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***Teaching Reading Strategies and Skills in  
the Algerian Middle School:  
The Case of Tizi-Ouzou.***

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation addresses the issue of reading strategies instruction in the Algerian Middle School in the light of the 'Interactive Approach' to reading. It examines the middle school syllabuses, the reading activities suggested in the textbooks together with the teachers' reading instruction practices, using analytic categories from formal research. Specifically, it seeks to determine whether reading strategies instruction is integrated within English Language Teaching programmes so that learners could develop appropriate reading strategies. Accordingly, the study conducted is a 'context evaluation'; a study technique aiming to improve a programme by evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. The final results of the study reveal that many underlying factors contribute to the inappropriate reading strategies instruction in the Middle School. First, the Algerian Middle School syllabuses do not provide the teachers with some instructional hints concerning reading strategies instruction. Second, some weaknesses of the reading activities provided in the textbooks are noted. Finally, the teachers are not appropriately prepared to adopt the new teaching paradigms grounded in the educational philosophy of the recent educational reform. Accordingly, the work ends with some suggestions and recommendations that are likely to improve reading strategies instruction in the Algerian Middle School.

## **Key words**

Reading strategies; reading skills; interactive approach; Algerian middle school; syllabus; reading activities; reading instruction practices.

*To my dear parents, brothers, sisters and Yacine.*

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**ALM:** Audio-Lingual Method

**BEM:** Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen

**CBA:** Competency-Based Approach

**CERIST:** Centre de Recherche sur l'Information Technique

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**FL:** Foreign Language

**GTM:** Grammar Translation Method

**ITE:** Institut Technologique de l'Education

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**MS:** Middle School

**MSE:** Middle School Education

**PEM:** Professeur d'Enseignement Moyen

**PCEF:** Professeur Certifié de l'Enseignement Fondamental

## **General Introduction**

The present dissertation addresses the issue of teaching reading skills and strategies in the Algerian Middle School within the framework of the recent reform in the educational system launched in 2001. Our study focuses on three aspects of the teaching process: the syllabuses, the textbooks and the implementation of their orientations and contents in the classroom. It is conducted in the light of the 'Interactive Approach' to reading, according to which reading must be viewed as an interactive process taking place between the reader and the text, and resulting in comprehension.

Starting from the point that reading plays a crucial role in the Foreign Language (FL) teaching/learning process, we shall attempt at determining the extent to which it is used both as a means for the presentation of language points and as a skill that constitutes an end in itself. As Stephen Krashen rightly states it, in addition to being a means for linguistic improvement, reading is conducive to vocabulary acquisition, the development of writing styles as well as cognitive abilities (2006). Our main concern, therefore, is to ascertain whether these and other literacy abilities, inherent in the linguistic and methodological objectives for teaching English as a foreign language in Algeria, are faithfully translated in the syllabuses, consistently fleshed out in the textbooks and efficiently implemented in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

Our interest in the way reading is treated arises from the poor performance of the Middle School students at the Middle School Brevet (Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen '*BEM*') examination taken in June 2007 - the first '*BEM*' exam after the implementation of the reform of Middle School Education that started in September 2003. Statistics reveal that the national rate of success was lower than expected (only 44.17% in Tizi-Ouzou according to the Ministry of Education, in comparison with 67.34% in 2006 in the former system, i.e., the BEF '*Brevet d'Enseignement Fondamental*') and much lower in the English subject. Yet, it has to

be observed that the reading skill is given primacy if we look at it within the Algerian educational context. Firstly, the 'BEM' exam is totally of the reading/writing mode, even if test designers, at times, include tasks involving the oral skills, such as pronunciation and some elementary aspects of stress and intonation. Secondly, a glance at the syllabuses reveals that the Algerian methodologists and syllabus designers seem to share Warwick B. Elley's view that reading is first of all a means of learning a second language before being a means of acquiring information about academic subjects (in Alderson, J. Charles, and Urquhart, A. H. 1984: 298). Warwick attributes his learners' "weakness in English to their lack of opportunity to read at an early stage". He recommends "ample supplies of 'simple' FL reading material as a way of improving students' performance" (Quoted in Ibid). Therefore, it can well be argued that the learners' unsatisfactory performance at the 'BEM' exam ultimately results from weaknesses in the teaching of reading comprehension and the development of the skill as such. This state of affairs results in negative effects on the students' achievement in other language skills, and more particularly in writing.

Our assumption is that the learners' low rate of success results essentially from reading problems. Accordingly, it is our intention to enquire into the teaching of the reading skill at the level of the Middle School. We will do so not only because the mastery of reading, as it seems to be suggested above, guarantees success in the final exam, but also because of the objectives announced in the syllabuses. One of them is to enable the learners to have access to technical and scientific literature published in English today, an access that will ensure further academic and professional success, as well as personal development. Of course, this objective may be achieved only if students acquire the ability to read and to understand texts fairly well, i.e. at a reasonably good rate.

At the heart of the Algerian educational reform is the Competency-Based Approach which, in the words of Faïza Bensemmane, one of the syllabus designers, borrows its

principles from social constructivism (2005: 136). The Competency-Based Approach perceives learning as a dynamic, social and cognitive construction. It breaks new grounds for the development of the learners' intellectual and social skills, as well as their autonomy. In this approach, learning to learn by using appropriate strategies displaces the old conception of learning at the beck and call of the teacher.

Three competencies are spelled out in the syllabuses for English in the Middle School: interaction, interpretation and production (Programme d'Anglais de la 1ère Année Moyenne, 2002:52-53). These competencies are recommended to be developed through the teaching of the four language skills in problem solving situations. The reading skill is closely tied to the competency of interpretation. This is the reason why we assume that the competency of interpretation can be best implemented, among many other means, through conscious and systematic teaching of reading strategies. Indeed, many scholars agree on the fact that the absence of appropriate reading strategies is a common cause of the learners' reading comprehension failure (Carrell, P 1989; Block, 1986; Hosenfeld, C; Williams and baker 2001; Pesseley and Block 2002). It has also been argued that reading strategy instruction improves the literacy level of the learners, and thus enhances their command of the language. With the support of these findings, we assume that instruction in reading strategies is a key for improving the learners' reading levels.

## **Review of the Literature**

Being a complex interaction of three parameters (teacher, text and learners) teaching/learning the reading skill has been the object of a great amount of research in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and educational psychology. All these researches have focused on one or more of these factors and examined them in relation to different variables, such as proficiency level, text and strategy difficulties, learners' background

knowledge, etc. In the review of the literature, we shall focus our attention only on the works conducted from the perspective of reading strategy instruction.

As reading strategy instruction has become an important field in ELT, a profusion of study articles and books have been published in this vein in the last three decades. Our interest in this research area stems from the assumption that success in learning to read depends on appropriate reading strategy use. Since the early 1970's, a significant amount of research has been directed towards the effects of reading strategy instruction in EFL educational settings. The early studies were mainly exploratory and descriptive researches that aimed at identifying the relationships between certain types of reading strategies and successful and unsuccessful reading by using mainly think-aloud techniques (Carrell, P. 1998: 05). The findings of these studies acknowledge the effectiveness of strategy training in enhancing Second/Foreign Language learners' comprehension, as well as their performances on tests (Carrell, 1985; Pearson and Fielding, 1991). They also recommend that Foreign/Second Language pedagogy should include explicit reading strategy training.

Carol Hosenfeld and Ellen Block have conducted exploratory studies on the issue of learners' use of reading strategies and its impact on their reading success or failure. In 1977, Hosenfeld studied U.S high school students' reading abilities in French, German, and Spanish. As for Block, she studied in 1986 non-proficient readers in order to find out the characteristics that differentiate the more successful from the less successful readers. Their results show that non-proficient readers either do not possess knowledge about reading strategies, or simply engage in bottom-up strategies, which are not always conducive to meaning construction. There have been several other case studies similarly showing the relationships that lie between various reading strategies and successful or unsuccessful second language reading (Devine 1984; Hauptman, 1979; Knight, Padron, and Waxman, 1985; and Sarig, 1987. In Carrell, P. 1998: 06)

In addition to the learners' use of reading strategies, strategy research has begun to focus on metacognition, particularly on the relationships that hold between metacognitive awareness, strategy use, and reading comprehension. Patricia Carrell (1989) conducted an exploratory study in this subject in order to examine the effects of cognitive and metacognitive strategy instruction on reading comprehension. Her study was followed by Raymond's (1993), who undertook a similar task, from an experimental perspective. The findings of the two studies indicate that good readers are more aware of the reading strategies they use, and that they use them more efficiently than poor readers. Moreover, the same results show that cognitive and metacognitive reading strategy instruction is effective in enhancing reading comprehension. Other researches have demonstrated that less skilled readers are likely to overcome their difficulties in reading if they are given some systematic reading strategy instruction.

As for the teachers' education and training, Sumita Pani's study (2006) explored the development of in-service teachers when a reading strategy instruction programme was offered to them. Pani's interest in teachers' strategy knowledge and training stemmed from her conviction that teachers need essential orientation in strategy training in order to fulfil the new roles that India's new teaching/learning paradigms impose on them. The final result of Pani's longitudinal study revealed the positive influence of reading strategy instruction programme on teacher development. This leads us to say that the first step towards implementing strategy pedagogy is to include the principles of strategy pedagogy in teachers' education and training programmes.

Finally, as far as the issue of teaching reading strategies in the Algerian context is concerned, it seems that this subject has not yet attracted scholarly attention. Indeed, the CERIST (Centre de Recherche sur l'Information Technique) Dissertation Abstract database does not mention any work conducted in this field, be it in English or in any other language,

such as Arabic and French. Therefore, we think that our research interest remains a fertile field of investigation, especially as the recent reform in the educational sector has brought about a new ELT programme, together with new textbooks, which invites to a great amount of scholarly study.

### **The Research Problem**

The review of the literature above has shown that most of the studies that have addressed the issue of teaching reading strategies, not to say all of them, are unanimous to state that the teaching of text-processing skills enhances the learners' reading proficiency. Therefore, we propose ourselves to extend this kind of investigation to the Algerian context in order to explore new possibilities in teaching English for beginning learners, in general, and improve the literacy level of these learners, in particular. In our view, the fulfilment of these objectives may largely help to improve our learners' command of the English language, and thus increase their chances of success at the BEM exam.

The exploration of the issue of teaching reading strategies in the Algerian Middle School may be conducted at three levels of investigation: the reading programme designed in the new textbooks, the teachers' practices in the classroom, and the learners' reading behaviours. However, in our research, we limit the scope of the study to the first two levels, because the issue of the learners' text-processing habits involves cognitive and metacognitive processes that are beyond the scope of our modest investigation. By limiting the scope of our study, we nevertheless hope to reach results that are likely to spot the place of reading instruction in the recent reform of Foreign Language education. In addition, we hope to throw some light on the teachers' behaviours in reading classes, especially as they are reflected in their strategy training and practice.

To begin with, the first level of our investigation, i.e., Middle School syllabuses and textbooks, beg many questions as to the way they approach reading comprehension from a language processing perspective: First, does the reading programme developed in the new textbooks provide enough practice about the reading strategies formulated in the official syllabuses? Second, what is the procedural design followed by the textbook designers to translate these text processing skills into classroom activities? Third, are the reading selections appropriate to both the proficiency level and the interest of the learners? The latter question brings us to the issues of the students' literacy skills and their cognitive abilities. James Coady states that the typical reader "acquires the skill of reading by moving from the more concrete process strategies to the more abstract" (Coady, J. in Mackay, C et al. 1979:7). In the light of this statement, another question arises: Is there any gradation in the teaching and practice of the different types of comprehension processes involved in the reading and study of texts?

The second level of our investigation of reading strategies instruction will involve the teachers themselves. As active agents in the classroom, the teachers are requested to materialise the recent reform in Foreign Language teaching by creating a context environment that is likely to ensure the development of their learners' linguistic, cultural and cognitive skills. As far as the issue of teaching reading strategies is concerned, it is obvious that the teachers' knowledge of reading processes greatly enhances their performances. Accordingly, we wonder whether Middle School teachers are aware of the importance of reading strategy instruction in learning a foreign language. In other words, to what extent are the teachers aware of the appropriateness of teaching reading strategies as a crucial feature of English classes? Have they undergone any kind of training in reading strategy instruction?

Besides the interest in the teachers' perception and theoretical knowledge of reading strategies, our research intends also to analyse the teachers' performance in the classroom.

This task will be carried out through an investigation of the procedures and techniques used by the teachers in their attempt to implement the instructions contained in the syllabuses, and thus may lead to the attainment of reading objectives, in general, and the teaching of language processing skills, in particular. It will lead us to observe and analyse the reading techniques used by the teachers in order to help their students cope with reading selections. Starting from the assumption that the teacher's task is to teach learners "to use reading strategies appropriate to the task at hand" (Clarke and Silberstein in *ibid*: 50), we shall also focus our attention on the appropriateness and the pertinence of the processing skills activated by teachers before, during and after their reading activities in order to help their students to cope with the texts' meaning difficulty. By doing so, we hope to reach some insights into the teaching of literacy in the English classrooms, and expand the results in order to suggest some possible remedies to the teachers' practice in reading classes.

### **Research Methodology Design**

In order to account for the issue raised above, we shall attempt to go over the Middle School syllabuses, textbooks as well as their pedagogical implementation in the classroom. To this end, we intend to conduct some 'context evaluation', a study technique defined by Daniel Stufflebeam (1971) as a type of evaluation "designed to improve a program by evaluating and critiquing its strengths and weaknesses" (In Nunan, D. 1992: 193). In order to accomplish this evaluation, we shall conduct a theoretical study of the syllabuses and the reading section of the Middle School textbooks, along with an empirical enquiry within the context of Tizi-Ouzou middle schools. As for the analytic categories, which we assume are the most adequate for this type of study, they will be borrowed from the 'Interactive Approach' to reading.

## **Structure of the Dissertation**

In addition to the General Introduction, our dissertation consists of two parts, comprising three chapters each: 1) Reading: Theoretical Premises and 2) The Middle School Syllabuses, Textbooks and Teachers. As its title indicates, the first part is devoted to an elementary theoretical background for reading. It provides an overview of the research into reading models, reading instruction methods and, most importantly, the core issue of the present work, i.e., reading strategies. As for the second part, it comprises a systematic analysis of the middle school syllabuses, textbooks and teachers' practice. The first and the second chapters are concerned with the analysis of the procedures suggested and the objectives assigned to reading in the Middle School syllabuses and their interpretation in the textbooks. As for the third chapter, it comprises classroom investigation to assess the teaching/learning process in reading classes. Finally, starting from Daniel Stufflebeam's assertion that "the most important purpose of evaluation is not to prove but to improve", our work ends with some suggestions derived from the results reached, and presented in the General Conclusion.

## **Part One: Reading: Theoretical Premises**

### **Introduction**

*“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body. It is wholesome and bracing for the mind to have its faculties kept on the stretch”*

(Hare, A. quoted in Bettmann O.L. 1992: 07)

As the quotation above asserts, in our modern time, people become functional only if they are literate, that is, capable of using the needed skill to fulfil daily activities. One cannot deny the various virtues of reading ranging from being a key of success at school and the enjoyment of leisure time to playing an important role in “promoting social awareness and growth” (Dechant, E. 1991: vii). The literature of both first and foreign language testifies to the importance of the reading skill in improving education and reducing illiteracy. In EFL contexts, the goal of reading instruction is to help foreign language readers to understand different texts that they are likely to encounter in their daily life. To this end, one needs to understand how the reading process works. This stems from the fact that different methods of reading instruction are “underpinned by different models of reading, and it is crucial to know what these are before deciding which programme or intervention to implement to address difficulties students may have with literacy” (Reid, G, et al. 2003:01).

The basic goal of current reading research is twofold: gaining a better understanding of the nature of the reading process, along with designing effective methods for teaching the reading skill. Accordingly, this part attempts at tracing the development of two research trends namely, reading processes and reading instruction, with special focus on the central issue of the present research, that is, reading strategies instruction.

## **Chapter One: The Nature of Reading**

In an EFL context, reading is a skill that requires a specific interest, for it represents a source of input for language learning and an end in itself as a skill to use outside the classroom as well. Besides, reading seems to be the major channel through which learners can keep in touch with English. It is for that reason that many educators testify to the fact that “reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in English as a second or foreign language” (Carrell, P. et al. 1988: 01).

In this context, finding out the ‘best’ method for teaching reading becomes a fundamental goal to reach for many educators. This requires a systematic understanding of the nature of reading. Unfortunately, it is not that simple because reading is not an unconscious and simple process. It is rather a complex mental activity when examined in all its detail. There is a long history of attempts to conceptualise reading through the formulation of abstract models of the reading process. Some of these models are presented below.

### **I. Models of the Reading Process**

In an EFL context, insights into the nature of the reading process are so important and have a direct impact on EFL classroom methods and materials. In an attempt at providing a systematic definition of reading, researchers have been concerned with what happens in the readers’ eyes and mind when they are reading. This is what comes to be known as ‘model of the reading process’. Put differently, in order to understand the nature of the mental activities involved in comprehending texts, reading specialists have created reading process models. A model of reading may be defined as a representation of what goes on in the eyes and the mind when the reader is understanding or misunderstanding a text (Davies, F. 1995: 57). In addition, a reading model illustrates the processes involved while reading, the factors influencing these processes and the interplay among them (Kucer, S. 2005:123).

Disputes over the nature of the reading process have a long history in psycholinguistic literature, resulting generally in three main models of the reading process: bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models. Before examining these different models, it is worth pointing at the fact that the first attempts to understand the reading process were highly influenced by first language (L1) models of reading. This stems from Kenneth Goodman's assumption that some processes are universal. In fact, many Second Language (L2) reading researchers such as Coady (1979), Jolly (1978) and Rigg (1977) support Goodman's contention that L1 and L2 reading involve similar processes.

### **I.1. Bottom-up Models**

Also known as 'part to whole' models, bottom-up reading models emphasise a single direction (from bottom to top) processing of text. They describe the reading process in terms of serial steps in which "the direction of processing is from 'bottom-level' features of text to 'higher levels'" (Davies, F. 1995: 169). Stated differently, the bottom-up models of the reading process perceive reading as a decoding process which involves reconstructing the author's meaning via recognising the letters and words (Gough 1971; Widdowson, 1979 in Carrell, P. et al 1988)

At the heart of the bottom-up models is the idea that:

Visual information is initially sampled from the printed page and the information is transformed through a series of stages with little (if any) influence from general world knowledge, contextual information higher order processing strategies.

(Pollatsek A, and Rayner K. 1989:464-465).

According to David Nunan, in this view, reading is basically a matter of decoding a series of written symbols into their aural equivalent for the sake of creating meaning from texts (Nunan, D. 1991, in Vaezi 2005). The writer is perceived as a transmitter of a message, the reader as a receiver of that message, while the visual system as a communication channel through which the message is transmitted (Emerald, D. 1991:12)

Many models have been proposed as being bottom-up models, such as those suggested by Massaro (1975), Laberge and Samuels (1974), and Mackworth (1972). The most influential one is the model proposed by Philip B. Gough in 1972. This model draws from laboratory studies of adult readers engaged in letter and word recognition tasks (Davies, F. 1995: 60). According to this model, reading starts by a recognition process “operating serially across the display so that processing is letter by letter” (Pollatsek A, and Rayner K. 1989: 465). The second stage is the comprehension that occurs by making use of syntactic and semantic rules. One of the weaknesses of Gough’s bottom-up model, recognised by Gough himself, is that the model does not really deal with higher-order comprehension. As a matter of fact, Gough calls this comprehension device (higher-order skills) “Merlin” to show that it has magical properties or at least that the properties are difficult to specify (ibid). Despite the weaknesses of Gough’s model, it deserves credit for having stimulated research on the nature of the reading process.

The major limitation of bottom-up models, in general, is the lack of flexibility attributed to the reader. The latter is perceived as a passive recipient of the information in the text. In addition, bottom-up models have been under attack for their over-reliance on the formal features of language. Yet, what must not be neglected is the fact that language knowledge, or more precisely, knowledge of linguistic features of texts, is also necessary for comprehension to take place.

## **I.2. Top-Down Models**

Developed within the framework of psycholinguistics, top-down models of the reading process assume that fluent readers first anticipate the meaning of text before checking the available syntactic and graphic clues. To these models, the reader, rather than the text, is at the heart of the reading process. They emphasise the reader’s interpretation of texts by guessing the meaning on the basis of their background knowledge. In opposition to bottom-up

models, they describe the processing sequence proceeding from predictions about meaning (Top) to attention progressively to smaller units of texts (Down).

The best known top-down models of the reading process are those suggested by Kenneth Goodman (1970) and Frank Smith (1971). Goodman's model is the most frequently cited in both L1 and L2 literature. It was initially developed on the basis of his experience with beginning readers, yet he claims that the process is basically the same for more skilled readers (Pollatsek A, and Rayner K. 1989: 462). Goodman's approach to reading is highly influenced by psycholinguistics, with its emphasis on how we make sense of our world through the use of language. Meaning construction is called by Goodman 'psycholinguistic guessing game', because when readers approach a text, they have in advance a hypothesis of what the text might be about. Then they test their hypothesis and confirm or reject it as they read through the text (Reid, G. et al. 2003:03). Reading, to borrow Goodman's words, is:

a psycholinguistic process in that it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs. There is thus an essential interaction between language and thought in reading. The writer encodes thought as language and the reader decodes language to thought.

(Goodman, K. in Carrell, P. et al 1988: 12)

We should note that Goodman, with his top-down view of the reading process, still defines reading as a receptive skill. In this context, Patricia Carrell thinks that even though the psycholinguistic model of reading describes reading as an interaction of language and thought, it has generally failed to give sufficient emphasis to the role of the reader's background knowledge (Carrell, P. in Carrell, P. et al 1988: 75)

Goodman describes the reading process by dividing it into four cycles "between the visual input supplied by the eyes to the brain and the meaning constructed by the brain: visual, perceptual, syntactic and semantic" (ibid). His aim is to create a model explaining the reading behaviour which may be taken as a basis for reading instruction effectiveness

(Goodman, k. in Carrell ,P. et al 1988:11). The model is perhaps best explained by Goodman himself:

The reader does not use all the information available to him. Reading is a process in which the reader picks and chooses from the available information only enough to select and predict a language structure which is decidable. It is not in any sense a precise perceptual process. (Goodman, K. 1973. Quoted in Carrell, p. et al, 1988: 74)

Though it provides important insights into the nature of the reading process, Goodman' model has been criticised on the basis that it does not provide explicit explanation of some cognitive procedures required for understanding , nor “does it give any hint as to how the meaning is assimilated with the reader’s background knowledge” (Pollatsek A, and Rayner K. 1989: 464). Another major limitation of Goodman’s “guessing game” concerns its pedagogical implication to reading classes. In the words of Barbara Birch, instruction about sounds and letters is sometimes neglected by teachers and syllabus designers as well.

In addition, a great deal of evidence has shown the guessing hypothesis to be false. For instance, from eye movement data, evidence shows that skilled readers, while reading relatively easy texts, pay attention to every letter in every word in the text. More importantly, no evidence has been observed confirming that advanced readers sample, predict, or guess what words will come next, while they read (Carver, R.P 2000: 316). Researchers have also found that it is the poorer reader who has to do more guessing and predicting, instead of the better one (e.g., Stanovich, 1986 in Carver, R.P 2000: 317).

In fact, many reading researchers think that not Goodman’s model only, but all the models that rely so heavily on top-down mechanisms to explain the reading process, suffer from the lack of precision. This is partly due to the lack of knowledge about how higher-order processes work (ibid). Another major limitation of the top-down models to reading is that “for many texts, the reader has little knowledge of the topic and cannot generate predictions” (Kamil, M. and Samuels, S. Quoted in Carrell, P et al 1988: 33). Furthermore, sometimes it is

easier for a skilled reader to simply recognise words in a text than to try to generate hypotheses and predictions. David Eskey, for his part, criticises the top-down models on the basis that they tend to deemphasise the perceptual and decoding dimensions of the reading process. (Eskey, D in Carrell, P. et al 1988).

Despite all the critics addressed to top-down oriented models, one cannot deny the powerful impact of the top-down approach on EFL reading as it has led to extensive research on how higher-level processes and background knowledge affect the reading process.

All in all, one may say that the major difference between bottom-up and top-down models lies in the fact that “bottom-up models start with the printed stimuli and work their way up to higher-level stages, whereas the top-down models start with hypotheses and predictions and attempt to verify them by working down to the printed stimuli” ( Kamil, M. and Samuels, S. in Carrell, P et al 1988: 31). As for the interactive models, they seem, in the words of David Eskey, to strike a balance among bottom-up and top-down models of the reading process.

### **I.3 Interactive Models**

In opposition to the previous views of reading, presented so far, which consider comprehension as the outcome of exclusive bottom-up or top-down processes, current research in the field of Second/Foreign Language reading is oriented towards a ‘multi-layered Interactive Approach’. The latter focuses on the various kinds of knowledge that the reader employs for the sake of understanding texts. The roots of this approach go back to a theory developed by David. E Rumelhart in the late 1970’s, wherein he demonstrates that reading is a “bi-directional” perceptive and cognitive process, involving both the reader and the text (In Davies, F. 1995:63). In simpler words, getting meaning from a text is the result of the interaction of the information presented in the text and the reader’s background knowledge and experience.

According to the interactive approach, texts do not “contain meaning”, they rather have “potential for meaning” (Wallas, C.1992: 39). This potential is realised only in the interaction between text and reader. That is, meaning is created in the course of reading as the reader draws both on his/her existing linguistic and schematic knowledge and the input provided by the printed or written text (ibid). Furthermore, the interactive approach suggests that the most successful readers are both skilful ‘bottom-up’ processors and skilful ‘top-down’ processors of texts. In other words, “they can convert the language on the page into the information it represents both rapidly and accurately” (Eskey, D.), at the same time “they can relate this new information to the relevant knowledge they already have to construct a plausible meaning for the text” (ibid). Moreover, the advocates of the interactive approach claim that successful readers experience the two processes simultaneously; they decode and interpret as they read. This is the reason why it is technically called “parallel processing approach” by Florence Davies (1995) and David Eskey, drawing a synthesis of the top-down and bottom-up processes and stressing both what is written on the page and what the reader brings to it.

