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Writing under the Competency-based Approach
The Case of Second Year Middle School Pupils
(Constantine)

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Dedication

To my parents with love.

To my husband and son.

To my sisters and brothers.

To Hakima and Wafa.

To the post-graduation 2005

To all my teachers.

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List of Abbreviations

FL: Foreign language.

EFL: English as a foreign language.

CBET: Competency-based Education and Training.

AM: Année moyenne.

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Introduction

Aims of the study

Learning English as a foreign language generally entails the exposure of learners to the four skills that are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The amount of exposure to any of these skills varies according to the objectives set for the teaching procedure. As its name suggests, the Reading Method, for example, stresses the reading skill and thus gives priority to reading in comparison to listening, speaking, and writing. The Aural/oral Method for its part lays more emphasis on listening and speaking in relation to reading and writing.

Writing as a skill has come to play the eminent role it probably deserves in foreign language teaching because of the many benefits it provides. In much the same way as the other skills, writing may be described as helping learners to gain proficiency in the foreign language. Possibly more than the other skills, and because of the considerable production time learners take to plan and revise their text before it is put in final form, the writing skill gives foreign language learners a sense of command over the language being taught, and allows them to discover more about how English works. In addition, writing is the skill foremostly used to examine pupils' performances. This is particularly the case of the Algerian educational system where internal and external writing examinations are the means teachers and examiners use to determine learners' acceptance to upper classes.

The teaching of English as a foreign language in the Algerian educational system has witnessed many a change of method from the Grammar Translation to more so called 'modern approaches'. Within this evolution, the latest to date to be adopted is the Competency-based Approach. This new approach, which seeks to establish competences in learners, has been embraced starting the school year 2003/2004.

The official document Programmes de la Deuxième Année Moyenne states that the Competency-based Approach at Algerian second year middle school (2AM) aims at the establishment of three competences: first, to interact orally which involves spoken communication in English. Second, to interpret authentic oral or written documents. This requires learners to display their comprehension through some mostly oral reformulation of authentic oral or written documents. Third, to produce simple oral or written documents and this calls learners to generate simple oral or written messages (46-7).

Because it is expressed as the first stated competence sought after, oral interaction in English may be described as being given prominence in this approach, and be considered as the “key competence”. This is further confirmed by the Document d’Accompagnement des Programmes de la Deuxième Année Moyenne when it clearly states that in the teaching of English as a foreign language, in second year middle school, priority is given to oral skills (82).

Of course, one may wonder the reasonableness of aims that give priority to the teaching of audio-oral skills within a system that ultimately examines pupils’ performances in both internal and external examinations solely through writing.

Still, official documents and recommendations remain to be taken as stating what ought to be the case. Hence, in the light of such features as are described as prominent under the Competency-based Approach as expressed in the Algerian second year middle school English programmes, the object of the present study is to investigate the consequential effect of such prominence awarded to oral interaction, thus to the audio-oral skills, on the writing skill in actual classroom practice.

The expression, in actual classroom practice of this consequential effect is measurable: the time awarded to writing, the distribution of writing as an activity within overall

classroom activities, and the presence of writing, as an activity, in the most important part of the English course may constitute indicators of such a measure.

One way to investigate the expression, in classroom practice, of the consequential effect on writing, as a skill, of the prominence awarded to the audio-oral skills under the Competency-based Approach as expressed in the Algerian second year middle school English programmes may thus be to assess, during actual classroom practice, by means of the above stated indicators, the importance that is left to writing.

Statement of the problem

Does the consequential effect of the prominence awarded to oral interaction, thus to the audio-oral skills on writing as a skill under the Competency-based Approach as expressed in the Algerian second year middle school English programmes find expression, in actual classroom practice, in the importance that is left to writing activities, thus to writing as a skill?

Hypothesis

Considering the Competency-based Approach as expressed in the Algerian second middle school English programmes, it would appear that the consequential effect of the prominence awarded to oral interaction on writing skill finds expression in actual classroom practice, in the importance that is left to writing activities.

Definition of the terms of the study

General definitions

Following Byrne, writing will be understood as the graphic combination of letters “according to certain conventions to form words, and words have to be arranged to form sentences” (1).

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines importance as "the quality of being important" and important as "having a great effect on people or things; of great value" (651). Having a great effect or great value are features that bear measurement.

Operational definitions

Writing will be identified as the graphic activities pupils engage in.

Importance will be operationalized in terms of:

- The time apportioned to the selected activity (ies) within the overall frame of the activities,
- The distribution of the selected activity (ies) within the overall activities, and
- The presence of the activity (ies) in the most important part of the course.

Means of research

Because the research relates to a specific activity which it aims at identifying and measuring, and because classroom observation places the investigator in direct contact with what the teacher and the pupils do in the classroom, classroom observation has been selected as the tool for the present research. Grids have been constructed, and used to record the time the writing activities take within the overall frame of the activities, the activity suggested, the task type, teachers and pupils' roles, and the material and media used. This observation has involved files three and four of "Spotlight on English", book two.

Steps of the study

The dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the act of writing. The main components of writing are reviewed together with the stages of development, and types of writing. This is followed by a review of the teaching of writing.

Three approaches are treated: the product, process, and genre approaches. The chapter closes with assessment and feedback in writing.

The second chapter gives an overview of the Competency-based Approach in terms of approach, design, and procedure. Some other major teaching approaches/methods are also considered in this chapter, but in terms of the place they devote to writing. In so doing, a brief account of writing under the Grammar-Translation Method, the Reading Method, the Oral language Teaching, the Audio-lingual Approach, and the Communicative approach is provided, before writing under the Competency-based Approach is dealt with.

The third chapter involves the field investigation. Its aim is to examine the place given to writing under the Competency-based Approach.

The chapter opens on a brief account of the motives behind the selection of observation as a means for data collection. Then follows a description of the population of the study, and the files observed, files three and four of “Spotlight on English”, book two. The two files are described in terms of objectives, and content of their sections and sub-sections. Observation grids are used to help record the writing activities pupils engage in. Task components which involve the input, learners’ roles, teachers’ roles, actions and activities, form the source from which the grids’ categories have been extracted. So as to examine the material and media used and to determine the time apportioned to the activities in general and to writing in particular, two components have been added to the original task components. The third chapter ends with an analysis of the data, to determine the place devoted to writing under the Competency-based Approach as used in the classes observed. Chapter four proposes some pedagogical implications and recommendations related to writing under the Competency-based Approach as observed in two second year middle school classes.

Chapter one: Writing

Introduction

In general manner learning a foreign language subjects learners to the four skills that are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learning to write is increasingly becoming a necessity in life, no matter what career one will embrace. Writing is a communication tool that translates thoughts into language, and pedagogically speaking, it is the means by which learners' achievements are generally examined.

This chapter will proceed from a general definition of learning, to a specific definition of learning to write. It also comprises a comparison between writing and speaking, as well as writing and reading. Besides the stages of development in writing, and types of writing, the orientation the teaching of writing takes, is also taken into account. Last but not least, teachers' responses to learners' writing are also considered in this chapter.

1.1 Definition of learning

If Fontana considers learning as a change in the potential behaviour of an individual that results from experience (142-3), Davis et al conceive learning as an active process of transforming new knowledge and skills into behaviour (12). Ingram, on her part, views that an individual is learning if s/he manages to do what s/he could not do before (218).

1.2 Definition of learning to write

If the aforementioned definitions relate to learning in its broad sense, learning to write "entails learning to differentiate and manipulate the elements of the written system (e.g. letters and words) in order to engage with, and manipulate the social world (Dyson126). In like manner, Tribble states that "to be deprived of the opportunity to learn to write is to be

excluded from a wide range of social roles, including those which the majority of people in industrialized societies associate with power and prestige” (3). Accordingly, learning to write is a highly valued act that allows integration in social roles.

Still and all, and in comparison to the other skills, writing is said to be the Cinderella skill which is not only the most sophisticated one, but the least easy to acquire as well. Furthermore, writing as reported by Byrne, does not develop naturally like speech, it is a skill which cannot be acquired but through a process of instruction (5).

1.3 Act of writing

Language skills are categorized as either receptive or productive; listening and reading are the receptive ones, and speaking and writing are the productive ones.

Writing as defined by Rivers is the act of putting in conventional graphic form what has been spoken (242). For Byrne, writing involves the conventional arrangement of letters into words, and words into sentences that need to flow smoothly to form a coherent whole (1).

Writing is a complex skill that engages the writer in a physical as well as mental effort, and added to this complexity are the problems writers face. Byrne classifies such problems into three categories. The first category, he calls psychological, stems from lack of interaction and feedback between writer and reader: there is a physical absence of a reader. The second classification involves linguistic problems caused by the necessity to compensate for the absence of certain devices that the spoken medium has, such as pitch and intonation, through a clear and correct expression of ideas. The third category involves cognitive problems due to the fact that unlike speech which can develop in a natural way, writing requires formal instruction to develop (4).

For a clearer picture of the difficult nature of the act of writing, a comparison between writing and speaking on one hand, and writing and reading on the other hand, will be of great help.

1.3.1 Writing and speaking

Grabe and Kaplan (qtd. In Weigle 15) report that antagonistic attitudes separate educational researchers and linguists, as far as the distinction between writing and speaking is concerned. The educational researchers regard the written form of language as 'more correct', that is why it has to be 'more highly valued than oral language'. Linguists, on the other hand, advance converse arguments and state that 'speech is primary and written language is merely a reflection of spoken language.'

Brown (qtd. in Weigle 15) distinguishes the two productive skills in terms of permanence, production time, distance, orthography, complexity, and formality. Permanence refers to the lasting nature of the written medium. Whereas oral language is non-permanent and has to be processed in real-time, the written medium 'leaves a trace' and is, thus, everlasting. Production time, on its part, relates to the fact that in speech, the spontaneous nature of the medium makes that the flow of conversation has to be kept up with no enough time to totally monitor what is being said. Writers, on the other hand, go through a whole process of planning, drafting, and revising; hence, they have much more production time. Distance involves the absence of a shared context between writer and reader; there is no immediate feedback. Consequently, the text needs to be as clear and intelligible as possible. Furthermore, and compounding the difficult nature of writing is the orthography which 'carries a limited amount of information compared to the richness of devices available to speakers'. Among such devices pitch, speed, and pausing can be given as examples. Aside from the orthography, the written medium is complex in that it uses long clauses and subordinators, which is not the case of the spoken medium where

short clauses are joined by coordinators. Last but not least, writing is considered as a more formal medium of communication in comparison to speech.

1.3.2 Writing and reading

Despite their different characterizations, writing as a productive skill, and reading as a receptive skill, both complement each other, and skill in one results in a proficient user of the other. In this respect, Stosky advances that:

Better writers tend to be better readers (of their own writing as well as of other reading material), that better writers tend to read more than poorer writers, and that better readers tend to produce more systematically mature writing than poorer readers. (636)

As for Stosky, good writers tend to be good readers, and those who are good writers tend to read more than poor writers. What's more, those who read a lot come out with good writing, unlike those who do not read a lot. Writing and reading seem closely tight since reading results in good writing, and good writing is the result of exposure to a lot of readings.

To wrap up such convergences and divergences between skills, be they receptive or productive, Mackey considers that all four skills are interwoven and contribute to an effective learning, when he states that before one can write, s/he has to be able to read and shape the letters of the alphabet and has, before writing sentences, to say them aloud (436).

1.4 Components of writing

Components of writing relate to the elements out of which writing is made. Raimes (Techniques in Writing) views that writing involves first of all content which has, for example, to be relevant, clear and logic. This content needs, also, to be organized in such a

way as to form a coherent whole. In addition to content and organization, some tools are used to convey the intended meaning, and they consist of grammar, syntax, mechanics and word choice. Grammar relates to the rules of the language; syntax has to do with the way words and phrases are put together to form sentences; mechanics involve such aspects as handwriting, spelling, and punctuation; and word choice alludes to the vocabulary used. Along the aforementioned constituents of writing, other three equally important components deal with the purpose or the reason for writing, the audience or the reader(s), and the writer's process of getting ideas, getting started, writing drafts, and revising (6).
Raimes' components of writing can be grouped under six main headings:

- Content or the message to generate
- Organization of the ideas
- Tools used to convey the message
- Purpose
- Audience
- Process

1.5 Stages of development in writing

Another equally important difficulty in writing is that it is a skill which has to be taught through formal instruction. Rivers argues that in order to learn how to express oneself comprehensively and clearly, learners need go through five stages of development: copying, reproduction, recombination and adaptation, guided writing, and composition (245). All five stages, according to Rivers overlap.

