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Dedication

To my mother Safia and my father Ahmed, who have always supported me and believed in me

To my beloved sister Fadila, her husband Ahmed and their sweet daughter Maria

To my brothers Azeddine, Brahim, Mehdi, Djaffar, Djamel and Seddik

To my sweet nephews Ahmed and Safia, and their mother Nawel

To my grandmother Zahra

To my most adored and closest friend Assia

To my dear friend Thiziri

To my friends: Tarek, Massi, Rabea, Samira, Zazu, Aldjia, Ouiza and Roza

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Abstract

This study is mainly concerned with the investigation of the assessment of reading comprehension with the third year learners in secondary schools in Ain El Hammam in Tizi-Ouzou. First, it tried to analyse the techniques and the strategies used in the class, in terms and baccalaureate exams to enhance the reading comprehension competencies in the learners. Second, it attempted to identify the main reasons of reading comprehension difficulties for the learners. Finally, it tried to check whether the reading comprehension activities provided by the New Prospect textbook effectively prepare the learners to the final exam in reading comprehension. The study was conducted based on the mixed method approach. Thus, a questionnaire was administered to EFL secondary school teachers in Ain El Hammam. In addition to two others, New Prospect textbook and a sample of a BAC exam analysis. Sphinx software was used for statistical data analysis while qualitative content analysis was used for the explanation and interpretation of the open ended questions of the questionnaire. The results of the research showed that the learners' reading comprehension skills are assessed using multiple techniques, such as: a. asking comprehension question, b. true or false statements, c. asking a question about the type of the text, d. asking learners to find or give synonyms and opposites, e. asking learners to put ideas according to their occurrence in the text, f. asking the learners to summarise the general idea of the text, g. giving multiple choice questions to select the appropriate one, h. asking learners to determine the author's purpose and i. asking pupils to find word references in the text . Moreover, the factors that cause reading comprehension difficulties are linguistic weakness and lack of reading. And also the findings showed that the New Prospect reading comprehension activities effectively prepare the learners to the final exam in reading comprehension.

Key words: Assessment, reading comprehension, reading comprehension techniques, reading comprehension difficulties.

List of Abbreviations

- SE3: Secondary Education Year Three.
- EFL: English as Foreign Language.
- CBA: Competency Based Approach.
- BAC: Baccalaureate Examination
- BEM: Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen.
- CLT: Communicative Language Teaching.
- N.P: New Prospects (2007).
- QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis.
- L1: Arabic and Berber Languages.
- n.d: No Date.

List of Tables

Table 01: Teachers' Gender.....	30
Table 02: Teachers' Teaching Experience	31
Table 03: The Average Number of Pupils in the Class.....	31
Table 04: Teachers' Satisfaction about their learners' Achievement	32
Table 05: The language Skill the learners Master the most.....	33
Table 06: The status of Reading Comprehension Assessment in CBA.....	34
Table 07: Teachers' Opinion whether Reading Comprehension Assessment is Essential.....	34
Table 08: Teachers' practice of the Assessment of Reading Comprehension.....	34
Table 09: Time Sufficiency to assess Reading Comprehension Skills of the Learners.....	35
Table 10: Reading Comprehension Strategies Used by Teachers.....	35
Table 11: Consistency of Reading Comprehension Activities in term and BAC exams.....	37
Table 12: Learners' Motivation to Practice Reading Comprehension.....	37
Table 13: Effect of text selection on the Learners' Reading Comprehension Achievement...38	
Table 14: Reading Comprehension Techniques Used in Six Reading texts in New Prospects Textbook.....	41
Table 15: Reading Comprehension Techniques used in the Baccalaureate Exam Foreign Languages Stream.....	42

List of Diagrams

Diagram 01: Teachers' Academic Qualifications.....	30
Diagram 02: Pupils' Motivation to Learn the English Language.....	32
Diagram 03: Learners' Output according to their Teachers.....	32
Diagram 04: Teachers' Opinion about the Competency Based Approach.....	33
Diagram 05: Tools Used by Teachers to Assess Reading Comprehension.....	36
Diagram 06: Techniques Used to assess Reading Comprehension in Tests and Term Exams.....	36
Diagram 07: Factors Causing Reading Comprehension Difficulties.....	38
Diagram 08: Teachers' Opinion about the Reading Comprehension Activities of the New Prospects Textbook.....	39

Contents

Dedication	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
List of Abbreviations	iv
List of Tables	v
List of Diagrams	vi
General Introduction	
• Statement of the Problem.....	1
• Aims and Significance of the Study.....	2
• Research Questions and Hypotheses.....	3
• Research Techniques and Methodology.....	4
• Structure of the Dissertation.....	5
Chapter 1: Review of the Literature	
Introduction.....	6
I. Assessment.....	6
1. Definition of Assessment	6
1.1. Assessment, Evaluation, Test and Examination.....	7
2. Types of Assessment.....	8
2.1. Diagnostic Assessment.....	8
2.2. Formative Assessment.....	9
2.3. Summative Assessment.....	9
2.4. Self-Assessment	10
2.5. Peer Assessment	11
3. Importance of Assessment and the reasons for Assessing the Learners	12
4. Assessing Learners under the Competency Based Approach.....	14
II. Assessing Reading Comprehension.....	15
1. Definition of Reading.....	15
1.1 Reading Techniques	16
1.1.1. Skimming.....	16
1.1.2. Scanning.....	16
1.1.3. Extensive Reading.....	17
1.1.4. Intensive Reading.....	17
2. Reading Comprehension.....	18
2.1 Reading Comprehension Assessment.....	19
2.2. Factors behind Reading Comprehension Difficulties	20
2.2.1 Linguistic Weakness.....	20
2.2.2 Lack of Reading.....	21
Conclusion.....	21
Chapter 2: Research Design	
Introduction.....	22
1. Context of the Study.....	22
1.1. Setting of the Research.....	22

1.2. The Participants.....	22
1.3. Corpus.....	23
1.3.1. Description of New Prospects (2007) Textbook.....	23
1.3.2. Description of a Sample of a Baccalaureate Exam.....	24
2. Data Collection Tools.....	25
2.1. The Questionnaire.....	25
2.2. The Checklist.....	26
3. Data Analysis Procedures	27
3.1. The Statistical Method; Sphinx Software (version d'évaluation-V5).....	27
3.2. The Content Analysis.....	27
3.2.1. The Qualitative Content Analysis.....	27
3.2.2. The Quantitative Content Analysis.....	28
Conclusion.....	28
Chapter 3: Presentation of the Findings	
Introduction.....	30
1. Presentation of the Results of the Questionnaire.....	30
2. Presentation of the Results of New Prospects Textbook Analysis.....	41
3. Presentation of the Results of a Sample of a Baccalaureate Exam Analysis.....	42
Conclusion.....	43
Chapter 4: Discussion of the Findings	
Introduction.....	44
1. Discussion of the Questionnaire the Teachers	44
1.1. Teachers' Assessment of Reading Comprehension.....	44
1.2. Davis' Techniques Used to Assess Reading Used to Assess Reading Comprehension Skills.....	46
1.3. Learners' motivation and Achievement.....	48
1.4. Reasons behind Pupils' Reading Comprehension Difficulties.....	49
1.4.1. Linguistic Weakness.....	49
1.4.2. Lack of Reading Practice	50
1.3 Teachers' Opinions about New Prospect Textbook Reading comprehension Activities	51
1.4 Teachers' Suggestions to improve the Quality of assessment of Reading Comprehension.....	52
2. Discussion of the results of New Prospect Textbook Analysis.....	54
2.1 Davis' Techniques used in New Prospect Textbook to Assess Reading Comprehension Skills of Learners.....	54
3. Discussion of the Results of Baccalaureate Exam Analysis.....	56
3.1. Davis' Techniques Used in Baccalaureate Exam to assess Reading Comprehension Skills of Learners.....	56
Conclusion.....	56
General Conclusion	58
Bibliography	61

Appendices

Appendix A: Teachers' questionnaire.....	66
Appendix B: Checklist.....	71
Appendix C: Reading Texts.....	73
Appendix D: A Sample of BAC Exam.....	93

General Introduction

Statement of the Problem

In the last few years, with the development of the foreign language teaching agenda, and the need to get the greatest number of learners involved in the language teaching process and activity, The CBA, or the competency based approach method seemed to be among the strategic tools to activate the linguistic learning process in Algeria. The key word of this method, beside being learners centered and the teacher's role who is the educational supervisor, is the concept of assessment in this approach.

In general, assessment refers to the process that allows teachers to gather information about learners' knowledge, and skills. All teachers practise assessment in the classroom. In fact, it gives them a chance to analyse students' improvement and understanding. Moreover, it permits them to decide how to help the learners to move forward, through showing them their weaknesses and strengths.

The review of other research works related to assessment shows that assessment is an important activity in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Actually, the learners can be assessed in the four language skills, that is to say, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Concerning the reading skill, the assessment of reading comprehension is one of the basic practices in the teaching/ learning process. It means that teachers need to evaluate the learners' improvement in acquiring the reading comprehension skills and strategies. However, the task involves different techniques and methods to be used in order to measure the students' progress.

According to Teixeira (2012) reading is a key language skill that has a significant place in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. It contributes in building vocabulary that

helps the readers to communicate easily with others, and improve other language skills. Since reading plays an important role in the teaching of foreign languages, it is necessary to make sure that the reading comprehension assessment is performed in an effective and proper way. In other words, it needs to be conducted in a valid and reliable manner so as to meet the learners' reading needs and also to support the learning of language in general.

Indeed, reading comprehension is one of the essential skills in EFL learning. Therefore, teachers need to assess this skill accurately and adequately. In other words, accurate assessment of reading comprehension is necessary to know if the learners really acquire and improve their reading comprehension skills, but it is required to select instructional strategies to ensure the achievement of the goal.

In the Algerian school, all the baccalaureate exams and even the end of term exams in the English language in all streams, literary or scientific, include texts to be read and explored. Furthermore, all the questions of the first part in the English language exams turn around the text or at least are related to it. And more importantly, the large portion of the whole mark, which is twenty out of, is devoted for the reading section, including comprehension/ interpretation, vocabulary and many other text related issues.

Inasmuch as the reading comprehension skill contributes the major part of the baccalaureate examination which means a considerable part of the mark, the current research seeks to investigate the way the learners are assessed both during the school year and at the end of the course. That is, to focus both on the informal and the formal assessment of the learners' reading comprehension during the course and at the end.

Aims and Significance of the Study

The main concern of this research is to investigate the assessment of reading comprehension in the Algerian secondary education, specifically, in third year classes, with reference to “New Prospects” textbook and to BAC exam. The main objective of the present work is to check whether the reading comprehension skills are assessed in a valid and reliable way.

Emphasising the main interpretive competence, that is reading, the present paper seeks to consider the topic of the assessment of the reading comprehension in relation to the language teaching approach, which is *Competency Based Approach CBA*. The latter is adopted by the Algerian educational system in the last decade. This approach is applied in the teaching of the English language. It focuses on helping the learners develop their skills and competencies to be good speakers, listeners, readers and writers. In addition, CBA trains the learners to deal with different tasks in the classroom and to deal with real life situations outside the classroom. Its aim is to develop the learners’ problem solving abilities to cope with problems in the school and out of school.

The overall aim of this investigation is to answer the questions which focus on identifying the activities and the tools that are used to assess reading comprehension, with reference to 3rd year secondary education, and also to detect whether these techniques used in the textbook prepare the learners to take an exam in the reading comprehension. In addition it seeks to identify the main reasons behind the learners’ difficulties in reading comprehension.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Considering the importance of reading comprehension assessment in EFL teaching and learning, the present investigation aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How are the reading comprehension skills assessed both in the class and in the baccalaureate exam?

2. What are the factors that cause the learners' reading comprehension difficulties?
3. To what extent do the activities used in the reading section of the "New prospects" textbook prepare the learners for a final exam in reading comprehension?

Before doing the research and answering the above mentioned questions, the following hypotheses are advanced

H1: Reading comprehension skills are assessed focusing on reading comprehension questions.

H2: The linguistic weakness of the learners is the main reason behind the learners' reading comprehension difficulties.

H3: The reading comprehension activities used in the textbook effectively prepare the learners to a final exam in reading comprehension.

Research Techniques and Methodology

To conduct the research, this work adopts the mixed method approach. It means that, it combines both quantitative and qualitative methodologies for the data collection procedures and analysis. It uses a questionnaire with both closed ended and open-ended questions, to be administered to the teachers of 3rd year secondary education in Ain El Hammam in Tizi-Ouzou. The teachers' questionnaire aims at determining the tools and the activities that are used for the reading comprehension assessment and the factors that cause the learners' reading comprehension failure. In addition to the questionnaire, the study adopts textbook analysis for the reading part of each unit in the "New prospects" textbook, and also the analysis of the reading section in a sample BAC exam.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is structured following the traditional complex design. It includes a general introduction, four chapters, and a general conclusion.

The introduction presents the field of research in general, the motives behind choosing the topic, the aims and the significance of the study, the research questions and hypotheses, research techniques and methodology, and the structure of the dissertation. The first chapter is concerned with the reviewing of the main theoretical issues related to both assessment and reading comprehension. Precisely, it attempts to clarify and describe the most important concepts related to the area of research. The second chapter is called “Research *Design*”. In fact, it introduces the research methodology, the data collection procedures and the analysis of the collected data by means of the teachers’ questionnaire, textbook analysis, and BAC test analysis. The third chapter is entitled “*presentation of the Findings*”. It is devoted for the presentation of the outcomes; this section uses visuals to display the quantitative data, and paragraphs to present the qualitative data. The fourth and the final chapter is “*The discussion of the Findings*”. It discusses the results of the study in relation to the first chapter and research questions. It tries to provide convincing answers to the research questions that are asked in the beginning of the research, and to confirm or reject the proposed hypotheses.

The conclusion presents the general summary of the whole work. It concludes and sums up the different points seen through the dissertation.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This section is theoretical and it tackles the issue of the assessment of reading comprehension skills. In fact, it is an attempt to clarify the main concepts related to the assessment of reading comprehension. It, then, consists of two parts. The first part is named assessment and explores the process of assessment, its importance in the teaching/ learning process and the reasons for assessing the learners. The second part is entitled Assessing reading comprehension. It explains the nature of reading comprehension, and the basic techniques that should be used to assess reading comprehension skills according to Frederick Davis.

I. Assessment

1. Definition of Assessment

Walvoord (2010) defines assessment as “ *the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions that affect the student learning*” (Walvoord, 2010:2). It means that assessment is a planned procedure with clear objectives for collecting data about how the learners acquire knowledge, and improve their skills i.e. how well students achieve the objectives and what factors can influence their learning. In the process, time, tools and learning experiences are all taken into account by the assessor, and then the results and the efforts of assessment are applied to support the students’ learning. Moreover, assessment is described by Huba and Freed (2000) in the following words

Assessment is the process of gathering information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning.(Huba and Freed, 2000:8)

From the previous definition, assessment is viewed as a method for examining the learners understanding relying on different activities that aim to improve the learning outcomes.

Assessment therefore, is a crucial tool for a successful teaching and learning. It refers to the set of activities used by teachers to measure students' performance and progress. It involves collecting evidence and providing feedback to inform the learners to which extent their performance is good or bad, and how it can be improved.

1.1. Assessment, Evaluation, Test and Examination

Assessment, evaluation, test and examination are used to enhance the students' learning. In education, the four terms "assessment", "evaluation" and "test" are frequently used to refer to the same activity that is gathering information about the pupils' learning. However, the distinctions between the four terms show that they are different in their nature.

Assessment is a continuous process of describing, collecting and interpreting information about the learners. It is conducted to give a feedback that seeks to improve the learning process. Evaluation according to Bachman (2004) *"involves making an accurate judgement on the most important part of information, and gathering information for the purpose of which language assessments are used"* (Bachman cited in Bachman and Palmer, 2010:21). Moreover, Capel., et al (2006) explain evaluation as follows *"the term evaluation is used to refer to the act of making judgements about quality and effectiveness...is used by teacher to provide evidence upon which sound evaluative judgements can be based"* (Capel, et al., 2006:247). From the previous definitions evaluation is a process of observing and examining the learners' achievement for the purpose of judging and determining their performance based on specific criteria. Concerning the test, Brown (2004) states *"test is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge or performance in a given domain"* (Brown, 2004:3). In other words, a test is a set of techniques designed to measure the level of knowledge acquired by every learner in a particular language domain. In addition a test

provides a final score that determines the success or the failure of the student. As Regards examination, Richards and Schmidt (2010) define it as

Any procedure for measuring ability, knowledge, or performance. An examination is normally administered summative or proficiency test usually administered by an institution or examination board. The terms “examination” and “test” can be used interchangeably as there seems to be no generally accepted agreement regarding the distinction between the two.

(Richards and Schmidt, 2010:207)

In other words, an examination is like a test. It is designed to measure the learners’ knowledge and ability to know how they are good at something, and just like a test it results in a score that gives a final mark to decide on the success or the failure of the examined person.

