

## **General Introduction**

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Competency-Based Approach was introduced in the Algerian secondary schools as a result of the educational reform. It has been adopted in teaching English as a foreign language in order to prepare the learners to become competent in their real life tasks. The adoption of this approach came as a reaction to the shortcomings of those traditional approaches that have so far been in use in the Algerian educational system. It is, however that the design of textbooks used in the light of this approach as well as that of the curricula were done without the teachers being involved and that the level of pupils in the secondary school has not really improved. This may question the efficiency of the reforms undertaken by the Ministry of Education in Algeria. Whether this is due to the improper implementation of the approach, to the inappropriateness of the Algerian learning context to the approach, or to other reasons has to be seen and verified in the dissertation.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent is Competency-based Approach implemented in the third year secondary school textbook “New Prospects”?
2. What are the attitudes of secondary school teachers to the Competency-based Approach?
3. Does the textbook “New Prospects” meet the learners’ needs?

### **Assumption**

In the present study it is assumed that the Competency-based Approach is adequately implemented in the Algerian secondary school, that the Algerian secondary-school English language teachers hold a positive attitude to such implementation, and that the textbook “New Prospects”, mainly designed in the light of the Competency-based Approach, meets the learners’ needs.

## **Aims of the Study**

This study aims to investigate the extent to which CBA is implemented in the Algerian secondary schools and to determine the teachers' attitudes to this approach. It aims also to shed light on the CBA as a novel approach in Algeria, the reason for its adoption as a teaching approach and the purposes for such an adoption.

## **Structure of the Study**

The implementation of the CBA in secondary schools is the linchpin around which the present dissertation is centered. To answer the research questions and verify the assumption, the dissertation will be divided into three chapters. The first two chapters will be devoted to the theoretical part and the third one will be an empirical study.

The first chapter aims to shed light on the nature of the educational system in the Algerian secondary school. To do so, definitions, history of the educational system, an overview of the English language teaching approaches are presented. Then, the English language textbooks in general, and "New Prospects" in particular, are surveyed.

The second chapter sheds light on the implementation of CBA in the Algerian secondary schools. Central issues are addressed, including competence and competency. The Competency-based Approach, its history and its major principles and components are then presented. After that, the chapter provides the rationale for the CBA, its advantages and disadvantages, and moves on to investigate assessment under CBA, the theories underlying such an approach as well as the teachers' and learners' role under it, and ends an exploration of the teacher training for a CBA context.

The third chapter consists of data collection, analysis, and discussion. It relies on two research tools, namely, the teacher's questionnaire and classroom observation. After data is

collected from the research tools, it is analysed and discussed and the research findings are finally exposed.

### **Research tools**

The data was collected through a questionnaire and a classroom observation in order to test the research hypothesis and to establish its validity. The aim of the questionnaire was to determine the teachers' attitudes to the Competency-based Approach and verify their own practice of it in the classroom, and how they actually cope with the challenges if its implementation in the classroom. In addition, the questionnaire seeks to gauge the extent to which the textbook "New Prospects" stands as a reliable and appropriate material to use in order to implement the CBA and whether, being the main source relied upon by teachers, it is sufficient to secure such implementation. As for the classroom observation, it was conducted with the aim of checking the extent to which the approach is actually implemented in the classroom, that is, whether the teachers apply this approach in reality in their presentation of the classes, and how their pupils interact and react and acquire skills.

# **CHAPTER ONE:**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND TEXTBOOKS**

**IN THE ALGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL**

## **Introduction**

The wide spread of English as an international language gives it a great importance in the world wide curricula. Because of this the Ministry of education has introduced English as a foreign language in the Algerian schools in order to develop learners' interactive, interpretive, and productive competencies. Hence, new curricula were implemented and new textbooks were published aiming to put CBA principles into practice in the Algerian context. The third year secondary school textbook "New Prospects" is an example of the CBA implementation that is designed to develop the Algerian learners' competencies in the general English language class.

### **1.1. The Educational System in the Algerian Secondary School**

This section of Chapter One is an overview of the educational system in the Algerian secondary school. The educational system is first defined and then a brief history of this system in the Algerian secondary school is presented. After that, English in the secondary school, particularly English language teaching approaches, is addressed.

#### **1.1.1. The Educational System Defined**

Education in many fields is critical in all societies. It plays a vital role in regulating individual behaviour through transmitting a way of life and communicating ideas and values to the new generations. The term 'educational system' is widely and frequently used in the news media and public discourse, but it may be difficult to determine precisely what the term is referring to. This term generally refers to public schooling, not private schooling, and more commonly to kindergarten through high school programs (Education system, 2013).

One can, however, proceed to the definition of the term 'educational system' by enumerating what it involves, and the term might be used to denote "(...) a large and multifaceted organization which involves the coordination of many components: personnel, students,

parents, curriculum, and learning materials directed to a common purpose". (LakehalAyat, 2008, p. 167).

### **1.1.2. A Brief History of the Educational System in the Algerian Secondary School**

Education in Algeria is free and compulsory from the ages of 6 to 15, but only half of the Algerian students are enrolled in secondary schools. The Algerian educational system has several levels: preparatory, fundamental (primary, middle), secondary, vocational and higher education. Secondary school begins at the age of 15 after passing the BEM Exam. The pupils having passed the exam are enrolled into secondary schools where they study for three years. Pupils are confronted with the choice of specialty at the beginning of the secondary school, and by the end of the third year, they are required to pass a national examination, known as the Baccalaureate exam, before being admitted to universities, institutes or vocational training centers. Secondary education lasts three years and offers five specialties: exact sciences, sciences of nature and life, humanities and letters, literature and living language, and religious sciences. Technical secondary education offers the following specialties: electronics, electrical engineering, mechanics, public works and construction, chemistry, and accounting techniques. The orientation of pupils in the first year of secondary school towards the technical or general specialties of secondary education is done at the end of the year according to their wishes and their results as well. The end of schooling is marked by the Baccalaureate exam. Secondary schools aim at consolidating and deepening the knowledge acquired in the different disciplinary fields, developing methods of analysis, synthesis, reasoning and taking responsibility, having an openness to foreign civilizations and cultures and to accept differences as well as to coexist peacefully with other people as to be prepared for the pursuit of further studies or higher education (Arab, n.d). Before the French colonization, there were what was called *Madrassa* and *Zawiya* whereby most of the students study in Quran schools before they were destroyed by the invaders to start the policy of assimilation and

accommodation, and ending the traditional education findings in which they replaced *Madrasa* by primary schools(Arabic &French).Therefore, Algeria introduced several policies to reform and strengthen the educational structure.

Following independence, Algeria opted for a policy of Arabization that aimed to raise the Arabic language to the status of an official language as it is now the dominant one in the Algerian multilingual setting (Algerian Arabic and Berber), where modern standard Arabic is the official and national language, French is the second language that it used particularly in science, and English, on the other hand, is taught as a second foreign language that has acquired a high instrumental value. Unlike other colonized countries, Algeria was the most adamant in proclaiming its Arab identity as well as insisting on total Arabization as its ultimate goal (LakehalAyat, 2008, p. 130).

After independence, Algeria had an urgent need to regain its Arabic and Muslim identity that had been denied during the French colonization. One of the major reforms made in newly independent Algeria was to restore Arabic in education. In the Tripoli Programme of June 1962, the revolutionaries restated in regard to Arabic, what they did in constant manifestos before: [the role of the revolution] ... is above ... all to restore to Arabic – the very expression of the cultural values of our country – its dignity and its efficacy as a language of civilization ( Ordon, 1978. p,149 as cited in LakehalAyat, 2008, p. 131).

In the early 1960s, French was replaced by Arabic as the language of instruction at the primary level, and in the late of 1960s, Arabic was standardized at the secondary level. However, French continues to be used in technical fields at many post- secondary institutions despite a 1991 law mandating the use of Arabic in all sections and at all levels. Hence, Arabic is used as the language of instruction at the post-secondary level in most non-technical facilities.

The reform of the education system in Algeria was implemented gradually since 2003 because the school has become an important political issue in recent years. The reform was as consequence to numerous criticisms of national education on the lack of quality and efficiency. Thus, the reform has been initiated with the aim of increasing the efficiency of the system and responding to the challenges of modern society. Two major projects were launched: reformed school curricula in the form of skills and textbooks (Arab, n.d).

### **1.1.3.English Language Teaching in the Algerian Secondary School**

English, the language being spoken worldwide, tempts many people to learn it in the modern world of today, and the Algerians are no exception. The Algerian educational system has given great importance to foreign languages and encouraged their use as well, especially the English language to update modern technology, economic, and political relations. The Algerian Ministry of Education (2005) affirms that "Teaching English in Algeria aims at setting up and developing communicative, linguistic, cultural, and methodological competencies that would permit to the learner to face situations of oral or written communication that have to take place into which he or she involves"(p. 4).

Algeria offers many opportunities to its pupils to study English in order to improve their levels, as it gained such an interest over the competing French language, where students' results were disappointing. Miliani (2000)claimed that in a situation where the French language has lost much of its ground in the socio-cultural and educational environment of the country, the introduction of English is being heralded as the magic solution to all possible ills including economic, technology and education ones(p. 13).

The everyday spoken language in Algeria is the Algerian Arabic and the one taught at school is the modern standard Arabic as it is used as a medium of instruction. French, the first foreign language in the country, is taught at schools starting from the third grade of the

primary education as well as in the secondary education of scientific disciplines. However, its use is not restricted only to schools, but also occurs in everyday communication.

What is more, English is taught as a second foreign language at lower secondary school starting from the sixth grade till the Baccalaureate. The total of hours for English during the seven years is 420 hours in which the total teaching time in middle schools represents 10,65%, whereas, the time load in secondary school differs from one stream to another, whereby 12,79% of the total time load is for letters and for mathematics is 8,70% (Banrabeh, 2005).

#### **1.1.4. English Language Teaching Approaches in the Algerian Secondary School**

The teaching of English in the Algerian schools has adopted few approaches. To begin with, the Structural Approach was first used. Based mainly on learning separate syntactical elements, this approach proved efficient as learners were just memorizing individually the rules of grammar in order to apply them in unrealistic ready-made situations. As a result, learners could neither use the language fluently nor creatively; they did not know how to use social language, gestures, or expressions appropriately in order to communicate. Briefly, learners were at a loss to communicate in the targeted language culture (Baghoussi, 2010).

Later, another approach, known as the Communicative Approach, was introduced. It gave birth to pair and group work that help learners to develop their communicative competence, allowing thus appropriate, meaningful, spontaneous, grammatically acceptable, and reasonably fluent linguistic interchange to take place in both speaking and writing. Consequently, there was a shift from form to function, from usage to use, and also a shift from skill getting to skill using in an authentic communicative competence. That kind of learning made use of real-life situations that required communication. This approach was welcomed by both teachers, and learners, who became active and more interested in their learning. However, learners' English remains a "classroom English" even though they

managed to communicate efficiently using correct grammatical structures. Moreover, the communicative approach was criticized for being teacher-centered, in which the teacher is considered as the only holder of knowledge and without him nothing would move (Baghoussi, 2010).

#### **1.1.4.1. The Structural Approach**

Historically, the most prevalent of syllabus type is considered to be the grammatical one, in which the selection and grading of the content is based on the complexity and simplicity of grammatical items. Furthermore, the learner is expected to master each structural step and add to his /her grammar collection. As such the focus is on the outcomes or the product ( Lakhal-Ayat, 2008).The Structural Approach (SA) is one approach of teaching English that is rooted in behaviourism (Richards & Rodgers, 1995), a theory which views language learning as learning a set of habits (Brown, 1987, as cited in Mareva&Nyota, 2011.p104).

The structural approach to the teaching of English is a technique wherein the learner masters the pattern of sentences. Structures are the different arrangements of words in one accepted style or the other. It includes various modes in which clauses, phrases or words might be used. The SA is based on the assumption that language can be best learnt through a scientific selection and grading of structures or patterns of sentences and vocabulary. In other words, the stress is on the learning of essential structures of English. The approach, as KripakGautam states, ‘(...) is based on the belief that language consists of structures and that the mastery of these structures is more important than the acquisition of vocabulary (Structural approach, 2015).

In this approach, elements in a language are viewed as being linearly produced in a rule-governed way. In addition, language samples can be exhaustively described at all levels such

as phonetic, phonemic and morphology, in which linguistic levels are regarded as being pyramidically structured from phonemes to morphemes to phrases, clauses and sentences (Richards & Rodgers, 1995). Another focus of the SA is on knowledge of language, with the 'doing' being subservient to knowing (Widdowson,1991).Furthermore, it is believed that "language learning comes about by teaching learners to know the forms of the language as a medium and the meaning they incorporate" (Widdowson,1991, p. 160).Therefore, the focus is on the knowledge of the grammatical rules of the language being learned by which Widdowson referred to as language usage.

Within this approach, language is reduced to the grammatical system. The sentence is the main unit of reference, and its morphological elements must be organized according to a series of prescriptive rules ( Tejada et al, n.d).

Moreover, the teacher is the only authority in the learning process in which s/he provides his /her students with grammatical rules that they have to apply in exercises as being considered as passive knowledge receivers by which they just memorize the rules and vocabulary items as well. In addition, the reading and writing skills are emphasized over the speaking and listening ones. Thus, accuracy is emphasized over fluency; students are supposed to master a great deal of grammatical rules that help them inside the classroom situation. However, they fail to complete a full sentence in authentic conversations (Richards & Rodgers, 2001.p, 3).

The structural approach is probably better for the teacher to use than other materials. However, it focused on language usage rather than language use where students were taught only grammatical forms. Hence, they found difficulties in dealing with language when trying to convey their own ideas into communicative situations. That is to say, even though students master the grammar rules, their vocabulary level remains weak. Widdowson (1978) holds that

students who have learnt many years of the Structural Approach remain weak of formal English teaching.

#### **1.1.4.2. Communicative Approach**

The Communicative Approach in language teaching starts from a theory viewing language as a means of communication. The goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as “communicative competence” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach that aims to develop the communicative competence of learners. It focuses on communicative and contextual factors in language use. CLT pays little attention to grammatical competence. Howatt claims that CLT has two versions, i.e. a strong version and a weak version. The strong version of communicative teaching advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that learners should be exposed to communicative situations in order to acquire a language. On the other hand, the weak version stresses the idea that learners should be provided with opportunities to use English for communicative purposes (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Murcia (1991) claims that the goal of communicative language teaching is to enable learners to use the target language in their communication. It is assumed that courses should be based on both notions and functions in their design. Also, learners should work in pairs in order to exchange ideas which in turn enhance communication. (Murcia, c.1991 as cited in Koç, 2011, p. 6).