1.5.1 Copying

Copying, also called transcription, involves the exact reproduction of what one sees before her/him in print. It is generally presented as the first stage in a writing programme, especially if learners come from a different writing system. Copying is of paramount importance in acquainting foreign language learners with the foreign language script. At such early stages of language learning, Brookes and Grundy (Beginning to Write) reveal that copying “is as much about using writing to support language learning as about teaching writing itself” (22).

At this stage of writing, teachers need bear in mind some principles about copying if it is to be effective. Rivers argues that:

The work set for copying should consist of sections of work already learned orally and read with the teacher. As the student is copying, he should repeat to himself what he is writing. In this way he deepens the impression in his mind of the sounds the symbols represent, and he has further repetition practice of basic dialogue or pattern sentences. (246)

With regard to what Rivers advances, teachers need ask their learners to copy parts practised orally and read with them, but before copying it is important that these learners repeat what they are writing because this repetition will imprint the sound/symbol relationship in their minds. Similarly, Harmer (How to Teach) recognizes the importance of copying as an important stage in the development of the writing skill, and considers it as an activity that helps learners gain a basic mechanical competence (44). Rivers insists on accurate copying at early stages of language learning because bad writing habits, for her, are difficult to eradicate at later stages.

1.5.2 Reproduction

The second stage after copying is reproduction, which relates to the production of copies without reference to the original copy. Rivers defines this stage as follows:

During the second, or reproduction, stage the student will attempt to write, without originality, what he has learned orally and read in his textbook. This he will be able to do all the more successfully if he has been trained in habits of accuracy in the copying stage. (246)

Reproduction, as enunciated by Rivers, engenders the writing of items already copied or learned orally but without reference to the original copy. The material to be reproduced has also to be practised orally and read with the teacher, before it is reproduced. Training in accurate copying will benefit learners at this stage. Dictation is the activity widely used at this stage of development.

1.5.3 Recombination and adaptation

The third stage of development, that is combination and adaptation, engages learners in the reproduction of a learned section with minor adaptations that vary from substitution and transformation to expansion and contraction of sentences (248). Learners can substitute or replace nouns with pronouns, transform or turn sentences from the active to the passive form, turn direct speech into indirect speech, or change words from singular to plural. Furthermore, they can expand sentences by adding adjectives, adverbs, or conjunctions to sentences. Unlike expansion, however, contraction engages learners in substituting, for example, single words for group of words. This stage provides training in an accurate construction of sentences, how much valuable for an intelligible transmission of messages.

Recombination is relegated to later stages, till firm grounds are established in substitution, transformation, expansion, and contraction (Rivers 248). As part of some practice in recombination, learners may be called to rearrange a scrambled dialogue.

1.5.4 Guided writing

The fourth stage of development involves guided writing where learners are given some freedom in lexical and grammatical choices, but within a framework. This latter will prevent learners from trying to write at a level that exceeds their state of knowledge (Rivers 250). Learners can summarize a text, or paraphrase it. They are neither strictly controlled nor totally free. In like manner, Kroll states as examples of guided writing the production of a short text by answering direct and open-ended questions (250).

1.5.5 Composition

In comparison to the previous stages, the last stage of development entails some freedom, on the learners' part, in the selection of words and structures that suit best the message they want to convey. There goes without denying, that if learners receive adequate training in the four previous stages, they will think and write in the foreign language. In this scope Heaton states that:

The writing of a composition is a task which involves the student in manipulating words in grammatically correct sentences and in linking those sentences to form a piece of continuous writing which successfully communicates the writer's thoughts and ideas on a certain topic. (127)

The ultimate stage of development demands that learners display their mastery of language forms, and their ability to construct a coherent whole that reflects their ideas on a particular subject.

1.6 Types of writing

In addition to the stages they go through, learners have to perform certain writing activities if they are to improve their writing quality.

1.6.1 Notation

The simplest form of writing is notation, and it involves the graphic representation of sounds. It is a type of writing too beneficial for the learners required to discriminate between different sounds (Rivers 242-3).

1.6.2 Spelling

After some training in graphic discrimination of sounds, learners combine letters to form words or as Rivers calls them 'recognizable units of the foreign language' (243).

1.6.3 Writing practice

If the initial type involves a graphic representation of sounds into letters, and the second type subsumes the combination of letters to form words, the writing practice, as noted by Rivers, gives rise to a conventional graphic combination of words that conveys meaning, with special focus on the necessity to control the structure of the language (Rivers 243).

Training in graphic representations of sounds, in letters combinations to form words, and in sentence construction to come out with coherent wholes has to be reinforced through some writing practice because as Rivers and Temperly view:

Practice is needed in actual sequential writing. Having learned about the various part of the machine, and parts of the parts, and how these synchronize in action, the students need to set the machine in motion with different parts active in weaving the intricate pattern of meaning. Here guidance is helpful in learning which parts will operate together to form new patterns. Students' aptitudes vary

widely in writing. Some need considerable help in developing a smooth and effective operation, others seem intuitively to take off and create interesting patterns of their own. (297)

What Rivers and Temperly also recommend in this writing practice is that teachers guide learners in their conventional combinations, even if disparity among learners makes that some need more guidance than others in their writing practice.

1.6.4 Composition

The most developed form of writing is composition. This latter is the expression of one's ideas in a conventional graphic form through some free selection of vocabulary, and sentence structures (Rivers 243).

1.7 Teaching practice

All the stages of development and types of writing learners go through require a formal instruction, without which the writing skill cannot develop. Hence, an instructional programme should be devised to gradually help learners develop the abovementioned abilities in writing.

1.7.1 Approaches to teaching writing

Teaching of writing can take different orientations, each stressing a different aspect. Stress can be laid on the final product, on the process writers go through, or on a particular genre. Three approaches seem to be the prevailing ones in teaching writing: the product, process, and genre-based approaches.

1.7.1.1 Product approach

Brookes and Grundy (Writing) state that by product is meant the final result that has about it an air of finality. Nunan (Language Teaching) identifies the product approach to

the teaching of writing as an approach that stresses “the end result of the learning process. What is it that the learner is expected to do as a fluent and competent user of the language” (86). Still, Badger and White report that the product approach is primarily concerned with how well the writer knows the structure of the language, and writing is but an imitation of texts provided by the teacher (154). From what precedes accuracy of the final output is the aspect focused on in the product approach. Accuracy as defined by Parrott relates to the learners’ use of grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and the extent to which this is error-free (67). Consequently, writing revolves around the writer’s mastery of the grammatical and lexical systems of the language.

This conception of teaching writing is widely used at lower levels of language proficiency because it proved its worth “in building vocabulary, scaffolding writing development and increasing the confidence of novice writers” (Hyland 4). The final product, according to Hedge, has to involve the following aspects:

- Getting the grammar right.
- Having a range of vocabulary.
- Punctuating meaningfully.
- Using the conventions of lay out correctly.
- Spelling accurately.
- Using a range of vocabulary.
- Linking ideas and information across, to develop a topic.
- Developing and organizing the content clearly and convincingly (8).

The benefits the product approach provides for novice writers, and learners at lower levels of language proficiency do not make of it an approach exempt from criticism; Brookes and

Grundy (Writing) note that accuracy is “only one small part of the skill of writing” (53). Together with what Brookes and Grundy express, error-free writing has never been an index of improvement in writing, Hyland advances that some teachers are familiar with learners who can build correct sentences but cannot generate appropriate texts (5). Still, Raimes (Techniques in Writing) denounces the neglect of the communicative aspect in such product approaches in which interest is just in how well grammar, syntax, and mechanics are put in use, and not in what writing involves as a meaningful expression of messages (7). In addition, if Badger and White recognize some positive aspects about product approaches such as the need for learners to be given linguistic knowledge about texts, and the resort to imitation as one possible way of learning, our two writers also believe that process or linguistic skills that are planning, drafting and revising are undervalued under such approaches (157).

1.7.1.2 Process approach

An emergent interest in the writer, and the steps s/he goes through while writing, has given rise to a new way of conceptualizing the teaching of writing. In here, Weir views that:

A current concern in writing theory and practice is with the new “pedagogical orthodoxy” of process writing where the main interest is in what writers do when they write. This approach sees writing as an exploratory generative collaborative process rather than a linear route to a pre-determinate product. (130)

In other words, Weir views that giving the teaching of writing a process orientation shifts focus from the text, to the writer and the stages s/he goes through. Besides, this new emphasis on the writer, the collaborative, and recurrent nature of writing are also highlighted under this new orientation. Writing is no more conceived as a straightforward,

and individual act only, but as a process where a group of writers plan, draft, then backtrack before finally sorting out a final product. For Leki (Teaching Second Language), process approach to writing is “the wandering path learners use to get to the final product” (10). In like manner, Brookes and Grundy (Writing) conceive process approach as the means by which the writer reaches the final product (22). Almost all definitions of the process approach to the teaching of writing claim for the priority of the stages writers go through, in relation to the final product and how accurate it is. With regard to the importance of linguistic skills, or the planning, drafting, revising and editing skills in writing development, Tribble urges teachers to direct learners towards “writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas and collection of data through to the publication of a finished text”(36).

Once more, process approaches to the teaching of writing fell into disfavour by some; Badger and White, for example, view that not only insufficient importance is given to the texts writers produce, and why such texts are produced, but learners are also provided with insufficient linguistic knowledge to write successfully (157).

1.7.1.3 Genre-based approach

‘Genre’ as defined by Swales is “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (58). Likewise, Hyland points out that under a genre-based approach, the writer writes something to reach some purpose (18). Accordingly, central to a genre-based orientation to the teaching of writing is the notion of purpose.

Writing under genre-based approaches involves a social context in which texts are produced to suit a particular purpose. Different genres such as recipes, reports, letters of apology, and research articles can be given as some examples among many others.

The genre-based approach sees writing as predominantly concerned with knowledge of the language; it is sometimes considered as an extension of the product approach in its emphasis on the formal features, and its neglect of the linguistic skills. Dudley- Evans reinforces this idea when he identifies three stages in genre oriented courses. First a model of a particular genre to work on is introduced and analysed. Second, learners carry out exercises which manipulate relevant language forms. Third a short text is produced (154). Therefore, the genre-based approach conceives writing as the analysis and imitation of texts provided by the teacher, which is also what the product approach seeks to achieve.

1.8 Project work

One possible way of integrating all three approaches in the teaching of writing is through writing projects where the final product shares equal billing with the process learners go through, and where a purpose is generally set behind what is written. Further, Harmer (The Practice of English) clearly states that collaborative writing, which is generally involved in writing projects, works well with both process and genre-based approaches to the teaching of writing: writers' linguistic skills are highly improved by having more than one writer to generate, plan, draft, revise, and evaluate ideas in a friendly and lively atmosphere. Similarly, in genre-based writing, engaging more than one learner in the analysis of genre specific texts is by far better, and more successful (260).

1.8.1 Definition of project work

Haines identifies project work as “an approach to learning which complements mainstream methods and which can be used with almost all ages, levels and abilities of students” (1). Similarly, Papandreou defines project work as “an approach in which indirect teaching is employed, and evaluation focuses upon the process as well as the product of the students' work” (41). Fried-Booth recognizes project work as a student-

centred activity, and specifies that what makes project work so worthwhile is the route to achieving such end product (6). Legutke and Thomas (qtd. in Tammy 108) consider that the use of project work in classes “establishes a direct link between language learning and its application.” Willis, on her part, views that project work:

involve pairs or groups of learners in some kind of freer creative work. They also tend to have more stages than other tasks, and involve combinations of task types: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing and problem-solving. Out-of-class research is sometimes needed. Organizational skills and team-work are important in getting the task done. The outcome can be appreciated by a wider audience than the students who produced it. (27)

As a synthesis to all the earlier definitions, project work can be considered as one possible way of approaching learning that fits all levels and abilities. It generally involves a group of learners working together, and investing their school acquisitions so as to achieve a common end product that is put on the same footing as the route that led to it.

