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## BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL: CHALLENGES AND LEVERS TO MAKE AN AT-HAND SCHOOL FOR ALL STUDENTS

### Abstract

This paper defends the idea of an inclusive schooling, which, far beyond providing a schooling structure for children with disabilities, aims to transform the mainstream school to enable each student to succeed to the best of his or her ability. The implementation of such a school raises questions about the concepts of accessibility, special educational needs and equity. Several levers are then proposed such as training, collective work and a universal conception of accessibility.

**Keywords:** accessibility, disability, inclusive school, special educational needs.

### 1. From Disability to the Schooling of all Students

Inclusive school is very often seen as merely the schooling of disabled children. Yet, the inclusive school project is much more ambitious. The United Kingdom has been one of the first countries to pay attention to differences beyond disability. The Warnock Report (1978) certifies that in terms of education, it is more the specific educative needs that must be taken into consideration than the deficiency. Since then, many works have shown the lack of relevance as for education in the information brought by medical diagnoses. For example, to know that children with Down syndrome (Rondal, 2000) have a deficiency in the syntactic / morphological field is pertinent for a therapeutic or re-educative work, but it does not help to build an efficient pedagogical environment for such children. Moreover, done in this way, the diagnosis hides the individual differences as these differences are as important among children with disability as among those without any disability. For example, there are some people with trisomy or autism who take high studies successfully while others do poorly at school, which does not prevent them from developing other skills.

Three types of needs were identified in Warnock Report (1978) on the one hand, the needs for dispositions to access learning structures; on the other hand, the needs for arrangements in the curricula and, finally, the needs for particular attention to the students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Consequently, many research studies have urged educational systems to consider this non categorising approach (Keil, Miller & Cobb, 2006) that incites to work according to the needs of the children rather than to categorise them according to their particular needs.

The fact of not categorising avoids the “labeling” of the children whose effects have largely been described by sociology (see, for example Goffman, 1975) and allows quick responses without long, expensive diagnosis processes. For teachers and educational professionals, a non-categorising approach allows also finding solutions for a larger number of children who face difficulties at school for other reasons than a handicap, such as illness, social hardships, or a non-integrated culture in the school requirements. Let us take the following example: many children have difficulties in reading that last long after the

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elementary school. This can be due to dyslexia, to some social or cultural contexts that have not allowed a sufficient development of reading requirements, or to a physical or sensorial deficiency. In all cases, the children's needs are the same: Educative resources to help them complete the learning they have failed.

In an inclusive logic, responding to the needs does not merely consist of solving difficulties; it also, and more importantly, anticipates weaknesses and provides pedagogical actions to help every child learn successfully what is at his reach and have a normal social life. It is a real paradigm shifting that takes us from a selective school to a successful school for all learners (Gardou, 2012). This why the UNESCO (2018) has put the inclusive school within its objectives for sustainable development!

## **2. Accessibility or Compensation?**

Satisfying the children's special needs can, sometimes, be achieved by setting up compensatory devices to help some children have access to education. For example, someone can help a child with a physical disability to reach a classroom. This accompanying person – sometimes referred to as a “human help”- can help a child read a document, carry a school work. Of course, it is not a matter of doing the work instead of the child, but *of compensating* his weakness so that he would be able to attend school and learn like the other children.

To provide compensations is necessary for many children: A human help, a computer, a magnifying glass, Braille books allow them to have access to learning without delay and learn. However, compensation has limits; it does not transform school or other educational places; it simply allows some children reach them. Therefore, making up for the difficulties is not enough: most children with learning difficulties will not succeed unless school is transformed. We know that. The school or educative success of many children is hindered by even the shape of the educational place. It is not only a matter of physical organisation of these places, but of pedagogical choices, of curricular contents, of social organisation that turn out to be excluding for many children coming from social and cultural backgrounds away from school (Charlot, Bautier & Rochex, 1992; Dubet & Duru-Bellat, 2009). Moreover, many children have learning difficulties that make their schooling in the usual school context difficult or even impossible (Rousseau & Belanger, 2004; Thomazet, 2008). This maladjustment causes school dropping, weak learning and social exclusion. To achieve an inclusive school, therefore, requires a school transformation.

An accessible school, then, has ramps and other necessary dispositions for people with moving difficulties, but this is not enough. For example, some children often miss school because of an illness, social difficulties or remoteness. Is it possible to provide digitised courses? Other children have vision difficulties or reading problems. Can we help them use a computer or a telephone to “listen” to the text to which they cannot have access with their eyes? Some children have not been able to acquire the basics that would allow them to evolve in their learning; others need more time, a better environment, special pedagogies. These children already have a place in some schools that have been adapted; now it is a matter of generalising these adaptations.

Well beyond compensation, it is accessibility of school that it is question of when we talk about inclusive school. To make lessons accessible is to put in place the devices, the arrangements, and the necessary resources so that all the children can have access to the lessons. Many resources have been developed in order to help institutions and professionals to evolve their devices and practices towards accessibility (Booth and Ainscow, 2002; Michel 2008). It is clear from these scientific works that the approaches must be comprehensive, involving the responsible (school headmasters, inspectors...), the families, and, of course, the

teachers. The researches highlight the need for the evolution of the social environment (peer support, enabling environment) of the pedagogical practices (universal pedagogy, groups of need) and didactic choices (explicit teaching, adaptation of contents to the needs).

It is clear that the transformation of our systems can be achieved only in the long term as it requires deep restructuring involving different actors. Yet, there are already some answers. Some difficulties are already solved, in theory.

A number of solutions are known, now, and with the help of public finances, associations and organisations, they are financially sustainable. It is particularly a matter of setting up the physical accessibility to the buildings, of providing textbooks in Braille, a computer or a cell phone to “read” documents, a sound amplification system, or a translation into sign languages. Thus, many students with disabilities or with sensory or motor limitations can have access to school. Research has shown that when physical barriers are lifted, these students do better (see, for example, Connors, Curtis, Emerson, & Domitorio, 2014, in the case of visual deficiency). Moreover, once the concerns about the lack of knowledge of these students have passed, teachers in mainstream education are very much in favour of welcoming them as it is shown by a recent study conducted on a large scale in France (Le Laidier, 2018). In other words, the accessibility of educational buildings and the reception of many “different” children who are capable of learning like the others do not really need new research, but a concrete implementation.

Other children have needs that make it difficult for them to attend school as we know it. So the answers are less obvious, namely when it is a question of working on social, educational and didactical accessibility. Very often, these children’s needs do not only concern schools. The answers are, therefore, obviously more complex in the sense that the expertise of many people - teachers, health and specialised education professionals, families – is necessary to find solutions. Some children with autism would be able to follow a curriculum close to the ordinary one if some arrangements regarding social and educational accessibility (reception at school, class organisation, and methods of school work presentation etc.) are set up. These adjustments can only be done in consultation among teachers, families, and professionals of autism (see Alin, 2019). In other words, for these students, the skilfulness of teachers who can manage a class must be complemented by the knowhow of other professionals, specialised in specific needs and families, too, so as to find solutions *together* that would fit both their needs and the requirements of our teaching systems (class size, respect of school curricula).

In the remainder of this article, we suggest five challenges to building a more inclusive school. To face these challenges would promote the building of a more inclusive school. To overcome them requires both a conceptual approach of all actors leading to the paradigm shift that we mentioned above and the collective building of practical solutions.

### **3. Five Challenges to Build an Inclusive School**

#### ***3.1. First Challenge: Inform and Train***

In the field of inclusive school, as elsewhere, good will is not enough. The training is seen as determinative by a large body of research (see, for example, Ebersold, Plaisance & Zander, 2016).

As a first step in the training, it would be useful to suggest a time of information so that each actor of the school – children, families, teachers, non-teaching professionals – would know their rights and their duties towards the students who are “different” and would understand that school is changing and must be open to difference. In the second step, it is

necessary to make these actors change paradigm by developing an inclusive point of view, moving from a normative school concept to a school that adapts to the needs of all children (Thomazet, 2008).

In a second step, beyond the principles, vocational training should support professionals in understanding what is expected from them and integrating these expectations in their practice. This training should allow professionals overcome the difficulties they could encounter in the field, which sometimes, take the form of hard dilemmas such as having to respect the curricula and being attentive to the students' needs. We understand, then, that more than an initial training, it is an accompanying with regular meeting times that the actors need to build, stabilise, and adapt their practices (see, for example, Messio & Ainscow, 2015).

Setting up these training courses will probably require the training of trainers as the resources are not always available and the task is huge. Investing in training trainers is a powerful advantage as each trained person can train many persons.

### ***3.2. Second Challenge: Rebuilding Equality on the Basis of Equity***

Equality is very often a founding principle of our schools. However, equality, as it is implemented, is above all an equality of treatment, a normative equality (Calvez, 1994; CAWI, 2015). According to this approach, school is considered fair only when it provides the same teaching to all children and when it acts towards everyone in the same way. The logic of inclusive schooling presupposes that each child is different and that an identical treatment to all is a factor, not of equality, but of injustice (Skrtic, 1991). To become inclusive, school must reconsider its concepts of equality by providing each child with what he needs so by being fair. This principle, obviously, applies to children with disabilities: to be fair is to allow a blind child have a way to read otherwise than with the book that other children use (a book in Braille, a computer, a cell phone through which he can listen). This principle also applies to any other child at risk to fail school for any other reason than disability.

### ***3.3. Third Challenge: Getting out of "Activism"***

To act for an inclusive school, and to act for the construction of a different school, is a matter that concerns families and committed, active professionals. Yet, international commitments that are transposed in the national laws of most countries over the world should make every professional be concerned with the school transformation. This, of course, presupposes a change of mentality, as well as the replacement of the devices of exceptions (specific finances and sectors devoted to the children with disability) by a right reception in ordinary institutions (schools, high school, university). This project should go, beyond teachers, to all levels of the systems, ministries (of education, as well as of health, society, work...), to inspections, to masters of schools and institutions. This also presupposes that the children who are "different" to be received in the ordinary conditions of the institutions in terms of registration, school trip, exams and competitions. The paradigm shift is present in the transformations expected at school: where historically children used to find difficulties to go to school and to study, now, it is School that is in difficulty to be accessible and to allow all children to go to school and study.

### ***3.4. Fourth Challenge: Making Knowledge Accessible***

As seen above, the accessibility of educational institutions is an important step, often a legal obligation, even if it often remains to be concretised. Yet, this is not enough to make school inclusive; the following step, once in the classroom, is to allow every child learns.

Well beyond disability, making the weakest pupils follow is the biggest problem that teachers face. Many children are present in the class but do not feel concerned by the teaching that they do not understand and in front of them, many teachers do not have any project for these pupils. The problem of these teachers, as said above, is a dilemma: how to teach challenged pupils while respecting the programme set for all? (Norwich, 2014; Thomazet, Merini & Gaime, 2014). While the children advance in age, at the end of primary school, then in secondary institutions, this dilemma becomes impossible to solve and the concerned students leave the school that is not made for them (Thomazet, Merini, & Gaime, 2014). Here again, a change in the way we think of school is necessary. It is not a matter of opposing the needs of the children and the constraints of the curricula, but, on the contrary, it is a matter of teaching at the level of the children so that they learn and therefore move forward in the programs. Far from being a weakening school, inclusive school is an ambitious school that must allow raising the level of our educational systems by allowing each child to learn to the best of his possibilities. To develop universal educational practices (Bergeron, Rousseau & Leclerc, 2011), to set up differentiated teachings (McLeskey & Waldrom, 1996) is then the fundamental challenge on inclusive school.

### ***3.5. Fifth Challenge: Collaborating***

Many children at risk of school failure are in complex situations: they have needs that are not only academic. To take these needs into account requires, in addition to the competence of teachers that of other professionals, in care and social work, particularly. Very often, each professional works in isolation from the others, each one in his specific field. In the context of an inclusive school, could we imagine the collaboration of these professionals with different expertise in ordinary schools? (Merini & Thomazet, 2016). It will be, then, a matter of showing a collective intelligence so as to find collective answers, in an ordinary milieu, but adapted to the most fragile students. To take only one example, schooling a child with behavioural or attention disorder would become realisable in an ordinary class because a psychologist would have worked with the school administration, the teachers and other professionals and would have found with them the best way to organise the classes and structure the pedagogy. To these conditions, schooling in an ordinary milieu is possible and beneficial to the children suffering from the autism spectrum (Poirier and Cappe, 2016) and the set up arrangements will be useful to many other students having the same needs (Thomazet, 2012).

## **4. Conclusion**

It may seem legitimate to question the relevance of an inclusive school. However, there too, we have to reverse our logic. The answer to the question if inclusive school is pertinent is yes. If it does not work, let us find the solutions so that it works, so that it becomes pertinent. The answers, as we have often seen, will be found collectively by constituting partnership that allows a cross expertise between teachers, professional disability specialists, as well as cultural and social differences and, of course, families. In this context, the current staffs present in specialised institutions have their place in the ordinary school as teachers' partners.

Building an inclusive school is not optional; it is a legal and an ethical obligation. The inclusive school also meets a societal need: allow all the young people, whatever their difficulties, disability or fragility to integrate and contribute to our societies.

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## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE LEBANESE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

### Abstract

As a founding member of the United Nations, Lebanon aims to include its educational policy in the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs), in particular the fourth, which aims to ensure "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". To achieve this objective at the national level, many structures and systems have been created in schools, particularly in the private sector. The nature of the interventions and the support offered are not similar, while the room for manoeuvre is not the same for all schools (Akiki & Frangieh, 2018). The structures and systems in Lebanon for the education of students with special educational needs (SEN) then vary from the most segregated schooling to the least restrictive. A systematic review methodology (Young & Eldermire, 2017) was applied. The work and projects related to inclusive education in Lebanon were analysed. It shows that inclusive education remains work in progress without a global action plan. This work dynamic encourages both local initiatives and generates difficulties in carrying them out. Our results show that the development of inclusive education in Lebanon is marked by uncertainties, tensions and contradictions.

**Keywords:** equality, equity, inclusive education, policy statements, practices, structures and systems

### 1. Introduction

#### 1. 1. Context

As a founding member of the United Nations, Lebanon is a supporter of to many international declarations and conventions carried out by the United Nations and UNESCO. It highlights the right to education for all and the need to consider the educational needs of each child. As international legislation has developed, this commitment has been embodied in the signatory countries in the principle of Education for All and more particularly Inclusive Education (Ramel & Vienneau, 2016). Thus, Lebanon has committed itself to aligning its educational policies, systems and practices with its international commitments.

Through these, Lebanon aims to include its educational policy in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG4 and SDG17. While the first aims to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", the second seeks to "revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development".

The framework of our study is based on the guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education realized by UNESCO (2017), which relies both on ODD 4 and ODD 17. This choice intends to position our work in an international movement for inclusive education,

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especially in the absence of a national consensus on the fundamental principles of inclusive education.

This study is organized according to the four dimensions of the guide: the concepts, the policy statements, the structures and the systems and the systems and practices. They are closely linked in a hierarchical relationship (cf. figure 1).

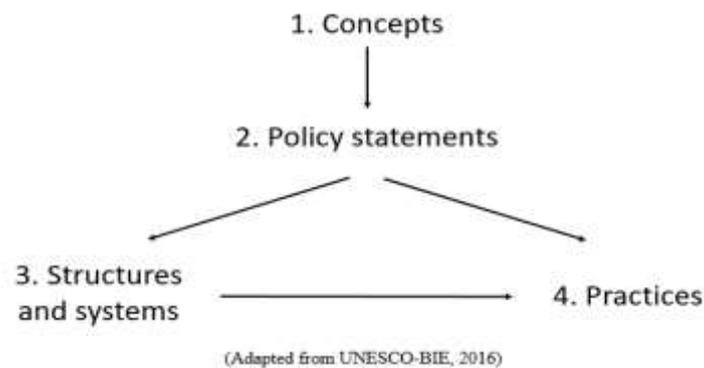


Figure 1:

*The four Dimensions of an Inclusive Education Policy*

To fulfill these international commitments, a multiplicity of projects related to inclusive education has been carried out in Lebanon and many reports have issued. These show that, similar to other countries around the world, Lebanon faces difficulties in implementing these international guidelines. The question then arises: what are the structural challenges in implementing inclusive education in Lebanon?

We can also note that each of these projects had its own conceptual representations and references, which demonstrates the usefulness of developing a close understanding of the implementation of inclusive education and synthesizing all this work. In this context, it is particularly interesting to look at the data produced by the Lebanese education system by adopting a systematic review methodology (Young & Eldermire, 2017). For this purpose, we contacted representatives of the ministries involved in the project of inclusive education and the concerned entities in the field of the education of students with SEN, like the: Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Public Health (MoH), Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD), Department of Guidance and Counseling (DOPS), Higher Council for Childhood.

### **1.2. Procedures**

To provide an answer to our research question and to achieve the goal of this study, we carried out five steps which we deemed crucial.

To implement this study, several interviews were conducted with those responsible for services to children with special needs in ministries, local or international NGOs and other entities. Due to the lack of a databases specific to Lebanon, we had to collect the data directly from with the last-mentioned. The objective of our interviews was so to retrieve any documents as laws, circulars, projects, publications, that could help us to understand the Lebanese context related to the inclusive education.

Our work has been focused on the education of students with special needs, so we have extracted the initiatives and ideas that go with them. The selected documents were classified and analyzed in the light of the four dimensions of the UNESCO guide (figure 1).

## 2. From Separate Schooling to Inclusive Education

### 2.1. Concepts and Key Principles of Inclusive Education

The fact that inclusive schooling seems to be the subject of apparent societal consensus and no longer gives rise to a lively political debate (Baudot, Borelle, & Revillard, 2013) could suggest that there is agreement on the definitions underlying the issue under consideration. Reading recent scientific literature suggests that this is not the case, and the lack of shared definitions has been identified as a problem, promoting ideologies and hindering the development of scientific work (Bélanger, Mérini, Thomazet, Frangieh, & Graziani, 2018). This lack of a consensus leads to misunderstandings about the very idea of an inclusive education and more specifically an inclusive school, both in terms of practices and the analysis of phenomena (Bélanger & al., 2018).

It is important to highlight that “a holistic view of the education system, encompassing both the private and public system, must be taken when considering adopting an inclusive approach” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 15). On the other hand, this approach must not be limited to the school context or to a category of student such as pupils with special educational needs but must encompass them. Mérini and Thomazet (2016) affirm that [inclusive school is not simply the opening of the school to students with disabilities. Building an inclusive school means rebuilding the school to serve all students] (p. 31). Inclusive schooling and even more so inclusive education are part of an evolution in schooling practices with each new stage being anchored in the previous one (Figure 2):

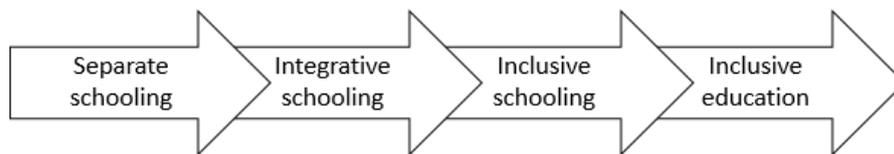


Figure 2:

### *From Separate Schooling to Inclusive Education*

In practice, structures corresponding to each of these stages often remain in the same country as witnesses to the evolution of its educational system. So far, Lebanon has been known for its separative schooling in which pupils with special needs are educated in specialized centers related to their disabilities. At the same time, integrative schooling was further developed, each school creating its own modalities. However, it seems important to highlight the absence of real inclusive schools, even if there are some that claim to be inclusive.

This doesn't seem to work, namely decision-makers, researchers and practitioners, who are expected to work together to achieve a real inclusive educative policy.

### 2.2. Policy Statements

Lebanon makes Education for All a priority, with its Constitution guaranteeing equality before the law without any discrimination (preamble). Thus, Law No. 220/2000 on the *rights of persons with disabilities* replaced the previous laws on “disabled” persons (Law 11/1973 and Law 243/1993) by providing a codification of the rights of “disabled” persons and the means for them to access their rights. It also promotes the integration of “disabled” children into the regular system as soon as possible (MEN, 2004). It was therefore considered to be an important improvement in this field.

This law has 10 sections, each related to a specific field, and defines the status of “disabled” persons according to the four categories set out in the former International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (WHO, 1980). It should be noted that this classification has since been replaced by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO, 2001), which was implemented in a version for children and youth in 2012. This observation illustrates the gap that may exist between national laws and international conventions, the former evolving much more slowly than the latter, as do representations.

The concept of disability embodied in this law is therefore no longer in line with current international approaches. The existing legislative framework lets teachers believe that diagnosing all students with SEN will contribute to solving their needs. Medical expertise can give teachers the impression that the student's difficulties are due to a pathology to be treated outside the pedagogy (Frangieh, 2017). Nevertheless, this legal requirement has been an important step in favor of “disabled people” and efforts have been made to facilitate their schooling in a sustainable way.

Despite the fact that Lebanon has made commitments in its Constitution, international and national laws and has ratified many international conventions relating to equality between all persons without any discrimination, in general, and more particularly with regard to “disabled” persons, it has yet to provide a safe and inclusive environment for students. People with disabilities still face many obstacles and are still fighting against a world of exclusion.

The lack of a real inclusion policy is particularly noteworthy despite the publication of Law 220/2000, and the subsequent initiatives to issue decrees. For example, decrees number 16417 and 16614 concerning the exemption from official examinations for students with learning difficulties and gifted students. And the publication of other texts such as the National Plan for Education for All (2004), the National Strategic Plan for Education and Teaching (2012), etc. Despite these important prescriptive attempts, more work needs to be done to make the Lebanese education system inclusive. This dimension is essential because it can influence and support inclusive thinking and practices by establishing the equal right of every individual to education, and by describing the forms of teaching, support and leadership that are the basis for quality education for all (UNESCO, 2015).

Considering the need for clarification of policy statements related to inclusive education, the aim will be to improve the legal context of inclusive education and develop a legal framework that promotes inclusive education. The two dimensions (concepts and policy statement) presented above are struggling to find their place in the Lebanese context, which has repercussions on the ground, where professional structures and practices are still far from allowing all children to attend school in an ordinary environment.

### ***2.3. Structures and Systems***

Even if Lebanon is a signatory to the international Declarations and Conventions guaranteeing the right to education for all, many children with SEN in Lebanon are excluded. Indeed, many public or private schools do not accept them, both because of the absence of a regulatory framework and because of the low resources of the schools (Frangieh, 2017). Many children are also unable to access schooling due to lack of available places, inadequate premises, learning curricula and teaching methods that do not meet their needs (Frangieh, 2017). This phenomenon is reinforced by even higher school fees for this category of pupils and the lack of facilities to access schools. But some of them, especially in the private sector, are still trying to do everything possible to accommodate this population in their school (Frangieh, 2017).

The education of SEN students in Lebanon is carried out in several structures, with specific services each with its own name. The structures and systems vary from the most segregated schooling (in specialized centers) to the least restrictive possible (in a regular classroom). As a result, the nature of the interventions and supports offered may differ considerably from one school to another. This gap is reinforced by the lack of a clear and coherent national policy that leads each school to feel free to make and implement its own choices.

Consequently, the nature of the interventions and the assistance offered are not the same in schools. Each school thus tries to invent practices adapted to its context, since the margin of maneuver is not the same for all schools. Each of them carries out its own project according to its financial means and convictions.

As an example, let us underline some existing integration modalities in Lebanon. The student can be integrated into a regular class, in this case the teacher is solely responsible for the schooling of the student with special educational needs. He can be also supported by a multidisciplinary team. In this case, a third option is applicable, two teachers who can be present and work with the whole group. Finally, the student also can participate in a resource group, where he or she attends sessions adapted to his or her own pace.

In the other hand, the student can be integrated into a specialized class in the school. He participates then in the general activities of the school (sports activities, recreation, outings, etc.) and sometimes in some secondary disciplines (geography, history, etc.). However, he may not participate in any school activities outside the specialized classroom.

#### **2.4. Practices**

Developing truly inclusive practices is a real challenge for any education system. Indeed, the system can vary considerably from one school to another or from one teacher to another, even though the same legal framework is supposed to guide them. Schools and their principals should therefore take over so that teaching practices are truly inclusive and promote the social and academic participation of all students (Porter & AuCoin, 2012).

UNESCO (2017) sets out four key elements to ensure inclusion and equity in education:

- Schools and other learning centres have strategies to encourage the presence, participation and success of all learners from their local community.
- Schools and other learning centres support learners who are at risk of academic failure, marginalization and exclusion.
- Teachers and support staff are prepared to consider the diversity of learners during their initial training.
- Opportunities for continuing professional development in inclusive and equitable practices are provided for teachers and support staff.

The first step would therefore be to remove barriers to accessibility from an equity perspective, which is “to treat everyone fairly, taking into account their particular circumstances and eliminating structural barriers” (City of Ottawa, 2015, p. 10). To these structural obstacles, practices can also be added when they act as obstacles to student progress, like in the figure 3:

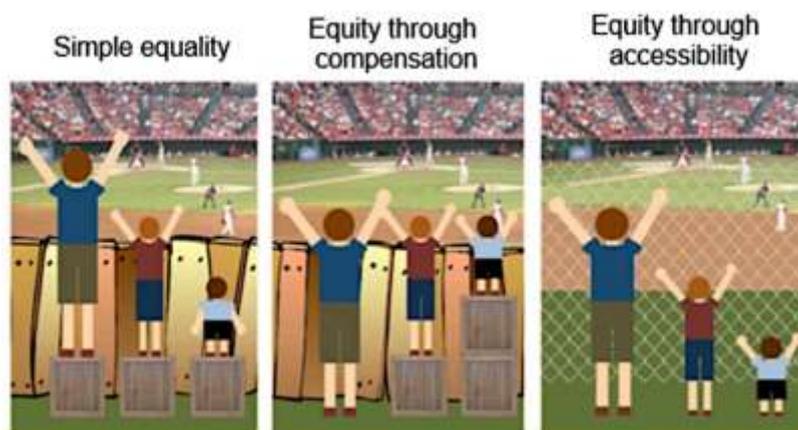


Figure 3:

*Between simple equality and equity through accessibility (from Ville d'Ottawa, 2015; Ramel, 2018)*

While the first two images are well known, the third is much less so, although it best illustrates the notion of accessibility. If, in the first instance, the three children receive the same equal support without success for the smallest, in the second instance, adjustments are made to the situation of disability for everyone to participate. We could call this second equity mechanism by compensation, since it aims to compensate for a disadvantage related to the size of two of the children.

The Lebanese education system is most often part of a simple equality, where the curriculum is not adapted for students who need it. This principle is also often applied in SEN student assessments, under the pretext that the teacher must not give them favors at the expense of their peers. The consequence is that only students with the required skills can succeed their schooling, while drop-out is a major problem for others.

### 3. Obstacles and Challenges to Develop Inclusive Practices in Lebanon

Through our study, we have identified four main categories of related obstacles and challenges.

First, current practices regarding students with special educational needs are still highly segregating or integrative. In addition, those are not unified in Lebanon, as each school or specialized center applies its own policy.

Secondly, as already noted, the legal and regulatory framework in Lebanon is insufficiently developed in terms of the reception of pupils with special educational needs in public schools. For this reason, the funds are not released by the government because the law does not require it to do so. So, the people in charge of this mission suffer from a lack of financial resources, knowing that they are already limited to best meet all the needs of the students.

Thirdly, a predominant vision of disability based on functional limitations does not sufficiently consider the learning processes of students with special educational needs. The students' academic difficulties are medicalized and teachers have a labeled conception of students with special educational needs reducing them down to their shortcomings. Such a focus on the deficit hinders educational desire by contributing to the stigmatization and desocialization of the student and leads teachers to abdicate their pedagogical responsibility. The lack of training and awareness in the school community reinforces this observation, the

diversity of the students and the difficulties of some of them putting the teachers themselves in a disabling situation.

Fourth and lastly, existing buildings make physical accommodations such as ramps or elevators difficult or impossible. As a result, pupils with a motor or sensory impairment encounter difficulties in accessing school, difficulties that are reinforced by the lack of infrastructure in terms of adapted transport or accessible roads.

#### 4. Conclusion

As in many countries, the establishment of an inclusive school in Lebanon is marked by uncertainties, tensions and contradictions. This school project is a major challenge for the education system: to provide an effective and high-quality education for all learners. However, this study allowed us to highlight many of the difficulties and obstacles identified by most interviewees. Addressing the subject of inclusive education in Lebanon has been a difficult task because much work remains to be done to ensure a clear conceptual framework, a well-defined legal framework, a structured and organized system and consistent practices.

Providing quality education for all students is a challenge and requires fundamental work for all committed actors. The response to this diversity requires the active participation of management and supervisory staff as well as the intervention of medical and social professionals in the form of partnerships is an essential element. Despite the efforts and initiatives deployed on Lebanese territory, the progress made in terms of inclusive intervention in schools remains as in many countries, still modest. There is still a long way to go in establishing really inclusive schools in Lebanon.

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## INDIVIDUAL NAMES WITH TIV PEOPLE FROM NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

### Abstract

This article focuses mainly on individual names given at birth and by which people are ordinarily named with Tiv people from Nigeria and Cameroon. Many change factors punctuate their attribution and offer some typological bundles to be put in relation with practices that have been observed on others communities mostly those related to God and death, to fauna. Individual names are a linguistic reality since they express verbal messages whose signs are those of daily language practices. They are also a social reality because they are place of cultural expression in their genesis and their content. They convey relationships network in which individual socially defines himself. The first scientific interest of this work is that, going from the knowledge of the change factors that rule individual names attribution, we come to review classical historiography of African linguistic communities in general and Tiv people in particular.

**Keywords:** Anthroponyms, variational factors, typological clusters, classical historiography

### 1. Introduction

The article intends to examine the contexts of denomination practice of individual with Tiv people from Nigeria and Cameroon. The objective is to show primacy and diversity of the factors that establish attribution process of African individual names in general and the ones of Tiv people in particular and to appreciate expression of the bearers' belief. Individual names are a linguistic reality since they are verbal messages whose signs are the ones of daily language practices. They are also a social reality because they are place of cultural expression in their genesis and their content. They convey relationships network in which the individual socially defines himself.

The analysis tools of individual names defined by Lerot (1983), Ntahombaye (1983), Rodegem (1985) and Saulnier (2002) constitute our conceptual anchorage points. The corpus basing the analysis has been constituted throughout the years 2015 and 2016 in different Tiv-speaking localities of Nigeria and Cameroon. It combines in situ observation of this linguistic community, semi-directed and directed enquiries as recommended by Béal (2000, p. 17) and Blanchet (2012, p. 51). As regards the problem summarizing the whole of the reflection, it can be expressed by the following questions: What are the change factors that justify choice of individual names in Tiv community? What relationships those individual names maintain with belief of this community's members? What social functions do they fill? Cannot individual names use as reference for questioning some of established theories, namely the ones related to religious missions in Africa that have been, in part, at the colonization origin?

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## **2. Tiv Community and Context of Individual Names Attribution**

Tiv people are a linguistic community localizable in Nigeria and Cameroon (Blench, 2012, p. 82). Nigeria is a multilingual country with five hundred and fifty languages (op. cit., p. vi) that are spoken by different tribes and ethnic groups. Tiv people constitute 3.5% of Nigeria population and thus represent the fourth most important ethnic group (Census, 1991). They spoke Tiv as language. Benue-Congo type, Tiv is spoken at “Benue State, Makurdi, Gwer, Gboko Kwande, Vandeikya and Katsina Ala LGAs; Nasarawa State, Lafia LGA; Taraba State, Wukari, Takum, Bali LGA; and in Cameroon »(op. cit., p. 82). For Tiv people like other tribes of Nigeria and Cameroon, individual name received by a child stays dependent on the child history, p. whether the way child has been conceived or circumstances surrounding his birth, his physical appearance, preference of a sex (male or female), future prospecting which parents desire for the child. For them, an individual name choice is more than reassembling letters to obtain a melodious tone. It is rather a question of attributing individual names that have a significant impact.

After the birth of a child in this linguistic community, grandfather or family eldest must choose and give individual name to the new-born. Child can receive several names, one from each parent, and one from grandparents. Though the child’s parents can also choose a first name for him, individual name that is attributed to him by grandfather or eldest prevails on others. Most of individual names in this community express a predominant anchorage in the belief and representations and constitute factors determining the choice of individual names.

## **3. Change Factors and Attempt of Typology of Individual Names with Tiv People**

In a first time, we deal with change factors justifying individual names attribution and in a second time, on the basis of indexed factors, we propose an attempt of typological classification then we discuss of God concept problem that has been one of the reasons of religious missions in Africa.

### ***3.1. Change Factors of Individual Names with Tiv People***

Names that interest us are names given at birth and by which persons are usually called. Several factors underline their attribution with Tiv people. They are revealers of illustrations as interesting as the ones observed in most of linguistic communities of the world (Mbandi, 1993; Essien, 2000; Leguy, 2005; Henrix, 2009; Sambiéni, 2014; Mangulu, 2014; Adjeran, 2013;). But the factors basing their attribution are in accordance with social realities of each community. Among the factors justifying the choice of individual names, we cite the most predominant that state as following: relationship with God, death, here below existence, various social realities, animals, fauna. Individual names attribution is sometimes interrelated to the sex of children who bear them. Individual names with Tiv people, far from being non justified choice, are a source of different, various and justified information. They express well determined social functions.

Names are classified following strict criteria. Also, rather recently, Leguy (2005, pp. 4-11) and Henrix (2009), for instance consider the signification, that is to say the message and the givers preoccupations, precisely the context as fundamental criteria. A language philosophy research conducted by Mbandi (1993, pp. 103-110) on personal name with N mbɛ-Gendza people enabled to establish the three following semiologico-pragmatic functions, p. (i) indexed or referential function, (ii) predicative or iconic function, (iii) symbolic function. Among these three, symbolic function appears to be the most significant (Essien, 2000, p. 129) and justifies our methodological approach. Essien (ibid.) rightly specifies: “[...] personal names are not mere tags that distinguish one person from another. They are serious

mental, emotional, psychological, linguistic and cultural matters, symbolizing the relationship between the name bearer and his / her cosmic world.” These factors do not exclude establishment of a typology of individual names in Tiv linguistic community with regard to notability of indexed factors.

### 3.2. *Attempt of Typology of Tiv People Individual Names*

The majority of individual names can, with Tiv people, be understood as being messages sent either to one or well precise persons, either to community, or more to supernatural entities. Appearing as a small brief sentence made up of words of popular language, they seem to mean something. But it is not given to all to hear message thus issued: some do not even know always what means the name they bear, or do not know the reasons for which it has been chosen. As for all allusive formula, it is necessary to know enunciation context (here the choice of individual name) to accede to meaning of the message thus expressed.

Among these individual names bearers of messages, there are of different types and more or less esoteric. We can thus differentiate individual names addressed to supernatural entities and individual names more specifically addressed to persons. This section deals with establishment of a two-point typology of individual names with Tiv people with regard to the predominance of indexed change factors.

#### 3.2.1. *Individual names in relation with God*

Individual names prefixed by Aondo (God) or Ter (Lord) maintain a very close relationship with Tiv people belief. As a profession of faith, these individual names invite to recognize God like omnipotent. Tiv people devote to him their powerlessness and express whenever and wherever his presence. It is a strong testimony to give these types of individual names to their posterity to magnify, to praise and to appreciate his favors towards begetters. In one word, these individual names praise God’s attributes. It is also a sort of commitment for life to put oneself under the protection of Supreme Being, being subject of praise. It is a secular practice with Tiv people. It could not be bring close to importation of revealed religions that date from a more recent period. This relation is ontological and rhythm their everyday life. Individual names in (1) testify of this relationship that this community maintained and still maintains with God.

Title 1:

*Individual names prefixed by Aondo (God) or Ter (Lord) in Tiv Language*

(1)	<i>Aondo</i>	<i>God</i>
	<i>ter</i>	<i>lord</i>
	<i>aondolumun</i>	<i>God agrees</i>
	<i>aondodoo</i>	<i>God is good</i>
	<i>Adodofa</i>	<i>It is God who knows what I wish</i>
	<i>aondonguvan</i>	<i>God is close</i>
	<i>aondoakula</i>	<i>God guides</i>
	<i>Aondoguuma</i>	<i>God is alive</i>
	<i>aondonguavese</i>	<i>May God be with us</i>
	<i>aondodoerdoo</i>	<i>God has well done</i>
	<i>msughaondo</i>	<i>I thank God</i>
	<i>Terumburmo</i>	<i>God remembers me</i>

### 3.2.2. Individual names in relation with death

Individual names addressed to supernatural powers such as death are more often given by the child's parents themselves who thus express their wish of a prosperity based on a big family. The virtue of these names is known in numerous West African societies (Houis, 1963). With Tiv people, these individual names are attributed to children of families who have experimented many cases of stillborn children. These individual names are in general prefixed of *ku* with reference to death. They are given to mark resistance and very rare times conciliation (it is the case of *Mzamberku* which means I beg you death). Others are true provocation message addressed to death. Data in (2) well illustrate this analysis.

Title 2:

*Individual names addressed to supernatural powers in Tiv language*

(2)	<b><i>Kukighir</i></b>	:	<i>Death's door is closed</i>
	<b><i>Kpega</i></b>	:	<i>This child won't die again</i>
	<b><i>Kulumum</i></b>	:	<i>If death agrees</i>
	<b><i>Kuhemba</i></b>	:	<i>Death is wicked</i>
	<b><i>Kude</i></b>	:	<i>Death leaves us</i>
	<b><i>Kuyem</i></b>	:	<i>May death moves away</i>
	<b><i>Mzamberku</i></b>	:	<i>I beg you death</i>
	<b><i>Kuhee</i></b>	:	<i>Death does not respect anybody</i>
	<b><i>Chiaku</i></b>	:	<i>Fear of death</i>
	<b><i>Kuwua</i></b>	:	<i>Death has done its work</i>

Tiv people believe that by depreciating death, it could not any more kill their posterities. It will realise the tenacity of the begetters and especially their courage to face it without fear. They do not hesitate to give it orders: *Kuyem* (*May death move away*). Sometimes, in front of the powerlessness of begetters, they look for solution near the supreme Being as testify this individual name: *Suurshaondo* (confide oneself to God's will). These individual names express the will of the members of this linguistic community to keep alive their posterities for a long time.

Tiv people gave sometimes "antinomic names of death" to take back the expression of Houis (1963). Some people, born after several children died at birth or in early infancy bear particularly repulsive names with a view to ward off fate. Attribution of animals' names takes place in this logic and aims at diverting death attention. It will henceforth put their posterity at the same level as wild animals, individual names that are attributed to them being related to animals' names. They can be subject of various interpretations. There are descriptive individual names that originate from nicknames attributed to the person with a physical or moral characteristic or simply idiomatic expressions, or shortened glory titles. Likewise, popular belief sometimes alludes to intelligence, to bravery of some animals (respectively rabbit and monkey then lion) as resistance strategy in front of death. This analysis is illustrative of many tendencies observed in others linguistic communities, especially with Sabe people (Adjera, 2013, p. 182). Data in (3) well illustrate these realities.

