Teaching to the Test in the Algerian Secondary School EFL Class

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DEDICATION

In the Name of God, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate

I dedicate this work to

My parents
My fiancé
My sisters and brothers
My sisters and brothers-in-law
My best friends: Zeyneb, Amel, Hannan, Wissem and Rana
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ABSTRACT

The present research aims at investigating to what extent developing communicative competence is given priority in the Algerian secondary school EFL class. It attempts to uncover whether EFL teachers’ main focus is to develop their pupils’ communication skills, or to cover the prescribed syllabus in the limited time available and make pupils ready for exams. Two questionnaires are used in this study. The first one is for teachers, and aims at investigating whether teachers teach to the test or to develop the learners’ communicative competence. The second one is for pupils. It is concerned with the pupils’ views, perceptions and attitudes about their teachers’ way of teaching and testing. The results reveal that although most of teachers are aware of the importance of developing the learners’ communicative competence, they do not give it much more priority in their practices.
LIST of ABBREVIATIONS

- AS: Année Secondaire
- CBE: Competency-Based Education
- CBLT: Competency-Based Language Teaching
- CLT: Communicative Language Teaching
- EFL: English as a Foreign Language
- N: Number
- Q: Question
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INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem
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1. Statement of the Problem

Today’s, secondary school English coursebooks in Algeria are designed on the basis of the competency-based approach, which is learner-centered and project-oriented. They aim at helping learners build basic language skills so that they can communicate correctly and fluently in English. The teachers’ role has changed from being the doer and the initiator of all tasks to a mere facilitator and a guide. The aim is to help learners and get them work by themselves or in groups to enhance communication skills.

However, on the basis of informal interviews with secondary school pupils we have heard that English some teachers show little interest in pupils, and even though the approach is communicative, teachers do not focus so much on how they can help them develop their communicative competence. Rather, their aim is just to go through the prescribed syllabus in the limited time available to enable them to pass exams. Teachers are also said to work with some ‘good’ pupil and little or no focus is given to ‘less good’ pupils. On the other hand, according to our experience as a temporary teacher of English at Oum El-Bouaghi University, most of first year LMD students are unable to communicate easily in English notwithstanding the fact that they have been taught the target language for seven years (four years at the middle school and three years at the secondary school) in the framework of the communicative approach.

2. Aim of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive study is to investigate whether developing the pupils’ communication skills is actually given priority in the Algerian secondary school English as a foreign language (EFL) class. More particularly, we aim at exploring teachers’ and pupils’ beliefs and practices regarding developing communication skills and teaching to the test.

3. Research Questions and Hypothesis

Our study aims at answering the following questions:

- Why do most of first year learners of English find many difficulties to communicate in English though they were taught through the communicative approach at the secondary school?
- Is developing the pupils’ communication skills given priority in Algerian secondary school classes?

Accordingly, we hypothesize that secondary school EFL teachers teach to the test and give little attention to developing the pupils’ communication skills.

4. Research Methodology

The questionnaire is used as a research tool in this work. One questionnaire is designed for secondary school pupils to inquire about their teachers’ way of teaching, main focus, and whether they encourage them to speak and communicate in English. Another questionnaire is designed for the teachers to attempt to uncover whether their main interest is the examination or the learners’ communicative competence.

5. Structure of the Study

Our research is divided into two chapters. The first chapter deals with the background of the study, namely with the issues of communicative competence, communicative language teaching (CLT) and testing, and teaching to the test. The second chapter is concerned with the field study, that is, outlining and discussing the results of the questionnaires.
Chapter One: DEVOLOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND TEACHING TO TNE TEST

Section One: COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Introduction

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Introduction

When teaching English as a second or foreign language, the phrase ‘communicative competence’ is highlighted. This section deals with the concept of communicative competence and communicative language teaching. We will deal with a general overview of these concepts, and their importance in teaching/learning and testing.

1.1. Communicative Competence

1.1.1. Historical Overview

Being able to reach our goals in social life depends to a large extent on our communicative competence. The scientific history of the concept of communicative competence is traced back to the 1960's (1962, 1964, 1972) as a counter-movement against the so-called linguistic competence introduced by the structural linguist Chomsky (1965), who based his linguist theory on an ideal speaker-listener with perfect linguistic knowledge, which is supposed to be unaffected by cognitive and situational factors during actual linguistic performance. The sociolinguist Hymes (1973) finds it necessary to differentiate between two types of competence: linguistic competence which deals with producing and understanding grammatically correct sentences, and communicative competence which deals with producing and understanding sentences that are appropriate and acceptable in a particular situation. Thus, he introduced the term ‘communicative competence’ to emphasize that Chomsky’s concept of linguistic competence could not serve as a relevant component.

In a theory of real life communication, and as Habermas (1970:137-138 cited in Knapp & Antos 2008: 15) argues that general semantics cannot be developed sufficiently on the monological linguistic competence proposed by Chomsky. So, communicative competence, as Hymes defines it, is a knowledge of the rules for understanding and producing both the referential and social meaning of language. Hence, a good communicator has many constraints and the underlying ability of the interlocutors is among them. As Wilson & Sabee (2003:3-4 cited in Knapp & Antos op.cit: 15) put it:
We have so many scholars, from so many fields, studied communicative competence within so many relational, and cultural context our hunch is that scholars as well as the contemporary western societies in which most live and work, widely accept the following trait beliefs: (a) within many situation, not all things that can be said and done are equally competent; (b) success in personal and professional relation-ships depends, in no small part, on communicative competence; and (c) most people display incompetence in at least few situations, and a smaller number are judged incompetent across many situations.

1.1.2. Teaching Communicative Competence

Language learning, as Widdowson (1978) views it, is not restricted to the acquisition of knowledge of the rules of grammar, but it relates to acquiring the ability to use language to communicate. According to him, knowing a language is not just knowing how to understand, speak, read and write, but how sentences are used to communicate: “Do not only learn how to compose and comprehend correct sentences as isolated units of random occurrence; but also how to use sentences appropriately to achieve communicative purposes” (ibid). He states that six or more years of instruction in English does not guarantee normal language communication (widdowson, 1973). What he suggested is that communicative abilities should be developed at the same time as linguistic skills. Hence, he strongly suggested that we need to teach communicative competence along with linguistic competence.