1.8.2 Characteristics and types of project work

Project work has some typical features that distinguish it from other learning devices; in this respect, Stoller (4) states that project work emphasizes learners’ involvement and responsibility; it is learner-centred even if the teacher dispenses considerable guidance and help. Still, project work fosters cooperation rather than competition; it seeks to instil some social skills in learners. Project work results in an authentic integration of skills and engages learners in processing information from varied sources which is a task they might be called to perform one day or another in real-life. Not less significant is the final product learners come out with, and which is as important as the process that allowed its

conception. Projects can also be displayed to others, and this gives a real purpose to project work. Another equally important characteristic, as Stoller views, is that project work increases learners' motivation, and results in building more confidence, esteem, and autonomy in learners.

In like manner, Leki (Teaching Second Language) views that project work fosters collaboration among learners, and reduces the feeling of isolation encountered by individual writers (10).

In order to develop a project work Stoller suggests ten steps to follow:

1. Students and teacher agree on a theme.
2. Students and teacher determine the final outcome: they consider the nature of the project, its objectives, and the way it will be reported.
3. Students and teacher structure the project. At this stage students should ask:
 - a. What information is needed to complete the project?
 - b. How can the information be obtained?
 - c. How will the information, once gathered, be compiled and analyzed?
 - d. What role does each student play in the evolution of the project?
 - e. What time line will students follow, from the starting point to the end?
4. Instructor prepares students for the language demands of information gathering. If the learners are required to write a letter, for example, the teacher can introduce letter formatting conventions, and audience considerations, including levels of formality and word choice.
5. Students gather information.

6. Instructor prepares students for the language demands of compiling, and analyzing data.
7. Students compile and analyze information; in one word they weigh the collected data.
8. Teacher prepares students for the demands of the culminating activity: the teacher helps students succeed with the final product through some class activities such as editing and revising written reports.
9. Students present the final product.
10. Students evaluate the project: they reflect on the content they learnt about the topic covered, the steps they followed to reach the final output, how effective is their product, and whether they will bring some changes next time(7-8-9).

Likewise, Harmer (How to Teach) sets the following six steps for teachers and learners, alike, so as to sort out a project:

1. Learners and teachers agree on a project topic, and then define the aims of the project. How data will be gathered, the timescale of the project and the stages to go through are also debated at this stage.
2. Learners get involved in data gathering from different sources, ranging from encyclopaedias, to the Internet, to books, or to questionnaires and interviews. Other sources can also be used.
3. Learners plan how the end product will be set out.
4. Learners draft, and edit their work. They determine whether the rough written form can take a final form, and what corrections can improve what they produced.

5. Learners sort out a final version which can be collected by teachers to be exhibited in school libraries, for example, or to be shared with other classes.
6. Teachers are consulted to provide any help or guidance if ever learners need it.

In view of the fact that project work is assigned different definitions, it can take different forms depending on: the curricular objectives, course expectations, students' proficiency level, students' interests, time constraints, and availability of materials (Stoller 4).

There are a number of taxonomies for project work, each stressing a different aspect. Projects can be specified in terms of teachers' involvement in the organization of projects, in terms of data collection techniques and sources of information, in terms of their relation to real-world concerns, or in terms of the ways of reporting that information.

Henry (qtd. in Stoller4) identifies three types of projects different in teachers' involvement in project work:

1. Structured projects are specified by the teacher in terms of topic, materials, methodology, and presentation.
2. Unstructured projects are largely defined by learners themselves.
3. Semi- structured projects are defined in parts by the teacher, and in part by the learner.

Haines also distinguishes four types of projects, but projects different in the ways used to gather information:

1. Research projects engender the collection of data via library research, or other text projects.
2. Correspondence projects necessitate communication with individuals to demand information by means of electronic mail, letters, faxes, or phone calls.

3. Survey projects require the design of a survey instrument and then gathering and analysing data from informants.
4. Encounter projects entail a face to face interaction with guest speakers, or individuals outside school, or guest speakers.

The information learners compile need to be reported to an audience, projects at this level are also classified by Haines as:

1. Production projects relate to the creation of a product that can be a video, a written report, a radio program, brochures, or letters.
2. Performance projects can involve an oral performance, or theatrical performances.
3. Organizational projects can comprise the planning and formation of a club, or a conversation table.

1.8.3 Portfolios

Since production projects leave a trace of learners' linguistic capacities and achievement, they have to be preserved for future use or consultation. Portfolios can be used to serve this purpose.

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines portfolio as "a thin flat case used for carrying documents, drawings etc." (981). Johnson (Portfolio Assessment) advances that the concept of portfolio is borrowed from the field of fine arts where portfolios are used to show "the depth and breadth" of an artist's capacities. The collected samples have to be created and organized in such a way as to display certain competencies (143). Bastidas defines portfolios as a "purposeful and systematic collection of students' work that demonstrates the students' progress, efforts and accomplishments in one or more areas" (24). All in all, the portfolio is a folder learners use to insert their works in. But this collection of items has to be well founded, Hamp-Lyons and Condon advance the example

of writing samples collected in portfolios, they state that unless more than one writing sample is included in portfolios, and unless this selection is justified, portfolios will simply involve a pile or a large folder. From what precedes it can be concluded that portfolios need involve the collection of more than a single sample; this collection should not be random, learners have to select, with teachers' help, what items to insert. Like projects, portfolios can serve different purposes. Nunes states that:

For some teachers, the portfolio is part of an alternative assessment programme and it can either include a record of students' achievements or simply document their best work. For other teachers, the portfolio documents the students' learning process, and still others use it as a means of promoting learner reflection. (327)

Accordingly, Portfolios can be used as an alternative assessment procedure that can provide feedback to learners on their strengths and weaknesses, or simply enclose learners' best work. Still, and in other cases, portfolios can be used to record the learning process in that they can be used as a learning tool that helps teachers stand on learners' achievement, in order to take decisions about what has been accomplished so far, and what remains to be done. Portfolios are also used by some teachers as one way of enhancing learners' cognitive abilities.

1.8.3.1 Types of portfolios

It is not because portfolios are folders that enfold collected samples that they are all similar, portfolios can be either process or product. Process portfolios involve all the stages learners go through whereas product portfolios enclose finished products only. Crockett (qtd. in Nunes 327) identifies five types of portfolio:

1. Found samples comprise pieces fulfilling class assignments.

2. Processed samples include analyses and assessment of a work already marked by a teacher.
3. Revisions contain samples that have been graded, revised and rewritten.
4. Portfolio projects involve work designed for the sole purpose of inclusion in learners' portfolios.

1.9 Assessment, feedback and correction in writing

Assessment, feedback and correction cannot be dissociated from instruction, they are closely related. Teachers' response to what learners have written has to be effective and appropriate because such responses evaluate learners' progress and development in a skill recognized as the least easy to acquire, and the more demanding physically and mentally. Diagnosis of learners' weaknesses and strengths in writing is critical to learners' progression and improvement.

1.9.1 Assessment

Assessment is the process that defines the extent to which educational objectives are achieved by learners. Assessment is two types: formative and summative. The formative assessment aims at informing teachers and pupils on levels reached. It helps find out in what areas difficulties in learning lie, so as to offer strategies intended to promote learning. The summative assessment, on the other hand, takes place at the end of a pre-set period, learning cycle, or study program; it is widely used to decide about learners' placement in appropriate levels. Summative assessment considers the progress made, the amount of knowledge acquired, and the skills handled so far by learners, in order to determine whether these learners can proceed to upper classes (Programmes de la Deuxieme Annee Moyenne 65).

1.9.2 Feedback

Ur defines feedback as the “information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving this performance” (242). Hence, feedback is the information learners are provided with about how good or bad their performance is. If some distinguish correction and assessment as two separate evaluation tools, Ur regards them as two essential components of feedback. For him, via assessment the learner is simply told how well or badly s/he has done, percentage grades can be an example, and via correction learners are provided with information on aspects of their performance, through explanation, or proposition of better options (242).

1.9.3 Correction

Harmer (How to Teach) points out to correction as an indication that a performance is wrong (108). Rivers argues that regular training in writing necessitates correction of individual scripts, if what is written is to be effective; in like manner she advances that careful correction of short writing assignments at regular intervals, provides the most effective form of practice in writing (255-6). Along the information learners receive on their achievement, grades are allotted to determine the quality of what has been written. Grades, according to Rivers, need to:

be a composite one, allowing a certain percentage for grammatical accuracy, for lexical choice, for expression of time sequence, for general idiomaticity or feeling for authentic expression, and for arrangement of ideas. The emphasis given to each area will vary as students acquire more skill. (257)

With regard to what Rivers advances, as far as the grades learners receive on their writing are concerned, only formal features are taken into account in the evaluation process. She suggests that grades reflect how error-free what has been written is, how appropriate the

vocabulary selected is, how authentic the message is, and how smooth the flow of ideas is. It can be concluded that although, teaching writing can take different orientations, language formal features seem to be the only aspect teachers care for while considering their learners' writing. Within this scope, Zamel reveals that:

Despite the influence of process oriented research, teachers are still and by large concerned with accuracy and correctness of surface-level features of writing and that error identification-the practice of searching and calling attention to error- is still the most widely employed procedure for responding to ESL writing. (84)

1.9.3.1 Ways of correcting

Among the many ways teachers can adopt to correct their learners' writing, Harmer (How to Teach) proposes the following ways:

- Selective correction which is a technique whereby teachers avoid overcorrecting papers. Correction is restricted to only one aspect; it can be spelling or punctuation for example. To render this way of correcting more effective, teachers should discuss in advance with learners what aspects will be looked for.
- Using marking scales involves teachers in marking, out of 10, categories such as grammar, coherence, or vocabulary. To concentrate on such features helps the teacher diagnose the areas that need to be worked out.
- Using marking symbols subsumes the categorization and coding of mistakes. Unless learners recognize the type of mistake they are making, they will continue to make it. A code correction can be applied by teachers while correcting, an S for example attracts learners' attention to a spelling mistake, a G to a grammar mistake, and a T to a wrong tense.

- Reformulation is another way of writing correctly what learners have already written.
- Referring learners to a dictionary or a grammar book entails the consultation of non human material such as dictionaries or grammar books, as an individual step on learners' part in correcting their mistakes.
- Asking the teacher implies a face to face interaction between learners and teachers that can help sort out the problems learners encountered while writing.
- Remedial work encompasses the actions teachers undertake to deal with the problems learners could not surmount while writing. Teachers can show anonymous sentences containing mistakes, and then ask learners to correct them.

All in all, approaches to marking writing vary from one teaching context to another and from one teacher to another, but what has to be taken into account is that assessment, feedback, or correction should not consider form and forget about the intended meaning, because writing is whole whose constituents are interrelated.

1.9.4 Peer and group response

Teachers are not the only accredited persons to evaluate learners' writing, peers can also respond to their colleagues products. Harmer (How to Teach) considers peer response as valuable in the writing process because it encourages learners to work collaboratively, and is very important especially for learners who react passively to teachers' responses. When correction emanates from a peer it not conceived as a command (116). Among the other merits of peer and group response is that an audience other than the teacher is recognized, what learners write is read by their classmates. Added to this real audience is communication among learners through the written medium, and the development of critical skills in learners. Shaaban suggests that learners write evaluative and encouraging notes for each member of their team, in which they stress their positive contribution to

team work (38). The criticism levelled at the concept of peer response relates to its time consuming nature, and to whether the language skills of learners are good enough to criticize their peers (Ur 171).