Before examining the most notorious interactive models prevailing during the last decades, it is worth mentioning that though each model emphasises a specific element of the process, all of them share the basic principle of the interactive approach. The latter refers to the fact that the most efficient processing of text is interactive, a combination of top-down and bottom-up processing modes. Top-down processing relates to the process of prediction, confirmation or rejection on the basis of prior knowledge, as it is mentioned earlier. On the other hand, bottom-up processing relates to the building of textual meaning from the smallest units to the largest on the basis of the information encountered in the text.

### **I.3.1 Rumelhart's Model**

Rumelhart's model represents the first of a number of interactive models of reading. Developed from laboratory research on fluent skilled readers, it proposes the combination of both decoding and interpreting processes in order to reach understanding. For Rumelhart, the process of reading

Begins with a flutter of patterns on the retina and ends (when successful) with a definite idea about the author's intended message. Thus reading is at once a 'perceptual' and 'cognitive' process. Moreover, a skilled reader must be able to make use of sensory , semantic and pragmatic information to accomplish his task. These various sources of information appear to interact in many complex ways during the process of reading.

(Rumelhart, P. 1977 Quoted in Davies, F. 1995: 64).

Rumelhart describes the reading process as an interactive process in total opposition to what he calls "linear models", that is, bottom-up and top-down models. According to him, linear models are deficient because they describe reading as an information flow passing along in one direction, and thus do not account for the interaction between lower and higher levels of meaning processing. ( Kamil, M. and Samuels, S. in Carrell, P et al 1988: 27). In this respect, Pollatsek and Rayner explain: " Rumelhart's primary goal was to provide a framework for the development of models that are alternatives to the serial flow-chart models and that place more emphasis on highly interactive parallel processing mechanisms" ((Pollatsek A, and Rayner K. 1989:468). In a word, the Rumelhart's model sustains that efficient reading entails decoding and interpreting texts to create meaning.

### **I.3.2 Schema Theory**

*"Immanuel Kant claimed as long ago as 1781, new information, new concepts, new ideas, can have meaning only when they can be related to something the individual already knows". (Carrell, P and Eisterhold, J in Carrell et al 1988: 73)*

The idea expressed by Immanuel Kant during the Enlightenment era, as the above quotation asserts, becomes at the heart of current theories in comprehension processes in general and reading comprehension in particular. It reflects the shift of emphasis of comprehension processes from exclusively on the language to be comprehended, to include

the comprehender, that is, the reader in our case. This shift results in a new field of research which is “Schema Theory”. The latter is a theory of knowledge representation which has a pervasive influence on current thinking about text comprehension. Within the framework of this theory, reading comprehension is viewed as a comprehension process involving an interaction of text-based processes and knowledge-based processes. It is worth mentioning that the schema theory is not a theory exclusive to reading processes. Rather, it seeks to explain the comprehension process in general, be it in reading or any other process of language learning.

Schema-driven models of reading assert that the reader’s background knowledge of the text’s topic and context affect his/her reading process and comprehension. Efficient comprehension requires the ability “to relate the textual material to one’s own knowledge” as Anderson and others point out: “Every act of comprehension involves one’s knowledge of the world as well” (Quoted in Carrell, P. et al 1988: 76). At the heart of these models are schemata, more often referred to as background knowledge.

### **A. Schemata (Background Knowledge)**

According to cognitive scientists, schemata relates to “the building blocks of cognition” (Rumelhart, 1980 in Kucer, S. 2005 ). Put differently, schemata are complex structures of information that represent the individual’s past encounters with the world. They contain his/her knowledge of objects, situations, and events as well as “knowledge of processes, such as reading, washing clothes, or home buying” (Kucer, S. 2005). In simpler words, background or prior knowledge relates to the world understanding that learners bring to school.

Schemata might best be conceptualised as “cognitive maps”. It means that the knowledge stored in the individual’s mind is organised in the form of maps wherein each

location represents a concept or an idea with “roads from one location to the next signifying conceptual linkages” (Ibid: 125).

In the context of reading, schemata refer to the reader’s pre-existing concepts about the world and about the text to be read. Though many researchers use the terms Schemata and background knowledge interchangeably, a slight difference between the two concepts may be drawn. Following Patricia Carrell, background knowledge refers to the reader’s previously acquired knowledge, whereas schemata relate to the reader’s previously acquired knowledge structures (Carrell, P. et al 1988).

The value of background knowledge to reading lies in its support to the construction of interpretation for the print being encountered. When a reader comes upon new information, during the reading process, he/she evaluates the relevance and the appropriateness of his/her background knowledge being used to support the understanding of the text. In other words, the reader evaluates the degree to which new meanings cohere with past meanings and to make adjustments as required. Marva Barnett explains this process as follows: “if new textual information does not fit into a reader’s schemata, the reader misunderstands the new material, ignores the new material, or revises the schemata to match the facts within the passage” (Barnett, M. A. 1988). In this context, Frank Smith notes that the good reader is the one whose comprehension approximates the information level that the writer encodes in print. He explains: “just because meaning has to be brought by the reader [to the text] does not mean that *any* meaning will do” (Smith, F. 1988 in Emerald, D. 1991: 11).

In the light of what has been said so far, one may claim that background knowledge has a significant role in reading comprehension. It allows the readers to appreciate and anticipate the content embedded in the text. This anticipation helps the learners to decode the text easily and deepen the understanding of its meaning. Two types of schemata are generally referred to in the reading literature namely; content and formal schemata

## **A.1 Content Schemata**

Content schemata relates to the content knowledge that a reader has about the topic of the passage at hand. When a reader approaches a text with sufficient content schemata, this will help him/her to understand and recall more than does a reader less familiar with text content.

## **A.2 Formal Schemata**

It relates to the reader's knowledge of the textual features of different texts. In other words, it defines the reader's expectations about how pieces of textual information will relate to each other and in what order details will appear. This encompasses the reader's knowledge of characteristics of different text types and genres. For example, in a narrative text, the reader could expect the following steps: introduction, the climax and the resolution.

### **I.3.3. The Bottom-Interactive Model**

Like Rumelhart's model, the bottom-interactive model proposed by Rayner and Pollatsek, draws on laboratory studies of fluent adult readers. Rayner and Pollatsek state that their model is "primarily bottom-up, but top-down processes do interact with bottom-up processes" (Pollatsek and Rayner in Davies, F. 1995: 69). Their objective has been to gain insight into the relationship between eye movement and cognitive processing. Unlike schema-driven models, the bottom-up interactive model emphasises the importance of the processing of visual information in meaning construction.

### **I.3.4. Stanovich's Compensatory Model**

Keith Stanovich (1988) claims that readers draw on both bottom-up and top-down processes when reading. He argues that "readers use information simultaneously from different levels and not necessarily begin at the graphic (bottom-up) or the context (top-down) level" (in Reid, G. et al. 2003:04). Moreover, he suggests that because the different processes interact, the reader's weaknesses are compensated for by his /her strengths. That is the reason

why he describes the reading process as an “interactive compensatory model”. The basic premise of the latter is that “reading involves an array of processes. Readers who are weak in one strategy will rely on other processes to compensate for the weaker process” (Grabe, W. in Carrell, P et al 1988: 61).

The compensatory assumption, according to Stanovich, states that “a deficit in any knowledge results in a heavier reliance on other knowledge sources regardless of their level in the processing hierarchy” (in Carrell, P et al 1988: 32). For example if a beginning reader comes upon a new word he does not know, he may use sentence, context, and his background knowledge on the topic to deduce the meaning of the word. On the other hand, if a skilled reader (on word recognition) comes upon a text that he does not know much about the topic, he may rely more on his bottom-up processes to understand the text.

In this context, James Coady, in discussing Goodman’s psycholinguistic model of reading, suggests that background knowledge may compensate for certain syntactic deficiencies. He explains:

The subject of reading materials should be of high interest and relate well to the background of the reader, since strong semantic input can help compensate when syntactic control is weak. The interest and background knowledge will enable the student to comprehend at a reasonable rate and keep him involved in the material in spite of its syntactic difficulty. (Coady, J. 1979 Quoted in Carrell, P et al 1988: 75)

### **I.3.5. Bernhardt’s Constructivist Model**

In 1986, E. Bernhardt proposed what she called a “constructivist model” of L2/FL reading to describe how an L2/FL reader interacts with a text to construct meaning. The model that she proposed is interactive and multidimensional involving some text-based (word recognition, phonemic/graphemic decoding...) and extra text-based components (intratextual perception, prior knowledge and metacognition). Several or all components work together to achieve the meaning intended or unintended by the author (Upton, T .1998). “The reader recognises words and syntactic features, brings prior knowledge to the text, links the text

elements together, and thinks about how the reading process is working (metacognition)” (Bernhardt, E. quoted in Barnett, M. 1989: 47).

## **Chapter Two: Reading Instruction**

*“Different models for conceptualising literacy have resulted in conflicting views and diverse positions over how to teach reading”*

(Reid, G. et al. 2003:08).

The different theoretical perspectives on the act of reading, described so far, lead to different approaches to the teaching of reading, as the quotation above states. The various reading models “have been directly influential in the formulation of educational policies and hence have played a central, if sometimes ‘hidden’, role in shaping teaching methods” (Davies, f. 1995: 57). For instance, from a bottom-up view to reading, learning to read encompasses first learning the letters of the alphabet and establishing the principle of sound-symbol identification and then applying this in order to decode words (Reid, G. et al. 2003: 03)

Before examining the different approaches to reading instruction, a brief introduction to the Foreign Language Methods prevailing during the last century, or so, is necessary. This provides a clear framework of the history of reading instruction in EFL contexts. More importantly, this helps to demonstrate how current reading research and instructions are triggered by some traditional assumptions.

### **I. FLT Methods and Reading Instruction**

Serious attempts at providing systematic methods of reading instruction have a history of almost forty years. Before 1970, reading was viewed as an adjunct to oral skills and described as being “speech written down”. This view rooted in the principles of the Audio-Lingual Method which were in vogue at that period. The primary reason for ALM neglect of

reading seems to be a historical one (Saville-Troike, M. 1973). Older teaching methods emphasised the written forms of language, largely ignoring speech. The typical representative of these old-fashioned assumptions is the Grammar Translation Method which was used in the teaching of Latin and Greek during the beginning of the twentieth century. Because the purpose of language learning was limited to the appreciation of classical language literature and to make the learners cope with the great literary works, the basic classroom activity was reading. Yet, the focus was not on the development of reading strategies and skills, but on translation. In other words, reading was a means to an end and not an end in itself.

On both linguistic and psychological grounds, it was argued, during the mid-twentieth century, that spoken language should be the principal objective in language teaching at the expense of reading. These grounds relate respectively to structural linguistics and behaviourist psychology, which were in vogue at that time. Language learning was viewed as a process of habit formation, and language itself as speech. Thus, oral skills instruction was emphasised while reading and writing skills are supposed to be developed only after long systematic exposure to oral language. This becomes the rationale for the ALM (ibid).

It is worth mentioning that during the period of Audiolingualism there was some recognition of the importance of background knowledge and culture, what comes to be known later as schemata, (Fries, 1963; Rivers, 1968 in Carrell, P. et al 1988). Yet, no impact of these views has been marked on E.S.L reading theories.

From the late sixties on, disciplinary schools of thought such as cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics (or the psychology of language) and Generative Grammar have come to bring a new understanding of language learning. They broke a new ground for Foreign Language Teaching methods, and by the same token, they sparked a strong tradition of systematic reading research. The latter attempts, as it has been already pointed at earlier, at

conceptualising knowledge and theory about the reading process together with approaches to reading instruction.

## **II . Approaches to Reading Instruction: The Great Debate**

A common agreement among reading researchers upon the interactive characteristic of the reading process is reached. Yet, there is still a debate among teachers and teacher-trainers about the type of knowledge and processing strategies that must be emphasised, mainly concerning beginners. This debate gives birth to two major approaches to reading instruction, namely, Phonics and Whole Language. While advocates of the former approach place more importance on bottom-up processing to the detriment of comprehension, advocates of the latter emphasise top-down processing instruction. Many reading researchers speak of Whole Language and Phonics in terms of “approaches” or “philosophies”, whereas Stephen Krashen prefers to use the term “Hypotheses”, symbolising the non-end of the debate or more precisely “the reading wars” which “show no signs of stopping”(Krashen, S. 2002)

At the heart of the great debate Phonics Vs Whole Language lays the conflict between “Bottom-up” and “Top-down” models of the reading process. Accordingly, the following section is about the conflicts and the tensions that are raised over how to teach reading by researchers and practitioners who are drawing upon psychological-based models of the reading process. Before then, we find it necessary to point at the fact that these two approaches are not exclusively concerned with FL reading instruction. Even current L1 reading researchers are divided over the issue of these two opposing views, mainly in the United States of America (USA).

### **II.1. Phonics**

The Phonics approach to reading instruction, be it in first or second language, claims that literacy is developed from the bottom-up, reflecting the principle that learning to read starts by learning sound-spelling correspondences. It is a part-to-whole approach grounded in

bottom-up models of the reading process. In the English writing system, one letter may not necessarily refer or represent one specific sound. Therefore, providing learners with explicit and systematic instruction about correspondences between letters and sounds is of paramount importance, mainly in early stages of foreign language learning. Some researchers refer to letter-sound relationships as phonics instruction.

In EFL contexts, hostiles to Phonics as an instructional method have the tendency to emphasise the irregularity of the spelling-sound correspondences in English (Stanovich, K. E. 1991: 26). As a matter of fact, Frank Smith (1971) thinks that one of the major weaknesses of the bottom-up models, and by implication the Phonics, is that they do not “account for the fact that there are at least 166 different grapho-phonetic rules covering the regular spelling-to-sound correspondences of English words and that these are not easy to teach” (In Davies, F. 1995: 60). Furthermore, Florence Davies states that teaching grapho-phonetic rules to beginning readers can be “counter-productive, forcing the reader to focus on lower-level sources of information such as letter-sound correspondences at the expense of other sources of information” (ibid). The most frequent example given by the opponents to Phonics is the pronunciation of “EA”, which can be pronounced differently in teach, bread, great or create. As for spelling, the example provided is the sound /f/ which can be assigned to different spellings as in **f**rog, **ph**one, **to**ugh, **st**uff, etc.

Many researchers in the field of reading instruction show their total opposition to Phonics by claiming that it is useless, pointless, a waste of time, and boring. However, after discussing two traditional methods of teaching grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences namely, “phonic generalisations” and “linguistic method”, Barbara Birch comes to say that this “bad connotation” stems from the methods adopted to phonics instruction. “Phonic generalisations”, for instance, is based on explicit instruction of grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences through the use of rules. Accordingly, teachers are right in rejecting this

method, because learning phonic generalisation rules does not lead to reading proficiency. It is like learning grammar rules without being able to generate or understand language (Birch, B. 2002). Reading researchers have suggested some modern methods of teaching grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences in context and in a more motivating fashion. “Reasoning by analogy by using contextual information in the form of frames” (Goswami, 1998 and others in Birch, B. 2002:24) is suggested as an alternative to the traditional “phonic generalisations”. To make it clearer, we may give an example: instead of teaching the different pronunciations that may be assigned to the grapheme “A” in isolation, it is better to introduce this grapheme in context (in a word within a sentence) . The learner will store the chunk, for instance “at” in his linguistic memory as a graphic image with a strong connection to its pronunciation / æ t/, so that, as soon as the learner sees it he will quickly know how to pronounce it (ibid).

## **II.2. Whole Language**

Also known as “real books” in the United Kingdom, the Whole Language approach (U.S appellation) is initially advocated by literacy educators, such as Kenneth Goodman and Frank Smith, and has become a major movement in literacy education during the last decades. The term ‘Whole Language’ seems to be used for the first time by Harste and Burke in 1977 (Carver, R 2000). There is no conventional systematic definition of the whole Language. Some consider it as an instructional approach while others prefer to consider it as a philosophy.

This approach draws upon psycholinguistics and represents a top-down approach to reading instruction. Many reading researchers make it clear that “Whole Language is not a “method” or collection of activities, but a philosophy underlying all the teacher’s instructional decisions” (Hayes, A.D. and Stahl, S. 1997:07). The basic principle of whole Language is

that meaning develops “from whole to part” (Reid, G. et al. 2003: 13). In other words, we “learn to read by reading” (Goodman, K. and Smith, F. in Krashen 2002)

The core of the Whole Language approach is Goodman’s guessing game hypothesis. In this regard, he contends that efficient reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all elements, but from selecting the fewest, most productive clues necessary to produce guesses. (Goodman, K. in Thompson, I. 1988: 618).

Whole Language advocates reject the isolated and systematic instruction of particular systems of language and instead place primary emphasis on the process of meaning construction. Moreover, they claim that the rules of Phonics are complex and have numerous exceptions, which make them “unteachable” (Smith, F. 1994 in Krashen 2002).

Many reading scholars testify to the fact that Whole Language is difficult to define. Yet, many principles are shared by most advocates of Whole Language. The most salient one is the fact that language is used for authentic purposes, so it is best learned if it is learned for authentic purposes (Goodman, K. and Goodman, Y 1979 in Hayes, A.D. and Stahl, S. 1997:06). The pedagogical implication of this principle is the use of authentic reading tasks using whole texts in the classroom, not looking at parts of language, such as symbol-correspondences.

The theoretical basis of the Whole Language approach may be summarised in the following tenets:

- Learning to read is natural just like learning to talk is natural. That is, since children do not need to be taught to listen so they do not need to be taught to read. In other words, reading must be taught in context without direct instruction in grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences. (K. S. Goodman & Y. M. Goodman, 1979).

- Because reading is natural, it should be learned in natural settings that involve actual authentic language situations, for example, real books, and authentic texts and mainly for authentic purposes (K. S. Goodman, 1992; Smith, 1976).
- Good readers guess the words they do not know using context, not sound-it out or by using decoding strategies (Smith, 1979), and all readers should be taught to do this (K. S. Goodman, 1967; Smith, 1979). (In Carver, R.P 2000: 312)

Even though many reading researchers tend to support Whole language as a substitute to Phonics, some proponents of Phonics reject it completely. For instance, Keith Stanovich criticises the Whole Language approach with its top-down view to reading on the basis that it lacks scientific validity because “it was seen to be operating on broad assumptions and not having sufficient empirical data” (Stanovich, K. 2002 in *ibid*).

The debate over the advantages and limitations of both Whole Language and Phonics leads some researchers to reflect on a more integrated approach that may serve the multiple aims of reading instruction. Since reading is considered to be a synthesis and integration of two processes, identifying and recognising words as well as comprehending, “it follows that a major goal of reading instruction should be the development of proficiency in these processes” (Dechant, E. 1991: X). Emerald Dechant goes on to add that “good teaching must guide the pupil’s development in both, especially in their integration” (*ibid*).

### **II.3. Towards an Integrated and Balanced Approach**

Because successful reading requires both bottom-up and top-down processing, an integrated approach taking into account both directions of information processing should be adopted (Nunes, 1999. in Birch, B 2002:04). Even more to the point, the examination of the different models suggested so far makes it clear that interactive models are more convincing models of the reading process. Accordingly, current research in the reading instruction field runs counter to exclusive versions of either Whole Language or Phonics approaches to

reading instruction to support a more balanced approach. (Vellutino. 1991 In Carver, R.P 2000: 323)

Many researchers think that an intermediate position between Whole Language and Phonics approaches must be established , an approach that would be more in line with the interactive view to reading (Carson 2002 in Reid, G. et al. 2003:10). According to Barbara Birch (2002), the balanced approach to reading with its focus on both bottom-up and top-down processes reflects the interactive nature of the reading process. She explains that reading is interactive in three ways:

- The different processing strategies, both top-down and bottom-up, along with the knowledge base, interact with each other to accomplish the reading.
- The reader's mind interacts with the written text so that the reader can understand the message.
- The reader interacts indirectly with the writer of the text across time and space because it is the writer who is communicating information to the reader, but it is the reader who must grasp the information from the writer. (Birch, B. 2002: 04)

Within the same context, that of promoting an integrated approach to reading instruction reflecting the interactive nature of the reading process, David Eskey notes that the top-down views to reading, mainly Goodman's theory of guessing game, though it provides useful insights into the nature of the reading process, has distorted the picture of true problems Second/Foreign language readers face (Eskey, D. in Carrell, P et al 1988:95). He goes on to say the following:

In promoting higher level strategies, like predicting [...], some researchers have been sending a message to teachers that the teaching of reading [...] is mostly just a matter of providing them with the right background knowledge for any texts they must read [...]. Though that is certainly important, it is also, I think, potentially misleading as a total approach [...] We must not, I believe, lose sight of the fact that language is a major problem in second language reading, and that even educated guessing at meaning is not a substitute for accurate decoding. (ibid:97)

Barbara Birch supports Eskey's view and sustains that Phonics may be embedded as an element within the Whole Language approach resulting in a more balanced and integrated view of reading instruction.

### **Chapter Three: Reading Strategies and Reading Skills**

Starting from the point that reading is the process of constructing meaning from texts, one may say that effective beginning reading instruction should target three main goals: fluency, comprehension, and motivation to read. These three goals are interconnected. One of the concerns of the present study is comprehension, more precisely teaching the learners reading strategies to help them develop the ability to understand and learn from texts.

The traditional linguistic view to literacy has been challenged in the last three decades by the psycholinguistic-cognitive theories (Johns, A. 1997: 08). The core element of the alternative view of literacy is "text-processing" (Ibid: 12), i.e., meaning construction is the result of the interaction of the reader with the text. On the basis of the latter theory, the pedagogical focus shifts from the text to the interactive process between the text and the reader. This interaction cannot be achieved without some kind of processing mechanism. The processing component, also known as procedural knowledge, consists of a variety of strategies and skills that allow the reader to take the text as a source of information, and drawing on his/her background knowledge as another source, to make sense of what is on the printed page (Birch, B. 2002:02). Theorists and practitioners believe that literacy may be acquired through teaching reading strategies for text processing (Carrell, P et al. 1989: 648).

#### **I. Reading Strategies Vs Reading Skills**

Because of the potential vagueness and varied interpretations that may surround the use of the term 'strategy', an operational definition of the term should be conveyed. Reading strategies may be defined as the various perceptual and cognitive processes that the readers engage in during their reading process for the sake of reaching understanding (Carrell, 1989;

Block, 1986). Another definition is provided by Stephen Kucer and others, for whom reading strategies refer to “information processing procedures [...] driven by print, background and purpose, guide the reader’s transaction with print and the construction of meaning” (Kucer, S. et al 2005: 131). In simpler words, we can say that reading strategies refer to the different procedures that the reader appeals to for the sake of constructing meaning from texts. By “using the various strategies, the reader builds a web of meaning (deep structure) from the print (surface structure)” (ibid: 133)

Even though some scholars believe that reading strategies can be distinguished from reading skills, it can nevertheless be assumed that no clear-cut distinction between the two concepts can be agreed upon. An important point of dispute among reading researchers revolves around the extent to which reading strategies/skills involve conscious or unconscious behaviours. In this regard, Cohen (1986) and Pritchard (1990) note that: ‘strategy’ refers exclusively to conscious behaviour (in Davies, F. 1995). A similar viewpoint is shared by other researchers in this field, such as Paris, Lipson, and Wixon (1983) who consider skills as “cognitive processes that are executed automatically, without the reader’s conscious attention or choice”. In contrast, strategies are “deliberately chosen and applied to a reading situation” (Quoted in Hayes, A.D. and Stahl, S. 1997:14). Paris, Wasik and Turner (1991) define ‘strategies’ and ‘skills’ as follows:

Skills refer to information-processing techniques that are automatic, whether at the level of recognizing grapheme-phoneme correspondence or summarizing a story. Skills are applied to a text unconsciously for many reasons including expertise, repeated practice, compliance with directions, luck, and naive use. In contrast strategies are actions selected deliberately to achieve particular goals. An emerging skill can become a strategy when it is used intentionally. Likewise, a strategy can "go underground" [...] and become a skill. Indeed strategies are more efficient and developmentally advanced when they become generated and applied automatically as skills. Thus, strategies are "skills under consideration."

(1991, Quoted in Carrell, P)

On the other hand, Marva Barnett, Barbara Birch, and Florence Davies, among others counter this view and consider both processes as ‘reading strategies’. Marva Barnett uses only the term ‘reading strategy’ to cover both meanings of strategy and skill. Barbara Birch explains that the processing strategies may operate automatically (unconsciously) without the reader’s awareness or “kick in selectively because of our attention to something we perceive” (Birch, B. 2002: 03). As for Florence Davies, she states that a strategy may be a conscious or an unconscious behaviour according to the purpose of reading. She explains that in ordinary reading, readers use many strategies unconsciously, but when readers are “put in a position where they are required to report on their thought processes”, reading strategies are likely to become conscious behaviours (Davies, f. 1995: 50). She defines reading strategy as “a physical or mental action used consciously or unconsciously with the intention of facilitating text comprehension and / or learning” (ibid). Thus, she concludes that “consciousness or unconsciousness” cannot be taken as a systematic variable to draw a clear-cut distinction between the two concepts.

In the context of the Algerian educational system, the syllabus designers seem to use the two concepts interchangeably. For instance, whereas Florence Davies consider ‘skimming’ and ‘scanning’ as reading skills (Davies, F. 1995:135), the Algerian syllabus designers speak of them in terms of reading strategies (Arab, S.A. et al. 2006: 60). Accordingly, for our purposes, the term reading strategy is used throughout this research paper to include any of a wide array of procedures that readers use to engage in and comprehend texts. By doing so, we are siding with Patricia Carrell and Marva Barnett, among others, for whom the term reading strategy refers to reading skill too.

## **II. Types of Reading Strategies**

In order to categorise the different reading strategies, researchers in the field have tried to develop different taxonomies. For example, Block. E (1986) categorises them only into

top-down, or general comprehension strategies, and bottom-up or text-based strategies (in Fotovatian, S. and Shokrpour, N 2007). A further distinction between the different strategies of reading has been provided by Hossein Nassaji (2003) in regard to the learners' literacy level. He distinguishes between two component processes: higher-level and lower-level skills. According to him, lower-level skills involve word recognition processes (such as orthographic and phonological abilities) which enable decoding print. This category of reading capabilities can be activated and taught to beginning learners, with a relatively elementary literacy level. On the other hand, higher-level skills involve syntactic, semantic and discourse skills, leading to the integration of ideas in the learner's global knowledge. They are, most of the time, integrative and transferable strategies, activated by skilled readers, with an advanced proficiency level.