Making the discussion of teaching both linguistic and communicative abilities clear, Widdowson (1978) distinguishes two aspects of performance: ‘usage’ and ‘use’. ‘Usage’ refers to the extent to which a language user demonstrates his knowledge of linguistic rules, whereas ‘use’ refers to the extent to which a language user demonstrates his ability to use his knowledge of linguistic rules for effective communication. Besides, he differentiates between two aspects of meaning: ‘significance’ and ‘value’. The former refers to the meaning that sentences have in isolation from the particular situation in which they are produced. The latter refers to the meaning that sentences take on when they are used to communicate. He suggests that the classroom presentation of language must ensure the acquisition of both kinds of competence by providing both
linguistic and communicative contexts. The linguistic context emphasizes usage to enable the students to select which form of sentences is contextually appropriate, while the communicative context focuses on use to enable the students to recognize the type of communicative function that sentences fulfill.

1.2. Communicative Language Teaching

1.2.1. Definition

“Communicative Language Teaching can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language, how learners learn a language, the kind of classroom activities that best facilitates learning, the role of the teachers and the classroom.” (Richards, 2006:2).

The major aim behind it is that of teaching communicative competence. Before, language learning restricted to the mastery of grammatical competence. However, in recent years language learning has been viewed from very different perspectives. It is seen as resulting from processes such as interaction between the learner and the teacher, collaborative creation of meaning, creating meaningful and purposeful interaction through language, and learning through attending to the feedback learners get when they use language.

1.2.2. Elements of Communicative Language Teaching

Belchamber (2007: para.2) reporting the findings of an investigation, states:

Most groups are enthusiastic about the lesson opportunities which CLT offers. However, some indicated they felt constrained by the system under which they operate, especially those teaching in settings which are particularly-exam focused. In addition, they queried the relevance of CLT to their situation, where many of students never used English outside the classroom.

Accordingly, she suggested four elements of CLT that we are going to view in the following sub-sections
1.2.2.1. Communication According to Ability

The label CLT implies “a focus on communication”. Some consider that CLT cannot be employed with low level learners, given that authentic communication cannot happen with a limited set of vocabulary and restricted range of function.

Basing teaching on communication, both authenticity and meaningfulness of spoken exchanges are required. Teachers should create a context for realistic and meaningful interaction, and at the same time provide support to students to generate the target language. She considers that: “Producing a language is a skill and when we learn a skill we practice in improved settings. For example, before a nurse gives a real injunction, they have punctured many a piece of fruit to hone their technique.” (Belchamber, op.cit: para. 5)

1.2.2.2. Accuracy and Fluency

Accuracy and fluency are among the issues to be considered in CLT. Teachers decide whether to put much focus on accuracy or fluency depending on the type of the lesson given to students. If they need to get things right and take an opportunity for correction, accuracy is the teachers’ choice.

However, teachers need also to apply strategies to enable their students to speak and interact since this is the basis of CLT. Belchamber (op.cit: para.7) states that: “There is a lot of preparation; accuracy practice is the bridge to a fluency activity. By implication, CLT involves equipping students with vocabulary structures and functions, as well as strategies, to enable them interact successfully.” Richards (op.cit:14) argues that “fluency is developed by creating classroom activities in which students must negotiate meaning”. He differentiates between activities that focus on fluency and those which focus on accuracy as follow:

Activities focusing on fluency are those which:

- Reflect natural use of language;
- Focus on achieving communication;
- Require meaningful use of language;
- Produce language that may not be predictable; and
- Seek to link language use and context.
Activities focusing on accuracy are those which:

- Reflect classroom use of language;
- Focus on the formation of correct examples of language;
- Practice language out of context;
- Do not require meaningful communication; and
- Control choice of language.

1.2.2.3. Promoting Learning

The aim of any teacher is first and for most to promote learning in their students. Students learning should emphasize applied learning and thinking skills, not just declarative knowledge and skill. Teachers should consider who they are teaching and for which purposes. They have to know whether their students are in need to learn English to know lexical items and linguistic rules to pass their exams, or they want to learn it for communication purposes. What should be given much emphasis is how teachers can help learners to master the language since if they master the language, they will be able to perform better in exams. In addition, those who do see a purpose beyond classroom related English will be better equipped for using the language socially.

1.2.2.4. Motivation

Motivation is one of the most important issues in learning EFL. Learners’ contribution is more related to the extent to which they are motivated. As stated by Belchamber (op.cit: para.11) “motivation relates to engaging students but also includes confidence building. If there is a climate of trust and support in the classroom, then students are more likely to contribute.”

There are many ways in which EFL learners can be motivated. Among those ways are allowing pair-checking of answers before open-class checking, and giving a chance to students to make group discussion before speaking in front of the whole class. Domain (cited in Belchamber,op.cit: para.11) suggests that: “The need for ongoing negotiation during interaction increases the learner’s overt participation. Thus, teachers should make their students achieve negotiation in class-room, even by uttering a word or a phrase.”

1.3. Competency-Based Language Teaching
1.3.1. Historical Background

Competency-Based Education (CBE) is an educational movement that emphasizes the outcomes of learning in the development of language programs (Richards & Rodgers, 1986:141). It is more concerned with what the learners are expected to do with language. It advocates defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that students need to possess at the end of a course being studied. It is described by Schenck (1978:41; in Richards & Rodgers; op.cit: 141) “as outcomes-based and is adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers and community”. As an application of the principles of CBE to language teaching, competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) emerged. By the end of 1970’s, this approach has been adopted as the basis for the design of work-related and survival-oriented language teaching programs for adults, and later on it has been used as a central approach to the planning of language programs in some parts of the world.

This newly adopted approach is seen as a positive agent of change. It offers teachers an opportunity to revitalize their education and training programs. Not only the quality of assessment improves, but the quality of teaching and students’ learning will be enhanced by the clear specification of expected outcomes and the continuous feedback that competency –based assessment can offer. These beneficial effects have been observed at all levels and kinds of education and training, from primary school to university, and from academic studies to workplace training (Docking, 1994:15; in Richards & Rodgers, op.cit:142).

In Algeria, it has been introduced by the Algerian Ministry of Education in 2005 and has been adopted in the new coursebooks and programs. In this regard, a competency is viewed as :

Cette approche lui permet d’installer des compétence intellectuelle et de déveloper divers processus nécessaire à l’assimilation et l’utilisation de ses connaissances. Elle lui permet également de mobiliser des ressources qu’il développe à l’école en vue de faire face à des situations the school situation-problems scolaire et extrascolaire. (Louznadjj: 2003; in Belouahem, 2008:77).
1.3.2. Distinguishing Features

CBLT is based on the functional and interactional view of language learning. The underlying principle is that of teaching language for the sake of interaction and communication between people to achieve certain specific goals and purposes. So, language is no longer taught without reference to the social context in which it is used. Hence, CBLT has been used as a framework for language teaching in situations where learners have specific needs and are in particular roles, and where the language skills they need can be fairly accurately predicted or determined (Richard & Rodgers, op.cit:143).