2. Types of Assessment

In the teaching and learning process, there exist many types of assessment that can be used differently for different purposes to enhance the pupils’ learning.

2.1. Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment is a process of identifying weaknesses, strengths and problems in the students’ learning. Ecclestone (2012) defines the term diagnostic assessment as “*an initial diagnosis and guidance designed to identify learners’ needs at the start of their programme*” (Ecclestone, 2012:72). That is to say, diagnostic assessment is applied in the very beginning of the course to detect the learners’ necessities and needs. As cited in the article of *Diagnostic Assessment in the Support of the Student Learning* (2010) by Ontario Ministry of Education, diagnostic assessment regularly occurs in the opening of the school year, unit, chapter, or semester. It used to discover what the learners already know and the difficulties they might face. This type of assessment looks backwards rather than forwards because it intends to determine the level of the student. Furthermore, the information obtained from the diagnostic assessment are always useful to choose the appropriate assessment tools.

It is no secret that the primary purpose from using the diagnostic assessment is to diagnose the students’ area of weaknesses. In this regard, Black (1993) argues that diagnostic

assessment aims to diagnose students' weaknesses (Black cited in Belli and Cowie, 2002:11). Moreover, it intends to regulate those weaknesses in the coming courses through the daily formative assessment.

2.2. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is referred to as "*Assessment for Learning*". It is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It involves classroom interaction, questioning, structured classroom activities and feedback. Actually, it aims at helping students to reduce their gaps and improve their performances.

Black and William (1998) define formative assessment as "*all the activities undertaken by teachers and/ or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged*" (Black and William, 1998:2). That is to say, formative assessment takes place during the course to support the student learning. It also helps teachers to make necessary modifications and adjustments in the teaching process. Black and William (1998) in the above quotation insist on the role of both teacher and learners. That is, the teacher plays the role of the instructor, and the students are engaged in the process of learning through self and peer- assessment.

In fact, formative assessment provides an on-going process that helps the learners to evaluate and improve their performance so as to meet their needs in their learning process. In this context, Brown (2004) states "*formative assessment evaluate student in the process of forming their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to that growth process*" (Brown, 2004:6). In brief, the main goal of formative assessment is the increasing of the students' motivation and learning.

2.3. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is a type of assessment that is referred to as the "*Assessment of Learning*". It is an evaluation of an individual learner at the end of the year or the course. It

takes the form of tests and examination that can be used for judgements or making decision on the students' achievement such as the BAC and the BEM end of year examinations in the Algerian context. According to Wojtczak (2002) "*summative assessment is testing which often occurs at the end of a term or course, used primarily to provide information about how much the student has learned and how well the course is taught*" (Wojtczak cited in Harvey, 2014). It can be evident from the previous definition that summative assessment is carried out at the end of the course and is considered to be the examination of the achievement of the learner. It is aimed to make judgements about the student's learning and the instruction efficiency.

Brown (2004) argues "*summative assessment aims to measure, or summarise, what a student has grasped, and typically occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction, final exams in course and general proficiency exams are examples of summative assessment*" (Brown, 2004:6). That is to say, after instructions, summative assessment takes place at the final stage in order to measure students' proficiency. Hence, summative assessment is an end point that sums up the performance or the learning level of achievement. More importantly, it is implemented for the purpose of certification or admission to higher levels of education.

2.4. Self-Assessment

Self- assessment is a process by which students monitor, and evaluate the quality of their learning. In fact, it is a way to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and also the strategies that improve their understanding and skills. Falchikov (2005) defines self-assessment as follows: "*self-assessment is a way for students to become involved in assessing their own development and learning*" (Falchikov cited in Frankland, 2007:121). It means that self-assessment is the appraisal or judgement by a student of his or her work or learning progress.

Falchikov (2005) expands upon the above definition and she suggests the following points:

- A way of introducing students to the concept of individual judgement.
- Involving students in dialogue with teachers and peers.
- Involving individual reflection about what constitutes good work.
- Requiring learners to think about what they have learned so far, identifying gaps and ways in which these can be filled and take steps towards remediation.

(Falchikov cited in Frankland, 2007:121)

That is to say, self-assessment plays an essential role in language learning. Firstly, it makes the learners evaluate and judge their achievements. Secondly, it is a way to develop students' responsibility and activeness in the learning process through interacting with their teacher and classmates. Thirdly, it enhances self-consciousness about hard working to get good marks. And finally, it is a powerful tool for identifying gaps, and thinking about how to close those gaps with secondary school pupils before taking the final examination.

The most important point in self-assessment is that it is not only useful for the learners to evaluate themselves and improve their understanding, but it also helps teachers in the teaching process. Indeed, it provides teachers with information about students' expectations and needs, the difficulties they meet, how they find their learning progress, and what is their opinion about the course in general.

2.5. Peer Assessment

Peer assessment is a type of assessment that refers to the evaluation of student's work, or learning process by his or her classmates. It involves observing, monitoring and making judgement about his or her performance. Wilson (2002) describes peer assessment as

“the assessment of the work of others with equal status and usually has an element of mutuality” (Wilson cited in Steve Frankland, 2007:145). That is to say peer assessment is the process of assessing the product or the learning of the student by his or her peers owning the same status.

Actually, peer assessment like other types of assessment requires providing a feedback to the assessed one, since feedback plays an essential role in student’s motivation. Black et al (2004) find that students are likely to seek help and feedback from peers than from their teacher (Black et al., cited in Callahan., 2007:2). That is, learners prefer to receive help and judgement from their classmates rather than from their teachers. Because they have the same status and they are all learning.

In fact, engaging pupils in peer assessment has many recognisable benefits. First, it helps students to develop the sense of ownership and motivation, and then they rely on themselves not on their teacher. Second, it encourages deep learning through engaging in interaction with other learners and sharing knowledge. Third, it enhances critical thinking and skills by evaluating others’ works. Finally, it serves in improving social interaction and collaborative learning between the students since peer assessment occurs between more than one participant (Cheng & Warren, 2005; Noonan & Randy Ducan 2005 cited in Steve Frankland, 2007:145).

3. Importance of Assessment and Reasons for Assessing Learners

Assessment is considered to be as a key component in the teaching and learning process. When it is properly used, it is beneficial for both teachers and learners. To begin with teachers, assessment allows them to know if their teaching is effective. It also offers them an opportunity to check the students’ learning so as to meet the learning objectives. Concerning

the students, assessment helps them to learn as it allows them to see how they progress, and also what they have understood and what they should improve.

All teachers practise assessment. They assess their learners for many important reasons, according to Brown (2003), McCallum and McCallister (1995) and Hill (2000) teachers assess learners for the following reasons:

- To determine how well students have achieved the outcomes.
- To diagnose learner difficulties.
- To provide feedback to learners.
- To determine which students are ready to progress to further learning.
- To engage students to put effort into their learning.
- To allocate marks or grades, either for the benefit of students or because the system requires it.
- To report progress to parents or other interested parties.
- To determine what things need to be revised or retaught.
- To identify ways for improving teaching and students' learning. (Brown, 2003; McCallum and McCallister, 1995; Hill, 2000 cited in Roy Killen, 2005:102)

From the above cited points, assessment is used for numerous motives; first, to identify what students know which means their strengths. Second, to determine students' needs that is to say their weaknesses. Third, to make students know how well or bad they performed. Fourth, to make decisions on the students' admission to the upper level. Fifth, to motivate the students to work harder. Sixth, to give the final marks and grades. Seventh, to communicate with the learners' parents to give them information about their children progress and learning in general. Eighth, to select activities for revision and remedial works. Finally, it is used to monitor and improve both teaching and learning.

4. Assessing Learners within the Competency Based Approach

Competency based approach is one of the modern approaches, which was first introduced in the USA in the late 1960s. Then, it was developed through application to other professional educational programmes in the USA in 1970s, vocational training programmes in the UK and Germany in 1980s and vocational professional skills in Australia in 1990s. This approach was adopted by many countries in teaching EFL and Algeria is one of those countries. It was introduced to Algeria at the beginning of the 21st century since the Algerian authorities introduced reforms to the whole educational system.

Chelli (2001) argues that competency based approach is a very popular approach which focuses on measurable and useable knowledge skills and abilities (Chelli, 2001:1). That is to say, CBA is an approach to teaching that is based on some important aspects which are: First, the focus on knowledge of language. That is, to teach the learners how to use language to perform certain acts like teaching them how to apologise or request. Second, the emphasis on the skills, which means to teach the learners the four language skills; speaking, listening, reading, and writing to make them develop their competencies; receptive, interpretive, productive and interactive competencies. In addition to the importance of the ability that is to use the target language in the real life situations.

In fact, CBA is an approach implicated in teaching but it has roots in behaviourism and it shares some features with CLT. As both CBA and CLT seek to develop the communicative skills of the learners. Richards and Rodgers (2001) argue that the goal from implementing CBA is to allow the learners to become competent with demands of the world by teaching language not in isolation but in the language form required by the situation (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:143). It means that the primary purpose from applying this

approach is to develop the learners' competencies to apply what they learn in the class to real life outside the classroom. Moreover, CBA aims at establishing the three competencies in learning: first, to interact orally in English. Second, to interpret authentic, oral or written documents. And finally, to produce simple, oral or written messages. This can happen through assessing the learners' needs, involving the learners in the learning process, pushing them to rely on their pre-acquired experiences and make them use their own thinking strategies and cognitive skills.

Within the competency based approach, classroom assessment is regarded an integral part of teaching. Actually, it emphasises on assessing the learners' progression in terms of knowledge and skills so as to perform certain tasks in the class and outside the class. That is to say, it insists on training pupils and putting them in authentic situations where they can put their knowledge into practice. Basically, with CBA more time is devoted to evaluate every learner skills by means of different types of assessment; self, peer, formative and summative assessment. Furthermore, it focuses both on the role of the teacher, who is the assessor, and the learner, who is the assessed. The teacher is required to assess the pupils' work and see how well or bad they have performed. He/she has to correct the pupils' mistakes and then give them feedback. Learners in their part should be engaged in the learning process as they are asked to show their understanding, knowledge, skills and abilities in the classroom activities, assessment tasks, tests and examinations.

In EFL classes, reading comprehension represents a significant skill. Thus, a well conducted assessment is required to insure the meeting of the learners' needs.

II. Assessing Reading Comprehension

1. Definition of Reading

Reading has been shown to be as an important component in foreign language learning. In general, it refers to the process that involves the reception and the interpretation of information. The concept of reading is defined by many scholars: Françoise Grellet (1981) defines reading as *“an active skill that constantly involves, guessing, predicting, checking and asking oneself questions”* (Grellet, 1981:8). That is to say, reading is a language skill that requires from the reader good thinking, guessing, predicting and asking oneself questions in order to get the information from the text. McNeil (1984) states *“reading is an interactive process between the reader and text by which meaning is both found and created”* (McNeil cited in Arena, 1990:84). Moreover, Anderson (2003) describes reading as *“a process of readers’ combining information from a text and their own background to build meaning”* (Anderson cited in the CATESOL Journal, 2004:13).

In other words, reading is an interactive complex activity that involves a reader, a text and interaction between them. The text encodes the meaning by means of words, sentences, and paragraphs and then the reader decodes the meaning relying on his/ her knowledge and skills.

1.1. Reading Techniques

Reading has got many types of techniques that a reader can use according to his or her purpose.

1.1.1. Skimming

According to Brown (2004) *“skimming is the process of rapid coverage of reading matter to determine its gist or main idea”* (Brown, 2004:213). In the same sense Grabe and Stoller (2002) state *“skimming is a specialized type of reading in which the reader reads quickly for a general understanding of the text and for the gist of the passage”* (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:266). It means that skimming means reading quickly to get the general meaning of the passage, without looking at all the details. Besides, the purpose of skimming is to know what a text is about, and its overall message.

1.1.2. Scanning

Scanning is a speed reading technique used to look for specific information in the text. The process does not require reading everything in details. This means that the reader does not read all the text word by word, but he or she rather extracts specific information without reading all the passage. Williams (1996) argues that scanning occurs when a reader goes through a text very quickly in order to find a particular point of information (Williams, 1996:100). So, when the reader scans a written text he or she goes rapidly through the text.

1.1.3. Extensive Reading

Extensive reading is the reading of longer texts, for the purpose of getting information or just pleasure. Extensive reading is necessary for the improvement of reading skills and also language acquisition, Krashen (1993) argues that “*reading is good for you. The research supports a strong conclusion...Reading is the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and the only way we become good spellers*” (Krashen cited in Jacobs and Farrell, 101:2012). That is to say, extensive reading is an important technique that helps in developing both reading and the writing skills. Furthermore, it enhances good pronunciation especially aloud reading, so extensive reading is essential in language teaching.

1.1.4. Intensive Reading

Intensive Reading is an activity that involves learners reading in details for specific purposes. Learners are asked to read short text to extract specific information. Palmer (1968) argues:

Intensive reading tends to teach reading as set of component skills and usually refers to careful close reading ...of shorter, more difficult foreign language texts with the goal of deeper detailed understanding. Texts are studied intensively in order to introduce and practice reading skills that are distinct. (Palmer cited in Thomas, 387:2009)

The above quotation means that intensive reading involves short texts and it helps students to acquire essential reading strategies and develop their comprehension.

2. Reading Comprehension

Reading cannot be separated from comprehension since the primary purpose of the reading activity is to comprehend what is read. Moreover, reading without comprehending is useless.

Howell and Morehead (1993) define reading comprehension as follows: “*reading comprehension is the act of combining information in a passage with prior knowledge in order to construct meaning*” (Howell and Morehead 1993:182). That is to say, reading comprehension is the ability of getting the meaning from what has been read relying on both experiential background and information from the text. In the same sense Paris (2008) adds that “*comprehension means making sense of words, connecting ideas between texts and prior knowledge, constructing and negotiating meaning in discussion with others*” (Paris, 2008:1). It means that the comprehension of a text requires the obtention of words meaning, the combination of the previous experience with the facts in the text, and also interacting information with others like teacher or classmates.

In addition, Grellet (1981) states that “*reading comprehension means understanding a written text to extract the required information from it as efficiently as possible*” (Grellet, 1981:182). Here, Grellet emphasises the importance of obtaining the required information from the passage. To Snow (2002), comprehension entails three elements which are:

1. The reader who is doing the comprehending.

2. The text that is to be comprehended.
3. The activity in which comprehension is a part. (Snow cited in Uraibe-Zarain, 2007:20)

In short, reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from a text based on background knowledge and information from the text.

Flores et al (2004) argue that reading comprehension skills “*is the mind’s ability to understand the ideas in the text and the message and purpose of the author*” (Flores et al., 2004:3). That is to say reading comprehension skills refers to the learners’ capacity to get the meaning of the text, decode the writer’s message and purpose.

2.1. Reading Comprehension Assessment

Reading comprehension is a complex activity that involves the text, the reader and the activity of reading. Grellet (1981) argues that reading comprehension can be done as a class activity based on a variety exercises. That is to say, teaching reading comprehension basically requires some exercises to assess the learners’ understanding such as comprehension questions, word meaning, and summarising the general idea. According to Pressley (2002) as cited in the article entitled *Key Issues in L2 Reading Development*, good readers react for careful comprehension, and they actively engage in academic texts through multiple strategies that can be summarised in the identification of the important information in the text, making guesses about unknown words, following the text structure to guide the understanding and making interpretation as they read, summarising the main idea and reflecting on the information in the passage. (Grabe, n.d)

Assessment of reading comprehension requires measuring basic skills of the learners so as to check their understanding of the text and develop their comprehension abilities. In EFL classes, teachers should make sure that those skills are assessed in an effective way with clear and specific activities to foster the pupils’ reading comprehension skills. To deal with the issue of assessment of reading comprehension skills, the study relies

on Davis' theory (1944). He suggests nine basic skills to be measured when assessing reading comprehension. They are as follows:

1. Knowledge of word meanings and vocabulary.
2. Ability to select the appropriate meaning of a word or phrase in the light of its particular contextual setting.
3. Ability to follow the organization of a passage and to identify antecedents and references in it.
4. Ability to select the main thought of a passage.
5. Ability to answer questions that are specifically answered in a passage.
6. Ability to answer questions that are answered in a passage but not in the words in which the question is asked.
7. Ability to draw inferences from a passage about its contents.
8. Ability to recognize the literary devices used in a passage and determine its tone and mood.
9. Ability to determine a writer's purpose, intent, and point of view, i.e., to draw inferences about a writer. (Davis cited in Afflerbach, et al., 2008:367).

It means that to conduct a successful assessment of reading comprehension in the class and even in the exam, the task should be based on some techniques that aim at measuring fundamental skills of the learners. Those skills can be summarised as follows: first, testing the vocabulary knowledge of the learners which means asking them to give or find the meaning and the opposite of words found in the text. Second, asking the learners to answer questions that are directly or indirectly answered in the text such questions help to check the pupils' comprehension of the passage. Third, asking the learners to summarise idea of the text and to draw a conclusion from the general understanding of the passage. Finally, asking the learners to identify the type of the text and the author's purpose from writing the passage which helps

in determining the mood and the tone of the text; for instance, is it a scientific text or a humour text and so on, is it written to sensitise, to inform, or to retell.