#### **1.1.5. English Language Textbooks in the Algerian Secondary School**

This section will address the English language textbooks in an Algerian context, namely the Algerian secondary school, with a particular reference to the textbook “New prospects”.

The section is divided into two subsections, Textbooks as a Teaching Material and Secondary School English Language Textbooks in Algeria. In the first subsection, the textbook is defined and its role in the classroom is exposed, with a focus placed on the advantages and disadvantages of the use of textbooks. In the second, the third year textbook “New Prospects” is presented, and its structure and the material so chosen for it are investigated.

#### **1.1.6. Textbooks as a Teaching Material**

Materials are resources for whatever procedures are used in specific classrooms, and one of the most important instructional material as well as the most useful in the classroom is the textbook. The course book has become an almost universal element of ELT, playing as it does a vital and positive part in the everyday job of teaching and learning of English (Hutchinson and Torres, as cited in Tomlinson, p.37).

The textbook is a book used as a standard source of information for formal study of a subject and an instrument for teaching and learning (Graves, 2000). It is regarded as one of the many sources that teachers can draw upon in creating an effective lesson and offer a framework of guidance and orientation as well. The textbook provides confidence and security, especially for those inexperienced teachers. The textbook plays a remarkable role in the teaching and learning process by which it represents a useful resource for both the teacher as a course designer and the learner who is acquiring the English language. In other words, it is not only the teacher who has a significant impact on the use of textbook, but also the learners' reaction to it is taken into consideration; the textbook is considered as one of the most important sources of contact that they have with the language as it is also a framework or guide that helps them to organize their learning (Graves, 2000).

According to Allen (2008), course books are the most frequent foreign language instruction materials; they can be of crucial help to learners in order to become competent. In addition, the teaching texts in these materials can act as guidance to learning process (Hasan&Raddatz, 2008).

A textbook can serve different purposes, especially for teachers, to whom it can serve as a core resource, a source of supplementary material, an inspiration for classroom activities, as well as a curriculum itself.

#### **1.1.6.1. What is a Textbook?**

A Textbook (or a course book) is a teaching tool that is used in teaching English language in the classroom. It is produced according to the demands of educational institutions. Moreover, it is a useful source for the teacher to control the presented language and provide the learning process with suitable exercises and materials. As a pedagogical concept, many definitions were given by researchers to textbook.

“Textbooks visibly reflect pedagogic considerations. That is, a textbook is not just a book used in schools. Rather, it is a book that has been consciously designed and organized to serve the ends of schooling. To this extent, then, textbooks are organically linked to the changing circumstances of schooling. Indeed, it should be possible to ‘read off’ forms of schooling from the textbooks that accompany them.”(Hamilton, 1990).

Textbook is defined by the Oxford Dictionary (2008, p.459) as a “Book that teaches a particular subject, used in schools”.

Byram (2000,p. 626) states that:

“Textbooks are one particular resource amongst an increasingly wide and diverse range of teaching materials. They are bound collections of textual and visual material, designed for

teaching and learning a particular subject and following particular methodological and didactical principles.”

Hutchinson and Torres (1994) define textbook with a particular reference to English language teaching. Here is what they say about it:

“The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries...” (p. 135).

What all the above-mentioned definition stress is the fact that textbooks are tools that used in teaching. They are designed depending on some features, such as the inclusion of texts and images. Besides, they are based on particular methods and instructions in order to facilitate language teaching and learning.

#### **1.1.6.2. Role of the Textbook in the Classroom (advantages and disadvantages of using the textbook)**

Textbooks play a crucial role in the process of teaching and learning a language. However, besides their advantages, they also have disadvantages.

According to Cunningsworth the textbook serves as a resource for presenting materials that can be written or spoken. In other words, it helps teachers to make the process of teaching simpler and more effective since the textbook includes different forms of language. It is a source of activities for student practice and communicative interaction .i.e. it includes different types of activities that help students to interact successfully in the classroom. Also, the textbook is a reference for students on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, culture, etc. Besides, it is a resource for self-directed learning or work self-access. It provides a clear instruction by which the learner becomes self-oriented. Finally, it works as a support for less

experienced teachers who still need to gain confidence. In other words, it helps teachers to gain confidence and experience at the same time (1995, p. 7).

Cortazzi and Jinn consider textbook as the key element in foreign language classroom. They argue that the textbook can function as a teacher, whereby, it gives students knowledge and instructions about foreign cultures. Besides, it can work as a trainer guiding inexperienced teachers in their teaching, hence its unparalleled usefulness as a material for teachers. Also, it is a resource from which both students and teachers can easily select the appropriate items to be taught and learned. Moreover, the textbook can be a map. In other words, it gives an overview of an organized curriculum which consists of both linguistic and cultural aspects. It can also be seen as an authority in the sense that it is an authentic, valid, and reliable material. The textbook can be seen as an ideology in the sense that it can function as a social and cultural construction for both teachers and students (1999).

Advocacy of course books has come from scholars who strongly believe that course books should be seen as a means of 're-skilling' rather than 'de-skilling' teachers (O'Neil, 1982; Hutchinson and Torres, 1994; Edge and Wharton, 1998) and that, provided they are used flexibly, they can be adapted and supplemented to meet the needs of specific classes (Bell and Gower, 1998:117) (as cited in Brian 2014, p. 39). They state the following advantages for the use of course books:

1. Course books meet a wide range of practical needs, particularly in contexts where English is being taught in a non-English-speaking environment and where teachers either lack training or sufficient time to analyse each group's needs.
2. Course books help provide a route map for both teachers and learners, making it possible for them to look ahead to what will be done in a lesson as well as to look back on what has been done.

3. Course books provide structure and predictability, which help give the participants in social interactions, like lessons, a safe base, a platform for negotiation and exploration.
4. By dealing with a certain amount of routine work for teachers, course books free them to attend to more important aspects of lesson planning (including materials adaptation and supplementation), and to concentrate on using their creative skills.
5. Course books provide teachers, particularly those lacking in training and experience, with a sense of self-confidence and security.
6. Most course books are designed and developed by experts in the field, conversant with current theoretical approaches and methodological practices. The quality of sophistication in their design, content and organization would be difficult to match with home-grown materials.
7. Course books can act as agents of change, allowing innovative ideas to be introduced within their structured framework in a way that enables teachers and learners to develop in harmony with these new ideas. Indeed, Edge and Wharton (1998) see the ELT course book functioning as a genre of mass communication, where its authors can enter into positive dialogue with teachers and students on a number of issues of current significance to ELT professionals (Brian, 2014, p. 39).

Although textbooks have advantages, they also have disadvantages. According to Gimeno (1988), textbooks cannot deal with all aspects such as dealing with all learning styles, and every category of learning strategies. Also, it cannot reach all students' needs. Moreover, the content of textbook may be irrelevant and not interesting to both teachers and students. Ur (1996, pp. 183-195) adds that textbooks may restrict the teachers' creativity and kills their freedom as well as preventing them to give negative judgments about the content. Harmer (1991, p. 257) states that when teachers overuse the textbook in teaching, learners will "find the study of English becoming routine and thus less and less motivating".

Richards (2001, p.2) gives a list of the disadvantages of textbooks. These are summarized in what follows:

### **1. Textbooks may contain inauthentic language**

Textbooks sometimes presents in authentic language since texts, dialogs and other aspects of content tend to be specially written to incorporate teaching points and are often not representative of real language use.

### **2. Textbooks may distort content**

Textbooks often present an idealized view of the world or fail to represent real issues. In order to make textbooks acceptable in many different contexts controversial topics are avoided and instead an idealized white middle-class view of the world is portrayed as the norm.

### **3. Textbooks may not reflect students' needs**

Since textbooks are often written for global markets they often do not reflect the interests and needs of students and hence may require adaptation.

### **4. Textbooks can deskill teachers**

If teachers use textbooks as the primary source of their teaching leaving the textbook and teacher's manual to make the major instructional decisions for them, the teacher's role can become reduced to that of a technician whose primarily function is to present materials prepared by others.

### **5. Textbooks are expensive**

Commercial textbooks may represent a financial burden for students in many parts of the world.

#### **1.1.7. Secondary School English Language Textbooks in Algeria**

In 2003, the Algerian educational system has witnessed a change in terms of the implementation of new curricula and a new approach based on competencies. The change

covered the three levels in which new books were published. In the secondary level three books were designed; “On the Move” for first year pupils, “Getting Through” for second year pupils, and “New Prospects” which is our main concern in this research study was introduced for baccalaureate pupils.

### **First year secondary textbook “At the Crossroads”**

The “At the Crossroads” textbook is designed for pupils aged 15 to 16 who have already studied English for four years in the middle school. It consists of five units. Each unit is supposed to be covered in some twenty hours’ of teaching. “At the Crossroads” aims to consolidate and extend the competencies acquired at the middle school level. These broad competencies are worded in the syllabus as follows:

Interacting orally in English;

Interpreting oral and written texts; and

Producing oral and written texts.

There are two reasons why the course book is called ‘At the Crossroads’. The first reason is that this textbook is intended for learners who have come at a crossroads in their educational career in which they will choose to specialize in different streams at the first year secondary education (SE1). Second, the course places the learners at a ‘crossroads’ of disciplines (school subjects) and culture in that it seeks to establish cross-curricular and cross-cultural linkages.

### **Second year secondary textbook “Getting Through”**

The “Getting Through” textbook is designed for second year secondary school pupils. It consists of eight files; signs of the time, make peace, “waste not, want not”, budding

scientists, news and tales, no man is an island, science or function,? Business is business.

Each unit comprises five main parts which are:

1. Discovering the language.
2. Developing skills
3. Putting things together
4. Where do we go from here
5. Exploring matters further.

#### **1.1.7.1. “New Prospects”: The Third Year Textbook**

The “New Prospects” textbook is designed for the Baccalaureate students. It consists of 6 files. “Exploring the Past”, the first file, deals with ancient civilizations in which pupils explore the past through texts that are designed to increase pupils’ knowledge and culture, picture and maps. It aims to enable pupils to compare between two things, to narrate, to inform and to express concession. The second file, entitled “Gotten Gains Never Prosper”, is typically about ethics in business, fighting fraud and corruption. Through the file’s texts and activities, pupils can distinguish between what is morally acceptable or wrong in business. It seeks to enable pupils to distinguish between ethical and unethical practices when doing business and how they can fight against unethical ones such as corruption, counterfeit, etc. the third file, entitled “Schools: Different and Alike”, is mainly about education in the world. The main purposes of this file is to enable pupils to describe a process, to express wish and desire, to express purpose/ result, to express warnings, to express obligation and necessity, to ask for and give advice, and to compare and contrast. “Safety First” is the fourth file; it is about advertising, consumers and safety. Its main objective is to make the student at the end of the file able to describe, express cause and effect, express probability and possibility, express hypothesis and deducing, express concession and express quantity. The fifth file, presented

under the title “It’s a Giant Leap for Mankind”, is mainly about astronomy and the solar system as well as satellites, telescope, planets’ information and man explorations of the moon. Its main objective is to enable the student to describe, compare and contrast, make hypotheses, make suppositions, read figures and ask questions. The last file of the third year secondary school textbook is “We Are a Family!”. It is about feelings, emotions, humour and related topics. Its main objective is to enable learners to describe, advise, express likes and dislikes, and express feelings. Hence, at the end of each file learners are expected to be able to do something new (Grazib, 2014).

“New Prospects” is an ordinary English language textbook. It offers an important range of language input. The textbook draws from many theories of language learning where the structural view mingles with the functional perspective and where the communicative approach mates with the task-based one, i.e. the textbook is an “all in 1” course that borrows its learning units from the different types of syllabuses (Bensemmane, et al, 2011).

“New Prospects” is the last of a series of three course books designed for the teaching of English to secondary school students (Bensemmane, et al, 2011). The main aim of this course book rests on communicative language teaching, which engages learners in real and meaningful communication in which learners are given opportunities to process content relating to their lives and backgrounds, and to develop both fluency and accuracy. In this course book, language learning is viewed as a developmental process in which errors are a natural part of that process. We also regard the mastery of grammar as the cornerstone of a good command of English (ibid).

“New Prospects” contains a large number of effective learning tasks through which students are brought to notice, reflect and analyse how language is used. Those tasks give

opportunities for learners to interact in the classroom and negotiate meaning. Most of the tasks are intended to enhance individual learning as well as learning with peers (ibid).

The diversity of tasks in “New Prospects” seeks to enable learners to gradually automatize their knowledge and recall the language acquired with greater control and ease during production. Besides, the texts selected in this course book present language in different types and styles: radio interviews, dialogues, news reports, encyclopedia entries, newspaper and magazine articles, excerpts from works of fiction, poems, etc. Thus, students will be prepared to interact with various language situations they will encounter in real life (ibid).

#### **1.1.7.1.1. Presentation and Structure of “New Prospects” (Textbook Design)**

The third year textbook “New Prospects” progressively develops in students the three competencies of interaction, interpretation, and production that cover all areas of language (syntax, morphology vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling) through six graded units. In addition, the graded tasks of the type to be found in the English paper of the Baccalaureate examination, and thus provide the students with the gradual familiarization with the examination requirements for English (Bensemmane, p. 11).

“New Prospects” is composed of two hundred seventy pages (270). The first three pages include information about the content of the book and its designers followed by a “foreword” and a “book map”, and then teaching units, which extend from page four (4) to page thirteen (13). It includes six units dealing with six topics, starting from page fourteen (14) to page one hundred ninety five (195). These topics are:

- 1) Ancient Civilizations;
- 2) Ethics in Business: Fighting Fraud and Corruption,
- 3) Education in the World: Comparing Educational Systems;
- 4) Advertising, Consumers and Safety;

- 5) Astronomy and the Solar System;
- 6) Feelings, Emotions, Humour, and Related Topics.

Each unit is sub-divided into two parts, namely “Language Outcomes” and “Skills and Strategies Outcomes”. The first part contains two sequences: listen and consider, read and consider, after that we have “take a break”. The second part includes four sequences: research and report, listening and speaking, reading and writing, project outcome. At the end of these sequences there is an assessment and “time for” that includes a song or a poem. At the end of the textbook there are four sections; these are listening scripts, grammar reference, resources portfolio, and acknowledgements, which extend from page 196 to page 271.

#### **1.1.7.1.2. The Aims of “New Prospects”**

“New Prospects” is an English textbook which is designed for students in the third year of secondary education for the purpose of developing their competencies. It follows the guiding principles that fit up the curricula and that account of the learners’ social and educational background and the cultural values of the country (Algeria) as well. In fact, the pedagogical importance of such textbook can make the syllabus more tractable. Moreover, the textbook “New Prospects” is very useful for pupils whereby it helps them to acquire knowledge, information and skills as well as it testifies the fulfillment of the tasks and lessons in the classroom (Benzerroug, pp 336-337).