CBLT is built around the concept of communicative competence. It gives the opportunity to learners to develop abilities to use language for communication purposes. Thus, the teacher’s role is to focus on teaching language as a function of communication rather than teaching language in isolation. Docking (1994; in Richards & Rodgers, op.cit: 144) finds that:

CBLT competency-based language teaching is designed not around the notion of subject knowledge, but around the notion of competency. The focus moves from what students know about language to what they can do with it. The focus on competences or learning outcomes underpins the curriculum framework and syllabus specification, teaching strategies and assessment.

So, this approach considers that acquiring competences is what learners need to achieve from learning, and it is only through this approach that they will develop a know how act by means of different functions and skills. They will also acquire strategies to be competent language users. In addition, they will learn how to work cooperatively through sharing and exchanging information and knowledge with others. In this respect, it is stated in the programme designed by the Algerian Ministry of Education (2005:4) that: “cette approche permet a l’enseignant d’apprendre a apprendre mais egalement d’apprendre a partager echanger et cooperer avec l’autre” (Cited in Belouahem; op.cit:78)

In short, CBLT is the approach which is characterized by:

- Less authoritarian attitude;
- Openness to discussion and negotiation; and
- Sensitiveness to learners’ concerns.

1.3.3. The Teacher’s Role and Teaching Strategies in CBA

As far as CBA is concerned, the teacher plays a great role as an important partner in the process. In fact, s/he is the one who takes the responsibility of applying this approach and giving life to the education tools.

Before, the teacher was the only one who takes part in the lesson. S/he was the one who provided information, explained and evaluated. However, now more dominance is given to the learners. They are seen as active participants in the learning process. Hence greater commitment on their part is required, and also more opportunities have to be given to them to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

CLT learners are seen as more outwardly focused from the beginning. They are viewed as negotiators who take some responsibility for their own learning. They are contributors to the learning process. Language production is encouraged from the start, even if in the primary language. (Burwell, 2001:3)

So, the teacher is no longer the one who takes initiation, but rather should leave a space to the learners for more authentic interaction. In this regard, Burwell (op.cit:11) states that:

As with nearly every other aspect of CLT, the teacher’s role is broadly defined, thanks to the various views of CLT. Titles such as facilitator, guide, organizer, needs analyst and counselor are all used to describe the teacher’s function. But the common element again is communication so the first and for most roof the teacher is to promote and manage the communicative process in the classroom to prepare the learners for authentic real world interaction.
1.4. Communicative Language Teaching and Communicative Language Testing

Communicative language testing goes in parallel with CLT which emerged in 1970’s. It opposes the structural approach which highlights lexis, grammar and phonology (Skehan, 1990; in Aouine, 2010:39). By definition, communicative language testing is “intended to provide the tester with information about the testee’s ability to perform in the target language in certain context-specific tasks”. (Langham & Body, 2000: 75). It has, as Weir (1990) stated “several masters to serve, linguistic, pedagogic, administrative, acquisitional and ideological” (cited in Aouine, op.cit:40). This kind of testing is based on the models of communicative competence introduced by Canale and Swain (1980). According to Spolsky (1989:140; in Langham & body, op.cit:77)

Language tests involve measuring a subject’s knowledge of, and proficiency in, the use of language. A theory of communicative competence is a theory of the nature of such knowledge and proficiency. One cannot develop sound language tests without a method of defining what it means to know a language, for until you have decided what you are measuring, you cannot claim to have measured it.

The work of Canale and Swain began in an attempt to “determine the feasibility and practicality of measuring we call the communicative competence of students enrolled in core French as a second language programmes in elementary school in Ontario.” (Canale & Swain, 1980; in Langham & Body, op.cit:77). The implication of this model for communicative language testing is that the learners have to be tested not only on their knowledge of language, but also on their ability to use it in a communicative situation.
Conclusion

The issues communicative competence, communicative language teaching and communicative language testing are crucial aspects that should be taken into account when teaching English as a foreign language. Teachers should be aware of the fact that learners are in need to develop their communicative competence in the target language. Hence, communicative language teaching is required, and in this case communicative language testing is to be concerned with.
Section Two: TEACHING TO THE TEST

Introduction

1.1. Definition
1.2. Advantages of Teaching to the Test
1.3. Problems with Teaching to the Test

Conclusion
Introduction

In the previous section, we have dealt with the issues of developing communicative competence, communicative language teaching and testing and how they go hand in hand. In this section our main focus is teaching to the test. We will try to illustrate what teaching to the test refers to, and then we will shift to advantages of teaching to the test and problems with teaching to the test and how they negatively affect learning.

1.1. Definition

Whenever we utter the phrase “teaching to the test”, the first thing that comes to our mind is teaching for the sake of exams, in other words, teaching for standardized tests. By definition, teaching to the test is an educational practice where teachers focus on providing their learners with a particular set of knowledge and skills presented in the curriculum to be tested on. Teachers in this case spend most of the time studying the textbook concepts to be given to the learners so that they can prepare themselves for exams. Teachers’ efforts are so limited to what is included in the curriculum/test.

As far as teaching to the test is concerned, Popham (2001) differentiates between two types of assessment instruction “curriculum teaching” and “item teaching”. The former refers to the body of knowledge and skills that the test question represents, i.e., learners will be tested on certain knowledge and skills presented by the teacher and they are included in the curriculum. For example, if students will be tested on fractions, curriculum teachers will cover range of knowledge and skills related to this topic. For instance, students will understand what fractions are, know their manipulation mathematically, understand how to use them to solve more complex problems and able to communicate with and about them. Item teaching refers to the use of “the actual test items in classroom activities or the use of items similar to the test items” (Popham, op.cit: 16). This means that teachers limit their instruction, organizing their teaching around the same items which are likely to be found on the test. Popham provides the following example “a high-stakes test includes the multiple-choice subtraction item Gloria has 14 pears but ate 3”. What the test taker is supposed to do is to “choose from four choices the number of pears that Gloria has now”. If the item” Gloria has 14 bannans, but ate 3” is revised by the teacher slightly, the test-taker only substitutes the
kind of fruit and the fruit-eater, and the cognitive demand is unchanged. Jerald in his article ‘Teach to the Test. Just Say No’ states that: “item teachers might drill students on a small set of vocabulary words expected to be assessed rather than employing instructional strategies that help students develop the kind rich and broad vocabulary that best contribute to strong reading comprehension”

Item teaching is unreliable because it misrepresents how much students have learnt about the topic. Students, for instance, who have learnt only the 10 words on the vocabulary portion of the reading test will be scored well even though they have not developed a broad vocabulary, which is supposed to be the goal. So, students in this case will not have the opportunity to master a particular skill or concept, and will not have the opportunity to answer questions which assess the same skill or concept in different manner.