Title 3:

*Antinomic names of death in Tiv Language*

(3)	<i>alom</i>	<i>rabbit</i>	<i>kulugh</i>	:	<i>Tortoise</i>
	<i>bagu</i>	<i>monkey</i>	<i>nyam</i>	:	<i>Meat</i>
	<i>begha</i>	<i>lion</i>	<i>nyinya</i>	:	<i>Horse</i>
	<i>bua</i>	<i>cow</i>	<i>nomyongo</i>	:	<i>Ram</i>
	<i>ichongo</i>	<i>fox</i>	<i>nor</i>	:	<i>Elephant</i>
	<i>ishu</i>	<i>fish</i>	<i>yese</i>	:	<i>Scorpion</i>
	<i>lyar</i>	<i>buffalo</i>	<i>apu</i>	:	<i>Vulture</i>
	<i>lyo</i>	<i>snake</i>	<i>gafa</i>	:	<i>Scavenger</i>
	<i>jaki</i>	<i>donkey</i>	<i>tsoughul</i>	:	<i>Falcon</i>

Beyond the singular identification of child, attribution of individual names is a school of life; it conveys tricks displayed by begetters to keep themselves and to keep their close family in front of the throes of death. Individual name is a statement that must be absolutely read between the lines: what “is said” is not what we “want to say” (Lerot, 1983, p. 147; Rodegem, 1985, p. 70), because “we point out without naming” (Ntahombaye, 1983, p. 36). Its interpretation ineluctably proceeds both from the domains of sociolinguistic, semantic, pragmatic and enunciation.

If linguistic meaning is inherent in the sentence and stays invariable, real meaning or sociolinguistic meaning is function of linguistic competence of the listener to use his knowledge of the speech context and laws (Lerot, 1983, p. 148). If we can from an individual name only understand sometimes what it can mean - what is not always obvious as far as the formulas are often elliptical - it is however necessary, to accede to the message itself, to know the context that has justified its choice. Through the case of individual names to understand in relation to various social realities, we can appreciate how attribution of individual name can be significant of the organization and a social function.

#### 4. Social Function of Individual Names

Contrarily to most of philologists and historians, linguists and logicians attempted to define functions of individual names. Let us limit ourselves to indicate the questions that set to sociolinguist definitions expressed by some of them; for many, individual name would be only a kind of deictic having only the function to designate and identify an individual. Benveniste (1976, p. 200) expresses this point of view when he proposes the following definition: “What we usually mean by individual name is a conventional mark of social identification such as it can constantly and in a single way name a unique individual. If individual denominations have had for only function to identify (such as singular numbers that would characterize each one a distinct person) systems of individual names certified in the various societies would appear widely dysfunctional. Indeed, what catches attention when we examine the anthroponymic system of a collectivity, it is the narrowness of individual names field: limited number of patronymics at the scale of a village or a region, first names often similar within a same lineage or even a same age class, anyway where necessities of distinction are yet the most predominant.

Without any doubt, we can argue that in many societies, individual nickname guarantees personal identification, avoids confusions due to the identity of family name and first names; but this argument does not entirely prevail on the conviction: on the one hand, nicknames have a social integration function as well as the one of individualization; on the other, they ensure only imperfectly the distinction among individuals (many of them are not nicknamed); finally and above all, necessary recourse to individual nicknames testify, if needed, distinctive weakness of individual names’ system considered in its whole.

Besides, if persons' names had for only function to "name constantly in a single way a unique individual", we would wrongly understand why many societies institutionalize - and many others tolerate - that an individual receives a different name at each step of his biography - what complicates more identification processes. We can see it, empiric arguments do not lack to invalidate definitions that deal with individual name like an "index".

A reflection on the functions of individual names begins by recognition of a paradox: to what hold distinctive weakness of systems vowed, at first sight, to ensure personal identification? A series of examples, borrowed to distant and close societies will enable to take measure of this paradox and to better locate the debate's stake.

With Guidar people of North-Cameroon, any individual receives "during his existence two names: firstly at his birth, a name that indicates his birth rank, then three or four months later, a "nickname" that name him in a more personal way»(Collard, 1973, p. 45). First names are identical for all Guidar people who have the same birth rank; thus all eldest boys are named Tizi, all eldest girls Keza; besides, sexual distinction is only marked for the first four children; the fifth born will equally receive, Madi like individual name, the sixth Todu, etc. These ordinal first names "are if we want, numbers" (ibid.) labelling each one according to his seniority degree. We could think that nickname is unique, for distinction purposes; this is not the case: "It is in general father's name which is besides most often name-number. Thus, most of Guidar people have a name composed in fact of two names-numbers; their own and the one of their father" (op. cit., p. 48). That such a system enables personal identification (by the use of ordinal first name within the family, and the composed-name within the group), we will agree without difficulty; but there is not the only function: in fact, it classifies individuals according to their genealogy, so that homonyms are those who have the same native status.

The whole of names, we just see it, was attributed according to strict rules; every individual bears, besides, a patronymic that is transmitted, as its name indicates, in agnatic line; this patronymic functions as a lineage classifier, pointing out, on the one hand, the relatedness of all those bearing the same family name, confirming on the other hand, the prevailing patrilineal filiation type.

More than these names that classify more than they do not identify, one resort to nicknames to distinguish individuals among themselves or to diminutive of first names; but the bearing of these names, singularly individual those, is not general in the community; distribution of nicknames approximately varies from a socio-professional group to the other. If we continue further analysis, we notice that individual nicknames are reserved, in general, to men and their use is subordinate to a set of strict rules: we do not use them either in front of a stranger to the collectivity, or outside the community environment. Here again, identifier functions as a classifier: it indicates professional status, the fact of being native, the local membership.

Finally, the whole of these names functions as a code of which each element (first name, patronymic, patronymic diminutive, nickname) indicates the named subject membership to one "preordained class"(Lévi-Strauss, 1962b, p. 240): a sex, a birth rank, a native status, a socio-professional group are the most predominant change factors. Let us notice that different elements of this code do not only attribute positions to named individuals but they express relationships that those maintain among themselves (homonyms by their first name, they belong to alternated generations (grandfather or grandson) or fellow creatures (first cousins), homonyms by their patronymic diminutive, they belong to consecutive generations, etc.). If one had to compare such systems of individual names with others classificatory systems, one would willingly agree, with Lévi-Strauss (1962b) that they are similar to vegetable or animal taxonomies. The "individual" is "defined" there as a "species"

occupying a determined place in a “system” involving “many dimensions” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b, p. 248).

Classifying animals and vegetables do not only consist in attributing to different species a particular position in taxonomy according to permanent and distinctive characteristics that we recognize to them. Scientific thought like “wild thought” distinguishes also plants and animals according to stages of their growth; as an example, Kissi people of Guinea name dixi rice sub-species that botanists identify like *Oryzasativa* L.O. *indica* (Kato) Gutschin; they use this unit to identify this sub-species, whatever the plant maturation stage; likewise, they have a very rich range of words or syntagm to designate different vegetation cycles: sanò designate “seed soaking”, maiotolio “planted out rice”, maiowil, “rice that shoots”, maiofura, “rice that grows”, maiodèdu, “rice in flowers”, maiodite le “ripe rice” (see Portères, 1966, p. 24).

Like vegetable and animal taxonomies, a lot of anthroponymic systems are organized according to these two dimensions: individual receives, in the days or months that follow its birth, one or several permanent names (that indicates his native status, his seniority degree, etc.) then, during his existence, he is given others names that indicate each one a change of his statutory position.

With Nuer people of Sudan, child receives little after his birth two particular names, one attributed “on final decision of the father”, the second by his maternal grandparents (Evans-Pritchard, 1971, p. 185-187); besides he “inherits” “of a cot paak, individual name to his clan and in honour title»(ibid.).Beside these permanent names, he receives, over time, others names that rhythm the great stages of his life: “A cow name” at the time of his initiation, his father or his mother’s name (preceded of “son of”) when he is too old for being called by his “cow name” and still too young for being called by a teknonym (“father of”).

Most of anthroponymic systems are therefore animated by those two contradictory tendencies: attribute permanent positions to individuals, indicates status change that “mark” their biography” (Zonabend, 1980, p. 15). What do these different examples prove? Firstly, most of these anthroponymic systems deals with “individualization like a classification” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b, p. 261); secondly, certified individual names in a society form a system of signs, relatively closed series of which each one is supplied with a distinct signified, several of them can besides name a same individual; thirdly, we already said it, the distinctive weakness of these systems is only the reverse of their classificatory richness; Finally, these systems classify individuals according to criteria that vary from a culture to the other, without one can yet say that the classification methods are in limited number like differences that characterize cultures and societies. The principle supports denomination on the basis of well-defined criteria. A set of parameters precises the meaning.

Must we conclude, on the basis of these examples that “individual name always remains on the classification side” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b, p. 285)? Examples that we could draw in our contemporary societies seem, at first sight, to invalidate this generalization. Choice of the child first name, for instance, appears much more subordinated to particular purposes of parents and relatives than strict social rules. Individual name stock appears then varied and unsettled, to an extent that liturgical calendar must be periodically updated to register innovations, for lack of being able to hold back the flow. This lability does not only characterize inventories of contemporary individual names.

In the study he devotes to Mosi people of Haute-Volta anthroponymy, Houis (1963, p. 9) notices that it is purely unexpected that two individuals bear the same yure (individual name). Same situation occurs with Yanômami people of South America. Lizot (1973, p. 62-

63) notices that “some individual names are completely fabricated” and “usually we avoid giving a name already attributed”. In these two cases, individual names form opened series and do not differentiate from the others nominal categories. “Individual names do not constitute (...) a separate linguistic category, at least formally. ‘Individual names’ category contrasting the one of ‘common names’ do not concern mooré people” (Houis, 1963, p. 7). “To form personal names, the entire lexicon is engaged.

Any stem is likely to get in the composition of an individual name” (Lizot, 1973, p. 61). Could it exist two extreme denominations formulas, one rigid giving one or names to an individual according to a pre-established code, the other more flexible, even asystematic, where the chosen name would make echo to particular circumstances or personal intentions? On the one hand, “individual names” seem to form “fringe of a general system of classification (...).When they come on stage the curtain rises on the final act of logical representation” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962b, p. 285); on the other hand, no mechanical pattern enables to account for their distribution in a social group; denomination then appears as “a free creation of the one who he names, a transitory state of his own subjectivity” (op. cit., p. 240) or “How many mothers, [notice Lizot (1973, p. 61)] during stays in the most distant groups asked me by carrying their child at arm’s length: “Give him a name!”.

Opposition between these two formulas, as real as it is, is however less clear than it appears at first sight. Let us notice that only individual names or nicknames are vowed to this anarchy. Family, clan names etc. remain in all above-mentioned cases, intangible classificatory references.

Finally, it is not so much individuation that overtakes classification, it is symbol that prevails on sign; in our societies, books (specialized dictionaries, religious or profanes magazines) index qualities one can attribute to different first names, codify residual metaphysics that is attached to them; in traditional societies, individual name is often, by its form like its content, a message towards numinous powers that express an intention, “the one to insure life against death” (Houis, 1963, p. 22).As such, the name use is subject to a set of rites that confirm the values that one invests in them.

Therefore, individual name can have a double status, the one of classificatory reference attributing to the named individual one or some determined positions in the social structure, the one of symbol sharing a world vision, organized system of representations and beliefs. These two functions - equally or not - gathered under a same individual name, whose respective importance varies not only from a society to the other but also from a type of name to the other within a same anthroponymic system deserves further analysis. Beyond functions attributed to individual names and regarding symbolic character that they contain, a discussion around these names would certainly invalidate established theories.

## **5. Discussion**

Most of the works on anthroponomy remained static ideas descriptions (contexts of names’ attribution, social functions of names), isolated historic markers, rarely highlighting of social dynamics that would enable to question some theories of which for instance religious missions in Africa that have been, in part, at colonization origin.

Africa colonization was an important stake of the colonial time and was at the centre of rivalries between great colonial empires. More than everywhere else, these empires expressed the desire to civilize African continent and to help it develop trade institutions. Mothers countries took over territories considered like unoccupied. By this support, they ensured natural resources control in exchange for what they developed social structures imported from industrialized countries: roads, ports, towns etc. Africa’s colonization is at the

origin of a racial discrimination philosophy in which white man superiority was undeniable and incontestable.

The superior attitude of Europeans colonists, convinced to contribute to a healthy development of African people, caused a high assimilation of native peoples to European culture. People therefore lost their culture, their beliefs and their traditions for foreign civilization; it is what is called acculturation. Colonial business of Europeans countries went also with religious missions that wished to evangelize African continent. This meeting with religious culture has only emphasized African people acculturation. The assumption of God ignorance was raised to justify these religious missions. Abundance of ideas put forward suggests that one starts from the interpretation of individual names' attribution to confirm or invalidate this assumption.

Names with Tiv people as with others linguistic communities in Africa, clarify the relationship of these communities with God. The simple fact of existence of a cosmogony in each of them reveals knowledge of God. Better, Tiv linguistic community clearly identifies Supreme Being by *aondo* or *tor* (God). That supposes that its existence is ontological. Several names exalt faith and acknowledgement of Supreme Being favours. This exaltation is more perceptible when it comes to praise his power, to solicit his protection, his blessing, his presence or to recognize that he is the Creator of universe (Compare the examples above-mentioned). Names being linguistic units, it is obvious that they are inherent in the culture of the community that uses it. Expressing belief in Supreme Being varies from a community to another. This variation could not be interpreted as the sign of God ignorance by a community. Supreme Being knowledge is a reality that depends on universal life. Each community expresses it through linguistic units as for instance names that it attributes to his offspring or through cultural practices.

## **6. Conclusion**

At the end of this analysis of individual name with Tiv people of Nigeria and Cameroon, we could say that the anthroponymic system humanly has nothing extraordinary. It presents characteristics that can be considered as being very common to many others African linguistic communities. It offers typological order bundles to put in relation with practices that have been observed with other communities especially the ones linked to God and death that are also frequent with Sabe and Bebelibe people (Adjera, 2014; Sambieni, 2014). Names with Tiv people are an example of how Tiv community incorporated God in its existence, in its life conception and in its representation of Supreme Being. Therefore they justify how they can construct knowledge.

The first scientific interest of this work is that, going from the knowledge of the change factors that rule the attribution of individual names, we come to review classical historiography of African linguistic communities in general and Tiv people in particular. Work is therefore a contribution to a best knowledge of sociolinguistic realities and Tiv culture. It is usual to hear that sub-Saharan Africa does not or did not have writing tradition. It is justified if it is only the use of Roman, Arabic, Chinese letters, etc. but if one redefines writing, not on graphic plan, nor as visual manifestation, but by taking into account his function, one can say that individual name, with support that is bearer, undeniably plays writing role.

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## THUS SPOKE AHURAMAZDA: 2004: A SYSTEMCIDE -ON TO -THE-L.M.D. ODYSSEY

### Abstract

The reform brought about in the tertiary tuition some years ago certainly had a well-intentioned aim of a transformation for better. The decision-maker behind such a reform pushed by a dire need of reform instead of taking us on an enthralling pedagogic voyage led us rather in the dire straits, on a odyssey of which Odysseus, Homerus' hero, could ne envious! Ever since the 2004 systemcide of the Classical System to the present day, the imperious problems of that new system have become standing out conspicuously! The return safely to our pedagogic Ithaca, we directly need an Ahumazda, a kind of lord of light and wisdom to lead us out of that rampant malarkey.

**Keywords:** Ahumazda, LMD system, odyssey, Odysseus, systemcide.

### 1. Introduction

Replacing one system by another means that there is need for change and sometimes even an urgency in doing so. Although nothing was really pressing to bring change, but in 2004 the L.M.D. system was launched. A legion of teachers was thunderstruck when such a system arrived in our walls uninvited and without warning. The verdict was fatal: it is the *systemcide of the classical system!* The first palpable bad consequence of such a systemcide (suicide of a system) was swift: an unprecedented confusion! Yet, the introduction was not marked by a great excitement for indeed the passing of time brought a sense of demotivation among teachers and some hard working students and things started

To worsen, imperious problems started to stand out, and the list of drawbacks to elongate; it is the dreaded opening of the Pandora Box!

### 2. From Skill and Experience to Larcenous Idleness

It has always been possible to reconsider pedagogical matters of an educational institution from a number of different perspectives (Nunan, 1988). In a quest for change, for example, the best reconsideration is to seek easiness or curricula syllabi for easification of enhancement or otherwise. For change, we also move in a linear fashion, never backward. Thus started the odyssey!

When in 1982, the compensation system was launched; it had the pious claim to change things from difficult to easy, from blocking students by a hard (but a yielding système modulaire), to a less demanding and helping Samaritan educational system. Allowing learners to compensate for their weaknesses as modules compensated one another; in the long run, this system turned out to be *ruinous* to learning which little by little started to undergo an invisible degeneration. Students began to care less about their learning except for moving from year to

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another making the least efforts. In addition, change continued, bringing other unwanted snags (Labeled, 2007).

Indeed, in 2004, the ministry decision-makers brought about another reform, pushed by a dire need of change, but instead of taking us on an enthralling pedagogic voyage, led us in dire-straits, on an odyssey of which Odysseus, the Homer's hero, could not be envious. It is the LMD odyssey: with the compensation system maintained, such a system decided for dropping the "note éliminatoire" to allow a much easier move from one year to another together with the introduction of the system of credits which allow a student to move to the next year without necessarily having secured the average. The students have started to develop an attitude about studies and learning, the attitude of *larcenous craving of idleness*; "larcenous" because such learners succeeded in depriving pedagogy from the art and professionalism to inculcate skill and experience, and by consequence of which teachers are rendered lean providers of marks more than of knowledge.

The trench between pedagogy and larceny began to be seriously dug which has created a kind of isolation where some "teachers may feel that they are not really in control of the learning process, or even aware of how a learner is progressing" (Frendo. 2005, p.96). The same feeling can also be shared by some hard working learners who feel that they have been dispossessed of their motivation and their authentic working environment where fierce competition and will to succeed are masters! They see in front of them some idle students who gravitate around succeeding without the least effort, at times mocking at those who work hard!

### **3. The Odyssey of Pedagogy: From Self-concept to the Dire Straits**

In normal instances where learning takes place, the main running theme in the learning enterprise is how the learner rates himself in accordance to his competence in doing his particular tasks. Add to this, the image he makes of himself and the self-evaluation (or self-value) he generates of himself. All these affect his way of approaching his learning and his learning problems and the way he solves them.

These conceptions the learner makes of himself and which influence his learning behavior in one way or another are known as self-concept, or how the learner perceives and conceives himself within the world of his education and learning and gain confidence of his academic prowess where in 'education is viewed as involving the emotions and feelings [not] merely transmitting pieces of knowledge' (Williams et al.1997, p.33). This is exactly the image we wish our learners develop in the course of their tuition for we do believe that coming to the university is not simply succeeding because of a Samaritan L.M.D. [and a compensation] system but rather for truly acquiring the notions of why and how he is *learning*. Actually, on the basis of a belief in his capacities, the learner may become more efficacious when [he learns to] masters his learning (vicarious) experiences. Such a boost in self-concept is expected to encourage for further achievements. Because of such a boost, the learner is also expected to affect his *self-esteem* or the judgments of the self-worth and his self-determination, which both help him show 'greater efforts and greater persistence in the face of setbacks' (Woolfolk.2004, p.369).

However, with the L.M.D. system as a guiding principle of our tertiary language policy, these self-schemes seem to pertain to a scientific paradise. Again classroom observation and monitoring revealed to us that these self-schemes are indeed manifested in some of our students' behavior but this remains, unfortunately, far below our expectancies. The consequence is that for eight years or more, pedagogy and some caring teachers are in the dire straits. Eight sheer years of an odyssey in unfriendly waters are enough. It is urgent to

draw the attention of the decision makers at every stance of the hierarchy that if such system if not immediately stopped, and its doctrine seriously revised for betterment, the rampant malarkey that we witness day after day will sure enough annihilate our tertiary educational system. These are the somber truths about such a system, and “all truths that are kept silent become poisonous” (Nietzsche. 1976, p.56).

Whether such a stand and warning smacks of exaggeration, the lucent truth is that a positive-thinking minded person would take it as an invitation for a ‘change in the behavior, thoughts or feelings of an organism (...) that results from experience’ (Sternberg,1995, p.236).It is precisely thanks to our experience that we cannot think or accept learning to take place precisely “*without some laws of learning*” (Palmarini, 1981, p.301. Original italics) that we advance the claim that if we accept as a charge of responsibility to write off for good at all such a system, this will have the redoubtable role in judiciously readjusting tuition in our colleges. For the interest of precision, it seemed that the LMD system has brought about some laws of learning that are alien to the Algerian realities. The dean of the University of Lille, who has “unlearned to keep silence” (Nietzsche, 1997, p.38), has *openly and simply* admitted in a meeting in circa 2005 that in his university where they have the LMD system for over a decade and they are “still groping around!” Such a declaration would allow to advance the thought that for the decision makers that maybe it has been a haste to adopt such a system without truly looking deeply and congruously into it to see whether it veritably suits our pedagogic environment; or at least try it with a sample class instead of an ad hoc adoption, pushing the twenty-year good old system to a *systemcide*.

#### **4. Back to *Pedagogic Ithaca*: Incubation for Re-thinking the Pedagogic Route**

To return safely to the *pedagogic Ithaca*, one needs to stop and think of how to break away from the herd mentality and live by one’s ‘will to power’. What we really need is an incubation time. As an operational definition, incubation means putting the problem aside for a while. In other words, when we are unsuccessful in solving a problem probably because one of the attributes discussed above are missing as motivation, proper environment, etc., we need to rest, to rethink all the strategies that have been adopted, to recalculate the risks, to re-order the system, name it! It is advisable to stop ‘working’ than continuing to work without interruption, which leads –as it is the case- to disappointment, or loss of self-confidence.

Many agree that incubation improves creative problem solving (c.f. Matlin, 2003). With taking a break, and with a top-down strategy, i.e. looking at the higher-level of the problem, that is beginning with a consideration of the overall organization developing a better idea of the problem, will allow the pedagogues to look at the problem differently. Furthermore, if necessary, the pedagogues can evenly take recourse to the bottom-up approach which consists in decoding the multi-cellular organism of reasonably complex structure of the system’s problems step by step from the smallest elements on to gradually building up a larger understanding of it (Robinson, 1991 and elsewhere).

However, if incubation seems to be at times slow and does really solve problems, it remains nevertheless within the province of practice that when ideas block, it is better to stop, to change potion, or to postpone the task to a further moment. By taking a break, the pedagogues can rewrite the entire pedagogic road map to enable the university to carry on with her pedagogic voyage on a better and more appropriate route to reach back the so dreamed *pedagogic Ithaca*. After all, what matters most in any language policy is to help *maintain* among all learners, however difficult, the desire to follow with heartthrob their learning, and participate thoroughly in the ‘ethos of *the* classroom’ (Widdowson,1990). The voyage that took Odysseus back to his Ithaca lasted some twenty years; we hope our odyssey will be shorter, much shorter.

## 5. Conclusion

Isn't the university condemned to re-think her language policy? To answer such a question, one has to sincerely and judiciously look at the results of every year, and then *ascertain* whether the decision makers have been manipulated to adopt that system called the L.M.D.

Again, an invitation is sent to the pedagogues to make use of at the apocalyptic statistics of our repeaters and dropouts wherewith to measure the thickness of the layers of our troubles that pile up year after year owing to such a system. Then, the decision can be taken about which necessary alterations to make. The bottom line is that it is only by using the appropriate heuristics together with the consideration and evaluation of feedback that we can implement all these aspects of change in the Algerian tertiary language policy system. We believe that it is only by so doing that *we will for sure awaken in us the dormant Ahuramazda*, that lord of light and wisdom and upholder of truth, to lead us out that rampant malarkey.

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## A NEED-BASED EVALUATION OF AN ORAL PRESENTATION COURSE AT BEJAIA UNIVERSITY: PERSPECTIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS

### Abstract

This paper reports on a needs-based study conducted to explore EFL master students' academic needs and to examine the adequacy and effectiveness of the oral presentation course in catering to those needs. To this end, a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were conducted with students. The findings suggest that the current course had a number of drawbacks in meeting the learners' expectations and needs. The course could be further improved by incorporating relevant materials, increasing the time allotted to the course, and putting more emphasis on the students' needs regarding the master thesis oral presentation.

**Keywords:** EFL students, needs analysis, needs-based evaluation, oral course evaluation,

### 1. Introduction

EFL graduate students are expected to engage in several academic tasks to ensure successful completion of their courses. One major challenging task that graduate students face is writing a research paper and presenting an oral summary of this research during their thesis defense. To cope with these demands, the Department of English at Bejaia University offers a wide range of modules and courses such as scientific communication skills, oral presentation skills and research paper writing techniques. The purpose of these courses is not to render students a better command of English, but to enable them to carry out certain tasks pertinent to their academic success in their prospective fields of study. Most of these courses can be compiled under the umbrella of English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

English for Academic Purposes is a major field in Applied Linguistics which, in a broad sense, encompasses all areas of academic communicative practice such as undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate teaching, classroom interactions, academic publishing and curriculum issues, as well as various research and student genres (Hyland, 2006, p. 1). Dudley-Evans and St-John (1998) define EAP briefly as "any English teaching that relates to a study purpose» (p.34). Hence, the main focus of EAP is to equip students with the necessary academic skills to complete their University course tasks (Jordan, 1997; Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Brick, 2012). These study skills are common to all students at the tertiary level and considered to be as discipline independent (Brick, 2012, p. 170). Hamp-Lyons (2001) claims that the purpose of EAP courses is to teach the formal and academic genres of the language as opposed to general English courses which tend to focus on conventional and social genres. EAP can be further categorized as English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). EAGP draws on academic discourse common to all disciplines; whereas, ESAP focuses on discipline-specific academic discourse (Brick, 2012).

Evaluation is considered as an essential process to insure the effectiveness and efficiency of any language course. Programme evaluation refers to “collecting information about different aspects of a language program in order to understand how the program works and how successfully it works, enabling different kinds of decisions to be made” (Richards, 2001, p. 286). A course evaluation can be carried out for several purposes and can be oriented to serve different agents. Weir and Roberts (1994) identify two main purposes of language programme evaluation: programme accountability and programme development. The former kind of evaluation is oriented to measure the effects of a programme at significant end points and is often conducted for the interests of an outsider audience or decision-makers. The latter, however, is concerned with improving the quality of a certain programme as it is implemented and usually involves teachers, learners and the staff who are already engaged in the programme (Weir & Roberts, 1994, p. 5). Based on its purpose, language programme evaluation can be either termed as summative, which usually occurs at the end of a course or formative, which is conducted during the course (Rea-Dickins & Germaine, 1992). Summative evaluation is considered to be formal and aims at assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of a programme; whereas, formative evaluation is informal and usually aims to refine and enhance the current practices of the programme (Graves, 1996). Chen (2005) points to the necessity of gathering hard evidence to prove programme effectiveness and efficiency. He adds that neglecting feedback from participants has great potential in steering the course towards more effective processes. In congruence with this, Richards (2001) purports that examining the effectiveness of a course involves different measures such as mastery of objectives, performance on tests, and measures of acceptability which is considered as a valuable account for students' and teachers' satisfaction about the course (p. 294).

Moreover, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) stress the importance of course evaluation in both ELT and EAP contexts. EAP courses are designed to respond to particular educational needs; therefore, evaluation is a necessary tool to demonstrate to what extent those needs are fulfilled (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 152). Long (2005) considers language programme evaluation as a part of the larger context of programme Needs Analysis (NA). According to Brown (1995), NA refers to “those activities involved in gathering information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of students”. It follows that course evaluation and needs analysis, though can stand alone, may intersect at certain points. In fact, some of the outlined aims of NA are directly associated with course evaluation. For example, NA can be used to examine if the course is “preparing the learners properly for their use of English at the end of the course” (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 123) and “to help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students” (Richards, 2001, p. 52).

In the present study, course evaluation was utilized as a part of a needs analysis process that attempts to examine areas of mismatch between the course and the students' needs. In doing so, the students' wants and expectations are identified and discussed in relation to the course. The researcher approached the current course from students' perspectives. Students, as key participants in evaluation, provide valuable information "on the way the program was taught and the relevance of what they have learned to their needs" (Richards, 2001, p. 196). The evaluation was carried out after the course, by the end of the second semester to make sure that the students have delivered their thesis oral presentations. An after-course evaluation is deemed highly important because "the learners will be in position to judge how well the course prepared them for the target situation they are in now" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 155). After going through their academic experience, former learners can lend vital insights into the process of improving the instruction and learning of academic oral presentations skills.

The main goal of the current course, as stated in the official curriculum, is to improve students' oral presentation skills (c.f. Appendix 01). With the goal being general, some freedom was left for the instructor to determine the intermediate objectives of the course, the content and the methods by which to carry out the course. Such process exerts great responsibility on teachers since it requires a thorough and ongoing needs analysis. Some teachers may skip this step which often results in a prescribed course based on the teacher's idiosyncrasies rather than students' real needs. Hence, the present study intends to cast lights on students' needs and concerns and reveal areas that require further improvements in the course. Nunan (1988) considers NA as the first step in designing and improving language programmes. Therefore, the findings of this research will set a foundation for the upcoming process of designing a focused course that will cater to EFL master students' needs at Bejaia University.

The following questions guide this research:

- How do students judge the adequacy of the course in terms of content, structure, timing, materials, feedback and instruction?
- How effective was the course in responding to the students' needs?

## **2. Methods**

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the oral presentation course through the perspectives of the learners. To provide rich information and reinforce evaluation conclusions, the present study employs a mixed- methods design drawing on both quantitative and qualitative accounts. In language programme evaluation, the use of both quantitative and qualitative data is preferable since they often complement each other (Richards, 2001).

### ***2.1. Participants and Setting***

The course under evaluation is offered by the Department of English at Bejaia University as a compulsory subject in the Master 2 programme of the Linguistics option. The course has a time span of two hours and half per week and covers only fall semester. The participants of the study include 16 EFL master 2 students majoring in Linguistics. The study was conducted after the course, by the end of the academic year 2017-2018.

### ***2.2. Research Instruments***

The programme evaluation was conducted after the course in the form of summative evaluation. Data was obtained through quantitative and qualitative measures. A survey questionnaire was devised and administrated to students by the end of the academic year after the students have completed the master thesis defense. In summative evaluation, questionnaires are widely used as research instruments because they permit the collection of large data set about a course and they are very efficient where "there are very clear focuses for the evaluation and there is a need to summarize the data to get a general picture" of a course (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 130). The survey questionnaire aimed at gathering students' opinions about the effectiveness and the adequacy of the course in terms of the content, organization, materials, feedback, timing and instruction. Data obtained from questionnaires were compiled and analyzed using SPSS. Data has been presented in tables and described in terms of percentages.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 students after the questionnaires were obtained. Interviews can be used to supplement the survey questionnaire by providing in-depth information on specific questions (Richards, 2001, p. 300). Semi structured interviews were utilized to explore students felt needs and to provide deep insights

on the effectiveness of the course in meeting those needs. The qualitative data obtained from the interview were coded and analyzed through content analysis.

### 3. Results and Discussion

To get a deep sense of students' evaluations of the current course, both quantitative and qualitative data were used. The findings from both types were analyzed separately. To answer the research questions, both quantitative and qualitative data were both analyzed and discussed under two main sections: the adequacy of the course and the effectiveness of the course. The students' suggestions were included in the qualitative data analysis.

#### 3.1 Findings from Students' Questionnaire

##### 3.1.1. The adequacy of the course

This section of the questionnaire attempts to illicit students' opinions about the adequacy of the course in terms of course timing, content, structure, materials, feedback, and instruction. In doing so, the areas of strength and weakness in the course were identified and highlighted.

Table1

*Students' opinions about the course*

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
	%	%	%	%	%
1-The time frame given to the course was sufficient	43.8	43.8	12.5	0.0	0.0
2-Error correction and feedback were appropriate.	6.2	50.0	6.2	37.5	0.0
3-There was enough variety in the lessons.	12.5	50.0	6.2	31.2	0.0
5-The class atmosphere was positive.	0.0	12.5	6.2	56.2	25
7-Materials were appropriate.	31.2	56.2	6.2	6.2	0.0
8-All instructions were clear.	0.0	0.0	25	56.2	18
9-The skills taught in the course were -appropriate to my needs.	0.0	50.0	6.2	43.8	0.0
10-The course provided rich knowledge and information.	0.0	56.2	6.2	37.5	0.0
11-The content of the course was appropriate to my needs.	0.0	43.8	12.5	43.8	0.0

The results presented in table 1 indicate that some aspects of the course were deemed adequate while others seem to be less adequate in students' views. The majority of students disagree (43.8%) or strongly disagree (43.8%) that the time allocated to the course was appropriate. Over half of the participants (56.2%) reported that the course did not provide rich information and knowledge. A significant number of students strongly disagree (56.2%) or disagree (31.2%) that the materials used in the course were appropriate. Half of the respondents indicated that the feedback they have received during the course was not sufficient. Only few students (37.5%) reported that the feedback was adequate. In response to Item 3, many students strongly disagree (12.5%) or disagree (50%) that the lessons included enough variety.

Apparently, the majority of students find the course timing, materials and feedback to be inadequate. In addition, there seem to be an agreement concerning the lack of variety in lessons and a shortage of rich information and knowledge. This can be considered as a pitfall in the course, which should be addressed accordingly.

Further, the results indicate that almost all respondents agree (56.2%) or strongly agree (25%) on the positivity of the classroom atmosphere. Very few students (12.5%) seem to disagree with this statement. A large number of students agree (56.2%) or strongly agree (18.8%) that the instructions they have received in the course were clear. It seems that the classroom atmosphere and the instruction have received a better agreement among students. This can be due to teacher's personality or way of instruction.

Additionally, the findings reveal some areas of division where rates are not very conclusive. As illustrated in table 1, (43.8%) of the participants rated the course as appropriate to their needs. In contrast, other (43.8%) of students reported that the course was not appropriate to their needs; against (12.5 %) who remained neutral. Some (43.8%) of the students agree that the skills thought in the course were appropriate; whereas, 50% of respondents disagree with this item. Opinion was divided concerning whether the course content and skills were appropriate to student's needs. This can largely be due to the fact that needs have a subjective nature. Many students have different views and opinions about their needs. Therefore, the course may have met some of students' needs and may have ignored the needs of others. In some cases, students can be unaware about their needs. This however points out to the importance of identifying students' needs before implementing an EAP course.

### 3.1.2 The effectiveness of the course

This part is devoted to report on the effectiveness of the course in developing students' oral presentation skills and therefore preparing them for the task of delivering master thesis oral presentation.

Table 2

*The students' perspectives towards the effectiveness of the course in improving their presentation skills*

Items	Not at all helpful %	Slightly helpful %	Helpful %	Very helpful %
1.The ability to cope with stress	0.0	18.8	68.8	12.5
2. Engaging the audience	0.0	25.0	68.8	6.2
3. Appropriate pace	0.0	18.8	75	6.2
4. Adequate timing	6.2	18.8	68.8	6.2
5. Effective non-verbal communication skills	6.2	18.8	50.0	25
6. Fluency	6.2	12.5	56.2	25
7. Correct pronunciation	6.2	37.5	43.8	12.5
8. Appropriate range of vocabulary	6.2	50	37.5	6.2
9. Accuracy of grammar	6.2	62.5	18.8	12.5
10. Appropriate handling of visual aids	62.5	18.8	12.5	6.2
11. The organization of supporting materials in a logical way	37.5	43.8	12.5	6.2
12.The organization of content in a coherent way	25.	50	18.8	6.2
13. Adequate selection of relevant content	12.5	62.5	12.5	12.5

Table 2 depicts on the students' views concerning the effectiveness of the course in developing their presentation skills in 13 areas. A large number of participants (68.8%) stated that the course helped them to cope with stress and engage with audience; whereas, 18.8% of students maintained that the course was slightly helpful. The majority of respondents reported that the course was effective in helping them develop appropriate pace (75%) and adequate timing (68%). About half of the students assert that the course was helpful (50%) or very helpful (25%) in improving their non-verbal communication skills and fluency. Half of the participants (50%) claim that the course was not very effective in providing them with an appropriate range of vocabulary to deliver oral presentations. 62.5 % of students claim that the course was slightly helpful with regard to accuracy of grammar. Another (62.5%) indicated that the course was not helpful at all in teaching them how to handle visual aids. Evidently, the course was not effective in the area of organizing the supporting materials in logical way. 50% of the respondents maintained that the course was slightly helpful in assisting them to select and organize the content of presentation. Some students claimed that the course was not helpful at all with regard to this skill.

The results imply that the course was effective with regard to delivery skills such as coping with stress, engaging the audience, responding to the audience, adequate timing and managing non-verbal behavior. As for language, the course seems to be effective in developing students' fluency and pronunciation and slightly helpful with regard to vocabulary and grammar. This indicates that the course offered a good opportunity for students to practice and improve their oral skills. However, the course seems to be less effective in equipping students with the necessary skills to prepare an oral presentation. Preparation skills include mainly the ability to select and organize appropriate content and the ability to design and handle visual aids or supporting materials. It seems that the focus of the course was more on delivery skills rather than preparation skills. This might have happened because the teachers take for granted that master students have adequate knowledge of how to prepare formal oral presentations. As for the visual aids, the shortcomings can be due to the lack of materials such as audio-visuals and computers. Since the course is carried out in a regular classroom, it is difficult to teach students how to handle and design visual aids effectively.

### ***3.2. Findings from Semi-structured Interview***

#### *3.2.1. The adequacy of the course*

The qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews revealed a great resemblance to that of the questionnaire. Students reported on some areas of weakness and strength in the course. One major theme appeared in the analysis is the inappropriate time span of the course. In this regard, a student said: "it was kind a short...so not many sessions...we didn't have enough time I guess to learn more about oral presentations especially the viva presentation" (S6). Another student adds: "it wasn't sufficient, just one session a week and as you know we had some strikes so it was not enough" (S1). The students suggest increasing the time allotted to the course. Some students even proposed to start the course in master one so they can have sufficient training.

Moreover, the students expressed their dissatisfaction with the materials used in the course saying that "we didn't use any new or good materials such as computers or data-show" (S7). Similarly, a participant stated, "there was a lack of materials like computers, so we didn't learn anything about how to design and make a presentation in PowerPoint" (S4). Apparently, the lack of materials inhibited the students from learning how to manipulate and design effective visual aids. In reply to this lack of materials, the students strongly advocate the use of technology such as computers, projectors and internet. Given the nature of the course; this seems to be a crucial demand to insure the adequacy of the course materials.

Some students described the content of the course as good and sufficient. However, other students have pointed out that the course content was inadequate in terms knowledge and relevance to their needs. A student in this context stated that “in terms of information or knowledge... we didn’t focus on that but we did practice and did many activities” (S9). Another respondent mentioned that “there was a lack of input, if there is no input how can we give the output” (S3). There seem to be a lack of content which a student addressed saying “before any techniques we need a basic background knowledge about oral presentations” (S8). A participant suggested that “the content of the course should include many components like the possible software we can use, the techniques...information about what makes a good presentation, what should be done or avoided»(S5). The students; thus, emphasize rich and relevant content before practice. As for the activities, the students seem to prefer debates, free presentations and research based presentations.

Additionally, there seem to be a lack of feedback and correction during the course as a student reported “even we had some presentations but there was no feedback so we didn't learn much from our classmates' presentations” (S4). Similarly, a student expressed her view saying that “we didn't really have enough time to deal with each presentation... each one gives his presentation, there isn't much time to talk about it or reflect on it” (S6).