2.2. Factors behind Reading Comprehension Difficulties

2.2.1. Linguistic Weakness

This factor has to do with the lack of the readers' knowledge of the EFL vocabulary. In fact, possessing a rich vocabulary is the basic aspect that enhances the readers' comprehension of the linguistic texts since it enables them to recognise the printed words that construct texts and understand their whole meaning. Accordingly, Hoover and Coughs (1990) estimate that *"there can be no reading comprehension without the ability to decipher or recognise words"* (Cited in Nation, 2004:249). Furthermore, Campbell (1987) added *"Linguistic difficulty would more affect the less advanced learners' enjoyment of text and their development of fluent skills in the target language"* (Campbell cited in Rezaei, et al., 2012:983). Said differently, lack of vocabulary effects negatively on learners' comprehension.

2.2.2. Lack of Reading

Many scholars in the field of reading comprehension stress the importance of the reading habits because of their significance in improving the EFL learners' reading comprehension skills. According to Owusu-Acheaw (2014) *"reading is an essential tool for knowledge transfer and the habit of reading is an academic activity that increases skills in reading comprehension strategies ... Reading habits, therefore, play a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve practical efficiency"* (Owusu-Acheaw, 2014:6). Thus, the lack of reading has a negative impact on EFL reading comprehension performance.

Conclusion:

To sum up, this chapter has dealt with the review of the literature that shed light on the process of assessment and reading comprehension as well. It clarified the concept of assessment and some related issues like its types, assessment within the competency based approach, its importance and the reasons for assessing the learners. Moreover, it explored the concept of reading comprehension, the reading techniques and the skills that should be measured while assessing this skill. Therefore, teachers can use assessment while teaching reading comprehension so as to improve their learners' skills.

Research Design

Introduction

This chapter is practical. It covers the research design and methodology applied to achieve the aims of the study and answer the questions asked in the general introduction. First, it describes the setting of the investigation. Then, it presents the participants of the study who are the EFL secondary school teachers in Ain El Hammam. Next, it describes the corpus of the research which comprises the Algerian secondary school New Prospects (N.P) textbook and a sample of the baccalaureate exam in the English language (course exam 2015 foreign languages stream). After that, it explains the data collection procedures which consist of a questionnaire administered to secondary school teachers and a checklist. Finally, it explains the data analysis procedures. Since the research adopts the mixed method, the quantitative outcomes are analyzed using the statistical method relying on the Sphinx software, while the qualitative data are interpreted using the qualitative content analysis.

1. Context of the Study

1.1. Setting of the Research

As far as concerns the questionnaire, the investigation is conducted in a real context, that is, in four secondary schools in Ain El Hammam. The latter is a sub-urban area (chef lieu) located about 53 kilometers southeast of Tizi-Ouzou. The research is carried out in Moustafa Ben Boulaid, Lycée des Jeunes Filles, Ould Brahim Mohand Arezki and Ouadia Ali secondary schools. All of these schools are mixed schools of general education for all streams (scientific, mathematic, technical math, foreign languages and literature and philosophy).

1.2. The Participants

The participants in this research are EFL secondary school teachers in Ain El Hammam. The sample of respondents consists of fifteen (15) teachers who are teaching third

year classes in the current academic year (2015/2016) and used N.P textbook at least for one year. Thus, they were targeted with questionnaires that aim at gathering reliable results.

1.3. Corpus

1.3.1. Description of New Prospects (2007) Textbook

A textbook is a teaching material that plays a significant role in EFL teaching and learning. Richards and Schmidt (2010) state “*a textbook is a book on a specific subject used as a teaching/ learning guide, especially in a school or college. Textbooks for foreign language learning are often part of a graded series covering multiple skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking, speaking, grammar)*” (Richards and Schmidt, 2010:595). It means that a textbook is a manual of instruction which deals with a given school subject; for instance, the subject of the English language. In EFL classes, this teaching material is necessary for the teaching and the learning of language skills such as reading, listening, speaking, writing, grammar and other language areas. In the Algerian context, textbooks are always designed by the educational authority which is the ministry of education.

N.P (2007) is the official textbook for teaching English as a foreign language in the Algerian secondary school for the third year learners. It is designed by the national curriculum committee of the ministry of education in 2007, as part of the educational reform. This teaching tool is planned to meet the requirements of the new approach (CBA) and its major aim is to develop the three main competencies of the learners: interactive, interpretive and productive.

N.P textbook consists of six units: unit one is Exploring the Past, unit two is Ill-Gotten Gains Never Prospect, Unit three is Schools: Different and Alike, unit four is Safety First, unit five is We Are All a Family and unit six is It Is a Giant Leap for Mankind. Each unit contains two parts. The first part is Language Outcomes that is in itself divided into Listen and Consider and Read and Consider. These, according to the authors, aim at getting

the students internalise the thematic and linguistic tools that they need in the coming part of the unit and it ends with Take a Break. The second part is named Skills and Strategies Outcomes and is concerned with structural and discursive aspects of the text. It begins with a section called Research and Report followed by two sequences: Listening and Speaking and Reading and writing, then by Project Outcomes, assessment and Time for...

The current study, deals with the reading texts included in the six units in “read and consider” part. It analyses those texts to check whether the Davis’ nine reading comprehension skills are assessed in every text for each unit. So, the texts are as follows:

- ❖ Text 1: is about the ancient Egyptian civilisation.
- ❖ Text 2: speaks about social auditing and ethics in business.
- ❖ Text 3: deals with the topic of education in the United States of America.
- ❖ Text 4: is an advertisement about the cooktop Toshiba’s brand.
- ❖ Text 5: speaks about the impact of the collision with comets on the planet of earth.
- ❖ Text 6: is entitled The Unicorn in the Garden. (See appendix C)

1.3.2. Description of a Sample of a Baccalaureate Exam

In Algeria, the baccalaureate exam is a national and official exam designed by the ministry of education to assess third year secondary school pupils at the end of the course. It is a summative assessment that involves all the subjects like mathematics, Arabic, English, French and so on, that depends on the specialty of every learner. It generally takes place at the end of May or the beginning of June and determines whether the pupil will carry on his/ her studies at the university or no. The learners who pass this exam always get a certificate of success which gives them access to higher education.

The sample BAC that is used for the study is the exam of the year 2015 of the foreign languages stream (see appendix D). The exam includes two parts. The first part is entitled “Reading” and it comprises two sections. The first section is “Comprehension” and it

assesses the pupils' comprehension of the text. The second section is "Text Exploration". It contains activities in grammar, lexis, phonetics and other language issues. The second part is named "Written Expression". It consists of two topics and the pupil has to choose only one.

2. Data Collection Tools

In the field of social sciences there are several research methods. Those methods can be divided into three main categories: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and analysing them using statistical procedures. On the other hand, the qualitative research is defined by Creswell (2009) as follows: *"in comparison to quantitative research, the qualitative inquiry employs different philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiry; and methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation"* (Creswell cited in Martella, et al., 2013:294). It means that unlike the quantitative method, the qualitative approach focuses on collecting non-numerical data which are more open to interpretation and the researchers have to give a meaning to the results. In addition to the two methods, there is the mixed method approach which involves the combination of the quantitative and the qualitative research either at the collection or data analysis levels.

The study adopts the mixed method approach to be used for both gathering and analysing the outcome. The choice of this method serves the study as it allows collecting both numerical and non-numerical data. Therefore, for the completion of this work the following tools are selected: a questionnaire to be handed to teachers, textbook analysis of the reading texts in N.P textbook and a sample BAC exam analysis.

2.1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a tool used for gathering information about a particular issue. In the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (2010) it is defined as follows: *" a questionnaire is a set of questions on a topic designed to be answered by a*

respondent.....*Questionnaires are used in many branches of applied linguistics, such as language surveys, the study of attitudes and motivation, and in needs analysis*” (Richards and Schmidt, 2010:478) . That is to say, a questionnaire is a research instrument that can be used in the field of social sciences, and it consists of a set of items or questions designed to collect both qualitative data such as attitudes and motivation and it is designed also to collect quantitative data such as numbers and statistics. Accordingly, the questions should be clearly asked, they can be either closed-ended questions or open-ended questions; closed-ended questions require from the respondents to choose the appropriate answer from the suggested ones while the open-ended questions make the respondents feel free to give their opinion and answer as they like.

The questionnaire that is used for this study is addressed to secondary school teachers in Ain El Hammam. It comprises closed-ended questions, open-ended questions and multiple choice questions where the respondents need to tick the right box to indicate the suitable answer. It mainly aims at determining the techniques that are used to assess reading comprehension and the factors that cause the pupils’ reading comprehension difficulties. In fact, it contains 25 items and it is divided into four sections. The first section is about the general information of the teachers, the second section is about the learners’ level and motivation to learn the English language, the third section deals with the assessment of the reading comprehension under the competency based approach and the last section is about the reasons that cause the reading comprehension difficulties. (See appendix A)

2.2. Checklist

A Checklist is a list of items used for the verification of something. According to S JHA (2014) checklist is used as an important tool for the research and it enables evaluation of subjects according to specific categories. In this study, a checklist is adopted as a tool to evaluate the six reading texts provided by N.P textbook and the reading section of a sample

BAC exam. The analysis is achieved relying on the checklist developed on the basis of Davis' work (1944) as cited in Afflerbach (2008). It includes eight elements which are considered as the basic reading comprehension skills that should be assessed by teachers. These elements are: a. Word meaning, b. identifying the references, c. Selecting the main thought, d. answering questions that are answered in the passage, e. answering questions that are not directly answered in the passage, f. drawing inferences, g. type of the text and h. determining the writer's purpose. They are included in a table (see appendix B).

3. Data Analysis Procedures

3.1. Statistical Method

The method that is used to analyse the numerical data gathered through the closed-ended questions is the statistical method. The data is calculated using a computer software named "Sphinx" (version d'évaluation-V5), the version is downloaded from the following link: (https://www.4shared.com/rar/e47gLLq/Sphinx_Plus_2_V_5_2_.html). Sphinx is a French programme that helps in the analysis and the presentation of the results in fields like economy and social sciences. It is used through following three basic steps: first, creating a questionnaire. Then, entering the answers of the respondents. Finally, analysing the data, that is, it calculates the data then transfers them into different types of graphs or tables (Le Sphinx Développement, 2007). For the open ended questions the data is interpreted using the qualitative content analysis.

3.2. Content Analysis

3.2.1. Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) is a systematic technique used to describe and interpret the data collected via interviews and open-ended questions in a questionnaire such as opinions and point of views of the participants. Du Plooy (1997) argues "*qualitative content analysis tends to be more critical in nature and can be used when we need to*

penetrate the deeper layers of a message, such as in a semiological or narrative analysis” (Du Plooy, 1997:152). It means that QCA deals with non-numerical data that can be analysed in a critical way not by statistical methods. This method is based on the interpretation of the data. In this work, QCA is used to analyse the outcomes gathered via the open-ended questions of the questionnaire.

3.2.2. Quantitative Content Analysis

Quantitative content analysis is a method used to describe the quantitative data. It allows the researcher to describe the written, spoken or visual data. Du Plooy (1997) states *“Researchers use quantitative content analysis to quantify the degree to which a certain category or event occurs in a sample or population”* (Du Plooy, 1997:153). That is to say, when the researcher uses the quantitative content analysis to analyse the data, he/she gets numerical results in the form of numbers or frequencies. This work adopts the quantitative content analysis to analyse the results obtained from the textbook analysis of the reading texts and BAC exam analysis by means of the checklist. The results are analysed and presented using the “Sphinx” software. It is used through following three basic steps: first, inserting the categories of the designed checklist. Then, entering the results of the analysis of the textbook and BAC exam. Finally, analysing the data, that is, it calculates the data then transfers them into tables.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has shed light on the research design and methodology used in the study. First, it has presented the context and the participants of the research. Then, it has clarified the data collection procedures which consist of a questionnaire for teachers, textbook analysis of the reading texts and BAC exam analysis. Finally, it has explained the data analysis procedures. The “sphinx” programme is used as a statistical method to find the percentages and present the findings of the closed-ended questions and the results obtained

from the quantitative content analysis while the qualitative content analysis is used to interpret the results of the open-ended questions.

The results that are collected from these data procedures will help to investigate the assessment of reading comprehension. Moreover, it will allow evaluating whether the reading comprehension skills are assessed in a valid way both in the “New Prospect” textbook and Baccalaureate exams.

Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the findings of the investigation. It is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the analysis of the results collected through questionnaires that mainly aims at gathering information about the assessment of the reading comprehension skills and the reasons behind the learners' reading comprehension difficulties. The second part displays the outcomes of the analysis of the six reading texts provided by the *New Prospects* (N.P) textbook. The third and the last part is devoted to the presentation of the results and BAC exam analysis.

1. Presentation of the Results of the Questionnaire

On May 24th, 2016, fifteen (15) questionnaires were distributed to teachers of English in Ain El Hammam. However, only fourteen (14) questionnaires were referred back and two of them lacked the answer to the last question.

Section one: General information

Question one: Gender

Gender	Male	Female	Total
Number	2	12	14
Percentage	14.3%	85.7%	100%

Table 1: Teachers' gender

The majority of the teachers, which is 85, 7%, are females and only 14.3 % from the total represents males.

Question two: What academic qualification do you hold?

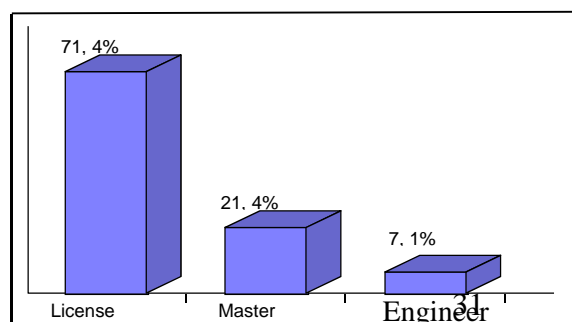


Diagram 1: Teachers' academic qualifications

Diagram 1 shows that most of the teachers have the licence degree (71.4%). On the other hand, 21.4% from the total percentage hold the master degree. And only (7.1%) of them graduated from the teachers' training college (ENS:Ecole Normale Supérieure).

Question three: How long have you been working in the field of teaching?

	One year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	More than 20 years	Total
Number	0	8	3	0	3	0	14
Percentage	0.0%	57.1%	21.4%	0.0%	21.4%	0.0%	100%

Table 2: Teachers' teaching experience

These results demonstrate that a large number teachers, which is (57.1%), have a short experience in teaching for the category (1-5 years) and only (21.4%) of them have along experience for the category of (16-20) years.

Question four: How many third year classes are you teaching this year?

Seven teachers out of fourteen answer that they are teaching three (03) third year classes, six (06) of them say that they are teaching two (02) and only one (01) of them has four (04) third year classes.

Question five: What is the average number of pupils in your classes?

	20 – 25	26 – 30	31 – 35	36 – 40	More than 41	Total
Number	3	7	4	0	0	14
Percentage	21.4%	50%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

Table 3: The average number of pupils in the class

From the results, the highest percentage is the category between 26- 30 and then 31- 35. This means that the large classes in Ain El Hammam are spread while the classes between 20 – 25 represent only 21.4% from the total percentage.

Section two: Learners' motivation and level

Question six: Do you think that your learners are motivated to learn the English language?

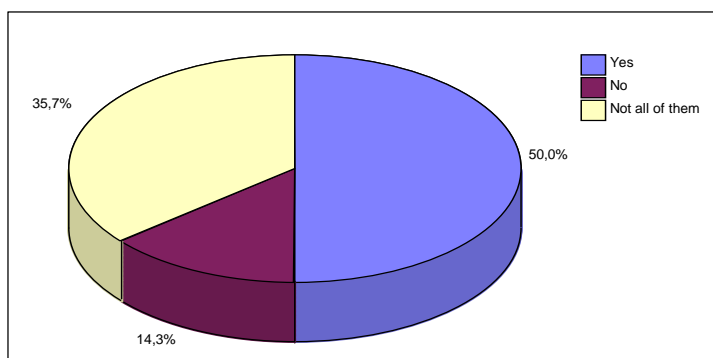


Diagram 2: Pupils' motivation to learn the English language

The percentages shown in this diagram present that half of the teachers (50%) of them confirm that their learners are motivated to learn the English language and only (14.3%) of them answer that their learners are not motivated to learn English.

Question seven: How do you find the output of your learners?