Conclusion

In conclusion to this chapter, it can be said that learning to write is gaining grounds in importance, it a skill that allows integration in social roles. Nevertheless, it is the least easy skill to acquire in comparison to other skills. Writing cannot be acquired but through formal instruction, that is why teachers need consider seriously the way they introduce this skill to learners. Teachers can guide learners through some stages of development, or recommend some types of writing. Similarly, they can select among the different orientations, the teaching of writing takes, the one that suits best their learners' needs, and objectives. Whatever approach is adopted, product, process, or genre-based, teachers have to respond to learners' writing. This response can be an assessment, a feedback, or a correction.

Chapter two: Competency-based Approach and teaching of writing

Introduction

Language teaching field witnessed the emergence of various approaches which rise, either as an extension or a reaction to one another.

In this chapter we will examine one of those approaches, that is the competency – based approach in Algerian second year middle school, and try to give an overview of the status of writing under major teaching approaches before a general description of how is writing viewed under the Competency-based Approach at Algerian second year middle school.

2.1 Competency –based approach

Before we embark on an overview of the Competency-based Approach, three terms are generally confused and need to be defined. The three terms are: approach, method, and technique.

2.1.1 Definition of approach, method, and technique

Anthony views that:

The arrangement is hierarchical. The organizational key is that techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach....An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon , the selected approach.

An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. Within one approach, there can be many methods... A technique is implemental – that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective . Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well.

(qtd. in Richards and Rodgers 15)

Accordingly, an approach is the broadest and encompasses theories of language and language learning, a method specifies how a language ought to be taught, a technique being the most specific, involves classroom activities and devices.

2.1.2 Background of the Competency-based Approach

Employers, among others, denounce schools and universities ' incapacity to form effective adults, able to transfer to real- life situations what they have been inculcated, an opinion backed by Slavin who also views that:

If a student can fill in blanks on a language arts test but cannot write a clear letter to a friend or a prospective employer, or can multiply with decimals and percents on a math test but cannot figure sales tax, then that student's education has been sadly misdirected. (241)

For Slavin if a student cannot apply what has been acquired in school, in extra school contexts then his or her education needs reconsideration.

An approach, namely the Competency-based Approach came in an attempt to bridge the gap between school life and real life, by relating school acquisitions to varied and pertinent contexts of use inside as well outside school.

The Competency- based Approach was first applied in USA military field. It has, then, been extended to the professional training domain where it proved its worth. The application of the Competency-based Approach in USA educational field came as a response to the problems this field has witnessed. Tuxworth cites that " the 60's were tumultuous times in education in USA: demands for curriculum reform, dissatisfaction with teacher training were features of the climate when emerged the CBET " (11).

The Competency-based Approach, as its name suggests, seeks to establish competences in learners so as they can put in practice what has been acquired in school, in other extra school settings. It is an approach that revolves around three main concepts that are competence, problem-situation, and transfer of knowledge.

2.1.3 Definition of competence

‘Competence’ as defined in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary is the ability to do something well (246). Less frequent but also used is ‘competency’ which is technical and refers to the skill that one needs in a particular job or for a particular task (246). Competence will be retained in our current study, since more used and less technical. Competence is a notion borrowed from the language of markets, investments, and products.

Gentile and Bencini report Perrenoud's definition of competence as the faculty of mobilizing a set of cognitive resources such as knowledge, capacities, and information, to face with efficacy and pertinence a family of situations. Still, Perrenoud, in the same interview, gives the example of knowing how to treat an ill child as a competence which does not only mobilize capacities such as taking the temperature, knowing how to observe the physiological signs, and how to administer a

remedy, but also requires knowledge of pathologies and their symptoms, some emergency measures, what medicines to dispense, and some medical and pharmaceutical services (10). Similarly, Le Bortef states that a competence relates to the mobilization of one's cognitive resources to face with success a family of complex situations (21). For Rolle- Boumelic a competence is the integration of knowledge and capacities for the sake of a problem resolution. (20). In Programmes de La Deuxieme Annee Moyenne, Competence is defined as "a know how-to-act process which integrates a set of capacities, skills, and knowledge mobilized to face problem- situations" (44).

Perrenoud (Developper des Competences Dés l'Ecole) urges teachers to create the conditions that lead to the establishment of competences in learners. These latter have to face problem-situations which require the mobilization of school acquisitions: learners can be confronted to an enigma to elucidate, a problem to solve, a decision to take, or a project to conceive. With regard to the aforementioned definitions of competence, four key elements are to be retained: knowledge, skill, capacity, and attitude.

Knowledge according to Greene “refers to all the information we have stored in memory, including common sense knowledge. It can be thought of as a record of past experiences, knowledge of facts and know-how about what to do and when” (18).

Support Document for the Competency-base Approach, defines knowledge as “entities of learning which are part of us. Knowledge can be declarative (found in a dictionary, for instance) or procedural (methods of action not always consciously devised) (24).

Skill as noted by Sullivan is “a task or group of tasks performed to a specific level of competence or proficiency which often use motor functions and typically require the manipulation of instrument and equipment.”

Capacity in Support Document for the Competency-based Approach is “a know-how, adequate acting which allows someone to take up a role, a position or activity” (24).

An attitude is identified by Support Document of the Competency-based Approach as “a relatively stable and sustainable integration of certain values which facilitate certain behaviours. It is not directly observable, but can be inferred from the observation of behaviours” (24).

All in all, for Perrenoud (*Developper des Competences Dés l’Ecole*) there is no consensual definition of competence, it is a concept subject to controversies.

3.1.4 Definition of problem –situation

As its name suggests, a problem – situation alludes to an obstacle to surmount, or a problem to solve. In this respect advocates of the Competency-based Approach urge teachers to place learners in front of problems to reflect on, instead of requiring them to regurgitate information presented by the teacher. In front of problem-situations, learners capitalize on their previously acquired knowledge to find a solution, and this will result in the construction of new knowledge.

Perrenoud (*Dix Nouvelles Competences*) refers to Astolfi's description of a problem – situation when he states that a problem-situation is centered on an obstacle to overcome through hypothesis generation, the obstacle to overcome needs to be challenging but not insurmountable. Astolfi, always

quoted by Perrenoud, views that in the problem-situation pedagogy; it is question of soliciting learners in their Zone of Proximal Development (44-5).

Vygotsky termed the Zone of Proximal Development the conceptual distance between what learners can do on their own, and what they can do with assistance of more competent adults or peers (86).

2.1.5 Transfer of knowledge

Transfer for Ingram “has to do with the effect of past learning on present learning and with the effect of intervening learning on the recall of past learning” (264).

The application of knowledge acquired in one situation to new situations is one of the main objectives of the Competency- based Approach, but this transfer of knowledge from one situation to another, or to real- life situations should not be taken for granted; it is not because students do well on tests that their teachers can ensure that they can transfer to real life contexts what they have learned.

Slavin beholds that “students must receive specific instruction in how to use their skills and information to solve problems and encounter a variety of problem- solving experiences if they are to be able to apply much of what they learned in school” (241). Accordingly, problem- based learning provides training in transfer of what has been learnt to other contexts.

Slavin also concludes that transfer can take place when two factors are taken into account; first, how well the skills or information were learned in the initial situation, and second how similar is this initial situation to the situation to which this information is to be applied (242).

For Slavin “what is memorized by rote is unlikely to transfer to new situations no matter how thoroughly it was mastered” (242). Parrot learning does not help in transfer of knowledge.

2.2 The competency- based approach in Algerian year middle school

Drawing on Richards and Rodgers' notions of ‘approach’, ‘design’, and ‘procedure’, approach specifies the theory of language and language learning which underlies the particular approach; design involves the objectives, organization and content of the particular syllabus type, teaching and learning activities, teachers and learners' roles, and the role of instructional materials. Last but not least, a procedure relates to the classroom practices and techniques.

In what follows will be outlined how the Competency-based Approach- as an approach, design, and procedure- is applied in Algerian second year middle school.

2.2.1 Approach

2.2.1.1 Theory of language

Among the three theoretical views of language, the competency- based approach subscribes to the functional and interactional views.

The functional view insinuates that language is a means for communicating functional meaning. This view stresses the semantic and communicative elements of language (Richards and Rodgers 17). Furthermore, Finocchiaro and Brumfit point out that “a functional notional approach to language learning places major emphasis on the communicative purpose(s). It focuses on what people want to do or what they want to accomplish through speech ”(13).

The interactional view considers language as a tool for the realization of interpersonal relations, and for the fulfilment of social transactions between persons.

Language, through this interactional view, helps create and preserve social relations (Richards and Rodgers 17).

The Competency – based Approach is conceived as an extension of the communicative approach, thus the theory underlying it ascertains that language is communication and language teaching seeks to develop what Hymes coins “communicative competence”.

2.2.1.2 Theory of learning

Richards and Rodgers claim that a theory of learning underlying an approach should answer two questions: what are the cognitive and psychological processes involved in learning a language? What conditions need to be met so that learning can take place?

As far as the psychological and cognitive processes involved in language learning are concerned, the Competency- based Approach relies on a conception of learning and teaching which is both cognitive and socio- constructive. What is cognitivism, constructivism and socio- constructivism?

Cognitivism

Cognitivism is traced back to Plato and Descartes, it is deeply rooted in the belief that mind is the source of knowledge. This theory has been reintroduced by Chomsky, and came as a reaction to what was expounded by behaviourists whereby language learning is a connection between stimulus inputs and behavioural responses. For Chomsky, “the rationalist approach holds that beyond the peripheral processing mechanisms, there are innate ideas and principles of various kinds that determine the form of the acquired knowledge in what may be a rather restricted and highly organized way " (48), language learning is not habit formation, there is

an active involvement of the learner in inferring principles and rules and then testing them out. Language learning, for the adherents of this cognitive or rationalist theory, is an active process of internalizing the system of the language.

Constructivism

Piaget is the outstanding figure that is always associated with constructivism. It is a theory of learning which upholds that learning is not a passive transmission of information. Learning is constructed, in that learners build new knowledge upon previous experiences and knowledge.

Constructivism is a theory best introduced if structured in a frame where tasks, concepts and questions take the form of problems to be solved, and obstacles to be surmounted and in which there is an active involvement of learners. Piaget views that schemata, or previous knowledge, can be laid down through active involvement (qtd. in Child 402).

Cardinal to constructivist pedagogy is the conception of learning as meaning making, and learning as the negotiation of meaning; knowledge is constructed not reproduced.

Smith asserts that “constructivism finds expression through such activities as cooperative learning, teacher- student negotiated theme cycles, process writing and reading and portfolio assessment” (221). Consequently project-based learning, which is advocated by the Competency- based Approach, has at its foundation constructivist theory.

Socio- constructivism

Classroom knowledge, through the socio- constructive perception of learning, is not transmitted from teacher to learner, but is socially constructed. Social interaction

according to Vygotsky, the leader of this theory, plays an important role in cognitive development. According to this theory of learning, learners will advance beyond their present level of development, to a higher one if they interact with more competent peers, teachers or parents.

Project-work is a teaching device that fosters interaction, collaboration and teamwork skills among learners. Sometimes parents and teachers are solicited to help in the achievement of projects. According to Vygotsky's theory, social interaction promotes the learners' cognitive capacities; there is a social construction of knowledge in which both teachers and learners are co-constructors of knowledge.

With regard to the conditions that need to be met so that the learning processes can be activated, the Competency-based Approach stipulates that learners must face problem situations and obstacles that need to be challenging yet within learners' capacities. Social interaction, according to the socio-constructive view, promotes learning.

2.2.2 Design

2.2.2.1. Objectives

Insofar as the competency-based approach builds on a functional and interactional view of language, it seeks to develop communicative skills in learners: to enable them use English to express themselves meaningfully, and make themselves understood. The Competency-based Approach aims at establishing three competences in learners:

1. to interact orally in English.
2. to interpret authentic, oral or written , documents .
3. to produce simple , oral or written , messages .

In addition to the three targeted competences, the Competency- based Approach seeks to relate school acquisitions to varied and pertinent contexts of use, so as to render those acquisitions viable and sustainable (Programmes de la Deuxieme Annee Moyenne 43). In other words, knowledge acquired at school is useful and long-lasting if it is transferred to varied situations. The approach also seeks to set up language forms, functions, and social skills that help learners act as effective users of language in real- world contexts. The approach aims at the establishment of a know-how-to-do, and a know-how-to-be in learners.