1.2. Advantages of Teaching to the Test

One of the most controversial subjects in recent time is the issue of standardized testing. Some claim that it is prejudice and puts unfair pressure on learners. However, others argue that if this is true, tests would have been discontinued long time ago (Johnson, 2010:1). In fact, teaching to the test has many benefits. According to Johnson:

Tests give the teachers goals as well as standard to which they can teach. It is a regional goal that means it cannot change the influence of on person or small group. If a principle accuses teachers of not teaching well, they can use the standardized test in their defense. Of course, it can also go the other way. Goals and standards are needed in every field, but especially teaching

So, standardized tests help the teacher in many ways. They show him how well students are prepared and ready to move on in a subject on a state. They also help them to have an overview about the learners’ level, i.e., they can look at the results and see where the student is weak and will possibly have trouble. Teachers, in this case, know the strengths and weaknesses of their students and might base the test question on the strengths, resulting in consistently high grades.
1.3. Problems with Teaching to the Test:

When teaching to the test, students are likely to experience for more facts and routines than conceptual understanding and problem-solving in their curriculum. Some observers argue that drill focused forms of teaching to the best minimize the students’ opportunity to learn more cognitive skills, such as how to solve problems and communicate effectively. They point to the work of economists, such as Frank Levy and Richard Murnane, who warn that most of job, especially higher paying jobs, requires more complex skills rather than rote routine skills. Levy and Murnane in their analysis of tasks performed in jobs across the economy between 1969 and 1999 found a big decline in rote tasks ad routine work along with a skyrocketing demand fo’ expert thinking skills and complex communication skills. Murnane, in Jerald, argue that: young people who are decided the opportunity to develop such advanced skills will be at increasing disadvantages in the changing economy of the 21st century”, in the sense that educators who settle for drill and kill instruction-or who do not at least balance such instruction with more complex assignment-will be trading long-term benefits to students for short-term gains or standardized tests.

Standardized tests assess only part of the curriculum, and time spent on test taking often over emphasizes basic-skills subjects and neglect high order thinking skills, i.e., teaching to the test not only reduces the depth of instruction in specific subjects but it also narrows the curriculum so that non-tested disciplines receive less attention during the school day.
Conclusion

Standardized testing is and will likely continue to be a controversial subject. It will always be considered as discriminatory and biased against someone and the teachers will be accused for ‘teaching to the test’. Teachers should not limit their teaching to what is included only in the curriculum to prepare the learners for exams. They should rather teach them high skills and competences to adopt them in their real life situations.
Chapter Two: TEACHING TO THE TEST IN THE ALGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL EFL CLASS

Section One: Pupils in Action

Introduction

2.1. The Sample

2.2. Secondary School Pupils’ Questionnaire

2.2.1. Description

2.2.2. Results and Discussion

Conclusion

Section Two: Teachers in Action

Introduction

2.1. The Sample

2.2. Secondary School Teachers’ Questionnaire

2.2.1. Description

2.2.1. Results and Discussion

Conclusion
Section one: Pupils in Action

Introduction

2.1. The Sample

2.2. Secondary School Pupils' Questionnaire

2.2.1. Description

2.2.2. Results and Discussion

Conclusion
Introduction

Field investigation is the central focus of the present chapter. In the first section, we will deal with the learner as an important factor in language learning. We will try to investigate and analyse what learners think about learning English as a foreign language, their major interest when learning that language and what they can say about their teachers' way of teaching and testing.

2.1. The Sample

In the framework of this study, a questionnaire is designed to explore the Algerian pupils' attitudes, views and perceptions about English learning/teaching and testing. We have chosen this method because we consider it as the most appropriate one to test our hypothesis. We wished also to do classroom observation, but we could not do it due to time constraints.

Secondary school learners of English in Algeria constitute our target population. Our study sample is that of secondary school learners of English at the secondary school of Delphi Ibrahim, F'kirina. The latter was opted for because it is the place where the researcher lives. Hence, help and collaboration were more expected. In addition, we have faced some difficulties to explore our research in other places.

The questionnaire is designed for first year, second year and third year pupils. This questionnaire is common to all of them. It is worth mentioning that all the learners are from the literary stream, given that foreign languages are of the major importance in this stream, particularly English. 44 pupils were randomly selected to answer the questionnaire.
2.2. Secondary School Pupils' Questionnaire

2.2.1. Description

In the introduction of the questionnaire, we explained its aim to the participants, namely to investigate to what extent developing communicative competence of EFL learners is given priority in the Algerian secondary school. The questionnaire includes 17 questions presented in five sections: ‘General Information’, ‘English Learning’, ‘English as Tool of Communication’, ‘Teaching and Testing Method’ and ‘Further Suggestions’.

Section 1: General Information

This section aims at getting general information about the informants, namely their gender (Q1), their age (Q2), and their level (Q3).

Section 2: English Learning

The aim of this section is to investigate whether learning English is considered as difficult or not (Q5), whether pupils are interested in learning English for the sake of examination or for developing their communication skills (Q6), and which activities they most like to do inside the classroom (Q7).

Section 3: English as Tool of Communication

This section aims at investigating whether pupils practise English orally inside the classroom (Q8). In case the answer is No, pupils are required to tick the appropriate reason(s) from four provided ones with a possibility to add their own reasons (Q9). The section also aims at investigating whether they use English to communicate outside the classroom (Q10).
Section 4: Teaching and Testing Method

This section investigates: whether English teachers work with the whole class or with some good pupils (Q11), whether they make their pupils work in pairs/groups (Q12), the kind of tests pupils prefer (Q13), and the reasons why they do prefer certain kinds of tests (Q14).

Section 5: Further Suggestions (Q17)

The last section provides the pupils with a space where they can add any comments or suggestions.

3.2. Results and Discussion

Section one: General Information

Q1: Gender

a- Male
b- Female

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>15.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>84.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table1: Pupils’ Gender
Among 44 respondents, 15, 91% are male, and 84, 09% are female. This indicates that the number of girls is higher compared to the number of boys.