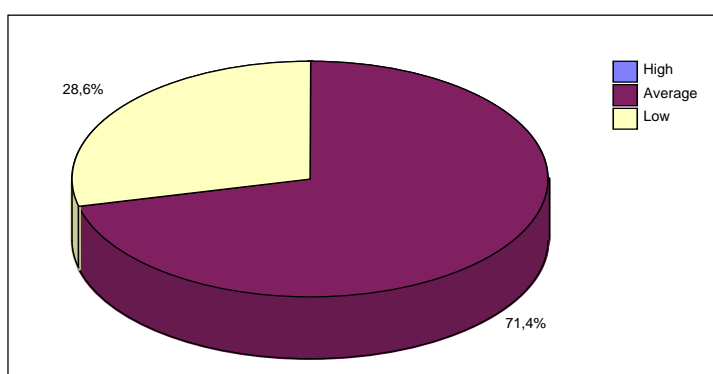


Diagram 3: Learners' output according to their teachers

The majority of the teachers (71.4%) find that the output of their learners is average and only a small percentage of them (28.6%) find that their pupils' output is low.

Question eight: Are you satisfied with your pupils' achievement?

	Yes	No	Total
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Number	6	8	14
Percentage	57.1%	42.9%	100%

Table 4: Teachers' satisfaction about their learners' achievement

Teachers' answers to this question demonstrate that more than half of the respondents (57.1%) are not satisfied with their learners' achievement and the rest of them, which makes (42.9%), are satisfied with their learners achievement.

Question nine: Which language skill do you think your learners master the most?

	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening	Total
Number	9	1	4	0	14
Percentage	64.3%	7.1%	28.6%	0.0%	100%

Table 5: The language skill the learners master the most

The table above shows that the language skill that the learners master the most is reading with (64.3%), and then comes the speaking skill with (28.6%). None of the teachers have answered that their learners master the listening skill.

Section three: The teaching and the assessment of the reading comprehension skills within the competency based approach

Question ten: In your opinion the competency based approach is: easy or complicated

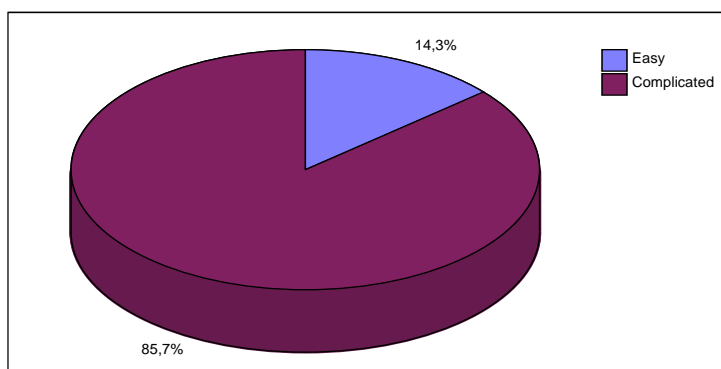


Diagram 4: Teachers' opinion about the competency based approach

Twelve teachers making up (85.7%) claim that the competency based approach is complicated and only (14.3%) of them think that this approach is easy.

Question eleven: To what extent do you apply it?

Most of them claim that they do not often apply it because it is not easy to be applied to all of the learners and in loaded classes.

Question twelve: Does the competency based approach emphasise the assessment of reading comprehension skills?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	12	2	14
Percentage	85.7%	14.3%	100%

Table 6: The status of reading comprehension Assessment in CBA

As shown in table 6, while (85.7%) of the total of the teachers think that the CBA emphasises on the assessment reading comprehension, (14.3%) remaining teachers think that it does not emphasise on assessing reading comprehension.

Question thirteen: Do you think that the assessment of the reading comprehension is essential in teaching English as a foreign language?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	14	0	14
Percentage	100%	0.0%	100%

Table 7: Teachers' opinions whether the reading assessment is essential

As indicated in table 7 all the teachers think that the assessment of the reading comprehension is essential.

Most of them have justified their answers by the fact that the assessment of reading comprehension is important because it allows them to check their learners' understanding of the text and collect information about their learning. Moreover, they apply the results to enhance their reading comprehension skills.

Question fourteen: Do you assess your learners' reading comprehension skills?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	12	2	14
Percentage	85.7%	14.3%	100%

Table 8: Teachers' practice of the assessment of reading comprehension

Table 8 depicts that the majority of the teachers (85.7%) assess the reading comprehension skills of their learners.

Question fifteen: Is the time devoted to the reading comprehension assessment sufficient?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	2	12	14
Percentage	14.3%	85.7%	100%

Table 9: Time sufficiency to assess the reading comprehension skills of the learners

The results gathered in question fifteen show that (85.7%) of the respondents find that the time devoted for assessing reading comprehension is not sufficient.

Question sixteen: What are the strategies that you use in the class when teaching reading comprehension?

Strategies	Number	percentage
Explaining in French, Arabic or Berber	6	10.5%
Using the target language all the time	2	3.5%
Asking learners to use dictionaries	10	17.5%
Identifying important events and concepts in the text	8	14%
Testing comprehension with questions	14	24.6%
Giving students practice with new words	4	7%
Asking students to summarise the general idea	8	14%
Encouraging self-assessment	5	8.8%
Other	0	0%

Total	57	100%
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Table 10: Reading comprehension strategies used by teachers

The above table represents the reading comprehension strategies that teachers use while teaching reading comprehension. All of the strategies are used; however, the ones that are mostly used by the informants are: a) the testing comprehension with questions, b) asking learners to use dictionaries, c) asking the learners to summarise the main idea of the text.

Question seventeen: What are the tools that you use to assess the reading comprehension skills of your learners?

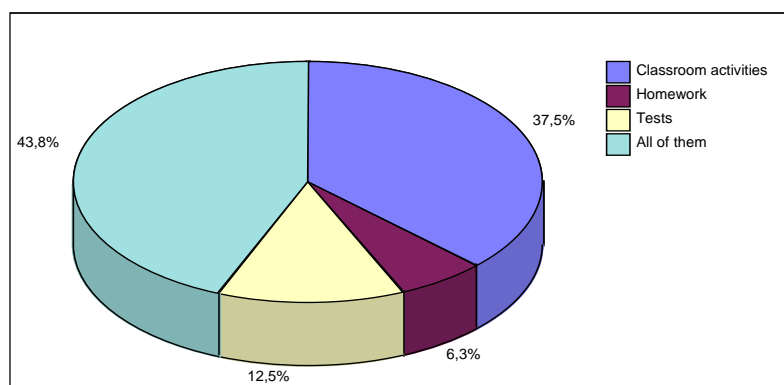


Diagram 5: Tools used by teachers to assess reading comprehension

As diagram 5 demonstrates, the majority of the teachers (43.8%) use all the suggested tools which are; classroom activities, homework and tests. (37.5%) of them use classroom activities. (12.5%) use tests and (6.3%) use homework.

Question eighteen: In tests and term exams, what are the techniques that you use to assess the reading comprehension skills of your learners?

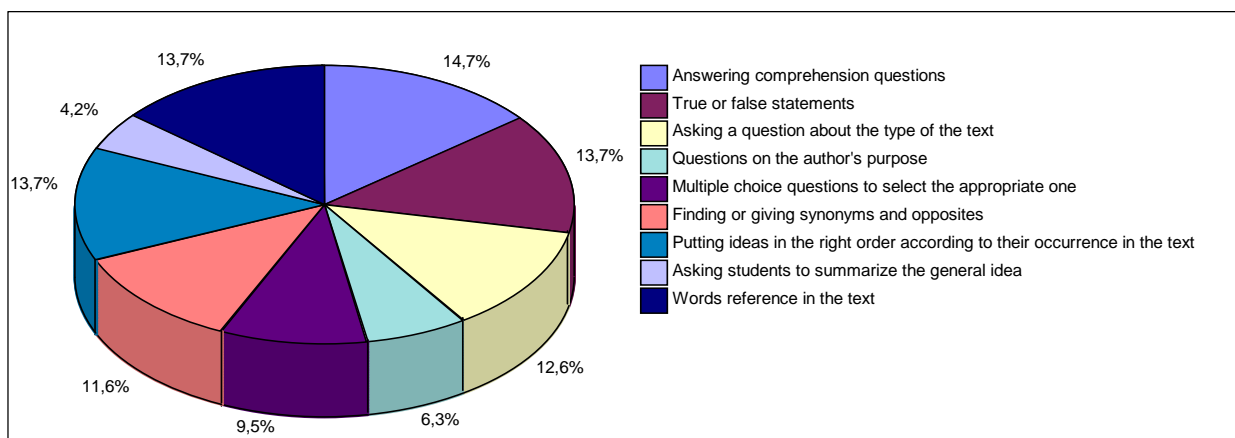


Diagram 6: Techniques used to assess comprehension skills in test and term exams

In the diagram above, the percentage that shows the use of the technique of answering comprehension questions (14.7%) is shown to be bigger than other choices. That is to say, this technique is used by most of teachers. Then, comes the techniques of true or false statements and putting the idea in the right order according to their occurrence in the text with (13.7%). After that, asking a question about the type of the text with (12.6%). Next, giving or finding synonyms and opposites with (11.16%). The remaining techniques are used only by some teachers.

Question nineteen: Are the activities that you use to assess reading comprehension in the term exams the same with those used in the baccalaureate exam?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	14	0	14
Percentage	100%	0.0%	100%

Table 11: Consistency of reading comprehension activities in term and BAC exams

The results in table 11 reveal that all of the teachers (100%) confirm that the activities that they use to assess reading comprehension in the term exams are the same with those used in the baccalaureate exam.

Section four: the factors that influence positively or negatively the learners' reading comprehension

Question twenty: Do you think that your learners are motivated to practise reading comprehension?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	10	4	14
Percentage	71.4%	28.6%	100%

Table 12: Learners' motivation to practice reading comprehension

From table 12, (71.4%) of the teacher think that their learners are motivated to practise reading comprehension while only (28.6%) of the total percentage think that they are not motivated.

Question twenty one: According to you, what are the factors that cause the students' reading comprehension difficulties?

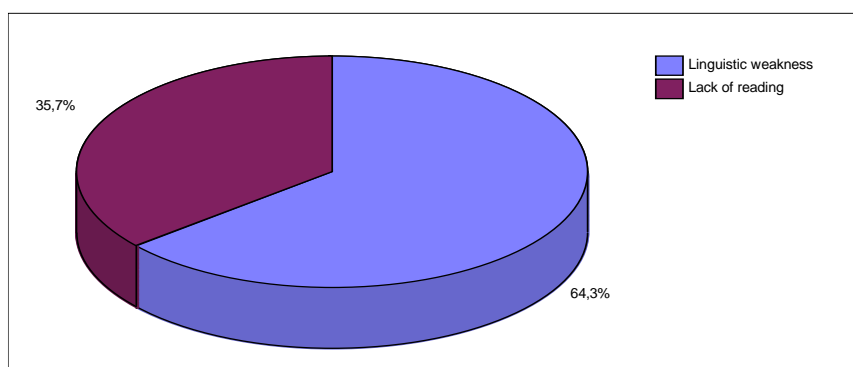


Diagram 7: Factors causing reading comprehension difficulties

As illustrated in diagram 7, (64.3%) of the teachers confirm that the linguistic weakness is the main reason behind the learners' reading comprehension difficulties. While (35.7%) find that the lack of reading is the main reason behind their learners' comprehension difficulties.

As far as concerns other factors one of the teachers argues that L1 reading skill interference is one of the reasons behind the EFL learners' comprehension problems.

Question twenty two: How can you help your learners when they do not understand while reading a text?

Most of the teachers argue that they can help their learners to understand the text through asking them to use the dictionary, explaining difficult words, using gestures, and asking the learners to read the passage step by step to direct them to the interesting information.

Question twenty three: Do you believe that text selection has an effect on the learners' reading comprehension achievement?

Option	Yes	No	Total
Number	13	1	14
percentage	92.9%	7.1%	100%

Table 13: The effect of text selection on the learners' reading comprehension achievement

As illustrated in the above table, the majority of the teachers (92.9%) think that text selection has an effect on the learners reading comprehension achievement.

Question twenty four: Do the reading comprehension activities of the "New prospects" textbook effectively prepare the learners' for a baccalaureate exam in reading comprehension?

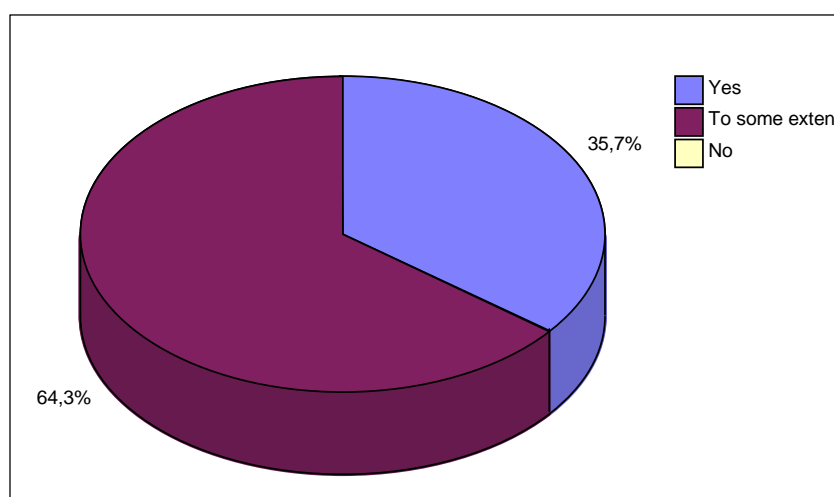


Diagram 8: Teachers' opinion about the reading comprehension activities of the New prospects textbook

In diagram 8, most of the teachers (64.3%) think that N. P textbook prepares the learners for the baccalaureate exam to some extent. (35.7%) from the total percentage say that it effectively prepare them.

Most of those who have said yes argue that the texts provided by the textbook are well-chosen and they prepare the learners well for the baccalaureate exam.

Question twenty five: As a secondary school teacher, what would you suggest to improve the quality of the assessment of the reading comprehension skills?

- Giving more importance to this skill..
- Selecting short motivating texts (attractive topics fitting the scientific, the sociological and technological development).
- Using ICTs (information and communication technology)
- Elaboration of supplementary activities aiming at the enrichment of the learners' vocabulary.
- Devoting more time to this sequence.
- Reading extra-books.
- Making presentations in the class about the books that are read by the pupils.

To sum up, the results collected from the questionnaires reveal that all participant teachers are aware of the importance of the assessment of reading comprehension skills and the majority of them practise it in their teaching process. They assess their learners through formative assessment relying on classroom activities and they assess them through summative assessment via tests. The results also show that the competency based approach emphasises on assessing learners' comprehension skills and the informants use different techniques to assess reading comprehension. The techniques are represented in eight points: a) answering comprehension questions, b) true or false statements, c) asking a question about the type of the text, d) asking questions about the author's purpose, e) giving multiple choice questions to select the appropriate one, f) finding or giving synonyms and opposites, g) asking the learners to put ideas in the right order according to their occurrence in the text, h) asking pupils to summarise the general idea and i) asking pupils to find word references in the text. Concerning the factors that cause the pupils' difficulties in reading comprehension, most of the informants think that linguistic weakness is the main reason behind the learners' comprehension problems. Finally, the results reveal that most of the teachers agree that N.P

textbook prepares the learners for the baccalaureate exam reading comprehension because texts and types of the activities provided by N.P textbook are almost the same. So, learners are trained before the final exam.

2. Presentation of the Results of New Prospects Textbook Analysis

The results of this part are reached from the analysis of six reading texts provided by N.P textbook. The analysis is achieved relying on a checklist developed on the basis of Davis' work on the basic techniques to assess reading comprehension skills.

<div>Texts</div> <div>Techniques</div>	Text1	Text2	Text3	Text4	Text5	Text6
a. Word meaning.	0	0	0	1	1	1
b. Identifying the references.	1	1	1	0	0	0
c. Selecting the main thought	1	1	1	0	0	0
d. Asking questions that are answered in the passage.	1	1	1	1	1	1
e. Asking questions that are not directly answered in the passage.	1	1	1	1	1	1
f. Drawing inferences.	0	0	0	0	1	1
g. Type of the text.	1	0	0	1	1	1
h. Determining the writer's purpose.	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	5	4	4	4	6	5

Table 14: Reading comprehension techniques used in six reading text in New Prospects textbook

The results of table 14 reveal that Davis' techniques are used in the six reading texts of N.P textbook. Each technique is used at least once by one text; however, the combination of the 8 eight techniques is not found in any text of the six texts. Texts 1 and 5 include five

techniques, texts 2, 3 and 4 include 4 techniques and text 5 includes 6 techniques. The two techniques that are used by all of the texts are d and e which are asking questions that are directly answered in the text and asking questions that are not directed answered in the text.

3. Presentation of the Results of a Sample of a Baccalaureate Exam Analysis

The results of this part are gathered from the analysis of the BAC exam given in June 2015 to foreign languages stream. The analysis is achieved relying on a checklist developed on the basis of Davis' work on the basic techniques to assess reading comprehension skills.