Last but not least, the Competency- based Approach aspires to inter-disciplinarity in which the learner mobilizes knowledge acquired in more than one discipline, to face with efficacy a problem- situation; this mobilization results in the construction of a transversal competence. The learner can apply what s/he has learnt in biology to conceive a herbal guide as part of an English course project work.

2.2.2.2 Syllabus

The syllabus relies on a communicative and Competency- based Approach, in which learning sections are organized and specified in terms of topics, and where five main aspects are stressed: know-how-to- do – related to competences, socio- cultural themes, grammar forms, lexical forms and pronunciation.

Know- how- to- do-, related to competences , relates to the functions and notions pupils need, to communicate and interact with others; the socio- cultural themes invite pupils to consider some cultural aspects all over the world, through texts and documents related to the topic of the file. The grammar and lexical forms deal with the grammar and lexis needed to cover the topic of each file. Pronunciation is stressed

through sounds identification, stress and intonation. A project culminates the five aspects covered.

2.2.2.3 Types of learning and teaching activities

To be faithful to the Competency-based Approach claims, whereby a competence is associated with action, learners engage in communicative tasks which as defined by Nunan (Designing Tasks) are “a piece of 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” (10).

For Prabhu task is “an activity which requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought” (24).

Pupils in the Competency- based Approach are required to develop communicative skills. Communicative language teaching theoreticians endorse the use of tasks that comprise ‘an information gap’ and ‘information transfer’: learners will do the same task, but each learner has different information necessary to complete the task (Richards and Rodgers 22). The selected tasks rely on a cognitive classification “based on the cognitive operations different types of tasks involve” (Ellis 213) and which include what Prabhu dubbed information –gap activities, ‘reasoning- gap activities’, and ‘opinion-gap activities’.

- Information- gap activities involve a transfer of given information from one person to another – or from one form to another or from one place to another.

– Reasoning – gap activities subsume deriving some new information from given information through processes of inference, deduction, practical reasoning, or perception of relationships or patterns.

– Opinion–gap activities encompass identifying and articulating a personal preference, feeling, or attitude in response to a given situation (46 -7).

In addition to Prabhu's task types, Willis ' typology (23-4) deals with the operations learners are asked to effectuate. The tasks are classified as follows:

- Listing
- Ordering and sorting
- comparing
- Problem – solving
- Sharing personal experiences
- Creative tasks, often called projects (26 -7).

Along the abovementioned activities, the textbook encloses completion and cloze exercises; recognition exercises, such as underlining and boxing; giving short or long answers; vocabulary review, and games.

As far as the arrangement of pupils is involved, the Competency–based Approach favours group work. What's more, group work as pointed out by Prabhu “will generate spontaneous interaction between members of a group, creating opportunities for the deployment of their emerging internal systems” (81). Harmer (The Practice of English) also views that group work fosters learners' autonomy in that they are responsible for their decisions: no teacher to tell them what to do (117). Furthermore, Paulston and Britanik view that group work provides learners with more chances to practice language; it also contributes to a positive, affective climate and promotes cognitive development (79 – 80).

2.2.2.4. Task Components

Task components generally establish the components of which a task is made.

We will examine here the suggestions of four major works in the field.

Candlin, for example, views that tasks have to involve seven components:

- Input which relates to the data introduced by teachers to learners.
- Roles which determine the relationship between participants in the task.
- Setting which indicates the environment where tasks are completed.
- Actions which correspond to the activities learners engage in while performing tasks.
- Monitoring which relates to the control of tasks.
- Outcomes which refer to the goals of tasks.
- Feedback which deals with the evaluation of tasks (19).

Breen on his part designates five components of tasks:

- Task objectives relate the purposes for which teachers engage learners in such tasks.
- Task content involve the input learners are provided with.
- Task procedures show how learners fulfill the task.
- Learner contributions engender what learners bring to the task.
- Task situation involves the environment where the task takes place.

Nunan (Designing Tasks) suggests that tasks should contain six components:

- Goals or the aims behind the selected task; teachers try to find out why they had learners do a given task (48).

- Input or data and information learners are provided with, and from which they depart, the input can be a dialogue, a text, a film or a letter (53).

- Activities specify what learners will do with the data. The activities can be real- world, or pedagogic activities. Learners, in real – world tasks, are called upon to near in class, the kind of tasks needed to be performed outside the classroom. On the other hand, pedagogic tasks learners are engaged in, require a performance very improbable to be carried out in the real – world. Real- world tasks are selected on needs analysis basis. Pedagogic tasks rely on some theory of second language acquisition (40-1).

- Learners ' roles allude to the part learners play in fulfilling the task, in addition to the interpersonal relationship between participants (79).

- Teachers' roles pertain to the teachers' part in the task and the type of relationship they are supposed to set with the learners (84).

- Setting: refers to the classroom setup; it also considers where and how is the task carried out. Is it an in –class or an out-of- class task? Is it an individual, a pair or a group work? (91- 3)

In like manner, Hyland distinguishes between physical settings, i.e. whether the task is carried out inside or outside the classroom, and social settings dealing with how learners perform the task, i.e. will they work individually, in pairs or in small groups? (118)

With reference to task components, mentioned above, it is noticed that Algerian second year middle school pupils are engaged in tasks that seek to achieve various goals and objectives. The learners are provided with an input to work on, and different roles are assigned to both teachers and pupils. Furthermore, different actions, skills and abilities are practised in different tasks. Pupils and teachers use

pedagogical tools to illustrate the input. The activities are of varying length that is why the time spent varies from one activity to another.

Consequently, if we come to establish our task components they will involve:

- Goals and objectives.
- Teacher's instructions or roles.
- Learners' tasks or roles.
- Task type or actions, skills and abilities practiced in the task.
- Material and media used or pedagogical tools which illustrate the input.
- Timing or duration of skill and abilities focus.

In addition to the types of learning and teaching activities, different roles are assigned to both teachers and learners under the Competency – based Approach.

2.2.2.5 Teachers ' roles

The teacher's role in any approach is closely related to the assumption about language theory and language learning theory. The teacher's role under the competency - based approach has to parallel the demands of the new method. The teacher is no more just a transmitter of knowledge whose unique duty is to fill in empty vessels, but rather is assigned the role of facilitator who engages learners in tasks, and helps them develop learning strategies for an effective learning. S /he is a counselor in that s/he exemplifies “an effective communicator seeking to maximize the meshing of speaker intention and hearer interpretation, through the use of paraphrase, confirmation and feedback” (Richards and Rodgers 78), and is a resource person consulted about information or advice. Furthermore, the teacher is required to

consider the individuality of learners that do not all move at the same rate, by resorting, if necessary, to individual teaching.

The teacher is also required to be a researcher and a learner especially in how projects are realized and what requirements need to be met for the accomplishment of those projects. Besides, the teacher has to initiate pupils to collaboration through pair and group work, much valuable in a socio-constructive perception of learning and teaching.

In short, the teacher needs to help learners feel responsible for their learning. If these are the roles attributed to teachers under the Competency -based Approach what roles are assigned to learners?

2.2.2.6 Learners' roles

The competency - based approach is learner-centred, the learners are no more passive receivers of knowledge, they play an active rather than a reactive role in the learning process, and are required to construct and mobilize their resources to face with efficacy a problem-situation. Hence, learners have to develop strategies that enable them overcome such obstacles, acquire problem- solving skills, and increase their intellectual potential. Learners act upon what they are learning, and thus assimilate better what they are learning. Additionally, they are required to collaborate and negotiate information. The competency-based approach initiates learners into self- assessment, in an attempt to render learners more responsible for their learning, and to help them evaluate their acquisitions.

2.2.2.7 Role of instructional material

Hyland ascertains that in EFL settings, materials are of paramount importance as they may be the only contact that learners can have with English and provide them

with the only opportunities to study target texts (86). The instructional materials seek to facilitate and promote communication between learners; focus is on the communicative abilities of interaction, interpretation and production. Stress is on meaningful and pertinent exchanges of information, rather than on the exclusive presentation of structures. The textbook uses short dialogues, passages and, as much as possible, authentic texts. Different activities and task-based materials are also used.

2.2.3 Procedure

The textbook follows a topical / functional format that includes five topical files. Each file includes three sequences, Learn about culture, Check, a project and a self-evaluation grid to complete. Each sequence starts with an input that exposes learners to authentic language involving a communicative function: learners listen to a short conversation or passage for a particular purpose, they listen to fill in a form as in file one, sequence two: Listen and Speak page 12, or listen in order to locate places on a map as in file two sequence three: Listen and Speak page 36. Then follows some practice in phonology through sounds identification, stress and intonation. Pupils afterwards practise through oral or written activities what they have just learnt; they are also introduced some new vocabulary related to the topic explored. Each sequence ends with a contextualized focus on language form that underlies the function highlighted in the opening conversation or passage i.e. learners are shown instances of the rule displayed in discourse, then are required to practice it, before developing a rule. Some socio-cultural aspects related to the topic of the file are covered through short extracts to be read, followed by activities that consolidate what has been learnt. Pupils consider their acquisitions via a set of exercises in Check.

The transfer and mobilization of pupils' acquired knowledge to solve a problem - situation manifests itself in the project work. The project is a real - world task because, as imparted by Nunan (Designing Tasks) learners, through the project work, rehearse some kinds of behaviours in the class that are required of them in real - world ,whereas in pedagogic tasks, learners are required to perform tasks unlikely to be performed outside the classroom (40-1). The project based - pedagogy as stated in Guidelines for Users “aims to modify school practice in depth and strives to change radically the relationship between school and all the social practices as a whole” (6). Projects are a suitable teaching method that link knowing with doing; they are, also, a tangible evidence of learners' mastery of the abilities they require to act in the real - world.

A self - assessment grid, to be completed by the learners at the end of each file, closes up the whole procedure teachers and learners go through in second year middle school. Self- assessment seeks to render pupils more responsible for their learning.

2.3 Writing under Language Teaching Methods/Approaches

2.3.1 Writing under the Grammar –Translation Method

The Grammar-Translation Method is the most ancient in the learning/teaching field. As maintained by Richards and Rodgers, it is propulsion of the approach used in the teaching of classical languages, on modern languages. It is an approach which endorses rule focused learning and de-contextualized instruction and practice; language learning is viewed as a key to cultural and intellectual improvement.

Under this method, writing is emphasized as a back up to grammar: after long and complex grammatical explanations and demonstrations in the native language, students

practise their knowledge of grammar by: writing paradigms, constructing sentences in the foreign language, and writing responses to highly literary texts (Rivers 16). Likewise Richards and Rodgers state that the Grammar Translation Method "approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language"(3).

Written exercises, as well as translation, are a tangible proof that students have grasped those grammatical details. Rivers and Temperly view that "written translation into English may be used to test application of the rules of grammar, as in the translation of sample sentences or the translation of passages" (326). Composition, under the Grammar-Translation approach, is identified with translation (Kelly 16).

Accuracy is the aspect teachers stress in this method, even if the translated texts give versions that are not idiomatic: no matter if the texts do not sound natural to a native speaker, as long as they are correct (Rivers17). Accurate translations indicate students' mastery of grammatical rules. Altogether, writing under the Grammar – Translation Method is but a medium used for the application of the grammatical knowledge through either repetitive written exercises or translation, where only the accuracy of the product matters.

2.3.2 Writing under the Direct Method

The Direct Method came as a reaction to the Grammar-Translation Method; the former unlike the latter, however, sought a direct use of the foreign language. The purpose set behind the Direct Method is "to develop the ability to think in the language, whether conversing, reading, or writing" (Rivers (18). Conversational skills take precedence over written skills; learners should hear the language first, before seeing it in written

form (Richards and Rodgers 8). As far as writing is concerned, students under the Direct Method learn to write the language by transcription in a first stage, then by composing summaries of what they have already read. The reading material, to which learners are introduced, needs to be about what they have discussed orally. Besides those summaries, students write simple accounts of what has been discussed, and dealt with orally (Rivers 20). Hence, speech primes and writing is there just to prop what has been spoken. Writing reinforces what has already been learnt in the speaking phases of lessons.