**Q2: Age**

![](image)

**Table 2: Pupils' Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>01</td>
<td>02.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>31.82</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>22.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>09.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows that the learners are aged 15-21

Q3: Level

a- 1ᵉ AS  
b- 2ᵉ AS  
c- 3ᵉ AS

Table 3: Pupils’ Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1ᵉ AS</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ᵉ AS</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3ᵉ AS</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>04.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The informants are from the literary stream at the secondary School Delphi Ibrahim. Languages are very important for them, especially the English language. The majority of the respondents are from first year and second year level (47, 73% for both), and only 4, 54% from third year level. This is because 3ᵉ AS pupils have finished their programme and they have been preparing for their baccalaureate exam.

Section 2: English learning

Q4: Do you think that English is difficult to learn?

a- Yes  
b- No

Table 4: Difficulties of Learning English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>09.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>90.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Difficulties of Learning English

90, 91% of the respondents answered that English is not difficult to learn, and 09, 09% answered the opposite. What we can say is that most of the pupils have a positive attitude towards English learning, and they consider it as an achievable goal.

Q5: If Yes, please explain why

Two pupils stated that English words are difficult to pronounce; one pupil stated that they are not motivated to learn it, and the other gave no explanation.

Q6: Are you interested in learning English

a- To pass your exams
b- Develop your communication skills
c- Other: please, specify
Table 5: Pupils’ English Learning Motive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>61.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ab</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>09.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pupils’ English Learning Motive

61.36% of the respondents answered that they want to develop their communication skills, 29.55% of them answered that they are interested in learning English just to pass their exams. However and 09.09% have chosen both options. Others reasons added by the pupils are:

- “I want to become a teacher of English”;
- “I like my teacher of English”;
- “English is an international language, and we have to learn it” ; and
- “I want to know more about English speaking culture.”

These results indicate that most of the pupils are aware of the importance of English language in their life.
Q7: What are the activities that you most like to do inside the classroom?

a- Grammar-based activities
b- communication activities
c- Vocabulary exercises (about synonyms, antonyms)
d- Reading comprehension activities
e- Writing paragraphs
f- Other: please, specify

Table 6: Classroom Liked Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>13.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>13.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4

Classroom Liked Activities
As Table 6 shows, most of the respondents answered that they prefer doing communication activities inside the classroom. The option ‘b’ (communication activities) was mostly considered with a percentage of 52.27%. The other options ‘a’ (grammar-based activities) and ‘d’ (reading comprehension activities) were less considered (13.64% for both), and only one pupil who added ‘doing project’. These results reveal that pupils are more interested in developing their communication skills.

Section 3: English as Tool of Communication

Q8: Do you practise English orally inside the classroom?

a- Yes
b- No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>20.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>79.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practising English Orally inside the Classroom

Figure 5

Practising English Orally inside the Classroom
The results provided in Table 7 show that the majority of pupils (79.55%) do not practise English orally inside the classroom. The option ‘a’ (positive answer) was chosen with a percentage of 20.45%. This indicates that only a few number of secondary school English learners do practise the language orally inside the classroom.

Q9: If No, is it because

a- You lack the language to speak
b- You are not motivated to speak
c- You are afraid of making errors
d- You are not given the opportunity to speak
e- Other: please, specify

Table 8: Reasons for not Practising English Orally inside the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>18.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>56.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reasons for not Practising English Orally inside the Classroom

Table 8 shows that most of the pupils who said ‘No’ to Q8 consider the option “c” (fear of making errors) as their main reason. The options‘d’ (you are not given the opportunity to speak) and ‘b’ are also considered (31.82% and 27.27% respectively) However, The option “a” (you lack the language to speak) is less considered. This indicates that although pupils have the willingness to speak, they cannot do so. This is due to their fear of making errors when speaking, on the one hand, and lack of motivation and few opportunities offered by teachers, on the other hand. Hence, teacher are not interested in making pupils speak, and this is why they do not encourage them and give them a chance.

Q10: Do you use English to communicate outside the classroom?

  a- Yes
  b- No
Table 9: Practising English outside the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>61.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 shows that the vast majority of informants (61.36%) do not practice English outside the classroom.

Section 4: Teaching and Testing Method

Q11: In your opinion does your teacher

a- Work with the whole class
b- With some good pupils

Table 10: teachers’ working way in the Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>63.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers’ Working Way in the Class

This table shows that most of the pupils (63.64%) agree that their teacher of English works with some good learners and not with the whole class. This indicates that most of the pupils feel ignored by their teacher and the latter does not care if everybody is involved or not.

Q12: Does your teacher make you work in pairs/groups?

a- Yes
b- No

Table 11: Working in Pairs/Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 shows that all pupils agree that their teachers make them work in pairs/groups. Q13 tells us more about how much they do so.

**Q13: If Yes, how often**

- a- Always
- b- Regularly
- c- Rarely
- d- Never

**Table 12: The Frequency of Pair/Group Work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>54.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Frequency of Pair/Group Work

According to Table 12 half of respondents (54.55%) answered that they rarely work in pairs/groups. 30.09% of the pupils state that they do so regularly. However, 11.36% of them answered that their teachers always make them work in pairs/groups. This means that teachers do not focus on the activities through which pupils can share knowledge and negotiate meaning.

Q14: What kind of tests do you prefer?

a- Written tests
b- Oral tests

Table 13: Pupils’ Preferred Types of Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>93.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>06.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 13, the majority of informants opted for option 'a' (93.18%) i.e. they prefer written tests. The option 'b' is less considered (06.82%).

**Q15: Whatever your answer, please explain why**

Most of the pupils (37) who stated that they prefer written tests gave the following reasons:

- They have enough time to think about the answer.
- Their performance is good when they write, not when they speak.
- They have time to correct their mistakes.
- Feeling shame to answer in front of their classmates.
- The possibility to answer from the text.
- They feel more relaxed when writing.

Those who stated that they prefer oral tests gave as reasons the opportunity to practise the language orally. 1 pupils did not provide any explanation.

**Q16: Have you ever been tested orally?**

a- Yes
b- No
Table 14 shows that testing speaking performance of secondary school pupils is not considered by EFL teachers. The option 'b' (negative answer) was highly opted for with a percentage of 65.90%.

Q17: Do you have further suggestions or comments?

28 pupils completed the section of 'Further Suggestions'. They raised the following points:

- The importance of learning English and the willingness to learn it.
- The difficulty of learning English language (pronunciation, tenses, sentence structure.)
- The inability of the teacher to transmit the message to the pupils.
- Their wish to go abroad.
- The need to learn English for certain specific purposes.
- Learning English for communication purposes.
- Teaching the English language is not given much importance as other subjects (mathematics...).