Davis' techniques to assess the learners' reading comprehension skills	A sample of BAC exam
a. Word meaning.	1
b. Identifying the references.	1
c. Selecting the main thought.	0
d. Asking questions that are answered in the passage.	1
e. Asking questions that are not directly answered in the passage.	1
f. Drawing inferences.	0
g. Type of the text.	1
h. Determining the writer's purpose.	0
Total	5

Table 15: Reading comprehension techniques used baccalaureate exam foreign languages stream

The table above shows the five reading comprehension techniques used to assess the learners' comprehension skills in the baccalaureate exam year 2015, foreign language stream. The techniques are: a) word meaning, b) identifying the references, c) answering questions

that are answered in the passage, d) answering questions that are not directly answered in the passage and e) type of the text.

Conclusion:

This chapter provides the presentation of the results gathered from questionnaires administered to fifteen EFL secondary school teachers in Ail El Hammam, textbook and BAC exam analysis. The results show that the learners are assessed during the year and at the end of the course, that is to say, in the class and in the baccalaureate exam. They are actually assessed by means of different techniques and activities. As concerns the factors that impede the learners' reading comprehension the outcomes of the questionnaire show that lack of reading and linguistic weakness are the two main reasons behind the learners' reading comprehension difficulties. The findings also show that N.P textbook prepares the pupils well for the final exam in reading comprehension.

The results are going to be clarified and interpreted in the following chapter which is devoted to the discussion of the findings.

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the results of the study in relation to the research questions and the review of the literature presented in the first chapter. The findings are gathered from a questionnaire administered to EFL secondary school teachers in Ain El Hammam, New Prospects textbook and a sample baccalaureate exam analysis. The chapter comprises three main parts. The first part is devoted to the discussion of the results of the questionnaire of the teachers. The second part is concerned with the discussion of the outcomes reached from the analysis of six reading texts provided by New Prospects textbook. The third and the last part discusses the results of the BAC exam analysis. The two last parts are discussed according to Davis' techniques for assessing reading comprehension skills.

1. Discussion of the Questionnaire of the Teachers

1.1 . Teachers' Assessment of Reading Comprehension

From the findings of the questionnaire that investigates the assessment of reading comprehension with third year pupils in the secondary school, it appears that all of the participants are aware of the importance of the reading comprehension assessment. Moreover, the majority of them about (85.7%) assess their learners' comprehension skills. In fact, there are many types: diagnostic, formative, summative, self and peer assessment. The results of this investigation reveal, the two prominent types of assessment that are mostly used by the informants which are formative and summative assessment.

Formative assessment which is referred to as the assessment for learning is practised by most of the participants relying on classroom activities, that is to say, most of the teachers continuously assess their learners in class through different activities about reading comprehension. According to Black and William (1998), formative assessment takes place in

everyday learning and it involves different activities undertaken by teachers to gather information about their learners and support the learning process. As the results show (37.5%) of the teachers, who are targeted by the investigation, rely on classroom activities to assess their learners' reading comprehension, while (12.5%) of them use tests to assess their learners.

Tests are classified within summative assessment since they are used to measure the learners' performance and level of knowledge so as to provide a final score. They always determine the success or the failure of pupils (see chapter 1). So, as the findings have shown many teachers prefer to use this tool of assessment to measure their pupils' performance in reading comprehension. The majority of the participants about (43.8%) do not rely on one exclusive tool to assess their learners' reading comprehension skills but they use multiple tools. Indeed, they think that a combination of effective means such as tests, classroom activities and homework help them better gather data about their learners and the use of a unique instrument cannot reach this goal.

As it is discussed above the two types of assessment that are widely used by the informants are formative and summative assessment and only few teachers mentioned the use of other types of assessment and only about (8.8%) of them encourage self- assessment. As concerns self-assessment Falchikov (2005) recommends using this type of assessment while teaching and she argues that *"self-assessment is a way for students to become involved in assessing their own development and learning"* (Falchikov cited in Frankland, 2007:121). It means that self- assessment is essential to raise learners' awareness about their learning and it is a useful means to involve all of the learners in the learning process. In addition, it helps teachers in their teaching process as it provides them with information about their students' expectations, needs, the difficulties they meet, how they find their learning progress, and what is their opinion about the course in general (see chapter 1). Moreover, Petty (2004) argues

“self-assessment encourages reflection and purposeful activity towards useful goals, as well as encouraging learners to become responsible for their own learning” (Petty, 2004: 322).

This means that self-assessment is important to raise the learners’ reflective thinking and more importantly it makes pupils know about their achievements through giving them a chance to evaluate their own performance.

Competency based approach, which is the teaching method adopted by the Algerian schools to be applied in teaching English as a foreign language, stresses the importance of assessing learners in general and assessing their reading comprehension skills in particular. The majority of the teachers about (85.7%) of them have shown in their answers that CBA emphasises on the assessment of reading comprehension. Indeed, with CBA more time is devoted to evaluate every learner skills by means of different types of assessment; self, peer, formative and summative assessment. That is to say, the combination of the four basic types of assessment insures a successful teaching and learning. Furthermore, the focus is on both teacher and learner. Teachers assess their pupils’ work and see how well or bad they perform. They are asked to correct their pupils’ mistakes and then give them feedback. The learners in their part are engaged in the learning process as they are asked to show their understanding, knowledge, skills and abilities in the classroom activities, assessment tasks, tests and examinations. Therefore, reading comprehension assessment is an integral part in teaching. It is a systematic collection of information about the learners’ knowledge and understanding and the primary goal from classroom assessment is not to evaluate or classify the learners’ performance but to inform teachers and enhance learning. In fact, teachers conduct assessment not only by setting formal tests but also by making continuous classroom observation and applying instructional activities.

1.2 . Davis’ Techniques Used to Assess Reading Comprehension Skills

The findings of the investigation reveal that teachers use multiple techniques to assess their learners' comprehension skills and most of them use Davis' techniques. Their answers demonstrate that pupils are assessed by means of different techniques, basically through nine techniques: a. asking comprehension questions, b. true or false statements, c. asking a question about the type of the text, d. asking questions on the author's purpose, e. providing learners with multiple choice questions to select the appropriate one, f. asking pupils to find or give synonyms and opposites, g. asking pupils to put ideas in the right order according to their occurrence in the text, h. asking learners to summarise the general idea of the passage and i. asking learners to identify word references in the text.

Accordingly, Davis (1944) (cited in Afflerbach, et al. 2008) sets some basic techniques to deal with the assessment of reading comprehension. The techniques turn around eight important points: a. knowledge of word meaning and vocabulary, b. assessing pupils' ability to identify word references in the passage, c. asking the learners to select the main idea discussed in the text, d. asking the learners to answer questions that are directly answered in the text, e. asking learners to answer questions that are not directly answered in the text, f. assessing learners' ability to draw inferences from the general understanding of the text, g. asking pupils to identify the type of the text, h. asking pupils to determine the writers' purpose from writing the text. The results have shown that every participant teacher uses at least five of the Davis' techniques to assess their learners' reading comprehension skills and no one depends on one exclusive technique. This means that the respondents give importance to reading comprehension assessment and they are aware of the significance of the reading comprehension skills in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Thus, they use multiple techniques to ensure a good and a reliable way to assess their pupils and help them in developing their comprehension skills.

Therefore, teachers apply all of Davis' techniques to assess their learners' comprehension skills. Moreover, some of them use two other techniques which are not proposed by Davis. The two techniques are: providing pupils with multiple choice answers in order to select the appropriate one according to the text and asking pupils to order ideas according to their occurrence in the passage. This shows that teachers are innovative in their teaching practices and they know that assessing reading comprehension is important. So, they use several techniques to check the pupils' understanding of texts.

1.3. Learners' Motivation and Achievement

The findings of the research regarding the pupils' motivation to study the English language have revealed that only half of the teachers think that their learners are motivated to learn the English language. These results demonstrate the attitudes of the learners towards the English language. Teachers can help their pupils by motivating them and making them interested in the English language learning. In other words, teachers can stimulate their pupils by giving them a special attention to make them involved in the learning process and encouraging them through different ways, for instance, praising them often, providing constructive feedback and trying to simplify all the difficulties that can be the main reason behind their negative attitudes toward the learning of the English language. Thus, learners' motivation is essential to any successful learning, so teachers always try to know whether their learners like the subject or not.

Moreover, the results of the study have demonstrated that the majority of the teachers (71.4%) find that their learners' output is average and only (28.6%) of them find that their pupils' output is low. None of them said that their learners' results are high. This means that the level of the learners in general is average and the results of the question on the pupils' motivation are relatively consistent with the pupils' output. Because only a few teachers think that their learners like the English language consequently their output is not high. Ravitch

(2003) argues that *“motivation increases student effort to learn. Increased effort, in turn, raises academic achievement”* (Ravitch, 2003:98). That is to say, the pupils’ output is directly related to their motivation and the more they are motivated the more they perform well.

Furthermore, assessment plays an important role in enhancing learners’ motivation to learn. Accordingly, Lorna (2003) argues

Motivation is essential for the hard work of learning...Assessment can be motivator, not through rewards or punishment, but by stimulating the intrinsic interest of students and providing them with the direction and confidence that they need to take risk.

(Lorna, 2003:68).

That is to say, pupils need motivation to work hard and assessment is essential to increase the motivation of the learners. This means that a well-designed and performed assessment raises learners eager and willing to study and motivated learners always get good results. Therefore, assessment, motivation and learners’ achievement are closely related.

1.4. Reasons behind Pupils’ Reading Comprehension Difficulties

One of the purposes of the assessment of reading comprehension is to find out the reasons behind the learners’ difficulties so as to help them learn this skill. In fact, assessment makes the task easy for teachers to identify the difficulties and the problems that the learners encounter. As it is mentioned in the first chapter, reading comprehension difficulties are caused by two main factors which are lack of reading and linguistic weakness.

1.4.1. Linguistic Weakness

Relying on the findings of this investigation, it is noticed that the majority of the teachers (64.3%) consider that the linguistic weakness is the reason behind the EFL learners’ reading comprehension problems. This mainly shows that possessing a rich and fertile vocabulary enables the learners to identify the meaning of the words in isolation. Thus it serves in understanding the whole meaning of the text. As Hoover and Couphs (2004) argue *“there can be no reading comprehension without the ability to decipher or recognise words”*

(Hoover and Couphs Cited in Nation, 2004:249). In addition to this, Anjomshoa and Zamanian (2004) estimate that *“there is an agreement among second language researchers that vocabulary knowledge is an important component in reading comprehension... Vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in reading comprehension. Reading a language and comprehending it require that one possess sufficient vocabulary”* (Anjomshoa and Zamanian, 2004:91). Therefore, increasing EFL learners’ vocabulary knowledge and lexis is really important to improve their comprehension skills and get rid of their linguistic weakness which impedes their reading comprehension.

1.4.2. Lack of Reading Practice

From the results of the research, (35.7%) of the informants estimate that their learners’ comprehension problems are caused by the lack of reading practice. This shows the necessity of developing the learners’ own reading habits and highlights their role in improving the EFL learners understanding of linguistic texts. Accordingly, Owusu-Acheaw (2014) estimates that being involved in extra reading plays a major role in acquiring knowledge, more importantly owning reading habits increases the reading comprehension skills of EFL pupils which facilitates for them comprehending shorter and longer texts written in the English language (Owusu, 2014:6). Furthermore, reading habits do not only improve the EFL reading comprehension skills of the learners, rather, they also determine their academic achievements to a great extent (Owusu, 2014:1). Therefore, reading habits and learners’ performances both in class and exams are closely interrelated and the more they read outside the school the more they improve their reading comprehension skills and perform well.

Moreover, one of the most important reading habits is extensive reading. It refers to the reading of longer texts for the purpose of getting information or just for pleasure. In fact, extensive reading is beneficial to EFL pupils and it is a useful technique to develop their

reading skills. Kalmane (2012) argues “*extensive reading is meant for students to enjoy what they read and improve their general reading comprehension*” (Kalmane, 2012:17). That is to say, extensive reading is not only meant for pleasure but also for academic purposes, since this technique is crucial in fostering the reading comprehension skills.

In addition to linguistic weakness and lack of reading, the results have revealed that one of the teachers has completed the empty place about other factors that can cause reading comprehension problems. The informant has argued that L1 reading skill interference is one of the main reasons behind the students’ comprehension difficulties. The participant teacher thinks that the Berber or Arabic languages, which are the L1 of the learners in their context, obstruct the learners’ understanding of the texts in English. However, Torki, et al., (2014) argue the opposite of the participant’s opinion, they estimate “ *there is a common underlying cognitive ability between L1 and L2, and it implies we do not need to learn reading in L2 if we have a certain level of L1 reading ability ...Transfer happens automatically*” (Torki et al., 2014:42). This means that L1 reading comprehension abilities of EFL learners have a positive effect on L2 reading comprehension skills and they help them to comprehend EFL passages, since L1 skills are transferred into L2 skills when dealing with EFL linguistic texts. Moreover, EFL pupils cannot learn to read in L2 if they do not possess certain reading skills in L1. Therefore, L1 reading skills of the EFL learners effect positively their reading skills in EFL and help in understanding written texts.

1.3 Teachers’ Opinions about the New Prospect Textbook Reading Comprehension Activities

The results of the investigation have revealed that most of the teachers find that N.P reading comprehension activities well prepare the learners to the final exam in reading comprehension (BAC exam). Accordingly, most of them have justified their answers by the fact that the texts that are provided in the textbook are nearly the same as those given in

the BAC exam. Moreover, some of them have argued that the texts suggested by the existing units are good, helpful and they tackle interesting topics. Furthermore, some of them argued that the reading comprehension skills of pupils are practically assessed in the same manner in the textbook and BAC exam. It means that the learners are well trained before the final exam.

1.4 Teachers' Suggestions to Improve the Quality of Assessment of Reading Comprehension

The results of the study, concerning teachers' proposals and suggestions to improve the quality of reading comprehension assessment, have revealed that many of the informants agree on the necessity. Some of them think that selecting short and motivating texts is useful. It means that the texts should address attractive topics fitting the scientific, the sociological and technological development. Some of them suggest teaching aloud reading because presently they are asked to teach silent reading. Thus they do not have an opportunity to assess the learners' pronunciation and they argued that aloud reading attracts much more the pupils than the silent reading. Accordingly, Taisser (1998) estimates “ *when reviewing the literature on the development of reading skills in a foreign language, we find that great emphasis has been placed on silent reading, whereas aloud reading is de-emphasised*” (Taisser, 1998:283). This means that aloud reading is given less importance in EFL classes. Furthermore, Taisser (1998) argues “*EFL teachers do not insist on a high standard when their students aloud, which results in poor reading skills overall*” (Taisser, 1998:281). In other words, aloud reading is essential to enhance the EFL learners' reading skills.

One of the teachers think that using ICTs (Information communication technology) is helpful because it allows the integration of videos and pictures which help better understand the texts, in addition, teaching English using technology motivates and stimulates both of the learners and teachers. According to Davis and Tearle (1999) and Lemke and Coughlin (1998)

“ICTs have the potential to innovate, accelerate, enrich, and deepen skills, to motivate and engage students...as well as strengthening teaching and helping schools change” (Davis and Tearle (1999) and Lemke and Coughlin (1998) cited in Syed, n.d:2). This means that ICTs are useful and helpful in the field of education. They motivate the learners and they foster their language skills.

Following the results of the study about the teachers’ views about the improvement of the assessment of reading comprehension. One of the respondents considers that elaborating supplementary activities aiming at the enrichment of the learners’ vocabulary is good helping learners get rid of linguistic weaknesses in the English language and also for the improvement of the reading comprehension assessment. Another one suggests to devote more time to assess reading comprehension. The respondent adds that teachers are given only two hours for each unit to deal with reading text and the time is not sufficient, thus they need more time to cover all the learners’ needs and assess them all one by one. One of the teachers thinks that encouraging extra reading is beneficial that is asking the learners to read texts, stories or even books in English helps them better cope with the reading comprehension skills.

Besides, one of the informants thinks that asking the learners to do oral presentations about the books that they read is effective. Accordingly, Brook and Wilson (2014) argue *“oral presentations have been shown to be extremely with respect to improving learners’ L2 skills, and increasing their autonomy”* (Brook and Wilson, 2014:202). It means that making presentations in the class involves the learners in the learning process and it makes them do much effort; therefore, this technique develops comprehension skills of pupils and the quality of the assessment as well. One of the teachers has suggested three points to improve the quality of reading comprehension assessment: first, providing students with convenient well-structured materials and a variety of topics of current interest. Second, giving the opportunity to pupils to express themselves to develop their confidence and sense of power over the

language to be more creative. Finally, using more exercises to direct the pupils' attention to certain features of the English language and providing them with a strategy for reading and understanding more difficult texts.

2. Discussion of the Results of New Prospect Textbook Analysis

2.1 Davis' Techniques Used in New Prospects Textbook to Assess Reading Comprehension Skills of Learners

The findings of the analysis of the six reading texts in N.P textbook, that aimed at checking whether the techniques proposed by Davis (1944 cited in Afflerbach, et al. 2008) were used to assess the third year EFL learners' reading comprehension skills, have revealed that the different techniques that are used to assess reading comprehension skills of third year ELF learners are: a. word meaning, b. identifying the references in the text, c. selecting the main thought of the text, d. asking questions that are directly answered in the text, e. asking questions that are not directly answered in the text, f. asking learners to draw inferences, g. asking a question about the type of the text, h. asking pupils to determine the writers' purpose.