2.3.3 Writing under the Reading Method

The impracticality of the Direct Method, which requires a native-speaker or a teacher with a native-like proficiency in the foreign language, led to the emergence of the Reading Method, at a time when people could not travel abroad. Reading is the skill this method seeks to foster. Writing under this approach is confined to exercises that would help learners retain vocabulary and structures necessary to the comprehension of the reading texts (Rivers 22).

2.3.4 Writing under the Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching

This approach stresses the oral aspect of language, and practice in situations. It draws much from the Direct Method in that the target language is used in classrooms, and language teaching starts with speech.

Writing, under this approach, is deferred until sufficient grammatical and lexical grounds are established, and “Language teaching begins with the spoken language. Material is taught orally before it is presented in written form” (Richards and Rodgers 34).

Accordingly, the study of language focuses on spoken language; written language is conceived as spoken language put into written form (Brookes and Grundy 1).

2.3.5 Writing under the Audio-lingual Approach

The combination of structuralism as a linguistic trend and behaviourism as a theory of learning has given rise to an approach dubbed the Audio-lingual Approach where language is speech, and learning is habit formation. Oral skills are primary, and written form is delayed because:

The early introduction of the graphic form of the language has been regarded as a potential threat to mastery of the sound system and to the development of a near-native accent because the symbols used in writing or printing already have associations with native language pronunciations. (Rivers 37)

According to Rivers, if written skills take precedence over oral skills at an early stage of language learning, the development of a near –native accent will be hindered, because FL written symbols have associations with native language pronunciation.

Writing under this approach is imitative, i.e. learners imitate and manipulate models supplied by the teacher. For advocates of this approach, writing is a product resulting from the writer’s command of grammatical and lexical knowledge (Hyland 3).

Under the Audio-lingual approach, writing is strictly controlled by the teacher. In fact, the notion of controlled composition stems from the belief that language learning is habit formation (Silva 13). Raimes (Techniques in Writing) states that learners are required to “work on given material and perform strictly prescribed operations on it” (6). The main purpose set behind, is to encourage learners come out with error-free writing.

The underlying theory of learning, in this approach, stipulates that habits are established when reinforcement follows the response, that is why “negative assessment is

to be avoided as far as possible since it functions as ‘punishment’ and may inhibit or discourage learning. Positive assessment provides reinforcement of correct responses and promotes learning (Ur 243). The teacher, when responding to learners writing, has to provide them with positive feedback so as to promote their skill in writing and to establish the writing habit in them. The teacher who is the reader of learners’ papers takes the “role of editor or proof-reader, not especially interested in quality of ideas or expression but primarily concerned with formal linguistic features” (Silva 13). The written product of learners under this approach is a means for language practice, in which sheer correctness is sought.

2.3.6 Writing under the Communicative Approach

The aforementioned approaches fell into disfavour because they resulted in students at a loss to communicate in the target language; the communicative and functional dimensions of language were so far neglected. This approach adduces that language mastery should not be measured only by how well the learner knows about the language, but by how well s/he can use it to communicate as well.

As far as writing is concerned, Brookes and Grundy advance that the prevalent acceptance of communicative language teaching stands as one of the main motives behind the recognition of the real significance of teaching writing as a skill. Also, the Communicative Approach plays an important role in directing its adopters to the analysis of how things are done (i.e. the processes used) (11).

Correspondingly, writing under the Communicative Approach enjoys a high status, it is a skill which is not relegated to the last stages of learning, Finocchiaro and Brumfit note that writing can be introduced right from the beginning if desired (92).

Under the Communicative approach, writing is communicative; what one writes is not just a vehicle for language practice, or a string of linguistic items that reinforce speech, but an act that presupposes a writer writing about a particular topic, with a purpose and an audience in perspective. Raimes (Techniques in Writing) views that “some feel that writers do their best when writing is truly a communicative act with a writer writing for a real reader” (6). Moreover, Pincas beholds that writing in its communicative dimension can be grouped under three main headings. The first one involves communicative skills; in which writing is functional i.e. it fulfils a specific purpose and suits a specific subject matter. The second one involves organization skills, where it is question of coordinating ideas, building paragraphs, and employing linking words.

The third and last one relates to stylistic skills in which the four main styles have to be handled: narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative, besides the right level of formality and the appropriate tone.

It is also worth noting, that with the advent of the Communicative approach emphasis in writing shifted from accuracy to fluency; learners are encouraged to put down their ideas, not to do exercises (Byrne 22). Error-free writing is no more targeted, as long as learners can convey meaningful messages, content primes on form, errors are tolerated, and error-making has become a common practice. Errors are conceived as an evidence of “learners' developing competence in the foreign language” (Parrott 68). Correction does not involve all the mistakes; focus is on the mistakes that interfere with the conveying of meaningful messages (Ur 224).

2.3.7 Writing under the Competency –based Approach at Algerian second year middle school

If the aim behind the teaching of writing to advanced learners is to “write essays that match the level of content and mastery of language skills required of native speakers in an academic environment (Kroll 250), beginning learners, with regard to the limited amount of language at their command, need to be introduced to this skill in a fitted way so as to favour, at later stages, an effective communication of ideas through the written medium.

2.3.7.1 Writing for communicating and learning

Algerian second year middle school pupils (2AM), as stated in Programmes de la Deuxieme Annee Moyenne use writing for learning and communication (47). Writing for communication is greatly influenced by the advent of communicative approaches to language teaching, and the desire to develop a communicative competence. Two main questions need to be answered as far as writing in its communicative dimension is involved: why and for whom does one write?

Pupils, under the Competency-based Approach, realize that writing involves a subject, an audience and a purpose. They write to communicate a message, and teachers presuppose an audience other than themselves, another 2AM class for example.

Raines (Why Write?) views that the importance of writing can be “enhanced if we use it for learning all the language skills” (40). This seems to be the case of 2AM pupils where writing consolidates what has been listened to, spoken and read. Writing is also a skill not taught on its own but used to learn English.

2.3.7.2 Product versus process oriented approach

Writing, in 2AM classes under the Competency-based Approach, is also attended to through both product and process approaches. The former centers on the end result of writing, and the latter on the process of writing itself. Product – oriented

approaches involve learners in question–answer display and imitating, copying, and transforming models of correct language texts. The latter stresses the stages learners go through before coming up with a final product. Each approach has its advantages, the product approaches focus on form and emphasize sentence structure and grammar, and this provides a good preparation for written examinations. The process -oriented approaches raise pupils' awareness to the stages writers need to go through before reaching the final output. The process approach to writing also recognizes that writing is non – linear and recurrent: the writer can move backward, at any time of the writing process. 2AM pupils go through three stages: the preparation phase, the realization phase, and the presentation phase. The first stage encompasses the choice of the theme: how will it be selected? Is it the teacher or the pupils who select the theme? Will all the pupils work on the same theme? But whether selected by the teacher or by the pupils, the theme must be interesting and appealing to pupils' interests. It needs to be challenging but not impossible to achieve. Once the theme is selected, the project's timescale and objectives are set. The teacher needs to undertake, first, the role of a knowledge holder, then step by step s/he becomes a facilitator who guides pupils, and from time to time s/he can become a co-learner. Evaluation criteria ought to be established at this stage. The second stage deals with data gathering, planning, drafting and revising. The last stage subsumes the presentation of the final product in front of an audience where feedback is expected from peers and teachers.

The combination of the product and process approaches is palpable in the project work, because the final product shares equal billing with the process pupils engage in.

2.37.3 Writing competence

As far as writing is concerned, the Competency - based Approach sets out to establish in 2AM pupils two competences: to comprehend a written document and to produce a simple written message. These two competences bring pupils in direct contact with the printed word. For the interpretation of authentic written documents, pupils, as enunciated in Programmes de la Deuxieme Annee Moyenne, are required to show their comprehension through an oral and/ or written reformulation of different types of authentic texts (47). This exposure to the written text can provide pupils with models of how language is organized, how words combine to form meaningful paragraphs that serve a specific purpose. As asserted by Hyland, those models (written documents to interpret) support and direct learners to explore the key lexical, grammatical, and rhetorical characteristics of a text and to employ this knowledge to express their own examples of the genre (88). Additionally, pupils are sometimes required to respond in writing to those documents. This implies some practice in writing because 2AM pupils are also required to produce simple written messages. By the end of the year pupils are expected to express their ideas in a logical and chronological way paying attention to syntax, orthography and punctuation, so as to bring out pertinent and coherent messages. Pupils, less and less guided by their teacher, develop skill in written expression, and end by evaluating the way they proceeded for further improvements (Programmes de la Deuxieme Annee Moyenne 53).

The aforementioned document specifies that this competence encompasses the activation of background knowledge i.e. semantic, syntactic and orthographic knowledge to construct a written text. Pupils need to establish a plan for what they are to write:

- What am I supposed to do?

- What can I write?
- How am I going to write it?
- In which order?

The context, the communicative purpose set behind, the audience for whom this work is directed, and the theme are taken into account. Pupils, then, structure their texts whereby they select the appropriate words, structures, and organize their text elements and ideas. Once their text structured, a revision of the text succeeds; pupils re-read their texts, make their texts read by someone else; check spelling, syntax and punctuation; verify the pertinence of information and coherence, and try to avoid redundancy and contradictions. Pupils at the end rewrite their texts (Programmes de la Deuxieme Annee Moyenne 55-6).

2.3.7.4 Teachers and pupils' roles

Regardless to the way writing is attended to, Kroll proclaims that learners at an early stage of language learning, need to be introduced to instances of writing in an absolutely, or relatively controlled way (250). 2AM pupils, as beginners, write in English within a controlled –to- free framework. Crookes and Chaudron view that some activities necessitate the full control of the teacher, as copying; some are semi – controlled, and do not need a strict control, as information transfer or application from one mode to another. Others allow more freedom to learners, as is the case in games, problem solving or drama (52-3). The typology of tasks used in the textbook endorses this controlled –to- free continuum. Pupils at the beginning of each file write under the teacher's control and, step by step, reach the project work where they no more write under the strict control of the teacher. There is a free choice of words, structures, and personal views: all the tasks carried out along the file are a

preparation for the realization of the project. Meanwhile, teachers try to equip pupils with the necessary vocabulary, structures and strategies they might need to complete their projects.

2.3.7.5 Evaluation of writing under the Competency-based Approach

Evaluation of writing under the Competency-based Approach asserts some criteria to be taken into account; they involve the pertinence of ideas, the coherence and cohesion of the text, respect of presentation and textual organization, the originality of the product, and authenticity of information. Evaluation can involve the comparison between the present writing and a precedent one (Programmes de la Deuxieme Annee Moyenne 54).

Conclusion

As a conclusion, one can state that the Competency-based Approach emerged to bridge the gap that exists between school acquisitions and social practices. It is an approach that revolves around three key notions that are competence, transfer of knowledge, and problem-situation. Competence involves the integration of knowledge, skills, capacities, and attitudes. Problem-situation is the obstacle learners need surmount. Transfer of knowledge refers to the application of what has been learnt in other contexts of use. In an attempt to shed light on the implementation of the Competency-based Approach in Algerian second year middle school, an overview of this approach is provided. Other major teaching methods/approaches are also considered but only in terms of the place they devote to writing; particular focus has been laid on writing under the Competency-based Approach.

Chapter three: Field investigation

Introduction

Montaigne views that “saying is one thing; doing is another thing” (qtd. in Robson 191). This insinuates that what one says might be different from what s/he does, hence the necessity when enquiring about classroom practices to get involved in classrooms to scrutinize what actually takes place between teachers and learners.

This chapter is undertaken with this spirit, we will attempt to investigate about the importance of writing under the Competency-based Approach, through the observation of what teachers do in classrooms. But prior to this observation, a thorough description of the two files observed, three and four, will pave the way for a better understanding of what classroom practices, as observed in two 2AM classes, involve. Classroom observation will be followed by an analysis of the findings.