Despite the students' dissatisfaction about some areas of the course, the participants also have identified some positive aspects of the course. A student said that “the positive thing is that we can feel that the teacher is dynamic and gives us the chance to speak instead of her presenting and talking, which allowed us to practice” (S1).

Another student reported “we felt comfortable with the teacher, she was very active and positive” (S1). It seems that the students were satisfied concerning the instruction and the atmosphere of the classroom.

### *3.2.2. The effectiveness of the course*

The qualitative data concerning the effectiveness of the course in preparing students for their master thesis oral presentation revealed deep and new insights that support the questionnaire data. Many students reported that the course was not helpful in some areas. A student mentioned that the course “was short and didn't help much” (S4). Similarly, another student said “honestly, I didn't think I learned many things in that course, because it was always about group discussions and debates... these activities were okay but not enough” (S3).

Many students felt that the course did not well-prepare them for their thesis oral presentation. A student stated in this vein “we feel that we were frozen when we got to that moment of presentation, we didn't know how to start or what to do and the teacher didn't give us enough information concerning all these things” (S7). Another student said “actually the course we had this year wasn't that helpful because we didn't have like a lot of sessions and it wasn't about how to present your thesis presentation” (S1). Similarly a participant further explains that “the viva presentation was different and something new for us, we were not so ready for it” (S3). Another student reported when he was sharing his experience of master thesis defense “I remember weeks ago we were talking about our presentation and we were confused about which elements to include and how do we structure the presentation, we were not prepared for this...we didn't study this in the course” (S8).

The students attributed different reasons for the ineffectiveness of the course including the lack of time and materials, inappropriate content and activities, and insufficient information about the master thesis presentation. The students' statements suggest that the focus of the course was not the thesis oral presentation particularly; rather, the course seemed

to be oriented to tackle speaking skills and oral presentations skills in general. This aligns with a student' comment that the course «was similar to first year, second year or third year sessions of oral expression where we had discussions, debates, dialogues, and presentations, so it was not so helpful for thesis oral presentation” (S1). When the students were asked about the objectives of the course a student replied “I think the course should be more about the master thesis oral presentation...it's more important” (S10). Another respondent adds “the purpose of the course is to help us improve our presentation skills...so we can pass the viva and defend our topic” (S8). Similarly, a student stated the purpose of the course is “to help us give a good master thesis oral presentation”. While these students relate the course objectives to master thesis oral presentation, others seem to focus on improving their speaking skills. For example, a participant mentioned that the purpose of the course should be “to improve our English and our speaking skills” (S4). Although the majority of students reported that the course should aim at preparing them for master thesis OP, there was a minority of student who seem to disagree with this claim. Probably, those learners have low linguistic competence thus they are more concerned about improving their speaking skills. In contrast, students who are in good command of speaking skills might be interested in acquiring the necessary skills to deliver an effective thesis oral presentation as one student explicitly states “I think that the course is made to help us prepare for the viva presentation so I think it should not be like this...general” (S5).

The students felt that the course was general thus did not prepare them well for their master thesis presentation which is a new genre for them. Evidently, the course did not respond well to the students' academic needs in this area. Therefore, the purpose of the course should be adjusted to serve the students' needs and expectations.

Some students expressed positive views towards the effectiveness of the course. The course was deemed efficient in helping students develop some delivery skills such as facing the audience and overcoming shyness and anxiety as reported in students' words:

S3: “the teacher told us how to convince others and how to present our ideas”

S2: “it was very helpful module because the teacher showed for us many strategies how to face the audience and present better”

S1: “maybe it helped in how to overcome anxiety or shyness”

Other students emphasized the effectiveness of the course in improving their speaking skills, which implies that speaking skills are important for some students. Students in this regard state:

S6: "I think it was effective because we practiced our speaking skills, we did debates, learned how to defend our ideas, we did also presentations ...so yes it was a good chance for us to improve our speaking»

S4: “this year we had the opportunity to practice speaking more during the course and we did many activities, so the course helped me to do my oral presentation”

S9: “it was very helpful for me personally, I was not used to speak but in this course I did presentations and participated in debates and discussions”.

It seems that some students prioritize speaking skills over presentation skills or they are simply unaware of the true purpose of the course. These students indicated that the course was effective in developing their speaking skills in general. The view that these students seem to hold is that speaking skills are more important and crucial for making an effective presentation. In other words, they seem to believe that if they have a good command over speaking skills, they will eventually succeed in making effective presentations, which is not

entirely true since even native speakers, who are linguistically competent, face major challenges when giving oral presentations (Morita, 2002).

Apparently, the students' views about the effectiveness of course vary according to their beliefs about the objective of the course and its relationship to their needs. The students who described the course as ineffective seem to identify their needs in relation to the master thesis presentation. According to them, the course failed to prepare them for this task; hence, their needs in this area were not addressed appropriately. However, the students who reported that the course was effective seem to identify their needs in relation to their speaking skills. That is to say, the needs of those students revolve around improving their speaking skills in general and the course seems to be successful in responding to those needs.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study attempts to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of oral presentation course through the perspectives of the students. The findings reveal some significant aspects of the oral presentation course under evaluation. Although the course has some strength, more efforts should be paid to improve some areas such as time allotted to the course, materials, feedback and more importantly the course objectives and content.

The results show that the time allocated to the course is not sufficient to improve students' presentation skills. Since presentation skills are acquired through intensive training, more time should be devoted to the course. The results also reveal a clear need for the use of materials such as computers and projectors. Assuming this is not always feasible, teachers can consider incorporating blended learning or using 2.0 Web tools to support the classroom instruction. Blended learning is likely to be effective in improving students' presentation skills (Ibrahim & Yusoff, 2012). Bouguebs (2019) stresses the importance of adopting flipped learning in EFL classrooms to enhance learning outcomes and compensate for the lack of materials and the limited time of language programs in higher education. This is especially true for the current course; the students may benefit immensely from out-of-class resources such as guides, lectures and videos of presentations, leaving the classroom time for practice and tasks that are more challenging.

Another area of concern revealed from this study is the lack of feedback, which is highly important especially in developing student's presentation skills. It is suggested to adopt different forms of feedback such as self-evaluation, peer feedback and teacher feedback. Research (Mika, 2006; Lee, 2017) confirm the efficacy of these forms of feedback in improving students' oral presentation skills.

A tentative conclusion that can be drawn from the findings is that the objectives and content of the course were general; therefore, they did not cater for the specific needs of students with regard to their master thesis oral presentation. The course was probably helpful in improving student's speaking skills or presentation skills. However, it was less successful in preparing the students for the challenging task of delivering an effective master thesis presentation. One of the probable reasons underlying this issue is the gap found between both objectives and content of the course, and the needs of students.

It is evident that the current course needs a reconstruction of its objectives and content. In doing so, the students' voice should be audible concerning what they learn and why they learn it (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Jordan, 1997; Long, 2005).

According to the students, the main objective of the course should be to prepare them for their master thesis presentation. Consequently, the students speaking skills will be improved as well since OPs are very useful in improving students' speaking skills (Brooks & Wilson,

2014). Hence, a detailed needs analysis should be conducted to reorient the course content and objectives in the direction of meeting the students' needs.

The findings indicate that the course under evaluation was very similar to an oral expression course, which often aims at developing students' speaking skills for general purposes. However, EFL master students can be considered as advanced learners who have already mastered speaking skills. Hence, they are in need of specific language and a set of skills to successfully carry out a particular academic task which is the delivery of master thesis oral presentation.

It appears that the English for general purposes approach adopted in the current course did not yield fruitful results. Therefore, the course is likely to be more effective if it is approached from the perspective of English for academic purposes. This narrowed angle will allow the course to address the specific academic needs of EFL master students at Bejaia University.

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## **Appendixes**

### **Appendix 01: The official Programme of the subject: “Techniques of Oral Presentation”**

**Intitulé du Master: Linguistique**

**Semestre: 3**

**Intitulé de l’UE: Méthodologique**

**Intitulé de la matière: Techniques de présentation orale**

**Crédits: 3**

**Coefficients: 2**

**Objectifs de l’enseignement**

- Initier les étudiants aux méthodes et techniques pédagogiques utilisée dans les présentations orales
- Initier les étudiants à l’utilisation des supports multimédia dans les présentations orales
- Initier les étudiants à l’utilisation du power point dans les présentations orales

**Connaissances préalables recommandées**

- Connaissances linguistiques
- Connaissances en informatique

**Contenu de la matière**

Introduction

Definition of oral presentations

Types of oral presentations

Factors to consider in oral presentations

Time Control

Place

Audience

Create visual aids

What makes a good communicator?

How to deliver an effective oral presentation

Power point and video presentations

**Mode d’évaluation:** Examen + Travail personnel TP

**Appendix 02: The programme of Semester 03 (M2, first semester) of the Linguistics  
Option at Bejaia University**

**3- Semestre 3:**

Unité d'Enseignement	VHS	V.H hebdomadaire				Coeff	Crédits	Mode d'évaluation	
	15 sem	C	TD	TP	Autre s			Continu	Examen
<b>UE fondamentales</b>									
<b>UEF1(O/P)</b>									
Historical/corpus linguistics (CL)	45h	1h30	1h30			2	04	*	*
genre analysis (GA)	45h	1h30	1h30			2	04	*	*
Pragmatics	22h30		1h30			1	02	*	*
<b>UEF2(O/P)</b>									
Contrastive and Comparative Analysis (CCA)	45h		3h			2	04	*	*
Didactics of Language Skills	22h30		1h30			1	02	*	*
Learning and Teaching Strategies (LTS)	22h30		1h30			1	02	*	*
<b>UE méthodologie</b>									
<b>UEM(O/P)</b>									
Techniques to Write a Scientific Paper (TWSP)	67h30	1h30	3h			3	06	*	*
<b>Oral Presentation Techniques (OPT)</b>	<b>37h30</b>		<b>2h30</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>03</b>		
<b>UE découverte</b>									
<b>UED(O/P)</b>									
Language Communication Practices and ICT (LCP)	22h30		1h30			01	01		
English for Specific Puposes (ESP)/ English for Academic Purposes (EAP)	22h30		1h30			01	01		
<b>UE transversales</b>									
<b>UET(O/P)</b>									
Methodology of Specialized Translation	22h30		1h30			01	01		
<b>Total Semestre 3</b>	<b>375h</b>	<b>4h30</b>	<b>20h30</b>			<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>		

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## OVERCOMING COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWNS THROUGH THE USE OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES: PERCEPTIONS, PRACTICES AND PERSPECTIVES

### Abstract

Communication competence in foreign language learning has long been a major subject under discussion and investigation in order to trigger for the factors that lead to successful or unsuccessful communication in EFL contexts. In fact, studies have demonstrated that success relates to the use of adequate learning strategies and failure pertains to the wrong use of the adequate strategy (Oxford, 1990 & 2005). The present paper, then, is an attempt to shed light on a major issue that pertains to learners' awareness of the appropriate use of learning strategies to overcome communication breakdowns. The findings show that it is of paramount importance that foreign language learners should be acquainted and trained to regular use of the appropriate learning strategies that allow them achieve effective communication.

**Keywords:** communication breakdowns, communication competence, communication strategies, strategy instruction-training.

### 1. Introduction

With the advent of cognitive and humanistic approaches in foreign language learning, a changing approach has emerged, which focuses on the learner rather than the teacher; it is a learner-centred approach. In fact, a significant transition has taken place, resulting in less emphasis on the teacher and teaching and greater stress on the learner and learning. According to this approach, the learner determines the learning goals and the learning process, as well. This interest in the learner has led researchers to a quest towards what distinguishes successful and unsuccessful learners. In fact, this inquisitiveness has helped them identify that there are individual differences (IDs) in L2 acquisition. These differences imply that learners differ not only in their physical appearance but in their needs and competencies, as well. Personality, age, attitude, aptitude, and motivation are all features of those differences. Hence, differences in learners' achievement. Yet, those differences do not relate to cognitive abilities only but to affective ones, as well. Thus, researchers have been investigating how affective variables affect the quality of foreign language learning.

The present study, then unveils a common issue existing among our students which relates to wrong strategy use and unsuccessful communication. It is important, then to investigate the type of strategies the students use when they are confronted to a communication breakdown and introduce them to new strategies that may help them overcome those deficiencies in the speaking skill. In fact, a set of variables affect interaction and make the whole teaching /learning process a multidimensional phenomenon. The teacher and learners' behaviours, motivation and attitude all contribute in making interaction effective and constructive or vice versa. A cohesive behaviour where asking questions, answering them, sharing and exchanging information, not only make the language classroom a

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successful one but provide the learner with the appropriate tricks he/she may use when needed in real life situations. Accordingly, the questions which come to one's mind are as follows:

- a. Are all our learners aware of the strategies they use when facing speaking difficulties?
- b. Which compensation strategies do our students use in order to overcome those deficiencies?

After long debates concerning whether unsuccessful learners use strategies, or not, researches have demonstrated that both successful and unsuccessful learners use learning strategies but the unsuccessful ones use the wrong strategies in problem solving and successful language learners are those who are aware enough to use the appropriate strategy in the appropriate learning task. Therefore, we assume that strategy instruction would overcome the students' communication difficulties.

## 2. Review of Literature

Verbal communication constitutes a major goal of every foreign language learner since his/her mastery of the target language relies on his/her oral performance. Moreover, effective communication does not rely only on one's linguistic proficiency, but on his/her verbal one, as well. Unfortunately, communication breakdown remains the main obstacle faced by foreign language speakers. Indeed, foreign language learners have a complex set of attitudes, experiences and language learning strategies which typify each learner/speaker and may lead to successful or unsuccessful communication. In addition, learners' cognitive abilities, previous knowledge, learning styles and strategies differ according to their personalities and each learner has his own way in approaching the learning process, using his/her own procedures, tricks or plans in order to effectively achieve the learning task (Chamot, 2004).

These tricks and plans are called "strategies". These strategies, if employed correctly lead to the mastery of the target language. For such reasons, learning strategies have received much attention on the part of practitioners. The following diagram summarizes Oxford's typology (1990). It divides language learning strategies into direct and indirect ones which in turn are divided into sub strategies:

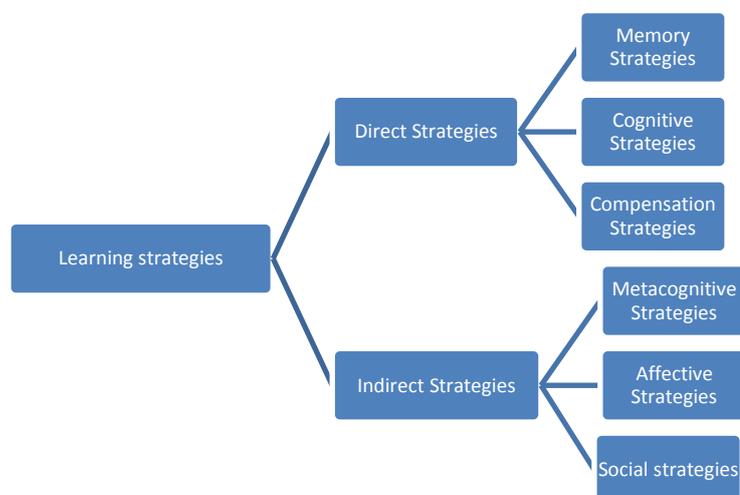


Figure 1:

*Typology of Learning Strategies (Oxford, 2001, 2003)*

It is obvious that learning strategies are involved in all learning, regardless of the content and context. Learning strategies are used in learning any subject both in a formal setting such as the classroom or informal one such as the street. Moreover, language learning strategies are good indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems encountered during the process of learning or when meeting real life difficulties. They also help the language teachers know how their learners understand, learn or remember new input or engage in problem-solving. Oxford's typology (1990 & 2005) classifies learning strategies into two main types: The direct strategies and the indirect ones which are divided into six sub-strategies:

**2.1. The Direct Strategies** are mentally-based strategies. That is, the task requires mental processing in order to be done. They include memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies.

➤ *The memory strategies* are used for remembering, storing or retrieving information. They include creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well and employing action.

➤ *The cognitive strategies* are used for understanding new information. They include practicing, receiving, sending messages, analysing, reasoning, creating structure for input or output.

➤ *The compensation strategies* help learners overcome shortages in using language. They include guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (the productive skills). Indeed, direct strategies, when properly used help learners achieve well in language learning

**2.2. The Indirect Strategies** are feeling-based. The environment and the learners' emotional state direct learning and problem solving. "An effective learning strategy enables learners to plan what they will do, and then monitor and modify their own thoughts and actions they proceed (Westwood, 2004, p.7).

The indirect strategies include metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies.

### *2.2.1. Metacognitive strategies*

Metacognition is recognized as having a strong impact on our awareness and thoughts. Consequently, it plays a crucial role in making learning a foreign language effective. "It is the ability to reflect on what is known, and does not simply involve thinking back on an event, describing what happened, and the feelings associated with it (Anderson, 2008, p.15). Metacognition is the knowledge of one's or others' proper cognitive activity, which allows planning, then its regulation when communicating information. Metacognition, then relates to one's cognitive knowledge and the control over the cognitive, as well as the affective strategies. In order to obtain effective and methodological acquisition, the learner must be able to actively handle not only his previous knowledge with the new one but he also has to apply selective strategies through regular supervision and constant management to reach a thorough evaluation at the end of the task he undertakes. Moreover, one's awareness in using metacognitive strategies helps him/her to reach positive achievement. "Learning and metacognitive strategies enable students to acquire and master academic content"(Alderman, 2004, p. 148). Organizing, planning, monitoring, and evaluating are all metacognitive strategies that contribute in making learning successful and using the target language effective. In fact, various sources support the idea that learners who use metacognitive strategies are good learners. "It is also believed that many learning difficulties are caused by students' lack of appropriate cognitive strategies and relative absence of metacognition" (Westwood 2004, p. 7).

Accordingly, successful learning relates to the use of metacognitive strategies because these allow learners monitor and evaluate their own achievement. Thus, it is crucial that the teacher helps his learners be aware of their importance and integrate them in the activities and tasks. When learners become used to metacognitive strategies, they can assess themselves and react when learning is ineffective. Through organization, planning and self-evaluation, the English teacher plays a significant role in helping his learners be aware of the importance of the metacognitive strategies which are meant to facilitate problem solving and avoiding problematic situations.

### *2.2.2. Social/Affective strategies*

The words social and affective imply that there is interaction with someone else. So, in order to interact positively and reach comprehension between the interlocutors, one has to take into account the affective dimensions which allow appropriate interaction and understanding. The classroom constitutes a social environment in which affective dimensions play a salient role in shaping positive interactions between the learner and the teacher or between the learners themselves. Learning strategies, such as, monitoring, organizing, elaborating or evaluating allay anxiety (O'Malley & Chamot, 1995).

Although direct strategies and indirect ones are completely different; the first, mentally-based, and the second emotionally-based, both are salient in foreign language learning and consequently they are complementary (Figure1). Moreover, one cannot deny that cognition and mental processing are congruent in foreign language learning. In fact, cognitive strategies, like reasoning, analyzing, note-taking, summarizing, and synthesizing are salient and certainly help learners achieve proficiency. But these would be ineffective without the use of metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Nevertheless, activities that encourage learners use such strategies should be well-structured and designed by the English teacher. In fact, direct strategies help the students develop cognitively and the indirect ones help them regulate their behaviour and motivation. Therefore, the English teacher has to be aware of the crucial role the learning strategies play in improving and regulating learners' achievement. Hence, teaching the students the suitable strategies whenever undertaking a task or activity.

### *2.3. Strategy Instruction*

Research in strategy use has revealed that it is important to train learners to the use of language strategies. The teacher, through regular intervention, makes his learners aware of the appropriate and wrong strategy use. Through teachability, i.e., classroom practice and training, contemporary educators and researchers should be increasingly keen to harness the potential which LLS would seem to have for enhancing an individual's ability to learn language (Griffiths & Parr, 2001, p. 249). Learners become used to the identification of the good and bad strategies and consequently accomplish their tasks successfully. Nonetheless, it is worthy to mention that learning strategies depend on the learning activity itself. Seeking information in reading, listening to a passage, writing an essay, or speaking, all require different strategies. It is the role of the teacher to help learners use the right strategies with the appropriate tasks.

After being acquainted to a strategy and after experiencing success, the learner will certainly use it again and then, the strategy will become part and parcel of his learning process. For example, in teaching a reading passage, learners may have difficulties in comprehending new vocabulary, what makes comprehension of the whole text quite difficult for them. Therefore, vocabulary strategies, like guessing, using a dictionary, etc., facilitate this hard task and allow learners not only acquire new lexical items, but assimilate new ideas, as well. Moreover, assimilating new lexical knowledge enhances both learners' oral skill and

reading one. Consequently, enhancing the receptive skills (listening and reading) enhances the productive ones (speaking and writing).

### **3. Methodology**

#### ***3.1. Participants***

In an attempt to answer the research questions, forty-five (45) master 2 students in applied linguistics, in the University of Mostaganem, Algeria, participated in the present study. The respondents who regularly interact with English speaking people (native and non-native ones) were selected and asked to participate in a longitudinal study for a diagnostic assessment phase and an evaluation one. The major goal of the present investigation was the identification of the students' difficulties and weaknesses when interacting in English.

#### ***3.2. Data collection Tools and Data Analysis***

Two tools were used for collecting data: a structured questionnaire and participant observation. The students, who were in the same group on Facebook, accepted to answer the questions virtually. Virtual questioning was meant to avoid any classroom subjectivity and leave the students free to participate or not in the investigation. First, a structured questionnaire was administered to the students in order to unveil their speaking difficulties and the strategies they generally use to overcome their speaking difficulties. The main goal of the questions was to identify the frequency of strategy use to overcome communication breakdowns and to train students in practising the strategies they practise less or they do not use at all. Hence, strategy instruction should be integrated as a major component within the teaching methodology (Chamot, 2005).

#### ***3.3. Discussion***

The results obtained via Facebook revealed that the majority of the students had speaking difficulties when interacting with foreign people and the majority of them avoid interacting with native speakers because of those difficulties. After the speaking deficiencies were unveiled, some learning strategies were introduced as part of the teaching methodology. Emphasis was mainly on compensation strategies (Oxford, 2001) to overcome communication breakdown. Switching to the mother tongue, asking for help, using mimes and gestures, avoiding communication totally or partially, selecting the topic, adjusting the message, and using circumlocution (roundabout words) were all compensation strategies introduced to the students for practice. Yet, some of the strategies can only be used among the speakers of the two languages. For instance, switching to the mother tongue cannot be applied with foreigners. Using mimes and gestures is another compensation strategy that can be used only in face-to face communication or in virtual /visual communication. That is, the interlocutors can see each other while speaking. Table 1 demonstrates the frequency of communication strategy use among a Facebook community.

Table1:

*The Students' Use of Communication Strategies*

<b>Types of Compensation Strategies</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>sometimes</b>	<b>rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
1. Switch to mother tongue	03	02	30	10
2. Asking for help / clarification	00	05	35	05
3. Using mimes & gestures	30	10	05	00
4. Avoiding communication partially or totally	09	10	26	00
5. Selecting the topic to direct communication	00	00	10	35
6. Adjusting the message	05	40	00	00
7. Using circumlocution (roundabout words)	10	30	05	00

The findings reveal that though some of the students may use some compensation strategies, others may avoid them. In fact, (35%) of students does not ask for help or clarification, though this can be very helpful and facilitative. The big majority of them also does not select the topic to direct communication when facing misunderstanding and almost all of them avoid communication, either totally or partially when facing speaking difficulties. The students' incompetence to manage successful communication certainly pertains to their ignorance of the existence of some strategies that may be helpful to overcome communication difficulties. In fact, nineteen of the students (19) said they avoid communication partially or totally. There is evidence that the students' avoidance does not help them improve their speaking skill. When asked about adjusting the topic to direct communication, all the students (100%) answered negatively. This demonstrates that the students ignore how to adjust and direct a given topic for communication.

Because the best way to promote effective speaking is through practice, the students are given an opportunity to practise some speaking strategies within the classroom. For this purpose, they were introduced to the most common compensation strategies (table 1) they may use to overcome speaking difficulties. The students, those who rarely use a given strategy, like a circumlocution, or those who do not use it at all, practised the strategy in conversation with their mates through role-plays, discussions and debates in an atmosphere free from anxiety, stress and fear. This not only helped them overcome their speaking difficulties but gain self- confidence, as well.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The increasing advent in science affected our educational milieu and has led practitioners and researchers to look for the conditions that make learning effective and successful. Nevertheless, long decades of field investigation and empirical research have made it clear that individual differences are the main paradigms that shape learning and consequently, the achievement in learning. Moreover, the diversity among our learners has demonstrated that the cognitive differences are associated to affective ones, and they may positively or negatively affect their achievement. Indeed, the 1990s have demonstrated that learners use different strategies but do not necessarily imply successful learning. This latter, in fact is achieved only if, and only if our learners are aware of proper strategy use; which can be attained through regular practice within an appropriate teaching practice. Indeed, overcoming communication breakdown in EFL contexts may be the cause of some harmful consequences leading to the lack of self-confidence and self-esteem and to a negative attitude towards learning the target language. Thus, a sound teaching methodology that includes appropriate material, tasks and strategies can but be beneficial to the students for the betterment of their learning outcomes.

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## GENRE IDENTITY AND COMPREHENSIBILITY ASSESSMENT IN THE ARABIC VERSIONS OF SELF-HELP MANUALS

### Abstract

This empirical research assesses quality in the intralingual translation of self-help-manual in the Arab world. It questions transfer competence in the versions produced by Arab therapists and life coaches who have migrated from the realm of scientific discourse to knowledge popularization. This research adopts the perspective that shows how macro and micro analyses of the subjects' textual choices contribute to investigating the genre boundaries in the prefaces of ten manuals produced in different Arabic countries. It also applies a model of text comprehensibility assessment to examine knowledge transfer in the manuals. Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies have been adopted to study the causal relationships and the distribution of rhetorical moves, meta-discourse markers and comprehensibility dimensions in the source text and in ten Arabic versions. Rhetorical analysis of the prefaces has revealed the insertion of rhetorical moves from promotional genres (i.e. product advertising; self-representation in business settings) which has affected the genre integrity and aroused the promotional effort in the prefaces. Comprehensibility assessment has proved that the subjects have compensated for their lack of linguistic competence by their bicultural competence and by predominant use of some comprehensibility dimensions ('simplicity', 'motivation' and 'perceptibility'), which have increased the level of comprehensibility in most of the versions.

**Keywords:** Comprehensibility Assessment, Genre integrity, Popularization.

**Abbreviations:** TQA: Translation Quality Assessment; ST: source text; TT: target text; L: language; SL: source language; TL: target language; SC: source culture; TC: target culture; MDMs: meta-discourse markers; CV: curriculum vitae.

### 1. Introduction

During the last two decades, the American psychology has been transferred to the Arab reader through the popularization of self-help or 'How to' manuals. In different countries in the Arab world, the book market has been increasingly drowning in a flood of manuals resulting from intralingual translations conducted by local experts in psychotherapy and life coaching. Despite the fact that their professional profiles show no prior translation experience or training, the local experts or therapists (the subjects in the current paper) have ventured to compete and even challenge the working environment of professional translators.

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Like native translators who depend on their bilingual competence to translate from one language (L1) into another (L2), the subjects enjoy the same innate ability to translate as a consequence of acquiring both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). However, their bilingualism does not necessarily include the competence of transferring meanings and/or forms from one language to another. According to Lörscher (1991), ‘bilinguals often lack the meta-lingual and meta-cultural awareness necessary for rendering a source language text effectively into a target-language and culture’ (1991, p. 5).

Apparently, the Arab therapists work within the boundaries of the text genre of self-help manual and try to transfer complex terminology which may not be easily attainable for them as first-timers in translation. Thus, their migration from the realm of ‘real’ scientific discourse to the realm of popularization (also vulgarization) problematizes both the genre integrity and the text comprehensibility.

### ***1.1. The research Questions***

When taking a close look at the corpus, it is apparent that the therapists have inserted ready-made structures and different text types (idioms, Quranic verse, proverbs, poems, etc.) into the manuals, creating target texts (TTs) clearly hybrid in appearance. The hybrid nature of the TTs may potentially alter the translation *skopos* in the sense that text mixing may carry additional communicative purposes in the TTs or transmit different text functions than those of the source text (ST), which may have negative impact on the readers and disappoint them. These assumptions have led to question transfer competence in the work of the subjects and triggered the following questions: Being members of the same disciplinary community, what communicative purposes do the subjects endeavor to achieve by genre mixing? When facing the constraints of genre identity, the market pressure and the reader’s expectations, how can the popularizers establish a comprehensible text? And how can we ascertain that certain texts function better than others?

### ***1.2. Motives of the Research***

This paper is particularly prompted by a curiosity to go beyond the translation classroom so as to study the textual manipulations that occur in the work place. It would be interesting to understand how the text genre is redefined in conventionalized and institutionalized settings. As far as knowledge popularization is concerned, little has been said about knowledge transfer and how the text comprehensibility is empirically measured within the fresh discipline called Transfer Studies. From this perspective, another motive behind this research is to know how to measure the text comprehensibility using one of the models of comprehensibility measurement that belong to the fields of educational psychology and readability research.

## **2. Review of Literature**

The analysis sections in this research address decision making and language use in the work of the subjects. This paper adopts a multidisciplinary approach that involves different frameworks that help define the genre boundaries before and after translation, and grasp the process of building comprehensibility in knowledge transfer.

### ***2.1. Rhetorical Moves Analysis***

A move is a meaningful unit represented in linguistic (lexico-grammatical) forms and related to the communicative purpose of the activity in which the members of a given community are engaged (Vergaro, 2004, p.182). According to Bhatia (2004), Move Structure Analysis is optimal for assessing the integrity of texts in terms of abiding to the generic conventions or the propensity for generic innovation. Hence, based on the recent

contributions of Bhatia to Genre Analysis (1993, 1997, 2004, 2014)-especially the analysis of academic and promotional genres - and on Stine's (2002) pattern of moves for the optimal preface of self-help manual, this paper focuses on the examination of the rhetorical devices and discourse types in the corpus at a macro level.

Move analysis is adopted in this paper to promote the identification of textual segments fulfilling specific functions in the corpus in order to be interpreted in the light of the criteria provided by the genre conventions, namely the pattern of rhetorical moves that belong to a specific text genre. Table1 explains the conformity between the move pattern of the preface that introduces scientific research, as it is outlined by Bhatia (2004), and the move pattern of the optimal preface of self-help manual in particular as it is defined by Stine (2002). The purpose of the analysis at this point is to compare the ST and TTs so as to examine the genre of the preface before and after popularization. Stine's framework is adopted to analyse the TTs only in order to assess the subjects' adherence to the genre's conventional boundaries in their manuals.

Table1.

*The conformity in Stine's preface move structure (2002) and Bhatia's (2004)*

Preface Rhetorical Moves (Stine, 2002)	Move conformity	Preface Rhetorical Moves (Bhatia, 2004)
<i>To Establish Who the Book is For</i>	<i>identical to</i>	<i>Establishing Customer Needs</i>
<i>To Establish Your Credentials</i>	<i>identical to</i>	<i>Establishing Credentials</i>
<i>To Explain Why You Wrote the Book</i>	<i>identical to</i>	<i>Positive Book Description to Meet Customer Needs</i>
<i>To Establish Success of Your Program or System</i>	<i>identical to</i>	<i>Positive Book Description to Meet Customer Needs</i>
<i>To Alert Readers to Anything Special about Your Overall Approach or Book</i>	<i>identical to</i>	<i>Positive Book Description to Meet Customer Needs</i>
<i>To Include Brief Overview of Book</i>	<i>identical to</i>	<i>Targeting Market</i>
<i>To End on a Hopeful Note</i>	<i>identical to</i>	<i>Non</i>

## 2.2. Metadiscourse Markers Analysis

Hyland's (2005) framework of Metadiscourse Analysis (Table2) is adopted to interpret the use and distribution of metadiscourse markers (MDMs); i.e. those textual elements whose primary function is to make contribution to the processing of the text and through which the writer manifests her/his perception of the reader's needs. Hyland's framework identifies MDMs into two major categories: interactive and interactional resources that the writer adopts to address and orient readers. The aim of MDMs analysis is to capture and examine the subjects' authorial impacts on the discourse of the preface at a micro level in the ST as well as in the TTs. The main motive behind ST/TTs comparison is to examine and interpret text change after the act of popularization.

Table 2.

*Hyland's Interpersonal framework of Metadiscourse Markers (2005, p.49)*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Interactive Markers</b>	Help to guide the reader through the text	<b>Resources</b>
<i>Transitions</i>	Express relations between main clauses	In addition; thus; but; and
<i>Frame markers</i>	Refer to discourse acts, sequences and stages	Finally; to conclude; my purpose is;
<i>Endophoric markers</i>	Refer to information in other parts of the text	Noted above; see figures, in section 2;
<i>Evidentials</i>	Refer to information from other texts	According to X; Z states;
<i>Code glosses</i>	Elaborate propositional meaning	Namely; e.g.; such as; in other words;
<b>Interactional Markers</b>	Involve the reader in the text	<b>Resources</b>
<i>Hedges</i>	Withhold commitment and open dialogue	Might; perhaps; possible; about
<i>Boosters</i>	Emphasize certainty and close dialogue	Absolutely; definitely; it is clear that.
<i>Attitude markers</i>	Express writer's attitude to proposition	Unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly
<i>Self-mentions</i>	Explicit reference to authors	I; we; my; me; our
<i>Engagement markers</i>	Build relations relationship with	Consider; note; you can see that

### **2.3. Comprehensibility Assessment**

The model of comprehensibility assessment applied in the current study is an Expert-judgment-focused model called 'The Karlsruhe Comprehensibility Concept', developed and published by Göpferich (2009) as a communication-oriented framework of TQA for non-literary texts. The model has gained insights from cognitive sciences, educational psychology, linguistics, and communication theory. The concept of comprehensibility is determined by the fulfillment of six dimensions requirements, namely *simplicity*, *structure*, *concision*, *motivation*, *correctness* and *perceptibility* (See Fig.1).

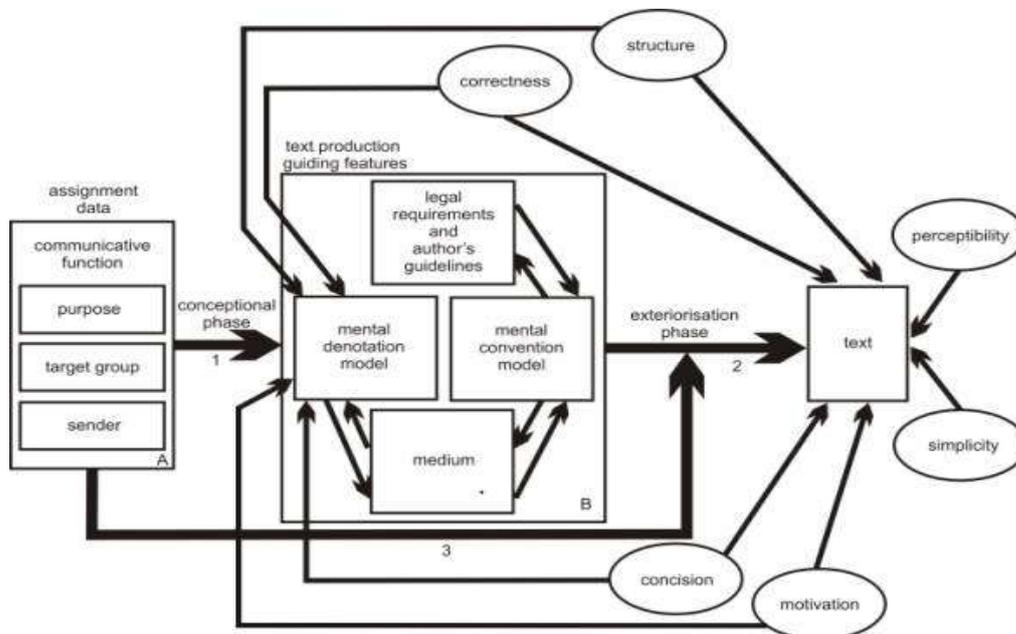


Figure 1.

*Göpferich Framework of comprehensibility dimensions and their range of application (2009, p. 34).*

### 3. Methodology

Methodology in this research is twofold: a) a qualitative methodology aims at discovering inferences and causal relationships during the analysis of the same textual unit as it appears in the source language (SL) and in ten Arabic versions; b) a quantitative methodology involves the reckoning of the occurrence, frequency and distribution of the rhetorical moves, Meta-Discourse Markers (MDMs), and comprehensibility dimensions in the corpus. The results are tabulated in numerical forms, graphs and pie charts.

In the first section devoted to the preface analysis, this study adopts a perspective that shows how macro and micro textual choices interact and contribute to TQA. At the macro level, the grounds for comparison in this section are the rhetorical moves disposition. The goal is to investigate and interpret the similarities and/or differences between the TTs and the move pattern in building the preface's rhetorical moves. At the micro level, Hyland's (2005) framework of metadiscourse Analysis enables to examine and interpret the use and distribution of metadiscourse markers (MDMs) in the ST and ten versions.

In the second section allocated to comprehensibility assessment, Göpferich's (2009) concept enables to identify the mental model, the text encoding in translation and the strategies adopted to satisfy the requirements of comprehensibility dimensions in the TTs. In fact, the model is adopted to test the ease with which knowledge can be perceived and then transferred to the reader's cognitive system for further processing. Technically, the operationalization of comprehensibility assessment relies on fulfilling the dimensions requirement used as criteria for *skopos* adequacy in TQA.

The analysis essentially focuses on instances where translation will not be adequate unless some additional material is provided, or when the translation *skopos* is modified to satisfy certain communicative purposes. Back-translation is used as a quality check.

### 3.1. The Subjects

The subjects in this research are ten Arab therapists and qualified life coaches who have been deliberately selected from different Arabic countries (Sudan, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, three from Egypt, and two from Syria). This choice might shed light on the way the same ST has been translated and the manuals handled in different geographical areas by members of the same disciplinary culture. The subjects' scientific profiles describe their professional qualifications and eminent experience in the field of psychotherapy and counseling; yet, there is no confirmation that they have received previous translation training or performed previous translations.

### 3.2. The Data

The source language (SL) corpus consists of the preface and an excerpt from 'Structure of Magic I', a book co-written by the American therapists Richard Bandler and John Grinder (1975). The authors are the co-founders of a well-renowned set of techniques used in psychotherapy and counseling called 'Neuro-Linguistic Programming' (NLP)<sup>1</sup>. In their book, the co-authors introduced their therapeutic philosophy which has gained a wider acceptance by therapists and life coaches, first in the USA and later around the world, including the Arab world.

Despite the fact that this research revolves around intralingual translation, the presence of the English source text in the analysis is essential to TQA which, according to Nord (1994), cannot be achieved without ST/TT comparison. The source text is the invariant and a frame of reference not only for evaluating the *skopos*-adequacy in translation, but also for identifying and checking out the accuracy and correctness of the text information.

The target language (TL) corpus consists of 10 Arabic manuals produced in different areas in the Arab world. Almost all the manuals carry the title: 'Neuro-Linguistic Programming' and present NLP techniques in the form of definitions or key concepts simplified for laymen. Each manual includes a preface (though in different length) that has been analysed in this in paper. In the prefaces, the therapists/ subjects address the readers and provide an overview about NLP and instruction about the manual's overall approach.