The most current categorisation agreed upon by many researchers, and on which our research is based, is the binary division of reading strategies as cognitive and metacognitive processes.

## **II.1. Cognitive Reading Strategies**

The cognitive reading strategies range from 'concrete strategies', such as guessing the meaning of unknown words from context, to more 'abstract strategies', such as relating what is being read to the reader's background knowledge. Concrete and abstract strategies are also called respectively, 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' reading strategies (Coady, J. in Mackay, C. et al. 1979:07). These two types of strategies work together in parallel in such a way to construct meaning from the printed text.

### **II.1.1 Concrete (Bottom Processing) Strategies**

The 'bottom' of the interactive model contains knowledge about language as well as bottom-processing mechanisms. Bottom-up processing relates to the recognition of letters and words. Therefore, bottom-up strategies refer to the skills that the reader uses in processing

information at the word and sentence level. They permit the transformation of “squiggles on the page into meaningful symbols” (Birch, B. 2002: 02). They are also known as word attack strategies. This category consists of some strategies like:

- Rereading text to find additional clues to the word.
- Skipping unknown words (Carrel, P). Michael Pressly et al. suggest that if the learners are given the option of skipping unknown words, they will learn that it is acceptable to read more challenging materials (1994).
- Classifying the words into grammatical categories.
- Inference: It refers to making use of “syntactic, logical and cultural clues to discover the meaning of unknown elements” (Grellet, F. 1981: 14). Patricia Carrell defines this strategy in terms of making contextual guesses about the meanings of unknown words.

Barbara Birch classifies the bottom-processing strategies into four major categories:

1. ***Phonological strategies***: They are processing mechanisms through which the reader recognises the sounds of language.
2. ***Orthographic strategies*** (or decoding strategies): They allow the reader to recognise the letters and match them with their sounds.
3. ***Lexical strategies***: The reader appeals to this kind of strategies to recognise words and their meanings. More importantly, they may be used also when dealing with unknown words.
4. ***Syntactic strategies***: They are used in the process of constructing phrases and sentences so that “the meaning can be constructed at the top of the reading process”. (Birch, B. 2002: 05).

## II.1.2 Abstract (Top-Processing) Strategies

The “top” represents the reader’s background knowledge. Generally speaking, it relates to the influence of what the reader brings to the text in terms of prior knowledge. Therefore, top-processing strategies relate to high-level processing strategies thanks to which meaning for big pieces of text, like sentences and paragraphs, is constructed.

Unlike the bottom-up, the top-down strategies refer to a higher level of information processing, wherein the reader attempts to understand how the different pieces of information fit together. The reader may do so by getting the gist of the reading selection, making predictions about what the text is going to be like, inferences about the motivations of the characters, etc. This category consists of some strategies like:

- Associating information in text to background knowledge
- **Predicting:** Considered as basic to the process of reading, predicting relates to making use of the grammatical, logical and cultural clues to guess what is to come next (Grellet, F. 1981: 17). It is a strategy that turns reading into an active process.
- **Anticipating:** Anticipating what might be upcoming in a text on the basis of structure and content clues. At first sight, it seems that anticipating and predicting are similar. However, Françoise Grellet draws a significant distinction. For her, anticipation is psychological sensitising, i.e., the aim is simply to create the need and wish to read as well as to familiarise the learners with some of the ideas they will come across in the text. As for prediction, she considers that it relates to more detailed guessing of the text’s content.
- **Previewing:** It is a very specific reading strategy involving the use of “the table of contents, the appendix, the preface, the chapter and paragraph headings in order to find out where the required information is likely to be” (Grellet, F. 1981: 18).
- **Skimming:** It refers to going quickly through the text “to get the gist of it, to know how it is organised, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer” (Grellet, F. 1981: 19).

In other words, it is a reading strategy used to quickly identify the main idea of the text. A simple way to practice skimming is to read, as quickly as possible, the first few sentences of every paragraph and the last few sentences of every paragraph.

- **Scanning:** E, Lunzer and K, Gardner consider that scanning is “a kind of skimming to see if a particular point is present or to locate it” (Quoted in Davies, F. 1995: 137). In other words, scanning is an attempt to locate specific information. It involves letting our eyes wander over the text without following the linearity of the passage “to find what we are looking for, whether it be a name, a date or a less specific piece of information” (Grellet, F. 1981: 19). It is a strategy that we often use when looking up particular words in reading materials.
- **Elaborating:** it relates to linking ideas contained in new information, or integrating new ideas with old information. (Fotovatian, S and Shokrpour, N. .2007).
- **Setting a purpose:** It is important to have an authentic purpose for any reading task. This will increase the learners’ motivation and engagement.

It is worth mentioning that these abstract reading strategies and others should be taught in conjunction with the concrete ones.

## **II.2. Metacognitive Reading Strategies**

### **II.2.1 Metacognition.**

According to Block, there is now no more debate on “whether reading is a bottom-up, language based process or a top-down knowledge based process” (Block.1992 in Vaezi 2005). Research has gone further to define the control that readers execute on their ability to understand a text. She refers to this control as metacognition. The latter involves thinking about what one is doing while reading. ( in Saltail and Akyel, 2002). As early as 1978, Jhon Flavell defined metacognition as "knowledge that takes as its object or regulates any aspect of cognitive behaviour" (1978 Quoted in Carrell, P)

## II.2.2 Metacognitive Reading Strategies Defined

Metacognitive strategies can be defined as strategies that control and guide the reading process. O'Malley & Chamot define them as “higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring, or evaluating the success of a learning activity ...” (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990 in Fotovatian, S and Shokrpour, N. .2007).

Following the definition above, we may say that this category consists of some strategies like:

- **Checking** the outcome of any attempt to solve a problem.
- **Testing** the effectiveness of a strategy used.
- **Planning.**
- **Self- Monitoring:** As they are reading, readers think about what they are reading to ensure that they are constructing the appropriate meaning.
- **Evaluating:** Checking comprehension after the completion of a reading activity. (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990 in Fotovatian, S and Shokrpour, N. .2007).

## II.2.3 Metacognitive Awareness

What is meant by metacognitive awareness is the fact that learners become aware of their cognitive reading strategies and the way they can regulate their thinking while they are reading. Developing the learners' metacognitive awareness is of paramount importance, because the learners need to know the kind of reading and thinking required from them to understand different types of texts (Carrell, p. in Carrell, P et al. 1988).

### III. Reading Strategies Instruction

Foreign language learners need to develop a variety of reading strategies in order to become proficient readers. Some foreign language beginning learners have already grasped and developed some basic reading strategies in their first language (L1) reading, but many of them need reading strategies instruction. The latter relates to the teaching of the cognitive and the metacognitive reading strategies referred to earlier. **significance of motivation etc. g. major stra. .**

There is a common agreement among reading researchers upon the indispensability of teaching reading strategies to learners. Yet, a debate over the best method to apply inside the classroom is still open. Some advocate an explicit instruction, while others think that it is better to appeal to cognitive apprenticeship instruction.

One widely recommended method of improving learners' ability to understand FL texts is explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies (Kern, G.R. 1989: 135). As its name indicates, it focuses on explicit teaching of a single strategy at a time assuming that the strategy will be used, along with other strategies, when reading (Hayes, A.D. and Stahl, S. 1997:10). Teachers should provide the learners with basic definitions of reading strategies together with explaining how and why to use them effectively.

In the USA, specific programmes for reading strategies instruction are created and tested in different contexts: L1 teaching and FLT. For the sake of illustration, we may mention one of these reading strategies instruction programmes: the SAIL (Students Achieving Independent Learning), first created by Janet, L Bergman and Ted Shuder. It is a long-term strategies instruction programme grounded in the principles of constructivism, discourse analysis as well as several major strands in recent cognitive research which stress the importance of metacognition in reading, the role of social support systems in learning, the significance of motivation, etc. (Beard El-Dinary, P. and Shuder, T.1993: 03). Many reading

strategies are targeted through explicit teaching in SAIL, namely, prediction, problem-solving strategies, guessing by using context or picture clues etc.

On the other hand, advocates of cognitive apprenticeship sustain that, in order to ensure an effective instruction, teachers should carefully model the strategies and provide guidance and coaching to the learners without explicit explanation. This view draws upon socio-constructivist trends advocating the development of cognitive processes through interaction.

According to Smithfield Public School's report (2004), while some learners "learn better from more explicit instruction", others "may learn better from more student-centred instruction". Therefore, a balanced literacy approach combining explicit instruction and cognitive apprenticeship is more appropriate to address different learners' learning styles. In fact, this balanced reading strategies' instruction approach is consistent with the interactive approach to reading and the balanced approach to reading instruction.

Within the framework of the view stated above, specialists in reading instruction suggest that in consistency with the interactive approach to reading and the balanced approach to reading instruction, the most salient reading strategies teaching procedure is the 'three-phase' procedure involving pre-, while- and post- stages (Williams 1984 in Hedge, T. 2000:209):

- The Prereading stage leads the learners to activate what they know about a topic and anticipate what they will read.
- The While-reading stage aims at encouraging learners to be active as they read.
- The Postreading stage aims at checking the learners' comprehension as well as developing their metacognitive awareness.

Given that the roles of textbooks, as well as teachers, are vital in encouraging and helping the learners to develop and use the reading strategies effectively in accordance with text variables, this procedure is taken as our analytical framework throughout this research work.

### **III.1. Analytical Framework**

Different reading specialists suggest different plans for textbooks and teachers to be followed in order to reach proficient reading instruction. Yet, most of our analytic categories will be borrowed from Marva A. Barnett's framework of a reading class lesson plan (More Than Meets the Eye Foreign Language Reading) together with Françoise Grellet's taxonomy of reading comprehension activities (Developing reading Skills).

Our choice for the combination of these two theories is done for two main reasons. The first is that there is a common agreement among reading instruction specialists on following an outline containing three phases in reading instruction namely; prereading, while reading and post reading stages. We think that Marva Barnett provides a lesson plan reflecting well this three-phase procedure. The second reason is that in order to fill in Barnett's three-phase procedure framework with appropriate reading activities for each phase, we have thought it is most appropriate to appeal to Françoise Grellet's taxonomy of reading comprehension activities. In fact, Marva Barnett herself recognises that the two theories are complementary. As a matter of fact, she sustains that Françoise Grellet provides probably "the most complete compendium of exercise types" (Barnett, M. 1989: 136). In addition, Grellet explains the advantages of each exercise by relating them to reading strategy practice.

#### **III.1.1 Reading Instruction Activities**

##### **A. Prereading Activities**

Because different texts contain different types of information, people do not approach newspapers, novels, instructions, magazines, etc. in the same way. As far as foreign language learners are concerned, mainly beginners, they pay so much attention to the unfamiliar code

that they do not naturally bring natural intent to their readings (Barnett, M. 1989: 115). Prereading activities aim at helping the FL learners to be involved in reading particular texts by eliciting their motivation, providing and activating the appropriate content and formal schemata in addition to setting a purpose for reading. In a word, the aim of the prereading activities is to “guarantee that students begin a text on the right foot” (Barnett, M. 1989: 114).

In this phase, some instruction hints may be used, such as:

### **A. 1 Text topic, source, author**

If the learners are already familiar with the text topic, source or author, it is only necessary to elicit from the learners the appropriate information needed for the text at hand. On the other hand, if the learners are not familiar with the text topic, source or author, the appropriate background knowledge may be provided through different activities. For example, concerning the source of the text, it may be directly presented by the teacher or in the textbook, mainly if the text at hand is non-fiction, like an article taken from a newspaper.

Similarly, Françoise Grellet provides the following exercise types:

<b>Targeted strategy</b>	<b>Exercise types</b>	<b>Specific aim</b>
Understanding the communicative value of texts (activating formal schemata)	Matching passages, characters etc. with functions	To train the students to recognise the function of the text

### **A. 2 Illustrations and Titles**

Texts’ titles play an important role in comprehension, in that they provide information about what a text is about. So do illustrations; they represent the starting point of the learners’ prediction for text’s meaning. They indicate the track to follow while searching for meaning. Unfortunately, some foreign language learners skip titles and ignore illustrations (Hosenfeld,

C. Et al. 1981. In Barnett, M. 1989: 117). Thus, it is important to raise the learners' awareness of the value of considering titles and illustrations as part of the text. To this end, Françoise Grellet suggests the following exercise types:

<b>Strategies Involved</b>	<b>Exercise Types</b>	<b>Specific Aim</b>
Previewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ask the learners to guess the topic of the passage from the title</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To train the learners to use titles and tables of content to get an idea of what a passage is about</li> </ul>
Predicting anticipating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skimming a newspaper index in order to look for specific topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To train the students to use newspaper index</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of illustration together with asking and answering questions</li> <li>▪ True or False</li> <li>▪ Multiple Choice Questions</li> <li>▪ Matching titles of books with titles of chapters taken from those books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To train the learners to use the pictures/ headlines and their prior knowledge to anticipate the content of the text.</li> </ul>

### **A. 3 Skimming**

Asking the learners to skim through the text before reading helps them to confirm the predictions from the title and the illustrations as well as to recognise the text content and structure, and thus activate the appropriate schemata. In addition, this leads them to state a purpose for their reading and ignore temporarily details.

Françoise Grellet provides the following exercise types:

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Exercise Types</b>	<b>Specific Aim</b>
Skimming	Skimming through a table of contents of a book, the preface and the back cover of the book to predict what the book is about.	To train the learners too use the text on the back cover of a book, the preface and the table of contents to get an idea of what the book is about
Anticipating predicting	Paragraph completion: the learners are given the first and the last paragraph of an article and asked to find the content	To show the learners the importance of the first and the last paragraph in an article, and therefore to give them the means of reading a newspaper more easily and naturally giving their whole attention to what they are really interested in.

NB: Skimming is a reading strategy and a reading activity alike.

#### **A. 4. Scanning**

“Scanning involves reading a text or part of a text rapidly in order to find specific pieces of information” (Barnett, M. 1989: 121). The purpose of teaching scanning is to help the learners to comprehend a text in general by relating the information gathered through scanning to their previous predictions from titles and illustrations (ibid: 122)..

Françoise Grellet provides the following exercise types:

<b>Targeted strategy</b>	<b>Exercise type</b>	<b>Specific aim</b>
scanning	Scanning a newspaper article to locate specific information	To train the learners to run their eyes over a text quickly to locate specific information

The aim of the prereading phase is to motivate the learners and “help them to approach reading more meaningfully and purposefully” (ibid). The selection of the prereading activities

depends on the text to be read. Each text requires specific background knowledge and introduction, thus determining the most appropriate prereading activity. he prereading activities depends on the text to be read. s they examine precisely what each word entails"

## **B. While Reading Activities**

The core of the while reading phase is concrete reading strategies practice (Barnett, M. 1989: 124).

### **B. 1. Guessing Word meanings (Inference)**

The meaning of unknown words may be guessed through “a complex combination of context, background knowledge, and morphology” (Barnett, M. 1989: 126)

#### **▪ Guessing through word formation clues**

The best-known strategies of guessing the meaning of unknown words through word formation clues are the word families and the different meanings of some prefixes and suffixes. The former relates to the comparison between verbs, adjectives and nouns. That is, the learner can guess the meaning of a noun by comparing it to the verb from which it derives. As for the latter, given that there are standard meanings of prefixes and suffixes, the learners guess the meaning of unknown words by analysing the suffixes and prefixes.

#### **▪ Guessing by considering syntax and sentence structure**

In addition to morphology, the learners may use syntax and sentence structure to guess words meanings. For example, knowing that “in contrast” signals a contradiction, may help the learners to guess the meaning of the word ‘optimistic’ in the following example:

*David is always optimistic; in contrast his brother looks on the dark side. (ibid)*

Another important point concerning syntax and sentence structure is that recognising the grammatical function of an unknown word may help the learner to understand it.

In this context, Françoise Grellet provides the following exercise types:

Strategies targeted	Exercise Types	Specific Aim
<p>▪ <b>Inference</b></p> <p>a. deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words through contextual clues</p> <p>b. deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items through understanding word formation</p>	<p>Recognising: Finding in the text synonyms, antonyms and markers of a book, the preface and the table of contents to get an idea of what the equivalence.</p>	<p>To recognise synonyms and antonyms</p>
	<p>Table filling:</p> <p>a. Filling a table with related words</p> <p>b. Filling a table with examples where different devices (e.g. i.e., parentheses etc.) are used to explain the meaning of a word or an expression</p>	<p>To train the learners to recognise related words in a text</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cloze exercise: reading a text in order to find the meaning of a word</li> <li>▪ Blank filling</li> </ul>	<p>To train the learners to use context to deduce the meaning of an unfamiliar word through contextual clues</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Asking and answering questions</li> </ul> <p>Ask the learners to guess the meaning of some suffixes, then find other words with similar suffixes or prefixes and analyse their meaning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To train the learners to recognise words formation and derivation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding relations within the sentence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Underlining different parts of a sentence (S, V etc.)</li> <li>▪ Matching (subjects with verbs etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ to help the learners recognise the structure of complex sentences</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Reference:</b></li> <li>Linking sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognising</li> <li>▪ Table filling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ to prepare the learners to recognise the relations</li> </ul>

and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Underlining and circling</li> <li>▪ Direct reference question</li> <li>▪ Classifying</li> <li>▪ Selecting</li> <li>▪ Blank filling</li> <li>▪ completing</li> </ul>	between sentences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ to train the learners to recognise the rhetorical value of sentences and understand the value of link-words</li> </ul>
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## B. 2 Using the Dictionary

It is important that the learners know how and when to use a dictionary. The latter is considered as “a strategy in itself and crucial to reading with understanding” (Ibid: 133). Teachers should encourage the learners to guess the meaning of unknown words when reasonable and to resort to a dictionary when important words are not clear from context. What remains problematic is that it is not easy to decide whether an unknown word is important or not for a foreign language learner. In an attempt to provide a systematic rule, Barnett sustains that “as a basic policy, a reader who is perplexed after two or three readings should check some words in a dictionary” (ibid).

Once the learners decide to examine a dictionary, a bilingual one in the case of beginning learners, it is important that the teacher shows them how context determines word meaning.

All in all, while reading activities aim at helping the learners to go beyond language and comprehension problems using the appropriate strategies. Given that reading is an individual process, it is difficult to provide a systematic way of helping the learners employ strategies while reading. Yet, teachers should explain “which strategies individuals most need to practise” (ibid: 134).

### C. Postreading Activities

This phase consists of checking how well the text was comprehended. In fact, this phase is the most frequent in traditional reading instruction. Yet, traditionally it relates to a series of comprehension questions focusing on text details. Some reading instruction specialists reject this traditional procedure of checking comprehension. As an alternative, they suggest a postreading phase targeting real world objectives. In other words, this phase should evaluate what a native reader may gain from reading and understanding a text. To establish these realistic objectives, researchers in the field provide different types of exercises. For instance, Marva Barnett suggests a few sample activities according to the text types provided for reading:

- Newspaper article: students list the facts or complete a chart questionnaire with the facts.
- Classified ads: students, for instance, decide which apartments they will call about and tell why.
- Essay: students decide which on a list of statements best expresses the author's point of view. Students with better language proficiency summarise the author's points.
- Short story: students identify main characters from descriptions given or describe the characters etc.
- Bus schedule: students give necessary information. They can answer questions such as, "when does the San Francisco bus leave?" etc. (Barnett, M . 1989: 135-136)

Françoise Grellet suggests the following activities to check the learners' understanding as an alternative to traditional comprehension questions:

To check understanding of	Exercise types
Main idea and supporting details ( using the information in the text)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Classifying according to logic and meaning</li><li>▪ Underlining and categorislogic and lmeaninging different types of sentences</li><li>▪ Match information and routes on a map</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify correct diagram of information</li> <li>▪ match articles and headlines</li> <li>▪ Use text information to make decisions</li> <li>▪ Use text information to the solution of a problem</li>   <li>▪ Fill in a table with text information</li> <li>▪ Complete a document or a map with text information</li>   <li>▪ Match precise drawings with parts of a text describing them</li> <li>▪ Transferring information from text to tree diagram, map etc.</li>   <li>▪ Matching paragraphs, characters or events to pictures, drawings, graphs or charts.</li> </ul>
Text organisation (developing formal schemata)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jigsaw reading: Groups of students with different text passages put them in order</li> </ul>
Chronological sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gap filling with adverbs of time</li> <li>▪ Reordering jumbled sentences to get a coherent text (story, recipe...)</li> <li>▪ Ordering a sequence of pictures</li> </ul>
Analogy and contrast	Fill in a comparison table
Argumentative and logical organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transferring information from text to tree diagram</li> <li>▪ Classifying according to meaning</li> <li>▪ Transferring information from text to list</li> <li>▪ Transferring information from text to tree diagram</li> <li>▪ Reordering jumbled sentences to understand the logical relationships within a text</li> </ul>

It is worth pointing at the fact that together with checking the learners' comprehension, the postreading activities evaluate the extent to which prereading and while-reading strategies are appropriately practiced by the learners to reach comprehension.

## **D. Follow-up Activities**

This phase consists of going beyond reading instruction to embrace transferring and integrating skills. The former relates to helping the learners to use reading strategies with comparable texts. As for the latter, it consists of integrating reading with other language skills, namely writing, listening and speaking.

We have noted that Marva Barnett's lesson plan contains four phases: prereading, while reading, postreading, and follow up. Yet, for our analysis we will make reference only to the first three stages since we are dealing with beginning learners. The follow-up phase concerns advanced learners, as Phillips explains: "follow-up activities take the students beyond the particular reading text in one of two ways: by transferring skills, and by integrating reading with other language skills" (Phillips, 1985. In Barnett, M. 1989: 115)

To conclude, we may say that the lesson plan provided so far represents a general framework of a reading class. It may be applied to many texts for the sake of helping foreign language learners to treat foreign language reading as a meaningful activity. As a result, learners will "participate more actively in class and in their own language learning" (Barnett, m. 1989: 143).

### **III.1.2. Reading Instruction Techniques**

In parallel with Marva Barnett's reading lesson plan together with the general procedure of task-based teaching (Willis, J. 1998) mentioned earlier, techniques for reading strategy instruction are divided into pre-, while- and postreading techniques. Different interactive techniques are suggested by different researchers, and we shall attempt to provide some of them in the following taxonomy. It is worth noting, however, that though most of our analytic categories are borrowed from Marva A. Barnett's framework of a reading class lesson plan (More Than Meets the Eye Foreign Language Reading), the taxonomy of teaching techniques is rather eclectic.

## A. Prereading Techniques

A fundamental feature of all prereading techniques is to tap into learners' prior knowledge (Mallow and Patterson, 1999 in Jenks, C. 2002: 02). Many prereading techniques are recognised in the literature, such as:

- **K.W.L** : First suggested in 1986 by Donna Ogle, K.W.L stands for what I **K**now (K), what I **W**ant to know (W) and what I have **L**earned (L). Accordingly it consists of three columns: K, W, and L. The **K** column represents the knowledge that the learners already possess. The **W** column represents the knowledge that the learners want to acquire. As for the **L** column, it relates to the knowledge the learners will have acquired by the end of the task. This technique aims at assisting the learners in understanding specific information, mainly, in content areas (Peregoy, S. and Boyle, O. 2001 in Jenks, C. 2002: 03). In addition, it facilitates connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge (Mallow and Patterson, 1999 in *ibid*).

- **Brainstorming**: To encourage the learners to say whatever comes to their minds about the topic.

- **Text Genre and Structure**: Much evidence can be found in the literature concerning the role of formal schemata in reading comprehension. Research shows that recognising the text genre helps readers understand easier and better. Given that foreign language learners are supposed to be familiar with some genres in their first language, foreign language teachers may ask their learners what they know about a specific genre before they begin reading. If the genre is not familiar, it is up to the teacher to introduce the genre and show some of its characteristics.

- **Scanning**: Because scanning is common in real world reading, teachers may help foreign language readers to practise this strategy through questions. They may ask questions about information essential to the text or relevant to the learners' background knowledge (Barnett, M. 1989: 121).

▪ **Developing Vocabulary:** One cannot deny the importance of having the adequate vocabulary for particular texts and contexts in comprehension. In foreign language settings, this idea seems to be more important “because of the many cross-cultural aspects of vocabulary” (Barnitz, J. 1985. In Barnett, M. 1989: 122). Vocabulary development is considered as an important prereading activity. In order to make it semantically based, three techniques for vocabulary development are to be found in the literature, namely semantic associations, semantic mapping and semantic feature analysis.

- *Semantic associations* consists of making the learners brainstorm all the words related to the text, context, or content area.

- *Semantic mapping* consists of asking the learners to “brainstorm words related to a concept crucial to the text” (Hague, 1987 in Barnett, M. 1989: 123). Then, the teacher together with the learners organise the words into visual maps.

- As for *semantic feature analysis*, it helps learners “focus in more detail on the distinctions between closely related words as they examine precisely what each word entails” (Barnett, M 1989: 123).

## **B. While Reading Techniques**

While reading techniques offer English language learners the questioning and the predicting strategies essential to the development of reading comprehension (Peregoy, S. and Boyle, O. 2001 in Jenks, C. 2002: 02). This category consists of some techniques, like:

### ▪ **The Use Graphemic Rules and patterns to Aid in Bottom-up Decoding**

Making the correspondences between spoken and written English represents one of the major difficulties in EFL beginning learners encounter in learning to read. What may facilitate this process is the acquaintance with some English orthographic rules and peculiarities (Douglas, H. 2001: 306). It is up to the teachers to provide the learners with hints on such patterns as the following examples:

‘Short’ vowel sound in VC patterns (bat, him, leg, wish etc.)

‘Long’ vowel sound in VCe (final silent e) patterns (late, time etc.) (Ibid)

One of the paramount aims of while reading techniques is vocabulary building through guessing (inference).

#### ▪ **Some Techniques to Help Learners to Guess**

Guessing is a broad category of reading strategies. It includes the following, among others:

- Guess the meaning of a word.
- Guess a grammatical relationship (e.g. a pronoun reference).
- Guess a discourse relationship.
- Infer implied meaning (between the lines) (Douglas, H. 2001: 309).

The teachers may help the learners to become efficient readers by encouraging them to use these while reading strategies

### **1. Analysis of Vocabulary**

When learners come upon unknown word, they may analyse it in terms of what they know about it. Some of the techniques that may be useful in this case are the following:

#### ***a. Morphological analysis:***

- Look for prefixes that may give clues
- Look for suffixes that may indicate what part of speech it is.
- Look for roots that are familiar

#### ***b. Grammatical Analysis:***

- Look for grammatical contexts that may signal information.