3.1 Means of data collection

Observation is the technique used for data collection because as stated by Robson it “seems to be pre-eminently the appropriate technique for getting at ‘real-life’ in the real world. Direct observation in the field permits lack of artificiality, which is all too rare with other techniques” (191).

Wajnryb views that observation can benefit a number of people (1). In like manner, Wragg states that observation, if skillfully handled, helps inform and improve the professional skill of both the observer and the observed (3). Classroom observation can benefit the researcher and teacher, the researcher is supplied with data, and the teacher can benefit from the findings of such observation in improving his/her teaching practices.

Observations has involved two files, file three and file four, and has been carried out during the third term of the school year, in Boughaba Rokia middle school, in Constantine. I have been a pure observer who has taken a detached role, always sitting at the back of the classroom and minimizing to the maximum interaction.

As for the method used to collect information in observation, Wallace suggests four alternatives 'real-time observation' which involves a written record as the lessons develop; 'audio-taping' in which the observer records sounds; 'video-taping' where there is a record of visual images and sound; and 'transcription' which is a written record of the tapes. Lack of electronic means, tape recorder or video, made that real-time observation is the only usable method that can help us collect data.

Focus is only on writing activities, in files three and four. Grids are used to facilitate record those activities. The headings of those grids are extracted from task components, we established with reference to three authors Candlin, Breen, and Nunan (see chapter two). The task components we set, involve: goals and objectives, teachers instructions, pupils task, task type, material and media used, and the timing of each activity. Since objectives and goals are thoroughly explained in file structure description (see following section), they have not been referred to in our grids of observation.

3.2 Sample population

Our sample population comprises two Algerian second year middle school classes, in Constantine. A class involves 37 pupils, and the other class has 38 pupils. Our subjects are 13/14 years old, and can be characterized as beginners; they have studied English as a foreign language for one year. The overall time allotted to the teaching of English is three hours/week.

3.3 File Structure Description

“Spotlight on English”, book two, is a textbook designed for 2AM pupils, i.e. pupils who have studied English for a year. It is set up on the 2003 official syllabus for second year middle school. The syllabus is built on a competency-based approach and seeks to consolidate and develop the three main competences pupils of 1AM were initiated to, namely:

- to interact orally in English
- to interpret authentic oral or written documents .
- to produce simple oral or written messages .

The textbook is made up of five files , each centred around a theme: “A person's profile” in file one, “Language Games” in file two, “Health” in file three, “Cartoons” in file four, “Theatre” in file five. The five files are organized in a similar way, and share the following headings:

3.3.1 Objectives

3.3.2 Learn the language

Learn the language comprises three sequences. All three sequences follow the same pattern. Each sequence unfolds with the objectives it seeks to achieve, then progresses as follows:

3.3.2.1 Listen and Speak

It unfolds in the following pattern:

- Conversation
- Pronunciation and spelling

- a. Listen and repeat
 - b. Identify
 - c. Compare
- Practise stress and intonation
 - Practise
 - Go forward

3. 3.2.2 Discover the language

This section is made up of the following sub-parts:

- Read
- Practise
- Reminder

3.3.3 Listening scripts

3.3.4 Learn about culture

3.3.5 Check

3.3.6 Project

3.3.7 Self-assessment

We will attempt, here, to provide a thorough description of files three and four:

3.3.1 Objectives

The overall objective of both files is the project pupils need to accomplish at the end of the file. Objectives are set up at the beginning of the three sequences. Each sequence in both files opens up with the objectives it sets out to achieve. In file three, sequence one, the objectives set are as follows:

- to consolidate 1ST AM vocabulary about illnesses

- to consolidate " have got "

- to consolidate the imperative

- to use " must" / " mustn't "

- to use " should "

In sequence two, the objectives state;

- to consolidate 1ST AM vocabulary about food , sports , and quantities

- to use adverbs of manner

- to use time adverbs

In sequence three:

– to consolidate 1AM vocabulary about discoveries , medicines , scientists , plants and colours.

– to use passive forms.

- to consolidate adverbs.

In file four, the objectives designed for the three sequences involve:

in sequence one:

– to consolidate 1ST AM vocabulary about leisure activities

- to consolidate time expression : at 3 o' clock , on Sunday

– to consolidate prepositions to / at / for ...

- to make invitations using " would you like "

- to use expressions : yes , I would / yes , I'd love to / yes , I'd really like to

in sequence two :

- to consolidate 1ST AM vocabulary about leisure activities

- to consolidate time expressions : tonight , tomorrow , on Friday , this weekend , next month

- to express future using “going to”

– to plan activities . Ask and answer questions about future activities

in sequence three:

- to consolidate 1AM vocabulary about shopping , games , sports ...

- to use which one / ones

- to use numbers : 12.000 / 35.000.....

If one refers to Brown's definition of goals as broad statements of what the course seeks to achieve, and that more specific statements are objectives explaining “the particular knowledge , behaviours , and / or skills that the learner will be expected to know or perform at the end of the course” (73), ‘to consolidate 1ST AM vocabulary’, or ‘to consolidate a language form’ , as it is stated in all three sequences of both files , are just broad statements or goals rather than objectives . However , " ‘using must or mustn't’, ‘should’, or ‘using passive voice’ in file three, and ‘inviting’ using ‘would you like’, expressing future using ‘going to’ or ‘using which one or ones’, as in file four, are objectives because they are more specific and express what pupils are expected to be able to do at the end of the sequence.

3.3.2 Learn the language

The lexis, structures, notions and functions pupils need, in order to fulfill their projects, are provided in this section which follows the following pattern:

Sequences 1,2, and 3:

3.3.2.1. 'Listen and Speak'

The following listening skills are covered:

- Listening to act out conversations
- Listening for specific information
- Identifying and interpreting topic and information

Prediction and guess are examples of strategies used to develop the listening and speaking skills. Before listening to a conversation, an accompanying picture, in all the Listen and Speak of the three sequences in both files, helps pupils hypothesize about the topic of the conversation and activate their background knowledge. The absence of aural material makes that the hypothesis is either confirmed or disconfirmed in the Listening script the teacher reads. A double burden is, hence, placed on the teacher. First s/he reads to help pupils validate their predictions. Second s/he is the model pupils follow when speaking; the teacher in such cases needs to have a native like accent, if the pupils are to be trained in correct pronunciation. Besides the strategies used to promote the listening and speaking skills, pupils generally act out the conversations, and answer orally some conversation related questions to promote those skills.

Focus on sound and spelling relation in 'Pronunciation and Spelling', and on intonation and stress patterns in 'Practise Stress and Intonation' gives pupils

training in correct pronunciation. Its placement just after the opening conversation highlights the importance of correct pronunciation in the effective communication of messages and interaction.

Pupils are then offered less controlled speaking practice in 'Practise': they engage in tasks in which they re-use the functions and forms previously learnt, through the oral or the written medium.

Pupils in 'Go Forward' follow up the work on the language, through a document they have to interpret: they read a short text with illustrations to which they respond orally or in writing. 2AM learners are initiated into some reading strategies such as guessing from the headlines and illustrations what the subject of their texts is; they then confirm or disconfirm their prediction when they read the text, and do some reading comprehension tasks.

3.3.2.2 Discover the Language

The skeleton or backbone of the language is its grammar, which has to be linked to the meaning it helps convey. Pupils' consciousness is raised to the grammatical rule through an inductive approach. As defined by Sharwood: "the term consciousness raising denotes a deliberate focus on the formal properties of language with a view toward facilitating the development of L2 knowledge. This focus can be initiated by the teacher, or it can be self initiated by the learner (176-177); accordingly, grammar is conceived as a means of enhancing language learning, and is not learned as an end in itself.

In this section of the file, pupils find out how the language works in a contextualized framework, they practise, either orally or in writing, the language

structures they have come across, in the short text they read previously. So as to be internalized, the rules pupils deduce are supplied in Reminders.

3.3.3 Listening scripts

They are the conversations pupils listen to, in ‘Listen and Speak’.

3.3.4 Learn about culture

This section equips pupils with some cultural facts related to the topic of the file. Extracts from real-life contexts initiate tasks and activities, oral or written, that help pupils discover some cultural aspects, and re-invest the items acquired during the ‘Learn the language’ sequences. This section seeks to make of individuals more tolerant persons, ready to accept other individuals’ views that are determined by different cultures.

3.3.5 Check

This section is built around a series of tasks from which the teacher can select the most relevant ones. It aims at helping learners consolidate their acquisitions, and seeks to make sure that the items covered so far have been correctly acquired; some tasks are carried out through both written and oral media. ‘Check’ acts as a classroom evaluation of the learning process, and helps guide the teacher to some remedial work in case pupils encounter some learning problems.

3.3.6 Project work

Pupils through the project work are placed in front of a problem situation whose resolution requires the integration and re- investment of the knowledge, skills and capacities acquired along the file in order to come out with a tangible output or a solution , and in which pupils’ attitudes are inferred from teacher's observation.

In files three and four, through their project work, pupils are placed in front of problem - situations. In file three, the project involves making a herbal or medical guide. In file four it is writing a story and making it into a cartoon strip. The obstacle pupils face in both files is challenging but not insurmountable, because all along both files, pupils are provided with the necessary functions, notions, lexis, and structures that help them materialize their projects. Language is not used as an end in itself but as a means of solving a problem – situation.

Projects are not only the context in which pupils re-invest what has been learnt with the help of more competent adults or peers, but are the evidence that they have acquired the abilities they need to act efficiently in real - world .

3.3.7 Self-assessment

It is a grid that closes up the file and in which pupils evaluate their acquisitions of file components. Self- assessment is one way of rendering pupils responsible of their learning. They decide by themselves what they learnt to understand, to say, to write and to do. Likewise, they express their points of view as to whether they enjoyed or not the topic of the file, the projects, the activities selected, working alone, with a partner or in groups.

All in all, worth of mention is the fact that writing, according to the textbook, is present throughout the whole sections of both files, pupils can be called to write in ‘Listen and Speak’, in ‘Discover the Language’, in ‘Learn about Culture’, in ‘Check’, and in the Project work.

It is also worth noting that all along the aforementioned sections, pupils develop social skills together with the primary skills that are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Such social skills help pupils develop into citizens who play active roles in

different social contexts. Throughout their pair and group work, pupils learn to collaborate and work together. Teamwork and collaboration skills are highly appreciated by prospective employers. Likewise pupils learn to help one another, to listen actively to one another, to take turns in speaking, and to share materials during the three phases of their project work.

Pupils in file three, for example, need to conduct an interview, or devise a questionnaire by means of which they investigate about common illnesses or plants. The social skills pupils acquire play an important role in establishing in them a ‘know – how- to be’.

In short, the files cast about for the establishment of a ‘know- how’, a ‘know-how to- do’, and a ‘know – how – to -be’ in pupils.

3.4 Description of classroom procedure

In addition to file structure description, see section above, we provide here a classroom procedure description which shows how teachers and learners proceed along the two files. This description relies on observation grids we developed. There is a record of all the writing activities carried out in the classroom, and which are shown in the tables below. The tables are presented in a way to give a thorough description of the activities involved in files three and four, in the following sections: ‘Listen and Speak’, ‘Learn about culture’, ‘Check’, and ‘Project work’.

Since a ‘Conversation’ is provided at the beginning of ‘listen and speak’, we will discuss it first.

3.4.1 Listen and Speak

3.4.1.1 Conversation

The 'Listen and Speak' section, in all three sequences of both files, opens up with a linguistic input: a 'Conversation' to generally work on orally. But from what has been observed (see Table 5 below), sequence two in file four unfolds with a conversation in which comprehension is checked through the written medium: pupils have to read a conversation from their textbooks, then are required to fill in bubbles and to match them with appropriate pictures on hand outs distributed on them by the teacher.

The teacher acts as a facilitator of communication between the pupils and the activities they engage in. She is a guide, in that she directs pupils to what is required from them in the assigned activity, and acts as a provider of feedback on pupils' answers.