## 4. Research Results

### 4.1. The Results of Move Analysis

The analysis of the preface's move structure has revealed a different structural identity of the text genre through translation. Global examination of move distribution and frequency in the corpus has shown that the ST include three moves (out of 4) from Bhatia's move pattern, representing 75% of the rhetorical moves of the optimal preface as an academic sub-genre, whereas the TL corpus consists of 68 moves (out of 70) from Stine's move pattern of self-help preface, representing 97.14%. Surprisingly, the common moves that have been established in the entire corpus are four: *Explain Why You Wrote the Book*; *Establish Success of Your Program or System*; *Include Brief Overview of the Book*; and *Establish your Credentials*.

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(1) Neuro-Linguistic Programming is an approach to communication, personal development, and psychotherapy developed by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in the 1970s in California University, the United States. The co-founders claim a connection between the neurological processes ("Neuro"), language ("Linguistic") and behavioural patterns learned through experience ("Programming") and that these can be changed to achieve specific goals in life.

In the TL corpus, the move *Explain Why You Wrote the Book*, through which all the subjects have explicitly mentioned their incentives and the reasons behind writing (compiling) the manual, has been established in all the prefaces, representing 17.24% of the total of moves of the prefaces (see Fig.2). The move *Establish Success of the Program*, which also represents 17.24%, has served the purpose of describing the manual positively to convince readers that it is worth reading. Likewise, all the subjects have managed to *Include Brief Overview of Book* (17.24%) to help the reader understand, even briefly in some TTs, what the manual is about.

Although it represents the frequency of (13.80%), the move *Establish Your Credentials* has been established in the entire corpus, whether in the preface or in the paratext of the manual. Some subjects have imitated the ST and established their credentials separately outside the preface's borders, that is, whether in the 'Foreword' or at the end of the manual, in the form of an 'Afterword', or through enclosing the author's professional CV. This move has been established by the subjects themselves in some manuals, but in other ones, by another expert from the field.

However, not all the TTs have managed to establish the move *Alert Readers to Anything Special about the Overall Approach or Book*, which represents (12.06 %). Communication in some TTs does not consider the reader's need to know some facts about the preparation of the manual such as the parts of the manual's content the therapist might deliberately omit or change, or at least, the effect this may have on readers. Moreover, in four TTs the subjects have shown an unwillingness to specify the target addressee in the preface by avoiding the move *Establish Who the Book is For*, scoring thus the lowest percentage of moves (8.62%) in the TL corpus. This can be interpreted as the writer's strategy to leave the manual available to any potential readership. In addition, almost all the TTs close positively and politely through the move *End on a Hopeful Note* (13.80%) (Only two TTs have not fulfilled this move).

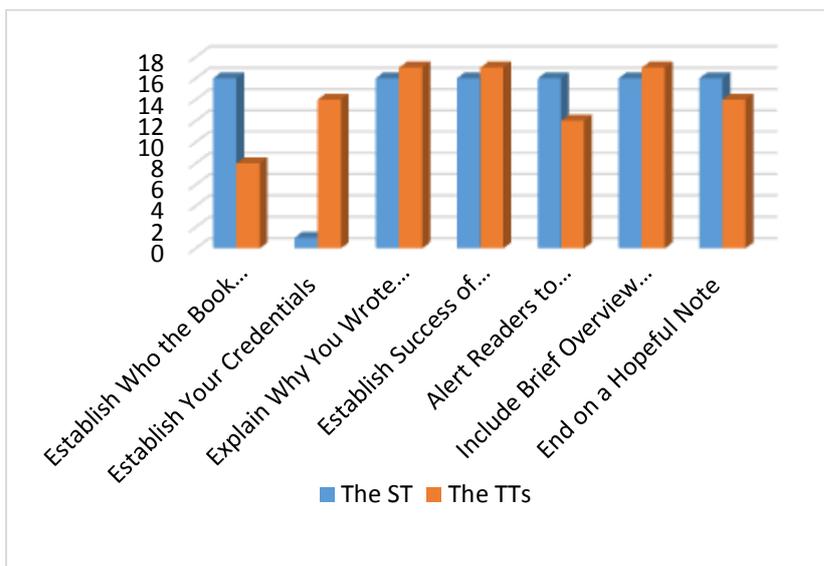


Figure.2.

*The frequency of rhetorical moves in the SL and TL prefaces.*

#### 4.1.1. The additional moves

In 80% of the TL corpus, the subjects have borrowed patterns from other genres to communicate their professional purposes. Move occurrence has shown that 24 moves belonging to business and advertising genres have been inserted. The embedded moves can be classified into three categories (see Table3); the first move type is called ‘Soliciting Response’, representing 33.33% of the additional moves used essentially to encourage further communication and contact between expert and reader. The second type called ‘Pressure Tactics’ represents 25% and fulfills the communicative purpose of pushing the half-inclined customer to take an immediate decision. The third type is ‘Enclosing Documents’ with the percentage of 33.33%. This move can be fulfilled by enclosing some documents in the manual, such as inserting the subjects’ CVs inside the manuals.

Table3.

*The frequency of the inserted moves in the corpus.*

Inserted Moves	ST	TTs	
	Occurrence	Occurrence	Percentage
Soliciting Response	0	8	33,33
Pressure Tactics	0	6	24
Enclose Documents	0	8	33,33
Σ	0	24	100%

#### 4.2. The Results of MDMs Analysis

Global Metadiscourse analysis has shown that both the ST and TTs have relied on interactive and interactional metadiscourse sub-categories respectively, though with some differences. Starting with the differences in the distribution and frequency of the interactive MDMs, most of the TTs show a heavy use of *Transitions* (25% of the total of MDMs in the TTs). Obviously, long TTs reflect the repetitive nature of the Arabic writing style used to establish coherence and the flow of information. The ST, on the other hand, uses less transition markers, rather it relies more on *Code Glosses* (20% of the total of MDMs in the ST). In the whole corpus, *Code Glosses* have been moderately used to provide exemplification and restatement. The same thing can be said about *Frame Markers*, *Endophoric Markers* and *Evidentials*.

Global interactional analysis has also shown that *Hedges*, frequently used in academic and scientific writings, are very scarce in the corpus, including the ST. Surprisingly, the TL corpus is more vigorous with *Boosters* than the ST. The analysis indicates that the TL popularizers have capitalized maximally on *Boosters* (32%) more than the ST (25%), but both of them prioritize the use of *Attitude Markers* (25%) to clarify and assure reading. *Engagement Markers* and *Self-mentions* have been equally used in the ST (each represent 25% of the total of moves), whereas, most of the subjects have resorted to *Self-mentions* (22%), *Attitudes markers* (25%) and *Boosters* (32%), and less *Engagement Markers* (18%).

### 4.3. Translation Quality Assessment

TQA has revealed a lack of consensus on a standard translation procedure in the translation of the titles. Analysis has also reflected their linguistic incompetence which has affected knowledge transfer in some versions. The presentation of long titles (representing 30% of the corpus) sounds semantically inappropriate and violates the requirements of concision, while metaphor translation has revealed a lack of transfer competence as when denotations and connotations blurred together in most of the versions, representing 60% of the TL corpus. Furthermore, the lack of transfer competence has manifested through the parallel presentation of the titles into two codes (Arabic and English), which is infinitely ubiquitous and thus strictly directionless in translation (Pym, 2010).

### 4.4. The Results of Comprehensibility Assessment

Comprehensibility assessment has revealed uneven fulfillment of the requirements of the six comprehensibility dimensions. The dimension of concision has been represented by 12 % among the fulfillment of other dimensions in the corpus. Most of the participants have failed to satisfy the requirements of this dimension so that 60% of the TTs are not concise which reflects a deficiency in the exteriorization phase (Fig.3).

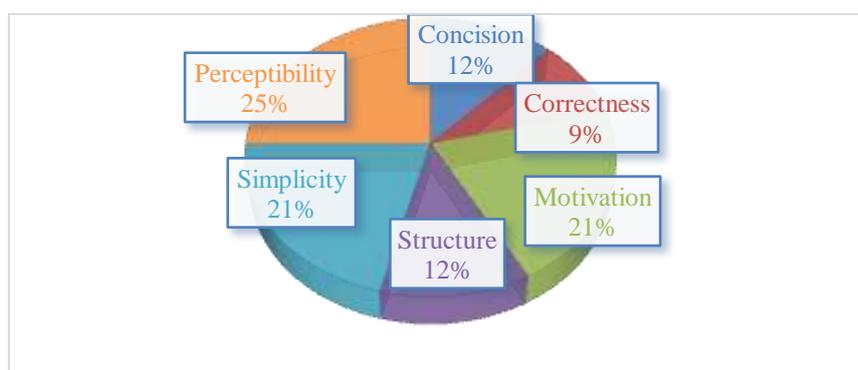


Figure 3.

*The frequency of comprehensibility dimensions in the TL corpus.*

Comprehensibility assessment has also revealed a lack of consensus on the offer of information reflected by the difference in the TT's length. Some TTs are quite long (60% of the corpus) due to superfluous detailing and semantic repetition leading to long formulations. On the other hand, some few short TTs have shown a lower level of explicitness (20%) represented by lexical density that increases abstraction.

The dimension of *Correctness*, representing the lowest percentage (9%) among the other dimensions, has been fulfilled differently in the corpus; the subjects have inserted culture-loaded material in non-explanatory passages instead of respecting the properties of discourse function of popularized texts by inserting domain knowledge information. In science popularization, domain knowledge is used in non-explanatory discourse units, such as providing relevant research information or presenting alternate scholarly views to help the reader process the information in its real context. Yet, in 70% of the TTs the subjects have supplied the non-explanatory passages with cultural knowledge (Quranic verse, literary quoting, poems, etc.), which results in the so-called register errors in translation (see Fig.4).

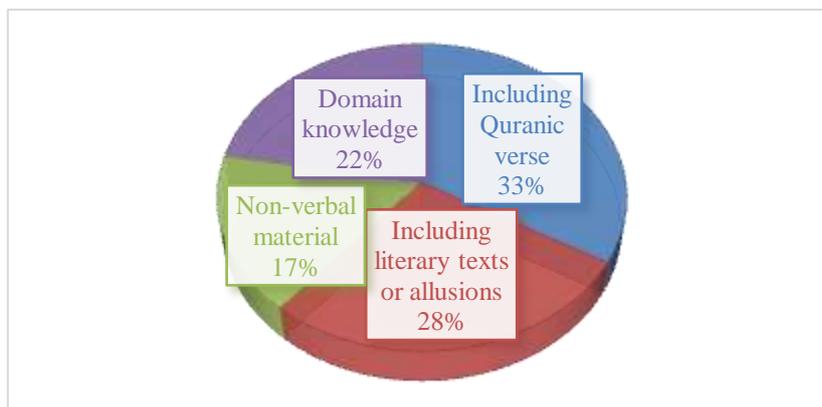


Figure 4.

*The frequency of non-explanatory passages in the same TT.*

Compared with the other dimensions, *Motivation* has been considerably fulfilled in the corpus (21%) by the use of different strategies to make the text more appealing to readers. However, the analysis has also reflected a lack of consensus on the amount of illustration to be used. Some TTs have exhibited an exuberant use of pictures, but some others have used irrelevant ones, while illustration has been absent in three manuals (30%). Surprisingly, recent versions of the manual are more motivating than the earlier ones. The analysis has also revealed unequal use of “avoidance strategy” by which complex information is not transferred in order not to impede *motivation*. Instead, the subjects have resorted to circumlocution and tautologies as explicitation procedures. In 80% of the corpus they have induced *motivation* by providing ‘progress monitoring’ such as Post-test and Questionnaires to engage the readers and evaluate comprehension during the reading process.

The examination of the dimension of *structure* at a macro level has revealed the juxtaposition of text units from different text types and registers. In order to boost comprehensibility, 80% of the manuals include pragmatic contexts in the form of ready-made structures that convey shared frames of meaning between SC and TC. Yet, this parallel structuring has been heavily used in some manuals which may delay the reading process. This structural error necessitates some stylistic correction as it has affected the dimension of *structure* that represents 12% among the other dimensions. *Structure* analysis at micro level has reflected a lack of grammatical order, especially in terms of theme-rheme relationship. This shortage at sentence level is not appreciated in text popularization. In some TTs, the ill-formulated structures obviously reflect the linguistic incompetence of some subjects. Moreover, the same text structure has been repeated in some manuals, reflecting the effect of mediated translation (or plagiarism in this case) on the work of the subjects.

*Simplicity* investigation has revealed that in most of the TTs, complex structures have been split up into simpler units which makes the text simpler and helps readers to process the text information. Therefore, the dimension of simplicity represents the percentage of 21% among the other moves. Yet, some few TTs have reflected lexical density, represented by the predominance of nominalization in 30% of the corpus. In fact, the nominal style, common in scientific writings, is discarded in popularization for it impedes comprehensibility. In the corpus, lexical density has generated shorter texts which are more complex and hard to process, whereas in some long texts, it has been surmounted through the split up of long sequences into shorter clauses, providing thus more flexibility and effectiveness in achieving the translation *skopos*.

Regardless of whether the subjects have undertaken the typographic design by themselves or resorted to the aid of typography experts, or even “borrowed” typography from the mediating texts they have consulted, *Perceptibility* has been fulfilled through diverse typographical designs in most of the corpus and represents thus the highest percentage of 25%. Almost all the manuals (80%) have included diverse para-verbal designs and visual layouts to guarantee reading comfort. Again, the recently published manuals are typographically rich and more appealing than the earlier versions. The latest manuals clearly show that the participants have obviously acquired a typographic design competence, whereas the earlier ones exhibit a naïve and conventional typographic awareness.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1. Move Analysis**

Global rhetorical analysis has confirmed that the differences between the ST and the TTs are statistically significant, especially in terms of the embedded moves. Borrowing some rhetorical moves from other genres used in product advertising and self-representation in business settings has aroused the promotional effort in the preface’s discourse. Genre embedding has served the construction and fulfillment of the popularizers’ promotional intentions such as presenting or promoting the manual as a product, introducing the therapist as an expert who offers her/his services, and encouraging the reader-as a prospective customer- to connect with the therapist.

In the same vein, the manual’s paratext has been exploited to foster the promotional flavor in the TTs through some techniques customary in promotional genres. For instance, the therapist’s picture on the cover of some manuals is a common technique in print advertisements. The enclosed CVs about the therapists’ professional achievement and long experience is a technique of ‘service offering’ in job applications. In some TTs, “Pressure Tactics”, a technique used to solicit the customer’s reaction, is borrowed from advertising genres. The establishment of the therapist’s credentials- in the preface, in the foreword or through the CV- is an aspect of persuasion and self-promoting. Thus, the reader would be more inclined to contact the expert as soon as he notices her/his professional address or telephone number.

In addition, authorship contribution has also highlighted the promotional effort in the prefaces that have been written by other experts from the field who have addressed readers directly, convincing them through positive arguments in favor of the manual and the therapist. Whether written by the therapists themselves or by their colleagues, the discourse in most of the TTs has been loud, announcing the presence and voice of the therapist as a commercial agent who promotes the manual as a product, and exploits the manual’s paratext to offers her/his services.

### **5.2. MDMs Analysis.**

Micro level analysis has also revealed the promotional effort in the TTs and the therapists’ struggle to impose their professional identities in the discourse. Metadiscourse analysis has revealed a predominance of interactional features more than interactive resources in the TTs. Most of the subjects have resorted to interactional sub-categories, namely *Boosters*, *Self-mentions* and *Attitudes markers* at the expense of *Engagement Markers*. This mirrors their tendency to impress readers and promote their own services more than to engage them in the communication. On the contrary, the SL co-authors show more inclination to involve the reader in the discourse through the use of more *Engagement Markers* in the ST. Accordingly, the Arab therapists have projected a powerful authorial identity similar to their professional identities at the place work.

### 5.3. *Comprehensibility Assessment*

Comprehensibility assessment has revealed that the prevailing mental model in most of the TTs may not be correct as the requirements of *correctness*, *concision* and *structure* have been violated; yet, it has served to create some TTs that are, to some extent, functionally equal to the ST. Conducting knowledge transfer from a cultural perspective might reduce error chances, at least at the communicative and pragmatic levels, and trigger comprehensibility to a great extent. More than the other dimensions, *perceptibility*, *motivation* and *simplicity* have been established by the majority of the subjects who seem aware of the fact that comprehensibility cannot be attained without motivating and engaging the reader and by using simple and perceptible material, especially in texts about psychology. Using cultural knowledge, which is common in literary translation, has served the discourse function of enabling readers to generate meanings from non-explanatory passages and relate them to the meanings in the explanatory sequences.

Although they have been conducted in different geographical areas, almost all the Arabic versions have reflected similar manipulation of the genre boundaries. Belonging to the same disciplinary community, they have manifested similar professional intentions, and endeavored to fulfill almost the same communicative purposes of promoting their manuals and their occupational services. Moreover, they have adopted a target culture-oriented strategy and familiarization which has led to the predominance of genre conventions expected by the target audience, though at the expense of some comprehensibility dimensions.

The Arab therapists- whether deliberately or not- have not adhered to the move structure of the preface of self-help manual. In fact, they have fulfilled their professional aspirations-or “private intentions”- at the expense of the genre integrity. Hence, the first hypothesis in this research seems to be confirmed: the subjects have actually inserted additional communicative purposes in the TT and thus violated the genre pattern of the preface as an introductory sub-genre. Strikingly, the borders of the preface’s moves have been blurred because of the insertion of moves inherent to business genres which make the preface likewise a kind of business genre. Moreover, the subjects have also dispersed their promotional effort and exhibited their expertise and credentials throughout the paratext of the manuals, reminding the reader that they are members of some professional community.

Genre invasion in this study has been justified by the subjects’ intentions to increase the promotional efforts in the preface so as to promote their manuals and their services, build up expert/reader relationship and prepare for face-to-face contact with readers/customers. Avoiding the market competitiveness may be another reason behind borrowing and mixing moves from different promotional genres into the body of the preface. Yet, one must admit, according to Bhatia, that generic integrity is not something given; it is versatile, often blurred at the edges, sometimes contested which leads to differing perceptions (2004, p. 153). Given that the therapists belong to a disciplinary community, they have abided to their professional intentions at the expense of the genre conventions. In so doing, they have not only manipulated the genre boundaries of the preface, but also imposed their professional identities on the TTs ‘discourse.

#### 5.4. TQA

TQA has unveiled a lack of consensus among the subjects on standard domain knowledge terminology, especially on the measures and translation procedures to overcome the linguistic challenges such as metaphors frequently used in psychological nomenclature. Seeing that most of the participants have failed to maintain the same degree of metaphoricality between SL and TL, it seems clear that they lack practice and expertise in translation and their abilities need to be open to improvement. Thus, the second hypothesis regarding the lack of competence on the part of the therapists seems to be borne out in this study.

Moreover, the subjects' transfer incompetence in some TTs answers the research question concerning their reliance on other material during the process of mediated translation. The influence of mediated translation on the corpus has manifested in the way some therapists have consulted and imitated other popularizers and/or translators whose works appear on the bibliography list in the TL manuals. Obviously, they have sought support and direction from different mediating texts from which they have borrowed (plagiarized) several sequences and put them unaltered in their manuals. It seems clear at this point that they have resorted to mediating texts because of their lack of linguistic competence.

To compensate for their lack of competence, the majority of the therapists have manifested remarkable pragmatic and bicultural competences in their work. Under the pressure of the market competitiveness and the properties of the genre identity, as well as the reader's needs and expectations, they have struggled to produce versions that seem to fulfill the conventions of a familiar genre in the target culture, namely the sermon. The therapists have relied on genre membership and the reader's familiarity with a special local genre to transmit their domain knowledge and boost the text comprehensibility. It seems that such genre manipulations answer the research questions about the optimal way to establish a comprehensible text for laymen.

The main criterion in TQA within the functionalist paradigm is whether or not a text fulfills its communicative function (or *skopos*). Despite the fact that the level of persuasion is higher in the TTs, both ST and TTs can be said to be largely 'equifunctional'. Hence, the mental model used in knowledge transfer has been reflected by the participants' tendency to elaborate texts that are functionally adequate and communicatively fitting in with socio-pragmatic requirements, though with some linguistic shortage in a few versions. In fact, to guarantee comprehensibility, the participants remolded a mode of transfer in which the target genre plays a central role.

Obviously, the therapists have managed to create their own mode of discourse and rhetorical pattern to communicate their private intentions, altering at the same time the genre conventions of the original and imposing different genre shape and alternative sets of linguistic choices. Nevertheless, due to the use of cultural knowledge instead of domain knowledge in non-explanatory passages, the substantive scientific content of the source text when it has been replaced by local knowledge, has resulted in TTs that are pragmatically adequate but factually inadequate (incorrect), especially at the level of text information. Comprehensibility assessment showed that most of the subjects failed to maintain the requirements of text Concision, Correctness and Structure at the exteriorization phase, but they managed to satisfy the requirements of Motivation, Perceptibility and Simplicity in most of the versions. Some few performances do not rank very high and have been embedded into poor sentence structure and naive typographic design; yet, most of the TTs have sounded functionally adequate. It seems that such competence deficiency is common in the work of novice and natural translators.

Obviously, the therapists have shown some awareness of the reader's preferences and her/his socio-cultural context. By exploiting their cultural knowledge (more than domain knowledge), they reflect an innate ability to socialize with the text, acting as intermediaries for those whom unknown domain knowledge is a communicative barrier. Being novice translators, the subjects in this study are not expected to produce translations of high quality competence; yet, they have struggled to communicate meanings and transfer knowledge out of undergoing socialization with the text genre, providing an instance of culture-specific projection and seeing the world through the filter of their own culture.

## **6. Conclusion**

This paper provides a case study that contributes to the understanding of the collaborative practices that take place in disciplinary settings and the manipulation of the genre conventions in translation. It shed light on the community of the Arab therapists who have created their professional discourse in the shape of different Arabic versions of self-help manual we actually encounter in the book market. In fact, more light was shed on mediated translation and it is conducted in the work place and how it enables some individuals to collectively interact- though indirectly- and produce comparable TTs of the same ST.

This paper also goes deeply into the phenomenon of Natural Translation that is coextensive with the translational practices of bilinguals. Unfortunately, Natural Translation is less addressed in translation classroom and research. This study has demonstrated that translation ability generated from bilingualism does not necessarily guarantee competence or expertise. The therapists have manifested performances that are similar to the rendering of 'natural' translators in terms of producing naive/native modes of communication. This paper undoubtedly approves Toury's (1984; 1995) opinion on Natural Translation which says that the production of socially acceptable translations is learnt and not an innate behavior or, in the words of Harris and Sherwood (1978), 'innate predisposition'. The practices of the therapists/bilinguals demonstrated that translation ability is not equal to translation competence and natural translation is not inherently coextensive with bilingualism, but necessitates in-depth study and practice to develop transfer competence.

The research findings may interest translation students and trainees and help them reconsider the difference between ability and competence and urge them to improve their innate ability to translate through more study and practice. What is more, the comparative analysis of genre conventions applied in this research has revealed the way some professionals reshape and manipulate the genre boundaries to fulfill their vocational aspirations. This will help translation students to understand that genre, especially in professional settings, does not necessarily revolve around conventions; rather it is about innovation and creativity. Hence, this study is a contribution to a significant movement from the idealized world of the classroom towards the realities of the world of work in which individuals construct their professional identities and promote products and services through textual material. Furthermore, such findings will foster in translation trainees a metacognitive awareness of their own cultural knowledge and how to exploit it in practice. This awareness will help them to appropriately discern, compare and/or contrast discourse patterns and genre conventions. More than that, it will help them understand how to write beyond the genre boundaries without missing the text function.

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## THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN EMBEDDING CULTURE WITHIN THE NEW LEARNT LANGUAGE IN THE TRANSLATION SUBJECT-MATTER: A CASE STUDY OF SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH

### Abstract

It has been known in the teaching profession that learners do not need the rules of language only; they also need to know how to put language in its appropriate social and cultural contexts. Since this is the focal point in 'communicative language teaching', this study focuses on the importance of culture and discourse in teaching language taking into consideration the factors that make languages overlap and differ at the same time. This paper casts light on the role of teachers in embedding culture in language teaching. It aims to help language learners interact with speakers of other languages on equal terms, without forgetting making them aware of their own identities and those of their interlocutors. So, it is hypothesised that: If students are taught languages carefully, they will be aware of the main role of cultural and intercultural dimensions. To test the validity of this hypothesis, a test, composed of two tasks, was given to eighty (80) second-year students of English to test their ability to understand and translate some idiomatic expressions. Results revealed that students succeeded in translating the first task, which is composed of a number of simple idiomatic expressions; however, they failed in filling the gaps with appropriate idiomatic expressions. This may refer to the fact that students are unable to relate between the English language and its culture. Thus, it is recommended for teachers to try to design a series of activities to enable learners discuss and draw conclusions by themselves. This helps them know about the target culture through their own experience as a result of what they have heard or read.

**Keywords:** Culture, discourse, language, learning, teaching.

### 1. Introduction

When two persons talk to each other, they do not only exchange information. They also learn about the way of how the other interacts because s/he belongs to a specific group. This includes a teacher with a student or a worker with his boss. That is, the social identities of speakers cannot be avoided in their interactions. For that, the communicative competence a great importance not only to what a language as a system comprises. Rather, it gives importance to what is appropriate to language use. Thus, the foreign language classroom has been considered an ideal place for raising the awareness of students about the cultures associated with the target language. For that, teachers should not focus on grammatical competence, they should enable their students indulge in the development of interculturality through the foreign language. The focus is going to be on the best settings which make students get into a familiar context in order to test their capacities in understanding the cultural and intercultural dimensions of the language.

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## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1. Intercultural Competence***

Language is recognised to be an important part of establishing dialogues between nations and people for mutual benefit in economy and security. Kramsch (1993) has written that every time one speaks, s/he performs a cultural act which implies that culture is embedded within the spoken language. Crozet and Liddicoat (2000) argue that the communicative approach to language teaching has failed to explicitly focus on the socio-cultural supporting of language. Hence, someone whose social identities include being 'a teacher' has to acquire the knowledge, values, and behaviours shared with other teachers through a process of socialisation. So, an intercultural speaker needs some knowledge to deal with the different contexts s/he finds himself/herself or s/he encounters in his/her life. As a result, it is worth mentioning the major components of intercultural competence.

### ***2.2. Crucial Constituents***

According to Deardorff (2006), the components which make the very core of intercultural competence are knowledge, skills and attitudes. In addition to these, there are values people hold because they belong to a number of social groups and which are part of people's social identities such as, skills of discovery and interaction and critical cultural awareness. According to Bryam, Gribvoka, and Starkey (2002), the components of intercultural competence are as follows:

#### ***2.2.1. Intercultural Attitudes***

Intercultural attitudes comprise curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own. This means a willingness to look at one's own values, beliefs and behaviours. It does not mean to take them for granted assuming that they are the best and most correct modals. In other words, these attitudes enable people to see how an outsider who has different sets of values may look at them. They are summarised in respect, openness, curiosity and discovery (Deardorff, 2006).

#### ***2.2.2. Knowledge***

This concept represents the knowledge that social groups share between each other and their products and practices in their own as well as their interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of social and individual interaction. So, knowledge can be defined as having two major types: knowledge of social processes, and knowledge representing illustrations of some processes and products; the second includes knowledge about how other people are likely to apprehend you, as well as some knowledge about other people (Deardorff, 2006).

#### ***2.2.3. Skills of interpreting and relating***

Skills of interpreting and relating are the ability to interpret a document or event that belongs to another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from the appropriate culture (Ibid, 2006).

#### ***2.2.4. Skills of discovery and interaction***

Skills of discovery and interaction are the ability to learn new knowledge of other cultures and cultural practices and the ability to practise knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction (Byram, Gribvoka, and Starkey, 2002).

### *2.2.5. Critical cultural awareness*

Critical cultural awareness is the ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in person's own and other cultures and countries. The role of the language teacher is consequently based on developing skills, attitudes and awareness of values just as much as developing the knowledge of a particular culture or country (Ibid, 2002).

### **2.3. Different Cultures and One Identity**

The intercultural dimension in language teaching is to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities. In addition, it helps them evade the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity. This should be taught carefully to students. Pauwels (2000) notes that many language learners have only limited access to real life situations where they can use the target language. As a result, she suggests that it is difficult for learners to acquire intercultural understanding naturally. Therefore, she proposes that cultural knowledge should be implicitly contained within language needs to be made explicit.

According to (Dufva, 1994; Byram, 1997; Byram et al., 2002; Jular, 2007), when designing and enacting the curriculum that should be used as a key factor in making students aware of the intercultural dimensions, two interrelated questions need to be addressed:

1. What knowledge do teachers want learners to develop (valued / conceptualised), i.e., the substance and the process of the desired knowing and learning?
2. How do teachers know that students have developed that knowledge, i.e., (eliciting their knowing, judging knowing, and warranting the judgements to be made)?

### **2.4. Teaching English Culture**

#### *2.4.1. Definition of culture*

The notion of culture is a dead loss because up to this moment no one has defined it exhaustively and in an objective way which represents its real meaning. Culture itself has been understood in different ways. On the one hand, its definition has been related to products such as literature and arts, history and institutions, traditions and customs, religion and belief, and practices such as festivals and popular phenomena (Liddicoat, 2004). On the other hand, culture, here, will refer to "shared understandings and practices within groups of people" (Menard-Warwick, 2008, p. 622). This includes products and practices; but more crucially, it contains "understandings", or perspectives in addition to values and ways of seeing the world which are aspects of culture constituting its core. Despite the fact that these practices, perspectives and products are shared, they also show a great deal of group differences, and are continually in the process of change which makes it difficult to find a static and exact definition of the word culture.

Being aware of the meaning of the word culture enables students understand others' cultures. Thus, it is important for understand that their own culture is complex, that it cannot always easily defined, and that it is not practised by everyone in their community in the same way because each person has his own way of dealing with a given matter. This may help students understand that another culture should not be as simple as they may think. Learners of English should understand that the culture of people from the English-speaking world is not uniform, not simple, and not easily defined (Longo, 2008).

#### *2.4.2. The Difference between cultural awareness and interculturality*

A distinction should be drawn between cultural awareness and interculturality. Cultural awareness is achieved when individuals learn about, acknowledge, and focus on differences, while interculturality (Byram, 1997) includes a respect of these differences, as well as the capacity to see oneself and one's culture through the eyes of another (Kramsch, 2005). In other words, intercultural competence refers to "the general ability to transcend ethnocentrism, appreciate other cultures, and generate appropriate behaviour in one or more different cultures" (Bennet, & Allen, 1999, p. 13). To describe this ability, to see cultural issues from multiple perspectives, and to interact with those of different cultural backgrounds in appropriate ways; the terms intercultural competence and interculturality will be used interchangeably. Based on the distinctions clarified, the focus is going to be on intercultural dimension, its reflection and its impact on teaching and learning especially in the presence of multi-ethnic groups where there is a mixture of cultures and sometimes a kind of racism.

#### **2.5. Teaching Interculturality**

Since the goal of intercultural language teaching and learning is to produce users equipped with explicit skills in understanding connections and differences between their own culture and the culture of the target language, intercultural language learning fundamentally calls for the learning of another culture's language to be an experience of personal growth and change taking into account a transformation of the self. Here, the focus is based upon the person's culture. Then, a kind of duplication is done in order to learn others' culture with due reference to the differences that exist between one culture and the other and which should not be taken for granted.

Corbett (2003) describes a wide range of intercultural teaching strategies such as developing critical visual literacy (the reflective interpretation of images and media), ethnographic approaches, awareness of genres and conversation modes. Liddicoat's (2004, p.20) statement that "we do not have descriptions of what intercultural competence looks like" implies that the nature of intercultural competence is imprecise. Thus, the imprecise nature of intercultural language effective communication, which is set behind the goals of teachers, makes it difficult to be precise in teaching others' cultures. Intercultural language learning is a language learning which develops an insider perspective on the target culture (Sercu, 2002). This is done through:

- Skills in contextual knowledge of the target language and culture.
- A view of culture as embedded in the language.
- Reflective critical understanding of one's own primary languages and cultures.

Scarino (2007) describes the innovations of intercultural language teaching as:

- Positioning the student in authentic situations, not pseudo or pretend roles.
- Developing teacher questions which elicit student analysis of usage and of meaning.
- Shifting from purely descriptive use of language to conceptual use.
- Yershova, DeJeagbere and Mestenhauser (2000) argue that intercultural perspective and intellectual skills are both integral to develop intercultural competence. In fact, there are three principal aspects of intercultural competence. These are skills, attitudes and values. They are involved in intercultural competence and crucial to understand intercultural human relationship. For that, they should make the gist of intercultural dimension. Byram, Gribvoka and Starkey (2002) summarised the three principal aspects of intercultural competence in the following guidelines:

- An intercultural dimension involves learners in sharing their knowledge with each other and discussing their opinions. Agreed rules for such discussions based on understanding human rights and respect for others need to be there. Learners, thus, learn as much from each other as from the teacher because they compare their own cultural context with the unfamiliar contexts to which language learning introduces them.
- Learners can acquire the skills of critical analysis of stereotypes and prejudice in texts and images they read or see. Their own prejudices and stereotypes are based on feelings rather than thoughts. They need to be challenged. Yet, teachers need to ensure that ideas are challenged not persons. The role of assessment is therefore to encourage learners' awareness of their own abilities in intercultural competence, and to help them realise that these abilities are acquired in many different circumstances inside and outside the classroom.
- What language teachers need for the intercultural dimension is not more knowledge of other countries and cultures. They need to know about skills in promoting an atmosphere in the classroom. This allows learners to take risks in their thinking and feeling. Such skills are best developed in practice and in reflection on experience. They may find common ground in this with teachers of other subjects and/or in taking part themselves in learning.
- Teachers cannot be neutral in cultural issues since they respond to other cultures as human beings do and not just as language teachers. They need therefore to consider how their own stereotypes and prejudices may influence their teaching subconsciously, and what the effects of this may be on learners. They also need to reflect upon how they respond to and challenge their learners' prejudices not only as teachers, but also as human beings subconsciously influenced by their experience of otherness, experiences which involve risk and reflection.

## ***2.6. Teaching Language Versus Teaching Culture***

In the field of second language acquisition, language is recognised as being embedded with cultural understandings (Kramsch, 1993). Teaching grammar heavily relies on rules or patterns. Teachers sometimes see the surprised look of students when they encounter exceptions to the rules. Teaching plural forms in English is a good example. Commonly, pluralisation in English is achieved through the addition of the letter 's'. For example, the singular form "house" is pluralised as "houses". In contrast, this rule for pluralising cannot be applied regularly and uniformly. For instance, the singular form of "mouse" cannot have the plural form as "mouses"; it is "mice". This is a good example where generalising can lead to errors. This can be referred to as over generalising, i.e., taking the rule from a language or culture and applying it in any context and everywhere.

Apart from grammar, generalising also occurs in other ways, including how others' cultures can be perceived. For example, when meeting people from another country, anyone can be naturally curious and interested to observe their characteristics. When observing those characteristics, it is likely that s/he will focus on the differences. The reason is when s/he mentally processes observations, s/he tends to start forming opinions and conclusions. Doing so, it is common to categorise the new information into similar types of groups that are already recognised. Paige et al. (2003, p. 177) described intercultural competence as:

The process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental and on-going process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviourally, and affectively.

Thus, the teacher's task is to develop attitudes and skills as much as knowledge. Teachers can acquire information about other countries together with their learners; they do not need to be the sole or major source of information. Skills are just as important as attitudes and knowledge, and teachers can concentrate as much on skills as upon knowledge (Byram, Gribvoka, & Starkey, 2002).

### ***2.7. The Impact of Similarities and Differences between Languages on Learners***

By taking the focus on differences into account, negative stereotypes can be reinforced. A focus on similarities may help students identify with the otherness and promote understanding and empathy by the end. So, a teacher should try to design a series of activities to enable learners to discuss and draw conclusions mainly from their own experience of the target culture. The teacher might provide some factual information related to the current lifestyles and patterns that are part of cultures. This gives the learners the opportunity to compare their culture with what the teacher has provided. Thus, it is to encourage comparative analysis with learners' own culture. For example, foreigners' views about the learners' country as represented in travel guides or in tourist brochures might be compared with the learners' own experience and views about their own country; they will quickly discover that there is a difference. They can then be asked to think whether their perceptions of the foreign country will be the same as those of the inhabitants themselves or not (Hawkins, 1984).

The teacher does not need to have experience or be an expert on the country. The teacher's task is to help learners ask questions, and to interpret answers. Thus, a non-native speaker inferiority complex is only the result of misunderstanding and prejudice. What is more important than native speaker knowledge is an ability to analyse and specific training in systemic cultural analysis of a great importance in becoming a foreign language teacher, regardless of the teacher's mother-tongue. This is not to deny the importance of linguistic competence and it may be important to follow the authority of the native speaker in linguistic competence, but intercultural competence is a quite different matter (Byram, Gribvoka, and Starkey, 2002).

### ***2.8. Enabling Learners to become Intercultural Speakers***

Intercultural learning helps students know differences and commonalities, question the relative nature of their own cultural identity, and develop multiple perspectives. Wierzbicka (2006, p.735) writes:

It is increasingly acknowledged that cross-cultural communication requires cultural learning, and that ways of speaking associated with different languages and cultures need to be properly described, understood, and taught.

As a result, intercultural competence relates to the ability to understand hidden meanings, assumptions and contextual meanings that are implicit in language and the faculty which is indispensable in grasping it. The teaching of intercultural understanding is based on the cultural relativity of the target culture and the person's background culture. Kohler et al. (2006) suggest that effective language teachers develop learners to have positive attitudes towards the target language, cultural differences and similarities, and to language and culture in general. They also promote a positive self-image in their students as users of the language and as performers of their own culture.

Scarino (2008) suggests that a shift in focus is needed, disregarding the content of language programmes towards learners' needs and interests. The suggestion is that there needs to be a focus on learners as creators of meaning through interaction, as mediators, and as intercultural speakers. Here, students will find what they need in comparing the aspects of their culture with others' culture (the target culture). This helps in self-discovery and linking an understanding of self-reflection with the target culture in a way that encourages learners to discover a third place standing between the learners' culture and the target culture. In this way, the target culture and language no longer need to be viewed as external. Doing so, the following tips may be useful for developing intercultural understanding:

- Explore definitions of culture;
- Discuss how language reflects 'micro-cultures' for instance, in a work place, a family or group of friends;
- Discuss culture explicitly as reflected in the target language;
- Promote tolerance of ambiguity and of difference;
- Explore cross-cultural similarities and focus on differences; and
- Understand that 'culture' can be used negatively to divide people and avoid doing so.

To consider these positive influences, teachers need to filter and monitor the language and attitudes that they elucidate to students.

The visit and exchange are much more than an opportunity to practise the language learnt in the classroom. It is a holistic learning experience which provides the means of using intercultural skills and acquiring new attitudes and values. Language practice may be limited, especially on a visit rather than an exchange, and the acquisition of knowledge about another country may be minimal, but this does not matter. If teachers create a pedagogical structure in three phases, learners can profit from a visit or exchange in ways which are scarcely possible in the classroom. Teachers need clear objectives, methods which take into account the power of experiential learning, and then learners will "make the strange familiar and the familiar strange»(Byram, Gribvoka, & Starkey, 2002).