#### ***c. Semantic Analysis:***

- Look at the semantic context (topic) for clues. (Douglas, H. 2001: 310).

## 2. Capitalisation of Discourse Markers to Process Relationships

The basic role of discourse markers is to establish relationships among ideas. Thus, a “clear comprehension of such markers can greatly enhance learners’ reading efficiency” ((Douglas, H. 2001: 310).

To assist the learners in applying the strategies during reading, teachers may also ask the learners to complete graphic organisers, make original notes, or even draw pictures.

### C. Post Reading Techniques

The primary aim of post reading techniques is to help retain the crucial information to the literacy success of the English language learners (Jenks, C. 2002: 02). In other terms, they help the learners to interpret, analyse and deepen their understanding.

▪ **C.S.R:** One way to teach reading strategies through direct instruction is through Collaborative Strategic Reading (C.S.R). It is proposed by Janette Klinger and Sharon Vaughn (1998). It is carried out across three phases: strategy training, cooperative learning and role playing under the supervision of the teacher (Brigham, R. Et al, 2007).

▪ **Story Maps:** The Story Maps’ technique is a stratagem recommended first by D, R Rutzel (1984), Carrell and others in order to help the learners to identify meaningful relationships among concepts or events. It consists mainly of graphic organisers representing new concepts or events. In addition, Rutzel argues that a story map could also facilitate the schema building process, and thus improve reading comprehension.

Because the lack of familiarity with the organisation of different texts may cause learners’ struggle in comprehension, it is essential to provide explicit instruction in the area of recognising key text features. Graphic organisers and concept maps, among others, may be used by teachers as teaching techniques to help the learners to organise the ideas and information taken from texts.

▪ **Graphic Organisers:** Graphic Organisers relate to the “visual representation of information in the text” (Grabe, W and Jiang X. 2007). It is a teaching technique highly recommended on the assumption that awareness of how texts are organised is of paramount importance in reading comprehension. They are said to be particularly valuable because “a good graphic representation can show at a glance the key parts of a whole and their relations, thereby allowing a holistic understanding that words alone cannot convey” (Jones, B F. Pierce, J & Hunter, 1988–1989. quoted in Grabe W and Jiang X.2007).

▪ **Semantic Mapping or Clustering:** In order to help the learners to structure the ideas presented, especially in long texts, the teachers may appeal to the semantic maps technique. It consists of drawing a skeleton representing the hierarchy of the ideas developed in the text (Douglas, H. 2001).

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of what has been said so far, one may come up to the conclusion that reading has been the object of various, and sometimes contradictory views during the last decades starting from the traditional view which is said to be a linguistic approach. The latter describes reading as a receptive activity focusing on the print from the text. Then the trend moves to the cognitive view, which enhances the role of the reader’s background knowledge in meaning construction. The view, which is in vogue now, is the Interactive Approach to reading, an approach that combines the two views. It assumes that reading is a process of meaning construction through the interaction of the reader’s knowledge with printed or written information.

One of the pedagogical implications of the Interactive Approach indicates that in order to construct meaning from texts, the reading learner should develop his/her procedural knowledge. This type of knowledge consists mainly of the reading strategies used by learners

to process texts. Both bottom-up and top-down strategies must be developed in the reading class as David Eskey rightly put it

Developing readers must therefore work at perfecting both their bottom-up recognition skills and their top-down interpretation strategies. Good reading- that is, fluent and accurate reading- can result only from a constant interaction between these processes  
(Eskey, D. Quoted in Carrell, P et al 1998: 96)

Patricia Carrell supports this point of view and recommends that in reading classes the teaching of the two categories of strategies - i.e., both bottom-up and top-down processing - should be developed conjointly (ibid :239). The reason is that while the bottom-up strategies contribute to the successful comprehension of words and sentences, the top-down strategies ensure a higher level of understanding. The interaction of both reflects the competency of interpretation.

Besides accounting for the competency of interpretation, which is one of the three competencies targeted in the Algerian Middle School syllabuses, another merit of the Interactive Approach to teaching reading strategies is its concern with the role of both the teacher and the reader in the FL classroom. The investigation of teachers' classroom practice being an important issue raised in our work, we have thought it is a judicious choice, once again, to resort to the Interactive Approach because of the role it assigns to the teacher. Janet Swaffar has assessed this role and written:

The interactive model has shown not only the reader's but also the *teacher's* role to be of greater significance than has been thought up to now. Rather than monitors of performance, L2 teachers who want their classes to interact with texts have to be facilitators of the reading process. (1988)

Top-down/bottom-up processes may be best developed through intensive reading instruction following the three-phase procedure, which focuses on the conscious use of reading strategies (Stanovich, K. in Carrell, P. et al, 1998). The objective of this research work is to use a taxonomy of reading instruction activities and classroom techniques within the framework of the three-phase procedure to evaluate respectively the Middle School

textbooks and teachers' practice. The two taxonomies, presented earlier, are consistent with the Interactive Approach to reading as well as reading strategies instruction.

All in all, our preference for the 'three-phase' procedure is dictated by our conviction that the primary goal of reading strategies instruction is to help learners to make meaning from texts. The second reason for the choice is that the theory is consistent with the interactive approach and the balanced approaches to reading instruction. It combines Whole Language instruction and word-attack strategies (Phonics). In other words, learners learn how to use their background experience and knowledge of the world in conjunction with effective strategies when they read texts to reach comprehension. This type of instruction can only be effective if it follows the three-phase procedure depicted earlier.

The analytic categories thus borrowed, mainly from Françoise Grellet and Marva Barnett, are applied in the second part of this work to the reading activities suggested in the textbooks and teachers' classroom practice (teaching techniques).

## **Part Two: The Algerian Middle School Syllabuses, Textbooks and Teachers**

The present part attempts mainly at evaluating reading strategies instruction in the Algerian Middle School textbooks and teachers' practice against Françoise Grellet and Marva Barnett's framework for reading strategies instruction already presented in the previous part. We think that it is necessary to start by exploring the place of the reading skill, more precisely of reading strategies, in the Algerian Middle School syllabuses. Therefore, we shall provide an analysis of the syllabuses with special focus on the reading skill, as well as a systematic analysis of the textbooks' reading activities and the teaching techniques used by teachers in reading classes. Accordingly, this part will be divided into three chapters namely, the Algerian Middle School Syllabuses, the Algerian Middle School Textbooks, and The Algerian Middle School Teachers: A Case Study.

### **Chapter One: The Algerian Middle School Syllabuses**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, we shall be looking at the middle school syllabuses and considering their role in the reading instruction process. Said differently, we shall throw a brief look at the syllabuses' content and spot the way the reading skill is accounted for. By doing so, we aim at checking whether the Algerian Middle School syllabuses are in line with the interactive approach to reading, revolving around reading strategies instruction. Before then, we find it necessary to throw a brief glance at the general objectives as well as the theoretical assumptions underlying the recent reform of the Algerian educational system.

#### **I. The Algerian Educational Reform**

The ultimate goal of today's educational system is to form autonomous individuals, the purpose of which is to help them cope with a rapidly changing world. Schools must provide opportunities to prepare the students to become lifelong learners to meet the

requirements of the job markets and the exigencies of globalisation. The traditional teacher-centred teaching paradigms are thought to be inappropriate. With interdisciplinary insights from different fields such as linguistics, educational psychology, and pedagogy, Second and Foreign language researchers have gained a broadened understanding of the learning process in general, and language learning in particular. These theories give shape to the framework of the new learner-centred teaching paradigms that target learners' autonomy.

In 2001, an educational reform was launched in Algeria. Its aim is to bring about pedagogical conditions that would foster the development of the learners' autonomy. In a word, the Algerian school should produce autonomous citizens of the world. The educational reform is grounded in Constructivism and the Competency-Based Approach (CBA).

Contrary to the traditional view of learning as knowledge absorption, nowadays learning is viewed as active knowledge construction. This new conception of learning is called "Constructivism". The latter is a theory of learning whose main tenet is that people learn by actively constructing new knowledge, not by having information poured into their heads. This theory is based on the work of the educational philosopher John Dewey, and educational psychologists Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner among others. According to them, through the process of learning, learners actively construct knowledge and this construction of knowledge happens in a social context.

As for the Competency-Based Approach, it is a teaching approach grounded in the constructivist principles. It aims to develop the learners' competencies in such a way to help them to become autonomous learners and individuals. The basic objective of the CBA is to build a bridge between school and society. Put differently, it aims to help the learners to transfer skills developed in the classroom to real world contexts.

Within the guidelines of the reform, the English language is perceived as a language of science and technology as well as an 'open window' to the world. As a matter of fact, the

general objective of teaching English, as set in the syllabuses, is to help the Algerian students to integrate with the universal society by participating in the English linguistic community.

## **II. Overview of the Algerian Middle School Syllabuses**

This section attempts at describing the Algerian middle school syllabuses. Even though slight differences may be noticed among the four Middle School syllabuses, all of them share the same organisational framework. Accordingly, we shall not be dealing with each of them in isolation. Rather, a general overview of their organisational framework will be provided. They are organised around three main sections:

### **II.1 Objectives of English Teaching in the Middle School**

In this section of the syllabus, the designers emphasise the importance of the English language for the Algerian learners' future professional career. They assume that due to globalisation, the English language has reached the status of "the world's lingua franca". In other terms, it has become the vehicle of civilisation and modernity. Thus, mastering the English language becomes more than a necessity for the Algerian citizen. It is a way, among others, of helping the Algerian society to integrate into universality.

Three basic objectives are targeted through teaching English in the Middle school: linguistic, methodological and cultural. The linguistic objective relates to the mastery of language components. The methodological objective relates to the development of strategies and skills. As for the cultural one, it concerns the development of the learners' cultural awareness and understanding of others' cultures.

### **II.2. Teaching Approach**

The teaching approach which seems more appropriate to achieve the objectives mentioned earlier, according to the syllabus designers, is the Competency-Based Approach. The new teaching /learning paradigm adopted aims not only at developing some linguistic

competence in the learners, but also at providing them with some communicative abilities. Another objective is to develop higher-order skills for the sake of the interdisciplinary competency. In addition to these objectives which may be considered as pedagogical ones, the teaching of English aims at developing social and cultural behaviours in the learners. This behavioural objective is termed as ‘Savoir être’ (know how to be) in the syllabuses.

In the section that concerns the teaching proper of the English subject, three competencies are worded in the syllabuses as follows:

- Competency 1: Interacting orally in English
- Competency 2: Interpreting oral and written texts
- Competency 3: Producing oral and written texts

### **II.3. Methodological Hints**

The key elements in this section of the syllabuses, as proposed by the syllabus designers, are : objectives, contents, organisation of contents and evaluation. To begin with, the competencies or the objectives are specified in terms of strategies related to each language skill. For exemple : “1.4 Stratégies propres aux activités de lecture” (strategies related to reading activities) (MS 3 Syllabus: 54). Then, a list of the content relevant to the objectives specified is provided. In this respect, the list consists of life-coping skills termed in the syllabuses as “Savoir-faire” (know-how), socio-cultural topics such as “formes de politesses interculturelles, mode de vie” (intercultural polite forms, lifestyle) (MS 3 Syllabus: 56), in addition to language items such as syntax, vocabulary, phonology etc. The last part of this section is devoted to evaluation to find out how well the objectives have been achieved by the learners.

### III. Analysis of the Algerian Middle School Syllabuses

This section attempts at categorising the Algerian Middle School syllabuses through the analysis of their aspects in order to check whether they are in line with the interactive approach to reading. Then, a special emphasis will be placed on the place of the reading skill in the syllabuses.

Based on the brief overview of the three main parts of syllabuses, we may assert that the syllabuses are organised in a rational way. That is, they start by explaining the objectives of language teaching, then they move to present the teaching approach that seems to be the most appropriate to reach the general objectives set in the reform. Finally, the last section is devoted to methodological hints. That is, how to implement such approach in the classroom.

Given that our issue is related to teaching, the focus of the analysis will be placed on the last section, that is, Methodological Hints. The design of this section shows a strong orientation towards the task-based principles as the following extracts taken from the syllabuses show:

- “En jouant un rôle actif dans sa formation, l’élève est responsable de ses apprentissages et peut ainsi effectuer le transfert de ses acquis dans toutes les activités de l’école et de la vie courante” (MS4 syllabus: 54). (Language learning is learner-centred aiming at helping the learner to use language outside the academic context).
- “ On s’attache à aider l’élève à jouer un rôle de plus en plus actif [...] en lui fournissant l’occasion de trouver réponses à des questions issues de son expérience quotidienne” (MS 4 syllabus: 52). (Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities).
- “L’élève est amené à interagir dans des situations scolaires courantes en utilisant un langage verbal et/ ou non verbal” (MS 1 Syllabus: 52). (One of the

basic tenets of the task-based syllabus is that language learning is best perfected through interaction).

- “Perçu comme le premier agent de ses apprentissages, l’élève devra s’engager dans une démarche de construction de ses savoirs” (MS1 Syllabus: 51) (Learning is a process of meaning construction).
- What is important is not to learn about language, but what the learners will be able to do with the English they have learned, i.e., getting things done by using language. This is termed in the syllabus as follows: “le programme sera donc centré sur l’élève et sur la construction de son savoir afin de lui faire acquérir, le plus efficacement possible, une connaissance fonctionnelle de l’anglais correspondant à des besoin scolaires et extra scolaires” (MS3 Syllabus: 40). This principle refers to what is called in the literature ‘communicative tasks’.
- The focus is on the socio-constructivist perspective to learning by emphasising the use of different strategies alongside the meaning construction process. “l’élève mobilise des stratégies pour comprendre un texte” (MS 1 Syllabus: 58).

In addition, what makes us sustain that the methodology suggested is task-based is the emphasis on language functions, strategies and life-coping skills in this section. For the sake of illustration, we may mention: “utiliser les formules de politesse pour saluer, échanger des informations” (MS3 Syllabus: 55). Another perspective known as Project-Based Approach is adopted. Its objectives are broader than those suggested by the Task-Based Approach: the development of an interdisciplinary competency involving cognitive and social skills.

This methodology is in line with formal research sustaining that the task-based approach is the most appropriate for CBA implementation. The Task-Based syllabus is a syllabus organised around tasks reflecting the shift of focus “from the linguistic element to the pedagogical, with an emphasis on learning or learner” (Rabbini, R .2002). Within the

framework of task-based teaching, language learning is achieved indirectly as the learners concentrate more on solving meaning/communicative problems suggested through different tasks. In other terms, communicative tasks are used to encourage the learners to use language communicatively in authentic contexts. More to the point, such methodology is adequate to reading strategies instruction as task-based syllabuses are the best-known of process-oriented syllabuses. The latter are in consistency with the interactive approach to reading as they emphasise the role of the learner in meaning construction.

In addition to selecting the appropriate items forming out a language syllabus on the basis of a specific criterion, an important point of interest is the way in which selected items are to be organised and presented to the learners. In this regard, a glance at the table of contents of the textbooks shows that they are cyclical syllabuses. For example, the 'past simple' is a language item suggested to be taught in MSE year 2 in both unit one and unit five. Similarly, 'the present simple tense' appears and reappears in different files of MSE year 3.

The basic principle of a cyclical syllabus is that "new subject matter should not be introduced once in a syllabus and then dropped". Rather, "it should be reintroduced in different manifestations at various times in the course" (Dubin, F and Olshtein, E. 1997: 55). Cyclical syllabuses are opposed to linear ones. The elements of the latter are sequenced and graded from easy to difficult and from simple to complex. In this respect, Cunningsworth states that a linear syllabus is "a syllabus which is organised and ordered on the principle of adding teaching points to each other one at a time" (Cunningsworth, A 1984: 93). This format proves a great usefulness with structural contents where each unit prepares the following one. Yet, when it comes to functions and notions, this format shows great weaknesses. Accordingly, the cyclical format is more suitable for functional or task-based syllabuses than the linear one.

### **III.1 The Place of the Reading Skill in the Syllabuses**

We turn now from considerations about the syllabuses as a whole to tackle the core issue of this work by placing reading and the teaching of reading within the context of the Algerian middle school syllabuses. Our focus will be on the aims of the materials (the syllabuses in our case), thus our main criterion will be borrowed from Hutchinson and Waters' checklist of material evaluation (1987: 100).

Two sections of the syllabuses are concerned with reading : “mise en oeuvre de la compétence 2 : Interpréter des documents authentiques oraux et écrits” and “indications méthodologiques/stratégies propres aux activités de lecture”. Reading instruction aims at helping the learners to comprehend different types of authentic texts. Its key element, as presented by the syllabus designers, is meaning construction through the interaction of the learner with different types of texts. Said differently, reading instruction aims at helping the learners to comprehend different types of authentic texts. This comprehension may be achieved through developing different reading strategies along with activating the learners' background knowledge.

### **III.2. The Categorisation of the Reading Strategies**

Following the distinction drawn in Part One between cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies, a classification of the reading strategies involved in the Algerian Middle School syllabuses will be provided here.

We think that it is important to start by drawing a distinction between learning strategies and reading strategies. The former relate to strategies that make learning more effective. On the other hand, reading strategies refer to the different processes used by the learners in order to make sense of what they read (Singhal, M . 2001). Through this paper, we are concerned with the second type only, the one involved in the section “indications méthodologiques/stratégies propres aux activités de lecture”.

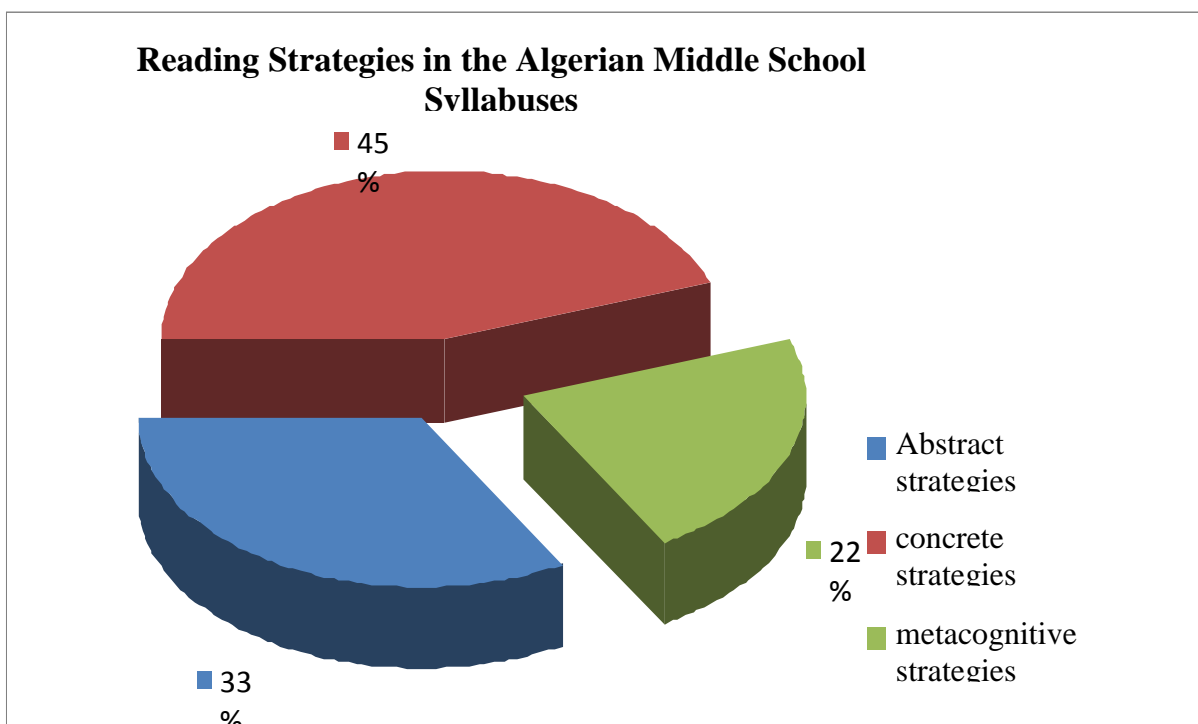
It is worth mentioning, however, that the list of the reading strategies is the same for the four levels. The categorisation is presented in the following table:

### **Categorisation of the Reading Strategies suggested in the Algerian Middle School Syllabuses**

<b>Strategies (as presented in the syllabuses in French)</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Type</b>
Anticipation du contenu à partir du sujet annoncé, du genre de texte, des éléments visuels, du titre/ sous-titres.	Anticipation / Prediction	Cognitive (Abstract)
représentation du contexte à partir d'éléments de la situation	recognising the context through illustrations and text features	Cognitive (Abstract)
établissement de liens avec ce qu'il connaît déjà à propos du sujet	relating new information to background knowledge	Cognitive (Abstract)
Précision de l'intention	specifying the author's intention (understanding the purpose)	Cognitive (Abstract)
identification de la tâche	Identifying the task	Metacognitive
reconnaissance globale des mots	Recognising the words	Cognitive (Concrete)
recours à la reconnaissance de la correspondance grapho-phonétique.	Recognising the grapho-phonetic correspondences (letter-sound relationship)	Cognitive (Concrete)

recours à des indices morphologiques	Identification of morphological clues	Cognitive (Concrete)
utilisation de la ponctuation	Identifying the role of punctuation in comprehension	Cognitive (Concrete)
identification de substituts de mots (pronoms) et de leurs référents	Identifying cohesive devices	Cognitive (Concrete)
identification des marqueurs de relations fréquents	Link-words	Cognitive (Concrete)
poursuite de la lecture même si le sens d'un mot lui échappe	Skipping unknown words	Cognitive (Abstract)
Relecture	Rereading	Cognitive (Concrete)
Questionnement / consultations d'outils de référence	Questioning/ Using dictionary	Cognitive (Concrete)
Retour sur l'intention de la lecture	Check the purpose of reading	Metacognitive
Expression par des réactions verbales et non verbales de ses goûts, ses préférences.	Verbal / non verbal reaction to texts	Cognitive (Abstract)
Retour sur la démarche utilisée	Monitoring	Metacognitive
Retour sur les stratégies utilisées	Testing the effectiveness of the strategies used	Metacognitive

The chart below represents the ratio of each type of reading strategies in the syllabuses:



All in all, the principles underlying the Algerian Middle School syllabuses are relevant to task-based teaching in general and reading strategies instruction in particular.

#### **IV. Results and Discussion**

The analysis of the Algerian middle school syllabuses reveals that they are task-based and project-based. This is to say, they encourage ‘learning by doing’. In fact, the task-based syllabus is today’s current issue on syllabus design. Furthermore, a glance at the table of contents of the four middle school textbooks helps us to sustain that the middle school syllabuses are cyclical ones. They are organised around functions of language together with language skills. In sum, we can say that the Algerian middle school syllabuses are cyclical task-based syllabuses.

Given the lack of exposure of the Algerian learners to the English language outside the classroom, a task-based approach with its emphasis on communicative learning is likely to be the most suitable type of language teaching syllabuses in the Algerian context. Furthermore, as Phillippe Perrenoud (1996) sustains, a relevant methodology to achieve competencies development goes through problem-solving situations where the learners are actively involved in thinking about the issue making use of their previous knowledge. Both Task-Based Learning and Project-Based Learning can be considered to a certain extent as different ways of creating opportunities for language learning through problem-solving (Richards, J, and Renandya, W. 2002:93) but from different perspectives. In other words, one of the learning processes adopted by both Task-Based and Project-Based approaches, through which the objectives designed by CBA and constructivism may be reached, is the problem-solving process. However, what is important pointing at is that the problems tackled through tasks target the development of the learners' communicative competence, whereas the ones tackled through projects aim at developing cognitive and social competencies.

The Task-Based syllabus is in consistency with the interactive approach to reading as it emphasises the active role of the learner in meaning construction. In addition, it is the best known of process-oriented syllabuses. The latter are suggested in the field of language teaching as an alternative to product-oriented syllabuses, for the sake of enhancing communicative language skills. They emphasise the process rather than the product, that is, "the focus is not on what the student will have accomplished on completion of the program, but on the specification of learning tasks and activities that s/he will undertake during the course" (Rabbini, R. 2002). Said differently, teaching is not just a matter of presenting language items or even strategies, "it is not the content of what is learnt that is important but also the activity through which it is learnt". (Prabhu, 1983 in Hutchinson, T. and Waters, A. 1987: 92).

Since our issue is related to reading instruction, we have somehow focused on the principle of task-based teaching. However, we do not mean, by any means, that it is the only syllabus adequate to implement the principles of CBA and that it is the only approach implemented in the Algerian syllabuses. It is universally admitted that even though each type of syllabus is treated in isolated contexts, in practice, they “rarely occur independently of each other” (Tarey, R. 1988). As for the case of the Algerian syllabuses, though the task-based syllabus label dominates, some other types of content are combined in it, such as language functions depicted in the list of the content to be taught and the textbooks’ content. In addition, some content related to language items is to be found in the syllabus.

At first sight it seems that this contradicts the principles of task-based syllabuses. However, Hutchinson and Water state, in this respect, that “any teaching material must in reality operate several syllabuses at the same time. One of them will probably be used as the principal organising feature, but others are still there” (Hutchinson, T. and Waters, A. 1987: 89)

As far as reading instruction is concerned, the syllabus designers seem to support the interactive approach to reading as they emphasise the learners’ interaction with authentic texts to construct meaning. Furthermore, a high focus on reading strategies instruction is to be noted in the four syllabuses since the competency of interpretation is specified in terms of a list of reading strategies. The categorisation of the latter shows clearly that each of the four middle school syllabuses recommends the development of eighteen reading strategies falling into the three types: concrete, abstract and metacognitive.

What remains problematic concerning this categorisation is the gradation of these strategies. No specific hints for each level are provided. Actually, the same list of reading strategies is provided for the four levels. Much evidence in the literature testifies to the importance of grading the reading strategies according to the literacy level of the learners. In

this respect, James Coady sustains that as “beginning readers become more proficient, they rely less on abilities such as making appropriate correspondences between sounds and letters, and more on abstract strategies involving the use of syntactic cues and contextual meanings” (Coady J. quoted in Mackay et al. 1979: 02). Furthermore, the syllabuses do not supply any teaching techniques to help the teachers effectively implement the content in the classroom. In other words, the syllabuses have not been submitted to methodologists for the interpretation of theoretical assumptions and principles into classroom techniques.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, we may say that the Algerian Middle School syllabuses are cyclical task-based syllabuses encouraging the learners’ interaction with texts. Thus, they are consistent with formal research sustaining that a cyclical task-based syllabus is the most appropriate for implementing the principles of CBA in general and the interactive approach to reading in particular.