A major aim of the textbook is to make the teacher and the learner as well to come to a fruitful interaction in which it provides such activities in order to stimulate and develop individual competencies in a vital phase when knowledge and skills are emphasized. The three competencies described in the national curricula that are of interaction, interpretation and production are developed at all stages of the textbook through diverse tasks and activities (ibid).

In addition, the textbook “NP” is arranged in didactic units where each unit is concerned with a particular topic which is proposed by the designers of the curricula. Those units are appeared in the bookmap at the beginning of the book. Furthermore, in each unit the pupils will have such opportunities for the sake of developing the three competencies as each unit is turned around a broad topic that is selected for its general interest as well as for the functional value it produces. Thus, pupils explore the issues in terms of the skills, functions, related strategies and language forms which fit into with the topic being in each unit of the textbook (ibid).

The textbook also aims to brainstorm pupils and hence lead them to talk about the things they know about a particular topic where they share their own knowledge and link it with that included in the text.

However, DoudjaSlougui holds that the textbook “NP” has failed to identify or show the competencies that should be achieved by the pupils as well as the standards they are expected to meet by which it does not make any reference to the social roles that those pupils are prepared for, to the needs they are catered for, as also to the social situations to be functioning in whereby she stated that “New Prospects does not have a clearly stated aim” (p. 90).

Slougui holds that what the project work sounds according to what learners produce contradicts with which the CBA consider such a project. In other words, the textbook provides learners with discourses, functional, structural and lexical input that help them produce the project work as if it is the achievable goal or the targeted competency whereas under the CBA this project work is regarded as an enabling task which help learners to develop a given competency.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to survey the educational system in the Algerian secondary school, particularly English language teaching and the approaches that have been used before the reform movement. The English language textbooks in the Algerian secondary school, particularly the third year textbook “New Prospects” have been equally tackled. The need was felt to give the reader an idea about the English language teaching and the teaching materials used in it in an Algerian secondary school context. This was, we assumed, a necessary step to go through before delving into the intricacies of the Competency-based Approach, which will constitute the topic of discussion in the second chapter of this research.

# **CHAPTER TWO:**

## **THE COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH IN THE ALGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL**

## **Introduction**

This chapter is devoted to the exploration of the main notions of this research. It starts with giving some definitions to the concepts of competence, competency, and the Competency-based Approach and its principles, components and characteristics. Then, it moves to present the kind of assessment used in the Competency-based Approach, the theories underlying this approach as well as the teachers' and learners' role. Finally, it ends with an emphasis on the teachers' training for a Competency-based Approach context.

### **2.1. Competence and Competency**

The discourse around education and training has shifted over the last twenty years where in the interest in competence and competency has been part of it. The latter are used as a part of the everyday language of teacher education, further education, community work, and so forth. Often a question is asked: Are competence and competency the same or different? Although competence and competency have an odd relationship on the surface, but they are often used in different contexts (Smith, 1996).

#### **2.1.1. Competence**

The term Competence can be seen as a combination of practical and theoretical knowledge, cognitive skills, behaviours and values used to improve performance. In the discussion that occurred in the 1980s in the UK, competence was basically approached as "(...) the ability to do a particular activity to prescribed standards." (Working Group on Vocational Qualifications, 1986). UDACE proclaimed that "competence is concerned with what people can do rather than they know" (Smith, 1996).

According to Philippe Perrenoud (1997), competence is a *Savoir-mobiliser* that is, the ability to mobilize resources; to know, to know-how to do, to know-how to be, to understand

processes of evaluation and of action, and to use tools to face complex and new situations. Definition of Selected Competencies (DeSeCo) defines competence as:

(...) a system of internal and external mental structures and abilities assuming mobilization of knowledge, cognitive skills and also social behavioural components such as attitudes, emotions for successful realization of activity in a particular context."(DeSeCo, in Chelli, 2010, p4)

### **2.1.2. Competency**

Developing competencies allows teacher to perform better in the classroom and higher quality in education. That quality can be only acquired by means of a reflective teaching practice where teaching competencies are developed by teachers. Teaching competencies can be defined as the ability to respond successfully to a complex requirement that involves attitudes, values, knowledge and capacities in a meaningful and effective way. In other words, it is the way in which knowledge, beliefs, capabilities, abilities, values, and strategies that teachers possess and that determine the outcome of their performance that are articulated. There are a wide variety of definitions of the concept of competencies in the literature. Lafortune (2006) holds that such kind of definitions mainly include several aspects and underpin differing even opposing theoretical views (Brahimi, 2011, p23).

Many definitions have been suggested in the field of education. QEP (Quebec Education Programmes) defines the term Competency as:

"(...) a set of behaviours based on the effective mobilization of a range of resources, in which this set of behaviours refers to the capacity to use appropriately a variety of resources both internal and external, in particular learning acquired in school or in everyday life. The concept of resources refers not only to everything that students have learned at school, but also their

experiences, skills, interest, etc... Students may rely on many resources, such as their classmates, their teacher, documentation." (QEP, in Chelli, 2010, p. 4).

As for Verma (2009) "Competency is a component of competence. Competencies refer to specific capabilities in applying particular knowledge, skills, decision-making attributed, and values to perform tasks effectively in a specific context"(p, 47).

Another definition provided by English Language Teaching(ELT) articles about English teaching in Algeria views competency as "a system of conceptual and procedural parts of knowledge organized into schemes that help identify a problem task and its solution through an efficient action within a set of situations."(Chelli, 2010, pp. 4-5).

Competency is the capability to choose and use an integrated combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes with the intention to realize a task in a certain context. The US Department of Education (2001, p.1) defines Competency as "a combination of skills, abilities, and knowledge needed to perform a specific task." (in Anothai and Kulaporn. 2000, p. 2).

Furthermore, Mrowicki (1986, as cited in Weddle, 2008) opines that "Competencies consist of a description of the essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours required for effective performance of a real-world task or activity. These activities may be related to any domain of life, though typically been linked to the field of work and to social survival in a new environment. "(p, 2).

Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (2001) cite Docking (1994), who sees the term Competency as an element of competency that can be defined "as any attribute of an individual that contributes to the successful performance of a task, job, function, or activity in an academic setting and or a work setting. This includes specific knowledge, thinking, processes, attitudes, and perceptual and physical skills." (p, 145).

In addition, Docking affirms that a unit of competency can be realized in the forms of tasks, roles, functions, or learning module. These will vary from context to context and may include specific knowledge, thinking, processes, attitudes, and both perceptual and physical skills. (Marcellino, 2008, p59).

Whenever the term competency is mentioned, a know how to act process is implied. Competency is a complex knowing how to act supported by effectively drawing upon and combining a variety of internal and external resources within a family of situations (Tardif, 2006). According to Le Boterf(2006) Competency is based on three key factors: **Knowing how to act**, which involves combining and bringing together relevant resources (knowledge, skills and networks); the **Willingness to act**, which refers to the subject's personal motivation and engagement; and the **Power to act**, which refers to the context, organization of work and social conditions that make it possible and legitimate for an individual to take responsibility and take chances ( as cited in Brahimi, 2011, p23).

### **Characteristics of a Competency**

Tardif (2006) identifies five main characteristics inherent to competency, namely, the integrative, combinatorial, developmental, contextual, and evolutionary characteristics. The table below briefly defines each characteristic (p. 26)

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Perspectives</b>
<b>Integrative</b>	Each competency requires many different kinds of resources.
<b>Combinatorial</b>	Each competency involves organizing resources in various ways.
<b>Developmental</b>	Each competency develops throughout life. Competency is an ongoing process, so learning to master a given competency can take place over time and become increasingly complex.
<b>Contextual</b>	Each competency is applied in contexts that guide the action.  The contextual character introduces the idea of critical situations within a family.
<b>Evolutionary</b>	Each competency is designed to integrate new resources and situations without compromising its nature.

**Table 1: Characteristics of a Competency Designed as Complex Know-how**

## **2.2. The Competency-based Approach**

### **2.2.1. The Competency-based Approach Defined**

The Competency-based Approach (CBA) is an approach to teaching and learning more often used in learning concrete skills than abstract learning. It is an approach that focuses on the skills and talents needed by the learner to be able to perform a particular task to a certain standard. CBA relies on using a series of assessment tools that identify not only the technical skills a candidate possesses, but his behavioral competency is as well. It is a continuation of communicative language teaching (CLT). i.e., instead of refusing the principles of CLT, it interpreted and reinforced them. Then, it seeks to develop communicative skills in learners. Also, it is concerned with enhancing learners' abilities, i.e. it seeks to enable learners to

behave and function appropriately in different contexts. In other words, through practice and integration of these abilities, skills and knowledge, learners construct their capacities.

CBA has been interpreted differently across academic programs. Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that the “CBA is based on a set of outcomes that are derived from an analysis of tasks typically required of students in life role situation” (p.114). This means, this approach is based on a set of results determined through analyzing the student’s achievement typically in real life situation.

Chelli (2010, p. 11) claims that “The competency-based approach is a very popular approach which focuses on measurable and useable knowledge, skills and abilities. It consists of teachers basing their instructions on concepts expecting to foster deeper and broader understanding.” In other words, it entails the putting together of all the knowledge, know-how, and attitudes required for the solution of real life problems or situations.

Doking (1994:16) states that “competency based teaching by comparison is designed not around the notion of subject matter knowledge but around the notion of competency. The focus moves from what students know about language to what they can do with it.”(Dokingascited in Richards&Rodgers, 2001, p.144). This means teaching under CBA is based on what learners are expected to achieve rather than on the knowledge they have. In other words, the focus is on the reflection or on the practice of that knowledge.

As a conclusion, Competency-Based Approach is based on developing learners’ competencies in order to help them to face some problems in their daily life. It aims to enable learners to put what they have learned in other life settings. Therefore, this new approach came to relate school life and real life settings and to help learners to become competent in their society.

### **2.2.2. History of the Competency-based Approach**

Many methods and approaches have been used in teaching English as a foreign language, with one following another, either as an extension or as a reaction to the previous one. The Competency-based Approach is one of the recent approaches to language teaching.

According to Butova, “The Competency-based Education was formed as an educational trend in the United States of America. Its initial idea was adopted from the so called generative grammar by N. Chomsky who declared in 1965 that there is a “... fundamental difference between the competence or knowledge of language and the application or actual use of language” (Chomsky, 1968, p. 172, in Butova, 2015, p. 251).

The Competency-based Education (CBE), which is used in this research interchangeably with the Competency-based Approach, was introduced by educators such as Benjamin Bloom. It has its roots in the behaviorist tradition popularized in the United States during the 1950s. It was used in vocational training programs in the US during the 1970s. After that, the CBE spread to Europe in the 1980s. In the 1990s, this approach was used in Australia to measure professional-skills (Bowden 2004 as cited in Griffith, 2014, p. 1).

In the same vein, Chelli stated that “the notion of CBE was first introduced in the USA in the late 1960s and evolved through applications to other professional education programs in the USA in the 1970s, vocational training programs in the UK and in Germany and many others in the 1980s and vocational professional skills recognition in Australia in 1990s” (2010, p.13).

The Competency-based Approach is not actually a new approach as Bruke (1989, p. 9) stated. The competency-based movement, under that label, has been around for 20 years or more in the USA. Its origins can, however, be traced further back to the 1920s, to ideas of

educational reform linked to industrial/ business models centered on specification of outcomes in behavioural objectives form (ibid).

### **2.2.3. The Competency-based Approach: Principles, Components, and Characteristics**

#### **2.2.3.1. Principles**

A change in most of the educational systems in the world in terms of the implementation of new curricula and a new approach based on competencies as the case of Algeria in which the Competency- based Approach was introduced in 2002 as a result of the educational reform in the primary, middle, and secondary schools. CBA has been adopted in teaching English as a foreign language in order to prepare the learners to be competent in their real life tasks (Chelli, 2010).

According to the general objectives assigned to the teaching of English in the teaching of English in the Algerian educational system, a socio–constructivist and efficient cognitive design has been set with the purpose in mind to install competencies in the learner. This is due to the failure of the communicative approach to enable the learners to reach an acceptable level of performance which allows them to communicate whenever it is needed, especially in the era of globalization and job requirement (Chelli, 2010).

Therefore, educational experience in many countries shows that one way of updating the content of education is the orientation of the training programs towards the CBA. Thus, in order to be integrated in the globalized world, Algeria underwent such a reform to enable young people to reach an international level in terms of the required competencies.

Hence, the Algerian suggested that the new programs would allow its learners to develop their capacities to think and act according to a vision of a world that they will construct day by day (Chelli, 2010).

To sum up, in order to improve the learning and teaching process, Algeria has adopted a new educational reform which is characterized by the use of the Competency-based Approach. This reform involves teaching languages through understanding their cultural constraints.

### **2.2.3.2. Components**

Weddel (2006) outlines the components of Competency-based Education and says that this approach consists of four components (as cited in Nk Wetisama, 2012, p. 520). These components are:

- 1- An assessment of the learners' needs;
- 2- The selection of the competencies;
- 3- The target instruction; and
- 4- An evaluation of the competency attainment.

The Competency-Based Approach starts with an assessment of the learners' needs, moves to the selection of the expected competencies, then to the target instruction, from where it moves to the evaluation of the rate of attainment of the competence, and then back to the assessment of the needs. So, the four components do not function in isolation. It is, thus, a cyclical process.

### **2.2.3.3. Characteristics**

Competency-based Education has gained popularity with learners due to its flexible structure and affordability. The CBLT implementation has a great value in language teaching and learning. CBA teaching and assessment has a great influence in which it serves as an interesting approach for teachers to revitalize their education and training programs and hence improve the quality of teaching and learning (Docking, 1994). CBA serves as an agent of

change as well as it is beneficial to language teaching and learning that it has several advantages.

CBA provides learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to problem solving in a field of study while preparing the learners to have entry level competencies for a specific job classification(Sudsomboon,2013).Competencies permit the learners to return to one or more competencies that have not been acquired in the learning process and also provide them with more authentic material and a clear map to achieve toward their goals(Vorhees,2001).

Another strength of the CBA is that learning work at the learners' own pace to demonstrate mastery in the competencies necessary to their chosen field (Sudsomboon,2013).Competency-based language programs rely on measurable assessment, that is, any competence being evaluated has to be described unambiguously and subsequently tested under these circumstances competencies are transparent (Vorhees,2001).

In addition, Watson (1990) asserts that the CBA is very interesting and important for learners that it helps them to focus on something to attain a background knowledge and experience which allow them to understand and communicate.

Watson (1990)states that the CBA “appears especially useful in training situations where trainees have to attain a small number of specific and job related competencies” (p 18).Moreover, Norton (1987) further argues that participants build confidences as they succeed in mastering specific competencies, they receive a transcript or list of the competencies they have achieved, training time is used more efficiently and effectively as the trainer is a facilitator of learning as opposed to a provider of information and the participants will achieve competencies required in the performance of their jobs, in other words, students under the CBA may build up self-confidence by which they notice that the things being taught in the classroom are applied after in real context.