### **3. The Practical Part**

Language teachers have a great role in developing the ability of students to see the world differently since their choice of words can affect students' way of learning to view other cultures. This may be done through equipping students with the skills to interpret the language and cultural images which are experienced outside the classroom. Since language teaching and learning develop critical thinking and learning, learners will be able to develop tolerance towards others and a better understanding of others. So, critical self-reflection and analytical skills should be part of learning another language and its culture. In order to see the degree to which students are aware of the intimacy of cultural and intercultural dimensions of language learning and teaching, the following question which forms the main issue of this paper was asked. It is as follows:

What is the importance and the role of cultural and intercultural dimensions and their impact on language teaching and learning?

In order to answer the above question and to see the ability of students to assimilate culture, we hypothesised that:

If students are taught languages carefully, they will be aware of the main role of cultural and intercultural dimensions.

### 3.1. The Sample

The sample consists of eighty (80) students, i.e., two representative groups of second year English students at the English Department of Mentouri Brothers university-Constantine. The sample is said to be homogeneous and it fits the research standards because the whole number of second year English students is about fourteen groups with forty students per group. So, it is regarded a representative sample for the whole population. Most of these students came from a literary stream in their secondary school education especially the one that is related to languages (Arts and Foreign Languages). The choice of second year English students is due to the fact that second years are getting more and more exposed to the English language and they are willing to know about its culture and how to relate between language and culture. However, they should start focusing their attention on the meaning of using language as such and the essence of relating it to other cultures and how culture is indulged and integrated in the learning of a language. Moreover, they have studied the different theories of translation in general and they may put them into practice.

### 3.2. The Test

First, these students have been taught some cultural elements such as giving them some dialogues and sentences comprising some proverbs, phrasal verbs and especially idioms. The focus was mainly on the last category where students were taught the three types of idioms which go from the simplest to the most difficult, i.e., from transparent idioms to semi-opaque and opaque where the understanding of the meanings becomes more and more difficult.

Then, the test has been submitted to students in order to apply what they have learnt during the course about idioms. It was composed of two tasks (exercises) each of which was composed of ten sentences. In the first one, students were asked to translate the sentences from English into Arabic by using the dictionary in the first five sentences and without using it in the second five sentences. In the second task, students were asked to fill in the gaps with the right idiomatic expression. The test was as follows:

#### 3.2.1. Task One

1. Salim is a teacher with a capital T.
2. I am not going to break my back working for such low wages.
3. John is an Englishman to the backbone.
4. I think that the coming of the new director will finally heal the breach between John and Peter.
5. The club is closed; we have had our chips.
6. My brother had to eat dirt in front of everybody after he had been proved wrong.
7. I am dying for a cold drink.
8. The rain has been falling for days on end.
9. The racket at the party was enough to wake the dead.
10. A man fooled Mr. Black and got his money. Mr. Black will really make the fur fly when he finds the man.

#### 3.2.1.1. Answer of Task One

1. سليم معلم من قمة رأسه إلى أخمص قدميه.  
أو: سليم معلم بكل معنى الكلمة.
2. لن أقصم ظهري بالعمل بهذه الأجور المنخفضة.
3. يوحنا إنجليزي حتى النخاع.  
أو: يوحنا إنجليزي قلبا وقالبا.
4. أعتقد أن مجيء المدير الجديد يمكن أن يصلح ذات البين بين يوحنا وبطرس.

5. النادي مغلق وها نحن نعود بخفي حنين.  
أو: وجدنا النادي مغلقا وعدنا نجرّ أذيال الخيبة.
6. اضطرّ أخي أن يعترف بالهزيمة أمام الجميع (ويبتلع الإهانة) بعد أن تبين خطؤه.
7. أتلهّف على شراب بارد.
8. مازال المطر ينهمر لعدّة أيام بلا انقطاع.
9. لقد كانت الصنّجة في الحفلة كفيّلة بإيقاظ الموتى.
10. لقد تمكّن أحدهم باستغفال السيّد بلاك وسلبه ماله، ولذلك فإنّ السيّد بلاك سيقوم الدُّنيا ويقعدها عندما يعثر على الرّجل.

### 3.2. Task Two

4. Why are you surprised by Ahmed's behaviour? *The child is father of the man.*
5. You will have to *cut and run*, if you want to catch the bus.
6. A rumour that the Prime Minister may resign *has acquired currency.*
7. We had last-minute doubts about the man we had chosen as our representative, but *the die was cast.*
8. The new laws *come into force* next month.
9. The car would not start, so we came *on foot.*
10. Think about this matter fully. You know *fools rush in where angels fear to tread.*
11. I may seem old to you, but there is no need to treat me as though I *had one foot in the grave.*
12. He *looked me up and down* and then told me I was just the kind of person he needed.
13. Of all the cities of Europe I think that Paris *bears the palm.*

### 4. Results

The results revealed that the students have more or less succeeded in translating the first part of the first task, but failed to do so in its second part. The reason behind that is mainly related to the use of the dictionary which was absent in the second part. As far as the second task is concerned, second year English students have found some of the idiomatic expressions they were asked to fill in the gaps with. All in all, second year English students have just knocked the door of relating the English language to its culture. They do not know about the accurate use of idiomatic expressions which are authentically cultural and basically related to the language they belong to and which is English in this case. In fact, it is worth submitting them to the most compact types of language which boil down to phrasal verbs, proverbs, idiomatic expressions, and poetry above all.

### 5. Pedagogical Recommendations

Teaching language's culture is still an embryo. It is in need of putting its substantial theorisation into practice. For that, the best way to teach second year English students both culturality and interculturality is to replicate a professional potential situation and to give them many exercises. Therefore, learners may need to carry out such tasks and draw the lessons that the teacher expects them to draw.

In this context, the teacher should try to design a series of activities that are made up of different cultural situations of the English language. Extensive practice is one of the key elements which contribute to the development of understanding the target culture. In addition, advising students to use idiomatic expressions, to watch movies and to check the new words is of a great importance.

Thus, to encourage comparative analysis with learners' own culture in order to learn more about the target culture and enhance the way they understand it is of great importance. For example, foreigners' views about the learners' country as represented in travel guides or in tourist brochures might be compared with the learners' own experience and views about their own country; learners will quickly discover that there is a difference. They can then be asked to think whether their perceptions of the foreign country will be the same as those of

the inhabitants themselves or not. As a result, this helps them to acquire the culture of the language they want to learn.

## 6. Conclusion

In a nutshell, the teacher does not need to have experience or be an expert on the target culture. The teacher's task is to help learners ask questions and interpret answers. Thus, what is more important than native speakers' knowledge is an ability to analyse since a specific training in systemic cultural analysis is of a great importance in becoming a foreign language teacher, regardless of the teacher's mother-tongue. This is not to deny the importance of linguistic competence because it may be important to follow the authority of the native speaker in linguistic competence. However, cultural and intercultural competences are quite different matters that go hand in hand with linguistic competence. They are of an undeniable importance because as claimed in the weak version of language relativity linguistic items and their usage influence thought and decisions. Consequently, they form an integral whole.

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## NEEDS ANALYSIS ON THE USE OF ENGLISH IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY THE CASE OF MARRIOTT CONVENTION CENTRE IN ALGERIA

### Abstract

The present research aims at performing needs analysis on the use of English in hospitality industry that addresses Marriott Convention Centre in Algeria as a case study. Needs Analysis is employed to find out the needs to English in the specific area of Hotel reception desk. This analysis stresses that the ESP course will contain relevant and useful things to learn. It also enables the course designers to achieve what the learner needs to be able to do in English in an occupation; and to produce a specification of the language skills described in the needs profile. The main method of the study was a survey administered to Hotel receptionists in Algeria. Questionnaires were used to retrieve primary data. The questionnaires covered different skill areas such as listening, speaking, writing, reading, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary which are needed in the workplace. Observation and interviews were also used to collect data. The results are then analyzed by means of statistical techniques. These results provide a useful input for developing an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) curriculum to meet the needs of Hotel receptionists, and thus ensure the high-quality service for international tourists.

**Keywords:** Convention Centre, Need Analysis, ESP Course, English Skills.

### 1. Introduction

The Mediterranean area plays a crucial economic role in attracting international tourists from different parts of the world. These individuals bring different perceptions, value, systems, and languages to the host countries. In this regard, English has been one of the main languages that are widely used in international communication, international trade and tourism for it enables tourists to travel to other countries wherein the ability to converse well in English is needed since most of them will likely communicate in this language. In this regard, all hotel staffs must be able to fluently speak English to facilitate communication with the guests. Good communication skills enable the staffs to understand the guests' needs, and they can fulfill these skills to gain their satisfaction. Despite the crucial need to English in hospitality industries, communicating effectively in it is still lacking in Algeria. This is partly true since English is one of the curricula taught at schools, and it is not widely used in daily communication. Moreover, English is mostly taught using traditional methods based on memorization and recitation techniques which do obviously not develop critical thinking, problem solving and decision making in learners. This lack of pedagogical knowledge is described by Sunal *et al.* (2001) as a type of "instructional barrier" on the part of science discipline. To provide skillful tourism human resource with good communication skills in foreign languages makes a great challenge because many graduates do not have the ability to

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converse well in English. To make sure that students learn all the English language skills required in work places, there must be a need analysis on the use of English in hospitality industries. It is quite essential since the results can be of a great use to improve the hotel services and to adapt the curriculum for English in hospitality industries in Convention Centres. Given the importance of that, this research performs needs analysis on the use of English in hospitality industries which is basically conducted on Marriott Convention Centre in Algeria.

## **2. Review on Related Theories**

### ***2.1. Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Algeria***

Discussing the subject of hospitality industry cannot be separated from that of tourism. In seeking a more comprehensive definition and understanding of hospitality, it is better to start from the literal meaning from Oxford English Dictionary (2002). In OED, hospitality means ‘the friendly and generous reception of guests or strangers’. One of the key issues to be successful in business dealings is to use appropriate language (Roebuck, 1998). Furthermore, global tourism managers and marketers must develop high levels of intercultural communication and competencies and make appropriate adjustments to their business practices to suit a particular international environment (Reisinger, 2009). Hospitality also suggests a commitment to meeting guests’ needs as the key focus in these essentially commercial operations and a nobility of purpose beyond the more venal commercial relationship implied in the hotel, the bar, or the restaurant (Lashley, 2008). Therefore, the reception staff’s potential to communicate with and to satisfy guests become a must.

Algeria has huge tourist potentialities and occupies a special place in the world tourist market, a tourist guide editor<sup>1</sup> pointed out. Algeria has been a member of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) since 1976. According to a report of the WTO published in 2014, Algeria is the 4th largest tourist destination in Africa in 2013 with 2.7 million foreign tourists, and ranks 111<sup>th</sup> on the international tourism scene<sup>2</sup>. According to the U.S. News and World Report, Algeria is ranked among the top 80 countries in the world in 2018. It is courting tourism and hotel investment to compensate the falling oil revenues. “Though the industry remains underdeveloped, particularly in regards to the number of hotel rooms and the cumbersome visa regime, foreign business tourism has strong scope for growth”. Therefore, the country is turning to this business and it has plenty to offer visitors and investors alike. For this reason, the government launched a strategic plan to boost this sector by 2025.

The Algerian government’s National Tourism Development plan intends to attract more foreign visitors to the country by 2027, bringing the total to 4.4 million from 2.7 million in 2017. Thereafter, the government initiates the development of the infrastructure needed to support this goal which has become more pressing as the oil price remains uncertain. The ministry of tourism had approved 1.812 new hotel projects as part of a plan to bring the country’s capacity from 100.000 guestrooms to 240.000. Of those projects, the minister said that 582 rooms were already under construction. Inter-Continental Hotels Group (IHG) made its debut in Algeria with the 242-guestroom Holiday Inn Algiers<sup>3</sup>. “The opening of Holiday Inn Algiers is a strategic move for us as Algeria’s proximity to Europe, airline connectivity, strong culture and heritage along with substantial business links creates a strong demand for international branded accommodation and a need for world-class hospitality,” Pascal Gauvin,

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1. Jean-Paul Labourdette the editor of the tourist guide ‘Petit Fute’. He told during the presentation, at the Arab World Institute (IMA), of the new Country-Guide that is devoted to Algeria and which is put for sell in France.

2. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism\\_in\\_Algeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_Algeria).

3. Source ;<https://www.hotelmanagement.net/development/oil-revenue-flagging-algeria-turns-to-tourism>.

India, Middle East and Africa IHG development manager, said in a statement, adding that the midscale brand would cater to both domestic leisure and international business travelers. March of 2017 had witnessed an affiliation of Hyatt Hotels Corporation which entered into a management agreement with Hospitality Investment Society to be located in Algeria. “Hyatt Regency Algiers Airport will be the first Hyatt-branded convention centre in Algeria and further demonstrates the company’s commitment to growing its brand footprint in the country and throughout Africa” Peter Norman, acquisitions and development–Europe, Africa, and Middle East Senior Vice President, for Hyatt Regency, said. He added, “The region is home to some of the world’s fastest-growing economies, with enticing prospects for both business and leisure travel.”<sup>1</sup> Marriott is the second convention centre founded in 2014.in Algeria. Four years later, it had also witnessed the opening of its seventh hotel in Annaba. The president and managing director of Middle East and Africa Marriott International said and described it as “integral to our overall development strategy throughout Africa” and where the company has other six hotels. The six hotels already operating in Algeria include Constantine Marriott Hotel, Renaissance Tlemcen Hotel, Sheraton Club des Pins, Sheraton Oran, Le Meridien Oran and Four Points by Sheraton Oran amounting to 1580 rooms. With other hotels under development, the company is set to double its footprint in the country. “We are delighted to strengthen our partnership as we open our seventh Hotel in Algeria,” said President and Managing Director, Middle East and Africa, Marriott International. “The opening of Sheraton further underlines our commitment to growth and expansion in Algeria, a market which continues to be integral to our overall development strategy throughout Africa” Parts of Marriott International make it easy for guests to explore the possibilities of travel at nearly 450 hotels in over 70 countries and territories around the world.

Both convention centres ‘Hyatt Regency and Marriott International’ were created in Algeria with a partnership of the American Petroleum Business Corporation and Sonatrach. Marriott International and Sonatrach are societies by action; however the latter is not specialized in hospitality that is why the task of accommodation and satisfying partners’ services is given to the convention centre. It means that when business partners come to the host country Algeria; they are going to be accommodated in hotels of the convention centre.

In November 2018, the group Marriott in Algeria had to celebrate a week ceremony dedicated to all clients and partners of “Global Customer Appreciation Week” group under the theme “Made Together”. The event will take place each year in all hotel parts of the group Marriott under the Slogan “Marriott Says Thanks”. About 300 guests came from America to the research field hotels (Meridien, Sheraton and FourPoint by Sheraton) last November so as to celebrate with the group. Thereby the researcher found it necessary to launch her research on the sample participants welcoming the guests.

## **2.2. English Teaching in Algeria**

The current status of English as an international language or global language is recognized by its wide use in range of politics, diplomacy, international trade and industry, commerce, science and technology and popular culture (Crystal in Lauder, 2008, p.12). English in Algeria is legalized as a foreign language and purely a cultural object of study that is not involved in societal functions like daily communication. Therein and after a long and rigorous colonial heritage, French is the most widespread foreign language. It is taught from an early stage in the primary schools until tertiary settings. Despite the Arabization policy of all sectors, French still holds the privilege of being the second language required and acquired

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4. The whole article is from the ‘Tourism chapter’ of The Report: Algeria 2016 by *Katherine Doggrell, an editor at Hotel Analyst, the U.K.-based news analysis service for hotel investors.*

at Algerian schools, training centres and universities. Besides Arabic as the first language, French is used in different work fields. Apart from the present research context participants, knowledge of English by the Algerian population is far below the average despite the government attempt in prompting its status. The importance given to French in the Algerian educational system is at the expense of English which is actually taught starting only from the middle school. This is closely linked to the less-than-adequate knowledge of English for Algerian people. The poor ability to converse and write well in English gives a poor impression when people have to communicate with foreigners.

### ***2.3. A Brief Look at ESP***

The origin of ESP and its development might be closely linked with the growing interests of people to learn English in various specific disciplines e.g. English for Hotel Industry, English for Law, English for Medicine, etc. In this case, students are interested in learning English for they have to perform a task which enables them to develop appropriate knowledge and skills through this language. Based on ELT tree (Hutchinson and Waters 1987, p. 17), the roots of English Language Teaching are learning and communication. The tree consists of three major divisions: English as a Mother Tongue (EMT), English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). English as a Foreign Language (EFL) comprises two sub branches: General English (GE) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP); the latter can be divided into two main types differentiated according to whether the learner requires English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) or English for Vocational Purposes (EVP/VESL). At the next level down, ESP can also be divided by the general nature of the learners' specialism such as English for Medical Studies, English for Technicians, English for Secretaries, etc. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p.18) further mention that the analogy of a tree can lead us to define ESP as neither a matter of teaching specialized English, nor is it of Science words and grammar for Scientists. ESP is not different from any other language teaching forms for it should be based on effective and efficient learning principles. Hence, it is clear that ESP must be viewed as an approach not a product. It is an approach to language learning, which is based on the learners' need. Other definitions given by some linguists on the nature of ESP as mentioned below. "English for Specific Purposes is a term that refers to teaching or studying English for particular career (like law, medicine) or for business for general." (International Teacher Training Organization, 2005). Based on what is stated before, it is clear that the teaching of ESP is based on the learners' needs as they are interested in performing specific tasks. Therefore, needs analysis has to be performed to assess the need in learning English.

### ***2.4. Needs Analysis***

To determine the notion of needs analysis, a number of definitions are given by various experts in the field of research. For instance, Ellis and Johnson (1994) state that analysis of needs is a method of obtaining a detailed description of learner's needs or a group of learners' needs. Several criteria are taken into account among which we cite the specific purposes for language use, the kind of language to be used, the starting level, and the target level to be achieved. Information can be obtained from a range of different people such as company staff, trainers, and the learners themselves. During the past few years, needs analysis is widely applied in different fields to teach English for occupational purposes. Definitions varied from one expert to another as they see need analysis from different points of view. In general, need analysis covers a series of processes to reveal what are the learners' needs and wants, which are later used to arrange specific material in ESP. As the growing demand of ESP, some notions of need analysis in ESP have been expanded. Chambers (cited in Basturkmen, 2010) states, "...need analysis should be concerned with the establishment of communicative needs

and their realization, resulting from an analysis of communication”. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) divide needs into *target needs* (i.e. what the learners need to do in the target situation) and *learning needs* (i.e. what the learners need to do in order to learn). They further state that the analysis of *target needs* can be viewed from three aspects: Necessities, Lacks and Wants. For that, Nation and Macalister (2010, p.25) provide a brief division between present knowledge and required knowledge, and objective needs and subjective needs. They further stress that lacks fit into *present knowledge*, *necessities* fit into *required knowledge*, and *wants* fit into *subjective* needs. Needs Analysis is significant in the sense that the course will contain relevant and useful things to learn (ibid, p.24). The various descriptions on the significance of needs analysis reveal that it is badly needed in arranging the most suitable material for ESP course. ESP syllabus design is, therefore, an end product of needs analysis which bridges what learners need to study and what will be studied. Needs analysis is becoming an essential step that must be made before designing an ESP course.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Method of the Study

Since empirical data were needed for the purpose of the study, two main research methods were chosen: quantitative and qualitative. Nunan states: “Quantitative research is a type of research that is concerned with an inquiry into an identified problem using statistical techniques in analyzing data” (1992, p.3). Furthermore, Gay and Airasian mention that “quantitative approaches are used to describe current conditions, to investigate and study cause-effect relationships»(2000, p.11). It is also mentioned that qualitative research seeks to prove deeply into the research setting in order to obtain understandings about the way things are, why they are that way, and how the participants in the context perceive them. (ibid, p.16). Hence, structured interviews were conducted and Likert scale questionnaires were distributed to the sample group of thirty six respondents<sup>1</sup> in Marriott Convention Centre in Oran<sup>2</sup> (Algeria). The collected data were analyzed using percentages, descriptive statistics of Mean/Average and Standard Deviation (SD) as shown in table 1. English skills degree of need was determined by the following equation: Interval Width = maximum point – minimum point \ number of levels (5-1\5= 0.80).

Table 1.

#### *English skills’ degree of need*

1.	•very low	1 to 1.80
2.	•low	1.80 to 2.60
3.	• moderate	2.61 to 3.40
4.	• high	3.41 to 4.20
5.	• very high	4.21 to 5

5. These were the front line receptionists that make the FO (Front Office) + Guest Service department as it was named in each hotel of Marriott International. Receptionists were accustomed to the English naming.

6. This Convention Centre is the composition of 5 stars hotels: Sheraton, Meridien, Four Points By Sheraton, Ebis, and Royal. The three first hotels were selected for the present research analysis.

## 4. Main Findings and Discussions

### 4.1. General Opinions

Due to the necessity of the language in the workplace, the sample of participants chosen in the present research felt that using English language skills was highly needed in their jobs; particularly listening which was rated essential. Followed by speaking, writing, translation, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar which they considered as very necessary; and based on prior level that they had, receptionists argued that the reading skill was moderate for them. For a question on the level of difficulty, they felt that all the English language skills were fairly difficult. They were asked to fill in the questionnaire regarding their need to English language skills. The results are presented by degree of need and by degree of difficulty (problem) in Table 2 below:

Table 2.

*Hotel Receptionists Degree of Need to English Language Skills*

How is your level when/in..	Statistical Description			
	Mean	S.D	Percentage	Meaning
<b>A. Listening</b>				
1. Understanding what clients want (Needs)	4,78	1,045	0,7962	Very high
2. Listening to telephone conversations (Problem)	3,54	3.301		High
<b>B. Speaking</b>				
1. Telephone conversation with clients (Needs)	4,67	2,028	0,7777	Very high
2. Face to face conversation with clients (Problem)	3,02	,821		Moderate
<b>C. Writing</b>				
1. Writing notes(Needs)	4,22	1,495	0,7037	Very high
2. Writing e-mails (Problem)	2,80	,933		Moderate
<b>D. Grammar</b>				
1. Showing understanding (Needs)	4,22	1,570	0,7037	Very high
2. Using telephone language (Problem)	2,82			Moderate
<b>E. Translating</b>				
1. Translating information for clients (Needs)	4,22	2,126	0,7037	Very high
2. Translating information for clients (Problem)	2,88	.866		Moderate
<b>F. Pronunciation</b>				
1. Speaking English with appropriate word intonation (Needs)	4,00	2,138	0,6666	High
2. Speaking English with appropriate word stress (Problem)	3,00	,907		Moderate
<b>G. Vocabulary</b>				
1. Vocabulary related to accommodation (Needs)	3,89	2,214	0,6481	High
2. Vocabulary related to accommodation (Problem)	3,05	.802		Moderate
<b>H. Reading</b>				
1. Reading memo, fax (Needs)	3,33	2,028	0,5555	Moderate
2. Reading information from internet, e-mail (Problem)	3,28	1.072		Moderate

According to the table above, hotel receptionists in the research context mostly needed to listen to English in their job. It has been disclosed that 79.62% of them declared that the need of listening skill was rated very high. Through discussion with them, the researcher discovered that the respondents highly needed to understand what clients want but they found many problems in listening to telephone conversations. In the area of speaking, the degree of need to English language speaking skills was given a high extent among respondents. 77.77% of the informants believed that the second major skill after listening is speaking. As to the problems encountered in speaking, these were generally in face to face conversation with clients and when providing them with information.

As also shown in the table, English writing skill, grammar and translating were marked as much needed skills too, 70.37% of respondents argued that they needed to use the writing skill when dealing with foreign clients in order to take notes whether they were satisfied by the services provided or not. Receptionists, in the case study hotels, knew well that guests' satisfaction made a boost of 20% in their salaries. As to the difficulty they faced, it was in writing e-mails. 70.37% of receptionists declared that they needed translating information for clients and to show understanding to them. They argued that they had problems in using the language on the telephone. 66.66% of hotel receptionists were crucially lacking in effective pronunciation skills, i.e., they highly needed them. They mostly needed to speak English with appropriate word intonation with their major. Furthermore, their problem existed mainly in word stress. 64.81% of them clarified that what they needed most was a rich linguistic repertoire of English vocabulary. They needed to know the vocabulary related to hospitality industry.

As regards the reading skills, 55.55% of informants admitted that their reading skills were moderate. Their need was in reading memos and faxes while their problem was reading information from internet and e-mails.

All in all, the research population in Marriott Convention Centre had given the highest score of need (mean = 4.16) to the English language skills and elements; and a moderate score of difficulty (mean = 2.69). These findings translate an interest in more training. The following bar-graph display the finding results of the table above.

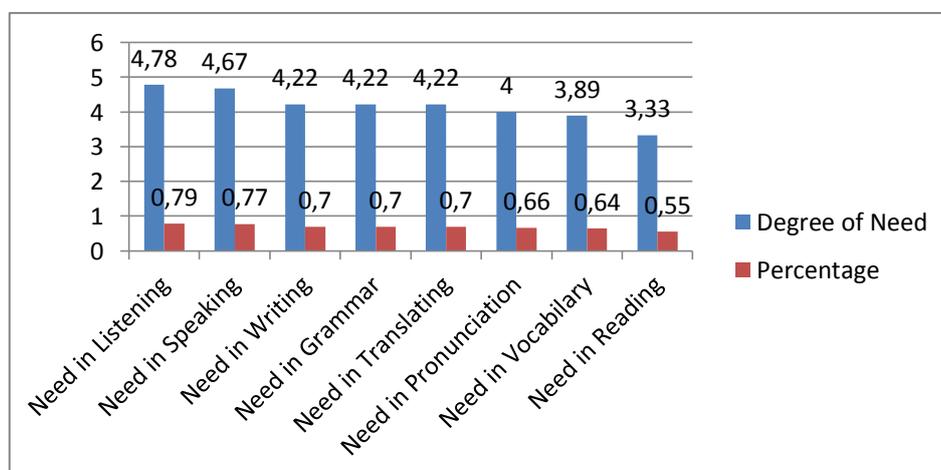


Figure1. Illustration of Skills' Degree of Need According to Mean and Percentages

And also the bar-graph hereafter points out the problems that the informants faced while using the language.

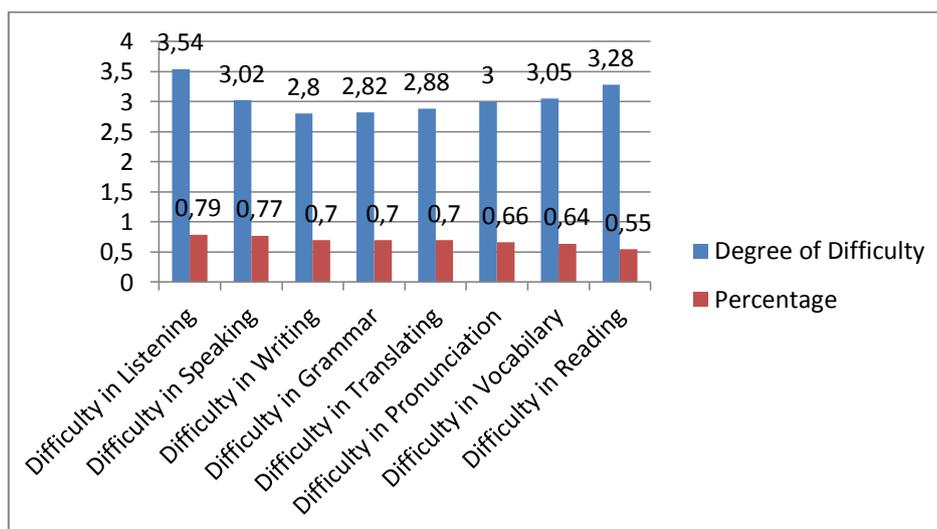


Figure 2.

*Illustration of Skills' Degree of Difficulty According to Mean and Percentages*

The table below further examines how the English skills' needs and problems were self-assessed by the receptionists under study (result averages were found with the use of mean and SDs found in table 2 above).

Table 3.

*Self-Assessed Needs and Problems of Hotel Receptionists*

English Language Skills	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
<b>Self-Assessed Needs (Lacks)</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Self-Assessed Problems (Difficulties)</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>33%</b>

The above percentages of needs 'lacks' had been obtained by taking into consideration the negative assessment only (i.e., low rating). At first glance, the table points 'listening' as being the weakest skill. The second weakest skill was writing which was troublesome for it needed translating followed by speaking. In self-assessed difficulties, the positive ratings were to be taken into consideration in terms of skills' difficulties 'problems' faced by receptionists while using the language. The high difficulty was in the listening skill followed by the writing and reading skills and finally speaking. A graphic display of the table 3 above is suggested for further examination of these results in the bar-graph shown below:

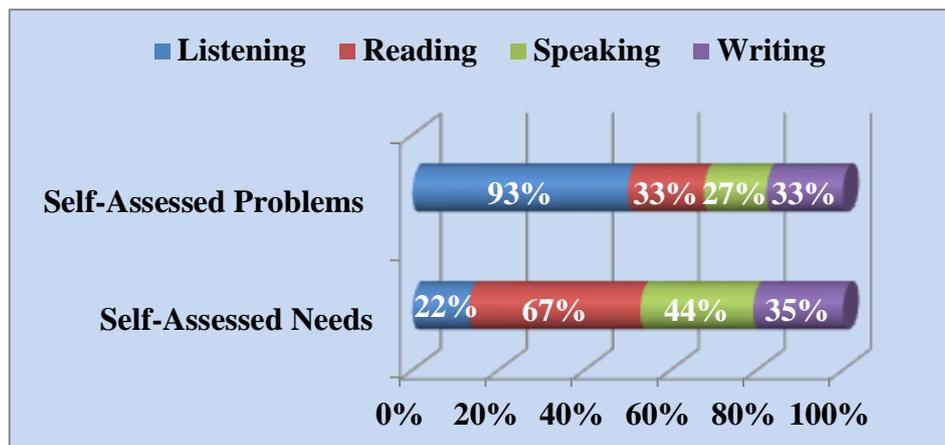


Figure 3.

*Self-Assessed Lacks and Difficulties of Hotel Receptionists*

## 5. Conclusion & Recommendations

As a conclusion, the hotel receptionists had had a pressing need for English language which reflected what skills they had to use in their job. Accordingly, they could perform the task effectively and implied what they would like to master when they learn English. From all the data collected, it can be inferred that there is always an increasing need in English language for hotel receptionists. In this view, in order to overcome the problems, there should be strong efforts in grading their skills both formally and informally. In formal education, the curriculum for English hotel receptionists shall cater the real data from the needs and wants from this research. In informal case, there should be regular programs from management to provide regular English in-service training for their staffs. Pre-service training should be arranged for the front desk staff before starting work and in- service training when starting and during work. Under this circumstance, trainees will be equipped by adequate knowledge to deal easily and comfortably. Without those efforts, it seems to be rather difficult to expect that hotel receptionists in Algeria will be ready for excellent communication services with foreign tourists. It is highly recommended for future researchers to investigate this subject in wider scope, not only in Marriott International Convention Centre but also in Holiday Inn, Hyatt Regency, and other foreign tourists' destination to Algeria. In addition, there should be material development for ESP course as a follow-up of needs analysis to be adjusted with the learner.

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### Appendix

Please indicate your Level in English Language Skills by ticking the appropriate number: 5=very high 4=high 3= moderate 2=low 1=very low

Tick the Suitable Box with the Appropriate Number	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
<b>How is your level when/in..</b>					
1. Understanding what clients want (Needs) 2. Listening to telephone conversations (Problem)					
1. Telephone conversation with clients (Needs) 2. Face to face conversation with clients (Problem)					
1. Writing notes (Needs) 2. Writing e-mails (Problem)					
1. Translating information for clients (Needs) 2. Translating information for clients (Problems)					
1. Speaking English with appropriate word intonation (Needs) 2. Speaking English with appropriate word stress (Problem)					
1. Vocabulary related to accommodation (Needs) 2. Vocabulary related to accommodation (Problem)					
1. Showing understanding (Needs) 2. Using telephone language (Problems)					
1. Reading memo, fax (Needs) 2. Reading information from internet, e-mail (Problems)					

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## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ALGERIAN AND TUNISIAN LAST YEAR SECONDARY EDUCATION SYLLABUSES OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### Abstract

Generally, in undertaking a new educational reform, the first and most essential step is accorded to the design of new syllabuses. Both Algeria and Tunisia have designed new syllabi when reformed their educational systems to cope with the world's development and globalisation. The aim of this work is to analyse and compare the Algerian and Tunisian syllabuses of the last year secondary education. The aim of this comparison is to highlight the similarities and differences in the syllabuses to have an idea about how two historically and geographically related countries perceive and teach English as a foreign language. Both syllabuses are commonly designed in relation to the fact that learners study different streams. The two syllabuses are first analysed in terms of general goals and specific objectives, design procedures, syllabus type, language content (aspects and skills). Then, a comparison of each of these elements is made. The results indicate that both syllabuses are based on the same teaching approach- i.e. the Competency-Based Language Teaching, and pursue nearly the same goals and objectives. Both are communicative, task-based and cyclical. The two syllabuses draw a central importance to the teaching of the language skills as well as language aspects though the formulation and presentation of the contents is different.

**Keywords:** Algerian syllabus, EFL, last year secondary education, Tunisian syllabus.

### 1. Introduction

The international status of English has led many countries to adopt reforms in foreign language policy. The educational reform is crucial for the development of any country since it mainly concerns the improvement of the living style and the thinking process of the educated people, because education is the pathway to the new changes and progress occurring in the world. Algeria (2002) and Tunisia (2000) are among the countries that have introduced reforms in their educational systems in order to meet the demands of globalization and universality. The reforms have touched all educational levels and all subject matters. Moreover, it started from the heart of the educational system in both countries; that is from the ministry requirements and needs. English represents a foreign language in both countries.

Generally, in undertaking a new educational reform, the first and most essential step is accorded to the design of new syllabuses. Since English is a worldwide language which establishes communication between all peoples of the globe and allows access to a set of conceptual, scientific and cultural fields, Algeria and Tunisia have designed new syllabuses of English for all educational levels in order to achieve such objectives. The secondary education in both countries is characterized by many differences. The Algerian secondary education lasts for three years in which students study common content in the first year and follow a specific field in the second and third years. However, the Tunisian secondary education lasts

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for four years. Learners are supposed to have a common education for two years and specialize in the third and fourth years. Notwithstanding these differences, secondary education in both countries ends with a national exam-*the baccalaureate exam*- which is the ticket that opens the doors of university to bachelors.

Since Algeria and Tunisia are situated in the same geographical area, have grown through time nearly with the same history, share cultural features and political policy, they constitute a geo-political entity that makes expect similar educational principles, thus similarities in syllabuses such as the one of English. Thus, the paper aims at answering the following questions:

- Do the Algerian and Tunisian syllabuses of English (last year secondary education) underline similar objectives?
- Are they based on the same syllabus type?
- Do they contain similar content (language aspects and skills) and present it in a similar way?

## 2-Review of the Literature

### 2-1-definitions of Syllabus

There are, in literature, many alternative and confusing definitions to the concept “syllabus”. A syllabus is, in general, the selection and the gradation of content. Syllabus is a detailed and ready statement of teaching and learning elements reflecting the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading in order to achieve specific and defined objectives.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> year secondary school Algerian syllabus of English defines the concept as: “*un programme scolaire comprend les finalités du système éducatif, les objectifs ou les compétences poursuivies et les contenus dans les différentes disciplines*»(Algerian 3SE syllabus, 2007, p.15). That is to say, a school syllabus is a document which supplies the objectives of the educational system, the competences, to be developed and the contents of the different disciplines, as it integrates the activities that lead to achieve the predefined objectives.

Luke, Woods & Weir (2013, p.10) define syllabus as “*a map and a descriptive overview of the curriculum. It stands as a structured summary or outline of what should be taught and learned across the schooling years*”. The syllabus should provide information about the needs, objectives and culture of the learners. Its content should be organized through inventories of items and gives methodological recommendations (how to teach and evaluate the content). Therefore, it should gather structures, notions, functions, skills and tasks which are required to achieve the objectives set.

According to Reilly (1988), a language syllabus involves integration of two important matters-the subject matter (what to talk about) and the linguistic matter (how to talk about it). He gathers six main types of syllabus on the basis of their content and objectives. The structural or formal syllabus is based on **grammatical** forms and structures. The **notional-functional** syllabus emphasizes language functions and notions. The **situational** syllabus focuses real or imaginary situations in which language occurs. The **skill-based** syllabus includes linguistic competences-as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation- into the four language skills. **Task-based** syllabus includes purposeful tasks to perform through language and other skills in specific settings of language use, therefore, integrates different language aspects and skills. The **content-based** syllabus concerns content and information; that is learning a subject matter through a foreign language. The **communicative** syllabus according

to Dubin and Olshtain (1986) integrates three essential features: the *language content* concerning language aspects and social skills, the *process* concerning the different types of activities to include, and the *product/outcome* concerning the language skills, in the form of inventories.

### ***2-2-Algerian and Tunisian Secondary Education***

Algerian as well as Tunisian secondary education is open for all learners who succeed in the final exam closing the middle education and obtain the *Brevet* diploma. This latter is a certification of the acquisition of the competences supposed to allow the learners follow their studies in secondary school. It is a diploma developed after four years of study in Algeria and three years of study in Tunisia. That is; it is an entrance exam to secondary education.

In Algeria, all secondary education students follow and study under the same syllabus for one year (common stream) before being streamed at one of the major fields: literary (letters and philosophy, and foreign languages), scientific (experimental sciences, mathematics, technical mathematics, and economy and management). At the entrance of the secondary school, learners have already learned English for four years, thus they leave secondary education with seven years English study. The Algerian educational reform aims at providing new opportunities that enable the country deal with the new requirements resulting from the political, economic and social mutations it undergoes.

In Tunisia, secondary education lasts longer since students have to follow a two years syllabus before being oriented to one of the various streams: letters, economy and management, mathematics, technology, and experimental studies. At the entrance of the secondary school, learners have already studied English for two years; therefore, leave the secondary level with six years of English study. The Tunisian reform aims at forming citizens who can cope with the new world and its conditions and demands.

### **3-Research Method**

The method adopted in this research paper is comparative in nature, since it aims to highlight similarities and differences underlying both syllabuses. The materials on which the research is relied are two syllabuses designed for teaching English for last year secondary education students in Algeria and Tunisia.

To answer the questions raised in the introduction, an analysis of both syllabuses is needed then a comparison of the results. The paper sustains the findings with reference to Dubin and Olshtain's work (1986) on communicative syllabus design and Reilly's work (1988) on syllabus type as well as Rabbini's (2002) principles on task-based syllabus. Concerning the objectives of both syllabuses, they are compared according to their orientations (linguistic, methodological and socio-cultural). The language aspects and skills are compared in terms of content provided and presentation.

### **4-Results and Discussion**

It is clearly mentioned in both syllabuses that they are based on the Competency-Based Language Teaching Approach. This latter is chosen as an answer to the 21st century needs and the world's changes and development. Therefore, the type to choose for syllabus design, the content to include the teaching strategies...should follow the competency-based language teaching. This is the case in both syllabuses though the way of presentation is different.