After scrutinising the two sections concerned with reading instruction in the four syllabuses, we come to conclude that they emphasise reading strategies development through task-based teaching. Yet, knowing that the aim of the syllabus is to communicate to the teachers what a course is about as well as the basic principles of teaching, no clear idea about what type of tasks to implement nor instruction hints for teachers are provided.

## **Chapter Two: The Algerian Middle School Textbooks**

### **Introduction**

Much of the effectiveness of language instruction is derived from supporting materials. The most common didactic support used in EFL classes, mainly in the Algerian context, where there is a shortage of language laboratories in the middle schools, is the textbook.

There are many ways to analyse a textbook depending on the intent of the analysis. We think that the analysis which can best help our aim here includes the textbooks “usability” (Dubin, F and olshtein, E 1986). We shall be looking at the way textbook design and organisation affects the development of reading strategies. Accordingly, we will focus on the typology of exercises/tasks suggested in the textbooks and the procedures used by the designers. Our evaluation criterion is still borrowed from Hutchinson and Waters’ checklist mentioned in the previous chapter, i.e., the aims of the material.

### **I. Description and Analysis of the Middle School Textbooks**

In this section, we attempt at describing the four Middle School textbooks together with analysing their reading sections. The focus of our analysis is put on the reading activities. Our aim is to ascertain whether they open opportunities for the learners to develop the reading strategies set in the syllabuses. To this end, we shall rely on Françoise Grellet’s and Marva Barnett’s respective views presented in the analytical framework in the previous part. More precisely, in order to make it systematic, we have deliberately given it a heavily ‘analogical’ aspect.

It is important to note that even though the activities and tasks are taken from the learners’ textbooks, some details needed for the sake of our analysis are taken from the

Teacher's Guides. Moreover, to make things clearer, the analysis is presented in tables (in the appendixes: A, B, C and D)

What is worth mentioning too is that the reading activities presented in the rubric 'Check' are not treated. This is due to the fact that their objective is not teaching, which is the issue of this paper, but rather evaluating the learners' progress.

## **I.1. Spotlight on English One**

### **A. Textbook Description**

Spotlight on English One is the first official English textbook designed for beginning learners in their first year of middle school. It fleshes out the 2002 official syllabus. It is developed through seven didactic files, each of them revolving round a general theme. Each file is made up of the following sections:

- Learn the language
- Learn about culture
- Reminder
- Check
- Project
- **Learn the language**

This part focuses on teaching language as a means of communication as well as on its grammar, lexis, spelling, and pronunciation. It is divided into three sequences stressing listening and speaking before moving to reading and writing activities. As a matter of fact, each sequence contains three rubrics, namely 'Listen and Speak', 'Practise', and 'Produce'.

**'Listen and Speak'**: the aim of this rubric is to make the learners familiarise with some vocabulary and structures intended to be used to express themselves.

**‘Practise’:** made up mainly of various activities, this rubric aims at making the learners practise the language items acquired in the previous rubric in various settings and situations.

As for **‘Produce’**, it consists mainly of writing activities aiming at getting the learners involved in written production.

- **Learn about culture**

Because language cannot occur in vacuum, i.e., separated from culture, this section of the textbook focuses on the cultural aspect of some English speaking countries. Several tasks and activities are proposed to make the learners acquainted with the English culture (mainly U.S. and British). Its basic aim is to enable the learners “to infer the similarities and differences between their own culture and the cultures that use English as a national or official language” (Teacher’s handbook: 08). Furthermore, a link between aspects of socio-cultural facts and specific language items and expressions is intended.

- **Reminder**

This section summarises all the new items and language functions introduced in the file. Its aim is to help the teacher, as well as the learners, to measure the amount of knowledge they are supposed to cover all over the file.

- **Check**

This section relates to evaluating the learners’ performance during the whole file in order to improve the quality of their learning. Its aim is “to make sure that the items introduced in the file have been properly acquired” (ibid: 09)

- **Project**

This rubric is devoted to some necessary steps and tips in the realisation of the project.

Within each rubric, activities and tasks are provided gradually. Our analysis will focus only on the rubrics containing reading tasks.

## **B. Results of the Textbook Analysis (Presented in Appendix A)**

The analysis of Spotlight on English One reveals that it comprises thirty-five reading activities. The theoretical background for the analysis is borrowed from Françoise Grellet's taxonomy of reading comprehension activities and Marva Barnett's reading lesson plan. The full analysis is presented in Appendix A, and it suggests that Spotlight on English One's reading activities are designed for different aims.

Nine of the activities are assessed as being designed for reading strategy instruction. Ten reading activities aim at checking the learners' understanding of texts corresponding to the activities suggested by Françoise Grellet. They are mainly 'transfer activities' aiming at helping the learners understand short passages by asking them to transfer information into tables. Other activities consist of helping the learners to study the chronological sequence in a text by asking them to reorder pictures to get coherent stories. On the other hand, seven reading activities aim at checking the learners' comprehension via traditional comprehension questions. An additional five reading activities seem to emphasise language practice through reading. In other words, reading is used as a means to an end and not an end in itself. Finally, four activities are suggested to develop the learners' background knowledge about the Anglo-Saxon culture. These are to be found mainly in the rubric 'Learn about Culture'.

The nine reading activities designed for reading strategy instruction target the following strategies:

### ➤ **Bottom-processing strategies:**

It is until the fourth file of the textbook that one and the only reading activity targeting bottom-processing strategies is to be found. It targets the strategy of 'Reference'. It's a gap filling activity whose objective is to train the learners to look carefully at the linguistic context in order to find out the function of the missing word as well as to find the grammatically correct-word.

➤ **Top-processing strategies:**

Two reading activities are designed to develop the learners' strategy of 'prediction'. Their objective is to train the learners to make predictions when reading, especially to guess where the sentences are likely to stop. They consist mainly in providing the right punctuation. Three other activities require from the learners to read short passages and find out the name of an animal, a sport or writing the bill. These are mainly games that may be categorised as activities targeting the strategy of 'stating a purpose for reading'. Finally, three activities are designed to help the learners 'understand the organisation of text', that is 'developing formal schemata'. Their objective is to help the learners to find out how the text is organised by reordering sentences to get a dialogue.

All in all, we may say that the reading activities are more or less consistent with Grellet's taxonomy of the reading activities. However, a shortage of reading activities designed for strategies instruction is to be noted. In addition, there is an overemphasis of the top-down strategies at the detriment of the bottom-up ones while activities targeting concrete strategies are likely to be beneficial for the learners at this level. This includes mainly 'cloze activities' aiming at helping the learners to guess the meaning of words through contextual clues. It is worth mentioning as well, that Marva Barnett's lesson plan is not applied at this level. Simple reading activities are suggested without following the three-phase procedure.

## **I.2. Spotlight on English Two**

### **A. Textbook Description**

Spotlight on English: book two is organised into five files comprising three learning sequences each. Each learning sequence is made up of the following sections

- Listen and Speak
- Discover the Language

- Learn about culture
- Check
- Your project
- Self assessment
- **Listen and Speak**

This section comprises three rubrics

***‘Pronunciation and spelling’***: This rubric is designed to help the learners improve their pronunciation

***‘Practise’***: It consists of several tasks aiming at practising the new language acquired so far in the previous rubric.

***‘Go Forward’***: As its title indicates, this rubric is a step ahead in the presentation of new language. It consists mainly of a reading task.

- **Discover the Language**

It aims at making the learners discover language forms presented in discourse. It contains

***‘Reading passage’***: It is meant for target language forms introduction within communicative context.

***‘Practise’***: Made up of various activities, this rubric aims at making the learners practise the language items encountered in the previous rubric in various settings and situations.

***‘Reminder’***: It relates to the formalisation of the rules that the learners are supposed to induce through activities and tasks.

- **Learn about Culture**

“This section is meant only for pleasure” (MS 2 Teacher’s Guide: 11). It provides many texts and authentic documents for the learners to read for the sake of learning about the universal culture.

- **Check**

This rubric consists of a set of tasks designed to help the learners to assess their degree of achievement.

- **Project**

This rubric is devoted to some necessary steps and tips in the realisation of the project.

- **Self-assessment**

It consists of a grid that the learners should use to evaluate themselves.

## **B. Results of the Textbook Analysis (Presented in Appendix B)**

A total of thirty-nine reading activities are analysed by analogy to the analytical framework of reading activities presented in the theoretical part. The whole analysis, presented in the form of a table, is to be found in appendix B.

Twenty-three of the activities are assessed as being designed for reading strategy instruction. Seven activities aim at checking the learners’ understanding of texts in accordance with the activities suggested by Françoise Grellet. This type of activities includes mainly ordering sentences to get a coherent conversation, which aims at checking the learners’ understanding of the chronological sequence in a text. In addition, ‘mapping it out’ activities are suggested to help the learners to understand the main information of a text by asking them to trace a route on a map. Another seven activities aim at checking the learners’ comprehension via traditional comprehension questions. Two activities are designed for language practice. In doing them, learners pay special more attention to form than to reading itself.

The twenty-three reading activities designed for reading strategy instruction target the following strategies:

➤ **Bottom-processing strategies:**

Three activities target the strategy of ‘Inference’. Their major aim is to train the learners to recognise synonyms and antonyms as well as to deduce the meaning of unknown words. Understanding the lexical relations and the relations between parts of the text is likely to help the learners infer the meaning of unknown items. Six activities target ‘using a dictionary’, a bilingual one at this level.

➤ **Top-processing strategies:**

Nine activities target the strategy of ‘Prediction’. Four of the activities are prereading ones, revolving around encouraging the learners to think about the topic of the text to be read by looking at the title and the illustrations. The other activities consist mainly in matching questions with answers and completing a letter or a story. Their aim is to train the learners to guess when reading as well as to recognise words more quickly. An additional five activities are designed for developing the strategy of ‘using information of the text’. Some of the activities consist of matching passages with the corresponding pictures. The learners learn to use the stated or implied information in the text. Other activities aim at helping the learners to understand the text by asking them to use the information contained in it to make decisions.

In sum, we may say that though some reading activities are designed in a traditional way, an important number of activities are consistent with reading strategies instruction. In addition, unlike Spotlight on English One, this textbook is characterised by a balance between the bottom-processing and the top-processing strategies. It is worth mentioning, as well, that the reading activities suggested in this textbook are much thematically related to the files where they are found. This may divert from the main objective of reading instruction. This is

to say, teachers may focus on expanding or reviewing vocabulary, and forget about reading strategies instruction.

### **I.3. Spotlight on English Three**

#### **A. Textbook Description**

Spotlight on English: book three is a follow-up textbook to Spotlight on English one and Spotlight on English two. It consists of four files entitled respectively: Communications, Travel, Work and Play, and Around the World. Each file is organised around the following sections:

- Language Skills: three sequences involving ‘Listen and Speak’, ‘Read and write’ rubrics each
- Snapshots of Culture
- Activate your English
- Do the Exercises and Draw the Rules
- Project Round-up
- Where do we Stand Now?
- **The sequences**

Each sequence is divided into three rubrics

**‘Listen and Speak’**: This rubric is made up of three sub-rubrics reflecting the three phases: presentation, practice, and production. They are entitled respectively: ‘listening task’, ‘say it clear’, and ‘imagine’.

**‘Read and write I’**: It is made up of

*Reading task*: Its aim is to help the learners to develop reading strategies and skills. It is worth mentioning that there is some emphasis on guessing/ predicting and verifying hypotheses.

*Practise:* It aims at encouraging the learners to re-use the language components (forms and functions) discovered earlier in the reading passage.

*Write it out:* It consists of a writing task.

**‘Read and Write II’:** This rubric consists of a reading and writing task. “Its objective is essentially to develop extensive reading skills” (Teacher’s book: 07).ers to re-use the languageills.

- **Snapshots of Culture**

It consists of many texts providing the learners with cross-cultural information, i.e., encouraging the learners to think about the differences that lie between the Algerian culture and the British/ U.S cultures.

- **Activate your English**

Its aim is to help the learners to build a “thesaurus” related to the topic of the file. They are mainly requested to look for the meaning of topic-related words and use them in sentences and paragraphs of their own.

- **Do the Exercises and Draw the Rules**

The aim of this section is to help the learners to write their own ‘reminder’ ( the equivalent section in Spotlight on English: book two) .That is, it is up to the learners to do a series of activities related to phonology, grammar, and morphology, then draw the rules accordingly.

- **Project Round-up**

This section consists of a sample of a project task, as well as some steps to follow to conduct the project.

- **Where Do we Stand Now?**

It provides the learners with a series of activities for self-evaluation.

## **B. Results of the Textbook Analysis (Presented in Appendix C)**

Sixty-two reading activities depicted in the rubrics ‘Read and Write I’ and ‘Read and Write II’ are analysed by analogy to the analytical framework of reading activities presented in the theoretical part. The whole study is presented in appendix C in the form of a table.

Twenty-five of the activities are assessed as being designed for reading strategy instruction. Ten activities aim at checking the learners’ understanding of texts and correspond to the activities suggested by Françoise Grellet. In this respect, various activities are suggested for varied aims. Some of them target checking the learners’ understanding of the chronological sequence, the text organisation or the main information in a text. Others help the learners to understand the text by asking them to use the information contained in it to make decisions, e.g., reading an authentic brochure to make suggestions to a friend. Eighteen reading activities aim at checking the learners’ comprehension via traditional comprehension questions. Seven activities may be categorised as means for introducing language forms. Finally, one activity targets reading for general understanding.

It is worth mentioning that eleven reading lessons start with prereading activities followed by while- and post-reading ones, hence following Barnett’s lesson plan in particular and a task-based teaching procedure in general. The pre-reading phases are explicitly stated or such that an experienced teacher can easily infer a suitable pre-task.

The twenty-five reading activities designed for reading strategy instruction target the following strategies:

### ➤ **Bottom-processing strategies:**

Five reading activities target the strategy of ‘Inference’. The activity type followed for that aim is the ‘cloze exercise’. The latter makes the learners realise “how much the context can help them to find out the meaning of difficult or unfamiliar words” (Grellet, F. 1981:32).

➤ **Top-processing strategies:**

Eleven activities target the strategy of ‘prediction’, designed chiefly as pre-reading activities. They consist mainly of an analysis of illustrations and questions in order to make the learners “aware of what they know, what they don’t know, what they wish to learn about the topic” (Grellet, F. 1981: 62). However, only one activity suggests to the learners to set hypotheses and check them. Similarly, one activity targets the strategy of ‘skimming’. The aim behind this activity is to show the learners the importance of skimming, that is, the general idea of a text may be identified from the understanding of just a few words. Six activities target ‘interpreting context’. Their aim is to make the learners aware of the importance of the context (illustrations, layout, title etc.) in meaning construction. Finally, two activities target ‘understanding the communicative value of texts’, that is, ‘developing formal schemata’. The objective of these activities is to encourage the learners to recognise the function of a text because the more they know about a text, the easier they understand it.

In sum, Spotlight on English Three is rich in reading activities in general and those designed for reading strategies development in particular. However, the number of the reading activities designed for testing is important too. As a matter of fact, eighteen activities are designed following the traditional reading comprehension design.

#### **I.4. On the Move.**

##### **A. Textbook Description**

On the Move is the last textbook designed to complete the Middle School English course. It consists of six files entitled respectively: *It’s my treat*, *You can do it*, *Great expectations*, *Then and Now*, *Dreams, Dreams...*, and *Fact and Fiction*. They are organised following the same structure. Each file is divided into six sections:

- Language Learning

- Take a Break
- Skills Building
- Project Round up
- Where Do we Stand Now?
- Time for...

It is worth pointing at the fact that each file is introduced by a ‘Preview’ and ‘food for thought’. The former aims at providing the learners as well as the teachers with the pedagogical road map of the file. As for the latter, it is a warm-up section consisting of pictures. Its aim is to trigger the learners’ cultural schemata with the help of the teacher and anticipate the content of the file.

- **Language Learning**

This section is concerned with teaching grammar in context. The latter is achieved indirectly through listening and reading activities. Thus, this section is divided into three rubrics:

*‘Listen and Consider’*: its aim is to get the learners exposed to the grammar items of the file. It is made up of a listening task, grammar window, and practise.

*‘Read and Consider’*: like the previous sub-rubric, the aim of this one is to introduce grammar items. Following the same procedure, it is divided into:

- *A reading task*: it aims at discovering language forms.
- *Grammar window*: It guides the learners in the study of those language forms.
- *Practise*: Its aim is to practise the language forms studied in the grammar window.

*‘Words and Sounds’*: the aim of this sub-rubric is to help the learners get familiar with spelling-sound correspondences.

- **Take a Break**

As its name indicates, the aim of this section is to allow the learners some time for relaxation before starting the next section. It is made up of cartoons, work out puzzles, tongue twisters, etc. vocabulary as well as getting them acquainted with phonetic transcriptions. dow. too. e file.

- **Skills Building**

This section comprises three rubrics:

*'Research and report'*: this rubric consists of several reading and writing activities to be carried out by the learners at home and reported on the class. They may be set as individual or collective work.

*'Listening and Speaking'*: it consists of tasks aiming at developing listening and speaking skills for an appropriate use of English in various social situations.

*'Reading and Writing'*: unlike the "Read and Consider" rubric, this one aims at helping the learners develop primary reading/writing skills as well as social skills. In other terms, the focus is not on language teaching but on skills development.

- **Project Round up**

This section consists of a sample of a project task as well as some procedures that will help the learners to conduct their projects.

- **Where Do we Stand Now?**

This section is devoted to evaluation. It comprises two rubrics:

*'Progress Check'*: It consists of some activities designed to assess the learners' performance all over the file.

*'The Learning log'*: what is at stake in this rubric is the learners' self-evaluation.

- **Time for...**

Made up of poems, songs, cartoons or proverbs, this section is meant to end the file on a happy note.

## **B. Results of the Textbook Analysis (Presented in Appendix D)**

A new procedure has been adopted in this textbook. The files are structured systematically. Each file is divided into two main parts: 'Language discovery' and 'Skills Building' with the 'Take a break' and 'Research and Report' rubrics in between. The first part is concerned with language practice through listening and reading as main language skills for language discovery. As for the second part, it is concerned with the development of linguistic, intellectual, and socio-cultural skills through language practice through listening and reading as main language skills in the era of competencies objectives which. In other words, in the first part the reading skill is instrumental in the process of language learning, and in the second part, the reading skill constitutes an end in itself.

The analysis of the textbook against Barnett's lesson plan framework and Grellet's taxonomy of reading comprehension activities reveals that it comprises twenty-six reading activities in the first part, 'Language Learning'. As for the second part, that is 'Skills Building', it comprises thirty-three reading activities. The whole analysis is presented in appendix D and the findings may be summarised as follows:

➤ Part one: 'Language Learning' (Read and Consider)

This part consists mainly of reading tasks starting by a prereading phase, followed by while and post reading phases. It is worth mentioning that reading at this level is mainly used as a means to introduce language forms in context.

The first part of the task is "Before you read". Its aim is to activate the learners' background knowledge about the topic as well as to make them anticipate what the text will deal with. Visual aids (illustrations) and/or questions are provided as means to elicit the learners' interaction with the topic. If well implemented by the teacher, this type of activity is

likely to develop the strategy of ‘prediction’. It also requires from the learners to set hypotheses about the content of the reading selection and then check them up while reading. The ‘check’ activity is set in the second part entitled “As you read”. As for the last part “After reading”, it relates to what Jane Willis calls “language focus” whose aim is to introduce grammar points and explain them.

➤ Part two: ‘Skills Building’(Reading and Writing)

As its title indicates, this part aims mainly at skills development in reading and writing. As a matter of fact, twenty-three activities are designed for reading strategy instruction. Five reading activities aim at checking the learners’ understanding of texts corresponding to the activities suggested by Françoise Grellet. These activities aim mainly at checking the learners’ understanding of different texts by asking them to use the information to make decisions, to study the chronological sequence, to locate a specific place in a map, or to transfer information from text to graphic display. Four reading activities aim at checking the learners’ comprehension via traditional comprehension questions. Finally, one activity is designed for language practice specifically the use of while, when, and as.

The twenty-four reading activities designed for reading strategy instruction target the following strategies:

➤ **Bottom-processing strategies:**

In this category of strategies, ‘reference’ has received the most importance as five activities are designed to develop it. They mainly focus on training the learners to make use of cohesive devices to understand a passage. They relate mainly to gap-filling and categorising activities aiming at developing the strategy of understanding relations between parts of text through the use of grammatical and lexical cohesion. Unlike ‘reference’, only one activity is designed to develop ‘inference’. Its aim is to help the learners to understand relations between parts of a text through synonymy and antonymy.

➤ **Top-processing strategies:**

Like the first part, ‘Read and Consider’, the strategy of ‘prediction’ is highly developed in this part. Twelve prereading activities are categorised as targeting to activate the learners’ background knowledge and to make them predict what comes next. They consist in asking the learners to use the illustrations, the title, the layout and their prior knowledge to guess the content of the text. Nine activities require from the learners to check their hypotheses set in the prereading phase. These activities may be categorised as ‘Reading for purpose’ activities. Only one activity is designed to help the learners to understand the communicative value of texts’, that is, to ‘develop their formal schemata’. Its objective is to train the learners to recognise the function of the text before reading it. Another activity aims at developing the learners’ interpretation of text and context. More precisely, it trains the learners to use the stated or the implied information in the text to relate pictures to sentences. Finally, it is important to note that some activities target more than one strategy, mainly the prereading ones, which revolve around illustrations and pictures as a starting point. They target the prediction strategy together with scanning. For the sake of illustration, we may mention activity one page eighty-two.

As far as Marva Barnett’s lesson plan is concerned, we may assert that it is faithfully followed in part one as well as in part two of each file. As a matter of fact, nine reading tasks in the second part state explicitly the three-phase procedure of reading strategies instruction.

In sum, interesting reading activities are to be found in On the Move either in the first or in the second part of each file. However, an over-focus on developing the strategy of prediction is to be noted.

## **II. Discussion**

The analysis of the reading sections of the four middle school textbooks shows that each of them reveals some strengths and weaknesses. Since some issues are common among the four textbooks, we have opted for an eclectic discussion with some focus on each textbook where necessary. The issues selected for discussion are: (1) The Teaching Procedure, (2) The Nature of the Reading Activities, (3) The Strategies Targeted and the Focus on Prediction, as well as (4) Teaching Vs Testing. Any discussion around reading instruction should not disregard the reading material. “When the written text is supportive, readers can afford to focus their attention on an aspect of the reading process without losing sight of the purposes of reading: communication and construction of meaning” (Weaver, C. 1998: 131). Reading materials should be selected carefully to highlight the use of reading strategies. Accordingly, we have opted for the inclusion of two other issues related to the texts, namely (5) Content-Oriented Teaching and (6) Authenticity.

### **▪ The Teaching Procedure**

To begin with, it is important to note that the teaching procedure adopted in Spotlight on English One is the 3Ps standing for: **P**resentation, **P**actice and **P**roduction. The first stage ‘presentation’, related to the ‘Listen and Speak’ rubric, aims at the development of declarative knowledge; it generally focuses on structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Items of language are presented in a clear context to get across their meanings. As its name indicates, the second stage ‘Practise’ aims at practicing the language items presented in the previous part. It consists of various reading and writing activities. Finally, in the third stage

‘Production’ the learners are required to produce language more spontaneously through writing and reading activities.

Such teaching paradigm, the 3Ps, sounds to be quite logical. However, teachers soon realise that the students can give the impression that they can really produce language accurately in the classroom, but in fact, they will soon forget it because it was guided communication (Willis, J. 1998). Moreover, this procedure emphasise the oral skills at the expense of reading. Actually, no specific rubrics related to reading are designed. Rather, reading activities are presented as part of the ‘practise’ or ‘Produce’ rubrics aiming by that mainly at practising language structures. This stems from the Audio-Lingual Method assumption that learners should not interact with reading passages before they have been drilled on pronunciation and grammatical structures. In fact, much evidence is to be found in the literature, mainly in the works of Jane Willis, sustaining that this procedure is part of the traditional teacher-centred paradigms.

The procedure is not compatible with the Competency-Based Approach. It contradicts formal research that suggests task-based approach to reading instruction as an alternative to the three Ps approach (Skehan. P, 1998). A task-based approach to reading conveys to the learners that efficient reading means reading different texts in different ways for different purposes. Another merit of the task-based approach to reading is that learners may work with simple authentic texts right from the beginning.

The Algerian middle school syllabuses, analysed in the previous chapter, are consistent with formal research, i.e., they are task-based. However, it seems that the textbook designers have failed to implement faithfully the syllabus principles in Spotlight on English One. However, what should be pointed at is that this approach (the three Ps) has not been adopted in the three other textbooks, that is, in Spotlight on English Two, Spotlight on English Three, and on the Move.

## ▪ The Nature of the Reading Activities

The analysis of the four middle school textbooks shows that they are rich in terms of reading activities targeting reading strategies development. However, the number of the activities alone cannot usually create a fertile context for strategies instruction. It is important to design activities in such a way to develop varied strategies together with adequate techniques on the part of the teacher to motivate the learners.

Many activities are accompanied by illustrations. The latter are of paramount importance in reading strategies instruction. In addition to raising the learners' interest, they are useful tools for the prereading phase. Some activities have illustrations, but it is up to the teachers to exploit them (mainly in Spotlight on English Two). They should be exploited in a way to lead the pupils in the theme through the association of ideas. This concerns mainly the illustrations that are not accompanied by questions. We wonder whether teachers exploit them appropriately and purposefully, especially when no methodological hint on how to exploit them is provided in the teacher's guides. The activity below best illustrates the case:

### ***Go Forward***

***1. Just like medicines some plants can relieve pains. Read about these common plants. Then choose one of them and tell the class about its use.***

*E.g. Headaches are relieved with lemon. The lemon is washed and cut into slices. The slices are applied on each temple and maintained with a cloth tied round the head.*

(Spotlight on English Two: activity one page 61).

Attractive pictures of common plants are presented in this activity as it deals with health. As we notice in the question, no reference is made to the pictures, and the activity starts directly with the while-reading phase. Two important reading strategies, prediction and

activating background knowledge, may be overlooked if the teacher follows blindly the textbook.