Furthermore, CBA is not usually taught only in one single module but rather integrated throughout several modules or the entire curriculum thus, enhances the learners' knowledge and or skills (Robinson,2013).

The Competency-based Approach works well with some learning environments and less well with others. Like all teaching approaches and methods, CBA also has disadvantages.

- It is less focused on preparing learners with the flexibility needed for a more uncertain future;
- It ignores the importance of social learning;
- It does not fit the preferred learning styles of many students;
- It does not suit all kinds of learners and maybe limited in developing the higher level, more abstract knowledge and skills requiring creativity, high-level problem-solving and decision making and critical thinking; and
- Learners often focus on the assessment instead of completing assignments (Robinson, 2013).

The Competency-Based Approach is learner-centered. It focuses more on the learner's role and activities. It is a socio-constructivist approach that seeks to help learners to build their own knowledge in order to enable them to use it in their daily life. According to Auerbach (1986, as cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2002, p. 146), the essential features that characterize the CBA are:

- *A focus on successful functioning in society:* the goal is to enable students to become autonomous individuals capable of coping with the demands of the world.
- *A focus on life skills:* rather than teaching language in isolation, Competency-based Language Teaching teaches language as a function of communication about concrete tasks. Learners are taught those language forms/skills required by the

situations in which they will function. These forms are determined by ‘empirical assessment of language required’ (Findley and Nathan 1980:224).

- *Task- or performance-centered orientation:* what matters is what students can do as a result of instruction. The emphasis is on overt behaviours rather than on knowledge or the ability to talk about language and skills.
- *Modularized instruction:* language learning is broken down into meaningful chunks (Center for Applied Linguistics 1983: 2). Objectives are broken into narrowly focused sub-objectives so that both teachers and students can get a clear sense of progress.
- *Outcomes that are made explicit:* outcomes are public knowledge, known and agreed upon by both learner and teacher. They are specified in terms of behavioural objectives so that students know exactly what behaviours are expected of them. This will assist each of the learners to realize certain actions when they are faced with the real situations.
- *Continuous and ongoing assessment:* students are pretested to determine what skills they lack and post-tested after instruction in that skill. If they do not achieve the desired level of mastery, they continue to work on the objective and are retested.
- *Demonstrated mastery of performance objectives:* rather than the traditional paper-and-pencil tests, assessment are based on the ability to demonstrate pre-specified behaviours.
- *Individualized, student-centered instruction:* In content, level, and pace, objectives are defined in terms of individual needs; prior learning and achievement are taken into account in developing curricula. Instruction is not

time-based; students' progress at their own rates and concentrate on just areas in which they lack competence.

According to Chelli (2010), one of the most distinctive features of CBA is its integration of project work as part of the learning strategy. Over all, if CBA expands on the communicative approach, it is in the sense that it seeks to make the attainment visible, i.e., concrete through the realization of projects. It also makes co-operate learning a concrete reality and opens new avenues for action, interaction, and the construction of new knowledge. In short, it is only through carrying out project work that we and our learners can live basic principles of CBA.

According to Nkwetisama (2012, p. 520), the Competency-based Approach is characterized by the following:

- The competencies are stated in specific and measurable behavioral terms;
- The contents are based on the learners' goals, i.e. outcomes or competencies;
- The learners continue learning until mastery is demonstrated;
- The approach makes use of an unlimited variety of instructional techniques and group work;
- The approach centers on what the learner needs to learn, which is the application of basic skills in life skill language context such as listening, speaking, reading or writing;
- It makes extensive use of texts, media, and real life materials adapted to targeted competencies;
- It provides learners with immediate feedback on assessment performance;
- The instruction or teaching is paced to the needs of the learners; and

- It gets learners to demonstrate mastery of the specific competency statements or objectives; mapping of some competency objectives or statements.

#### **2.2.4. Assessment in the Competency-based Approach**

The idea of competence has, in the UK, become almost inextricably linked with a particular assessment philosophy promoted by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ). Assessment was regarded as an extremely powerful weapon to promote a truly "competency-based" approach to training and learning. Competency-based assessment was practiced and preached in the UK and America in origin. The following American definition summarizes all the major features of competency-based assessment:

**Competence-based assessment** is a form of assessment that is derived from a specification of a set of outcomes; that so clearly states both the outcomes-general and specific- that assessors, students and interested third parties can all make reasonably objective judgments with respect to student achievement or non-achievement of these outcomes; and that certifies student progress on the basis of demonstrated achievement of these outcomes. Assessments are not tied to time served in formal educational settings (Raven, Stephenson& Lang, 2001, p.453).

The above definition encapsulates three main components of the competency-based assessment which are:

- The emphasis on outcomes; specifically, multiple outcomes, each distinctive and separately considered. In other words, the emphasis is on the outcomes of learning, not on the process;

- These outcomes should be specified to the point where they are clear and "transparent " in which both assessors and assesses should be able to understand what is being assessed and what should be achieved; and
- The decoupling of assessment from particular institutions or learning programmes, i.e., assessment is a continuous process that takes into account the end products as well as all the learner' achievements during the ongoing learning process.

However, the emphasis on outcomes and "transparency" is not peculiar to the competency-based context. It is also a defining characteristic of a rather broader theory of measurement, that of "criterion referencing" (Raven, Stephenson&Lang,2001, P .454). Foyster (1990) argues that assessment in competency-based programs must be criterion-referenced with the criterion being the competencies upon which the program is based.

In the Competency-based Approach, assessment refers to the process of collecting evidence and making judgments on the nature and extent of progress towards the learners' performance through portfolios, coursework, and written tests.

Under the CBA, assessment can take one of the two forms: Either a **formative** assessment or a **summative** one. Formative assessment is used to determine the student's progression along the path to competency. It must be frequent and specific by which its goal is to assess progress as well as to provide information about strengths and weaknesses.

However, Summative assessment is designed to determine whether the student has mastered the competency or not. It typically takes place at the end of each module as the final test, that is to say, if a student fails a summative assessment, s/he cannot move on to the next competency(Online Learning Insights, 2012; Richards & Rogers, 2001, as cited in Griffith,

2014, p. 5). Summative assessments are performance-based and may include various measurement tools.

True-false, fill-in-the-blank, and multiple choice tests are forever banished from the CBLT classroom as final competency assessments (Richards & Rogers, 2001; Sturgis, 2012; Sturgis & Patrick, 2010, as cited in Griffith, p.5). In CBE, the majority of assessment will be formative.

The following table, based on the work of O'Connor (2002), summarizes the differences, assessments, and grades in traditional classes and those in competency-based assessment.

<b>Traditional Classrooms</b>	<b>Competency-based Classrooms</b>
One grade is given per assignment. An assignment may be a quiz, a test, homework, project, or anything the student must complete.	One grade is given for each specific competency. Students may be assessed throughout the process but these formative assessments will not typically be considered in the final evaluation.
Assessments are based on a percentage system. Criteria for success may be unclear.	Standards are criterion or proficiency-based. Specific criteria and standards are made available to students ahead of time.
Traditional grades may rely on a mix of assessment, achievement, effort and behavior to determine the final grade and may include late penalties and extra credit.	Grades measure only achievement. Information about effort and behavior may be reported but it is not part of the competency assessment. There are no penalties or extra credit given.
Everything goes in the grade book regardless of purpose. Assessment score is included in determining the final grade no matter when it was collected during the module. The final grade determines whether the student advances to the next level.	Students advance only upon mastery of the competency.

**Table 2: Traditional versus Competency-Based Grading Style (Griffith, 2014:6)**

## **2.2.5. Theories Underlying the Competency-based Approach**

### **2.2.5.1. The Cognitive Theory**

The cognitive theory arose not as an explicit teaching method, but as a reaction to structuralism and to behavioural principles. A set of new beliefs of L1 language and learning involving the notions of universality, creativity and innateness constitute some of the arguments that led to the demise of the structuralist and audio-lingual framework (Tejada et al, n.d).

One of the most representative figures of this theory is Chomsky (1959), who, in an answer to Skinner's postulates (1957), provided some facts that rejected the previous position. Psychologically speaking, language learning started to be considered as a product of rule formation and hypothesis testing ,i.e., when the learners form hypothesis about that language, test them and turn them into rules if they are constructed to the incoming input. Hence, language learning was taught to be a creative process in which the learner is engaged in hypothesis construction. This process was innate and universal, that is to say, similar for all children (and possibly learners) because of two reasons: the first reason, children were thought to be endowed with a language acquisition device ( LAD) which is an innate predisposition to induce the rules of the target language from the input they are expected to . The second one, it was considered that all children (and possibly learners) made the same developmental errors (ibid).

The second theoretical axis of the cognitive theory came from linguistics and the development of the Generative Transformational (GT) and the Universal Grammar (UG). Language for the UG consisted of a set of universal features, rules and transformations forming the linguistic system or grammar. Studies were carried out in order to discover

universal features and among structures, such as questions, word order and relative clauses. For GT view, each language had a shallow and a deep structure (ibid).

The cognitive theory is the first response to provide a more complete perspective on how we learn . Its proposal of a similar position on linguistic grounds would come through transformational-generative grammar (ibid).

Cognitive code learning, as a reaction to audiolingualism started to recognize learning as a creative process, and looked for the universal features underlying all languages. (ibid). Chomsky (1965) asserts that:

“The rationalist approach holds that beyond the peripheral processing mechanisms, there are innate ideas and principles of various kinds that determine the form of the acquired knowledge in what may be a rather restricted and highly organized way” (p.48).Language learning is not habit formation; there is an active involvement of the learner in inferring principles and rules and then testing them (Tejada et al, n.d).

In themid-1970s, Robert Gagné was the first to apply cognitive science in education in Québec. Gagné developed a model by which he described how the human mind processes information in learning situations and memorizes it. Moving to the 1980s , work began on developing training systems models ( instructional design) that influenced by cognitivism. As an example, Brien (1997) in Québec recommended a design model, a process that goes from needs analysis to implementation, including defining objectives or competencies, structuring content, choosing methods, and system testing (Brahimi, 2011).

For cognitivists, all students are different and they all process information differently. According to this, the individuals’ differences are taken into account concerning the training system design in which cognitivists focus on students’ different learning styles, mental models , motivation, as well as on expectations and prior knowledge. Brien (1997)

holds that the person responsible for developing training, activities must clearly describe the competencies that the learners are to develop (as cited in Brahim, 2011).

To conclude, the cognitive theory focuses on how individuals learn, that is to say, what really happens in learners' minds as well as, it focuses on individual differences and hence, promoting the development of adaptive learning environments.

#### **2.2.5.2. Constructivism**

Constructivism is a theory of knowledge that argues that humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and their ideas. Constructivism is an epistemology, a learning or meaning that offers an explanation of the nature of knowledge and how human beings learn (Abdal - Haqq, 1988, p.1). Hein (2007) mentions that constructivism refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves; Each learner individually and socially constructs meaning as he or she learns (p. 1). Constructivism – whether as a mode of instruction or a school of thought on how the world is known by the observer – has a long and a diverse history- while it has existed in some form for centuries, it has been known by a variety of names, practiced under a variety of guises and shapes (Oxford 1997). This theory is a diverse, dynamic, and difficult concept to define in only a few words, terms, and entities as it was governed by many researchers in the area of investigation.

Constructivism is a theory of knowledge with roots in philosophy, psychology, and cybernetics. It asserts that two main principles whose application has far-reaching consequences for the study of cognitive development and learning as well as for the practice of teaching, psychotherapy, and interpersonal management in general. The two principles are:

1) Knowledge is not passively received but actively built up by the cognizing subject; and

2) The function of cognition adaptive and serves the organization of the experiential world, not the discovery of anthropological reality (Von Glaserfeld, 1989).

Ernest (1995) argues that "There are as many varieties of constructivism as there are researchers." (p. 459). Constructivism comes from the field of cognitive science, particularly the works of Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, and Gardner. Fasnot (1996) describes the works of these theorists and develops a synthesis to refer to the debate between cognitive constructivism described by Piaget (1967) and social constructivism outlined by Vygotsky (1978) and hence concludes that a constructivist learning model can be depicted as a dialectical tripartite drawing of self- others and medium connected by symbols. According to Brooks & Brooks, "Constructivism is not a theory about teaching, it is a theory about knowledge and learning ... the theory defines knowledge as temporary, developmental, socially and culturally mediated , and thus, non-objective" (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p. vii).

There are two different versions of constructivism. These are Cognitive constructivism and Socio-constructivism. Cognitive constructivists believe that learning is individual then social; on the other hand, socio-constructivists believe that social learning precedes individual learning. However, they commonly agreed that learning is an active process of knowledge construction by which the development of understanding requires the learner actively to engage in collaborative knowledge construction process.

Jenkins (2000) holds that "The development of understanding requires active engagement on the part of the learner" (p. 601) i.e. The ideas and thoughts identified

within the learner's mind are the products of social as well as individual cognitive processes of learning. Hence, knowledge exists as a social entity, not as an individual possession.

Constructivists do not recommend defining learning objectives in advance, but rather they are determined or negotiated by the learners. Thus, according to reality, other objectives may emerge during learning and guide the activities as well; hence, formulating such learning objectives develops high-level competencies. The competency-based approach is one of the most visible applications of this theory as it views competency as the ability to mobilize and organize a set of internal and external resources (Tardif, 2006, as cited in Brahim, 2011, p.14).

According to constructivists, there is no single "worldview" because all individuals interpret reality relying on their own knowledge, experience and competencies (Brahimi, 2011). Moreover, the idea that runs across the theory is that the development of understanding requires the learners' engagement in meaning-making. Constructivists argue that "knowledge is not passively received but built up by the cognizing subject" (Von Glaserfeld, 1995).

Therefore, shifting the focus from knowledge as a product to knowing as a process (Jones, 2002). Von Glaserfeld notes that this theory acknowledges reality but he goes on to say, "I define to exist only within the realm of our experiential world and not ontologically ..." (Tobin, 1993, p.4).

Thus, constructivism acknowledges the learner's active role in the personal creation of knowledge. "It is assumed that learners have to construct their own knowledge ... individually and collectively. Each learner has a tool kit of concepts and skills with which he or she must construct knowledge to solve problems presented by the

environment” ( Davis, Maher, Noddings, 1990 ,p.3). Besides “The central principles of this approach are that learners can only make sense of new situations in terms of their existing understanding. Learning involves an active process in which learners construct meaning by linking new ideas with their existing knowledge” (Naylor& Keogh,1999). Within constructivism, knowledge is not something that exists outside of the learner. "The human mind can know only what the human mind has made." (Von Glaserfeld, 1995, p.21).