#### ***4-1-The General Goals from Teaching English in Both Syllabuses***

Both syllabuses are designed with a humanist philosophy of education that emphasizes the learner; thus English is considered as a personal enrichment of the learners to become citizens of their country and the modern world they belong to. Therefore, English is considered in both syllabuses as a subject matter and as a means of communication. The following citations are examples from the syllabuses that show clearly the similarities in general goals from teaching English in this level:

Le but de l'enseignement de l'anglais est d'aider notre société à **s'intégrer** harmonieusement dans la **modernité** en participant pleinement à la communauté linguistique qui utilise cette langue pour tous types **d'interaction** (English as a means of communication)...l'enseignement de l'anglais implique, non seulement l'acquisition de compétences linguistiques et de communication, mais également de compétences transversales d'ordre méthodologique/technologique, culturel, social chez l'élève... (English as a subject matter) and (Algerian syllabus 3AS, 2007, p.7)

And

(English is) Both as a means of communication and a subject matter, English will be a means to collect information, process data... English will foster self-expression as well as appropriate interaction with peers and other interlocutors which, in turn, will ensure access to universal culture through Anglophone contexts and ...use communication technology, be it at the individual or cooperative modes through working procedures (English as a means of communication)... English will develop the learners' analytical and critical skills required by the syllabus mainly by drawing upon prior and academic knowledge to comprehend and use language as a system orally and in written form (English as a subject matter) (Tunisian syllabus 4AS, 2008, p.38)

#### ***4-2-The Specific Objectives from Teaching English in both Syllabuses***

The specific objectives set in the two syllabuses are from three natures: linguistic and communication, methodological/technological, and socio-cultural. These objectives share many similarities. As examples from the syllabuses:

«Doter l'apprenant d'une base linguistique solide (grammaire, syntaxe, vocabulaire, prononciation, maîtrise des codes de l'oral et de l'écrit)». (Algerian syllabus 3AS, 2007, p.8). And "Language is seen as a means of communication (interactional, transactional and functional) rather a set of decontextualized grammatical structures, word lists and isolated language skills". Tunisian syllabus 4AS, 2008, p.39)

These statements are examples of linguistic and communication objectives. The Algerian and Tunisian syllabuses show great similarity in formulating this kind of objectives.

«Consolider les capacités intellectuelles de l'élève telles que l'analyse, l'évaluation à travers des activités pertinentes ». (Algerian syllabus 3AS, 2007, p.8). And "The teacher should create conditions conducive to learning...the teacher acts as a professional, creative manager of classroom activities and of student learning". (Tunisian syllabus 4AS, 2008, p.39)

These statements show similarities in methodological/technological objectives cited in both syllabuses. There are many similarities; however, the Algerian syllabus listed objectives that are not included in the Tunisian one. For instance: "teach students to learn how to use different types of documentation in order to prepare them for university or any other milieu". (Algerian syllabus 3AS, 2007, p.8)

«Stimuler la curiosité de l'apprenant et contribuer à son ouverture d'esprit en l'exposant à divers contextes de civilisation et en l'intéressant plus particulièrement à la culture anglophone ». (Algerian syllabus 3AS, 2007, p.9). and "The learner's participation and interaction are important in learning the language and fostering self-confidence and social relationships among learners. Such relationships and interactions are among learners within the context of learning English will nurture in learners positive values and a sense of identity". (Tunisian syllabus 4AS, 2008, p.39)

These statements illustrate the standpoint Algeria and Tunisia share regarding the teaching of one's culture and the culture(s) of the English language. Hence, the cross-cultural teaching conducts them to efficiently and successfully integrate the active and foreign milieu outside the classroom and the country.

#### ***4-3-The Types of the Algerian and the Tunisian Syllabuses***

Concerning the syllabus type on which the Algerian and Tunisian syllabuses are based, it seems that it is task-based and communicative, thus they respond to the communicative purposes they both underline. Through reading the two syllabuses, it is clear that they share orientations with the task-based syllabus principles, as these few examples show:

- The learner is the centre of the language learning which aims at making him/her able to use the language outside the academic context (Rabbini, 2002). This principle is termed as "*le programme par compétence propose des situations d'apprentissage et des situations d'intégration qui mettent l'apprenant au centre de l'apprentissage*»and "*lui permettre de poursuivre avec succès une formation supérieure en anglais, en milieu universitaire ou professionnel* " (Algerian syllabus 3AS, 2007, p.8), and "*the learner is the core of the learning process...the teaching/learning process should foster learner independence to enable the learner to use English effectively both in its spoken and written forms so that he/she may continue learning by himself/herself, beyond the programme*»(Tunisian syllabus 4AS, 2008, p.39)
- Task-based syllabus is based on the belief that learners become analytical in the exploration process of communication in the foreign language and the ability to use it. Thus interaction is a basic element. (Rabbini, 2002). This principle is termed "*lui permettre de comprendre et communiquer aisément dans la langue étrangère*»(Algerian syllabus 3AS, 2007, p.8)and "*the learner's participation and interaction are important in learning the language and fostering self-confidence and social relationships among learners*" (Tunisian syllabus 4AS, 2008, p.39)

These principles are examples among the several ones mentioned in both syllabuses and which correspond to the principles of task-based syllabuses claimed by Rabbini (2002). Therefore, both syllabuses are task-based in nature since they are based on the learner, tasks and problem-solving situations. This in fact fits the competency-based approach adopted by both syllabuses. These principles claim to be communicative because they are based on principles claiming to develop learners' communication skills and respect the requirements of the competency-based language teaching. That is, both syllabuses are designed with harmony regarding their type and the approach they rely on. In this respect, Nunan (2001, nd.) sustained that "a task-based syllabus represents a particular realization of communicative language teaching. It relates purely pedagogical goals to real-world activities".

#### ***4-5-Language Aspects in both Syllabuses***

The language components (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) are given a great emphasis in both syllabuses, since the mastery of a foreign language needs the mastery of the linguistic competence. That is, training in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation helps the learners build knowledge s/he can use in everyday life, in every situation, in oral as well as in written perspectives. The grammatical structures help the listener/reader to understand the others and help the speaker/writer express their ideas correctly. Vocabulary instruction helps learners acquire words and expressions in their contexts; thus avoid misunderstanding or being misunderstood. Pronunciation is seen as the best way to evaluate one's communicative competence. Thus, knowing to pronounce means knowing to speak and articulate correctly and eventually understand correctly.

In the Algerian syllabus, there are two sections concerned with the teaching of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation: “*objectifs linguistiques et de communication*»and “*des savoirs/contenus linguistiques (language outcomes)*”. The syllabus argues that the learners need to be endowed with a solid linguistic baggage in English (syntax, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) in order to make them able to master oral and written skills, understand and communicate in English. The grammar and vocabulary of English should be taught in context and be related to the theme of the lesson or unit-that is contextualized grammar and vocabulary teaching. The learner needs to understand how the language system works, how language conventions vary according to communicative situations and contexts, and apply this knowledge in speech as well as in writing. Therefore, teaching of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation is an essential part of language teaching which helps the pupils to use English effectively both in spoken and written modes.

Similarly, the Tunisian syllabus devotes two sections for the teaching of grammar: “*principles, assumptions and methodology*»and “*grammar*”. Grammar instruction is among the crucial language aspects to teach in any language. This is because if a learner does not learn how the language is structured and how its system functions, s/he could not achieve any communicative competence. Thus, knowing the grammar of a language and how it functions contributes to effective language acquisition. Vocabulary and pronunciation are also formulated in such a way that makes the textbook designers aware of their importance. Thus, the syllabus gives guidelines for how to insert them in the textbook considering different parts of the language (as context, learner's needs and interests, and the baccalaureate exam).

Both syllabuses formulated clear objectives regarding the teaching of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. These latter are among the basic language components to master in order to get an efficient communicative competence-the basic principle of the competency-based language teaching. The importance of these language aspects is reflected in the textbooks, designed on the basis of the two syllabuses, with various tasks and lessons related to them. The different vital fact is the audio CD provided to help the Tunisian students achieve better pronunciation competence. The organization and presentation of materials are different in the textbooks; however, it is worthy to say that both syllabuses respond to the communicative syllabus regarding language aspects though with different formulation and presentation.

#### **4-6-Language Skills in both Syllabuses**

The four language skills are provided in both syllabuses with a significant position. The Algerian syllabus lists the main objectives to achieve in relation to each skill whereas the Tunisian syllabus categorizes the different sub-skills meant to develop in the learners with different strategies to adopt for each sub-skill in addition to the general objectives to achieve at the end of secondary education. In the Algerian syllabus, this is formulated mainly through skills and strategy outcomes in which different strategies are provided while the Tunisian syllabus devotes a large part to the sub-skills to develop and strategies to adopt for each skill.

Both syllabuses discuss the objectives to achieve considering the listening ability, though the presentation and organization of the materials are different. The Algerian syllabus formulates this through *compétence 2* that deals with the interpretation of oral and written texts, while the Tunisian syllabus shows a list of the different listening sub-skills and strategies to develop in the learners. However, the aim from teaching listening is the same: to help the learners understand and interpret oral discourse, to negotiate meaning, to infer and transfer information, and analyze the structure of different types and genres of oral discourse. Three sections in the Algerian syllabus are devoted to the listening skill “*compétence 2: interpréter des messages oraux ou écrits*”, “*des saviors-être: social skills outcomes*”, and “*des savoirs/contenus linguistiques*”. Listening is formulated in the Tunisian syllabus through the different sub-skills and strategies. That is, only one section is devoted to listening entitled “*reading and listening strategies*”.

Both syllabuses articulate objectives for speaking instruction. In the Algerian syllabus, it is formulated through *compétence 1* that intends to make the learners produce oral information relying on the context and situation, using correct grammar and pronunciation and appropriate vocabulary. In the Tunisian syllabus, it is articulated through the different sub-skills and strategies that, in general encourage the learners to produce an oral report relying on context, appropriate vocabulary, correct grammar and pronunciation. That is, the aim of teaching speaking is similar in both syllabuses. In the Algerian syllabus, there are five sections in which speaking objectives, skills and strategies are formulated: “*compétence 1: interagir oralement*”, “*des situations d’apprentissage et des situations d’intégration*”, “*des savoirs/contenus linguistiques*”, “*des savoirs-faire*»and “*des saviors-être*”. Two sections are allocated to speaking in the Tunisian syllabus: “*principles, assumptions and methodology*” and “*speaking and writing skills and strategies*”.

Reading is formulated in the Algerian syllabus through *competence 2*, as listening, underlying the understanding and interpretation of oral and written language, while in the Tunisian syllabus; it is articulated with sub-skills and strategies as listening. That is, the aim from teaching reading is the same. In the Algerian syllabus, reading is formulated through four sections: “*compétence 2:interpréter des messages oraux ou écrits*”, “*des situations d’apprentissage et des situations d’intégration*”, “*des savoirs/contenus linguistiques*»and “*des savoirs-faire*”. Only one section, in the Tunisian syllabus, deals with reading: “*reading and listening skills and strategies*”.

Writing is considered as the most important skill in both syllabuses considering the fact that secondary education level ends with a national examination-baccalaureate which is completed in the written mode. Accordingly, learners need to acquire different writing skills and strategies. Nevertheless, the presentation and organization of writing materials in both syllabuses are different. In the Algerian syllabus, competence 3 and the terminal objective shed the light on the importance and objectives of teaching writing; while in the Tunisian syllabus, writing is articulated through strategies and sub-skills. The importance given to writing in the Tunisian syllabus is highlighted when viewing the textbook and the teacher’s

book relying on that syllabus. Six sections in the Algerian syllabus are devoted to writing skills: “compétence 3: produire des messages écrits”, “objectif terminal d’intégration: profil de sortie de l’élève de 3AS”, “des situations d’apprentissage et des situations d’intégration”, “des savoirs-faire”, “des savoirs/contenus linguistiques”, and “description des projets en termes de ressources”. One part, in the Tunisian syllabus, is concerned with writing: “speaking and writing skills and strategies”. In both syllabuses, writing instruction aims at communicating and reinvesting the acquired and constructed knowledge in a range of situations related to real life. Therefore, learners are required to produce a piece of writing in any text type and genre studied in the textbooks, by using correct grammar, punctuation, text structure, cohesion, coherence, appropriate vocabulary...

## 5-Conclusion

This paper unveils the differences and similarities underlying the Algerian and Tunisian syllabuses designed for learners in the last year secondary education. The comparison essentially goes through some aspects: goals and objectives, syllabus type, language aspects and language skills. Thus, both syllabuses are based on the competency-based language teaching requirements in order to follow the new and continuous progress in the world. Both syllabuses are designed under the same types: communicative, task-based and cyclical but are different in that the Algerian syllabus is also project-based since it emphasises projects as a main learning tool. This type of syllabus is adequate to the use of the approach adopted by the two syllabuses. Both language aspects (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) and language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are crucial in both syllabuses. However, their presentation, practice and organization are different.

The Algerian syllabus is mainly formulated through general objectives to achieve at the end of the third year secondary education, and specific objectives to achieve for different contents (aspects, skills, strategies...). Conversely, the Tunisian syllabus is formulated so as to give the reader an insight of what to teach in general, the objectives to reach, and the different strategies to adopt in order to attain the objectives set. The content, in the Algerian syllabus, is mainly planned through three competences to develop in the learners. In contrast, the Tunisian syllabus is planned in terms of strategies for different content and outcomes with a central emphasis on language and social skills.

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**PATRIARCHY SANCTIONED UNDER RELIGIOUS FANATICISM : THE NERVOUS CONDITION OF MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN WOMANHOOD IN NAWAL EL SAADAWI' s *GOD DIES BY THE NILE* AND CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE 's *PURPLE HIBISCUS***

### Abstract

This article intends to unravel the myth of eternal feminine in Muslim and Christian societies, by exploring the gender asymmetry inscribed within as being traditionally and religiously reinforced by the patriarchal social order. Particularly, this asymmetry is generally maintained by unscrupulous representatives of religion, who seek to incarnate an unquestionable godly power that is oppressive to the female sex. Gender bias, in this regard, becomes justified in the name of God, or through a repressive discourse of righteousness which is male-prescribed and male-maintained, but claimed to be divinely ordained. With the patriarchalisation of religious tenets, women become further incapacitated to improve their lot and thus stifle the patriarchal energy seeking to relegate them to the auxiliary status.

Using Nawal El Saadawi's *God Dies by The Nile* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, the article tries to uncover the patriarchal distortions of Muslim and Christian cultures where misogynistic reading of religion is used against battered and sexually exploited women. The concern of this article is to depict, through the stories of these women, how the instrumentalization of religion by the patriarchal order can dangerously breed a chaotic culture which deliberately embraces a limited view regarding any female autonomous development.

The paper shows through the protagonists' dissident acts that to break free from the phallocratic mentality, women need to dogmatically and indignantly dethrone those God abstractions inflicted on their consciousness. A participation in de-patriarchizing oppressive God images will empower these subaltern women to cease playing the game of sex roles, imposed on them by the patriarchal social order.

**Keywords:** Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Christian, Muslim, Nawal El Saadawi, Patriarchy, Religion, Women.

### 1. Introduction

The statement that Muslim women are oppressed under Islam is not equally met with the claim that Christian women are oppressed under Christianity. This lopsided view is manifested in the fact that the very term "Christian Women", as a stereotypical and monolithic category of gender, finds no existence in current feminist scholarship. Unlike Muslim women, Christian women have never been homogenized under generic and essentialist labels like "Christian women", or "Western women", which may produce problematic assumptions regarding their treatment under Christianity. This view is illuminated by the Algerian sociologist Marnia Lazreg who is very attentive to the Orientalist inclinations of western feminist politics in which Muslim women are stereotypically "made to

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel *Nervous Condition*

conform to the configuration of meanings associated with the concept of Islam ” (Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence*, p.7).

As a Muslim woman getting increasingly alarmed by my Otherness in current feminist discourse, I feel committed to cross the hegemonic divide fabricated between Christian and Muslim women. Crossing this divide is tantamount to demonstrating that whether Muslim or Christian, women as daughters of Eve have always been prone to dogmatic religious beliefs which repress their individual freedoms. This means that the survival of patriarchy as an institution in both Muslim and Christian societies has always needed a gendered discourse of righteousness that would sanction discriminatory practices against women.

Feminists are adamant to investigate how patterns of gender bias are propagated under the word of God to reinforce the lowly position of women. Notably, the Egyptian feminist writer Nawal El Saadawi, known for her militant struggle against religious bigotry in the Arab world, argues that “conservative interpretations of religion and cultural indoctrination in patriarchal contexts account for the female subordination to men” (El Saadawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, p.70). Correspondingly, the Christian feminist Mary. B Mahowald devoted a significant attention to the misappropriation of religion in Christian societies. For her “Christianity and other religions have exhibited a gender-based individualism through their concurrence in, and replication of, the patriarchal structure of society” (Mahowald, *Feminism, Socialism, and Christianity revisited*, p.48). Mahowald further added that religion can be dangerously transformed into a gender biased enterprise when men control the leadership positions of various institutional religions, and women become intentionally excluded from those positions. Women, as a result of this exclusion, are socialized to be passive recipients of men’s faculties. They are often pressurized to comply with a repressing code of behaviour which is male-prescribed and male-maintained, but claimed to be divinely ordained. This view was endorsed by Simone de Beauvoir when arguing that in patriarchal societies, “woman must only mediate the law; she does not possess it” (De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p.106). According to some cultural assumptions, woman is a passive spectator because she is the Other, an auxiliary or deficient being incapacitated by her emotional and physical frailties to reach the masculine state of sovereignty. For De Beauvoir, the categorization of women as the second sex is a product of social stereotyping which has historically used the biological differences between the sexes to promote a polarized view of gender. Understandably, the biological destiny of woman has not only particularized her as the weaker sex, but also branded, on the other hand, man as the sovereign being.

Beauvoir’s existentialist view on the predicament of women in patriarchal societies is vividly portrayed in *God Dies by The Nile* (1985) and *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), two feminist narratives written respectively by the Egyptian Nawal El Saadawi and the Nigerian Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The Muslim and Christian women under study inevitably incarnate the essence of the Beauvoirian womanhood, as they are similarly socialized, under debilitating cultural norms, to succumb to the prescriptions of sex dualism. Echoing De Beauvoir’s view, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie claims that “the problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognizing how we are” (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *We Should All Be Feminists*, p.34). Comprehensibly, being a woman is, an ascribed identity determined by social paradigms which come to define gender roles, regulate gender relationships, and construct gender identities. This paper explores thus what it means to be gendered Muslim and Christian woman in Egyptian and Nigerian environments plagued by social disparities and religious deficiencies. The nervous condition of Muslim and Christian womanhood and the heavy burden of cultural norms in reinforcing gender hierarchy is then this article’s main focus.

Both Nawal El Saadawi and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie draw a disturbing picture about the flagrant violation of religion, maintained by corrupt religious men who fail to make a connection between what they preach and what they practice. The representatives of religion in our selected narratives are then Mayors who abuse their villagers, Imams who forcibly marry young women without their consent, priests who condone wife battery, and religious fanatics who heartlessly beat their children over unreasonable causes. Nawal El Saadawi, or Simone de Beauvoir of the Arab world as often called by western feminists, uses her writings to address these issues in a very categorical way. Her novel, *God Dies by The Nile*, resonates with her view already expressed in *The Hidden Face of Eve* that “the reasons for the low status of women in our societies, and the lack of opportunities for progress afforded to them are not due to Islam” (El Saadawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, p.41). She blames some economic and political forces, propagated by men, for making Islam an instrument of fear and oppression against women. In *God Dies by The Nile*, the village Mayor embodies these economic and political forces, as he belongs to the privileged ruling class which takes advantage of its financial positioning to exert power over poor peasants. The novel is then centred on the ordeal of Zakeya’s family, inflicted by the Mayor of Kafr El Teen who uses his authority to sexually exploit her nieces, Zeinab and Nefissa. Unsurprisingly, under misogynistic reading of religion, the Mayor’s sexual transgressions go incontestable and the plight of these female victims goes accordingly unheard. El Saadawi depicts poignantly the complicity of some religious men like Sheikh Hamzawi, the Imam of the village, and Sheikh Zahran, the Chief of the Guard, in exploiting Kafrawi’s financial vulnerabilities and Zakeya’s illness to promote the Mayor’s lustful interests. Being aware that the prevailing religious and political orders stand no power to resist such godly power, Zakeya decides to take her own measures of resistance by murdering her oppressor, and thus liberate her family from the shackles of blind obedience.

*Purple Hibiscus* is grounded in the same religious despotism depicted in *God Dies by The Nile*. Much like Nawal El Saadawi, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is interested in unveiling the patriarchal distortions of cultural norms, dressed often in religious clothing, to give a sense of legitimacy to repressive acts. Adichie, is careful to exhibit a feminist spirit which recognizes the cultural peculiarity of her African context. She creates fictional households which are microcosm of a contemporary Nigeria plagued by ethnic confrontations, religious fundamentalism, and significantly haunted by burdensome postcolonial instabilities. The repressive comportment of the patriarch in traditional Nigerian homes is very often revelatory of the dictatorial governance of the ruler at a global scale. The public and private settings of *Purple Hibiscus* are obviously no exception, as it is evidenced in the way, Eugene, the household patriarch, replicates the repressive structures of the government and the religious asceticism of fundamentalists. The novel is then a statement against fanatical faith preached by Eugene, who mercilessly tortures his wife and children for what he single-mindedly thinks immoral comportments. In the voice of his daughter, Kambili, Adichie brings to light the day to day surveillance maintained against the wife and her children, and more importantly the psychological trauma that arises from such enclosure. The narrative begins with domestic violence in the Palm Sunday, but ends up ironically with subversion and rebellion against the forces of repression. The murder of Eugene by his wife is portrayed in a positive light, giving glimpses of hope for a promising future to Kambili and her brother, Jaja.

## 2. Sanctioning Gender Asymmetry under The Word of God in Nawal El Saadawi's *God Dies By The Nile* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

In Nawal El Saadawi's *God Dies by The Nile*, the Muslim culture under study does not only employ superstitious beliefs to subjugate its female folk, but it instrumentalizes religion to maintain the status quo. The religious men of the village of Kafr El Teen, who are "responsible for upholding the teachings of Allah, and keeping the morals and piety of the village intact" (El Saadawi, *God Dies by The Nile*, 30), are the ones who violate these morals when they cunningly use their position to marry young women against their will. The Imam of the village, Sheikh Hamzawi, sees no contradiction between preaching the Word of God in the mosque and forcibly marrying a young woman without her consent. As an Imam very knowledgeable in religious matters, he is aware of the Islamic marital jurisprudence requiring the consent of the bride in his new conjugal partnership. Even worse, the sexually impotent Sheikh seems to give a sense of spiritual validity to his act when he brainwashed Haj Ismail, the man who helped him marry Fatheya, into believing that Allah will reward him generously because he has done "a service to the man who preserves the holy mosque and defends the teachings of God in this village" (29). The corruption of the Imam can hardly be passed over in silence; given the way he tries to use advantageously his prestigious position among the villagers to attain his selfish goals. For the respected Sheikh, his position as the village Imam entitles him to marry the woman he desires, even without seeking her consent. God is also thought to be on his side to serve this selfish interest, simply because he is a man who preaches his Word by providing religious guidance to the villagers of Kafr El Teen. A significant difficulty in combatting this religious hypocrisy occurs when violence becomes mandated to maintain this male power. Haj Ismail, for instance, instructs the father, Haj Mesoud, to beat Fatheya several times because, according to him, "women are only convinced if they receive a good hiding" (31). Haj Ismail's argument follows a patriarchal logic which approaches women as subservient beings, lacking this male sagacity to deliberate over important issues like marriage. For these men, there is no need to seek the consent of Fatheya in marriage, because women, as irrational creatures controlled by their biological nature, are irremediably and irredeemably doomed to depend upon the assistance of their male guardians. The latter are then religiously permitted, according to the prevailing cultural norms, to use violence as a disciplinary measure to redirect their female subordinates towards the path of righteousness.

The transition of woman from the supremacy of the father to the supremacy of the husband will entrap her in a loveless conjugal life where she is required to comply with what Nawal El Saadawi calls the philosophy of *God Above, Husband Below* (El Saadawi, *God Above, Husband Below*, p.90). Regarded as an emblem of servitude, women are called to be submissive wives because their devotedness to God is thought to be contingent upon their ability to obediently comply with their husbands' orders. Aligned with this philosophy, the polygamous husband warns Fatheya that, as a wife of Sheikh Hamzawi, she is doomed to swear the oath of bondage to her husband. Fatheya, in this sense, is not supposed to have a public existence, as she is not allowed to venture out of the domestic sphere except twice in her life. "The first time when she moves from her father's to her husband's house. And the second, when she leaves her husband's house for the grave allotted to her in the burial grounds" (30). The polarization and dichotomization of sex can hardly be underestimated in these disenfranchising instructions which behaviourally and spacially circumscribe the wife to her husband's sexist inclinations.

Fatheya is supposed according to these inclinations to comply with the dictates of the public/private doctrine which sentence her confinement in the domestic sphere of duty. In the midst of this seclusion, bonds of affection are hardly to be shown by the husband who is, according to the Moroccan feminist and sociologist Fatima Mernissi, persuaded to play “the role of master instead of lover»(Mernissi, *Beyond The Veil*, p.113). In explaining the dialectics of sex roles in traditional conjugal relationships, Mernissi further argues that all what the wife expects to get from her husband are orders, and what she is expected to give is obedience (Mernissi, *Beyond The Veil*, p110). The binary categorization of sex has affected heavily the familial and conjugal language which is more likely to be a language of confinement and containment rather than that of love and mutual respect. Going against the status quo is dreadful to contemplate for Muslim women, whose docility and passivity are not only made cardinal virtue of femininity, but also a religious imperative for the maintenance of this dutiful hierarchy. With regard to the misappropriation of religion, any rejection of these cultural norms would be seen as a tantamount to subvert what is traditionally accepted and religiously mandated. Accordingly, to say that a woman who does not accept docility as her chronic proclivity is unfeminine would be an understatement. She is rather identified under debilitating cultural norms as irreligious or fallen creature, because she has transgressed the Muslim code of righteousness; and thus, upset the teachings of Allah.

In *God Dies by The Nile*, women like Fatheya are credited social validation when they emulate the spirit of obedience and comply unquestionably with this normative code of behavior. Fatheya stands no power to transcend the dictates of the patriarchal gaze requiring her to display this wifely obedience. The narrator describes that when instructed to not step out of the domestic realm, Fatheya seems to succumb to this surveillance as she no longer “insisted on visiting her aunt, perhaps because each time he got into temper and tried to stop her from going out»(30).

The religious despotism of Sheikh Hamzawi is similarly accepted in the Christian world of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*. The novel opens with Eugene acting harshly against his child, Jaja, who did not go to Communion on Palm Sunday. Eugene reads Jaja’s refusal to follow the Holy Communion as a contravention of religion, and resorts to violence as a disciplinary measure. To maintain his power over his children, Kambili describes how the catholic father gives his children “scripture passage or a book by one of the early church fathers to read and meditate on” (Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*, p.31) then imposing on them to recite sixteen different novenas later on at the dinner time. Furthermore, the protagonist adds that even in their free time, she feels persecuted by being prohibited from chess games or newspaper discussions, because such ways of entertainment stand against her father’s path of righteousness. Eugene’s path of righteousness is seemingly intolerant to his supposedly heathen father, Papa Nnukwu, who is forbidden to maintain closer relationships with his grandchildren. More accurately, Eugene’s religious dogma pushes him to look narrowly at all traditional norms which do not comply strictly with his doctrinal convictions. Such alien norms are unsurprisingly identified under Eugene’s legacy as blasphemous. Accordingly, Papa Nnukwu who still believes in superstition is obviously regarded as a heathen who deserves to live on the fringes of the community. As a heathen, Papa Nnukwu is even prevented from sharing drinks or meals with his grandchildren. According to Eugene’s self-righteous legacy, eating or drinking in a heathen’s house is a sinful act which needs to be severely punished. This religious absolutism can be shown clearly in the way he instructs his daughter to pray for forgiveness after eating with her grand-father, and thus desecrating, as claimed by the devoted father, her Christian tongue.

Eugene’s adherence to religion is quite similar to Sheikh Hamzawi’s. The corrupt comportment of the Sheikh is explicitly shown when he tries to persuade his wife, Fatheya, to

give up her surrogate son because the latter was born of sin and fornication. He even daringly blames the innocent child for all his misfortunes, arguing that “the men of the village no longer like me to lead the prayer, because their prayers might not be favorably received by God»(105). Paradoxically, men like Sheikh Hamzawi and Eugene are afraid to desecrate their Muslim prayers and Christian tongues, but they display no attention regarding their repressive conducts towards their female folk. Eugene, who convincingly identifies his father’s superstitious beliefs as the gateway to Hell, is not able to see his constant torture of his wife and daughter as conducive to the same gateway.

Eugene’s brand of religion is very hostile to women, whose deviant sexuality needs to be rigidly tamed in accordance with a set of clothing regulations. Such regulations identify the wearing of trousers by women as sinful, and the exposure of their hair in the church as ungodly. It’s noteworthy that Eugene does not pursue any possibilities of communication which would enable him to share opinions and judgments with his daughter. Rather, by enforcing judgmental rules upon his children, he succeeded disappointedly to create an irritable household milieu devoid of fatherly empathy and dominated only by fear and anxiety. In order to maintain this authority over the children and their mother, physical assault becomes a common occurrence in Eugene’s household. Adichie depicts poignantly how Eugene mercilessly beats his wife and daughter over uncontrollable matters, like breaking the Eucharistic fast and the inability to receive the priest, Father Benedict, because of menstruation pain and pregnancy tiredness, respectively. Upon her break of the sacred fasting, Kambili tries to explain to the devout father that she felt obliged to eat corn flakes before taking Panadol, an explanation that was received by a heavy leather belt landing over her back. The justifications advanced by Kambili can never be comprehended under the father’s dogma which indignantly approaches her act as a sacrilege committed against a sacred Christian ritual.

This religious dogma is subsequently carried out to its extreme, when arguing to Kambili, that his violent reactions are meant to purify her soul and redirect her into the path of righteousness. It comes as no surprise that violence under Eugene’s self-righteous legacy becomes religiously justified and thus, emerges as an ultimate corrective measure for Kambili’s transcendence. Interestingly, domestic violence maintained against women cannot be understood outside its patriarchal social context, where pervasive power unbalances between the sexes come to regulate gender relationships. For the British sociologist Sylvia Walby, male violence against women is “part of a system of controlling women, unlike then the conventional view which holds that rape and battering are isolated instances caused by psychological problems in a few men” (Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*, p.03). Seen in this light, the patriarchal implications of the physical assault experienced both by Kambili and her mother, Beatrice, can hardly be disregarded. Eugene’s abusive comportment is symptomatic of his failure to deal adequately with his daughter and wife as equal beings. In other words, the power unbalances embedded in the patriarchal logic that men are inherently superior to women nurture a psychology of abuse for the pious father. Given the way men and women are seen appositionally, it would be safe to argue that Eugene’s offensive behavior reproduces the Hegelian dialectics of slave /master. In his household, Eugene enjoys the position of the master exerting an unquestionable authority over his subordinates who are supposed, under such dialogical logic, to display the spirit of self-effacement in regard to their paternalistic masters. When ordered to cut off all ties with her heathen grandfather, Kambili stands no power to oppose her father’s verdict. A tantamount to do so will be regarded as an act of rebellion against this power hierarchy.

Even the daughter's unplanned meeting with Papa Nnukwu is seen as an act of defiance to the authority of her father. Kambili, in the midst of this faith-based torture, describes desperately her suffering: "he poured the hot water on my feet, slowly as if it were conducting an experiment and wanted to see what would happen" (194). Being circumscribed by her father's self-righteous doctrine, Kambili feels obliged to repent from her sins, confessing in a sobbing voice "I am sorry! I am sorry!"(195). But these remorseful words are seemingly more directed to the earthly god, whose judgment, according to the feminist writer Mary Daly, is metamorphosed into God judgment. In her book "*Beyond God The Father*", Daly sees that this metamorphosis symbolizes the rise of a false deity, named the Judge of sin "who confirms the rightness of the rules and roles of reigning system, maintaining false consciences and self-destructive guilt feelings" (Daly, *Beyond God The Father*, p. 31). The creation of this consciousness, regarding such repressive God projections, makes women more amenable to submission and more powerless to resist their enslavement. The fear of divine judgment, which is associated with the fear of male judgment, will repress any attempts of dissidence. Similarly, Kambili is not able to rebel against her father's verdict of crucifixion because it is thought revelatory of a divine judgment. It would be safe to assume that the male attempts to control the natural and the supernatural realms resemble a pre-reformation mediation between God and women. This means that women, generally thought to be unable to understand the language of divinity and unqualified to exert this male hermeneutical privilege, are imperatively connected to God only through male mediation.

In *God Dies by The Nile* and *Purple Hibiscus*, the Mayor of Kafr El Teen and Eugene fulfill perfectly this corrupt mediation, as they succeeded to maintain a godly power over their female subordinates. In Nawal El Saadawi's narrative, the villagers of Kafr El Teen are "God's slaves when it's time to say prayers only. But are the Mayor's slaves all the time" (53). To put it rather blatantly, the earthly god of Kafr El Teen is more feared than the Heavenly God, who is invoked only in prayers and sermons. In Chimamanda Ngozi's narrative, Eugene enjoys almost similar position in Father Benedict's sermons which, according to Kambili, refer "to the pope, Papa, and Jesus—in that order»(04). Even worse, the narrator tells us that the name of Eugene was oftentimes used to illustrate the gospel and teach moral lessons in St. Agnes Catholic Church. The symbolic hierarchy God-male-female that arises from such religious bigotry has stirred feminist responses which try to uncover the androcentric construction of this prescribed order. Notably, the American feminist Rosemary Radford Ruether describes accurately the paradigms of this power hierarchy as follows:

"God is modeled after the patriarchal ruling class and is seen as addressing this class of males directly, adopting them as his "sons." They are his representatives, the responsible partners of the covenant with him. Women as wives now become symbolically repressed as the dependent servant class...They relate to man as he relates to God»(Guninder Kaur Singh, Nikky, *The Feminine Principle in The Sikh Vision of The Transcendent*, p.46).

It is clear that men like Eugene and the Mayor of Kafr El Teen adhere fervently to this chain of command. They act as if God delegated his power to them in order to exert authority over their female subordinates, and administrate their homes in a manner commensurate with their interests. It probably goes without saying that Eugene and the Mayor of Kafr El Teen come to daringly identify themselves as subordinate deities serving the kingdom of God. This is a flagrant violation of religious tenets exhibited by these supposedly devout men who try to project an anthropomorphized view of God which propagates only masculine interests. Since men are identified by the idolatries of sexism as anthropomorphic deities, the Divine images

inflicted on the consciousness of these subaltern women are mainly associated with repressiveness and oppressiveness. The domestic gods incarnated in Kafr El Teen and Enugu are prototypic cases of this God-male-female order, crafted by the phallic mentality to violate the egalitarian voice found in the gospel and the Quran, and bestow thus inferiority on women. This means that the differential treatment of sexes has not been decreed by God, but rather proclaimed by the context of sexism and patriarchalism. In the Quran for instance, God does not proclaim a hierarchical view regarding the status of men and women. In addressing His male and female believers simultaneously, He rather uses the term “allies»to highlight this gender justice: “the believers, men and women, are allies of one another. They enjoin the common good and forbid the bad, they observe prayers and give charitable alms and obey God and His Prophet”. (*Quran*, 9: 71). The verse is a clear statement against the ascendancy of one sex over the other. Men and women should not be categorized appositionally as they are thought to be allies created to support each other. Likewise, the Gospel does not mandate any discrimination on the basis of race, sex, or other social considerations. As such, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus»(Galatians 3: 28). Such spirit of equality runs counter to the dialectics of power hierarchy propagated by the legacy of sexism as shown by some fanatic patriarchs in the selected novels.

Despite of the lack of textual evidence regarding the inequality of sexes in the image of God, the manipulation of scriptural interpretations continues to regulate gender relationships in Muslim and Christian societies. The patriarchalization of religious tenets features prominently in *God Dies by The Nile* where the idea of God is employed oppressively in many ways against women. The Mayor’s agents use religion to enslave women like Zeinab and Nefissa under their master’ sexual exploitation. The religious men of Sayeda Zeinab, for instance, deceitfully exploit Zakeya’s psychological distress, diagnosed according to the prevailing beliefs as a manifestation of spirit possession, to boost the Mayor’s lustful interests. For these men, Zakeya is terribly haunted by evil spirits because she has disobeyed the law of Allah, but more importantly encouraged her niece Zeinab to follow this disobedience. More accurately, Zakeya cannot understand at this point in the narrative that the Mayor is blasphemously placed by these men on an equal position with God, and any contravention of his authority would be approached as a sacrilege against the Divine. As such, Zakeya disobeyed Allah or the god of Kafr El Teen, because she kept her niece away from the Mayor’s malevolent gaze. Yet according to these men, an opportunity of redemption will be possible if Zeinab obeys some divinely prescribed rules which include purifying baths, prayers of forgiveness, verses of the Koran, but more importantly confronting the iron gate leading to the Mayor’s house. To redeem her aunt from the evil spirits constantly haunting her, Zeinab has to sacrifice herself to the Mayor’s assaults, and endure passively the consequential psychological trauma. For fear of offending once again the vengeful god, Zeinab accepts to blindly undergo the redeeming measures decreed by the men of Sayeda Zeinab, without suspecting the Mayor’s exploitative plants. Obviously, the Mayor can never be suspected for his insidious plans, simply because he enjoys a divine sovereignty which entitles him to be fearfully obeyed by the villagers of Kafr El Teen.

Zeinab’ submission to this false consciousness illustrates Fedwa Malti Douglas’s definition of the religiously corrupted society as: “a male –oriented world in which women are pushed into the role of non-thinking servants” (Douglas, *Nawal El Saadwi and Arab Feminist Poetics*, p.101). Zeinab is an unthinking servant because she succumbs under such idolatrous thinking, which corruptly elects tyrant patriarchs like the village Mayor as domestic gods, having the incontestable right to subject the peasants to their authority.

Likewise, at the beginning of the novel, Beatrice seems to resonate with Douglas' definition, when clinging to a marital existence where physical assaults become the order of the day. Instead of rebelling against this spousal violence which has resulted in several miscarriages, Beatrice is paradoxically grateful to her husband for not taking another wife, because according to her, "a man of his stature cannot have two children" (75). For her, Eugene's class privilege entitles him to have many children, preferably male offspring who can subsequently uphold his doctrinal and political agendas. Yet, Beatrice is unable to understand that it is Eugene who must be blamed for this inability to bear more children, as he is the only one responsible for the miscarriages she underwent. Also, Beatrice is unable to understand that a man of his stature cannot mercilessly beat his pregnant wife, simply because she refused a priest's visit after mass, then foolishly pours holy water to cleanse his house from her presumably sinful act. Hence, Beatrice illustrates De Beauvoir's view that "woman makes no claim for herself as a subject because she lacks the concrete means, because she senses the necessary link connecting her to man without positing its reciprocity, and because she often derives satisfaction from her role as the other." (De Beauvoir, *Second Sex*, p.30). Unsurprisingly, when woman is never defined in relation to herself but rather in regard to man, the game of gender role will be unquestionably accepted. Correspondingly, Beatrice derives satisfaction from her role as submissive wife because she feels annexed to her husband, and thus unable to develop a sense of being beyond this marital bondage.