Other activities contain illustrations without appropriate questions. For the sake of illustration, we may mention the following activity taken from Spotlight on English Three:

***1. Read the text and answer the questions.***

*a. Do you have any nomads in your country?*

*b. Where do they live? Do you like them?*

(Spotlight on English Three: Activity one page 96)

This activity is accompanied by a picture of nomads. What is odd with this activity is that, at first sight, it seems that the questions are to be exploited to anticipate the topic of the text, which is “new age travellers in Britain”, since they are put before the text. Unfortunately, the questions are designed as a postreading task aiming at checking the learners’ comprehension.

This leads us to another important issue, namely the three-phase procedure of reading instruction. This procedure has been more or less followed in Spotlight on English Two , Spotlight on English Three , On the Move. The following examples are illustrative of the procedure:

➤ Spotlight on English Two:

***Go forward*** (Spotlight on English Two: 17)

***1. Susan received a letter from Bob. Look at the pictures and guess what Bob’s letter is about?***

This first activity, consisting of illustrations and a question, represents the prereading phase. Its aim is to make the learners think about the theme of the letter before reading it.

***2. Then, go to page 20, read Bob’s letter and answer the questions.***

*a. What animal did cavemen hunt?*

*b. Why?*

*c. Where did they paint the pictures?*

- d. *When?*
- e. *Why did they paint animals upside down?*
- f. *What did they make paint from?*

As for this second activity, it represents the while- and postreading phases. It consists of a series of traditional comprehension questions.

**3. Now, find in the text the opposites of the following words (use a dictionary if necessary)**

*Left/ boring/ same/ outside/ upright/ alive.*

By analogy with activity 1 page 28 in Grellet's taxonomy, this third activity targets the strategy of 'inference'. It aims at helping the learners recognise synonyms and antonyms.

➤ Spotlight on English Three:

***Read and Write I (Spotlight on English Three: 18)***

**1. Before you read, look at the gestures in the pictures. Guess what they mean.**

As the beginning of the question suggests (Before you read), this activity relates to the prereading phase. Its aim is to develop the strategy of 'prediction' together with 'the interpretation of context' (gestures).

**2. Text One and Text Two on the page describe:**

*a. personality    b. physical appearance    c. likes and dislikes    d. interests*

By analogy with activity 1 page 65 in Grellet's taxonomy, this prereading activity aims at training the learners to skim through texts in order to predict their contents. By simply looking at the titles and the accompanying pictures, they can guess what the text is about.

**3. Read Text Three and say why people like your partner**

**4. One of the sentences in text three explains the adjective "cheerful". Can you find it?**

These two activities represent the postreading phase. While activity three aims at checking the learners' comprehension, activity four targets the strategy of 'inference', i.e., to deduce the meaning of unknown words from context.

➤ On the Move:

**Reading and Writing (On the Move: 107)**

**1. Read the notes below and cross out the ones which you won't use in a short newspaper article about Martin Luther King Day.**

<p><i>Title: Should We celebrate Martin Luther King Day?</i></p> <p>a) <i>Man of peace?</i></p> <p>b) <i>Born in Atlanta, Georgia?</i></p> <p>c) <i>Support for Civil Rights?</i></p> <p>d) <i>Married Coretta Scott?</i></p> <p>e) <i>His modesty?</i></p> <p>f) <i>His courage?</i></p> <p>g) <i>Martin Luther King Day?</i></p> <p>h) <i>Baseball fan?</i></p>
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This first activity is a prereading one aiming at activating the learners' background knowledge about Martin Luther King in order to predict the text's topic.

**2. Read the letter of opinion below and check your answers to question 1. Say why the author of the letter has left out some pieces of information from the notes above.**

*Martin Luther King Junior never starred in a Hollywood film, and he never killed "the bad guys", but he was my hero. There are four reasons why. First, he was a man of peace. [...] The Americans are right to celebrate Martin Luther King Day because he spent his whole life teaching us lessons of love, peace, tolerance, justice, self-respect and the respect for other people. He lived and died for us. So we should remember him at least once in a year.*

This second activity represents clearly the while-reading phase as the learners read the text for the purpose of checking the hypotheses they have already set in the prereading phase.

In addition, the idea here is to identify irrelevant information.

**3. Read again the letter of opinion on the previous page and answer the following questions.**

A. *In which sentence of the letter does the author state his/her opinion?*

B. *How does the author organise his/her text? Circle the letter of the correct answer. Justify.*

*The author.....*

a. *Narrates a series of events*

b. *Lists and explains a series of arguments*

c. *Portrays Martin Luther King.*

C. *What kind of words does s/he use to organise his/her ideas?*

The postreading activity incorporates a series of comprehension questions to check the learners' understanding of the text.

As for Spotlight on English One, the reading activities suggested in it are decontextualised, as they are characterised by the absence of prereading activities. It is known in the literature that a benefit of such activities is their focus on the purpose for reading that they provide. Furthermore, people in real world generally have an idea about what to read before starting reading any text because they expect to find certain content depending on the source, the title and the subject matter of the texts they want to read. In this case, the role of the teacher becomes a little more difficult since it is up to him/her to introduce the context of the task and thus involve the learners.

The following is an example of a reading activity taken from Spotlight on English One:

***D. Read Sally's e-mail and answer the questions.***

*Hi, Amine. How are you? Here's a photo of my birthday party. I'm with my friends and parents at home.*

*Love*

*Sally.*

1. *Who is the sender?*
2. *Where is she?*
3. *Who is with her?*
4. *Who is the receiver?*

(Spotlight on English One: 45)

This activity requires the learners to read the e-mail and answer the questions. Though the questions are traditional comprehension questions, we think that the activity is interesting as it is a follow up of previous activities dealing with e-mails. Yet, no prereading activity is designed to help the learners get involved in the context.

▪ **The Strategies Targeted and the Focus on Prediction**

Strategies-development reading activities address the major objective of reading instruction, more precisely enabling the learners to develop the appropriate reading strategies for real communication outside the classroom. The analysis of the syllabuses presented earlier



**2. Read the introduction of the letter below and see if you were right. Then guess what the writer will say next**

*Dear aunt Hakima,*

*I'm writing to seek your kind advice. For years I have been trying to go abroad to complete my research work. And now that I have the opportunity to do, I feel paralysed. I don't know whether it would be wise of me to leave home and country.*

*§1*

**3. Read the second paragraph in exercise 5 below and check your answer to exercise 2 on the previous page.**

**4. The words in the box are used to join sentences and link ideas. put them into the correct category below.**

**5. now read the second paragraph of Nacera's letter again and fill in the blanks with appropriate link words**

*To begin with, let me give you the facts. My name is Nacera. [...] But I have just received a letter of acceptance from San Diego University and won a research scholarship granted by UNESCO.* §2

**6. Guess what Nacera will say next in her letter. Choose the letter of the best answer. Then check your answer in reading the rest of the letter on the next page.**

*I think Nacera will*

- a. Conclude her letter because she has exposed her problem
- b. Continue her letter by giving positive and negative prospects
- c. Has finished her letter. She will only sign it.

**(On the Move: 133)**

This task is very interesting as it includes a systematic series of activities around one reading strategy: setting hypotheses and checking them. However, it should not take the lion's share in the reading section.

Still within the context of the types of strategies targeted, another element which deserves to be mentioned is that of the bilingual glossary provided for learners in Spotlight on English One. The latter may prevent the learners from developing the strategy of guessing unknown words from context. It may even lead the learners to have "preconceived ideas about the meaning of polyvalent words and may fail to develop flexible strategies for contextual guessing" (Thompson, I. 1988: 621). Teachers should help the learners to use the glossaries judiciously because good readers analyse the unknown words and use the glossary or dictionary as a last resort.

What may hinder the learners' development of the strategy of guessing the meaning of unknown words is the absence of activities designed for such an aim. As a matter of fact, no 'cloze activity' is to be found in Spotlight on English One. Cloze activities aim at helping learners to use context to guess the meaning of unknown words while reading. Knowing that beginning learners need explicit instruction in bottom-up reading strategies, we wonder whether the choice of the activities is judicious.

#### ▪ **Teaching Vs Testing**

Many reading specialists point out that a common problem inherent in reading classes is that the major part of time is spent on comprehension assessment rather than on comprehension per se. The aim of the activities should be clearly defined, and a clear distinction should be made between teaching and testing. Testing involves more accuracy-type activities (Grellet, F. 1998). It relates to the bottom-up approach reflecting "a transmission model of reading" (Zamel 1992 in Song, M 1998: 04), which assumes that meaning resides exclusively in and is transmitted by a text. As a result, reading instruction focuses on the identification and retrieval of a set of ideas in a text, leading the learners to rely blindly on the text for meaning. This aspect is clearly reflected through traditional comprehension questions activities which call for pre-determined answers rather than learners' interpretation.

Learners try to answer the traditional comprehension questions "not by understanding the text well, but by looking progressively through the text, following the questions as they go" (Barnett, M. 1989: 134). Besides, Barnett sustains that "such questions chronically ask about inconsequential details a native reader would not normally remember" (ibid: 135). This type of comprehension questions neither check true comprehension nor enhance learners' motivation to read foreign language texts, since they "inherently inform learners that foreign language texts are not very meaningful" (ibid: 126).

Because creating a purpose for reading in the classroom enhances the learners' motivation and facilitates meaning construction, reading activities should be purpose-driven. Traditional comprehension questions provide learners with the purpose of reading for specific information. They generally address all information in the text in an undifferentiated manner and all the ideas of the text are considered as being equally important which is rarely the case in real life reading. Accordingly, we may suggest that these activities be reduced because they present high risks of undermining the main goals of reading instruction.

As an alternative to traditional comprehension questions, F Grellet suggests many activities that are likely to provide the learners with-real world reading purposes. As an example, we may mention 'transfer activities' that require from the learners to transfer information into action such as 'mapping-it-out' activities. These activities are highly recommended in 'task-based teaching' because they make the learners get something done via language.

The reading strategies instruction literature suggests that unlike traditional comprehension activities, reading strategies instruction teaches rather than tests comprehension (Zhang, Z. 1992). More precisely, the three-phase procedure has come as an alternative to traditional reading instruction (Hedge, T. 2000: 209). Surprisingly, the Algerian Middle School textbooks display an important number of reading activities which are designed to check the learners' comprehension via traditional comprehension questions, especially in Spotlight on English Three.

Most of the reading activities designed in the four textbooks to check the learners' comprehension seem to focus on asking questions related to the text. That is, they emphasise literal comprehension, such as answering detail questions, and they do not put as much emphasis on non-literal comprehension. Let us make reference to an activity selected from Spotlight on English Three. Before then, we should note that our choice for this textbook is

not done at random; it comprises eighteen reading activities aiming at checking the learners' understanding through traditional comprehension questions, in comparison with seven activities in Spotlight on English One, seven activities in Spotlight on English Two, and four only in On the Move.

Example:

2. *Read the TV programme on the next page and answer these questions.*
  - a. *What's on channel 5 at 9:25?*
  - b. *Which channel is "the Adams" on?*
  - c. *Next to the announcement of some films in the programme, you read "watch, don't miss it". Why?*

(Spotlight on English Three: 34)

In this activity, the learners are asked to read a text without any lead-in, followed by a series of comprehension questions to which they are required to answer. Such type of questions does not engage many learners. Worse than this, the learners who are accustomed to traditional comprehension questions are likely to believe that foreign language reading is confined to right or wrong choices. In a word, this type of activities does not teach learners to become proficient readers. On the contrary, there are high risks that most of the learners will read texts without understanding.

By implication, teachers also are inclined to focus so much on assessing reading comprehension that they overlook their task of developing the learners' necessary reading strategies to make meaning from texts. In this context, Cris Tovani states that "reading teachers can do more than *measure* comprehension. With explicit instruction that demonstrates what good readers do, struggling readers can be taught *how* to comprehend text better." (2000: 108). Put differently, the ultimate purpose of reading instruction is to provide learners with the necessary tools to become strategic readers.

What is worth mentioning is the introduction of a new rubric entitled ‘Coping’ in On the Move. It relates to an explicit instruction of different reading strategies, as the following example about the use of illustrations to guess the text’s topic and content clearly illustrates:

***Coping***

*It is important to look at the illustrations which accompany texts. They may help you in various ways.*

*1. Illustrations can help you guess the topic or the general idea of the text. So make sure you look at them before you start reading. This may help you better understand the text*

*2. They can also help you understand the meaning of difficult words.*

(On the Move: 58)

The problem is that these reading strategies are not taught first and then checked through exercises/tasks. The only exception is, On the Move but there the coping boxes are placed after the learners have done the exercises/tasks, that is, after having been tested. The logical order for reading instruction strategies is to displace the coping boxes to the top of the texts. The reading strategies, mainly the metacognitive ones would better be taken in charge if all of the textbooks provided the learners and the teachers alike with this rubric.

### ▪ **Content-Oriented Teaching and Motivation**

*“In both first and second language reading, reading is the primary source of new information about all sorts of topics” (Carrell, P. 1998: 01)*

According to Donna Brinton, Marguerite Snow, and Majorie Wesche (1989), Content-Based Instruction is “the integration of content learning with language teaching aims.” (Quoted in Brown Douglas, H. 2001: 49). Content-based reading classes lead to an increase in

the learners' intrinsic motivation mainly when the content is of interest for the learners. In other terms, when language is a medium to convey interesting informational content, the learners become intrinsically motivated. There is much evidence in the literature sustaining that the more learners are motivated the better they comprehend. Accordingly, what learners read must be of interest to them. They need to have goals for reading. They should understand that they are reading to get knowledge from texts. Therefore, selecting enjoyable and challenging reading materials will give learners the motivation to become life-long independent readers (Mallow,F. and Patterson, L. 1999 in Jenks, C. 2002).

What should be pointed at is that the crucial goal of integrating content teaching in language instruction is not content teaching per se, but rather using language in different contexts. The learners are first and foremost language learners.

The four Middle School textbooks are organised around thematic units. According to F. Kucer, thematic units serve two purposes in the EFL classroom. First, "the themes would develop the students' conceptual knowledge about certain topics and related concepts". Second, they "help the students increase their proficiency with reading" (Kucer, B. quoted in Weaver, C 1998).

Given that texts' content "can be a rich source of motivation in the English language classroom" (Davies, P and Pearse, E. 2000: 14), enjoyable topics should be selected for the units. Music, films, the internet, and sport are topics of personal interest for teenagers. However, the topics should not be difficult for both learners and teachers. The second file in Spotlight on English Two, for example, whose theme is 'health', seems to be inadequate to the learners' standard of English and knowledge. Such a topic needs an advanced level of knowledge in biology and technical terms in English on the part of the learners as well as the teachers. A judicious selection must be made so as to ensure that the cognitive difficulty level of texts matches the learners' cognitive and linguistic abilities. Otherwise, teachers and

learners will devote so much time to attempting to understand texts that they would forget all about reading strategies.

The rubric 'Learn about Culture' is also of paramount importance for the learners. In addition to the cultural aspect of the target language, many elements related to the learners' cultural background are provided. Through this type of texts, the learners are given an opportunity for direct access to some places and the peculiarities of typical U.S and British cultures.

To get the learners motivated and interested in reading, according to Stevick (1978 in Song, M. 1997), the texts' content needs to meet the learners' real-life interests. He adds that people learn better when what they are studying comes out of their own lives, to which they would in some way commit themselves. Likewise, a considerable amount of research shows that FL readers recall a greater amount of information if the reading selections are based on a native theme. Some researchers suggest that "reading selections, especially in early stages should include topics with which students have partial familiarity" (Thompson, I. 1988: 626). In this context, concerning the textbooks under scrutiny, many reading passages deal with the Algerian context, such as a recipe for Tcharek and Tamina suggested in On the Move (p 21). Other activities mix up the two contexts, such as Abdelkader's letter and Ronwood's e-mail (On the Move: 122). The two passages deal with two different profiles, that of an Algerian pupil and that of an English student. This may be very enjoyable and interesting at the same time.

- **Authenticity**

Current research in reading stresses the importance of using authentic materials in reading programmes. The use of authentic texts is an important principle of Communicative Language Teaching. Different researchers provide different definitions of authentic texts; yet a common agreement is reached upon the fact that an authentic text is one written by a native

writer with a real-life communicative purpose. Françoise Grellet extends the principle of authenticity to include the physical characteristics of texts as well. For instance, a newspaper article should be presented as it first appeared in the paper, with the same typeface, the same space devoted to the headlines and the same accompanying pictures. According to Swaffar, the main reason for using authentic texts in FL classrooms is that they introduce context-rich information about the target culture often absent in the sterilised reading materials typically included in textbooks.

Because reading in real contexts involves the flexible and simultaneous use of different reading skills and strategies, many reading researchers argue that “reading instruction should stress the use of multiple processes in real texts for real aims” (Hayes, A.D. and Stahl, S. 1997:09). The implication of this assumption on the issue of the present paper is that one of the major principles of reading strategies instruction is that strategies should be taught in conjunction with authentic reading events. The purpose is that the learners will learn the strategies as well as connect them with their own reading (Duffy-Hester, 1999:488).

There is a common agreement among reading researchers upon the importance of introducing authentic texts to intermediate and advanced foreign language learners. However, as far as beginners are concerned the researchers are divided between two views. There are those who consider that it is important to select authentic texts right from the early stages of language learning such as Françoise Grellet, and those who think that “the use of authentic texts with less proficient learners is often frustrating and counter-productive” (Ur, 1996: 150).

Our analysis of the Algerian middle school textbooks has shown that the designers seem to share the second view. The reading component of the middle school syllabuses emphasises the use of authentic texts rather than texts created for pedagogical purposes. Yet, the textbook designers seem to delay the use of authentic texts until the learners reach some language proficiency. As a matter of fact, the textbooks offer a variety of authentic reading

texts in Spotlight on English three and On the Move. However, no authentic text is used in Spotlight On English One. This may stem from the assumption that readability of FL reading texts is a result of multiplicity of factors interacting with each other. Among them, we may mention word familiarity, prior knowledge, degree of similarity/difference between the rhetorical organisation of texts in L1 and FL, syntactic complexity, figurative use of language, complexity of cohesive devices, etc. (Thompson, I. 1988). These factors may prevent the use of authentic texts in the early levels. As a result, we wonder whether the learners would be able to bridge the gap between simplified short texts encountered in the first and second years, and the sophisticated authentic texts they are expected to be able to read in the third and fourth years.

## **Conclusion**

In the light of the analysis conducted so far, we may conclude that the reading sections of the four Middle School textbooks display some strengths and weaknesses.

To begin with, many interesting reading activities, aiming at developing the learners' reading strategies, are suggested in the four textbooks. Globally considered, the thematic units are selected around enjoyable topics. In addition, the layout of the textbooks, especially the reading selections, is designed in an attractive way, full of illustrations and colours.

However, in each textbook some weaknesses are to be noted as regards reading strategies instruction. First, Spotlight on English One shows a shortage in reading strategies instruction, activities mainly the bottom-processing ones, which are so beneficial at this stage. Second, Spotlight on English Two is too content-oriented, which may divert the purpose of reading instruction from strategies development to vocabulary expansion. Third, in Spotlight on English Three, many reading activities are designed to test rather than to teach reading. As

for On the Move, it is overloaded with activities that aim at developing the strategy of ‘prediction’; reading is almost exclusively treated as a top-down guessing game.

It is worth mentioning that in MSE year one, reading instruction is somehow delayed until the learners attain a certain level of language proficiency. Accordingly, much focus is put on oral skills. This delay may partly stem from the assumption that beginning learners cannot interact with authentic texts until a certain number of vocabulary items and grammatical structures have been learned. Or rather, one may endeavour to claim that this may be due to the long influence of the traditional expectation of the Audio-Lingual Method that learners will develop reading skills as a natural consequence of improvement in oral skills. An alert reading specialist would consider that the textbook designers’ policy is counterproductive. Evidence in the literature sustains that “reading instruction should be an integral part of the language curriculum from the very start in order to allow sufficient time to prepare students to deal with authentic reading material either for advanced study or for real world” (Thompson, I. 1988: 617).

It is worth mentioning as well that the reading strategies are developed through a segregational way in the four levels. ‘Prediction’ has taken the lion’s share in the four textbooks. Thus, we come to say that reading is treated from a top-down view rather than from the interactive approach.

In conclusion, we may say that though the Middle School textbooks suffer from some drawbacks in terms of reading instruction, they remain one element among many others in the global operation of teaching. The techniques used by the teacher in reading classes have also their share in the success/failure ratio in reading instruction, as we shall see in the next chapter.

## **Chapter Three: The Algerian Middle School Teachers: A Case Study**

### **Introduction**

Even though many other factors contribute to the creation of a supportive learning environment, teachers have the greatest responsibility for providing appropriate reading instruction to enable the learners to become lifelong readers. In this context, Hutchinson and Waters sustain that:

*The great majority of students in the world learn language through the mediation of a teacher [...]. The teacher can influence the clarity, intensity, and frequency of any item and thereby affects the image that the learners receive.*

(Hutchinson, T. and Watters, A. 1987: 82)

Learning to read depends more on what the pupil does than on what the teacher does (Smith, 1988 in Emerald, D. 1991: 07); yet, the teacher's role is of paramount importance in facilitating the learning process. The role of the teacher is to find a stratagem for a creative use of the textbook. Here his responsibility is to make the best use of the materials and procedures suggested in the textbooks. Accordingly, the focus of this chapter is on the teaching techniques that alert teachers need to use in order to help their learners to be not only efficient identifiers of words and efficient comprehenders of what they are reading, but also to develop efficient reading strategies.

### **I. Classroom Observation**

For the sake of gathering the appropriate data needed for our study and determine the extent to which the techniques depicted so far are used in reading classes, we have opted for Classroom Observation as a data collection tool. Classroom observation is “a technique that can often reveal characteristics of groups of individuals which would have been impossible to discover by other means” (Bell, J. 1987: 88). In addition, we think that it is vital to know about the different techniques used by the teachers and to get a hint about the way they deal with reading strategies in the classroom.

### **I.1. Population and Sample**

The population targeted through this study comprises 523 Middle School English teachers working in schools located in urban, and rural areas of Tizi-Ouzou. More precisely two categories of teachers are targeted: PEM teachers (Professeur d’Enseignement Moyen) who attended a two-year training course in the 1980s, and PCEF teachers (Professeur Certifié de l’Enseignement Fondamental), new-generation teachers who graduated from University. Owing to the impracticality of observing all the teachers in their classrooms, a representative sample is selected on two bases. First, given that the intent behind our observations is to evaluate the teachers’ practices as they implement reading strategies instruction, we think that it is compulsory to take into consideration the teachers’ status, i.e. PEM Vs PCEF. Second, the area where the school is located is an unavoidable criterion for sample selection. Accordingly, our study may be considered as a case study as defined by Robert K, Yin (2003): “an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real context” (In Wikipedia Encyclopaedia). The case study “gives an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time scale” (Bell, J. 1987: 06).

The sample selected comprises 20 middle school teachers from 16 middle schools in rural and urban areas of Tizi-Ouzou. There are 14 females and 6 males in the sample, and the number of years of experience ranges from 1 to 30. According to statistics, taken from the

Education Authority of the Wilaya, 73.8% of the English teachers (that is 386) are PEM teachers, while 26.2% (that is 137) are PCEF. In parallel with these rates, our sample is composed of 15 PEM teachers (that is 73.8%) and 5 PCEF teachers (that is 26.2%).af 15 PEM teachers (taht is 73.8%) All the teachers expressed enthusiasm and were all quite willing to participate in the observations and discussions inserted in the investigation reported here.

## **I. 2. Data Collection**

Classroom observation is a research technique designed to tap as fully as possible teachers' daily instructional practices used as part of strategies instruction. Our procedure for data gathering may be summarised as follows:

After having been a permission from the Education Authority of Tizi-Ouzou to carry out our investigation, we started our visits to different schools. Qualitative data were collected through a series of site visits to different middle schools of Tizi-Ouzou chosen randomly from urban and rural areas. A total of 20 reading classes were observed on a one-time basis for a sixty minute period. A variety of classes at varying levels (MS1, MS2, MS3, and MS4) were sampled in order to compare and contrast the teachers' practices. Each observation was followed by an individual discussion with the teacher who had been observed. These observations and discussions took place during March through May 2008. Observations were combined with informal conversations with the teachers who had been observed as a data gathering approach since it allows us to gain direct knowledge of the research context. Our interest in the observations was on the procedures used in reading lessons together with the teaching techniques.

The majority of the observations were recorded on a videotape. However, because some teachers refused to be filmed, written field notes were collected during the observations. The data was gathered with reference to space (data was gathered in different settings: urban

and rural areas) and person (several individuals were sources of data: PEM and PCEF teachers; male and female).

### **I.3. Data Analysis**

The observations have provided us in-depth descriptions of the teachers' practices. Thirteen teachers were videotaped while conducting their reading lessons and seven of these were observed with the use of field notes. The reading sessions were transcribed and analysed in the following categories: (1) Lesson Planning, (2) the prereading phase, (3) the while reading phase, (4) the post reading phase, and (5) metacognitive teaching. What follows is a description of how each of these categories was operationalised. The analysis is fulfilled on the basis of the teaching techniques taxonomy presented in the analytical framework of the present paper.

#### **1. Lesson Planning**

To analyse teachers' planning for their reading instruction, we examine the reading lesson as a whole. Our aim is to determine the degree to which the lesson format is consistent with theory, more precisely, whether teachers follow the three-phase procedure or not.

#### **2. The Prereading Phase**

The analysis of this phase focuses on the first steps of the reading lesson; we examine the way teachers help the learners to get involved in the text. The focus is put on specific instructional techniques described in the theoretical part, to activate the learners' background knowledge and state a purpose for reading.

#### **3. The While-Reading Phase**

Our aim here is to analyse the teaching techniques used to help learners during the reading of the selection.

#### **4. The Post-Reading Phase**

Similarly to the two previous categories, this part relates to the analysis of the teaching techniques. Nevertheless, the focus is put on the type of questions that teachers ask at the end of each reading lesson. Our aim is to examine whether the teachers encourage learners' interaction and interpretation of texts, or just stick to traditional comprehension questions.

#### **5. Metacognitive Teaching**

This part analyses the explicit reading strategies instruction. That is, we examine whether teachers explain to the learners how to use the reading strategies.

After scrutinising the observational transcripts together with the informal conversations with teachers, issues for discussion have been identified.