**Conclusion**

On the basis of the analysis of the secondary school pupils' questionnaire, we can state that the vast majority of EFL learners are aware of the importance of English learning, and they are in need to develop their communicative competence. However, it seems from their feedback that their teachers do not respond to this need.

First, most of pupils agree that their teachers work only with good pupils (63.64%; Q11; see p.32). Teachers do not take into account whether everybody is involved or not. In other words, they are just interested in presenting their lesson.

Second, although all pupils stated that their teachers make them work in pairs/groups (100%; Q12; see p.33), more than the half stated that they do so rarely (54.55%; Q13; see p.34). This implies that teachers give few opportunities to their pupils to practise English in communication activities such as role play and group discussion.

Third, as the pupil’s feedback shows, testing speaking performance is not considered by EFL teachers (54.55%; Q16; see p.37). This means that teachers do not give much attention to enhancing their learners’ speaking performance.

Finally, pupils are not motivated to speak, and they do not receive any opportunity from their teachers to do so.
Section 2: Teachers in Action

Introduction

2.1. The Sample

2.2. Secondary School Teachers' Questionnaire

2.2.1. Description

2.2.2. Results and Discussion

Conclusion
Introduction

In the first section, we have dealt with the analysis of the secondary school pupils' questionnaire. In the present section, the EFL teacher is our major focus. We will try to investigate whether teachers face difficulties in the application of CLT and the reasons behind these difficulties, the kind of tests they usually design for their pupils, whether they assess their pupils speaking performance, and other relevant issues.

2.1. The sample

Secondary school teachers of English constitute our target population. Our sample is that of the secondary school teachers of English at the level of the Wilaya of Oum El-Bouaghi. Many questionnaire (18) were distributed to teachers in Delfi Ibrahim, Boukharouba Lakhdar, L’Amir Salhi, Boukhalfa Sabti and Farhati Hamida. Only 10 teachers returned the questionnaire.

2.2. Secondary School Teachers’ Questionnaire

2.2.1. Description

The questionnaire designed for secondary school teachers of English has several sections. In the introduction we have explained its purpose to the participants, namely to what extent developing communicative competence is given priority in the Algerian secondary school class. The questionnaire includes 17 questions related to: ‘Personal Information’, ‘Learning/Teaching English in the Algerian Class’, ‘Testing’ and 'Further Suggestions'.

Section 1: Personal Information

The aim of this section is to get general information about the informants, namely their gender (Q1), status (Q2), teaching experience (Q3) and degrees held (Q4).
Section 2: Learning/Teaching English in the Algerian Class

In this section, teachers are invited to answer whether their pupils are interested in learning English (Q5), whether they find difficulties in applying Communicative Language Teaching adequately (Q7), and the reasons behind these difficulties (Q9), whether their major aim is to present the lesson no matter if all pupils are involved or not or to provide the opportunity to everybody to participate (Q10).

Section 3: Testing

The aim of this section is to know which kind of tests teachers design for their pupils (Q10), according to which aspect they measure their pupils’ learning success or failure (Q12), whether they think that teachers should assess the pupils’ communicative skills (Q13), whether they test their pupils’ speaking performance (Q14), and how and why in the case they do not (Q15).

Section 4: Further Suggestion

In this section, teachers are left with a space where they can add any comments or suggestions.

2.2.2. Results and Discussion

Section 1: Personal Information

Q1- Gender

   a- Male
   b- Female

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 15: Teachers’ Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15 shows that most of the respondents are female teachers (70%). This indicates that in Algeria the number of female English teachers is higher compared to the number of male English teachers. So, females may be more interested in teaching languages than males.

### Q2-Status

- **Titulaire**
- **Stagiaire**
- **Suppleant (e)**

#### Table 16: Teachers’ Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it appears in Table 16, all the respondents are confirmed teachers.

### Q3.Teaching Experience

- **Less than 5 year**
- **5-10 years**
- **10-15 years**
- **More than 15 years**

#### Table 17: Teaching Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among 10 respondents, 7 teachers (70%) have been teaching English for more than 15 years. The options ‘b’ (5-10 years) and ‘c’ (10-15 years) were considered with a percentage of 10% and 20% respectively. The option “a” (less than 5 years) was not considered by any teacher. This indicates that teachers are relatively experienced in teaching English and they know much about CLT.

Q4: Degrees held:

- a- Licence
- b- Master
- c- Magister

Table 18: Degrees Held

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
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<tr>
<td>b</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 shows that the degree held by the respondents is the licence degree.

Section 2: Learning/Teaching English with Algerian class

Q5: Are you pupils interested in learning English?

- a- Yes
- b- No

Table 19: Pupils’ Interest in Learning English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pupils’ Interest in Learning English

The majority of teachers (90%) agree that pupils are interested in learning English. This fact must be motivating to teachers themselves.

Q6: Do you think that many pupils cannot learn English however you hard you try?

a- Yes
b- No

Table 20: Pupils’ ability to learn English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20 shows that all the respondents think that their pupils are unable to learn English despite the efforts they do. This indicates that teachers believe that English learning is not attainable. In other words, they see that it is too hard for their pupils to
develop their communicative competence, and what all they can do perhaps is to supply them with pieces of information included in the prescribed syllabus to prepare them for exams. Q7 is meant to tell us more in this respect.

**Q7: Whatever your answer, please explain why**

7 teachers answer this question.

2 teachers stated that pupils are unable to learn English because they live in a small village, and that’s why they are poor at English even they try from time to time to do their best.

4 teachers made clear that lack of motivation and lack of interest in learning language are the real problem that make English learning something difficult to achieve. It seems that these teachers are contradicting themselves since they stated in Q5 that their pupils are interested in learning English.

1 teacher explained that pupils do not master English because for a long time the main focus has been teaching linguistic components and learners get enough of learning the same thing.