The results have shown that Davis' (n.d) first technique asking learners about word meaning is used in three texts. In fact, asking learners to find or to give meaning or opposites of words is one of the basic techniques that is used to assess reading comprehension. Accordingly, Davis argues *"knowledge of word meaning is basic to measurement of all other skills since to read at all one has to recognise words and understand their meaning"* (Davis, n.d:236). That is to say, vocabulary knowledge and word meaning plays an important part in reading comprehension. Thus it is necessary to ask questions about word meaning to assess the learners' vocabulary and their understanding of words. Moreover, understanding word meaning in isolation helps in understanding the general meaning of the text.

From the results, the technique of identifying references is used in three texts in N.P textbook whereas in the other texts it is not found. Identifying references is mainly related to the understanding of the organisation of the passage that is cohesion of the text. Accordingly, Sally and Katie (2008) argue that cohesion is related to the extent to which elements of the texts such as words, sentences, paragraphs are linked to one another. This shows that the way to assess the learners understanding of the organisation of the text is asking them to look for the relationship between the items in the text. For example, asking them to who or what the underlined words refer in the text. And the technique is used in the N.P textbook. The learners are asked to find the word references in three texts.

The technique of selecting the main thought is also used only in three texts. Here the skill of skimming is always used to get the general idea of the text. The learners read the text from the beginning to the end so as to understand the main thought of the passage. Moreover, the technique of asking questions that are directly answered in the text is used in the six texts. So, the textbook focus on comprehension questions to assess the pupils' understanding of the text. The technique of asking questions that are not directly answered in the text is also used in the six texts. The technique of drawing inferences is used only in two texts. In fact, learners are asked many questions in order to test their comprehension of the text and their ability to draw inferences from what they read.

The technique of asking a question about the type of the text is used in four texts. This type of question generally is given in a form of multiple choice questions; for instance, the text is: a. Expository, b. Descriptive or c. Narrative. Furthermore, the technique of asking a question about the authors' purpose is used only in one text. In fact the purpose of the text cannot be cited in one particular part of the text, however, the learner can understand it based on some indicators. For example grammar is a good indicator to understand the author's

purpose and also narrative tenses such as the past simple is generally used to entertain the reader.

Therefore, the technique that is used in all texts is asking comprehension question about the passage. Thus all the texts focus on asking questions to check the understanding of the learners. Accordingly, Richard and Park (2005) argue *“the use of well-designed comprehension questions can be used to promote an understanding of a text”* (Richard and Park, 2005:67). Said differently, asking reading comprehension questions to check the EFL learners’ understanding is useful to enhance the comprehending of text. It means that the technique of asking questions about the passage is important in assessing reading comprehension with EFL pupils, so it is used in the six reading texts in N.P textbook.

3. Discussion of the Results of Baccalaureate Exam Analysis

3.1. Davis’ Techniques Used in Baccalaureate Exam to Assess Reading Comprehension Skills of Learners

The outcomes of the analysis of a sample baccalaureate exam, that aims at checking whether Davis’ techniques (1944 cited in Afflerbach, et al. 2008) were used to assess the third year EFL learners’ reading comprehension skills in the final exam, have revealed that multiple techniques are used to assess learners’ comprehension skills in BAC exam. In fact, the five of Davis’ techniques are used in the sample: a. word meaning, b. identifying references, c. asking questions that are directly answered in the text, d. asking questions that are not directly answered in the text, e. asking a question about the type of the text. Thus, the learners in this sample BAC exam are assessed on the basis of five techniques.

To sum up, the techniques that are used in N.P textbook and BAC exam are approximately the same. Moreover, all the techniques in the BAC exam are available in the

textbook. Therefore the learners are well trained and prepared to the final exam in reading comprehension since the beginning of the year.

Conclusion

The chapter has discussed the data gathered from the teachers' questionnaire, textbook and BAC exam analysis so as to answer the research questions of the investigation. All of the hypotheses supposed in the introduction are confirmed. The textbook and BAC exam analysis and informants' answers show that reading comprehension skills of the learners are assessed in both class and BAC exam relying on multiple techniques: a. asking comprehension question, b. true or false statements, c. asking a question about the type of the text, d. asking learners to find or give synonyms and opposites, e. asking learners to put ideas according to their occurrence in the text, f. asking the learners to summarise the general idea of the text, g. giving multiple choice questions to select the appropriate one, h. asking the learners to determine the author's purpose and i. asking pupils to find word references in the text.

With regard to the factors that cause reading comprehension difficulties for the learners, the informants affirm that the major reasons that cause reading comprehension problems are both linguistic weakness and lack of reading. The participants' answers, N.P textbook analysis and the comparison between the activities found in BAC exam and N.P textbook affirm that N.P textbook prepares effectively the learners to a final exam in reading comprehension.

General Conclusion

The study investigated the assessment of reading comprehension in teaching English as a foreign language with third year pupils in four secondary schools in Ain El Hammam in Tizi-Ouzou. Actually, it was intended to check whether the reading comprehension skills of third year ELF learners in the secondary school are assessed in a valid and reliable way during the school year and in the final exam. First, it aimed at analysing the techniques and the strategies used in the class, in the Baccalaureate and term exams to enhance the reading comprehension competencies in the learners. Second, it tried to identify the main reasons that cause reading comprehension difficulties of the learners. Finally, it tried to check whether the reading comprehension activities provided by the New Prospect textbook effectively prepare the learners to the final exam in reading comprehension.

The investigation attempted to bring some details about the process of assessment and precisely focused on reading comprehension as a significant skill in teaching English as a foreign language. The review of the study highlighted some theoretical issues related to assessment, its importance in the teaching and learning process and the reasons for assessing the learners. Furthermore, it explained the nature of reading comprehension and the basic techniques that should be used to assess reading comprehension skills of the EFL learners.

The research was conducted in the form of a case study and adopted the mixed method approach. Therefore, it combined both qualitative and quantitative research methods for data collection and analysis. In fact, the data were collected through three tools: a questionnaire was administered to EFL secondary school teachers in Ain El Hammam, New Prospect textbook analysis and a sample of the BAC exam (2015) analysis. For the sake of analysing quantitative data gathered from the closed ended questions of the questionnaire, the study adopted the statistical method relying on sphinx software. In addition to the statistical method, the qualitative and quantitative content analyses were used. The qualitative content

analysis was used to analyse and explain the open ended questions of the questionnaire and the quantitative content analysis was used to analyse the quantitative outcomes collected from textbook and BAC exam analysis.

The discussion of the findings of the teachers' questionnaire, textbook and a sample BAC exam analysis provided answers to the research questions. The results showed that EFL secondary school teachers assess their learners' reading comprehension skills relying on multiple techniques, such as: a. asking comprehension question, b. true or false statements, c. asking a question about the type of the text, d. asking learners to find or give synonyms and opposites, e. asking learners to put ideas according to their occurrence in the text, f. asking the learners to summarise the general idea of the text, g. giving multiple choice questions to select the appropriate one, h. asking learners to determine the author's purpose and i. asking pupils to find word references in the text.

Moreover, the outcomes demonstrated that the two main reasons that cause EFL learners' reading comprehension difficulties are linguistic weakness, that is related to lack of vocabulary knowledge and lack of reading practices. Therefore, teachers are invited to adjust their teaching to help their learners in overcoming these difficulties; for instance, by elaborating supplementary activities aiming at enriching the learners' vocabulary, asking pupils to bring and use their dictionaries to learn more vocabulary items and encouraging extra reading outside the class to enhance their reading habits.

Furthermore, the results showed that the activities provided by N.P textbook effectively prepare the secondary third year learners to the final exam _BAC exam_ in reading comprehension. The texts and the activities used in N.P textbook are almost the same in the BAC exam and the learners' reading comprehension skills are assessed in the same manner. So the learners are well trained and prepared through the school year.

Actually, the research demonstrated that assessing reading comprehension is an important task that requires different techniques, tools and strategies that lead pupils to show their strengths and weaknesses, their needs and abilities. Moreover, it is through the continuous classroom assessment that teachers can collect information so as to adjust their teaching practices and help the learners to overcome the difficulties that they encounter in their learning process. Besides, using effective teaching of reading comprehension strategies can bring useful solutions to reading comprehension problems. For instance, teachers can explain through using easier vocabulary, ask the learners to use dictionaries and encourage further reading.

In the end, it is hoped that the findings of the research will pave the way to further researches interested in the same area of investigation.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire of the teachers

This questionnaire is addressed to EFL secondary school teachers in Ain El Hammam. It aims at gathering information about the assessment of reading comprehension. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions. Your answers are strictly anonymous and confidential.

Please tick the right box (es) to indicate your answer, and provide your own answers where it is needed.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Section one: General information

1. Gender:

☐

Male

☐

Female

2. What academic qualification do you hold?

☐

License

☐

Master

☐

Other

3. How long have you been working in the field of teaching?

☐

This is my first year

☐

1-5 years

☐

6-10 years

☐

11-15 years

☐

16-20 years

☐

More than 20 years

4. How many third year classes are you teaching this year?

.....

5. What is the average number of pupils in your classes?

☐

20-25

☐

26-30

☐

31-35

☐

36-40

☐

More than 41 students

Section two: Learners' motivation and level

6. Do you think that your learners are motivated to learn the English language?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not all of them

7. How do you find the output of your learners?

☐ High

☐ Average

☐ Low

8. Are you satisfied with your pupils' achievement?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. Which language skill do you think your learners master the most?

☐ Reading

☐ Writing

☐ Speaking

☐ Listening

Section three: The teaching and the assessment of reading comprehension skills within the competency based approach

10. In your opinion the competency based approach is:

☐ Easy

☐ Complicated

11. To what extent do you apply it while teaching?

.....

12. Does the competency based approach emphasise the assessment of reading comprehension skills?

☐ Yes

☐ No

13. Do you think that the assessment of the reading comprehension is essential in teaching English as a foreign language?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please explain why

.....

.....

.....

14. Do you assess your learners' reading comprehension skills?

☐ Yes

☐ No

15. Is the time devoted to the reading comprehension assessment sufficient?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. What are the strategies that you use in the class when teaching reading comprehension?

- a. ☐ Explaining in French, Arabic or Berber
- b. ☐ Using the target language all the time
- c. ☐ Asking learners to use dictionaries
- d. ☐ Identifying important events and concepts in the text
- e. ☐ Testing comprehension with questions
- f. ☐ Giving students practice with new words
- g. ☐ Asking students to summarise the general idea
- h. ☐ Encouraging self-assessment
- i. ☐ Other

17. What are the tools that you use to assess the reading comprehension skills of your learners?

☐ Classroom activities

☐ Homework

☐ Tests

☐ All of them

18. In tests and term exams, what are the techniques that you use to assess the reading comprehension skills of your learners?

- a. ☐ Answering comprehension questions
- b. ☐ True or false statements
- c. ☐ Asking a question about the type of the text

- d. ☐ Questions on the author's purpose
- e. ☐ Multiple choice questions to select the appropriate one
- f. ☐ Finding or giving synonyms and opposites
- g. ☐ Putting ideas in the right order according to their occurrence in the text
- h. ☐ Asking students to summarize the general idea
- a. ☐ Words reference in the text

19. Are the activities that you use to assess reading comprehension in the term exams the same with those used in the baccalaureate exam?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please justify your answer

.....

.....

.....

Section Four: The factors that influence positively or negatively learners' reading comprehension

20. Do you think that your learners are motivated to practise reading comprehension?

☐ Yes

☐ No

21. According to you, what are the factors that cause the students' reading comprehension difficulties?

☐ Linguistic weakness

☐ Lack of reading

Other factors.....

22. How can you help your learners when they do not understand while reading a text?

.....

.....

.....
.....
23. Do you believe that text selection has an effect on the learners' reading comprehension achievement?

☐ Yes

☐ No

24. Do the reading comprehension activities of the textbook "New prospects" well prepare the learners' for the baccalaureate exam in reading comprehension?

☐ Yes

☐ To some extent

☐ No

Please justify your answer

.....
.....
.....
25. As a secondary school teacher, what would you suggest to improve the quality of the assessment of the reading comprehension skills?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you very much for your time and help.

Appendix B

Checklist

The following checklist is developed on the basis of Davis' work 1944 (Davis cited in Afflerbach, et al., 2008), where he sets some techniques to assess the learners' comprehension skills. In this study, it is adopted to analyse six reading texts provided by N.P textbook and the reading part of a sample of BAC exam to check whether the learners' reading comprehension skills are in a valid way.

Texts Techniques	Text1	Text2	Text3	Text4	Text5	Text6
a. Word meaning.						
b. Identifying the references.						
c. Selecting the main thought						
d. Asking questions that are answered in the passage.						
e. Asking questions that are not directly answered in the passage.						
f. Drawing inferences.						
g. Type of the text.						
h. Determining the writer's purpose.						

Davis' techniques to assess the learners' reading comprehension skills	A sample of BAC exam
a. Word meaning.	
b. Identifying the references.	
c. Selecting the main thought.	
d. Asking questions that are answered in the passage.	
e. Asking questions that are not directly answered in the passage.	
f. Drawing inferences.	
g. Type of the text.	
h. Determining the writer's purpose.	

Appendix c

► As you read

- Have a look at the coping box and do task 1 that follows.

Coping

Skimming means reading quickly for **gist** (general meaning). You skim through a written text in order to find out about the topic, the main ideas and the general organisation.

When you are asked to skim through a text, **you needn't** know every word and sentence in the text. You should concentrate, instead, on recognizing **key words**, i.e. words that the writer considers to be important. Key words are often repeated in the text.

- ① Skim through the **introduction** and the **conclusion** of the text below and pick out four to six key words.

TEXT

Ancient Egyptian civilization rose in the Nile Valley. As in Sumer, the need for an irrigation system first led farmers to join together and cooperate. But the bonding together of men developed much further in Egypt. Sumer remained a land of small city states whereas the people of Egypt became united under the rule of a single king. This made of Egypt the first nation in history. (§1)

The Pharaoh's government did many important things. It protected the land and its inhabitants by organising defences to keep out the raiding war-bands **which** sometimes attacked the country from the desert. The preserving of internal peace was another of the Pharaoh's tasks. The people of a nation can only live together if the rulers make sure that the laws are obeyed. Many of the laws of the Egyptians were traditional, that is to say, **they** had grown up gradually, over the centuries. But the Pharaoh could make new laws, and did so, whenever he thought it necessary. (§2)

In countless ways, then, the Egyptians derived great benefits from their system of national government. But **this** was only one reason why **they** stayed a united people throughout ancient times. Another reason was **their** national pride and strong sense of belonging together. The Egyptians

/ˈvæli/

/ˈsu:mə/

/riˈmeɪnd/

/juˈnaɪtɪd/

/ˈfeərəʊ/

/ɪnˈhæbɪtənts/

/əˈtækt/

/prɪˈzɜːvɪŋ/

/trəˈdɪʃənəl/

/ˈsentʃərɪz/

/dɪˈraɪvd/

/ˈgʌvnmənt/

/əˈnʌðə/

/təˈgeðə/

felt that **they** were privileged to have been born in Egypt. All other lands, **they** thought, were cold and dark, and the people who lived in **them** more akin to animals than to human beings. (§3)

It was the Ancient Egyptians' feelings and beliefs about the Pharaoh that provided the strongest unifying force of all. In Sumer, the king of each city was thought to be the chief servant of the city's god. The Egyptian idea of kingship went further than this. They thought that their king was himself a living god, a divine ruler who had magic control over the weather and the Nile, and who alone brought safety, prosperity and happiness to the nation. The Pharaoh was revered to such a degree that his people dared not mention him by name. **They** only spoke of the palace in which **he** lived. That is why **they** called **him** Pharaoh, which means 'great house'. (§4)

When we realize how much the Pharaoh meant to the Egyptians, it is easier to understand how the pyramids came to be built. Since **he** was a god, **he** could not be allowed to die. It was believed that **his** spirit would survive only if his body were preserved, together with everything that was needed for its future well-being. The pyramids, therefore, were designed as eternal dwelling places for the god-kings from where the dead Pharaohs would continue **their** magic work for their 'beloved land'. (§5)

The effort and resources needed to build pyramids were so great that from the 25 th century B.C onwards, they had perforce to become smaller and smaller. The later Pharaohs were buried, not in pyramids, but in rock tombs. Yet the contents of the tombs remained as extravagant as before. When Howard Carter discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922 it proved to contain the most incredible burial treasure ever found. With all this treasure going into the ground instead of being invested, it was no surprise that eventually the Pharaohs proved to be the major cause behind the decline and fall of ancient Egyptian economy, and therefore of its civilization. (§6)

(From Victor Skipp, *Out of the Ancient World*, Penguin, p. 61.)