## **II. Results and Discussion**

In this section, our attempt is to describe the results of the observations as well as to discuss some critical factors that seem to influence reading strategies instruction.

As expected, the observations together with informal conversations with teachers about particular information were highly informative about strategies-teaching practices as well as teachers' perceptions of strategies-based instruction.

Teachers need to plan what they want to do in their classrooms. This may help them to draw a clear pathway to attain the objectives of a particular programme. Generally, teachers engage in yearly, term, unit, and daily plans. We are more concerned with teachers' daily planning decisions as they deal with reading classes. Included in this discussion are the teachers' procedures together with their teaching techniques in an attempt at developing the learners' reading strategies. Accordingly, this section discusses the following issues: (1) A

limited repertoire of teaching practices, (2) Neglect of metacognitive instruction, (3) Challenges of reading strategies instruction, (4) Teacher training and (5) Teachers' commitment.

#### ▪ **A Limited Repertoire of Teaching Practices**

Reading instruction requires a particular set of teaching techniques that aim at developing strategies in the learners. Any professional teacher is supposed to have been trained on those techniques. Yet, our observations have shown that there is little use, or sometimes a total absence, of the reading teaching techniques that are credited by solid theoretical and/ or empirical support in the instruction literature about reading classes. Some reasons for this may include the fact that the Algerian middle school teachers attach more importance to grammar teaching. Teachers have a tendency to emphasise teaching reading as a means to practise language and they neglect developing reading strategies and skills. Many teachers think that reading instruction aims only at vocabulary building, grammar construction, and sentence analysis. Rare is the focus on comprehension, information gathering and, most importantly, reading strategies' development. In other terms, their reading instruction is not consistent with the goals set in the syllabuses.

Reading strategies include collaborative interpretation of texts. Stated differently, when learners are encouraged to read in groups, they unconsciously bring their own experiences, feelings and background knowledge while sharing their different interpretations with one another. Unfortunately, what happens in the reading classes we have observed is contradictory with what has been said so far. Teachers impose their interpretations as being the ideal ones and reject all of the learners' alternatives.

In order to teach reading strategies, teachers should help their learners to: set goals for reading, process text by using background knowledge in conjunction with text cues to construct meaning, monitoring ongoing comprehension, solving problems encountered while reading (e.g. inference, rereading, skipping unknown words...). This set of strategies and others may be taught through explicit instruction or modelling. For example, by means of the prereading phase, the teachers can prepare their learners in terms of language and schematic knowledge as well as ensure purposeful reading. We have noticed that, like in traditional teaching, many teachers, mainly PEM, prepare the learners for reading through a focus on language knowledge. The following extract from a reading class given by a PEM teacher in a rural area reflects well this traditional view of the prereading phase:

*Class: MS 3. File 3*

*Lesson: Read and Write I*

T (teacher): *Good morning. Today we do the Read and Write on page 94. ...well, open your books on page 95. Look at the pictures and tell your friends about the sea animals they show*

L1 (learner): *Emm... whales.*

T: *Make a sentence please.*

L1: *The pictures show whales* (with an incorrect pronunciation of the word whales)

T: *We say /weilz/, repeat please!*

(Four learners repeat the word one after the other).

T: *Well, what are the whales? ...they are sea animals...ok...what can you say about whales?*

L2: *Whales mmm is eh...a big*

T: (Interrupting the learner) *A whale is, it is singular*

L2: *A whale is a big animal. It lives in the sea.*

T: *In the sea!... Let's say in the oceans. Well, it is a very large sea animal with a smooth skin. Let me write the vocabulary here. (She writes 'smooth' in the board). Smooth c'est-à-dire lisse. (She explains in French). Right, look at the boy beside on page 95, what is he doing? Read what he wrote in the sign*

L3: *Save the whales*

T: *Repeat!*

Three learners repeat the same sentence one after the other.

T: *What is to save?*

L4: *Sauver* (In French)

T: *Yes, we save something or someone who is in danger. So, the whales are in danger. Danger of what?*

L5: *Extinction*

The teacher writes the word on the board, then she asks the learners:

T: *What is extinction, or the verb to extinct?*

(No answer)

T: *They can disappear. Now go to page 94 and look at the picture number one. Can you describe it?*

L2: *A strike!*

T: *No! It's a demonstration. They are demonstrating and holding signs.*

She writes 'demonstrating' on the board and she explains it.

T: *Read what is on the signs now!*

Some learners read aloud the four signs, and the teacher corrects errors of pronunciation. Then she writes the word 'to kill' on the board and asks the learners what 'to kill' is.

L5: *Tuer* (In French).

T: *Right, what is its opposite?*

L6: *To save*

T: *Now you can read the first question in the textbook and answer.*

Many reading studies testify to the fact that the three-phase procedure of reading instruction can be used as a teaching practice of an interactive approach to reading (Song, M. 1997:05). This procedure promotes the learners' reading strategies. Unlike PEM teachers, some PCEF teachers seem to be more acquainted with this alternative teaching procedure. However, sometimes starting a lesson with a prereading phase does not reflect reading strategies development as the following example from a reading class conducted by a PCEF teacher in a rural area shows:

Class: MS3. File 4

Lesson: Learn about culture

As a prereading activity, the teacher brings with her some objects (realia) such as pyramids. Then, she tries to help her learners activate their prior knowledge by asking them some questions about the objects and Egypt.

The teacher takes pyramids then asks the learners:

T (the teacher): *Who can tell me what are these?* [Sic]

learners: *They are pyramids.*

T: *Good...where are they situated?*

Learners: *In Egypt*

T: *One by one, please!*

L1: *They are situated in Egypt.*

T: *Where exactly in Egypt?*

Learners: *in Giza.*

T: *Do all the pyramids have the same size?*

Learners: *No*

T: *Good! Now who can name these three pyramids?*

No answer

T: *Ok! Who can give the names of the pyramids in Arabic; their original names?*

No answer.

The teacher gives the answer.

T: *Who built the pyramids?*

Learners: *The pharaohs*

T: *Who are the pharaohs?*

L2: *They are people who lived in Egypt.*

L3: *They are kings....*

T: *They were kings of Egypt at that time*

T: *Did the pharaohs themselves build the pyramids?*

Learners: *No*

T: *It is not the pharaohs themselves, it is the labourers, it is the slaves, you know what a slave is?*

Learners: *Un esclave (in French).*

T: *Un esclave, yes! Good... now, tell me, the pyramids are used for what?*

(Silence)

T: *When you say a pyramid, is it a museum, a hospital...?*

T: *They are homes of kings.*

T: *In reality, pyramids were not the homes, but they were the tombs of the pharaohs. They were the places where they buried the dead ones. What can you find in the pyramids?*

L4: *We find pictures of animals.*

T: *Follow me. The pharaohs before they die, they think that there is an eternal life after death, they don't believe that when they die everything is over. So, they take with them all their belongings...*

T: *Ok! Now open your books on page 153 and read the text in order to make the questions clear and you do task two.*

At first sight, it seems that the learners will predict about the content of the text they are about to read. However, no link is created between the first and the second phase (that is pre- and while reading). This is due to the teacher's unawareness of the importance of the prereading phase. Even though she has succeeded to activate the learners' background knowledge, her procedure has failed at getting her learners involved in the text, since she has not stated a purpose for reading. Given that in real life we usually have a purpose for reading, we read because we want to, it is important to give the learners some reason for reading. Efficient reading depends on having a purpose for reading, knowing why you are reading a text. The learners should go beyond the idea of reading a text because the teacher instructs them to do it, or simply because it is there and it is the next activity to perform.

In the post-observation debate, I asked the teacher the reason for starting the reading class by a pre-reading activity. Her answer was that one of the principles of the Competency-Based Approach is the use of realia (contextual support) in the classroom. We think that such kind of answer reflects the dominance of theory in teacher training seminars. Some teachers are accustomed with the general principles of CBA, but they are not yet aware about how and why to implement these principles in the field.

In the light of what has been said above, one may come up to the assumption that some teachers have not read the various documents that accompany the textbooks with a critical eye. The teacher should stick to the procedure suggested in the textbook and the teacher's guide that accompanies it, because it follows from assumptions in language learning theory adopted by the textbook designers. However, an apparent shortage of the accompanying documents, the syllabuses as well as teacher's guides, is to be noticed in some middle schools.

#### ▪ **Neglect of Metacognitive Instruction**

In order to gain a good understanding of texts, strategic readers reflect on what they are doing while reading. In other terms, they must think about the strategies they need to interact with the text. They must know what strategy to use, how, when, where and why to apply it. According to Neil Anderson, successful second language reading comprehension is:

not a matter of knowing what strategy to use, but the reader must also know to use it successfully and know how to orchestrate its use with other strategies. It is not sufficient to know about strategies, but a reader must also be able to apply them strategically. (Anderson, 1991 quoted in Carrell, P. 1998 : 07)

Unfortunately, reading strategies and skills are poorly developed in the Algerian middle school. Evidence of this problem includes the scores obtained in English at the BEM exam, as stated earlier, in addition to learners' inability to read and comprehend the instructions of the activities, as reported by some of the observed teachers. One of the causes

identified in the present research, which is consistent with those identified by some educational scholars, is the lack of metacognitive instruction. Learners are not coached by teachers to check or guide their comprehension processes.

The role of teacher explanation is an integral part of success in learning how to use reading strategies. Teachers' explanations include "information about what the strategy is, why and how it should be learned, where and when to use the strategy, as well as how to evaluate the use of the strategy" (Anderson, N.J. 1991: 470). However, teachers do not use strategies terms, do not inform the learners about the purpose of the lesson, do not discuss the usefulness of strategies, nor do they model the reading strategies. In addition, they do not explain the reasoning behind their thinking, nor do they encourage the learners to select strategies needed to facilitate the decoding and understanding of texts.

Teachers play important roles in helping the learners think metacognitively. Some effective techniques that teachers can use to help the learners reflect on their reading process to construct meaning from texts may be found in the literature. For instance, teachers should encourage their learners to 'think aloud', or verbalise their mental processing. By doing so, teachers convey the message that what matters most is the process of interpreting text, not the accuracy of a particular answer.

The learners must be aware of what they are doing; this is what teaching specialists call 'conscious learning'. In other words, they should not just sit, listen to the teacher, copy down English words on their copybooks, and then go home. If they are not involved in what is going on in the classroom, they certainly will not learn.

### ▪ **Challenges of Reading Strategies Instruction**

Sometimes reflected in the observations, and sometimes coming up in the post-observation conversations, the present study is an attempt to highlight some of the difficulties

faced by Tizi-Ouzou middle school teachers as they struggle to integrate reading strategies instruction into their classrooms. In fact, many studies may be found in the literature recognising that reading strategies instruction is challenging (e.g., Pressley, Tony Goodchild et al 1988). One of the salient challenges in implementing strategies instruction is that it takes too much time. Teaching reading strategies is a complex and a long-term process which needs a long period of time for teachers to teach and for learners to learn. The following comment is one of many instances in which teachers complain about the lack of time:

*This course is a disaster...I didn't have enough time to cover the material... I can't let my learners think for a long time...nor have I enough time to work with each individual learner.*

Teachers today are dealing with a multitude of challenges that they have never faced before. Many teachers do not feel appropriately prepared to meet the new roles assigned to them with the resources available. Perhaps more disappointing is the lack of professional support mechanisms that would foster the implementation of the new learner-centred teaching paradigm. Strategic teaching is so challenging, mainly in the Algerian context, as the teachers have to adapt the new teaching paradigms to the conditions of the Algerian middle school. For the sake of illustration, the classrooms are overcrowded and suffer from the lack of equipment such as audio-visuals or even electrical sockets, as one of the teachers comments:

*The working conditions are not in line with the expectations of the textbooks...I don't think that the textbook designers have a faithful picture reflecting the actual situation of English teaching in the Algerian middle school.*

One of the most disappointing facts we have noticed is the learners' total demotivation in some schools. Some classrooms are noisy and most learners seem as if they were uninterested in what is happening in class. Such an environment is not conducive to effective learning and much less to efficient reading strategies instruction:

*I am disappointed at the learners' attitude towards English subject. They are only interested in marks and how to pass ...*

Unfortunately, the same attitude has been noticed in some teachers, as the following comment indicates:

*The reading activities suggested in the textbooks are very interesting; yet it isn't easy to implement them in regard to the learners' level. Sometimes, I put aside the textbook and I go back to my traditional teaching (that is grammar)...the textbooks are too difficult; I don't think that the Algerian learners can work with such textbooks.*

The comment above was made by one of the PEM teachers observed. We were negatively surprised when she told us that she did not work with the textbook in the MS 4 classes. Being persuaded that her objective was to help learners to succeed at the BEM exam, she argued that the MS 4 textbook design is not in line with the BEM test format. This teacher does not seem to operate from a theory of reading at all, but from a theory of helping the learners to find out what test developers want, that is, the right answers. Thus, she seems to be promoting strategies designed to get the right answer even if her students are not able to read the reading selection of the test.

In sum, reading strategies instruction is not easy to implement. The teachers make it clear that they need extensive professional development support for that. Teachers need to learn new teaching strategies to cope with the new teaching paradigms.

#### ▪ **Teacher Training**

*“To teach foreign or second language reading well, we (teachers) need to know as much as possible about how the reading process works and how to integrate that knowledge effectively into our reading pedagogy” . (Barnett, M. 1989: 01)*

As the above quotation claims, to teach reading efficiently, teachers need some theoretical background about the reading process together with practical hints about reading instruction. Teachers, mainly the PEM ones, are supposed to get this knowledge from the in-service training sessions. However, the classroom observations indicate that shortcomings of teacher development have played a large part in the ‘failure’ of the implementation of the new programmes. Some teachers have not yet given away with the archaic ways of language teaching. They are still under the spell of the structuralist and behaviourist approaches to language teaching. This is an indicator of the lack of professional preparation of the teachers to the new programmes that they are expected to teach. According to Barbara Wasik, in order to make substantial impact on the learners’ reading performance, teachers need “a well-developed, structured tutoring program as well as high quality training and supervision” (1998:562).

The comments of some teachers in the post-observation conversations provide additional evidence of the teachers’ lack of professional development. Some teachers claim not to have attended any training session since the implementation of the reform. Others complain about the inefficiency of the training sessions:

*I don’t feel that my initial training allows me the implementation of such a curriculum nor do the few in-service training sessions.*

One of the crucial problems of teacher training is relating theory to practice. Most common criticism of teacher training courses is that they are too theoretical, or, in some other way, irrelevant to the needs of the teacher in the classroom:

*The training sessions are too theoretical... They focus on changing the traditional beliefs without proposing practices that embody the new theories... We need concrete hints about how to deal with the textbooks...*

## ▪ **Teachers’ Commitment**

While some teachers are not at all aware of the importance of developing reading strategies in the learners, some others, mainly young PCEF teachers are convinced that reading strategies instruction is very useful. Some strategies, such as predicting and associating information to background knowledge, are perceived as more efficient than others. These teachers believe that strategies instruction pedagogical benefits are worth the challenges and the difficulties that they confront in implementing it.

Through our observations, we have noticed that, even under the great challenges of reading strategies instruction, there are some enthusiastic teachers who show the desire to be more involved. We cannot but acknowledge the effort of one PCEF teacher in a rural area who shows her will to implement faithfully, as much as she can, the Competency-Based Approach. She expresses a quite constructivist view to reading instruction:

*What I try to do each time I start teaching reading is to find some knowledge that my learners have experienced in their lives to relate it to the text... I do that through brainstorming or by bringing some pictures or objects to the classroom... Indeed, I've never attended any training session from the beginning of the reform. I do that only because I've read some articles that show how learners construct meaning from texts; if they cannot relate anything to the text, I don't know if it's going to have any meaning for them.*

Even though she teaches an overcrowded class in a rural area, her teaching practice is more or less in line with her theoretical background about how reading should be taught. What follows is a brief description of the reading class that she gave:

*Class: MS 4 – File 5*

*Lesson: Reading and Writing*

*At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher asks the pupils to open their books on page 133 and describe the illustration in order to guess the text content. She conducts some learners' brainstorming through some questions as a 'lead in' phase. Then, she instructs the learners to read the text silently for two minutes to*

*check their answers to task one. After a series of question-answer exchanges between the teacher and her pupils, she asks them to do task 4 p. 134: link words. [...]. As a last, task the teacher starts to brainstorm the learners' ideas and guide them to the 'Write it out' task on page 135.*

This performance shows the teacher's degree of commitment to support independent-learner learning and to do so through strategies instruction. However, when asked about theory, she felt that she needs more explanations and modelling in in-service training courses. What helps this teacher to succeed in her job is her conviction that "one of the most invigorating things about teaching is that you never stop learning" (Douglas Brown, H. 2001: 426)

## **Conclusion**

After having studied teachers' practice in strategies instruction in the middle school, we have come to notice that it is different from strategies teaching studied in formal research. In other words, teaching practices are not consistent with the pedagogical philosophy embodied in reading strategies instruction; there is no emphasis on encouraging the learners to use strategies to cope with and construct meaning.

A particularly interesting insight in this study is that reading instruction is dominated by many principles and techniques of traditional teaching. In fact, the result reached in our study is consistent with some empirical researches indicating that a lack of connection between teaching reading strategies and reading instruction is to be noticed. In other terms, reading strategies are not incorporated into reading classes. The teachers' focus is put more on language practice, or sometimes comprehension testing, than on strategies development. It seems that some teachers lose sight of the overall long-term goal of English language teaching, that is, communication. An explanation which seems plausible is that the professional support provided is not sufficient for teachers to feel comfortable enough with the new textbooks and get a clear idea about reading strategies instruction.

Another important finding is the difference noticed between PEM and PCEF teachers. PCEF teachers show more motivation to reading-strategies instruction. They adopt a balanced, eclectic approach to English language teaching in contrast to a strong grammar-based emphasis of the PEM ones.

Because much of credible empirical research sustains that “the way teachers adapt and adopt new practices in their classroom relates to whether their beliefs match the assumptions inherent in the new programs or methods” (Richardson, V et al. 1991: 560), raising teachers awareness about the theories lying behind the Algerian reform becomes more than compulsory. We observed several instances of teachers trying to teach some reading strategies, but the attempts were weak and ineffectual. These were teachers who, when interviewed, did not express an understanding of the supporting theory. One could conclude, then, that middle school teachers need some theoretical background to get involved the new teaching paradigms, in addition to some practices necessary to coordinate the teachers’ different ways of approaching reading strategies instruction.

## **General Conclusion**

“Learning to read is a foundation for literacy and a gateway to education”

(Palincsar, A, M et al, 1986: 91)

Like Anne-Marie Palincsar, many reading researchers give significant importance to the reading skill as it is important for, to borrow Marva Barnett’s words, language and knowledge acquisition. Since reading is an important factor in the learners’ educational success, it seems necessary to investigate in depth the causes of poor reading instruction in the Algerian middle school. With this end in view, our area of investigation in the present dissertation, includes reading strategies instruction. We have documented how reading strategies instruction is structured in the textbooks and carried out by PEM and PCEF teachers of Tizi-Ouzou. Broadly speaking, this study reveals that the main cause of the problem is the fact that teachers are not well prepared to teach what is expected for their learners to learn.

Before we state the limitations of the present study, we shall first summarise our findings and interpret them in relation to the theoretical frame used to ground this investigation. Finally, we shall suggest some measures to undertake and some recommendations for current and future reading strategies instruction in the Algerian middle school.

Our study was “interpretive” (Merriam, S, B. 1988 in Banman, J and Ivery, G. 1997: 251) in nature and co-relational in design. The textbooks’ activities and the teachers’ teaching techniques were compared to the theoretical assumptions held by formal research prior to the data gathering. Multiple methods were employed to analyse the middle school syllabuses, textbooks, and teachers’ practices along with the interactive approach to reading. The latter

implies that “comprehension is a constructive process in which readers interpret text according to their own understandings” (Spiro, 1980 in Richardson, V et al, 1991: 563)

Our study has allowed us to establish undeniably that many underlying factors contribute to the inappropriate reading strategies instruction in the Algerian Middle School. These include some weaknesses of the reading activities designed in the textbooks together with the teachers who are not prepared to teach what they are expected to teach. The lack of learners’ motivation and involvement together with overpopulated classrooms are also factors that contribute to this ‘failure’.

Considered as a focal point for both learners and teachers, the textbook determines the daily activities in the classroom and dictates to a considerable extent the content and form of teaching. Unfortunately, the middle school textbooks provide teachers with a coherent body of considerations about ‘what’ to teach, without any methodological directions concerning ‘how’ to teach it.

As far as the teachers are concerned, the study results indicate that there is a gap between the teachers’ reading instruction practices and the educational reform’s teaching principles grounded in the CBA and constructivism. This makes us assume that the most alarming weakness of the reform implemented in Algeria is the lack of coordination between the different compartments of the global teaching operation, i.e., methodology, syllabus design, textbook design, teacher training and teaching. There is no collaboration between syllabus designers, textbook designers and teachers’ trainers and supervisors. Worse than that, the social and economic conditions of the Algerian schools are not taken into consideration by the reformers.

The status of the English language in the Middle School is that of a subject, among eight or nine others, at which the learners should get good marks in order to succeed at normative exams for certification. The learners learn the English language for testing, like any

other subject, not for communication. Many middle school teachers are under such great pressure to prepare their learners to pass the BEM exam, for example, that they hardly have the time or energy to teach other aspects of language than the potential test items and formats. In a word, the Algerian middle school needs to re-direct the focus of its teaching/learning of reading to a more productive perspective: communication.

Though our study is assumed to be illuminative concerning syllabus and textbook design, some limitations are to be mentioned concerning the case study.

First, the case study approach has been adopted in the hope of getting a clearer picture of the teachers' attempt to implement the educational reform and examine the success of a number of innovations brought about by the reform. A common problem of case studies is that of generalising from insufficient data. In fact, critics of the case study approach point to the fact that generalisations do not usually reflect the whole truth. Given the small scale of our investigation, our findings can be considered as more illuminative and suggestive than generalisable. Since our sample consists only of 20 teachers out of 583, we shall not attempt to generalise our results. However, Michael J. Wallas sustains that "generalisations play as much less important role than they do in natural sciences" (1998: 161). In the same context, Judith Bell contends that "there is no need to apologize, but there would be every need to apologize if data were manipulated in an attempt to prove more than could be claimed" (1987: 102). In addition, the objective of our research is to evaluate the teachers' performances as they deal with reading strategies instruction in a hope to determine the origin of reading instruction weaknesses and suggest some recommendations. Thus, the case study approach is thought to be the most suitable research methodology, as M. Bassey contends that case studies are of paramount importance in educational research, most importantly, "if they are aimed at the improvement of education" (Bassey, M. 1981. quoted in Bell, J.1987:07).

Second, the sample teachers' reading instruction practices in class are observed only on a one-time basis for a sixty minute period. We think that a longitudinal study over a long stretch of time would be more conclusive. In addition, each 'facet' of a classroom observation, that is, the situation, the observer, the observed etc., is a 'source of variability'. This is what makes of generalisation somehow unreliable, especially when a case study is conducted.

In spite of the limitations stated above, we may say that the analysis of the syllabuses, textbooks and the classroom observations can be suggestive of some points liable to be used to improve English teaching in the middle school in general and reading strategies instruction in particular.

To start with the syllabuses and textbooks, on the basis of the results reached, we may suggest the following:

- A clear definition of the English teaching objectives in the Middle School is vital for successful teaching. Therefore, providing the syllabuses with short-term objectives is likely to make the teachers feel that there is some progress.
- To add some bottom- processing activities to Spotlight on English One, mainly cloze activities. In this respect Françoise Grellet's book may be taken as a reference for very interesting activities.
- To drop some reading activities designed to test reading via traditional comprehension questions in Spotlight on English Three.
- As for On the Move, we think that varying the reading activities in such a way to include as many reading strategies as possible will be beneficial for the learners.
- To limit the number of files or the number of sequences in each file in such a way to make the textbooks adequate with the English course schedule.
- To add a glossary of reading strategies and teaching techniques in teachers' guides.

- The reading strategies, especially the metacognitive, which are rarely used, should be reconsidered so that they are either recurrent or presented more effectively.
- To put the ‘coping box’ in its due place, i.e., at the beginning of the reading selection, and to suggest some of them in the other levels that is MS1, MS 2 and MS3.

Evidence from the results of the research shows that the teachers, mainly the PEM ones, need a great deal of assistance to cope with the difficulties encountered in their attempt to grapple the new programmes. Rather than seeking to radically displace the traditional teaching techniques, we think that a smooth transition is likely to be more stimulating for the teachers.

Our post-observation conversations with teachers have revealed the latter have developed a feeling of ‘not belonging’ in the global teaching operation, a feeling of marginalisation. As a consequence, many of them are reluctant to adjust their teaching to the new programmes ‘imposed’ on them. This is why teacher development through in-service training courses and small group meetings revolving around demonstration classes is highly recommended.

The question that may be asked is how teachers can be best prepared for the many challenges of strategies-based instruction? This modest research suggests several professional development factors that may be important to teaching practice. The reason for our recommendation to devise efficient teacher development programmes stems from the assumption that only with a deep understanding of teaching techniques grounded in the philosophical principles of CBA that improved pedagogical practice can occur.

In order to be effective, teacher development should include some basic components, such as:

- Seminars, workshops, and training sessions should not be a one-time event but rather a regular component of an institution's ongoing professional development programme for middle school teachers.
- Sessions should be consistent and thorough.
- Teachers must be supervised by certified reading specialists.
- Several years of professional development, explanation and modelling of what good strategy teachers do, and encouragement and support from programme developers
- Regular meetings between teachers to discuss teaching challenges should be encouraged. Since teachers “are likely to benefit from sharing teaching successes and frustrations with colleagues who are dealing with the same challenges” (Tsui, L. 2001 in Tsui, L. 2002: 759), such an initiative is likely to promote teachers' collaboration as well as new ideas on teaching.

To successfully implement reading strategies instruction, teachers will need to invest some significant time and effort. In addition, the education authorities should contribute in this matter by providing necessary aids and by limiting class sizes, etc., in a word to create an adequate, safe, and supportive school environment for learning.

Though further research is needed to substantiate a causal link between teacher training and failure in the first steps of implementing the Algerian educational reform, we think that this study provides significant insights in this issue.