As a conclusion, constructivism’s perspectives on the role of the individual as well as on the active role of the learner and the importance of meaning-making are the very elements that make the theory appealing to educators.

### **2.2.5.3. Bloom’s Taxonomy**

Bloom’s taxonomy refers to a classification of the different objectives that educators set for students in which the taxonomy of learning objectives is an attempt to classify forms and levels of learning. The educational objectives are divided by Bloom’s taxonomy into three domains, which are “cognitive”, “affective”, and “psychomotor”. The three domains are related to each other in which learning at higher levels is dependent on having attained prerequisite knowledge and skills at lower levels that Bloom’s taxonomy aims to motivate educators to focus on all three domains, creating a more holistic form of education. (Bloom, in Chelli, 2010). In each domain, Bloom identified a number of levels. In the cognitive domain, he identified six levels: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation.

**1. Knowledge:** represents the lowest level of learning and is the fact of remembering the previously learned material (Bloom, in Chelli, 2010). At this level, learners are asked questions that require just recalling information, such as “define”, “who”, “where” etc.

**2. Comprehension:** the ability to grasp the meaning of material by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas. At this level students are asked to put several bits of information in a single category such as: “use your own words”, “explain”, and “compare”. (ibid)

**3. Application:** refers to the ability of using new knowledge in new and concrete situations or in other words to solve problems by applying acquired knowledge (ibid). In other words, learners are asked to apply the already acquired knowledge to new situations.

**4. Analysis:** refers to the ability to examine and break down material into parts so that its organizational structure maybe understood (ibid).

**5. Synthesis:** refers to the putting of parts together to form a new whole. It may be explained as the phase of production (ibid).

**6. Evaluation:** refers to the ability to make judgments about information (ibid). This means, evaluation questions do not have single right answer because they are relating to opinions. The affective domain describes the way people react emotionally. This concerns the awareness and growth in attitudes, emotions and feelings. Five levels in this domain have been identified (Chelli, 2010):

**1. Receiving:** students pay attention.

**2. Responding:** the student actively participate in the learning process.

**3. Valuing:** they attach value to what they are learning.

**4. Organizing:** the student can put together different values, information and ideas and accommodate them within his (her) own schema; comparing, relating and elaborating on what they have been learned.

**5. Characterizing:** the student holds a particular value or belief that now exert influence on his/her behavior so that it becomes a characteristic.

The third domain is the psychomotor one. It describes the ability to physically manipulate a tool or an instrument (Chelli, 2010).

## **2.2.6. Teachers' and Learners' Role in the Competency-based Approach**

### **2.2.6.1. Teachers' Role**

Competency-Based Language Teaching has much in common with the previous approach of Communicative Language Teaching. The role of the teacher under the Competency-based Approach is the same as in communicative language approach.

The role of teachers changes from one of being information-givers to that of facilitators (Surgie & Patrick, 2010, in Griffith, p. 3). In other words, they give information, but they deliver it in different ways. Teachers provide the materials, the activities, and the practice opportunities to their students (Paul, 2008, in Griffith, p. 3). According to Richards & Rodgers (1986, p.66), the teacher is assigned the role of a facilitator of the learning process; he facilitates the process of communication inside the classroom. Also, he is an independent participant, i.e., the teacher is not the focus in the communicative process. In other words, there is no long contact between the teacher and the learner. Moreover, he is considered a guide of the teaching process, whereby his role is to make students aware that classroom is not only a place where they learn the grammatical components of a language and memorize information and knowledge that is given by the teacher. Hence, he shows them how to use this knowledge in real-life situations and how to communicate with other people using this knowledge and exchange information with them. The teacher is also considered a needs analyst. This means, he sets the needs of the learner and suggests alternative materials to fit these needs. According to (Bader, 2007), the common role of the teacher under the

Competency-based Approach is a facilitator and an organizer who has to initiate students to collaboration through pair and group work (47).

According to Chelli (2010), the Competency-based Approach requires teachers' in action. This means, teachers have to draw on their professional skills in subject matter, methodology, in decision-making and in social skills to enable the learners to be achievers. He is considered a facilitator of the process of language acquisition. A part of the teacher's job is watching, listening, asking questions in order to learn more about how students learn; this leads them to become researchers.

#### **2.2.6.2 Learners' Role**

The CBA is learner-centered; it focuses more on the learner's role. Learners should no more rely on the teacher as the main source of information. Therefore, they work toward being autonomous learners, learn to think critically, and adapt and transfer knowledge from one setting to another. Learners are active recipients; they play an active role in the learning process, whereby, the principal role in the classroom is undertaken by them. They learn through those activities that are suggested by the teacher. For Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.146) the role of the learner in a competency-based framework is to decide whether the competencies are useful and relevant for him. Therefore, the learner has an active role in the classroom which is underlined by the fact that the students are expected to perform the skills taught (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 146). According to Marcillino (2005) (as cited in Griffith, 2014, p. 4), students need to find ways to motivate themselves and find ways to apply information to their own lives and to integrate it into the classroom. Students must be willing to challenge, to question, and to initiate in the CBLT classroom. Thus, they are required to construct and mobilize their resources to face with efficacy a problem-situation, to overcome obstacles, to acquire problem-solving skills, and increase their intellectual potential

(Bader, 2007). According to Chelli (2010), learner is a part in the negotiation that takes place inside the classroom which unites teachers and students in a common purpose. He revises his own knowledge and its scope to compare his own representations with those of his classmates. The learner is also considered as a researcher. In other words, he searches for information and validates it through consulting various sources of documentation and people in possession of information.

## **2.2.7. The Competency-based Approach in English Language Teaching in the Algerian Secondary School**

### **2.2.7.1. Training Teachers in Algeria for a Competency-based Approach Context**

The policies and procedures that are designed to furnish prospective teacher with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and skills they need to execute their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and community ( in both classroom, school in special and community in general) are referred to as teacher training or teacher education. Smith (2006) refers to teacher training as "preparation for teaching that enables the trainee to deal with predictable situation in the classroom"(p, 298). Teacher training courses should help student teachers to be in more control of their professional development and give them the chance to approach the profession from a much broader view than as merely a method in which student teachers should be taught the skills and confidence to analyze and articulate their thinking. Teacher students are encouraged to analyze the theoretical knowledge and realize how it can help improving their practices whereby their teaching practices will be more realistic and yet be more in control of their professional development.

In 1962, the Algerian educational system was new and geared toward the training of French colonial elite. However, in 1963 the creation of the Ministry of Education set in motion the process of building an inclusive and open national education system. Many

reforms occurred since then as many approaches were introduced to the Algerian educational system. So, what is opened to doubt in here whether the teacher is really able to do his/her job effectively whenever a new approach is introduced to the education system while s/he does not have a clear view on such approach, its principles, and especially the way it is implemented in classroom.

The teacher training consists of both theoretical training during which trainees are exposed to theories of learning and teaching, human development, multicultural education, and field experiences which allow trainees to make connections between course book and the practice of teaching (Beleulmi & Hamada, 2014).

Passing the baccalaureate examination is the major condition to enroll at Ecole Normal Supérieur (ENS) that trains basic and secondary school teachers in which those baccalaureate holders are required to be trained for four years in order to get the Diplôme de Professeur d'Enseignement Secondaire Award. The first two to these years of the teacher training, students are generally take classes in their subject area specializations, whereas, the final one is normally reserved for practical teacher training placements combined with pedagogical and theoretical training.

The Ministry of National Educational had planned to train all teachers after introducing the Competency-based Approach. However, only those teachers who have succeeded at the teachers' competitions have received training which is divided into theory and practice.

On one hand, the theoretical training is supposed to last 250 hours including seminars with the inspector who identifies competencies, teaching approaches, lesson formats and activity types used by teachers in their lessons and suggests effective lesson formats, methods, techniques and activities appropriate to help students develop English competencies.

The practical one, on the other hand is supposed to last 150 hours. It is conducted by an experienced teacher who is supposed to supervise the trainee teacher who has to attend some sessions to learn how to teach and then be asked to present some lessons in front of the students and the supervisor in order to be evaluated on his /her performance after and given a mark. However, most of teachers are not really satisfied with the received training in which they claim that that they need more specialized training with more practice whereby what they are actually teaching is not taken into consideration (<http://Academia.edu>).

## **Conclusion**

The Algerian educational system has witnessed a change in the method used in teaching in 2003. The Competency-based Approach has been adopted as a result of the reform movement. This new approach is learner-centered, where the learner's role emphasized in the learning process and his output rather than that of the teacher is targeted. In other words, it seeks to improve the learner's competencies by creating new knowledge and skills necessary for them in everyday life. To see whether this approach is actually implemented and how far its implementation is successful in the Algerian secondary school, an empirical study has been devoted in this respect in Chapter Three.

# **CHAPTER THREE:**

## **EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH THROUGH “NEW PROSPECTS”**

## **Introduction**

Our study aims to evaluate the implementation of the CBA in the Algerian secondary school through a scrutiny of the third-year textbook “New Prospects”, as well as to determine the teachers’ attitudes to the adoption and implementation of this approach. For this purpose, the research will make use of a questionnaire that was administered to some secondary school teachers and class observation.

### **3.1. Teacher’s Questionnaire**

#### **3.1.1. Questionnaire Description**

The questionnaire was administered to 18 third year English language teachers in secondary schools in Jijel. It starts with a small introduction that presents the aim of the study. The questionnaire consists of 13 questions that are divided into two main sections. The first section is concerned with qualifications and experiences. The second one presents teachers’ attitudes to the implementation of CBA in the light of the textbook "New Prospects ". This questionnaire is composed of numeric, close-ended, and open-ended questions.

Numeric questions are those questions concerned with the teacher’s background like work experience; close-ended questions are the yes / no questions; and open – ended questions are those questions that require more illustration on the part of the respondent.

On the one hand, the first section is composed of four questions. The two first questions aim to elicit the teachers’ personal information: age and gender. The other two remaining questions are concerned with the teachers’ qualifications as well as their work experience.

On the other hand, the second section consists of nine questions that vary between open and close-ended questions. This section focuses on the teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of CBA in the light of the textbook "New Prospects". The first two questions focus on teachers' training with the aim of implementing the CBA. The rest of the questions, however, are asked with one chief goal in mind, that is, to gauge the teachers' attitudes to the CBA implementation as well as their attitude to the textbook's use particularly the activities.

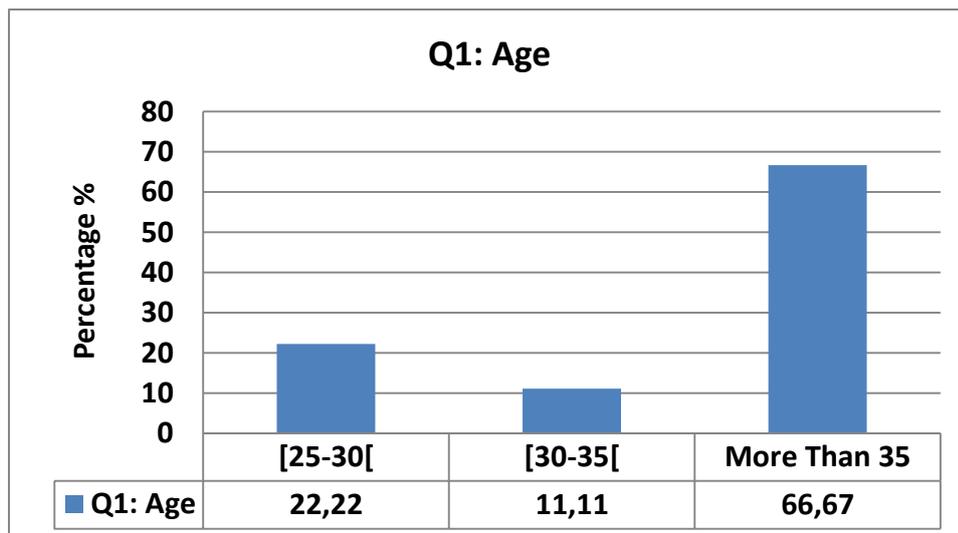
### 3.1.2 Analysis and Discussion of Teachers' Questionnaire Section one: Qualifications and Experiences

**Q1: A**

F: Frequency      P: Percentage

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	[25-30[	4	22,22%
2	[30-35[	2	11,11%
3	More than 35	12	66,67%

**Table 3:** Teachers' Age



**Graph 1:** Teachers' Age

The respondents in the study are classified into three categories. The last category of teachers who are older than 35 years represents the highest percentage (66,67%). This indicates that most of the teachers have probably a teaching experience. In other words, their experience would normally appraise and add positively to the findings of our study about the implementation of CBA.

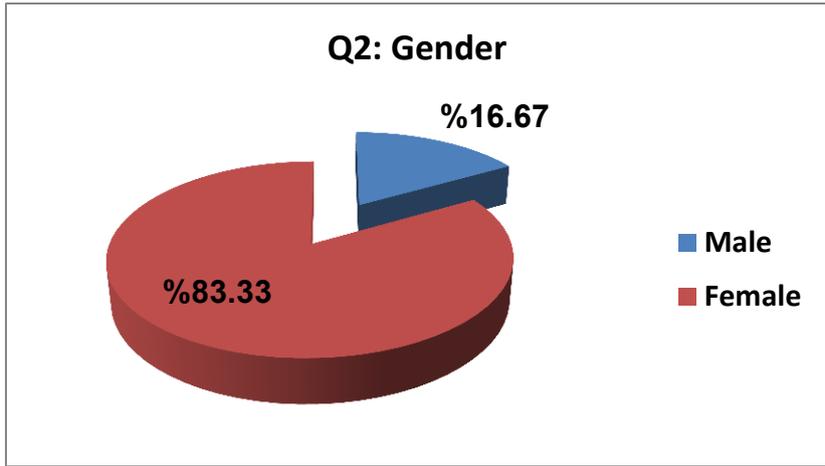
**Q2:** Gender

a) Male

b) Female

Options	Number of teachers	P(%)
Male	3	16,67%
Female	15	83,33%
<b>Total</b>	18	100%

**Table 4:** Teachers' Gender



**Figure 1:** Teachers' Gender

Among the eighteen teachers, three are males while fifteen are females. This means that, the number of female teachers is significantly higher than that of male teachers.