Caught in a vicious cycle of gender polarization, women like Beatrice, Zeinab, and Zakeya are forced to suffer in silence and choose surrender as a strategy of survival, because rebellion is thought to be a violation to the Muslim and Christian feminine codes of decency. The conversation held between Eugene's sister, Aunt Ifeoma, and Beatrice illustrates to what extent women are indoctrinated to passively accept the lesson of submission imposed upon them. When asked to rescue her body from marital abuse, Beatrice declined categorically any possibility of rebellion that would mean, according to the prevailing social assumptions, the dissolution of the sacred family bonds. The virtuous Christian wife is supposed to preserve the sacredness of these conjugal bonds, even if it entails subjecting her to deprivation and humiliation. Mary Daly convincingly argues when addressing the issue of women subordination that the "the goodness attributed to the few is not the goodness of self-actualizing person but of an impotent creature, lacking in knowledge and experience" (Daly, *Beyond God The Father*, p. 62). Docility of behavior, meekness of character, and sensitivity of emotions are all normative ideals which women are expected to dispense. Wifely submission is regarded as the pinnacle of femininity and the maintenance of familial bonds is keyed only into the mother's propensity for self-abnegation. Seen from this perspective, it becomes clear that under the Muslim and Christian cult of womanhood, the idealization of virtues, like passivity and docility, becomes synonymous with the idealization of pain and suffering. Intoxicated by the flowery language of such exalted femininity, women become further disarmed to confront the existentially abrasive structure implemented against them. The presence of this fetishized model of femininity in a sacred light exacerbates the oppression of women like Zakeya, Zeinab, Beatrice and Kambili and render them powerless to daringly confront their oppressors.

Given the way women are handicapped by the dictates of gender bias, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's question about the 'speakability' of the subaltern would be relevant in this context. For Spivak, the subaltern stands always in an ambivalent positioning in relation to power, and is thus denied the opportunity to have a voice within this power hierarchy. Yet, Nawal El Saadawi is hopeful about the possibility of emancipatory routes that can be envisaged only if the female 'Other' grows conscious of her subalternity. For El Saadawi, "to be conscious that you are a slave still living under oppression is the first step on the road of

emancipation” (El Saadawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, p. xv). This view is in line with Mary Daly’s that “the beginning of breakthrough means a realization that there is an existential conflict between the self and structures that have given such crippling security” (Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, p.24). Positioning the female self as an integral part in this gender dialogical tension means that women cease to act as selfless beings or pitiful victims, and start to fight vigorously for their emancipation. This emancipation would involve acts of dissidence that inevitably engender a direct confrontation between the victimized and his victimizer, between the slave and the master, but more importantly between those former unthinking female servants and the fallacious gods.

### **3. Dethroning Inadequate Gods and Female Self-Transcendence**

The increasing distortions exhibited by the unscrupulous patriarchs of Kafr El Teen have sustained reactionary acts of dissidence by women like Zakeya and Fatheya, who at a critical moment in the narrative, decide to rebel against male despotism. When the villagers of Kafr El Teen react against the illegitimate son brought up in Sheikh Hamzaoui’s household, Fatheya stands steadfastly against the claims calling for his abandonment, and even goes to protect him against their assaults. Sheikh Hamzaoui, on the other hand, remains passive in regard to these aggressions for fear that the Mayor will chase him out of the mosque, in case he decides to still shelter the illegitimate son with Fatheya. The latter decides to defy her oppressors alone, but armed with a newly emerging and sprouting militant spirit. The narrator describes her fierce determination as follows:

During the struggle for the child, Fatheya’s clothes were torn away...her eyes were filled with strange insane determination. She was soft, and rounded, and female and she was a wild animal, ferociously fighting those who surrounded her in the night. She hit out at the men with her legs, and her feet, with her shoulders and her hips all the while holding the child tightly in her arms.»(115)

Surprisingly, Fatheya, the obedient and submissive wife, who never dares to question the dictates of her husband, is transformed into an assertive subject claiming authority over her own life. Fatheya’s subversive act is grounded in her deep conviction that Allah cares for the poor people who worship him, and accordingly; He will bestow his mercy on her and her husband when the Mayor expels him from the mosque. Understandably, Fatheya’s breakthrough is manifested in the way she rebels against the godly power exerted over the peasants of Kafr El Teen. In light of Mary Daly’s feminist insights, Fatheya dethroned the false deity or the demon dressed as God. According to Daly, “the basic idol breaking will be done on the level of internalized images of male superiority, on the plane of exorcising them from consciousness and from the cultural institutions that breed them.»(Daly, *Beyond God The Father*, p.29). The process, then, includes destroying the malignant God projections, like the Judge of sinners, which have long dominated female consciousness and defined repressively the male- female relationship.

Similarly, Zakeya dethrones the fallacious god repressing her, by revengefully exterminating him, and thus putting an end to his malevolent gaze constantly roaming over her nieces’ bodies. Her dissident act comes as an ultimate reaction to Zeinab’s revelations which uncover the Mayor’s corrupt intentions towards her and her family. More importantly, uncovering the corrupt plans of the Mayor is synonymous, for Zakeya, to unveiling the fearful truth about the god of Kafr El Teen. Zakeya, at this point in the narrative, becomes able to understand that it is Zeinab’s refusal to play the role of sexual partner which sustained the Mayor’s revenge against her son. It is also the same refusal which led previously the religious men of Sayeda Zeinab to maliciously relate her sufferings with her niece’s disobedience of God. Zakeya failed previously to understand that the god referred by these religious men is

that of Kafr el Teen, and going against his authority will involve the unjust imprisonment of her son and brother. But now Zakeya comes to realize that when the god of Kafr El Teen sets his malevolent gaze upon a woman's body, a whole system must obediently respond: the law of justice can be broken, the word of God can be violated, and the privacy of the individual can be invaded. Zakeya is seemingly no more satisfied with the god who sanctions such injustices to selfishly gratify his lustful interests, and assert his authority over his village peasants. She knows that injustice permeates all domains and any possibility of resistance must be sought individually beyond any collective struggle. Her authoritarian words after murdering the Mayor reveal this epiphanic moment: "I was blind, but now my eyes have been opened...I know who it is. I know it's Allah...I buried him there on the bank of the Nile."(138). By using the word Allah, Zakeya speaks in the same patriarchal language that has been employed to enslave her and her family under the Mayor's exploitation. Now, she understands that the fear of being severely punished by this fallacious god has paralyzed and entrapped her in a vicious cycle of exploitations. Unsurprisingly, the poor peasant is not afraid of any punitive measures because murdering her oppressor enabled her to free herself at last from patterns of containment and confinement. The novel ends paradoxically with the murderess Zakeya enjoying her newly acquired freedom in the prison cell, with no indication of the villagers' reaction to their Mayor's sudden death. This may be suggestive of a new period free from religious surveillance and class exploitation for the peasants of Kafr El Teen.

The subversive act of dethroning false deities is similarly highlighted in Chimamanda Ngozie's narrative. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Beatrice can no longer endure the incessant maltreatment of Eugene who once again beats her during her pregnancy, an act which led inevitably to another miscarriage. Humiliated by her husband's mistreatment, Beatrice decides to lead Eugene silently to his demise in the same way she has been forced to suffer in silence. To rescue herself from her marital abuse, Beatrice resorts to kill her husband gradually by starting to pour poison each night in his cup of tea. Her resolution stems from her conviction that in a world where tyranny is sanctioned by religion, negotiating routes of empowerment against the directives of a man, whose name is evoked parallelly with the pope and Jesus Christ, is something quite impossible. Beatrice is aware of the masculine tendencies of the church, being represented by Father Benedict, who never intervened to rescue her body and soul from the physical and psychological humiliations she was forced to undergo. For Father Benedict, Eugene is the epitome of perfection and going against his religious regime is seen as a contravention of religion itself.

To live sacrificially and martyring her soul and body to Eugene's religious obscurantism becomes something no longer endurable for Beatrice. Disrupting the supremacy of the vengeful god, as the only emancipatory measure left for her, becomes in this case something imperative. It is noteworthy that the silent act of murder committed against Eugene did sustain neither remorse nor sadness for Beatrice. Furthermore, the widow mother goes against the mourning rituals requiring her to wear all black or all white, and attend the first and second year memorial Masses. Kambili explains poignantly that "the compound gates were locked. Mama had told Amado not to open the gates to all people who wanted to throng in for Mgabalu, to commiserate with us"(288). For Beatrice, it is unreasonable to mourn the death of a tyrannical husband who turned her body into a spectacle of abuse and bloodshed. There is no need even to feign sadness or any sort of affections, because the murder at last has freed her from all the assaults she underwent throughout her union with Eugene.

Like Frantz Fanon's colonized subjects, women like Beatrice and Zakeya find in violence their inevitable means of emancipation from the male bondage which has long disenfranchised them. Under the Fanonian theory, violence against injustice becomes a revolutionary act which does not only eradicate the authority of the oppressor, but it also destroys the alienation of the oppressed. Correspondingly, it would be safe to argue that by using violence in dislodging the Mayor and Eugene from their supreme positions, Zakeya and Beatrice succeeded to destroy the colonizer /colonized bond imposed on them. Their rebellion, in this regard, against the patriarchal social order highlights their metamorphosis from submissive figures to subversive agents.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The article has examined how the instrumentalization of religion via repressive God projections can be an efficient tool to promote masculine legacies and keep women in their lowly position. Echoing Mary Daly's view, the patriarchal and anthropomorphic caricatures of God can dangerously lead to the projection of invincible and tyrannical male figures that use the Word of the Divine to maintain this status quo.

Notwithstanding, the socio-cultural differences that may exist between the Muslim world of Nawal El Saadawi and the Christian world of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the article has shown that the misappropriation of religion is a common predicament for Eve's daughters and not exclusively relegated to Muslim women.

El Saadawi and Adichie are adamant to unveil the injustices that can arise from this misappropriation: a man of power like the Mayor of Kafr El Teen is allowed to have many sexual partners. His act is never seen by the religious men of Sayda Zeinab as immoral, but the son born of his illegal sexual adventures is considered as a social curse. Correspondingly, Kambili and Beatrice are required to succumb to the whims of this religious absolutism by passively surrendering to Eugene's faith-based retaliation. While the devout husband is free to pursue his self-righteous policies, the wife and her daughter are encouraged to bear the wounds of crucifixion and always comply with the verdict of the patriarchal order. It is against the auspices of this brimstone and fire religion that Beatrice and Zakeya decide to fight and thus reclaim their bodies and souls from this dutiful bondage. For them, it is no longer bearable to martyrize themselves on the altar of self-defeating asceticism which mainly serves phallocentric dictates. Their dissident acts show how the patriarchal cross of martyrdom, promoted by the model of the vengeful God, can dangerously engender the resurrection of vengeful female agents who see in violence their ultimate route for survival. Seeing violence as such would mirror the failure of the religious and judicial systems in protecting women like Beatrice and Zakeya from male sexual and physical assaults. In fact Zakeya and Beatrice cannot funnel their self-empowerment via any justice channel because according to Nawal El Saadawi in punitive terms "moral codes and standards in our societies very rarely apply to all people equally»(El Saadawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, p.27). Moral codes cannot be applied equally because the discourse of good and evil is gendered according to the dictates of the patriarchal order. By holding power over religion, which would normally extinguish the fire of women's immolation, the Mayor of Kafr El Teen and Eugene managed to keep their controlling gaze over Beatrice, Zakeya and Zeinab.

Redeeming religion from misogynistic distortions and castrating the repressive God images have been the concern of many Christian and Muslim feminists in recent years. For these activists, since women are oppressed under the name of the Divine, the struggle for gender equality should be grounded systematically in religious paradigms. Locating their militancy within a religious framework allows them to argue convincingly that the differential treatment of sexes was mandated neither by Islam nor by Christianity. Rather, it was framed

by cultural conditioning and the circumstantial development of hermeneutical and interpretive reasoning. The aim of this feminist activism, generally labeled as Christian and Islamic feminisms, is to rediscover then the egalitarian spirit of both Islam and Christianity, which in return would bring forth new understanding of the woman question within ethical discourse. Particularly, the Egyptian feminist writer Leila Ahmed argues that the Quran “makes a clear statement about the absolute identity of the human moral condition, and the common and identical spiritual and moral obligations placed on all individuals regardless of sex»(Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, p.65). In the same vein, Rosemary Radford, claims that “whatever diminishes or denies the full humanity of women must be presumed not to reflect the divine or an authentic relation to the divine, or to reflect the authentic nature of things” (Radford, *Feminist Interpretation: A Method of Correlation*.p.90). Seeing Islam and Christianity from this egalitarian language can stifle the patriarchal energy seeking to repress women under debilitating cultural prohibitions, and contribute significantly in empowering them in their struggle for gender justice. De-gendering God talks and de -anthropomorphizing God images via a gender neutral language would redeem religion from patriarchal claims and rescue women like Beatrice, Zakeya, and Zeinab from sexual and physical transgressions. This means that the instrument used for enclosure can subversively turn out to be one of disclosure by reclaiming the Word of God as a source of enfranchisement for women.

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ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS USING VIDEOS IN  
RAISING THEIR CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS: THE CASE OF THIRD YEAR STUDENTS OF  
ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SÉTIF2

## Abstract

The understanding and appreciation of different cultures mirrored via different languages by means of objective, non-judgmental and biased comparisons is of overriding importance in foreign language classes. For this purpose, this study is an attempt to investigate the relationship between videos as an audio-visual material and the EFL Algerian third year English students 'cross-cultural awareness at the University of Setif2. This research revolves around the basic hypothesis that foreign language students hold positive attitudes towards the use of videos in language teaching in Oral Expression sessions due to its effectiveness in promoting their cross-cultural awareness. To this end, a questionnaire was administered to a randomly chosen sample of (250) third year students. The analysis of the data has demonstrated that the targeted learners possess indeed positive vis-à-vis videos as a means to develop their cross-cultural awareness. That is, the research hypothesis was confirmed. This led to gain more insights into the core of the matter and by far open the door to further research attempts and suggestions in the realm of audio-visual materials and cultural awareness, two seemingly multifaceted areas.

**Keywords:** Audio-visual Material, Cross-cultural Awareness, EFL Students, Oral Expression, Videos.

## 1. Introduction

Foreign language learning is not as simple as it may seem at first glance. For many English foreign learners, it might be bewildering, particularly when its nexus with culture is brought to the fore. Recently, eminent figures (Hymes 1972; Canale & Swain 1980; Wen Qiufang 2000) have recognized that learning English is supposedly not restricted only to grammar; it is also not just lexicon and grammatical rules that make a learner alien to a language. It should rather include several aspects as comprising grammatical competence, communicative competence, as well as cultural competence or the cross cultural competence.

Actually, License Master Doctorate (LMD) foreign language learners face some difficulties in the Oral classes when learning about the target culture. This is likely to be due to the traditional methods that are implemented in such classes. Accordingly, relying on new technologies and audio visual materials is regarded as the best alternative in order to teach cultural aspects to EFL students.

In fact, there has been a growing interest in how audio-visual materials, videos in particular, can be suitable techniques to develop foreign students' cross-cultural awareness. The use of such aids in Oral Expression classes has grown speedily over the last few decades

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as a result of the prominence of communicative strategies and techniques. In addition, students enjoy learning with videos for they consider them motivating tools that fuel their interests, expectations and needs. In view of that, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using videos in raising learners' cross-cultural awareness in Oral Expression sessions. For this, the study aims at identifying the learners' perceptions of the importance of the target culture and cross-cultural awareness through the use of videos.

## **2. Literature Review**

Language and culture are part and parcel of each other. In fact, language is the vehicle of cultural manifestation. Culture is by and large a vague and ambiguous concept. Due to its complexity, it has been a subject of heating continuous debates among practitioners and learners in the field of English as a foreign language.

Apte (1994) points out that "there was in the early 1990s no agreement among anthropologists regarding its nature" (p.21). Much earlier, the English anthropologist Burnett Tylor (1871) formulates one of the most popular and quoted definitions, he states that "culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." In similar line, Newark (1988), relates the definition of culture to the living style. He argues that culture is "a way of life and its manifestations (...) are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression" (p. 94). Therefore, as cultures are diverse, so are languages. It is only natural then that with difference in cultures and difference in languages, difficulties often arise in communicating between cultures and across cultures.

### ***2.1. Students' Cross Cultural Awareness***

Achieving an understanding of the target culture can be a frustrating task for many students as learning a language is inseparable from learning its culture. Many effective ways and strategies can be used to develop students' learning English through building up cross-culture awareness, which is according to Hanvey (1981) a perception, a power of the immediate consciousness to the cultural components of the communication as well as texts, and a direct sense to the cultural differences between the two languages. It is a sense as it cannot be touched but can be felt or acquired through reasoning. Furthermore, it is an ability to communicate with English speaking people appropriately in different situations. Hence, it is an ability to be sensitive to the cultural differences. In other words, the students' capacity of understanding and adapting to divergent cultures, the one they live in, and the culture they are attempting to work with. It means that more awareness of students of their own culture makes comparative understanding of the differences and similarities of the sociolinguistic aspects of their target culture more comprehensible and relevant.

Hall (1981) says that "the great gift that members of the human race have for each other is not exotic experiences but an opportunity to achieve awareness of the structure of their system, which can be accomplished only by interacting with others who do not share that system" (p.44). To attain this kind of awareness, many scholars emphasized the role of different authentic materials and media in English as Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) classrooms in helping students learn the target culture promoting the process of cross-cultural awareness.

### ***2.2. Videos as an Audio-visual Material in Foreign Language Classrooms***

In recent years, the use of technology and its integration into the teaching process has gained considerable importance. Specifically, the use of video as an audio-visual material in foreign language classrooms has increased significantly as a result of its significant role in

facilitating learning of the target language. Using visual media material is advantageous in that it enables foreign language learners to experience the cultures of their target languages indirectly as they facilitate the learning and teaching process and make it more effective. Corder (1966) asserts that anything that is visible can be used by the teacher of language to teach meaning. These materials are expected to grasp the learners' attention and motivate them to learn. It also provides the learners with real situations so that they can understand the target culture better. River (1981) argued that audio-visual materials clearly help language learners to understand another culture by providing them with "vicarious contact" (p.399) with native speakers in the sense that there is no barrier between the learner and the native speaker as the videos provide a vivid and an explicit link to the targeted culture.

Furthermore, the video is regarded as a valuable educational device. Harmer (2001) posits that the video is a tool that allows language learners both listen to the foreign language, and to facilitate reading of the words as well, especially when sub-titles are provided. Additionally, videos personify visual signs like gestures and expressions –the body language– which supports language learners to figure out the content of the video. Thus, they facilitate and help learners to understand the language better. In other words, the visual images along with the auditory elements found in videos, film, television, etc., promote students' construction of information in a more efficient way (DiCarlo 1994). In the same way, Rogers and Medley (1988) view videos as one of the most important "authentic" materials in foreign language classes because "videos offer more clues for comprehension to the students than other materials" (p.468) as they provide language and non-verbal language.

### **3. Methodology**

It is worth reminding that the current research was based upon the basic hypothesis that foreign language students hold positive attitudes towards the use of videos in language teaching due to its effectiveness in promoting their cross-cultural awareness. Hence, this study was guided by the overriding research questions.

1. What are the Algerian EFL students' attitudes towards implementing videos in their Oral English classes for raising their cross-cultural awareness?
2. How is the importance of culture and cross-cultural awareness perceived by the EFL students?
3. Are video materials useful tools for teaching foreign culture and for building cross-cultural awareness?

#### **3.1. Context**

The study was conducted in the Department of English and Literature at the University of Sétif 2 during the academic year of 2018-2019. It aimed chiefly at getting insights into third year students' attitudes and opinions towards integrating videos in their oral classes to promote their cross cultural awareness.

#### **3.2. Participants**

It is opted for the random sampling technique whereby the required subjects for the study were selected from the existing population (514). The participants were third year students. The most important aim underlying the choice of such sample was their proficiency in expressing their attitudes and thoughts in a rather accurate way better than first and second year students. Moreover, their skills and familiarity to deal with English videos as they tended to watch them all along their English learning experience at university as it was revealed by many oral teachers that were asked about this matter previously.

### 3.3. Procedures

In fact, the questionnaire is widely used as a research tool that provides a relatively quick and efficient way of obtaining a large amount of information from a large sample of students contrasting other research tools. Also, it has its main function as a measurement tool (Oppenheim, 1992). Thus, a questionnaire was used as a research instrument for collecting data from students to test the validity of the beforehand stated hypothesis.

The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) includes closed yes/no questions and open-ended questions. This latter enable the respondents to offer some justifications for the reason behind choosing a specific choice; whereas others are meant to get their answers in order to know their points of view and to express their opinions spontaneously.

In fact, it is of twenty questions. The first two intend to get general information about the students' opinions of their experience of learning English and about the use of technology in English classes and whether they consider it as a good strategy to improve their level or not (Q1, Q2). These are followed by questions (Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6) seeking to get clear insight into the students' perceptions regarding culture and cross-cultural awareness. The respondents are asked to identify what culture is and whether they think that studying culture is important for them. They are also queried about their attitudes towards the English culture as well as the way they are studying it.

The following questions (Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13) aim to find the students' opinions and attitudes about videos, whether they like studying with videos in their oral classes and the kind of videos they prefer. The questions also try to know about the time devoted to understand videos, how many times videos are used in oral classes and whether they represent a waste of time and whether they find difficulties watching them.

The remaining questions (Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20) are intended to find out the students' attitudes towards the effectiveness of using videos to develop and raise their cross cultural awareness.

The questionnaire was administered during classroom time (7 classes were randomly chosen) where the researchers were present to provide any clarifications. The researcher collected the questionnaires on the same day.

### 4. Results

The following results are the most important findings obtained from probing into the obtained data which are transmitted into percentages.

Q1: Do you think that using technology in English classes is a good strategy to improve EFL learning?

Table 1.

*On the Use of Technology in English Classes*

Yes	No	Total
240	10	250
96%	4%	100%

Most third year students considered the use of technology in classes is a useful tool that helps them improve their level of English representing a percentage of 98%. Only one informant thought of this tool as not sufficient.

Q2: What does "culture" mean to you?

Table 2.

*What Does "Culture" Mean to You?*

Customs	Beliefs	Knowledge	Literature	Traditions	All of them	Total
10	45	30	0	0	165	250
4%	18%	12%	0	0	66%	100%

Students were asked to define the concept of culture in order to know what culture means to them. This question tries to find out whether English learners view culture as composed of big "C" or small "c" or both of them. Great number of third year students representing a percentage of 66% thought that culture means customs, beliefs, knowledge, literature, and traditions. 18% of students stated that culture means beliefs, while 12% informants exactly stated that culture means knowledge. But only 4% students mentioned that culture means customs. As observed, no one chose literature and traditions.

Q3. Do you think that being exposed to the English culture grossly threatens your own culture? If yes, how?

Table 3.

*On Whether Culture Threatens One's Own Culture*

Yes	No	Total
245	5	250
98%	2%	100%

As it is observed in (Table 3), most third year students 98% declared that their own culture is not threatened when they are exposed to the English culture. While the other informants 2% declared the opposite.

Q4. Audio visual materials are beneficial in oral classes?

Table 4.

*On Whether Audio-visuals Materials Are Beneficial in Oral Classes*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
205	25	20	00	250
82%	10%	8%	00%	100%

This question tries to find out whether the students under consideration think that the audio visual materials are beneficial in oral classes or not. 82% of students strongly agree with the view that says that audio visual materials used in oral classes are beneficial. 10% agree. However, 8% students disagreed.

Q5. Do you like to study oral expression with videos? Please, justify your answer.

Table 5.

*On Whether Students Like to Study with Videos*

Yes	No	Total
250	00	250
100%	00%	100%

Unsurprisingly, of the total respondents (N=250), 100% answered by 'yes'.

Q6.How often does your oral expression teacher use videos?

Table 6.

*On how often oral expression teacher use videos*

Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
125	120	5	250
50%	48%	2%	100%

The participants described the frequency of watching videos used in their oral classes as follows: 50 % stated that it is always. Others 48% considered it as sometimes. A few of them claimed it to be rare 2%.

**Q12:** Do you think the use of videos in oral classes is a waste of time?

Table 7.

*On videos in oral classes are a waste of time*

Yes	No	Total
00	250	250
00%	100%	100%

All learners opted for the "No" option with a frequency of 100%. They do not seem to be willing to consider videos as a waste of time. That is, none of the participants agreed with this statement.

**Q15:** Did your attitudes toward the target culture change after watching the videos?  
How? a. Yes b. No

Three quarters of the informants 80% stated that their attitudes towards the foreign culture changed after watching videos with 20% who disagree with that statement. Regardless of the students' choice in the foregoing question, justifying them under the banner of this question is of crucial importance. It has already been stated that 120 students ticked 'Yes' and "no", but, in fact, only 40 of them justified their choice. For so doing, these students wrote the following justifications which are going to be statistically represented:

- ❖ "As I know more things about the target culture or maybe I was in the dark about it. So, I end up changing my views about it". 50%
- ❖ "It did change but not too much. I used to hate some areas of the target culture and language but later it seemed that I got them wrong" 50%

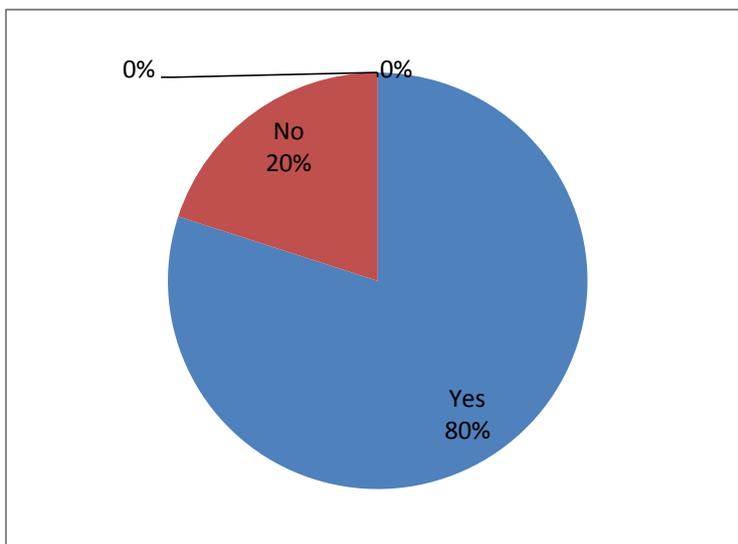


Figure 1.

*Changing Learners' Attitudes towards the Target Culture after Watching Videos*

**Q17:** Do you think that using videos help you to overcome cultural misunderstandings? a. Yes b. No

95% of the third year students agreed with only 5% disagreed upon the statement.

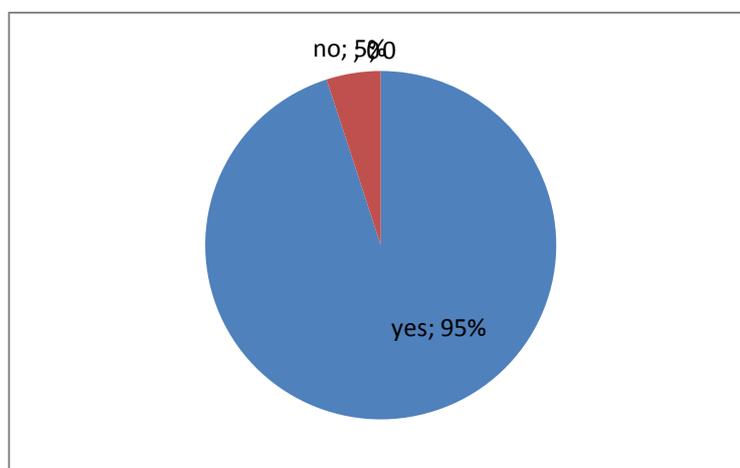


Figure 2.

*Videos to Overcome Cultural Misunderstandings*

**Q:** The videos provide you with enough exposure of TL use and usage to adapt you to the foreign culture.

A. Agree b. strongly agree c. Disagree d. strongly disagree e. Doubt

The overwhelming majority of students 87% agreed that videos endow students with TL's exposure which guarantee their adaptations. As far as those who doubt this statement, they represent only 13% of the sample. With no one to disagree upon it (See Figure 3).

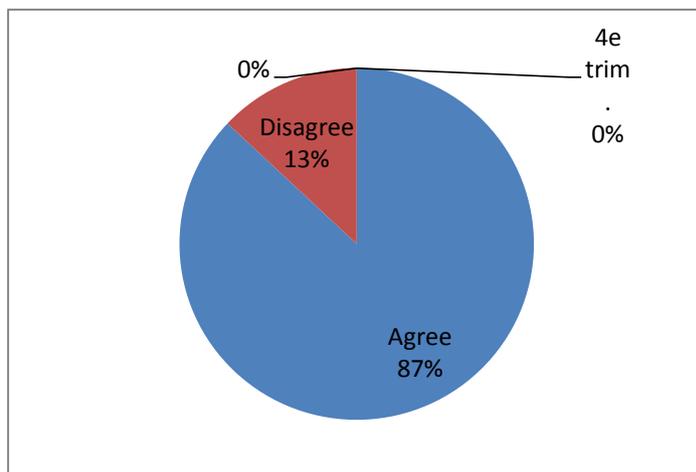


Figure 3.

*Videos and Exposure to Target Language Use and Usage*

**Q:** Does the use of videos motivate you to know more about the English culture?

- a. Greatly motivating    b. Not much motivating    c. Not motivating at all

The majority of the third year students 87% consider videos as motivating tools to grasp more knowledge about the alien culture. 10% consider them as not much motivating. Whereas, not motivating at all was thought only by 3 % of the whole sample (See Figure 4).

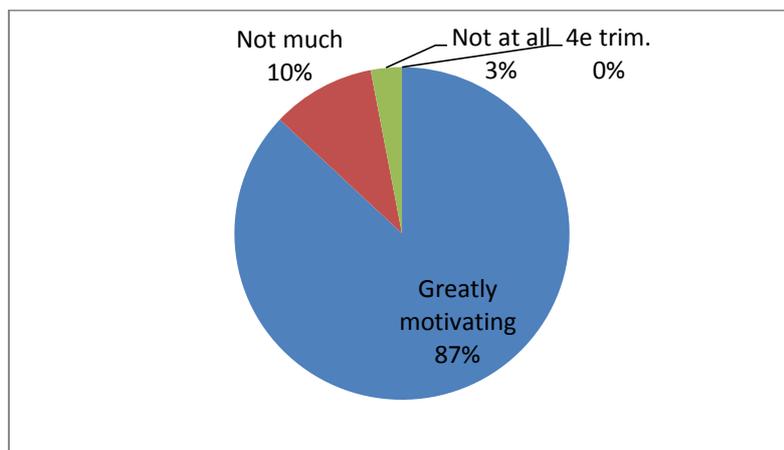


Figure 4.

*Using Videos to Motivate Students to Know about the English Culture*

**Q:** Do you think that watching videos develop your cross cultural awareness? a. Yes  
b. No.

The present question is an open ended one which has as its principal aim the identification of the number of students who think that their own cross cultural awareness has been developed through being exposed to videos. Such a thing is fundamental because direct contact with the alien culture been displayed in videos, greatly shapes the learner’s attitudes towards it and promotes cultural understanding. Thus, with placing too much reliance on the above statistics, it becomes safe to say that.

The majority of third year students 93% agreed on the question at hand. But, 7% of them offered a No. From 93% who opted for a “yes” and queried to justify how. Only 16% did. In accordance with this, 3 students wrote that “by being simply exposed to different backgrounds of cultures, I learn and improve my knowledge. Also, 1 student said “more times I watch videos my cultural awareness raised”. Others put it as “I can perceive some cultural aspects of the target culture which different from ours” (See Figure 5).

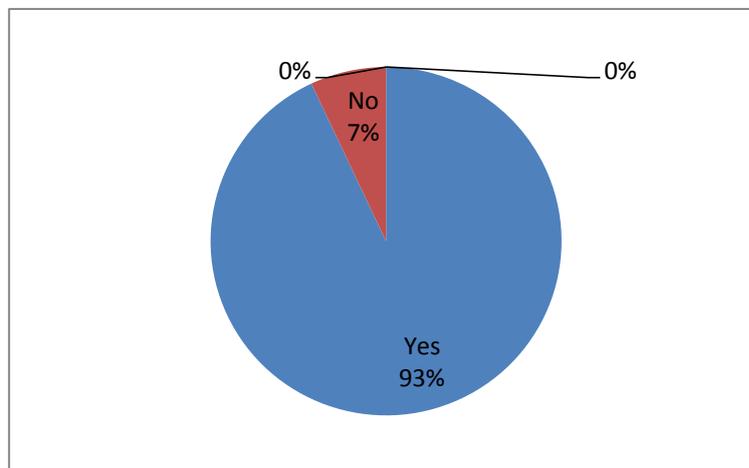


Figure 5.

*Learner's Perception whether Cross Cultural Awareness Developed Through Videos.*

## 5. Discussion

Taking into consideration the above facts, one is inclined to think that the analysis of the questionnaire generates a number of integral interpretations and conclusions. The latter are firmly grounded on the correlations made from the participants' answers in the four sections constituting the questionnaire. To this end, the discussion provided is hopefully a clear presentation of the conclusions drawn from the abovementioned analysis. Basically, the principal aim underlying such investigation is to elicit the students' attitudes towards using videos in promoting their cross cultural awareness in Oral classes.

The overriding conclusion drawn from the present study is that the Algerian students of English as a foreign language do seem to bear positive attitudes towards studying Oral module using videos and considered them as effective tools, as it has already been stated in (Q9) and (Q12), with frequency of 100%. As they do not help students to learn the language only, but the cultural aspects of the target language as well. Another supporting argument of this line of thought is that a considerable percentage of students 80% seem to change their attitudes towards the target culture after watching some English videos (Q15). They 75 % further assert that using such materials help them to overcome cultural misunderstanding (Q16).

Similarly important, The overwhelming majority of students 87% agreed that videos endow students with TL's exposure which guarantee their adaptations (Q17). Accordingly, 87% of them (Q18) consider videos as motivating tools to grasp more knowledge about the alien culture.

A final key integral conclusion drawn from the analysis of the questionnaire is that the 93 % Algerian learners of English as a foreign language believe that watching videos develop their cross cultural awareness (Q19). This is mainly because such materials facilitate the

learning of cultural aspects and help EFL students set up the similarities and differences between their own culture and the target one.

All things considered, it is adequate to say that the analysis of the present questionnaire helps in asserting that the present research assumption which states that “the Algerian university students of English bear positive attitudes towards the use of videos in promoting their cross cultural awareness” is confidently approved.

## **6. Pedagogical Recommendations and Suggestions**

This study is merely a stepping stone towards acceptably understanding, and having more insight into the impact of videos’ use in fostering learners’ cross cultural awareness in oral expression classes. Further follow up studies and recommendations for future research should be a welcome addition so as to furnish the field of foreign language teaching and learning with fascinating and novel insights and suggestions for the sake of giving rise to learners who are capable of resisting cultural shock and accepting the existing cross-cultural divergences between their native culture and the alien one. To this end, and under the light of the foregoing reported results, some suggestions are to be put forward:

- In order to test the impact of using videos to improve students’ cross-cultural awareness, it is strongly recommended that this present study can be tackled with the help of an experimental design. In which the controlled and experimental groups are to be used. At first, a written discourse completion task whose purpose is to test the learners’ cultural awareness for both groups. Then, only the experimental group will watch different videos for a period of time. At the end both groups will take the test again. Depending on the results, the researcher is apt to state confidently that the use of videos has an impact on learners’ cross cultural awareness or not.
- Oral expression teachers should utilize more authentic materials especially videos along with newspapers, music, television, internet in lesson plans. This enables students to relate the information to their daily lives and to the foreign culture. To this end, they should provide resources for technology to allow more access to authentic materials. It is indispensable to promote the use of technology to gain full understanding of the target culture in relation to their native one.
- Cultural awareness proves its unveiled necessity. Thus, oral teachers should work wholeheartedly in order to help their students in raising it in accordance with videos; many activities are highly suggested such as Negative Etiquette, Cultural Quiz and Cross-cultural Assimilators.

## **7. Conclusion**

That foreign language students hold positive attitudes towards the use of videos in language teaching due to its effectiveness in promoting their cross cultural awareness. This paper mainly examined the Algerian students’ attitudes towards the use of videos in oral classes as a learning strategy to enhance and develop their cross cultural awareness. In order to examine the hypothesis, a perception questionnaire was used as a data gathering tool in the Department of English in Setif2 University.

Based on the data obtained, it can be concluded that students actually have highly positive attitudes about the usefulness and the effectiveness of videos in raising their cross-cultural awareness. Furthermore, the results have led to approve that students are aware of the benefits of learning culture and that they believe that it should be integrated in their classes. In addition, the data show that students enjoy learning with videos which motivates them to

learn more about the target culture. The investigation carried out throughout this study confirms the hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>).

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## Appendices

### Appendix1. Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

Your willingness to complete this questionnaire will furnish us with the required data to bring our research into end. This questionnaire is mainly designed to gather information about your opinions about incorporating videos in EFL oral classes, and its effectiveness to raise students' cross cultural awareness.

May us thank you in advance for your cooperation and the time devoted to answer the questionnaire.

**Guidelines:** For each item, please tick the right box or write in the space provided.

#### Rubric One: General Information

1. What is your opinion about your experience of learning English?  
a. Positive.    b. Negative    c. Hard
2. Do you think that using technology in English classes is a good strategy to improve EFL learning?  
a. Yes            b. No

#### Rubric Two: Culture and Cultural Awareness

3. What does "culture" mean to you?  
a. Customs    b. Beliefs    c. Knowledge    d. Literature  
e. Traditions    f. All of them    g. others

4. Do you think that learning English as a foreign language entails learning its culture? A. Yes      b. No

Justify your answer:.....

5. Do you think that being exposed to the English culture grossly threatens your own culture? If yes, how?

- a. Yes      b. No

6. How do teachers of pragmatics, literature, civilization and oral expression provide you with information about the target culture?

- a. Explicitly      b. Implicitly

**Rubric Three: Audio Visual Materials and Videos**

7. Audio visual materials are beneficial in oral classes?

- a. Strongly Agree      b. Agree      c. Disagree      d. Strongly Disagree

8. How often does your oral expression teacher use videos?

- a. Always.      b. Sometimes      c. Rarely

9. Do you like to study oral expression with videos? a. Yes      b. No

Please, justify your answer.....

10. How many times it takes you to understand the content of the videos?

- a. One time.      b. Twice.      c. Three times.      d. More than three

11. Which kind of the following types of videos do you prefer?

- a. Music videos.      b. Film videos.
- c. Documentary videos      d. Cartoon videos.

Others:.....

12. Do you think the use of videos in oral classes is a waste of time?

- a. Yes      b. No

13. Do you find any difficulties when watching videos in your oral class?

- a. Yes      b. No

How?.....

**Rubric Four: Raising Cross-Cultural Awareness through Videos**

14. When using videos, which of the following topics do you think would be more beneficial for you to know more about the English culture?

- a. Culture.      b. Arts      c. Literature.      d. Religion.
- e. Others.....