As a conclusion, we may say that the educational objective of developing the learners' reading strategies is an important and challenging one. Its achievement requires a greater investment by teachers and the teaching institution. To become strategic instructors, teachers progress through the same phases of development that their learners do as they learn to self-regulate their use of strategies. Just as learners need interactive modelling, and direct

instruction to become strategic readers, so teachers need these components to carry out effective reading strategies instruction.

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# APPENDIXES

## Appendix A: Spotlight on English One

File	Rubric	Activity	Type	corresponding activity in Grellet's taxonomy of reading activities	Aim / Strategy
<b>File One: Hello!</b>	<i>Sequence one</i> 'Practise'	Act C. P 22	Punctuation	Ex. 2 p. 57	Predicting where the sentence is likely to stop
	'Produce'	Act. C. P 23	Ordering sentences	Ex. 10 p 102	Organisation of the text (developing formal schemata)
	<i>Sequence two</i> 'Practise'	Act B p 26	True/ false	/	To check understanding of details
		Act C. P 26	Ordering sentences	Ex. 10 p 102	Organisation of the text (developing formal schemata)
	<i>Sequence three</i> 'Practise'	Act B. P 29	Completing a document	Ex. 1 p 209	To help understanding of a passage through transfer of information
<b>File Two: Family and Friends</b>	<i>Sequence One</i> 'Practise'	Act D. p 45	Comprehension questions	/	To check understanding of text
	<i>Sequence Two</i> 'Practise'	Act C p 49	True/ False	/	To check understanding of text
	<i>Sequence</i>	Act D. P	Completing a	Ex. 1 p	To help understanding of a

	<i>Three</i> 'Practise'	52	document	209	text through transfer of information.
<b>File Three: Sports</b>	<i>Sequence one</i> 'Practise'	Act E. P 65	True/ False	/	To check understanding of text
	<i>Sequence Two</i> 'Practise'	Act C. P 69	Completing a map with text information	Ex. 6 p 170 Ex. 3 p 167	To help understanding of the text through transfer of information.
	'Produce'	Act B p 70	Ordering sentences	Ex. 10 p 102	Organisation of text (develop formal schemata).
	<i>Sequence Three</i> 'Practise'	Act E p 72	Reading to guess what the text is about.	A game	State a purpose for reading
	<i>Learn about Culture</i>	Act D p 75	reading	/	Reading for information
<b>File four: In and Out</b>	<i>Sequence one</i> 'Practise'	Act B. P 85	Correcting mistakes	/	Practise language forms
		Act C. p 85	Comprehension questions	/	To check understanding of text
	<i>Sequence two</i> 'Practise'	Act B p. 89	Reading to guess the name of an animal	A game	State a purpose for reading
	'Produce'	Act B. P 90	Matching bubbles with illustrations	Ex. 4 p 141	To use the stated or implied information in the text and relate it to pictures
	<i>Sequence three</i> 'Practise'	Act D. p 93	Table filling	Ex. 2 p 118	Taking notes To help understanding of the

	'Produce'				text
		Act A. P 93	Blank filling	Ex. 3 p 48	Reference: lead the learners to look to the context to find out the function of the missing word
		Act B. P 93	Reading aloud	/	Language practice (pronunciation).
	<b>Learn About Culture</b>	Act C. P 96	Reading	/	Reading for information
		Act F. P97	Questions about horoscope	Prereading	Prediction, Anticipation
			Reading	While-reading	Reading for information
<b>File Five: Food</b>	<b>Sequence One</b> 'Practise'	Act D. P 105	Using information in the text	A game	To state a purpose for reading.
	<b>Sequence Two</b> 'Practise'	Act C p 108	Reordering pictures reflecting instructions	Ex. 3 p 104 / Exe p 130	To help learners understand chronological sequence in a text by reordering accompanying photos
	'Produce'	Act B. P 109	Ordering sentences to get a dialogue	Ex. 10 p 102	Organisation of text (develop formal schemata)
	<b>Sequence Three</b> 'Practise'	Act C p 112	Completing a dialogue	/	Language practice: interrogative form

<b>File Six: Inventions and Discoveries</b>	<b>Sequence one</b> 'Practise'	Act D. P 125	True/ False	/	To check learners' understanding of text
		Act C. P126	Reading aloud + classifying words according to their pronunciation	/	To discriminate between final pronunciation T, D and ID (language practice).
	<b>Sequence Two</b> 'Practise'	Act D. P 129	Completing a document	Ex. 1 p 154	To understanding of text through transfer of information.
		Act E. P 134	Ordering pictures to get a coherent story	Ex. 2 p 104	Understanding the chronological sequence in a text
	<b>Sequence Three</b> 'Practise'	Act B. P 135	Using information in a text	Ex. 2 p 173	To train the learners to read in order to do a task
		Act C. p 135	Reading	/	Reading for information
<b>File Seven: Environment</b>	<b>Sequence Two</b> 'Practise'	Act C. P151	Comprehension questions	/	To check learners' understanding of text
		Act A. P 152	Matching pictures with corresponding sentences	Ex. 4 p 141	To check the learners' understanding of sentences
	<b>Sequence three</b>	Act D. P	Matching each	/	Language practice.

	'Practise'	155	sentence with its translation in Arabic		
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## **Appendix B: Spotlight on English Two**

File	Rubric	Activity	Type	Corresponding activity in Grellet's taxonomy/ Phase in Barnett's lesson plan	Aim / Strategy
<b>File One: A Person's Profile</b>	<i>Sequence One</i> 'Go forward' p 9	Act 1 p 9	Find out the questions to given answers	/	Practise language forms
	<i>Sequence Two</i> 'Go forward' p 13	Act one + Two	Questions + illustration	Prereading: Ex. 3 p63	Anticipation, prediction
		Act three	Looking up words in a dictionary	/	Use of dictionary
	<i>Sequence Three</i> 'Go forward' p17	Act one	Illustrations + questions	Prereading: Ex. 3 p63	Prediction, anticipation
		Act two	Comprehension questions	Post reading	To check the learners' understanding of text

	rain the learners to read in order to complete a task 'Practise'	Act three	Find in the text opposites	Ex. 1 p 28	Inference
		Act 4 p 19	Using information in the text	Ex. 2p 173	To train the learners to read in order to complete a task
<b>File Two: Language Games</b>	<b><i>Sequence One</i></b> 'Practise' (Listen and Speak)	Act 1 p 28	Find opposites of words	Ex. 1 p 28	Inference
	'Go forward'	Act 1+2 +3	Comprehension questions about dictionaries' use	/	Use of dictionary
	<b><i>Sequence Two</i></b> 'Go forward'	Act 1+2 P 33	Language game about word formation	/	Use of dictionary Practise spelling
		Act 5 p33	Fill in a table with related words	/	Inference: deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words through understanding word formation
	<b><i>Sequence Three</i></b> 'Practice'	Act 1 p 37	Completing a letter	Ex. 10 p 38	Predicting: Inferring the meaning of incomplete words  To train the learners to read faster

					and read words more quickly
	‘Go forward’	Act 1 p37	Matching	Ex. 4 p 141	Use the information in the text to relate pictures to definitions
		Act 4p 38	Mapping it out	Ex. 2 p 164	To check the learners’ understanding of the main information
<b>File three: Health</b>	<i>Sequence One</i> ‘Practise’ ( Listen and speak)	Act 2 p 51	Matching questions with answers	Ex.1 p56	Predicting
	‘Go forward’	Act 1 p 51	Using information	Ex. 1 p171	To help the learners to understand the text by asking them to use the information contained in it to make decisions
	‘Practise’ (Discover the Language)	Act 2 p 53	Matching questions with answers	Ex. 1 p56	Predicting
	<i>Sequence Two</i> ‘Go forward’	Act 1p 57	Using information	Ex. 1 p 171	use the information contained in it to make decisions
	<i>Sequence Three</i> ‘Go forward’	Act 1 p 61	illustrations	Prereading	Prediction, anticipation
		Act 4 p 62	Using information	Ex. 1 p 171	use the information contained in it to make decisions
<b>File</b>	<i>Sequence One</i> ‘Practise’	Act 2 p	Matching	Ex. 1 p56	Predicting

(Listen and speak)	75	questions with answers		
	Act 3 p 75	Ordering sentences to get two coherent conversations	Ex. 5 p 106	To help the learners understand the organisation of text and chronological sequence
	Act 1 p75	Illustrations (strip cartoons)	Prereading	Prediction, anticipation, and understanding situation from context
	Act 2 p 76	Comprehensions (True/False) stand the organisation of text and chronological sequence on questions (True/False)	post reading	To check understanding of the text
<b>Sequence Two</b> “Go forward”	Act 1 p 80	Matching Illustrations with expressions	Ex. 5 p 143	Understanding different expressions by matching them to gestures
	Act 2 p 80	Comprehension questions	/	To check understanding of the text
	Act 4 p 81	Looking up words in a dictionary	/	Use of dictionary

	<b>Sequence three</b>				
	‘Go forward’	Act p 85	Comprehension questions	/	To check understanding of cartoon strips.
	‘Practise’ (Discover the Language)	Act 5 p87	Ordering sentences to get coherent conversation	Ex. 4 p 106	To understand the chronological sequence in a text
<b>File five: Theatre</b>	<b>Sequence One</b>				
	‘Go forward’	Act p 98	Comprehension questions	/	To check understanding of the text
	‘Practise’ (Discover the Language)	Act 1 p 99	Matching questions with answers	Ex. 1 p56	Predicting
	<b>Sequence two</b>	Act p 102	Comprehension questions	/	To check understanding of the text
	‘Go forward’				
	<b>Sequence three</b>				
‘Practise’ (listen and Speak)	Act 4 p 106	Matching words with explanations	/	Inference	
‘Go forward’	Act 1 p 107	Comprehension questions	/	To check understanding of the text	
	‘Practise’ (Discover the Language)	Act 2 p 107	To continue the story	Ex. p 57	Prediction
		Act 2 p 108	Ordering sentences to get a	Ex. 4 p 106	To understand the chronological sequence in a text

			coherent conversation		
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### Appendix D: Spotlight on English Three

File	Rubric	Activity/ Task	Type of activity	Corresponding activity in Grellet's Taxonomy/ Phase in Barnett's lesson plan	Aim / Strategy
<i>File one: Communications</i>	<i>Sequence one</i> Read and Write I	Act 1 p 18	Illustrations + question	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Anticipation, prediction
		Act 2 p18	M.C.Q about the text	Prereading : Ex. 6 p 74	Skimming
		Act 3 p 18	Comprehension question	/	To check the learners' understanding of the text
		Act 4 p 18	Find out an explanation of an unknown word	Post reading: Ex. 5 p 32	Inference: to deduce the meaning of unknown words from context
	Read and Write II	Act 1 p20	Cloze exercise	Post reading: Ex. 5 p 32	Inference: inferring meaning from context
		Act 2 + 3 p20	Comprehension questions	/	To check the learners' understanding of the text

		Act 4 p 20	Fill in a comparison table	Ex. 1 p 109	To understand comparison made in a text
‘Practise’	<i>Sequence two</i> Read and write I	Act 1 p 26	Matching drawings with expressions	Prereading	Interpretation of context
		Act 2 p 26	Comprehension question	/	Traditional comprehension questions.
		Act 3p 26	Matching each passage with its function	Post reading: Ex. 1 p 90	Understanding the communicative value of texts (developing formal schemata)
		Act 4 p 26	Comparing texts	Ex. 1 p 90	Understanding the communicative value of texts (developing formal schemata).
		Act 1 p 26	Re-order sentences to get a coherent paragraph	Ex. 4 p 106	To understand the chronological sequence in a text
		Act 2 p 26	Matching paragraphs with corresponding birth announcements	Ex. 8 p 149	To help the learners to recognise the main information of the text.
		Read and Write II	Act p 28	Comprehension questions	/
	<i>Sequence three</i>				

	Read and write I	Act 1 p 34	Illustrations + role play (warm- up)	Prereading	Identification of the context
	‘Practise’	Act 2 p 34	Comprehension questions	/	To check understanding of the text
		Act 1 p 34	Find out the topic sentence	Ex. 2 p 94	Understanding the text organisation
	Read and Write II	Act p 36	Comprehension questions	/	Interpreting a poem
<b>File Two: Travel</b>	<i>Sequence one</i> Read and write I	Act 1 p 56	cloze exercise	Ex. 5 p 32	Inference: deducing the meaning of words from context
		Act 2 +3 p 56	Comprehension questions	/	To check understanding of the text
	Read and write II	Act 1 p 58	Comprehension questions about pictures	/	Interpreting pictures
		Act 2 p 58	Transferring activity from pictures and maps to text (blank filling)	Ex. 2 p 153	Interpreting context
	<i>Sequence two</i> Read and write I	Act 1 p 64	Blank filling (reading text A to	/	Using information

			fill in missing information in text B)		
		Act 2 p 64	Comprehension questions (M.C.Q)	/	To check understanding of the text
Read and write II		Act 1 p 66	Illustration + question	Prereading Ex. 3 p 63	Anticipation + prediction
		Act 2 p 66	Blank filling	/	Reading for general understanding
<i>Sequence three</i> Read and Write I		Act 1 p 72	Illustrations + question Matching pictures with corresponding texts	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63 Ex. 4 p 141	Interpreting pictures, anticipation, prediction Interpreting texts and pictures
		Act 2 p 72	Underlining the verbs of the text	Ex. 1 p 42	Language practice
	Read and Write II	Reading task 1 p74	Reading an authentic brochure to make suggestions to a friend.	Ex 2 p 173	Using information to make decisions
<b>File three: Work</b>	<i>Sequence one</i> Read and Write I	Act 1 + 2 p 94	Illustrations + question	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Anticipation, prediction.
		Act 3 p 94	Asking questions with “how long”	/	Language practice

		Act 4 p 94	Comprehension questions (M.C.Q)	/	To check understanding of the text
	Read and write Iite I"to a friend. decisions prediction.ing)	Act 1 p 96	Comprehension questions	/	To check understanding of the text
		Act 2 p 96	Cloze exercise	Ex. 5 p 32	Inference
	<b>Sequence two</b> Read and write I	Act 1 p 102	Illustrations	rereading	Anticipation, prediction Practise of the present perfect tense
		Act 2 p 102	Matching pictures with corresponding sentences	Ex. 4 p 141	Interpreting texts and pictures
	“Read and Write II	Act 3 p 102	Comprehension questions	/	To check the learners’ understanding of the text
		Act 4 p 102	Table filling	Ex. 1 p 109	Using information in the text
		Act 1 p 104d and Write Iing of the text	Illustrations + question	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Anticipation, prediction
		Act 2 p	Comprehension	/	To check the learners’

		104	questions		understanding of the text
		Act 3 p104	Close exercise	Ex. 5 p 32	Inference
	<i>Sequence three</i> Read and Write I	Act 1 p 110	Illustrations + question	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Anticipation, prediction
		Act 2 p110	Reading to check predictions	While reading	Checking the hypotheses
		Act 3 + 4 p 110	Comprehension questions about newspaper's tense	/	Recognising the tense used in newspapers
		Act 5 + 6 p 110	Comprehension questions	/	To check the learners' understanding of the text
	Read and Write II''	Act 1 p 112	Comprehension questions	/	To check the learners' understanding of the text
		Act 2 p 112	Blank filling with the appropriate verb tense	/	Language practise
<b>File Four: Around the World</b>	<i>Sequence one</i> Read and Write I	Act 1 p 136	Illustrations + question	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Anticipation, prediction
		Act 2 p 136	Use information in the text to name countries in a map	Ex. 6 p 170	Using information
		Act 3 p	Comprehension	/	To check the learners'

		136	questions		understanding of the text
	“Read and write II”	Act 1 p 138	Comparing texts with one another	/	Language practice: comparatives and superlatives
	<b>Sequence two</b> Read and Write I	Act 1 p 144	Mapping it out: use information of the text to name and locate places in a map	Ex. 6 p 170	To help the learners understand specific information
		Act 2 p 144	Comprehension questions	/	To check the learners’ understanding of the text
	“Read and Write II”	Act 1 p146	A quiz about Christopher Columbus	Prereading	Anticipation, prediction
		Act 2 p 146	Comprehension questions	/	To check the learners’ understanding of the text
	<b>Sequence three</b> Read and Write I	Act 1 p 152	Matching shapes with names	Prereading	Anticipation, prediction
		Act 2 p 152	Asking questions using “how”	/	Language practice
		Act 3 p 152	Table filling	/	Language practice
	Read and Write II	Act 1 p 154	Illustrations  Comparing information of	Prereading  Postreading Ex 8 p149	Anticipation, prediction  To help the learners recognise the main

			the text (Sahara years ago Vs Sahara today)		information of the text.
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## Appendix E: On the Move

File	Rubric	Activity/ Task	Type of activity	Corresponding phase in Barnett's lesson plan/ Activity in Grellet's Taxonomy	Aim/ Strategy
File one: It's my treat	<i>Read and Consider</i>	Act 1 p 21	Illustrations + questions	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Predicting the topic Language practice: eliciting the use of tag questions.
		Act 2 p 21	Re-ordering instructions to get a coherent recipe	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 104	Anticipation, prediction To help the learners understand the chronological sequence in a text
		As you read p 22	Checking the answers to the previous activities	While reading	To check the predictions made in the prereading phase
		After reading p 22	Grammar window	/	Language practice

	<b>Reading and Writing (Read and check)</b>	Act 1 p 32	Illustrations + M.C.Q	Prereading: Ex. 5 p 65	Anticipation, prediction. Activating the learners' formal schemata by making them aware of the rhetorical patterns corresponding to the text type of the advertisement.
		Act 2 p 32	Reading to check answers	While- reading	Checking the hypotheses made in the prereading phase.
		Act 3 p 33	Mapping it out	Postreading : Ex. 2 p 164	To help the learners understand the text
		Act 4 p 33	Comprehension questions	/	To check the learners' understanding of the text
		Act 5 p 33	Relating each sentence with a function (Fact/ opinion)	Ex. 1 p 90	To understand the communicative value of sentences by paying attention to textual features in order to discriminate between an opinion and a fact
		Act 6 p 33	Using information of the text to check the validity of opinions	Ex. 1 p 171	To discriminate between an opinion and a fact.
<b>File two: You can do it!</b>	<b>Read and Consider</b>	Before you Read p 46	Illustrations + questions	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Predicting the topic Language practise: eliciting the use of "may be" and "perhaps".
		Act 1 p	Checking the	While	To check the predictions made in

		46ad p 46do it!;n an opinion and a fact.y of opinions ng to the text type of the advertis ment	answers to the previous activities	reading	the prereading phase
		Act 2 p 46	Guessing the ending of a passage	While- reading: Ex. 1 p 57	Prediction
		Act 3 p 47	Reading to check answers	While- reading	Checking the hypotheses made in the prereading phase.
		After reading	Grammar window	/	Language practice
	<b>Reading and Writing</b>	Act 1 p 57	Illustrations + questions	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Anticipation, prediction. Activating the learners' formal schemata concerning magazine articles.
		Act 2 p 57	Reading to check answers	While- reading	To state a purpose for reading To check the hypotheses set in the prereading phase
		Act 3 p	Matching each	Postreading:	Interpreting texts and pictures by

		58	picture with corresponding sentence	Ex. 4 p 141	understanding the stated or implied information in the text
		Act 4 p 58	Classifying predictions according to their degree of certainty.	Ex. 1 p 111	Transferring information from text to a graph.
<b>File three: Great expectations.</b>	<b>Read and Consider</b>	Before you read p 70	Illustrations + questions	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Prediction, anticipation
		As you read p 70	Taking notes following the conditional model	While-reading	Taking notes. Language practise (Conditional)
		After reading p 71	Grammar window	/	Language practice
	<b>Reading and writing</b>	Act 1 p 82	Illustrations + questions	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Prediction, anticipation. Scanning
		Act 2 p 82	Reading and identifying the rhyme	/	To be acquainted with the different conventions of writing (poems in this case)
		Act 3 p 83	Transfer activity (from prose to poem)	/	To recognise the difference between prose and poems

		Act 5 p 83	Comprehension questions (M.C.Q)	/	To check the learners' understanding of the texts
		Act 6 p 84	Guessing the speaker and the function expressed in each sentence	Ex. 2 p 48	Guessing. Reference: understanding the rhetorical value of the sentence by interpreting the words and the tone.
<b>File four: Then and now</b>	<b>Read and Consider</b>	Act 1 p95	Illustrations + questions and answers (Pair work)	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Anticipation, prediction. Language practise (the use of “used to”)
		act 2 p 95	Illustration + M.C.Q	Ex. 5 p 65	Prediction
	Act 1 p 96	Reading to check the answers to activity 2	While- reading	To check the hypotheses set in the prereading phase	
	Act 2 p 96	Comparing the letter and the picture	Postreading: Ex. p 133	To help the learners understand the implied and stated information through comparing the information contained in the text with the picture.	
	After reading	Grammar window	/	Language practice	
	<b>Reading and writing</b>	Act 1 p 107	Illustration + M.C.Q	Prereading: Ex. 5 p 65	Prediction, anticipation. Activating the learners' content schemata about Martin Luther king.

		Act 2 p 107	Reading to check answers	While- reading	To state a purpose for reading To check the hypotheses set in the prereading phase
		Act 3 p108	Comprehension questions	/	To check the learners' understanding of the text.
		Act 4 p 108	Extracting synonyms, antonyms...ntony ms, antonyms, from t.tin Luther king.d stated information through comparing from the text	Postreading: Ex. 3 p 30	Inference
		Act 5 p 108	Matching each sentence with a strategy.	/	Reference.
<b>File Five: Dreams, Dreams...</b>	<b>Read and Consider</b>	Before you read p122	Illustrations + Categorising adjectives according to pictures	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Anticipation, prediction
		Act 1 p 122	Reading to check answers by paying attention to the tone	While- reading	Checking the previous predictions. Interpreting meaning according to the tone of writing
		Act 2 + 3	Comprehension	/	To check the learners'

		p 123	questions the tone of writingthe tone		understanding of the text.
		After reading p 123	Grammar window	/	Language practice
<b>Reading and writing</b>	Act 1 p 133	Illustration + M.C.Q	Prereading: Ex. 5 p 65	Prediction, anticipation.	
	Act 2 p 133	Reading to check answers	While- reading	To check the hypotheses set in the prereading phase.	
		Guessing what comes next	Prereading Ex. p 57	Prediction	
	Act 3 p 134	Reading to check the previous predictionsn nextof the text.	While- reading	To check the hypotheses set in the prereading phase.	
	Act 4 p 134	Categorising link words	/	Reference	
	Act 5 p 134	Blank filling with link words.	Postreading: Ex. 5 p 51	Reference: to understand the rhetorical value of link words	
	Act 6 p 134	Guessing what comes next (M.C.Q)+	Prereading	Prediction	

			reading to check the answers	While-reading	To check the predictions
		Act 7 p 134	Categorising link words	/	Reference
		Act 8 p 134	Blank filling with link words.	Postreading: Ex. 5 p 51	Reference: to understand the rhetorical value of link words
<b>File six: Fact and fiction</b>	<b><i>Read and Consider</i></b>	Act 1 p 146	Reordering words to write coherent sentences describing a picture	Prereading	Prediction, anticipation Interpreting pictures (recognising the context) Language practise (the use of appropriate tense)
		Act 2 p 146	Re-writing sentences using the appropriate tense	/	Language practice To help the learners become aware of the tense used in newspapers' headlines
		Act 1 p 147	Checking the answers to activity 2eadlinelearners become aware of the tense used in newspapers'	While-reading	To help the learners to become aware of the difference in tenses between headings and development of information in newspapers articles
		Act 2 p 147	Comprehension questions	/	To check the learners' understanding of the text
		After reading p	Grammar window	/	Language practice

		147			
<b>Reading and Writing</b>	Act 1 p 156	Illustration (book cover) + questions about the author, source, etc. of the book + guessing the title of the story	Prereading: Ex. 3 p 63	Prediction, anticipation scanning	
	Act 2 p 156	Reading to check the prediction made in the prereading phase	While- reading	To check the previous predictions	
		Guess what comes next	Prereading	prediction	
	Act 3 p 156	Re-order sentences to get a coherent paragraph + checking the previous predictions	While- reading: exe 4 p106	To help the learners understand the chronological sequence in a text Checking predictions	
	Act 4 p 157	Re-writing sentences using: while, when, and as	/	Language practice	

		Act 5 p 157	Comprehension questions about the aim of the story (M.C.Q)	/	To check the learners' understanding of the text
		Act 6 p 157	Discussing the previous answers	/	To help the learners provide arguments to support their points of view

## الملخص

تتناول هذه المذكرة مناقشة موضوع تعليم إستراتيجيات القراءة في المرحلة المتوسطة الجزائرية في ضوء نظرية تفاعلية القراءة. و تتخذ في درسها مناهج المدارس المتوسطة و أنشطة القراءة في الكتب المدرسية مع طريقة تدريس المعلمين لتقنيات القراءة. نسعى إلى تحديد ما إذا كانت إستراتيجيات القراءة مدمجة ضمن برامج تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية حتى يتمكن التلاميذ من إستخدام الإستراتيجيات المناسبة أثناء القراءة. و بناءا عليه فإن هذه الدراسة تقييمية في طرحننا حيث تهدف إلى تحسين وضع برامج التدريس للغة الإنجليزية من خلال تقييم أوجه قوتها و ضعفها. وصلنا في نهاية البحث إلى كشف أن العديد من العوامل تساهم في عرقلة تعليم إستراتيجيات القراءة في المرحلة المتوسطة. وتشمل هذه بعض نقاط الضعف للأنشطة التي تستهدف القراءة في الكتب المدرسية مع المعلمين الذين ليسوا علي استعداد لتعليم ما هو منتظر منهم للتدريس.

## **Résumé**

L'objectif de cette étude est d'évaluer l'enseignement des stratégies de lecture au collège dans le cadre de la réforme du système éducatif Algérien lancée en Septembre 2001. L'enjeu est d'examiner les programmes scolaires, les activités de lecture proposées aux manuels, ainsi que les techniques utilisées par les enseignants en classe à la lumière de 'l'approche interactive'. Après avoir analysé de manière croisée ces données, cette thèse révèle que de nombreux facteurs contribuent à l'enseignement inadéquat des stratégies de lecture à l'école moyenne. Il s'agit de certaines faiblesses des activités de lecture proposées aux manuels. Les résultats montrent aussi que les enseignants ont du mal à incorporer l'enseignement des stratégies de lecture dans leurs pratiques quotidiennes. Ce qui est principalement dû à leurs formations continues non satisfaisantes.