/lɪvd/

/bɪ'lɪ:fs/

/θɔ:t/

/kɪŋʃɪp/

/dɪ'vaɪn/

/naɪl/

/prɒ'sperətɪ/

/rɪ'vɪəd/

/rɪəlaɪz/

/ˌʌndə'stænd/

/ə'laʊd/

/sə'vaɪv/

/nɪ'dɪd/

/dɪ'zaɪnd/

/ɪ'tɜ:nl/

/mædʒɪk/

/rɪ'sɔ:sɪz/

/pə'fɔ:s/

/berɪd/

/tu:mz/

/tu:təŋk'ka:men/

/treʒə/

/ɪ'ventʃuəli/

/dɪ'klaɪn/

② Use the key words you have picked out in task 1 (page 37) to give a title to the text.

③ Now, skim through the whole text and match ideas A-G below with their corresponding paragraphs. One of the ideas is irrelevant. Write paragraph numbers in the boxes.

- A. The Pharaoh's government
- B. The importance of the Pharaoh for the unity of Egypt
- C. The unification of ancient Egypt
- D. Patriotic feelings in ancient Egypt
- E. The reason for the ruin of Egyptian economy
- F. The idea behind the building of the pyramids
- G. Tutankhamun's treasure

④ Have a look at the coping box and do the task that follows.

Coping

Scanning means reading for **specific pieces** of information (a fact, or a detail, or a particular word). When you scan written texts, your eyes **should move quickly** to find the information you are interested in. Ignore irrelevant items. What counts here is your power of observation.

● **Task:** Scan the text and answer the following questions.

- A. What is the major difference between ancient Sumer and ancient Egypt?
- B. What are the benefits that ancient Egyptians derived from their system of national government?
- C. What does the name 'Pharaoh' mean in the ancient Egyptian language?
- D. Why were the pyramids important for ancient Egyptians?
- E. Who discovered Tutankhamun's tomb?

⑤ Circle and link the words written in bold in the text with the items they refer to. E.g.

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

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

► After reading

- ① Have a quick look at the coping box below. Then decide which type of discourse the text you have studied belongs to.

Coping

There are five major **types of discourse** in prose texts: descriptive, expository, narrative, argumentative and prescriptive.

- ☐ As their name indicates, **descriptive** texts do just that: they **describe** people, places, things, etc.
- ☐ **Expository** texts **explain** how things work, and why these things are what they are.
- ☐ **Narrative** texts **tell** the story of something or someone.
- ☐ **Argumentative** texts are texts which **defend** points of view.
- ☐ **Prescriptive** texts are texts which **give instructions**.

Note: There may be more than one type of discourse in the same text.

- ② Write a short summary of the text (about one-fifth of it) you have studied. Your teacher will tell you about the strategies for making a summary.

► Writing development

- Follow the guidelines below to write your own version of the Ancient Greek myth of Ulysses.

① The pictures on the next page are illustrations of the Ancient Greek myth of Ulysses. They are not in order. Re-order them according to chronology.

② Jot down ideas about each picture. Then select the most relevant ones and start writing your draft narrative. Don't pay attention to mistakes at this stage.

③ Check whether your ideas are developed coherently. Then review your narrative for grammar and spelling mistakes.

④ Exchange drafts with your partner for error checking.

⑤ Hand your revised narrative to your teacher.

► As you read

① Skim through the text below and do tasks A and B.

A. Choose the sentence that best summarizes the content of the text. Justify your answer.

- a. Companies are unconcerned about social auditing and ethics in business.
- b. Social auditing is both a social obligation and a necessity in doing business today.
- c. Social auditing is just a way of exploiting the concerns of public opinion over environmental and social issues.
- d. Social auditing is not necessary at all for doing business.

B. Give a title to the text. Then compare your answers with those of your partner.

② Now scan the text and answer the following questions.

A. Why are some companies commissioning social audits ?

B. Giovanni Preston works as a corporate social responsibility executive. What does he really do ?

C. What are the labour standards that he mentions in the text ? Do you know of any other labour standards ? Name them.

D. What conclusion does he draw about ethics and business ? Do you share his point of view ? Justify your answer.

TEXT

Businesses are increasingly aware of the importance of social and environmental issues for **their** reputation. That's why some of **them** are commissioning social audits relating to **their** social performance; **these** are social reports **that** evaluate the effect of **their** behaviour in relation to **their** employees and to society as a whole. (§1)

Supporters of social audits say that social reporting is as important as financial reporting. **They** say that **it** provides important information about whether the activities of companies in areas such as employment and community, the environment, and the way of winning new business

/ˈbɪznɪsɪz/

/ˈɪnjuːz/

/kəˈmɪʃənɪŋ/

/peɪˈfɔːməns/

/brɪˈheɪvjə/

/səˈpɔːtəz/

/faɪˈnænʃəl/

/ɪmˈplɔɪmənt/

/ɪnˈvænərəs/

are morally right or wrong. Social auditing has emerged as a result of pressure groups concerned about problems of pollution, corruption, consumption and employment, but now it is considered by some company executives as one of the best ways of promoting products and services. **They** say that ethically responsible companies are more likely to prosper than **those** which behave unethically. (§2)

Critics say that a social audit may just be a public relations exercise, with no real benefits. However, in spite of **this criticism** many companies now are designating executives to oversee the whole area of corporate social responsibility. Giovanni Preston is one of **them**, he works for a Canadian multinational. **This** is what he says about his job: 'A lot of our manufacturing is done by suppliers in developing countries. Companies in the clothing industries are particularly open to criticism about sweatshop labour – the use of underpaid people with terrible working conditions, which amounts to labour abuse or labour exploitation. (§3)

My job is to travel to these countries and to check labour standards. I go **there** to check, for example, that our suppliers are paying **their** workers fairly, and that they work in good health and safety conditions with low levels of illness and accidents. We also ensure that workers are above the legal minimum age to work. Our suppliers must not use child labour. (§4)

We are aware that big companies such as **ours** are likely to be subject to scrutiny – seen and judged by consumer and environment associations from outside. We know that if we are seen to be socially responsible, the company will benefit. Today, we can no longer separate ethics from business.' (§5)

(Adapted from Bill Mascull, *Business Vocabulary in English*, p. 90)

③ Find in the text words that match the following definitions.

- A. give the job of doing sth to sb §1 - B. do well §2 - C. shared/common to a group of persons running a business §3 - D. give a position to sb (in a company) §3 - E. look after, control §3 F. a firm, company providing goods that are useful to another company §3 - G. detailed examination §5

/ɪ'mə:dʒd/
/pə'lu:ʃn/
/ɪg'zekjʊtɪvz/
/prə'məʊtɪŋ/
/rɪ'spɒnsəbl/
/pʌblɪk/
/benɪfɪts/
/deɪzɪgneɪtɪŋ/
/kɔ:pəreɪt/
/mʌltɪ'næʃnəl/
/kləʊðɪŋ/
/kən'dɪʃnz/
/leɪbə/
/sə'plaɪəz/
/wɜ:kəz/
/seɪftɪ/
/lɪ:gl/
/ə'weə/
/skru:tɪnɪ/
/ə,səʊsɪ'eɪʃnz/
/sepəreɪt/

► After reading

- Have a look at the coping box below. Then do the tasks that follow.

Coping

Writers use words such as **articles** (**a**, **the**, etc.) **possessive adjectives** (**my**, **your**, etc.) **demonstrative adjectives** (**this** book), (**those** books), **pronouns**, **synonyms**, and **antonyms** to refer back to things already mentioned or to refer forward to things that will be mentioned. These words are called **reference words**. They help writers avoid repetition and create lexical and grammatical cohesion between both sentences and paragraphs. It is important to pay attention to these reference words because they help us better understand texts.

- ① Link the words in bold type in the text with the items they refer to. E.g.

Businesses are increasingly aware of the importance of social and environmental issues for their reputation.

- ② Compare your answers to task 1 above with those of your partner. Explain in what ways the reference words have helped you to better understand the text.

- ③ Sentences A-F below are not in order. Re-order them to get a coherent text. Pay attention to the reference words. One of the sentences is irrelevant.

- 1 A. Algeria has recently adopted a new model of economic development.
- 3 B. It has also set high standards of governance including social auditing and public accounts reporting.
- 5 C. Such tasks are carried out by the National Economic and Social Council and by the Accounts Court.
- 2 D. This model balances economic growth, social justice and the sustainable use of natural resources.
- E. Algeria regained its independence in 1962.
- 4 F. In addition to the setting of standards of governance, it has accorded ethically responsible companies tax reductions so as to encourage them to promote sustainable development and social well-being.

- In what ways is the Algerian educational system similar to and different from the American one? Discuss as a class.

► As you read

① Skim through the block text below and divide it into **five** paragraphs. Don't write on your book. Use square brackets to indicate the beginnings and endings of the paragraphs. E.g. [Although _____] (§1)

② Match the paragraphs you have identified in task 1 above with 5 of the jumbled ideas A-F below. One of the ideas is the title of the text.

- A. The school system
- B. Points of conflict
- C. The government and education
- D. Types of education.
- E. Education in the US
- F. The quality of education

TEXT

Although in general Americans prefer to limit the influence of government, this is not the case where education is concerned. All levels of government are involved in education, and it is considered to be one of their most important responsibilities. The Federal Government provides some money for education through the Department of Education. But state and local governments have direct control and are responsible for the education of students between the ages of 5 and 18. Formal education is usually considered to begin at the age of 5 when children go to kindergarten. Kindergarten and the next five or six years of education (first grade, second grade, etc) are together usually called elementary school (the term primary school is less common in the US than in Britain). Grades seven to twelve are part of secondary education, and may be divided between junior high school and senior high school. Other school systems have middle school, where children spend two years. High school usually covers four years, from the ninth to the twelfth grade. Post-secondary education (also called University or Higher or Tertiary Education) after twelfth grade, is not free though state governments, which run most of the educational institutions,

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/ɪn'vɒlvd/
/kən'sɪdəd/
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/edʒu'keɪʃn/
/'kɪndəɡɑːtn/
/elɪ'mentri/
/ɡreɪdz/
/dɪ'vaɪdɪd/
/'kʌʌvəz/
/'tɜːʃəri/

subsidize the cost for people who live in the state. By some standards, American education seems very successful. Although young people must attend school until they are 16, over 80% continue until they are 18. About 45 % of Americans have some post-secondary education and over 20% graduate from college or university. However, 20% of adults, i.e. about 40 million people, have very limited skills in reading and writing, and 4%, i.e., about 8 million people, are illiterate. Most educational institutions in the US are public (run by the government), but there are some private schools for which students have to pay a lot of money to attend. Many private schools have a high reputation, and parents send their children there so that they will have advantages later in life. Americans agree on the importance of education being available to all, but there is disagreement about what should be taught. The greatest area of disagreement is the place of religious and moral education. Commonly debated topics include whether teachers should ask students to say prayers and whether it is right to beat students for punishment. Sometimes the debate ends up in court of justice, and courts usually say that students shouldn't be forced to do something that is against their beliefs.)

/səbsɪdaɪz/
 /ˈstændədz/
 /əˈmerɪkənz/
 /ˈgrædʒueɪt/
 /ˈraɪtɪŋ/
 /ˈpraɪvɪt/
 /əˈtend/
 /ədˈvɑːntɪdʒɪz/
 /əˈveɪləbl/
 /rɪˈlɪdʒəs/
 /ˈpreəz/
 /ˈpʌnɪʃmənt/

(From D.K. Stevenson, *American life and Institutions*, USIA)

- ② Have a look at the coping box below. Then scan the text on the next page. Spot all the link words and explain the type of meaning relationship each of them expresses.

Coping

Link words (also called discourse connectors) are words that establish logical relationships/connections in sentences, between sentences, or between paragraph. Therefore, when you read, you should pay attention to the link words because authors often include them in order to help you better understand the text.

E.g. Unlike other countries (relationship of contrast) ...education. ↑

See Grammar Reference pp.226-227.

Unlike other countries, the United States does not have a national system of education. Education is considered to be the responsibility of each state. Although there is a Federal Department of Education, its purpose is merely to gather information, to provide counselling, and to help finance certain educational programmes. Since the Constitution does not state that education is a responsibility of the Federal government, all educational matters are left to the individual states. As a result, each of the 50 states is free to determine its own system for its own public schools. In turn, however, state constitutions give actual control of the public schools to the local districts within the 50 states. There are some 16,000 school districts within the 50 states. By contrast to other countries, there is, therefore, a very large amount of local control over education in the United States.

However, because local and state taxes support the public schools, there are significant differences in the quality of education. States and communities that are able or willing to pay more for schools, buildings, materials, and teachers almost always have better educational systems than those that cannot or do not. Thus, for example, the average expenditure per pupil for secondary education in the U.S. was \$4,000 in 1986. But some states such as Alaska, New Jersey, and Wyoming spent more than \$5,000 per pupil. In order to reduce the differences in the quality of education, the Federal government sometimes provides special funds to poorer areas and school districts. But in general Americans are worried that more Federal help could eventually lead to less independence and less local control in state education.

(From D.K. Stevenson, *American life and Institutions*, USIA)

► After reading

① Now discuss the following questions.

- A. Have the link words you have identified in the **As-you-read** rubric helped you in any way to better understand the text above?
- B. Which other link words can you use in replacement for those in the text?
- C. Are there any link words that **are not needed to understand the** logical relationships (between the sentences and between the paragraphs) in the text? Which ones?
- D. What link words can you add to make the meaning **clearer to the reader**?

② The sentences below are not in order. Re-order them to get a **coherent** text. Then use link words to make the relationship between the sentences more explicit.

- A. This idea is more or less accepted all over the world.
- B. The job market is changing rapidly as a result of technological advance.
- C. Today, many adults go back to school to broaden their knowledge and learn something they enjoy doing.
- D. The idea of continuing or lifelong education has become more important than ever before.
- E. People are afraid of losing their jobs if they don't keep upgrading and updating their occupational skills.
- F. In the near future, all of them will return to school mostly for occupational reasons.

► Writing development

● Write an **expository article** for a school magazine **analysing the causes and effects of examination stress on students**.

① Go to the next page and study the ideas written down in the network tree. Then jot down details of your own. Feel free to cross ideas in the network and replace them by your own ideas; or reshuffle the ideas.

② **Select** three to four ideas and develop them. Write your draft article. Each time you mention an **effect** try to support it with **evidence**, illustrations and examples.

E.g. - Generally, students who do not cram perform better than those who do in the *Baccalauréat* examination.

- According to statistics issued by the Ministry of National Education, 2 out of 10 *lycée* students who take crash courses suffer from stress.

③ Your primary purpose is **investigation** and **analysis**. You simply present facts and information. So don't give any judgement/opinion. Let the reader do that.

④ Make sure you use link words expressing:

- **cause/effect**: as a result, as a consequence, so, therefore, because, since
- **purpose**: in order to, to, so as to, so that, in order that
- **contrast**: unlike, in contrast to, contrary to
- **concession**: though, in spite of the fact that, although ...

⑤ Revise your draft paying attention to the structure of your sentences, the organisation of your paragraphs, coherence, spelling and grammar. Then hand a copy of your article to your teacher.

Believe it or not, this cooktop is ready to boil water. All it needs is an iron or steel pot. It works by creating a magnetic field that heats the inside of the pot – instead of the cooking surface. That makes it safer than conventional cooktops. And more energy efficient. So get yourself a Toshiba. Or you may get burned.



The one thing Toshiba's new induction cooktop won't cook.

In Touch with Tomorrow

TOSHIBA

Toshiba America, inc. 82 Totowa Road Wayne, NJ 07470

① Fill in the table below with information from the advert above. Just take notes. Don't write full sentences.

Brand	Advertised item	Audience	The four expectations exploited	Your reaction
				Is the advert persuasive or not? Why?

② Compare your answers to task 1 above with those of your partner. Then read the advert again and answer these questions.

- What type of pot do you need to use on the cooktop?
- What two things make this cooktop better than others?
- The picture shows a surface which is ready to boil water, but the person's hand is not getting burned. Can you say why?
- The expression **get burned** is a **pun** or a **play-on-word**. Which two meanings does it convey? Circle the two best choices from this list:
1. be on fire 2. be happy 3. be proud 4. regret

► After reading

① Write a holiday advert for your local travel agency. Use the advert on the previous page as a model. In order to sell your holiday, do not forget to include the following

- emphasis on low cost
- an appeal to the environment issue
- a catchy slogan
- reference to the local culture
- a promise of enjoyment

② Once you have corrected your advert, participate in a class competition to choose the best advert.

► Writing development

The advertisement leaflet on the next page belongs to a holiday maker who has come back home from a disappointing adventure holiday abroad. Read it carefully, then **complete the letter of complaint** below using the annotations in italics on the leaflet.

Dear Sir or Madam,
I am writing to _____ (\$1)

My holiday with your company did not correspond to what the advertisement claims. Firstly, the advert states that _____, but in fact _____.