**Q3: Qualifications**

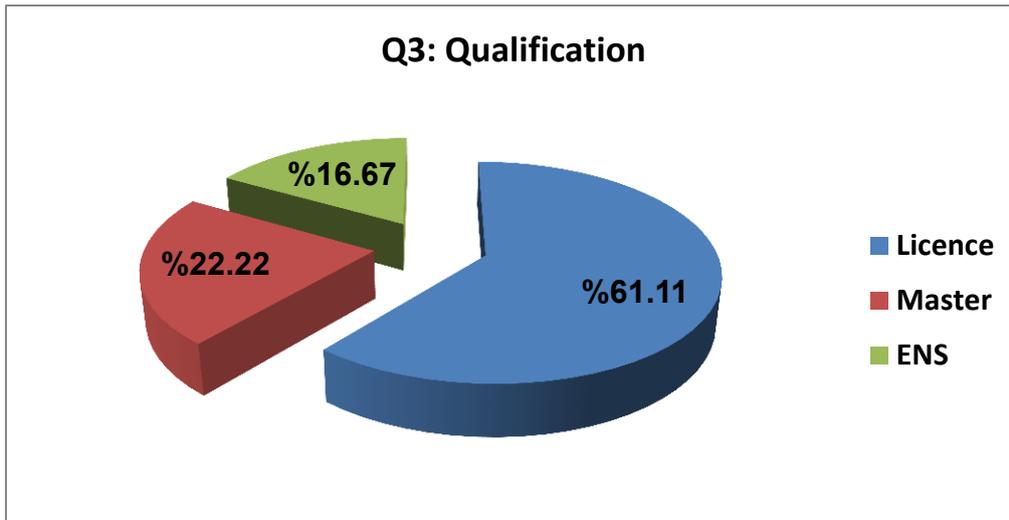
a) Licence

b) Master

c) ENS

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	Licence	11	61,11%
2	Master	4	22.22%
3	ENS	3	16,67%

**Table 5:** Teachers' Qualifications



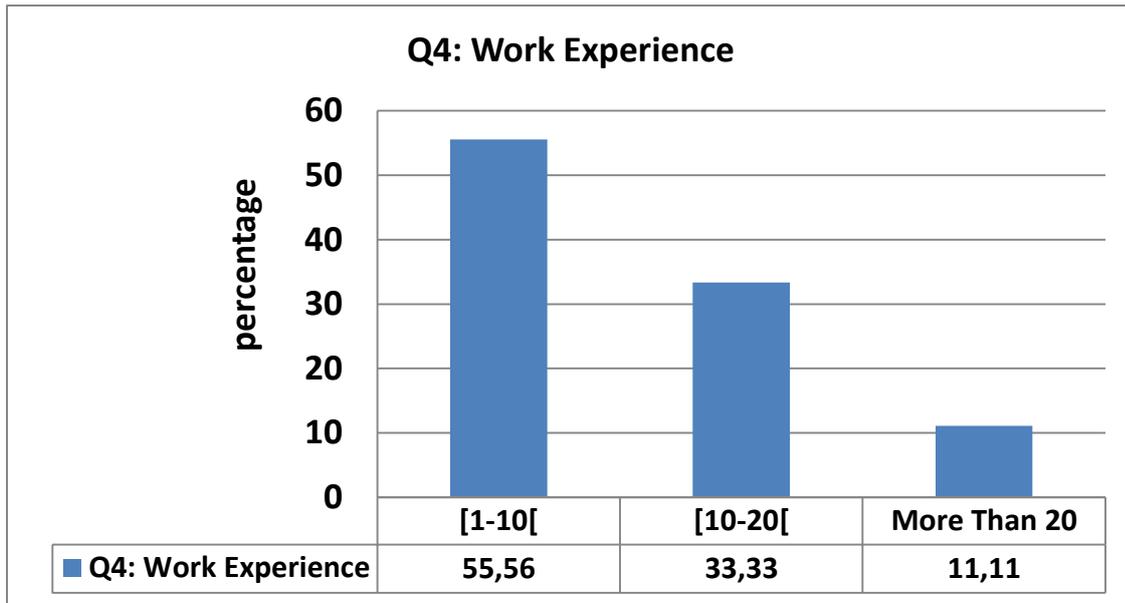
**Figure 2:** Teachers' Qualifications

The highest percentage (61,11%) was scored by the first category, that is that of teachers who have received a licence degree.

**Q4:** Work Experience (number of years)

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	[1-10[	10	55,56%
2	[10-20[	6	33,33%
3	More than 20	2	11,11%

**Table 6:** Teachers' Work Experience



**Graph 2:** Teachers' Work Experience

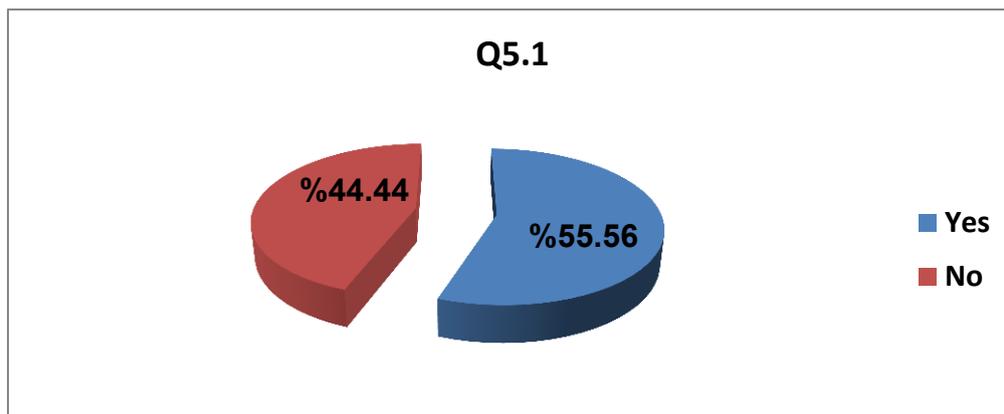
Table six is divided into three categories. The first category [1-10[represents the highest percentage in the table. (55,56% ) of the teachers have less than 10 years of experience in teaching English.(33,33%) represents the teachers who have between 10 to 20 years of experience. (11,11%), the lowest percentage in the table,is that scored by teachers who have more than 20 years work experience.

## Section two: Evaluation of the Implementation of CBA

**Q5:** Have you received training in implementing the CBA?

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	Yes	10	55,56%
2	No	8	44,44%
	<b>Total</b>	18	100%

**Table 7.1:** Teachers' training



**Figure 3.1:** Teachers' Training

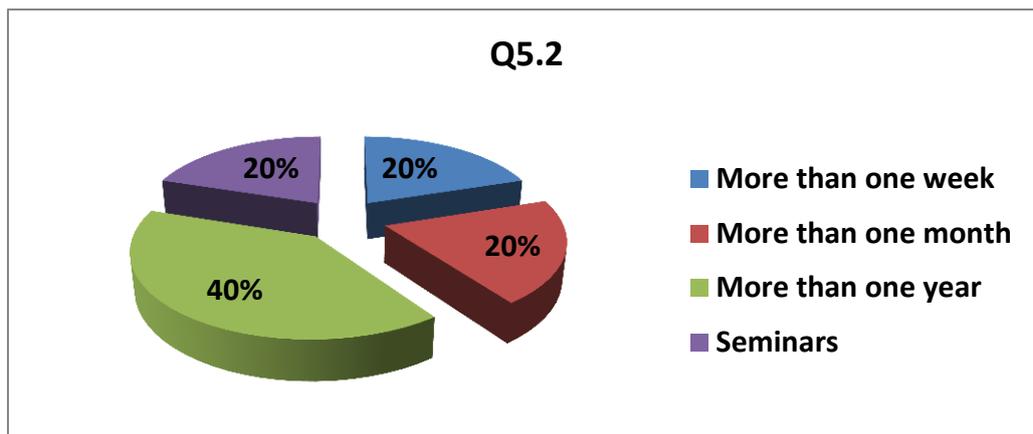
The table shows that (55,56%) of teachers mentioned that they have received a training in the implementation of the CBA, whereas (44,44%) of them said that they did not receive such a training.

A secondary question making part of question five and eliciting more information about said training has been asked. The question was:

If yes, how long have you been trained?

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	More than one week	2	20%
2	More than one month	2	20%
3	More than one year	4	40%
4	Seminars	2	20%

**Table 7.2:** Teachers' Training



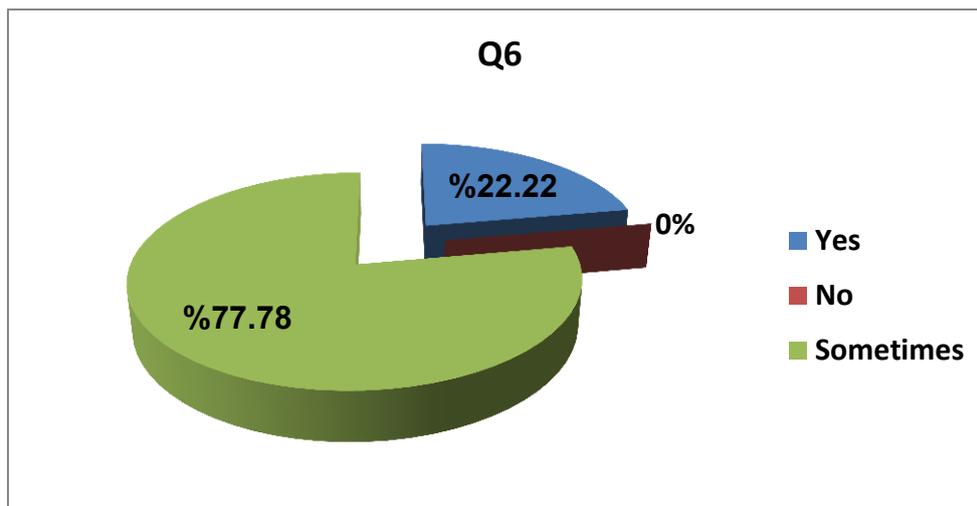
**Figure 3.2:** Teachers' Training

Question five was asked with the aim of knowing whether all teachers have received training or not and how long they have been trained in the implementation of the CBA, because the teachers' training has a great impact on the implementation of CBA. We noticed that the period of training differs from one teacher to another. The Answers show that (40%), the highest percentage, represents the teachers who have received training for more than one year whose studied in *ecole normale superieure(ENS)*. The answers show also that teachers who have been trained for more than one week and more than one month as well as those who have received training in the form of seminars scored the same percentage (20%).

**Q6:** Do you practically use CBA in teaching English?

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	Yes	4	22,22%
2	No	0	0%
3	Sometimes	14	77,78%

**Table 8:** Teachers' Use of the Competency-based Approach



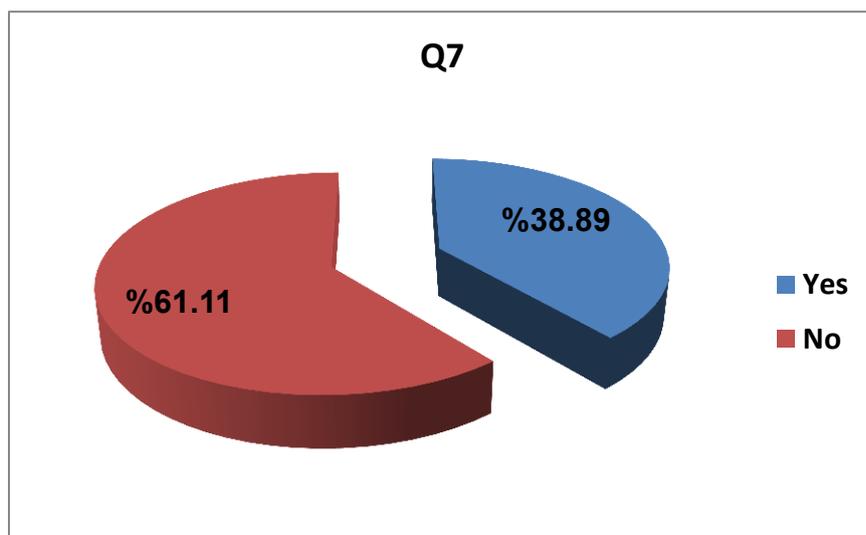
**Figure 4:** Teachers' use of Competency-based Approach

The sixth question was addressed to know whether the involved teachers in this piece of research practically use the CBA in teaching English. The purpose of this question is to know the extent to which the CBA is implemented in the classroom. (77,78%) of the respondents, that is 14 teachers, reported that they sometimes use the CBA in teaching English. Some teachers use the CBA when necessary as there are some tasks need pair-work and group-work. However, most of the teachers face some difficulties concerning the implementation of CBA because not all the lessons can be taught under the CBA such as grammar ones as well as it takes time. Also, the teaching context is not favorable for using it (level of learners, timing, large classes...). While,(22,22%) is scored by teachers who apply CBA constantly because they consider it as the suitable approach to teach English and the method that has to be implemented in Algeria. This means that, all the eighteen teachers practically use CBA in teaching English either constantly or sometimes.

**Q7:** Do you think that the implementation of CBA in teaching English is sufficient for your pupils to improve their competence?

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	Yes	7	38,89%
2	No	11	61,11%

**Table 9:** Teachers’ Opinion about the Sufficiency of CBA to Teach English



**Figure 5:** Teachers’ Opinion about the Sufficiency of CBA to Teach English

This question aimed to find out whether the implementation of CBA in teaching English is sufficient for the pupils to improve their competencies. Statistically,(61,11%) of the teachers involved in the present study said that the implementation of CBA in teaching English is not sufficient to improve their pupils’ competencies. They thought that it would be sufficient for good learners who are really motivated to learn the language. However, they reported that most of the classes are overcrowded full of slow learners who lack enough background knowledge to study following the CBA as well as most of them do not have the readiness to be autonomous in their learning. In addition, the teachers replied that pupils with different levels and backgrounds need more than one method, especially the weak ones, since learning a language needs practice and more authentic situations (motivation, environment). On the other hand,(38,89%) of the teachers argued that the implementation of CBA is

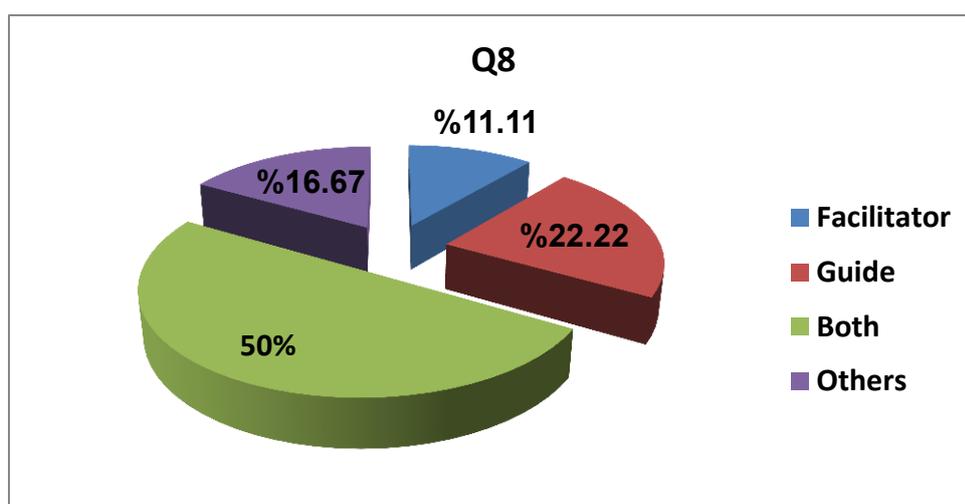
sufficient to improve the pupils' competencies because it helps them to acquire English through its four skills, and makes them able to deduce and anticipate more as well as to interact in the classroom in order to reach the realization of the fourth skill, that is writing. Moreover, pupils will be active participants under this approach, which would enable them to improve their competencies as well as build new ones, since the CBA puts them in problem solving situations, and hence, assuring the sense of group work and sharing information.