**Q8: Do you find it difficult to apply communicative Language Teaching adequately?**

a- Yes

b- No

**Table 21: Difficulty of Applying Communicative Language Teaching adequately**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It seems that all teachers share the same view, i.e., they find difficulties to apply CLT adequately.
Q9: If yes, is it because

a- Pupils are more interested in grades rather than the foreign language itself
b- Teaching communicatively requires the individualization of language teaching
c- Lack of the audio-visual material
d- What is important is to cover the prescribed syllabus in the limited time available and make pupils ready for exams
e- Other: please, specify

Table 22: Reasons behind the Difficulty of Applying Communicative Language Teaching Adequately

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14: Reasons behind Difficulties of Applying Communicative Language Teaching Adequately
Table 22 shows that 50% of the informants consider the option ‘c’ (lack of the audio-visual materials) as the main reason which makes them unable to apply CLT adequately. The options ‘a’ (pupils are more interested in grades rather than the language itself), ‘d’ (what is important is to cover the prescribed syllabus in the limited time available and make pupils ready for exams) are also considered (40% and 30% respectively). The option ‘b’ (teaching communicatively requires the individualization of language teaching) was less considered (10%). Here, we notice that there is a contradiction between pupils’ and teachers’ answers since most of pupils (61.36%) stated that they are interested in learning English to develop their communication skills.

One teacher added the following “pupils are very weak at English, they lack interest and motivation and they are not well informed”. Another teacher stated that “most of teachers are just focusing on teaching grammar and vocabulary on which pupils will be tested”.

Q10: What is the most important aim for you?

a- To present the lesson whether pupils are involved or not
b- To provide the opportunity for everybody to participate

Table 23: Teachers’ Major Aim

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 23, all the informants have the aim of providing the opportunity for everybody to participate. However, 31.82% of pupils stated that they are not given the opportunity to speak.
Section 3: Testing

Q11: What kind of tests do you usually design for your pupils?

a- Written tests  
b- Oral tests  
c- Both of them

Table 24: Tests Designed by Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15: Tests Designed by Teachers

This table shows that most of teachers (70%) design written tests for their pupils. Only 30% of them design oral test in addition, and no teacher uses oral tests exclusively.
Q12: According to which aspect do you measure your pupils’ learning success or failure?

- a- Grammatical accuracy
- b- Fluency
- c- Grades
- d- Other: please, specify

Table 25: Criteria for Measuring Pupils’ Learning Success or Failure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16: Criteria for Measuring Pupils’ Learning Success or Failure

Table 25 shows that most of the teachers measure their learners’ learning success or failure according to two aspects: grades and fluency. These two options were considered with a percentage of 60% and 50% respectively. Option ‘a’ (grammatical accuracy) was less considered (30%).
Q13: Do you think that teachers should assess their pupils’ communication skills?

a- Strongly agree
b- Agree
c- Disagree
d- Strongly disagree

Table 26: Assessing Pupils’ Communication Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>08</td>
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<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>c</td>
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<td>d</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17: Assessing Pupils Communication Skills

Among 10 respondents, 8 (80%) teachers strongly agree that they should assess their pupils’ communication skills. The option ‘a’ (agree) is considered with a percentage of 20%. This means that teachers are aware that communicative language teaching requires testing the skills of learners.
Q14: Do you test your pupils’ speaking performance?

a- Yes
b- No

Table 27: Testing Pupils’ Speaking Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18: Testing Pupils’ Speaking Performance

Most of teachers (70%) make it clear that they do not test their pupils’ speaking performance. The option ‘a’ (positive answer) is less considered (30%). This indicates that there is no communicative language testing which goes in parallel with CLT.

Q15: if yes, how?

Teachers who said yes to Q14 answered that they test pupils’ speaking performance through dialogues, reading free writing, and asking them to read instruction when doing projects.
Q16: if no, is it because

- Speaking is not easy to assess
- Students ‘speaking proficiency is too low
- Standard official tests are written
- Lack of time
- Overcrowded classrooms
- Other: please, specify

Table 28: Reasons for not Assessing Pupils Speaking Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>00</td>
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<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>c</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>d</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 19: Reasons for not Assessing Pupils’ Speaking Performance

According to Table 21, most of the respondents consider that time constraint (option d) as the main reason which makes them unable to assess pupils ‘communication skills. The options ‘b’ (students speaking proficiency is too low), ‘c’ (standard official tests are written) and ‘e’ (overcrowded classrooms) are also
considered (80%, 90% and 70% respectively). However, the option ‘a’ (speaking is not easy to assess) was not considered by any one.

Q17: Do you have any further suggestions or comments?

04 teachers completed the section of Further Suggestion. They raised the following points:

Teacher one: “secondary school teachers are obliged to teach the official syllabus to make sure that all learners will be tested on similar content.”

Teacher two: “I think that pupils are less interested in English learning because of the lack of motivation either at the school level or family.”

Teacher three: “difficulties in applying communicative language teaching adequately are due to overcrowded classrooms, lack of time and lack of materials.”

Teacher four: “we as teachers need more time (5 hours a week at least) to achieve more efficient work.”

Conclusion

On the basis of the analysis of secondary school teachers’ questionnaire, we have come to the point that the issue of developing the learners’ communicative competence is less considered in the Algerian secondary school EFL class, i.e., most of teachers teach to the test and not for the sake of making learners develop their communication skills.

First, most of the teachers see that pupils are unable to learn English (Q6). However, pupils themselves have positive attitude toward it and they are motivated to learn it, and they consider that they can learner that language.

Second, the majority of teachers state that pupils are interested in learning the target language (Q5). However, the same teachers add that they cannot apply CLT adequately because of the learners’ lack of interest (Q9) which is in contradiction with what is stated before.
Third, most of the teachers do not test pupils’ speaking performance, and most of the time they design only written tests. So, there is no communicative language testing which goes in parallel with Communicative Language Teaching (Q11, Q14).

Finally, depending on the results obtained from the analysis of pupils’ and teachers’ questionnaire, our hypothesis is confirmed, in the sense that EFL teachers in the Algerian secondary school class teach to the test and give little attention to developing the pupils’ communication skills.
CONCLUSION

Our research is about investigating the issue of to what extent developing communicative competence is given priority in the Algerian secondary school EFL class. In other words it aims at uncover whether teachers teach to the test or to enhance learners’ communication skills in the target language. Our research is divided into two chapters. The first one deals with the background of the study in which we have discussed the major points related to our topic, namely communicative competence, communicative language teaching and testing and teaching to the test. The second one is concerned with the discussion and the analysis of the questionnaires. To test our hypothesis, two questionnaires have been used. The first one was administered to pupils to know their beliefs and attitude concerning their teacher’s way of teaching and testing. The second one was given to the teachers to see whether they really teach to prepare the learners for exams, or to develop their communicative competence. Our results reveal that although most of secondary school EFL teachers know about the issue of developing communicative competence, they do not give it much focus in their practice. The matter for them is just to cover the prescribed syllabus and prepare learners for exams. On the basis of our study, some recommendations are to be supported. First, teachers should give more attention to developing the learners’ communicative competence in the target language. They should offer more opportunities to them to practice the language orally inside the classroom and encourage them to do so no matter the errors they do. They have also to integrate speaking tests so that they can have an idea about their learners’ ability to perform in the target language.
REFERENCES