Secondly the advert promises _____.

Unfortunately, _____. Actually, Thirdly, it says that _____. (\$2)

Though _____, As a result of all these

In general, our holiday _____. (\$3)

non-kept promises, I feel _____ because _____.

Therefore, I _____.

Yours faithfully,
Enc. The facsimile of our reservations

► As you read

① Read the text below to check the guesses and predictions you have made in answering questions 1-3 on the previous page.

So we can learn about the impact that a collision with comets might have on our planet. We will also have the chance to look at the crater caused by the collision, and study the ice and vapor that are released. In this way, we will also learn about the life secrets that lie deep within the hole of the comet. (§1)

When I describe the mission to people, I receive mixed reactions. Some feel that it is not really 'fine' to throw rockets at comets just to see what happens. They say that it is like greeting a stranger by shooting first and asking questions later. Aren't we going too far to satisfy our curiosity here? (§2)

Well, no. This explosion is not going to hurt anyone or anything. Here's an analogy. You would be justifiably angry if, in order to learn about shorelines, some scientist decided to dig up your favourite beach. But you wouldn't object if the scientist took a few grains of sand to study. There are approximately one trillion comets larger than 1 mile in diameter, in this solar system alone, and many more in the wider universe. So even if we destroyed the comet Tempel 1 entirely we would not be doing any harm to the cometary system. (§3)

In addition, this mission will not demolish the comet, alter its course, or affect the cosmos in any way. Comets collide with other celestial objects all the time. The only thing extraordinary about this particular impact is that we provoked it. 'Deep Impact' will simply make one more small hole in an object that, like all planets large and small, has been repeatedly hit by colliding debris since our solar system's origin, 4.6 billion years ago. (§4)

It is the beginnings of the universe that this experiment can illuminate. Beneath the dirty ice crust of a comet like Tempel 1 is material that has been frozen since the birth of our solar system. Inside this timeless frozen rock are organic molecules like those that made life possible on Earth. The study of that ice crust may help us explain the story of our origin. (§5)

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/'mɪʃn/
/'rɒkɪts/
/,kjuəri'ɒsəti/
/ə'nælədʒi/
/'ʃɔ:ləɪnz/
/ə,prɒksɪməti/
/hɑ:m/
/sɪ'lestiəl/
/rɪ'pɪ:tɪdlɪ/
/ɪk'sperɪment/
/ɪ'lumɪneɪt/
/mə'tɪəriəl/
/'mɒlɪkjʊ:lz/

As H.G. Wells once wrote, "There is no way back into the past. The choice is the universe – or nothing." It has been said that the dinosaurs disappeared because they couldn't go to another planet. Sooner or later a killer comet will again cross Earth's path, threatening all life. Fortunately, because we have knowledge about comets and space science, we will be able to survive. (§6)

/rəʊt/
/tʃɔɪs/
/dɪsə'piəd/
/'θreɪnɪŋ/

(From *International Herald Tribune*, Tuesday, July 5, 2005, p.8)

- ① Read the whole text again and answer the following questions.
 - A. Why did the NASA fire an explosive barrel in the path of *Tempel 1*?
Give one reason only.
 - B. Did people approve of throwing rockets at comets?
 - C. The author believes that the origin of life on Earth can be explained through a better knowledge of space. What paragraph indicates that?
 - D. Why is space science vital for humanity according to the author?
Explain by analogy with the fate of the dinosaurs.
- ② Have a look at coping box below. Then do the task that follows.

Coping

It is not necessary to stop and check the meaning of difficult words in the dictionary everytime you come across them in a text. Try to infer/ deduce their meaning from context, asking yourself these questions:

- ☐ Which class does the difficult word belong to? Is it a verb, a noun, an adjective, or an adverb?
- ☐ Doesn't the author include **synonyms** or **antonyms** of the difficult word in the text?
- ☐ Doesn't the author paraphrase/explain the word in the text?
- ☐ Are there any prefixes or suffixes suggesting the meaning of the word?
- ☐ Are there any link words (however, besides finally, etc.) that can help you identify meaning relationships in the text?

- **Task:** Now read the text on the previous pages again and deduce/infer the meaning of the words below.

Crater (§1) = _____

Hurt (§3) = _____

Ice crust (§5) = _____

Mixed reaction (§2) = _____

Demolish (§4) = _____ (refer to the end of §3)

disappeared (§6) =/= _____

- ③ Compare your answers to task 2 on the previous page with those of your partner. Then explain how you have inferred the meaning of the words. If you have made wrong inferences, explain why you have got them wrong.

► After reading

- ① The statements in the table below are taken from the text you have read. Think about the inference(s) that can be made from each of them and write them down in the table.

Statements from the text	Possible inferences
Throwing rockets at comets is like greeting a stranger by shooting first and asking questions later. § 2	
You would be justifiably angry if, in order to learn about shorelines, some scientist decided to dig up your favourite beach, but you wouldn't object if the scientist took a few grains of sand to study. §3	
Fortunately, because we have knowledge about comets and space science, we will be able to survive. §6	

- ② Read the coping box below and do the task that follows.

Coping

Argumentative texts defend implicitly or explicitly ideas, or points of view. They have two **functions**: a **polemical function** (dismissing someone else's point of view) and a **persuasive function** (changing someone else's point of view).

Argumentative texts resort to **three categories of reasoning**: **deductive reasoning** (drawing conclusions each time you say something) **concessive reasoning** (making concessions to other people's arguments, the better to criticize them) and **reasoning by analogy** (making your arguments more concrete by comparing situations).

- **Task:** On the basis of the information provided in the coping box, discuss the following features of the article on pages 156, 157 and 158.

A. Type of discourse B. Function C. Category of reasoning

► **As you read**

- Have a look at the coping box below. Then read the story about **The Unicorn in the Garden** and answer questions A-G below.

Coping

We have two types of comprehension questions: reference questions and inference questions. In **reference** questions, the answers are explicitly stated in the text whereas in **inference** questions, the answers are not directly stated. We must infer/deduce them from the facts and the reasoning developed in the text. To answer inference questions, we should, therefore, learn to compare, analyse, interpret the facts while reasoning, very often in the light of our own experience of life. We should learn to 'read between the lines'.

- A. What happened when the man was having breakfast ?
B. Are the husband and wife in love with each other ? Justify your answer.
C. What does the husband mean when he says : " We'll see about that ?"
D. Whom did the wife phone in order to have her husband put in a mental institution ?
E. What did the policemen and the psychiatrist do when they arrived ?
F. Why did the psychiatrist and the policemen look at the wife with great interest ?
G. What moral can you draw from the story ?

The Unicorn in the Garden

Once upon a sunny morning, a man who sat at his breakfast table looked from the window and saw a white unicorn with a golden horn quietly cropping the roses in the garden. The man went up to the bedroom where his wife was still asleep and awoke her. "There's a unicorn in the garden," he said, "eating roses." She opened one unfriendly eye and looked at him. "The unicorn is a mythical beast," she said, and turned her back on him. The man walked slowly downstairs and out into the garden. The unicorn was still there; he was now browsing among the tulips. "Here, unicorn," said the man, and he pulled up a lily and gave it to him. The unicorn ate it gravely. With a high heart, because there was a unicorn in his garden, the man went upstairs

/mɔːnɪŋ/
/'juːnɪkɔːn/
/ə'wəʊk/
/'mɪθɪkl/
/wɔːkt/
/'tjuːlɪps/
/ha:t/

and roused his wife again. "The unicorn," he said, "ate a lily". His wife sat up in bed and looked at him coldly. "You are crazy," she said "and I am going to have you put in a mental institution." The man, who had never liked the words "crazy" and "mental institution," and who liked them even less on a shining morning when there was a unicorn in the garden, thought for a moment. "We'll see about that," he said. He walked over to the door. "He has a golden horn in the middle of his forehead," he told her. Then he went back to the garden to watch the unicorn; but the unicorn had gone away. The man sat down among the roses and went to sleep. (§1)

As soon as the husband had gone out of the house, the wife got up and dressed as fast as she could. She was very excited and there was a gloat in her eye. She telephoned the police and she telephoned a psychiatrist; she told them to hurry to her house and bring a straight-jacket. When the policemen and the psychiatrist arrived, they sat down in chairs and looked at her, with great interest. "My husband," she said, "saw a unicorn this morning". The policemen looked at the psychiatrist, and the psychiatrist looked at the policemen. "He told me he ate a lily," she said. "He told me he had a golden horn in the middle of his forehead," she said. At a solemn signal from the psychiatrist, the policemen leaped from their chairs and seized the wife. They had a hard time subduing her, for she put up a terrific struggle, but they finally subdued her. Just as they got her into the straight-jacket, the husband came back into the house. (§2)

"Did you tell your wife you saw a unicorn?" asked the police. "Of course not," said the husband. "The unicorn is a mythical beast." "That's all I wanted to know," said the psychiatrist. "Take her away. I'm sorry, sir, but your wife is as crazy as a jaybird." So they took her away, cursing, and screaming and shut her up in an institution. The husband lived happily ever after. (§3)

(Adapted from James Thurber, *Fables of our Time*)

► After reading

① With your partner, compare your answers to the questions in the **As-you-read** rubric on the previous page. Then discuss the questions on the next page.

/raʊzd/
/kəʊldli/
/ɪns'tɪtjuːʃn/
/ʃaɪnɪŋ/
/məʊmənt/
/'fɒrɪd/
/wɒtʃ/
/ə'mʌŋ/
/'hʌzbənd/
/pə'liːs/
/saɪ'kətrɪst/
/ə'raɪvd/
/təʊld/
/'sɒləm/
/səb'djuːɪŋ/
/'streɪtdʒækɪt/
/waɪf/
/bɪːst/
/kɜːsɪŋ/

- A. Which questions (in the **As-you read** rubric) are reference questions ? Why ?
 B. Which questions are inference questions ? Why ?
 C. Which type of questions are easier to answer ? Why ?
 D. How did you proceed to find answers to the inference questions ?

② Have a look at the coping box below. Then discuss the questions that follow.

Coping

- ☐ Texts, especially literary texts, like the story you have just read, contain statements of facts and statements of opinion. E.g.
Fact : James Thurber is a 20th-century American writer.
Opinion : (He believes that) traditional fairy tales can be adapted to modern times.
- ☐ Opinions are often introduced by verbs such as **believe, think, suppose, etc.**
- ☐ Sometimes you have to work out/infer whether the statement is a fact or an opinion.
- ☐ After reading a text, you must also respond to it. Ask yourself some questions :
 - How are the opinions expressed in the text ?
 - Do I agree or disagree with them ? Why ?
 - Do I like this text or not ? Why ?
 - What lessons for life (if any) does the text contain ?

- A. How does James Thurber begin and end his story ? What type of stories start and end like this ?
 B. In what ways is this story different from fairy tales in characters, themes, language, etc. ?
 C. Do you think the author prefers the husband to the wife ? Argue your point.
 D. Do you agree with the author's opinion about modern tales ? Why (not) ?
 E. Do you like this story ? What makes you smile or laugh ? Why ?
 F. What adjectives would you associate with the mood of this story ? Tick (✓) in the relevant box.

tragic ☐ fantastic ☐ serious ☐ comic ☐ realistic ☐ hilarious ☐

③ Study the following interpretations of the story (that you have read above). Then choose the **one** you think is the best. Write 5 to 6 lines to justify your choice by giving evidence from the story.

Start like this:

In my opinion/ I think that/ _____. To begin with, _____

- A. The man tricked his wife into believing he was insane.
- B. The man was dreaming and sleepwalking. After he woke up he remembered nothing of what happened.
- C. The wife was mad and imagined the whole incident.
- D. The story is just a bad dream recounted by the wife to her husband.

► **Writing development**

● Write a review article of a film or a book of your choice. Ideally, it will be a recent comedy, tragedy, or love story. Your review should include the following :

- ① An introduction to tell your classmates about the theme and the storyline
E.g. • The book/film is about _____.
- ② A developing paragraph giving information about the characters, the setting, the action...
E.g. • It was written/directed/produced by _____.
 - It is set in _____.
 - The main characters are _____.
 - The main actors are _____.
- ③ A paragraph giving your viewpoint about the film/book
E.g. • The story/acting/photography is __ excellent/not very good. Say why.
- ④ A paragraph to say what you liked and didn't like about it.
E.g. • The thing I liked best about it was _____.
 - Another thing I really liked was _____.
 - The thing I didn't like much was _____.
- ⑤ A conclusion to give recommendations/advice
E.g. • You should /shouldn't/ ought/oughtn't to _____.

Appendix D

BAC Exam

CH08R15BAC2015



الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية

الديوان الوطني للامتحانات والمسابقات

دورة: جوان 2015

وزارة التربية الوطنية

امتحان بكالوريا التعليم الثانوي

الشعبة: لغات أجنبية

المدة: 03 سا و 30د

اختبار في مادة: اللغة الإنجليزية

على المترشح أن يختار أحد الموضوعين التاليين:

الموضوع الأول

Part One: Reading

(14 points)

A) Comprehension

(07 points)

Read the text carefully and do the activities.

When I graduated from college, I had a master's degree in finance. I was convinced I was now ready to conquer the world. I could pave my way to wealth, simply by holding that degree. I was exhausted studying and reading those boring books which didn't have the word "romance" in the title.

So, happily, I moved down the path of life. I took various positions: banking, accounting, and finally auditing. Later, I began taking a serious look at my life. Was this really what school had taught me? Wasn't there more to life than simply holding a job? How was I supposed to find my true vocation?

I began sitting at my desk contemplating my future. Surely there were others out there like me who began to question their fate and decided that their lives simply weren't working for them any more, and that a big change was necessary, or was I alone in this quest?

The funny thing about this long search is once you set your mind to do something, it's easy to find your answers. And the easiest way to find the answers is in writing. Books and magazines became my best friends. I began reading anything and everything, getting a new type of education from listening to what others had to say about success, life and the general pursuit of happiness. In fact, I discovered the importance of a real education, not just an institutionalized one.

A true education, which is one of my favourite topics, begins with a desire to learn. As long as that desire exists inside you; you can literally dominate anything. Knowledge is the key to success. It can unlock any door you choose; simply by having the will to learn. You can become anything you dream of and education is so easily achieved. Education is not synonymous with formal training. Education is simply the desire to learn. And there are so many ways to learn.

Thomas Edison had only three months of formal education during his entire lifetime. Bill Gates never completed college. Yet, every single one of these people became very successful in their lifetime. They had a thirst for knowledge, and learnt what was important to them in any way they could. They read. They educated themselves with happenings in the world around them. And they never gave up on the formal education of life.

Adapted from: www.visionofsuccess.com

1. Choose the right answer.

The text is: a- Expository b- Descriptive c- Narrative

2. Are these statements true or false? Write T or F next to the letter corresponding to the statement.

- The writer could conquer the world because of his wealth.
- The school taught him much more about life than holding a job.
- Schools are not the only way to get education and knowledge.

3. In which paragraph are the following ideas mentioned?

- The writer's reconsideration of his social position.
- The success of celebrities.



4. Answer the following questions according to the text.

- a- How was the writer feeling about his success in school?
 b- How did the writer discover the benefits of true education?
 c- What did the two celebrities have in common? Mention two features.

5. Who or what do the underlined words in the text refer to?

- a. this (§2) b. who (§3) c. you (§5) d. themselves (§6)

6. Give a title to the text.

B. Text Exploration

(07points)

1. Find in the text words whose definitions follow:

- a. to take control or possession of something by force. (§1)
 b. a long search for something that is difficult to find. (§3)

2. Complete the following chart as shown in the example.

	Verb	Noun	Adjective
Example	to know	knowledge	knowledgeable
	achievable
	to conquer
	education

3. Connect each pair of sentences with one of the words given. Make changes where necessary.

- a. Some people did not receive enough formal education. They have become famous. (in spite of)
 b. He graduated from college. He found a job. (as soon as)

4. Rewrite sentence (b) so that it means the same as sentence (a).

1. a. It would be advisable if you think carefully before choosing a job.
 b. You.....
 2. a. It can unlock any door you choose.
 b. Any door.....

5. Re-order the following sentences to make a coherent paragraph.

- a- They can also bring sustainable development.
 b- Education should be directed to human rights' respect.
 c- These aspects of education can help achieve peace in the world.
 d- It should promote understanding, tolerance and friendship.

6. Classify the following words according to the pronunciation of the final "ed".

convinced - educated - institutionalized - discovered

/t/	/d/	/id/

Part Two: Written Expression

(06points)

Choose ONE of the following topics:

Topic One:

Nowadays, a lot of youngsters are not interested in formal education. Do they share the writer's point of view, or do they have different reasons? Write a composition of about 120 to 150 words to state your opinion. You can use the notes below:

lack of interest and enthusiasm - availability of leisure and facilities - poverty - absence of job security...

Topic Two: The use of the Internet by children and teenagers pose an ethical dilemma. Write a paragraph of about 120 to 150 words in which you state arguments to support this statement.