**Q8:** What is the role that you play when you teach using the CBA?

- a) A facilitator                      b) A guide                      c) Both                      d) Others

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	Facilitator	2	11,11%
2	Guide	4	22,22%
3	Both	9	50%
4	Others	3	16,67%

**Table 10:** The Teacher's Role under the CBA



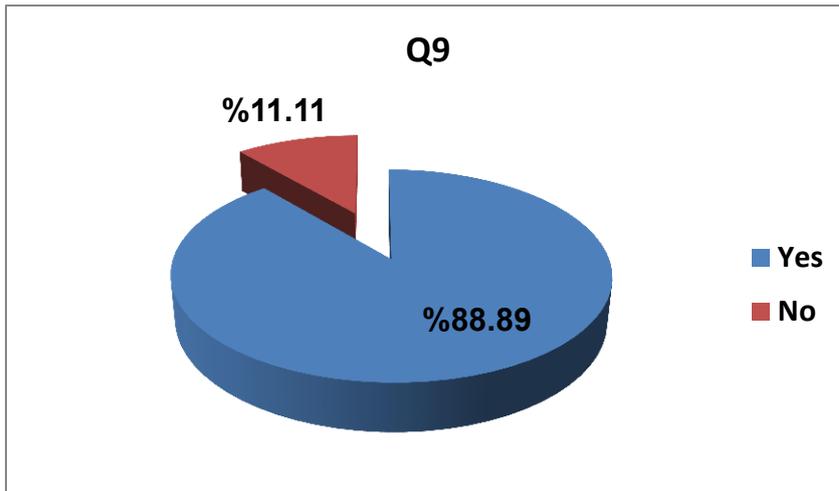
**Figure 6:** The Teacher's Role under the CBA

This question asked with the aim of checking the role of the teacher under the CBA. It highlights the extent to which the CBA is a learner-centered approach. The majority of the respondents (50%) said that they play the role of both a facilitator and a guide in which they facilitate the topics to their pupils and help them to find the best way to do the tasks whereby they give instructions and show them the guidelines to build rules. (22,22%) of the teachers said that their principal role is serving as a guide; according to these teachers, since the pupils are the ones who build their own competencies, the teachers guide them to use their knowledge and skills in order to solve the problems they have as well as help them to discover their mistakes and correct them together. The respondents who argued that their role is both being a guide and a facilitator added that they also play the role of a partner because they believe that a great majority of learners need a partner in their learning process, that is, the teacher has to create a sense of motivation inside the classroom. Al the more, they claim that they also play the role a monitor because CBA is a learner-centered approach. The lowest percentage (11,11%) was scored by the teachers who said thattheir role is confined to being a facilitator, in which they try to simplify the activities by explaining the difficult words and steps, and help them as well to be involved in the learning process in order to make them active and motivated. It can be concluded that the targeted population of our study, the teachers questioned, are aware of the roles that should be played under the CBA.

**Q9:** Do you find difficulties in implementing the CBA? If yes, explain them.

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	Yes	16	88,89%
2	No	2	11,11%

**Table 11:** Difficulties of the Implementation of the CBA



**Figure 7:** Difficulties of the Implementation of the CBA

Question nine was set to see whether the teachers face difficulties concerning the implementation of CBA or not. 11,11% of the teachers said that they do not face any difficulty in implementing the CBA. Whereas, the majority (88,89%) agreed upon the fact that they experience difficulties in such implementation. Among the common difficulties that the teachers face are large classes, the level of the learners, and time allocated to the implementation of such an approach, all of which obviously hinder the implementation of the CBA. This approach, according to the questioned teachers, fit better learners with high level, and most remarkably takes too much time to be adequately implemented. Another important difficulty is the lack of materials; the CBA also needs more ICTs and that is not available in some schools where pupils do not have these means to search and improve their competencies as well as to facilitate their learning process, meaning that the assistance of textbook is not enough. In addition, the type of activities does not favour the use of the CBA; they are too difficult for learners, especially when dealing with some lessons of grammar that need to use activities explicitly rather than implicitly in teaching.

**Q10:** Which activities “New Prospects” emphasizes?

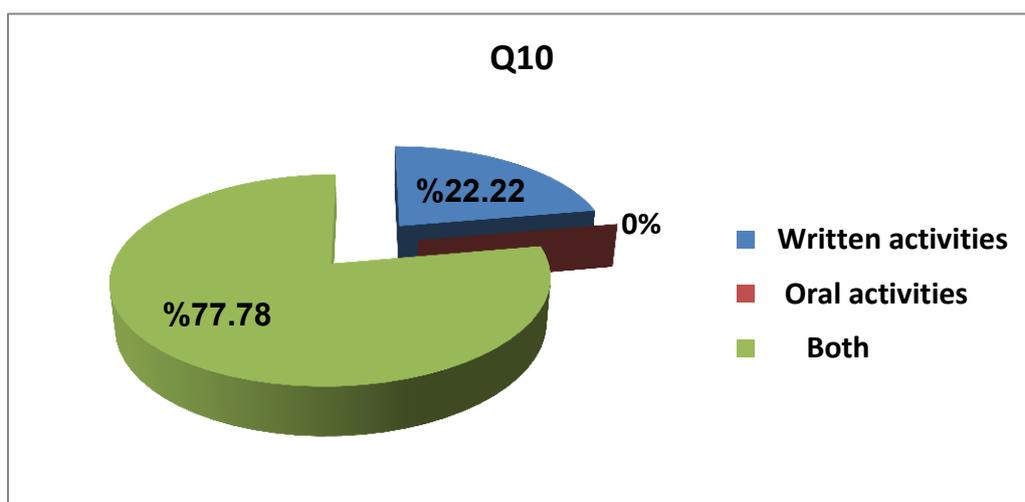
a) Written activities

b) Oral activities

c) Both

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	Written activities	4	22,22%
2	Oral activities	0	0%
3	Both	14	77,78%

**Table 12:** The Activities that the Textbook “New Prospects” Emphasizes



**Figure 8:** The Activities that the Textbook “New Prospects” Emphasizes

In the question ten, the teachers were requested to choose from the list which activities (written, oral, both) the textbook “New Prospect” emphasizes more. We wanted to figure out, which activities the CBA focuses on more, and whether there is any balance between language form and language use in this textbook. The majority of the of teachers (77,78%)reported that the textbook emphasizes both written and oral activities, while a minority of them (22,22%) answered that the textbook “New Prospects” focuses more on the written activities.

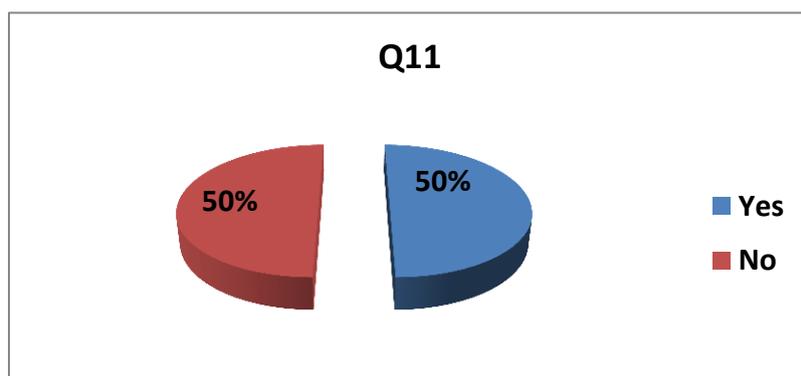
**Q 11:** Do you find that the activities of the textbook match the learners’ actual level?

a) Yes

b) No

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	Yes	9	50%
2	No	9	50%

**Table 13:** Teachers' Perception about the Matching of the Textbook Activities with the Learners' Actual Level



**Figure 9:** Teachers' Perception about the Matching of the Textbook Activities with the Learners' Actual Level

This question aimed to investigate whether the textbook's activities match the learners' actual level. In fact, we found that the answer of yes and no were equal in number and thus in percentage. While 50% of the respondents believe that the textbook's activities really match the level of the learners, exactly the same percentage of them maintains the contrary.

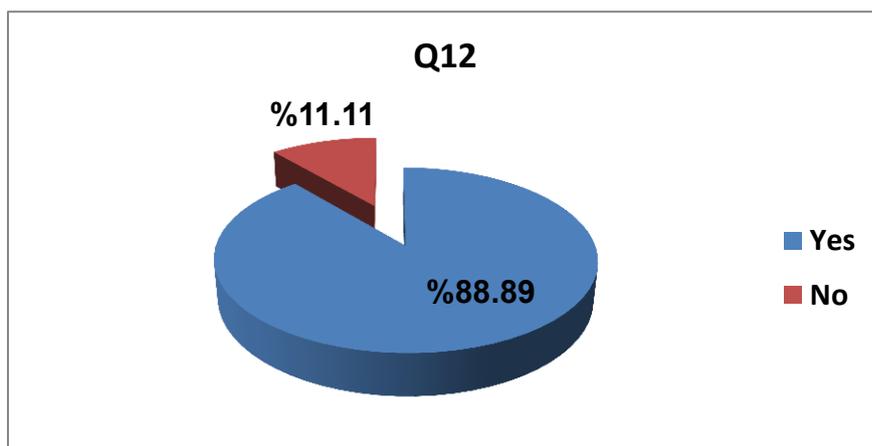
**Q 12:** Do you rely on other materials while teaching than "New Prospects"?

a) Yes

b) No

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	Yes	16	88,89%
2	No	2	11,11%

**Table 14:** Teachers' Use of Extra Materials



**Figure 10:** Teachers' Use of Extra Materials

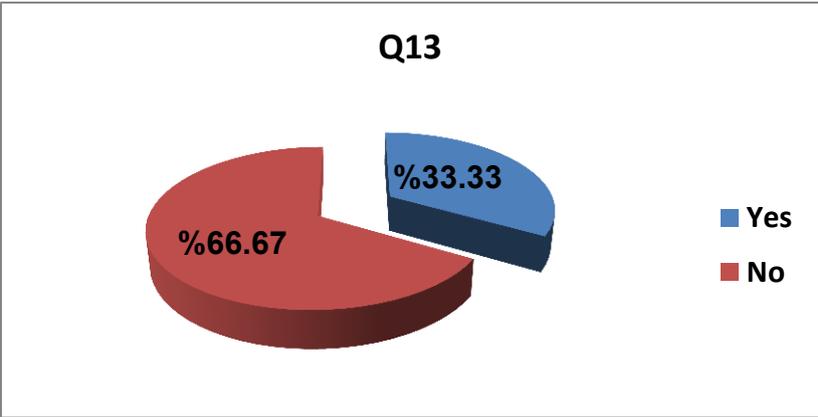
Question twelve was put to the respondents in order to see whether they rely on the textbook during the teaching process alone or they use other materials. We seek to know whether the textbook “New Prospects” really helps the teacher in motivating his learners that makes him rely just on it without requiring the use of other materials to support his teaching. The majority (88,89 %) of teachers agreed upon the use of other materials than the textbook because this helps motivate their pupils and allay the classroom routine. Therefore, the teachers use ICTs such as, data show, pictures, videos, video songs, and flash cards as well as the use of dictionaries, printed documents, texts and extra books in order to make pupils more enthusiastic and willing to learn. In addition, new activities are sometimes brought in to cope with the learners' level: sometimes the activities in the textbook are difficult for learners because of their weak level so the teacher look for other simple and easy ones that meet their level. A minority of 11,11 % said that they rely solely on “New Prospects”. Consequently, one

can deduce that the teachers are of the opinion that supplementing the textbook with extra materials is of a great importance as it supports the teaching/ learning process.

**Q13:** Do you find the textbook pedagogically satisfactory as it is the most available and required material to use?

/	Options	F	P(%)
1	Yes	6	33,33%
2	No	12	66,67%

**Table 15:** The Teachers’ Perception about the Satisfaction of the Textbook



**Figure 11:** The Teachers’ Perception about the Satisfaction of the Textbook

In this question, our purpose was to figure out whether “New Prospects” is pedagogically satisfactory since it is the most available material and the one the teachers are required by the Ministry to use. Around (33,33%) of the participants reported that the textbook is satisfactory, though they believe that it needs updating. However, the rest (66,67%) said that it is not, because the level of the learners is too weak to enable them to fully grasp the content of the textbook, which demands from the teachers double effort in order to convey such content by way of simplification.

## **3.2. Classroom Observation**

### **3.2.1. Classroom Observation Description**

In our study, we have chosen classroom observation to be the second tool as it is the most appropriate for our research work. The aim of this classroom observation is to check the extent to which Competency-based Approach is actually implemented in the third year Algerian secondary school classes.

The classroom observation took place in four secondary schools in Jijel during four sessions. On Sunday, the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2018, we have attended the first session in Kaoula Tunes secondary school. After having carried out an observation in Kaoula secondary school we moved to Ayad AbdAlkader in Elhaddada on the 9<sup>th</sup> April. The third session was held in Dara'a Mohammed Esadak secondary school on Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup>. Finally, the last session, which was held on Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup>, took place in Zayn Mohammed Ben Rabeh secondary school.

### **3.2.2. Analysis and Discussion of Classroom Observation**

In the classroom observation we have focused on teacher's and learners' behaviors in which we have used both notes taking and tapes recording. To achieve the purposes of this work, our classroom observation was conducted in four separate 3<sup>rd</sup> year secondary school classrooms in which we have attended one session in each class. The classroom observation was divided into two parts: one for teacher's behaviors while the other one for learners' behaviors. Throughout the classroom observation we have observed the fact that the classroom is a teacher-centered one in which the teacher was the authority in the class whereby he did not give his pupils the authority to take charge of their classroom or their learning process. Also, he was the one who cleaned the board and wrote the date and title of unit in which he used traditional material such as: chalk, board, and the textbook "New

Prospects” which was used as the main material. After that, he explained the lecture and then provided his students with some tasks.