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Teachers’ Questionnaire

Appendix 2: Pupils’ Questionnaire
APPENDIX 1

TEACHERS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a research work. It aims at investigation to what extent developing communicative competence of EFL learners is given priority in the Algerian secondary school class. I would be very grateful if you answer this questionnaire. Please, tick the appropriate box (or boxes) and make full statements when necessary.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Miss HAMLAOUI Ahlem

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

University of Oum El-Bouaghi
Section 1: personal information

1. Gender:
   a- No  
   b- Yes  
2- Status:
   a- Titulaire  
   b- Stagiaire  
   c- Suppliant(e)  
3- Teaching experience: How long have you been teaching English?
   a- Less than 5 years  
   b- 5-10 years  
   c- 10-15 years  
   d- More than 15 years  
4- Degrees held:
   a- Licence  
   b- Magister  
   c- Master  

Section 2: Learning/Teaching English in the Algerian Class

5- Are you pupils interested in learning English?
   a- Yes  
   b- No  
6- Do you think that many pupils cannot learn English however hard you try?
   a- Yes  
   b- No  
7- Whatever you answer, please explains why
   ......................................................................................................................................
   ......................................................................................................................................
   ......................................................................................................................................
8- Do you find it difficult to apply communicative language teaching adequately?
   a- Yes  
   b- No  

9- If yes, is it because
a- Pupils are more interested in grades rather than in learning the foreign language itself. □
b- Teaching communicatively requires the individualization of language teaching □
c- of the audio-visual materials □
d- What is important is to cover the prescribed syllabus in the limited time available and make pupils ready for exams. □
e- Other: please, specify

Section 3: Testing

10- What kind of tests do you usually design for your pupils?
   a- Written tests □
   b- Oral tests □
   c- Both of them □

11- According to which aspect do you measure your pupils learning success or failure?
   a- Grammatical accuracy □
   b- Fluency □
   c- Grades □
   d- Other: please specify □

13- Do you think that teachers should assess the pupils’ communication skills?
a- Strongly agree □
b- Agree □
c- Disagree □
d- Strongly disagree □

14-Do you test your pupils’ speaking performance?

a- Yes □
b- No □

15-If Yes, how?

……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………

16-If no, is it because

a- Speaking is not easy to assess □
b- Students’ speaking proficiency is too low □
c- Standard official tests are written □
d- Lack of time □
e- Overcrowded classrooms □
f- Other: please, specify □

Section 4: further suggestions

17-Do you have any other comments?

……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………
APPENDIX 2

SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear pupil,

This questionnaire is part of a research work. It aims at investigating to what extent developing communicative competence of EFL learners is given priority in the Algerian secondary school class. I would be very grateful if you answer this questionnaire. Please, tick the appropriate box (or boxes) and make full statements when necessary.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Miss HAMLAOUI Ahlem

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

University of Oum El-Bouaghi
Section 1: General Information

1. Sex:
   a- Male
   b- Female

2. Age: 

   ...........

3. Level:
   a- 1º AS
   b- 2º AS
   c- 3º AS

Section 2: English Learning

4. Do you think that English is difficult to learn?
   a- Yes
   b- No

5. If yes, please explain why?

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

6. Are you interested in learning English to
   a- Pass your exams
   b- Develop your communication skills
   c- Other: please, specify

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

8. What are the activities that you most like to do inside the classroom?
   a- Grammar-based activities
   b- Communication activities (role play, group discussion)
Section 3: English as Tool of Communication

8-Do you practice English orally inside the classroom?
   a- Yes □
   b- No □

9- If no, is it because
   a- You lack the language to speak □
   b- You are not motivated to speak □
   c- You are afraid of making errors □
   d- You are not given the opportunity to speak □
   e- Other: please specify

10- Do you use English to communicate outside the classroom?
   a- Yes □
   b- No □

Section 4: Teaching and Testing Method

11- In your opinion, does your teacher work?
   a- With the whole class □
   b- With some good pupils □

12- Does your teacher make you work in pairs/groups?
   a- Yes □
   b- No □
13- If yes, how often?
   a- Always ☐
   b- Regularly ☐
   c- Rarely ☐
   d- Never ☐

14- What kind of tests do you prefer?
   a- Written tests ☐
   b- Oral tests ☐

15- Whatever your answer, please explain why

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

16- Have you ever been tested orally?
   a- Yes ☐
   b- No ☐

Section 5: Further Suggestions

17- Do you have any other comments?

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........................................................................................................
........................................................................................................
RÉSUMÉ

Cette recherche vise à étudier dans quelle mesure le développement de la compétence communicative est prioritaire dans la classe d’anglais au secondaire. Elle tente de découvrir si l’objectif principal des enseignants est de développer les compétences de communication des élèves, ou de couvrir le programme prescrit dans le peu de temps disponible et rendre les élèves prêts pour les examens. Deux questionnaires sont utilisés dans cette étude. Le premier est pour les enseignants et Le second est pour les élèves. Les résultats révèlent que, bien que la plupart des enseignants sont conscients de l'importance de développer la compétence communicative de l'apprenant, ils ne donnent pas beaucoup plus prioritaire dans leurs pratiques.
يهدف هذا البحث دراسة إلى مدى يتم إعطاء وتطوير الكفاءة التواصلية في اللغة الإنجليزية الأولوية في الثانويات الجزائرية، بمعنى آخر أنها تهدف إلى معرفة أن كان أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية يدرسون هذه اللغة من اجل تحضير التلاميذ لامتحان أو من اجل تطوير مهاراتهم الإتصالية. وإثبات ثباتهم اعتمادنا في بحثنا على إجراء استبانين. الاستبان الأول كان من اجل التلاميذ و هدفه هو معرفة آرائهم فيما يخص طريقة الأساتذة في تدريس هذه اللغة و أيضا في تقييمها. أما الاستبان الثاني فقد أعطى لأساتذة و هدفه هو معرفة إن كان هدفه الأساسي هو التدريس من اجل الامتحان أو من اجل تطوير الكفاءات التواصلية في هذه اللغة. بينما النتائج أنه بالرغم من أن معظم الأساتذة على بيئة من أهمية تطوير الكفاءات التواصلية للطلاب إلا إنه لا يعطونها الأولوية في تطبيقاتهم.