15. Did your attitudes toward the target culture change after watching the videos? How?

- a. Yes      b. No

16. Do you think that using videos help you to overcome cultural misunderstandings?

- a. Yes      b. No

17. The videos provide you with enough exposure of TL use and usage to adapt you to the foreign culture.

- a. Agree      b. strongly agree      c. Disagree      d. strongly disagree

18. Does the use of videos motivate you to know more about the English culture?

- a. Greatly motivating      b. Not much motivating      c. Not motivating at all

19. Do you think that watching videos develop your cross cultural awareness?

- a. Yes      b. No.

20. Further comments and suggestions.....

.....

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**TYPE A, OR TYPE B, THAT IS THE QUESTION: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF PRODUCT-ORIENTED AND PROCESS-ORIENTED SYLLABUSES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING**

**Abstract**

The current paper aims at examining and comparing two major syllabus types, Type ‘A’ and Type ‘B’, by reviewing the literature on three product-oriented (type A) syllabus sub-types namely: structural, notional-functional and situational syllabuses and three process-oriented (type B) syllabus sub-types notably task-based, process and content-based syllabuses. The discussion focuses on the characteristics of both types, the different views of language and language learning that influenced the classification of the two syllabus types as well as the benefits and drawbacks of each type in foreign language learning and teaching. At the end of the paper, foreign language teachers are invited to adopt the eclectic approach by combining both syllabus types. This combination will, therefore, help in counteracting the weaknesses of both types and provide teachers with opportunities to address their learners’ diverse needs and meet their expectations.

**Keywords:** Foreign language learning and teaching, Process-oriented, Product-oriented, Syllabus, Type A, Type B.

**1. Introduction**

Before going to the classroom, a teacher needs to think about what should be done, why it should be done and in what way in order to achieve an effective learning process. These questions can be better answered by having what is called ‘syllabus’ which is defined by Ur (1996) as a comprehensive list of content and process items. This list is a public document which is ordered, has specific objectives, and may indicate a time schedule as well as a preferred methodology or approach. Moreover, the importance of syllabuses in the field of language teaching and learning can be demonstrated in a set of conceivable purposes provided by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). According to them, a syllabus, as plan of what is to be learnt and what can be achieved through teaching ‘linguistic performance’, aims at breaking the complex into manageable units and providing a practical basis for the division of textbooks and instructions. It also provides both teachers and learners with moral support as well as a clear idea about the progress of the course. Finally, a syllabus provides teachers with guidelines on how to select materials, texts and exercises.

In fact, different types of syllabuses have emerged and been categorized according to their objectives and the way language is presented to learners. Almost all researchers in the field of second language pedagogy, as we shall see in the next sections, agree on the fact that there are two major types of syllabuses. However, the names attributed to these two types differ from one researcher to another. For example, while the two types have been called by White (1988)

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as 'type A and type B syllabuses', Wilkins (1976) has classified them as 'synthetic and analytic syllabuses'. Also, the two types are known by other researchers, such as Nunan (1988), as product-oriented and process-oriented syllabuses.

The aim of the present paper, therefore, is to examine and evaluate these two major syllabus types (Type A and Type B) with regard to the development in the field of language and language learning theories that justify such a classification. Besides, this paper sheds light on the positive and negative aspects of each type and their influence on language learning.

## **2. What is a Syllabus?**

Before discussing the two types of syllabuses, a few statements are important to define and understand the meaning of the term "syllabus". The fact that "syllabus" is a broad concept has made scholars define it differently depending on the context in which it is used. For instance, Yalden (1987) points out that a syllabus is "an instrument by which the teacher, with the help of the syllabus designer, can achieve a certain coincidence between the needs and aims of the learner, and the activities that will take place in the classroom»(p. 86). In other words, a syllabus is an instrument that is used in the classroom in order to facilitate teaching and learning processes (Widdowson, 1984 as cited in Nunan, 1988). A more specific definition is offered by Kara (2001) who states that "the syllabus is time bound, linked to particular objectives, and founded upon a grading that emerges following the theory of language to be assumed and the administrative needs. It is flexible in terms of negotiation and adjustment. It is concerned with the teaching content, and is an account of it" (p.68).

## **3. Type 'A' Syllabus (Synthetic/Product-oriented)**

For Wilkins (1976), "a synthetic language teaching strategy is one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up" (p. 2). To put it differently, according to the synthetic approach, the focus is on what is to be learnt and language blocks are taught to learners separately and progressively.

For a better understanding of type 'A' syllabuses and how they work, White (1988) provides a detailed description of its major features. According to him, these syllabuses are interventionist. That is, it is the teacher who preselects the linguistic elements to be taught, divides them into small chunks and defines the objectives of the course before coming to the class without taking into account the learners' needs, abilities and expectations. This is why type A syllabuses are external to the learner due to the fact that the latter is viewed as a passive recipient who is just supposed to re-synthesize the language blocks and swallow all what is designed by the teacher who is considered as the only source of knowledge, represents the highest authority in the classroom, makes decisions and sets the learning objectives (Cited in Long & Crookes, 1993).

### ***3.1.Sub-syllabuses of Type 'A'***

Being a generic term, type 'A'/synthetic syllabus includes various sub-syllabuses namely: the structural, the notional-functional (N-F), and the situational syllabuses.

#### ***3.1.1. Structural/Grammatical syllabuses***

According to Long and Crookes (1993), this is the most prevalent type. The structural syllabus is based on the belief that the language teaching content is a set of grammatical structures of the target language and that the sentence is the largest unit of analysis (Krahnke, 1987). That is to say, the main focus in the structural syllabus is on accuracy and mastery of grammatical forms where the "learners' task is one of synthesis, combining the 'pieces of information' provided by teaching to form an overall knowledge of how the language

operates” (Knapp, Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2009, p.3). Similarly, Nunan (1988) assumes that language in grammatical syllabuses is made up of a finite set of rules that are combined differently to produce meaning. He adds that linguistic rules are acquired one by one and that “each item being mastered on its own before being incorporated into the learner’s pre-existing stock of knowledge»(p.29).

### *3.1.2. Notional-functional syllabuses (NFS)*

Wilkins (1976) categorized the N-F as an analytic syllabus as it aims at teaching learners how to use language for communication in different situations. However, other researchers such as Widdowson (1979) and Markee (1997) rejected the idea of classifying it as an analytic syllabus and claim that the notional-functional syllabus is considered as a synthetic syllabus. In this regard, Widdowson (1979) points out that learners are unable to use language for communication and apply certain semantic and pragmatic rules in different situations (cited in Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Likewise, Markee (1997) notes that although the notional-functional syllabus adopts some of the principles of Type B syllabuses, as we shall see in the next sections, and allows learners to interact and, to some extent, do things with language; it is rather considered as a synthetic syllabus because notions and functions are still linguistic units of analysis.

The notional-functional syllabus focuses on notions and functions of language instead of the grammatical structure. Hence, in order to clear up any ambiguities, it is important to highlight the difference between the terms ‘notions and functions’ before we discuss the principles and advantages of this syllabus. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), functions refer to the intention of the speaker behind language use such as: advising, warning, threatening and praising. On the other hand, notions are meaning elements which reflect the way in which reality is divided by the mind and language such as: time, frequency, gender, location etc. In Nunan’s words (1988), “functions refer to the communicative purposes for which we use language, while notions are the concept meanings (objects, entities, states of affairs, logical relationships, and so on) expressed through language” (p. 35). The notional-functional syllabus, therefore, stresses the communicative purposes and conceptual meaning of language. In this regard, Wilkins (1976) notes: “It takes the desired communicative capacity as the starting-point” (p.18) as its main concern is the meaning which emerges from the context in which language is used not from a set of isolated words.

### *3.1.3. Situational syllabuses*

The main organizing principle of the situational syllabus is that the teaching content should be presented in form of real-life situations which reflect the way language is used in daily life. Examples of such situations may include: at the hotel, at school, at the post office, at the restaurant and the like. Quite often, these situations include participants who perform specific activities in particular settings (Krahnke, 1987).

Furthermore, in the situational syllabus, language should be used in its social context because without this context, learners will not fully understand the intended meaning (Wilkins, 1976). That is to say, in a situational syllabus, linguistic items are closely related to situations that learners may be faced with. These situations are the bases for language content and presentation (Richards, 2001; Knapp et al., 2009). This is in line with Krahnke (1987) who notes that:

the situational syllabus relies exclusively on realistic situations rather than contrived or artificial situations devised simply to exemplify linguistic

structures...it is closely associated with a broadly communicative view of language and an experiential theory of learning (p.47).

### *3.2.Type 'A' Syllabuses' Underlying Theories of Language and Language Learning*

According to Stern (1983), “a theory of language and language learning is implicit in the practice of language teaching, and it reveals itself in, amongst other things, the syllabus. A syllabus will therefore reflect a particular view of language and language learning.»(cited in Van der Walt, 1990, p.72). In the light of their theoretical underpinnings, the aim of the following sub-sections (i.e. 3.2.1 & 3.2.2) is to explain why type A syllabuses have been classified as such.

#### *3.2.1. Influential theories of language on type 'A' syllabuses*

The structural syllabus is influenced by the structural view of language. According to this view, structure is the heart of speech (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) and the aim of language learning is seen to be “the mastery of elements of this system, which are generally defined in terms of phonological units, grammatical units, grammatical operations, and lexical items»(Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p.17).

Moreover, the notional-functional syllabus is said to be based on the functional view of language which came as a reaction to the traditional (structural) view of language learning. This view went beyond the sentential level and called for the importance of learning language in relation to the context in which it is used. Additionally, the functional view is closely related to Hymes' view of language which describes what learner's communication needs. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), Hymes sees that linguistic theory needs to be viewed as part of a more general theory including communication and culture. In this regard, they write:

The functional view of language emphasizes the semantic and communicative dimension rather than merely the grammatical characteristics of language and leads to a specification and organization of language teaching content by categories of meaning and function rather than by elements of structure and grammar (p. 17).

In addition, language syllabuses are not only influenced by theories of language but also theories of language learning because, as Richards and Rodgers (1986) note, “structural, functional or interactional models of language provide the theoretical framework that may motivate a particular teaching method. But in themselves they are incomplete and need to be completed by theories of language learning” (p. 17).

#### *3.2.2. Influential theories of language learning on type 'A' syllabuses*

Richards and Rodgers (1986) point out that there are two main language learning theories: process-oriented theories and condition-oriented theories. While the former (i.e., process-oriented theories) are concerned with “learning processes such as habit formation, induction, inferencing, hypothesis testing, and generalization” (p. 18), the latter (i.e., condition-oriented theories) focus on “the nature of the human and physical context in which language learning takes place” (ibid.).

For example, the structural syllabus is based on the process-oriented theories where language learning is viewed as a process of mechanical habit formation and stimulus/response whereby learners are required to repeat discrete items of language until they fully master them (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Therefore, “the learning of language was perceived as the progressive accumulation of structures of the language until the language was complete” (Wilkins, 1994, p. 46).

Furthermore, since it falls under the umbrella of type 'A' syllabuses and though it is assumed to be based purely on the functional view of language, in reality, the notional-functional syllabus (NFS) is also based on the process-oriented theories. More specifically, the NFS is based on the behaviorist view of language as it requires learners to repeat linguistic rules such as functions and notions (Richards, 2001).

### ***3.3. Strengths of Type 'A' Sub-syllabuses: (Structural, Notional Functional and Situational)***

The features of type 'A' sub-syllabuses attracted the attention of many researchers in the field of language teaching and learning. For instance, Brumfit (1980) notes that among the advantages of the structural syllabus is that it consists of units that can be broken down into small separate elements which can be ordered in a systematic way. Therefore, learners can master the grammatical structures of the target language easily (Cited in Chandee, 1991). Likewise, Higgs and Clifford (1982) argue that high proficiency in new language can be best obtained when these learners are exposed to formal structures of the language they are studying (Cited in Krahnke, 1987). Additionally, Krahnke (1987) lists a set of advantages that can be drawn from the structural syllabuses:

- Grammatical structure is the most general component of communicative competence. Every utterance, if it is reasonably well-formed, involves a given structure, which can be used for a variety of functions, situations, and meanings (p. 21).
- The content of these syllabuses is relatively easy to describe. Noun, verb, imperative, plural, and gerund are terms that are generally shared within the language profession, and there is general agreement about what they mean (p. 22).
- Structural knowledge is the most measurable of the components of communicative competence. Because of the relative finiteness of structural knowledge and its relatively clear definition, measurement tasks are easily prepared to determine how much students have or have not learnt (ibid.).

Further, the benefits of notional-functional syllabuses (NFS) have been highlighted by many researchers such as Wilkins (1976) who points out that NFS have been developed in order to encourage meaningful communication in the target language. In this type of syllabuses, great attention is paid to meaning without ignoring the importance of grammatical structures in the teaching process (Wilkins, 1976). Further advantages that are worth mentioning include: a) Providing real-world language, b) increasing learners' intrinsic motivation through involving them in interactions which express basic communicative functions, c) enabling teachers to exploit sound psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, linguistic and educational principles (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983 as cited in Nunan, 1988).

Finally, situational syllabuses have been praised by Krahnke (1987) that they develop learners' ability to communicate in specific socio-cultural situations. Besides, these syllabuses encourage learners to use language forms within the social context in which they are used as well as use students' needs and personal experiences as a basis to create meaningful situations. Therefore, this contextualized approach increases learners' motivation to learn (Christison & Murray, 2014) as they will be eager to know more about the use of the socio-cultural features of the language being taught (Krahnke, 1987). In other words, "such a syllabus focuses teaching upon what is most relevant to a particular group of learners and these learners, able to see the relevance of what they are doing, become more highly motivated»(Wilkins, 1972, p.256).

### *3.4. Weaknesses of Type 'A' Syllabuses*

According to Long and Crookes (1993), one of the negative aspects of Type A syllabuses is that they are 'static' and ineffective in terms of instructional content, course objectives and meeting the learners' needs and expectations. In their words: "synthetic syllabuses consistently leave the learner out of the equation" (Long & Crookes, 1993, p.27). Likewise, Spector-Cohen, Kirschner and Wexler (2001) believe that type A syllabuses "may not take sufficient account of the learner's specific language needs in that many courses are not restricted to specific disciplines»(p.373). In addition, Tyler (1949) criticizes product-oriented syllabuses because the lists of content items used in such syllabuses are ineffective as they do not clearly specify how to meet the objectives and how to teach learners the linguistic structures (Cited in Nunan, 1988). Moreover, Long and Crookes point out that the results of second language acquisition research regarding the nature of language learning processes are not reflected in the principles of type A syllabuses as the latter focus on the acquisition of linguistic units separately and in a linear fashion. However, they do not acknowledge the importance of psychological processes in language learning such as learners' intrinsic motivation, emotional well-being, memory (short and long term) and prior knowledge. These processes should have "priority over arguments concerning alternative ways of analyzing the ideal, but rarely attained, product»(Long & Crookes, 1993, p.27). In this regard, Widdowson (1979) concurs that "dividing language into discrete units of whatever type misinterprets the nature of language as communication." (Cited in Nunan, 1988, p.37). Last but not least, learners' major aim behind learning a target language is to communicate effectively using that language. Nevertheless, the principles of type A syllabuses might not help learners reach this goal because most of the grammatical structures to be taught do not fit learners' needs and interests. This would therefore have negative impact on their motivation to learn (Wilkins, 1972 as cited in Long & Crookes, 1993).

In addition to the disadvantages stated above, some type 'A' syllabuses have been proved to have some negative impacts on the teaching and learning processes. For example, Hasan (2007) claims that the structural syllabus is ineffective owing to the fact that it does not consider meanings and ideas conveyed through the language as its main concern is to teach learners isolated grammatical structures. He further adds, this syllabus does not provide learners with opportunities to use authentic language for meaningful communication. As a result, learners' motivation and their performance in writing can be negatively affected (Chandee, 1991). Furthermore, Nunan (1988) believes that the structural syllabus fails to present the complex nature of language because it is mainly interested in studying only the formal aspect of language ignoring other aspects and the context in which it is used.

The second syllabus that has been subject to criticism is the notional-functional syllabus. According to Christison and Murray (2014), this syllabus follows, to a great extent, the principles of the structural syllabus that instead of being identified through a needs analysis, notions and functions are identified in advance and need to be broken down into small components that are taught out of context. Besides, Long and Crookes (1993) point out that notional-functional syllabuses may cause some problems in terms of practicality as "many individual notions and functions are difficult to define and distinguish»(p.16). In the same vein, Krahnke (1987) writes:

A problem arises if notional/functional syllabi are limited to short utterances or exchanges involving the functions in question. Like structural syllabi, functional content can be presented entirely in short utterances and units of discourse. If this mistake is made, and larger structures of discourse are ignored, the students may be unable to handle the new language in longer, connected discourse (p.37).

The situational syllabus also has many drawbacks due to the fact that situations in which language is likely to be used are difficult to predict (Hasan, 2007). Hasan sees that though this syllabus is supposed to encourage learners to use language for meaningful communication in different real-life situations, in reality, it follows the principles of the structural syllabus. In his words, “it combines the structuralist view of the nature of language and a behaviorist orientation to language learning which emphasizes participation of the learners through the use of dialogues and role-play»(p.50). Moreover, this syllabus is thought to be ineffective because it aims at teaching the target language in only some specific contexts and situations. Therefore, language that can be used in one situation cannot be necessarily appropriate in another one (Richards, 2001) and learners will not really develop their communicative competence (Saraswathi, 2004). Similarly, Wilkins (1972) argues that “the diversity of linguistic forms in any one situational unit makes the task of generalizing grammatical learning a difficult one and without it the learner may acquire no more than a set of responses appropriate to that one situation»(Cited in Johnson, 2009, p.317).

#### **4. Type B Syllabus (Analytic/ Process-oriented Syllabus)**

The failure of the courses based on type ‘A’ syllabuses in promoting learners’ communicative skills in the target language has led to the appearance of type B syllabuses in which the focus has shifted from what should be learnt (content) to how it should be learnt (process). This view can be better explained in Wilkins’ description (1976) of analytic syllabuses. He writes:

In analytic syllabuses, there is no attempt at this careful linguistic control of the learning environment. Components of language are not seen as building blocks which have to be progressively accumulated. Much greater variety of linguistic structure is permitted from the beginning and the learner’s task is to approximate his own linguistic behavior more and more closely to the global language (p.2).

In other words, in courses based on type B syllabuses, great importance is attributed to meaning and developing learners’ communicative competence instead of just acquiring isolated structural forms. Besides, the rules of language are not explicitly presented to the learners, but rather learners are required to use their analytical skills and capabilities to synthesize the rules and convert the input they receive into intake (Saraswathi, 2004; Long and Crookes, 1991). Furthermore, a set of characteristics have been attributed to type B syllabuses by White (1988). He points out that unlike type A syllabuses, these syllabuses focus on how language should be learnt. They are non-interventionist in that the learning objectives are not set before doing the course and language content and course materials are not pre-constructed by the teacher alone, but it is a matter of negotiation with students. Hence, they are internal to the learner since s/he is seen as an active agent in the classroom who has her/his own voice and contribution to the learning process. Also, in type B syllabuses, teachers are no longer the highest authority in the classroom, but rather learning becomes, to a great extent, the responsibility of the learner while the teacher is just a facilitator and a co-participant. In addition, language learning within these syllabuses is viewed as a communicative interaction where teachers and learners share responsibility in decision-making and selecting the instructional content. The latter is based on what learners need and bring to the classroom (Cited in Long & Crookes, 1993).

#### ***4.1.Syllabuses of Type B***

A number of syllabuses fall under the umbrella of a type B syllabus. Three main types are discussed in this section namely: task-based, content-based and process syllabuses. The main concern of the three types is to use language as means for communication not to acquire isolated linguistic forms. This can be supported by Yalden's (1987) view about these process-oriented syllabuses. In this regard, Yalden declares:

all come via different paths to similar conclusions about language teaching: that the teacher's concern should be primarily with the route, not the goal-with what Richterich has called the "learner's trajectory" (Richterich et al. 1981). Along the way, procedures of linguistic syllabus design are considered marginally important if not irrelevant (p.74).

##### *4.1.1. Task-based syllabuses*

The view of language learning and teaching changed after to the emergence of the communicative approach which is based on the belief that learners learn best when they use language in its social context to interact. This has led second language acquisition researchers to shift their attention towards a new type of syllabuses and propose the task-based syllabus (TBS) where tasks are used as basic units of instruction.

Task-based syllabus emerges from Prabhu's hypothesis that "structure can be best learnt when attention is focused on meaning" (Yalden, 1987, p. 65). It derives its principles from the task-based language learning which is based on using real-life tasks that involve learners in authentic and meaningful communication and, therefore, develop their communicative competence. Taking tasks as the point of departure in the design process (Baleghizadeh, 2015), TBS focuses not so much on "particular words or grammar rules the learners will need to acquire, but rather on the purposes for which people are learning a language i.e. the tasks that learners will need to be able to perform" (Van den Branden, 2006, p.3).

In the literature, there has been a debate and different views on the very meaning of the term 'task'. However, although a variety of definitions exist, they all agree on the fact that "tasks are activities that are goal-directed...necessitate language use for its performance»(ibid). For instance, Nunan (1989) defines task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form" (Cited in Markee, 2015, p.165). To put it differently, a task is an activity that encourages learners to use the target language while interacting with each other and aims at reaching a specific objective in a given situation (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Bygate et al, 2001 as cited in Van den Branden, 2006).

The features of good tasks are best described by Candlin (1987). According to him, a good task promotes attention to meaning rather than linguistic forms and negotiation between the teacher and learners about the instructional content. It also takes learners' needs and expectations as bases to draw learning objectives. Moreover, a good task considers learners' beliefs and interests and encourages their contribution to the learning process. Further, it provides learners with opportunities of self and peer assessments and allows them to share responsibility with their teacher in evaluating the language tasks. Last but not least, a good task develops learners' critical skills and their awareness about the process of language learning (Cited in Nunan, 1988).

#### *4.1.2. Process syllabuses*

A simple definition of the process syllabus is ‘how learning takes place in the classroom’. Long and Crookes (1993) describe it as “a social and a problem-solving orientation, with explicit provision for the expression of individual learning styles and preferences»(p. 33). This syllabus, also called ‘negotiated syllabus’, is mainly based on the idea of Breen (1984) and Candlin (1987) who emphasize the importance of shifting attention to the learner and learning processes and needs instead of focusing on language and language learning processes. According to Breen (1984), “learners need plans in order to have a sense of direction and continuity in their work” (Cited in Johnson, 2009, p.322). This is why Breen and Candlin see that, in classes using process syllabuses, tasks and instructional materials should be chosen through a constant negotiation process between the teacher and the learners which, in turn, leads to effective learning (Cited in Long and Crookes, 1993). In addition, through this syllabus, learners are introduced to the way communication and learning to communicate can be undertaken in relation to particular situations of the language classroom. To put it differently, “a process syllabus addresses the overall question: “who does what with whom, on what subject-matter, with what resources, when, how, and for what learning purpose(s)?” (Breen, 1984 as cited in Long & Crookes, 1993, p.34).

#### *4.1.3. Content-based/topical syllabuses*

Instruction based on content-based syllabus (CBS) emphasizes learning about something or a specific topic that learners will acquire rather than learning about grammatical structures and language itself. That is, “the subject matter is primary and language learning occurs incidentally to the content learning... An example of content-based language teaching is a science class taught in the language the students need or want to learn” (Krahnke, 1987, p.12). In other words, in content-based instruction, learners acquire the language they are studying through introducing them to a set of topics where each topic is tackled differently and in a systematic way using what Mohan (1986) calls ‘a knowledge framework’ which is used to organize knowledge and learning activities. Each topic is treated in terms of the specific side (description, sequence, choice) and the general side (classification, principles and evaluation) (cited in Nunan, 1988).

In fact, CBS derives its principles from the communicative language teaching approach which encourages learners to use authentic language for meaningful communication and exchanging information. There are many characteristics, stated by Brinton et al. (1989), which demonstrate the importance to teach language in relation to specific content and make CBS effective in developing learners’ proficiency in the language they are studying. Quoting these features, Stoller (2002) writes:

In a content-based approach, the activities of the language class are specific to the subject matter being taught, and are geared to stimulate students to think and learn through the use of the target language. Such an approach lends itself quite naturally to the integrated teaching of the four traditional language skills. For example, it employs authentic reading materials which require students not only to understand information but to interpret and evaluate it as well. It provides a forum in which students can respond orally to reading and lecture materials. It recognizes that academic writing follows from listening and reading, and thus requires students to synthesize facts and ideas from multiple sources as preparation for writing. In this approach, students are exposed to study skills and learn a variety of language skills which prepare them for the range of academic tasks they will encounter (p.108).

#### ***4.2. Influential Theories of Language on Type ‘B’ Syllabuses***

In fact, the three types (i.e., task-based, process-based and content-based syllabuses) derive their principles from the learner-centered views of language, including Hallidayan view of meaning-potential, Hymesian’s communicative competence and Austin’s work, in addition to the principles of the communicative approach. According to Hymes, in addition to his knowledge of grammatical structures, a person needs to have the ability to use language appropriately in order to be an effective communicator within a speech community (Cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Also, the speech act theory by Austin assumes that language is a vehicle of communication and a tool employed by speakers to express their needs, feelings, intentions and thoughts (ibid.).

Furthermore, learner-centered pedagogists list some principles that should be followed in language classrooms. These principles, as stated by Richards and Rodgers (1986, p.71), are as follows:

- Language is a system for the expression of meaning.
- The primary function of language is for interaction and communication.
- The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.
- The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

#### ***4.3. Influential Theories of Language Learning on Type ‘B’ Syllabuses***

According to Richards and Rodgers’ classification of language learning theories, the three type ‘B’ syllabuses fall under the umbrella of the condition-oriented theories. Their main concern is to teach language in relation to its socio-cultural context. Kumaravadivelu (2006) claims that these syllabuses were mainly influenced by cognitive psychologists who criticized the value given to habit formation and mechanical processes by behaviorists and called for ‘insight formation’. Furthermore, learner-centered pedagogists suggest that “language learning is most appropriately seen as communicative interaction involving all the participants (learners, teachers) in the learning and including the various material resources (texts and activities) on which the learning is exercised»(ibid., p.118). Other influential theories of language learning include Krashen’s input hypothesis, Swain’s output hypothesis and Long’s interaction hypothesis. Krashen’s hypothesis assumes that “opportunities for second language acquisition are maximized when learners are exposed to language which is just a little beyond their current level of competence” (Krashen, 1981, 1982 as cited in Nunan, 2012, p. 41). Swain’s output hypothesis, on the other hand, emphasizes the role of output in facilitating second language acquisition. That is, it is through producing language that learners will be able to assess their language proficiency and see the gap between ‘what they want to say and what they can say’. Consequently, learners become aware of their weaknesses and work on improving their proficiency (Robinson, 2011).

Van den Branden (2006) praises the important role played by both input and output in task-based instruction in particular. According to him, tasks that are based on input and output hypotheses’ principles are vehicles that facilitate interaction and provide learners with opportunities to act as language users “who process meaningful input and produce meaningful output in to reach relevant and obtainable goals»(p. 8). Last but not least, interaction hypothesis also played a vital role in second language acquisition (SLA). In this respect, Long (1983, 1989) stresses the necessity of interaction between learners while doing their tasks as “it provides one way in which input can be made comprehensible and serves as a context for attending the problematic forms in the input and output during task-work»(Cited in Robinson, 2011, p.11). This was referred to as “negotiation of meaning” which “concerns the way

learners encounter communicational difficulties while completing tasks, and how they do something about those difficulties” (Skehan, 2003, p.3).

#### ***4.4.Strengths of Type ‘B’ Syllabuses***

Type ‘B’ syllabuses can be useful in various ways. According to Spector-Cohen et al., type B syllabuses’ main concern is to develop learners’ communicative skills in the language they are studying. Therefore, learners are exposed to authentic language and real-life situations which would help them master all what is needed for successful meaningful communication (Spector-Cohen et al., 2001).

Regarding the task-based syllabus, the fact that learners are given the opportunity to be active participants in the learning process, in terms of selecting the course content and setting the learning objectives, as well as share their personal experiences with others through using active and real tasks increases their motivation and involvement (Krahnke, 1987). Krahnke further adds that “Task-based learning can be especially useful for learners who are not accustomed to more traditional types of classroom learning or who need to learn cognitive, cultural, and life skills along with the language” (ibid, p.61). In addition, task-based instruction calls for the use of authentic materials in the classroom which expose learners to real-life situations and, hence, develop their communicative skills in the target language. The importance of using authentic materials in the language classroom is clearly shown in some of the advantages stated by Phillips and Shettlesworth (1978); Clarke (1989); and Peacock (1997) as follow:

- They have a positive effect on learner motivation as they are intrinsically more interesting and motivating than created materials.
- They provide authentic cultural information about the target culture including culturally based practices and beliefs.
- They provide exposure to real language rather than the artificial texts found in created materials. Simply put, learners are exposed to language in its social context.
- They relate more closely to learners’ needs and provide a link between the classroom and students’ needs in the real world.

(Cited in Richards, 2001, pp.252 - 253).

Besides, various advantages are claimed for process/negotiated syllabuses by Nation and Macalister (2009). According to them, the negotiated syllabus is responsive to the wants of learners and involves them in decision-making about the instructional content and the learning process. Consequently, this involvement in making decisions increases learners’ motivation to learn. Moreover, being a key concept, “negotiation develops learners’ awareness of the goals of language-learning activities and how these goals can be achieved. This understanding may then make them better learners” (ibid., p.156).

Last but not least, content-based syllabus can be useful in language classrooms in many ways. First, it motivates learners as they learn content instead of learning isolated linguistic items only (O’Mally & Chamot, 1994 as cited in Elaggoune, 2015). That is, when learners find that the content is interesting and addresses their needs, they will be highly motivated to acquire the target language. Also, Mohan (1986) agrees on the fact that content-based syllabuses facilitate learning not merely through language but with language. In this regard, he writes: “we cannot achieve this goal if we assume that language learning and subject-matter learning are totally separate and unrelated operations” (Cited in Nunan, 1988, p.49). In addition, Anderson (1990) sees that content-based syllabuses make linguistics forms more meaningful. Hence, they facilitate comprehension and lead to better learning (Cited in Stoller, 2002). To put it differently, “content-based instruction provides students with the ability to

master the language function and skills needed to understand, discuss, read, and write about the concepts acquired” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1994 as cited in Elaggoune, 2015, p.63).

#### **4.5. Weaknesses of Type ‘B’ Syllabuses**

Despite their effectiveness and significant role in developing learners’ communicative skills, type ‘B’ syllabuses have some drawbacks. One of the negative aspects is shown in the inability of teachers to find appropriate ready-made materials that match with learners’ needs and expectations. Hence, a lot of work is to be done by the teacher in order to produce his/her own materials (Spector-Cohen et al., 2001). Besides, these types of syllabuses might not be appropriate for learners with low proficiency level in the target language (ibid).

For instance, in the task-based syllabus, many problems become apparent. They are better presented by Bucur (2014) as:

the limits with second language acquisition and classroom research because of inconsistent methodology; little empirical support available for parameters of task classification and grading; the difficulty of defining the concept ‘task’; decreased learner autonomy due to preplanning and guidance; no complete implementation and evaluation of this type of syllabus (p. 914).

Another issue is related to the nature of task-based instruction which is not teacher-centered. Learners are required to be active participants, responsible and have some control over their learning. Hence, if learners do not have these qualities, implementing task-based instruction will be challenging for teachers (Krahnke, 1987). In addition, in terms of language assessment, “the field of task-based testing is still very young” (Van den Branden, 2006, p.12). The challenges of task-based testing include the following: a) difficulties in selecting concrete parameters on the rating scale, b) difficulties in selecting test tasks that allow for valid and reliable test scores, c), problems with extrapolating from test performance to real-world performance and across tasks in addition to increased cost and logistical problems (Bachman, 2002; McNamara, 1995; Messick, 1994; Norris et al., 1998 as cited in Van den Branden, 2006, p. 12).

Further criticism of type ‘B’ syllabuses concerns the negotiated/process-based syllabus. According to Nation and Macalister (2009), there are two major disadvantages. First, learners may not accept the idea of negotiation with each other as they believe that it is the teacher’s job to guide the course. Teachers are also against the negotiated syllabus as they think that giving learners chances to negotiate with each other and make decisions regarding the learning process would make them lose their power and authority in the classroom. Second, process-based syllabuses require time and huge efforts from the part of the teacher in order to produce appropriate resources.

Additionally, content-based syllabus is also claimed to be challenging and difficult to implement. For instance, Krahnke (1987) states that CBS may not be appropriate for beginners or adult learners with low proficiency level. This is why they need to be exposed to some amount of analytic grammatical structures in order to learn effectively. Besides, the fact that learners are not carefully guided by their teacher and given feedback on their language proficiency might result in “premature fossilization or overreliance on compensatory communication strategies” (ibid, p.70). Finally, in terms of language assessment, there are no specific criteria for assessing learners’ performance in content-based syllabus; instead “grading tasks are left partly to real-time impressionistic judgments by the teacher” (Long & Crookes, 1992, p. 37).

## 5. Which Type Is More Appropriate: Type A or Type B?

In the light of the discussion above, we believe that teachers had better adopt the eclectic approach to language teaching where they are compelled to combine type A and type B syllabuses as this combination would, hopefully, help in counteracting the weaknesses of both types (already discussed in sections: 3.4. & 4.5.). This is in line with Hutchinson and Waters' claim (1987) that "any teaching materials must, in reality, operate several syllabuses at the same time. One of them will probably be used as the principal organizing feature, but the others are still there, even if they are not taken into account in the organization of the material" (p. 89). This, of course, does not mean that teachers mix up different types randomly, but rather there should be some systematic relation among different types of syllabuses the teacher intends to use.

The integration of syllabus types results in what Yalden (1987) called 'proportional or balanced syllabus' which in turn leads to a more flexible, productive, and dynamic teaching that focuses on various syllabus specifications at once. In this regard, Yalden states that a proportional syllabus is beneficial as:

It allows the course designer freedom to respond to changing or newly perceived needs in the learners; and at the same time, it produces a framework for the teacher to start out with a plan. A proportional syllabus type can give rise to many kinds of frameworks; and a framework can be designed for most second language teaching (p. 93).

According to Yalden (1987), as shown in figures 1 and 2, by adopting the mixed-focus approach (i.e. focus on both form (accuracy) and meaning (fluency)), the teaching and learning processes go through different stages where the shift from one phase to another can occur at any time depending on learners' needs, abilities and interests. That is, at the beginning of the learning process, the teacher's emphasis should be more on merely developing the basic linguistic and phonetic structures. Next, after s/he makes sure that learners learnt the structural forms, s/he moves to the next stage which focuses on teaching the linguistic forms and their communicative and rhetorical functions. Last but not least, in the third phase, there is a shift from form to interaction and language use. That is, the teacher starts focusing much more on developing learners' communicative fluency through using tasks and topics that open the doors for learners' creativity and provide them with opportunities to apply the target language to real life situations.

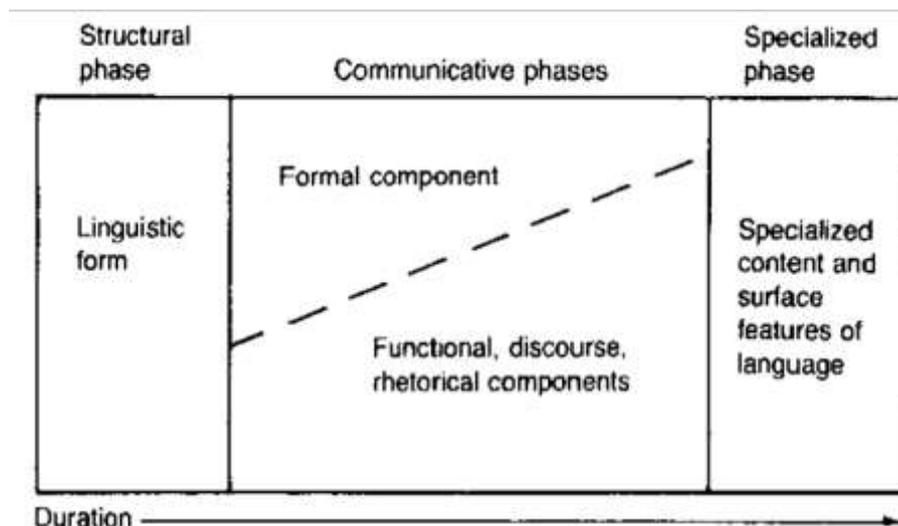


Figure 1

*Fully developed proportional model based on Yalden (1983) (Yalden, 1987, p. 96).*

Structure/Function	Function/Skills	Task/Theme
Greater emphasis on structure and functions	Targeting specific functions	Remedial structural work
Introduction of learning strategies & techniques	Application through task-based and problem-solving activities	Task-based syllabus, focus on learning processes and strategies to encourage creative language use
Elementary levels	Pre-Intermediate levels	Intermediate and above

Figure 2

*The proportional syllabus' stages (Finney, 2002, p. 76)*

All in all, applying the three stages in EFL classrooms will, hopefully, result in a better and more flexible instructional method that effectively considers learners' individual differences and teachers "who may not be able or willing to go fully communicative" (Yalden, 1987 as cited in Finney, 2002, p. 76) and allows more space for negotiation and interaction between students and teachers which in turn leads to an effective learning process.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of the present paper was to briefly describe and compare two major syllabus types (type A and Type B). It discussed critically the two types in terms of developments in the field of language and language learning theories. Besides, this paper aimed at evaluating the two syllabus types in terms of positive and negative aspects and their influence on language learning. As it has been shown in the literature, while type A syllabuses (structural, notional-functional and situational) are mainly concerned with what is to be learnt and helping learners master the linguistic items with a little consideration of the context in which they are used, Type B syllabuses (Task-based, process-based and content-based), on the other hand, focus on how it should be learnt where great importance is given to meaning and developing learners' communicative competence instead of just acquiring isolated structural forms. Afterwards, the main influential theories of language and language learning underpinning

each type have been discussed. As it is aforementioned, type A syllabuses are mainly influenced by the structuralist view of language and the process-oriented theories of language learning (behaviorist view). Type B syllabuses, however, derive their principles from the communicative view of language which aims at teaching language for meaningful communication in social contexts. In addition, these syllabuses are highly influenced by various condition-oriented theories mainly: Krashen's input hypothesis, Swain's output hypothesis and Long's interaction hypothesis. Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of each syllabus type, it was shown that type 'A' syllabuses can be useful as they provide learners with clear objectives of what to do and how they do it. However, these syllabus types totally ignore learners' needs and expectations. Type 'B' syllabuses have also proved to be beneficial in language classrooms as they are based on tasks as the major unit of analysis. Through these tasks, learners are exposed to authentic materials and meaningful communication. Nevertheless, these syllabus types were subject to criticism as they are thought to be inappropriate for beginners and learners with low level of proficiency. Also, preparing the language tasks and looking for resources require too much time and huge efforts from the part of the teacher. Thus, for an effective teaching process, it is recommended that teachers should combine the aspects of both types and adopt the mixed-integrated syllabus to better engage learners in the learning process.

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**Acknowledgement:** I would like to thank the two reviewers for their careful reading of the manuscript and valuable comments and suggestions.