

The last chapter provides some suggestions that may help to promote the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA. They may also help these learners face their weaknesses in this skill. The proposed suggestions are made according to learners' difficulties in this skill. Therefore, they can be helpful to motivate them to read, overcome areas of weaknesses in reading and develop their reading habits. In so doing, we also provided teachers, indirectly, with some techniques and pieces of advice to help them assess and teach the most common strategies for improving and developing the reading skill in their learners.

General Conclusion:

If we were able to take wings and get a bird's eye view of the English language teaching and learning in classrooms across the country and even across the world, we would certainly see a vast heterogeneity of activities related to any particular language skill. Teaching English as a foreign language is rewarding, challenging, interesting and can be fun but, at the same time, a hard task. This is because teachers are decision-makers in managing classroom process whatever the educational policy of the country, whatever the syllabus, the textbook and the methodology and most importantly, whatever the level of the learners they are in charge of, when teaching them the English language.

Today, English is included as a second foreign language in the Algerian school curriculum, aiming at facilitating students' constant communication with the world, their success to sciences and modern technologies and their introduction to the avenues of human knowledge and experience. It is clear from these objectives that the assessment process has an important place in the teaching of the reading skill within the CBA. Reading and assessment are closely linked. Teachers utilize assessment as an integral component of classroom instruction. It guides teachers step by step to recognize good reader behaviours and assess students 'strengths and weaknesses.

Unfortunately, in our secondary schools, there are still some shortcomings in the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA because it seems that pupils, even after years of study are unable to read in English easily. This may be caused by many variations and difficulties encountered in the teaching /learning process.

What we attempted to do in this dissertation was to look at the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA.

This research work has primarily tried to give an assessment of the teaching of the reading skill within the CBA. It has equally been targeted towards finding the real causes behind the learners' failure in the reading skill within the CBA. This issue has been dealt with in four interrelated chapters in an attempt to provide a clear picture of the teaching and learning context. Chapter one is primary directed to the theoretical landscape of this dissertation. It has, in effect, tried to clarify the place of the reading skill within the CBA. The second chapter is about the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA. The third one is devoted to the explanation and analysis of the research instruments and data collection. The last chapter has provided some suggestions and recommendations.

The results have shown that secondary school teachers do not focus too much on the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA. Teachers face problems with pupils in designing activities to motivate them to read. In addition to this, learners face difficulties in the reading skills in terms of vocabulary level and analyzing texts. This research work has relied on two instruments to collect data: pupils 'questionnaire and teachers 'interview. Furthermore, it has followed qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the data. Finally, some suggestions have been provided that likely to enhance the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA and to overcome the areas of weaknesses and achieve better results in this skill in particular, and in other skills in general.

Finally, it may be stated that this dissertation is far from being exhaustive. It is still a tentative and modest contribution which needs much elaboration. Indeed, more practice and research need to be done to find out how it can improve the assessment of the reading skill within the CBA. It is hoped that this work will provide some contribution to the work in this field and at the

same time stimulate further research in the field of EFL in general and reading in particular.