Concerning the second part in our observation which was devoted to the pupils’ behaviors we could observe that the majority of pupils were passive receivers in the learning process. They seemed uninterested, sitting on their desks, writing down what they are told to and waiting for the bell. Also, it can be inferred from the observation that the pupils’ main interest was only to receive information from their teachers in order to be able to answer the BAC exam questions and not to develop their communicative skills where they were asking their teacher to solve some previous BAC exam samples instead of the textbook activities. Unexpectedly, most of the pupils did not bring their textbooks. Moreover, what we have observed is that there was no reciprocity in communication, and pupils did not show any reaction or attempt to communicate neither with their teacher nor with their peers because of their weak language in so far they did not pay attention or even notice any mistake among each other but rather their mistakes were corrected by the teacher.

Over all, the pupils in the four sessions that we have attended did not show any attempt to be in charge in their learning process where they were passively sitting and waiting for their teachers to present the lesson ignoring all about developing their language and improving their levels. The teachers were doing the lesson for the sake of some pupils (around 5) who were the ones trying to be autonomous and care about their learning. In addition to what we have observed, the teachers themselves reported that the level of most pupils is weak and they do not show any reaction or attempt at least for the sake of learning.

Through the observation that took place in four secondary schools, we have found approximately the same results. The teachers whom we attended the sessions with claimed that the Competency-based approach normally should be applied in small classes with

advanced learners, but this is not the case that we have come across in which those teachers have revealed that most of the pupils are weak and they do not play their principal role. Through class observation, we have found out that all the classes are overcrowded; the class is out of control. We noticed also the absence of communication between the teacher and the students and among the students themselves. In addition, normally, under the CBA, when a pupil makes a mistake, his/her peers are supposed to correct him and not the teacher in order to raise the group work but since the majority of pupils are weak, no one dares or is able to even notice such mistakes. Hence, the teacher plays a double role. Also, we have remarked that the teachers use traditional materials in presenting their lessons, such as the board and chalk and the textbook, which does not actually motivate the pupils to be actively involved in the acquisition process, instead of using audio-visual aids that facilitate language learning, raise the learner's interest and motivation, and reduce boredom and routine.

Finally, classroom observation has shown that the competency-based class in the Algerian secondary school context is not really competency-based in a strict sense. The teachers rely mostly on their intuition in order to implement the program and finish the syllabus. It could be said also that the teachers respond to the learners' ultimate focus, which is the BAC exam, by preparing them to be able to answer successfully the questions of the secondary school final examination, instead of helping them develop language skills and improve their level in English

### **3.3. Findings**

The present study aims basically to evaluate teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of CBA in the Algerian secondary schools. The results obtained from the analysis of both the classroom observation and the questionnaire have revealed many facts on the teachers' attitudes to the CBA as the adopted method.

1. Though the competency-based approach is the only approach that is used in teaching English in the Algerian secondary schools, not all teachers use it. In other words, approximately all teachers agree on the fact that the teaching context is not favorable for using the CBA.
2. Normally the CBA is a learner-centered approach but in the Algerian secondary school classes the results show the opposite in which the teacher still play the principal role in the teaching/ learning process.
3. The majority of the questioned teachers find many challenges in implementing the CBA inside their classes including level of learners, large classes, lack of materials, time constraints, and absence of communication.
4. From the results, it appears that most of the teachers are not satisfied of using such an approach because it takes too much time as they make double efforts. Moreover, the challenges that are mentioned above do not suit the Algerian context.
5. Normally, with the coming of any new approach, teachers should receive training that it has a crucial role in the implementation of any approach in order to implement the approach effectively. However, the results show that most of the participants did not receive enough training but only those who studied in ENS did.
6. The textbook is not sufficient as it is the most available and required material to use that is why teachers rely on other materials such as: data show, videos, internet, etc.
7. Inadequate training of teachers for a CBA context, ineffective communication between teacher and students as well as humble teaching materials are the major challenges that the third year English secondary school teachers encounter in implementing the CBA in their classes.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has been devoted to the test of the hypothesis. It has reported the practical work which served as a basis to check the validity of the stated hypothesis. The analysis of both the questionnaire and the classroom observation proved that Algerian secondary school English teachers have negative attitudes toward the implementation of the Competency-based Approach not because the approach itself, but due to the inappropriate circumstances inside their classrooms. In other words, the majority of teachers affirm that the requirements of the CBA are not met in the Algerian context and that the textbook they rely on is not sufficient as it is the most available and required material to use.

## **General Conclusion and Recommendations**

The present study attempts to gain more insights on the implementation of the CBA in the Algerian secondary school classes with specific focus on the teachers' attitudes towards this approach. The main concern is to investigate the extent to which CBA is implemented.

It was assumed that the Competency-based Approach is adequately implemented in the Algerian secondary school, that the Algerian secondary-school English language teachers hold a positive attitude to such implementation, and that the textbook "New Prospects", mainly designed in the light of the Competency-based Approach, meets the learners' needs. To confirm or disconfirm the assumption, questions had to be asked. These are restated below:

1. To what extent is Competency-based Approach implemented in the third year secondary school textbook "New Prospects"?
2. What are the attitudes of secondary school teachers to the Competency-based Approach?
3. Does the textbook "New Prospects" meet the learners' needs?

In fact, the analysis of both of the teachers' questionnaire and the classroom observation revealed that the majority of the participants did not actually implement the CBA constantly. Questioned about how they viewed the approach, the participant shield a negative attitude toward its implementation. This contradicts some claims in the literature and the findings of some previous researches asserting that teachers hold positive attitudes toward the implementation of the Competency-based Approach. The participants agreed on the fact that the teaching environment in which this approach is to be implemented is not favorable. In addition, the results show that the participants are equally divided as to the meeting of the

textbook “New Prospects” of the learners needs, as fifty percent of them said it did and the same percentage said it did not.

Thus, the findings of this study have partly disconfirmed the assumption. In other words, the teachers face difficulties in implementing such approach, including the problem of large classes and that of the weak level of learners. Confronted with these problems, the teacher is overwhelmed by pressure demanding from him a double teaching effort. Normally, the CBA is a learner-centered approach whereby the teacher gives the opportunity to learners to work by themselves, but unfortunately, the learners do not give any assistance which forces the teacher to work by his own and to assume most of the burden. Also, the “New Prospects”, normally the only teaching material mostly used in class, is not sufficient because it sometimes results in the students’ boredom due to the teaching routine they have to cope with, which requires other attractive materials, particularly motivating aids, such as the data show and audio-videos, etc. One can safely claim that teachers are not satisfied with the implementation of the CBA, and are led to depart from it when it comes to practice. Furthermore, they call for the provision of a more comfortable context that suits the implementation of CBA including small classes, more aids and teaching media in class in order to raise motivation as well as to give pupils the chance to improve their language skills.

The problems encountered in the Algerian secondary school with regard to the CBA do not mean that the approach is not good. The problem lies in its implementation due to the surrounding obstacles that hinder the success of the teaching process. Consequently, it is high time to find solutions to the observed problems of the weak level of learners, large classes, lack of materials, absence of communication and time constraints, for the success of the implementation of the CBA cannot be achieved without having first overcome all of these drawbacks. To do so, the Ministry in charge has to empirically evaluate the teaching environment, practically give alternatives and find solution instead of giving unrealizable

suggestions, and involve teachers in its design of the syllabus and the setting of programs. It is only through these endeavors that the teaching and learning environments could be made more suitable for an effective implementation of the CBA.

## **Limitations of the study**

In fact, we found some difficulties and limitations during the process of conducting this piece of research.

1) Concerning our theme “An Evaluation of the Implementation of the CBA in the Algerian Secondary School”, the case of the textbook “New Prospects”, there was a lack of references concerning the first chapter. Therefore, we lost time seeking for the sources.

2) Another obstacle was the number of teachers to whom the questionnaire was administered. We intended to collect a large number of teachers, but unfortunately we were allowed to enter only seven secondary schools and since we dealt only with third year English teachers, the population investigated was limited.

3) Another encountered limitation took place when making classroom observation. We did not have the chance to attend the number of sessions we hoped to attend because of the collective absence of the pupils many times.

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## Teacher's Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is an important part of a research work. It aims to evaluate the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach at the third year secondary school through the textbook "New Prospects". You are kindly requested to answer the following questionnaire. Your answers will remain anonymous. We also tend to inform you that there are neither "right" nor "wrong" answers. So, please for the sake of reliability, give your answers as sincerely as can be.

Thank you in advance

Would you, please, tick the appropriate answer or write full statements when necessary.

### Section one: Qualifications and experiences:

1) Age

2) Gender:

a) Male

b) Female

3)Qualifications:

a) Licence  Master  c) ENS

4) Work experience (number of years)

### Section two: Evaluation of the Implementation of CBA

5) Have you received training in implementing the CBA?

a) Yes

b) No

If yes, how long have you been trained?

.....

6) Do you practically use CBA in teaching English?

a) Yes       b) No       c) Sometimes

Whatever your answer, please justify it.

.....  
.....

7. Do you think that the implementation of CBA in teaching English is sufficient for your pupils to improve their competences?

a) Yes       b) No

Please, justify your answer.

.....  
.....

8) What is the role that you play when you teach using the CBA?

a) A facilitator

b) A guide

c) Others

Explain the role briefly, please.

.....  
.....

9) Do you find difficulties in implementing the CBA? If yes, explain them.

.....

.....

.....

.....

10) Which activities “New Prospect” emphasizes:

a) Written activities

b) Oral activities

c) Both

11) Do you find that the activities of the textbook match the learners’ actual level?

a) Yes

b) No

12) Do you rely on other materials while teaching than “New Prospects?”

a) Yes

b) No

If yes, would you please specify what these materials are?

.....

.....

13) Do you find the textbook pedagogically satisfactory as it is the most available and required material to use?

a) Yes

b) No

Thank you so much for your collaboration

## Résumé

L'approche par compétences a été adoptée par les pays développés dans systèmes éducatifs longtemps abandonner les approches centrées sur l'enseignant qui ont prévalu au-delà des centres, cette pédagogie s'est imposée dans le domaine de l'éducation comme un moyen de besoins de la nouvelle génération et d'intégrer des approches centrées sur l'apprenant dans zone pédagogique. Il était donc nécessaire que l'Algérie adopte une telle approche en 2003 à la suite de la réforme de l'éducation dans les écoles primaires, intermédiaires et secondaires en termes de mise en œuvre de nouveaux curricula et d'une nouvelle approche basée sur les compétences. Le but du présent travail de recherche est d'évaluer la mise en œuvre de l'approche par compétences dans le secondaire algérien, notamment à travers le manuel de troisième année «Nouvelles perspectives». Cette recherche vise également à confirmer ou à infirmer l'hypothèse selon laquelle les enseignants d'anglais des écoles secondaires algériennes de troisième année ont une attitude positive vis-à-vis de la mise en œuvre de l'approche par compétences. Pour ce faire, les questions suivantes ont été posées: dans quelle mesure cette approche est-elle mise en œuvre dans le manuel de l'enseignement secondaire de troisième année intitulée «Nouvelles perspectives»? Quelles sont les attitudes des enseignants du secondaire à l'approche par compétences ? Le manuel «Nouvelles perspectives», répond-il aux besoins des apprenants? En conséquence, notre enquête a été réalisée à travers l'observation en classe qui a eu lieu dans 7 écoles secondaires à Jijel ainsi que par l'analyse d'un questionnaire fourni aux 18 professeurs de troisième année pour recueillir plus d'informations sur l'attitude des enseignants, ainsi que les circonstances qui entourent leur pratique lors de l'application d'une telle approche. Contre nos attentes, les résultats montrent que la majorité des enseignants ont une attitude négative vis-à-vis de l'approche par compétences, mais ils essaient de l'appliquer dans leurs classes, quelles que soient les difficultés qu'ils rencontrent, comme le niveau des apprenants, le problème des classes

nombreuses, le manque de matériel, les contraintes de temps, l'absence de communication entre les enseignants et les apprenants, et ainsi de suite. À la lumière des obstacles susmentionnés, les enseignants affirment la nécessité de surmonter ces difficultés afin de rendre la mise en œuvre de cette approche plus pratique.

## الملخص

لقد تم تبني منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات من طرف الكثير من الدول المتقدمة في أنظمتها التعليمية منذ وقت طويل وبالتالي تم التخلي عن المنهج الذي كان يعتبر المعلم محور العملية التعليمية و الذي ساد على مدى قرون خلت. هذا المنهج فرض نفسه في مجال التعليم كوسيلة لتلبية احتياجات الجيل الجديد ودمج مناهج التعليم التي تركز على المتعلم في الساحة التربوية. ولذلك كان من الضروري أن تعتمد الجزائر مثل هذا المنهج في سنة 2003 نتيجة للإصلاحات المتخذة في الأطوار التعليمية الثلاثة: الابتدائي والمتوسط والثانوي من حيث تنفيذ المناهج الجديدة ومنهج جديد يركز على الكفاءات. ويكمن الغرض من هذا البحث في تقييم تنفيذ منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات في المدرسة الثانوية في الجزائر، خاصة من خلال كتاب "New Prospects" الخاص بتلاميذ السنة الثالثة ثانوي. ويهدف هذا البحث كذلك إلى تأكيد أو نفي الفرضية التي مفادها أن أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية للسنة الثالثة ثانوي لديهم موقف ايجابي من تطبيق منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات. وللوصول إلى ذلك تم طرح الأسئلة التالية: إلى أي مدى يتم تطبيق المقاربة بالكفاءات في الكتاب المدرسي "آفاق جديدة" للسنة الثالثة ثانوي؟ ما هي مواقف أساتذة التعليم الثانوي من منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات؟ هل يلبي الكتاب المدرسي "آفاق جديدة" احتياجات تلاميذ السنة الثالثة ثانوي؟ وبناء على ذلك تم إجراء التحقيق عبر الملاحظة داخل الأقسام أثناء الدرس في سبعة مدارس ثانوية بمدينة جيجل، كما تم أيضا عبر تحليل الاستبيان الذي قدم إلى ثمانية عشر أستاذا للسنة الثالثة ثانوي من أجل الحصول على المزيد من المعلومات فيما يخص موقفهم من تنفيذ المقاربة بالكفاءات. وكذا الظروف التي تحيط تطبيقهم لهذا المنهج. وخلافا لتوقعاتنا، فإن النتائج أظهرت أن معظم الأساتذة لديهم موقف سلبي من منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات، ولكنهم يحاولون تطبيقه رغم الصعوبات التي تعترضهم مثل مستوى التلاميذ واكتظاظ الأقسام ونقص الوسائل اللازمة وعدم توفر

الوقت الكافي وغياب التواصل بين الأساتذة والتلاميذ وما إلى ذلك. في ضوء الصعوبات المشار إليها أعلاه يجمع الأساتذة

على ضرورة التغلب على الصعوبات المذكورة من أجل جعل تطبيق منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات أكثر عملية.