Pupils are attentive listeners to teacher's instructions. Their skill in listening comprehension becomes apparent in the appropriate matching of bubbles with pictures. Hand outs are the medium the teacher uses (see appendix 1). The whole activity takes 12 minutes; 7 minutes are devoted to writing.

Setting: Boughaba Rokia Middle School

TABLE 1

Book: Spotlight on English Book II

File: Three

Sequence: one : Listen and Speak

Lesson duration : one hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing																					
Pronunciation and Spelling(p. 50) Listen and repeat <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><td colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">Sounds</td></tr> <tr><td>English</td><td>teacher</td><td>school</td></tr> <tr><td>should</td><td>check</td><td>ache</td></tr> <tr><td>fresh</td><td>choke</td><td>stomach</td></tr> <tr><td>wash</td><td>French</td><td>chemical</td></tr> <tr><td>shoulder</td><td>challenge</td><td>character</td></tr> <tr><td>insurance</td><td>stretcher</td><td>mechanic</td></tr> </table> Practise (2 p. 51) Match the questions with the answers. There are two answers for each question. A. What's the matter? a. Awful b. I suffer from sunburn. c. Nothing, but eat less quickly. B. What should I d. I've hiccups. do ? e. You should put some ointment on it. C. How do you feel? f. Better, thanks.	Sounds			English	teacher	school	should	check	ache	fresh	choke	stomach	wash	French	chemical	shoulder	challenge	character	insurance	stretcher	mechanic	Listen , repeat then copy down the table on page 50.	Pupils listen to the teacher , then repeat the words before reading and copying them on their copybooks. Pupils listen to their teacher reading the questions and the answers, then match the questions with the appropriate answers on their books.	Copying : pupils copy words on Table p.50. Copying is preceded by listening, speaking and reading. Matching Pupils match the first part i.e. the questions with the second part i.e. the answers. + Copying Pupils copy the correction, written by their teacher, from the board on their copy books.	Textbook Textbook	12 minutes : time devoted to the whole activity. Writing takes 7minutes. 10 minutes : Time devoted to the whole activity . Writing takes 5minutes.
Sounds																										
English	teacher	school																								
should	check	ache																								
fresh	choke	stomach																								
wash	French	chemical																								
shoulder	challenge	character																								
insurance	stretcher	mechanic																								

TABLE 2

Setting: Boughaba Rokia Middle School

Book : Spotlight on English

File three : Three

Sequence : two : Listen and Speak

Lesson duration : One hour

Activity suggested		Pupils task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing																					
<p>Pronunciation and Spelling (p. 55) Listen and repeat</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="69 527 581 779"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Sounds</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>pile</td> <td>Pill</td> <td>each</td> </tr> <tr> <td>right</td> <td>ring</td> <td>leave</td> </tr> <tr> <td>bite</td> <td>itch</td> <td>feel</td> </tr> <tr> <td>advice</td> <td>illness</td> <td>reach</td> </tr> <tr> <td>private</td> <td>hiccups</td> <td>feet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>excite</td> <td>exit</td> <td>these</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Practise (4 p.56) Questionnaire : How often do you do theses things? Answer the questions, then work in pairs : Write down your partner's answers and report to the rest of the class . e.g. Linda</p>	Sounds			pile	Pill	each	right	ring	leave	bite	itch	feel	advice	illness	reach	private	hiccups	feet	excite	exit	these	<p>Listen , repeat then copy the table on page 55.</p> <p>Fill in the table then report your partner's answer to the rest of the class.</p>	<p>Pupils listen to their teacher , repeat the words then, then read and copy them.</p> <p>Pupils fill in the table. Then in a pair work , write their partners' answers and report them to the class.</p>	<p>Copying Pupils copy the words. Copying is preceded by listening , speaking and reading .</p> <p>Table completion: Pupils complete a table.</p>	<p>Textbook</p> <p>Textbook</p>	<p>10 minutes are devoted to the whole activity . Writing takes 6 minutes.</p> <p>15 minutes to the whole activity . Writing takes 9 minutes.</p>
Sounds																										
pile	Pill	each																								
right	ring	leave																								
bite	itch	feel																								
advice	illness	reach																								
private	hiccups	feet																								
excite	exit	these																								
<table border="1" data-bbox="69 1092 611 1378"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Brush your teeth</th> <th>Wash your hands</th> <th>Take a shower</th> <th>Clip your nails</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>You</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Your partner</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Brush your teeth	Wash your hands	Take a shower	Clip your nails	You					Your partner															
	Brush your teeth	Wash your hands	Take a shower	Clip your nails																						
You																										
Your partner																										

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

TABLE 3

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

File: Three

Sequence: Three: Listen and Speak

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing												
<p>Pronunciation and Spelling (p. 60). Listen and repeat</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Stress</p> <p>1^e syllable 2nd syllable 3^d syllable</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">thermos</td> <td style="width: 33%;">prepare</td> <td style="width: 33%;">preparation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ambulance</td> <td>transform</td> <td>transformation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>fibers</td> <td>relieve</td> <td>relaxation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>medicine</td> <td>discover</td> <td>medication</td> </tr> </table>	thermos	prepare	preparation	ambulance	transform	transformation	fibers	relieve	relaxation	medicine	discover	medication	<p>Listen , repeat , then</p>	<p>Pupils listen to their teacher , pronounce the words enclosed in the table on p. 60 .They, then, read and copy the words.</p>	<p>Copying : Pupils copy words. Copying is preceded by listening, speaking and reading .</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>13 minutes are devoted to the whole activity . Writing takes 8 minutes.</p>
thermos	prepare	preparation															
ambulance	transform	transformation															
fibers	relieve	relaxation															
medicine	discover	medication															
<p>Practise (2 p.61) Role play. Find another way to explain how you can use these home remedies . e.g : When you have a headache soak headache have when cloth in cold water and apply it on your head. It relieves the pain. The cloth is soaked in cold water and applied on the head , and the pain is</p>	<p>Read the sentences , then write them differently</p>	<p>Pupils turn the sentences from the active to the passive voice.</p>	<p>Transformation : pupils change sentences from one form to another that is from the active to the passive voice .</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>are devoted to the whole acivity. Writing takes 7 minutes.</p>												

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

TABLE 4

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

File: Four

Sequence: Three: Listen and Speak

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing																		
<p>Pronunciation and Spelling Listen and repeat</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="65 581 579 906"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Sounds</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Job</td> <td>got</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jane</td> <td>give</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jazz</td> <td>Olga</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jacket</td> <td>forget</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Subject</td> <td>singer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Objective</td> <td>organize</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Algeria</td> <td>ignore</td> </tr> <tr> <td>College</td> <td>language</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sounds		Job	got	Jane	give	Jazz	Olga	Jacket	forget	Subject	singer	Objective	organize	Algeria	ignore	College	language	<p>Listen , repeat , then copy down the table on <i>Page 74.</i></p>	<p>Pupils listen to their teacher pronouncing the words included in table p.74 , then repeat before reading and copying down the table.</p>	<p>Copying : Pupils copy words. Copying is preceded by listening , speaking, and reading.</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>10 minutes are devoted to the whole activity . Writing takes 5 minutes.</p>
Sounds																							
Job	got																						
Jane	give																						
Jazz	Olga																						
Jacket	forget																						
Subject	singer																						
Objective	organize																						
Algeria	ignore																						
College	language																						
<p>Practise (lp. 75)</p> <p>Pair work Practise inviting a friend , accepting (and) or refusing invitations . e.g. Would you like to go to the theatre this afternoon ? - Yes, I.... - No, I</p>	<p>In a pair work, practice inviting a friend who can accept or refuse your invitation.</p>	<p>Learners select one of many invitations suggested in the textbook(p.75), their partners either accept or refuse those invitations.</p>	<p>Sentence completion: Pupils complete sentences accepting or refusing invitations.</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>15 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing takes 7 minutes.</p>																		

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

File: Four

Sequence: Three: Listen and Speak

TABLE 5

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing																		
<p>Conversation Listen to your teacher and try to explain the situation (p.78)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open your book on p. 88. Read the bubbles and match them with the pictures. 2. Give a title to this cartoon <p>Pronunciation and Spelling Listen and repeat</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="100 976 583 1300"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Sounds</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cake</td> <td>juice</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coffee</td> <td>piece</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cartoon</td> <td>place</td> </tr> <tr> <td>College</td> <td>advice</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Concert</td> <td>accept</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Picture</td> <td>exercise</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Activity</td> <td>sentence</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Music</td> <td>difference</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sounds		Cake	juice	Coffee	piece	Cartoon	place	College	advice	Concert	accept	Picture	exercise	Activity	sentence	Music	difference	<p>Read the bubbles on page 88 and match them with the appropriate pictures</p> <p>Listen, repeat, then copy down the table on p. 79</p>	<p>Pupils match the contents of the bubbles with the appropriate pictures.</p> <p>Pupils listen to their teacher pronouncing words, then repeat, before finally reading and copying down the table on their copy books.</p>	<p>Matching : Pupils match the listening script on p.78 with the appropriate picture.</p> <p>Copying : Pupils copy the table Copying is preceded by listening , speaking, and reading .</p>	<p>Hand outs</p> <p>Textbook</p>	<p>12 minutes are devoted to the whole activity . Writing takes 7 minutes.</p> <p>8minutes are allotted to the whole activity. Writing is devoted 4 minutes.</p>
Sounds																							
Cake	juice																						
Coffee	piece																						
Cartoon	place																						
College	advice																						
Concert	accept																						
Picture	exercise																						
Activity	sentence																						
Music	difference																						

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

TABLE 6

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

File: Four

Sequence: Three: Listen and Speak

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing																					
<p>Pronunciation and Spelling(p.83) Listen and repeat</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="100 646 581 899"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Stress</th> </tr> <tr> <th>1st syllable</th> <th>2nd syllable</th> <th>3rd syllable</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Jacket</td> <td>objective</td> <td>organize</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Subject</td> <td>Algeria</td> <td>exercise</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Concert</td> <td>cartoon</td> <td>invitation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Counting</td> <td>advice</td> <td>lemonade</td> </tr> <tr> <td>College</td> <td>excursion</td> <td>conversation</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Practise (p.84) Pair work Ask and answer questions about these items E.g. How much is the computer? Which one? The small one. It is 50.000 DA. That 's expensive</p>	Stress			1 st syllable	2 nd syllable	3 rd syllable	Jacket	objective	organize	Subject	Algeria	exercise	Concert	cartoon	invitation	Counting	advice	lemonade	College	excursion	conversation	<p>Listen , repeat , then copy down the table on page 83 .</p> <p>Ask and answer questions about the items on your textbook (p. 84)</p>	<p>Pupils listen to their teacher pronouncing words . Then repeat , read the table , and copy it .</p> <p>Pupils select one item and ask and answer about it.</p>	<p>Copying. Copying is preceded by listening, speaking, and reading.</p> <p>Substitution. Pupils substitute pronouns for nouns : e.g. they substitute camera, for one.</p>	<p>Textbook</p> <p>Textbook</p>	<p>12 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing is attributed 7 minutes.</p> <p>are devoted to the whole activity. Writing is allotted 6 minutes.</p>
Stress																										
1 st syllable	2 nd syllable	3 rd syllable																								
Jacket	objective	organize																								
Subject	Algeria	exercise																								
Concert	cartoon	invitation																								
Counting	advice	lemonade																								
College	excursion	conversation																								

3.4.1.2 Pronunciation and Spelling

Pupils move to 'Pronunciation and Spelling' to improve their pronunciation and intonation patterns (see Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 above). Some words with sounds or stress patterns are enclosed in a table. The teacher reads the words from the textbook, pupils listen attentively then repeat after the teacher before finally copying down the aforementioned tables. The teacher is the role model pupils follow in a strictly controlled way; the lack of aural material makes that this teacher needs develop a native-like proficiency in English, so as to ensure that no bad speaking habits are established especially at such an early stage of FL learning. The teacher is the model pupils follow.

Pupils act as imitators of what the teacher says, before copying down what has been practised orally. What can be noticed is that although it is a section whose main goal is to foster the listening and speaking skills, pupils write what they have already practised orally: they copy down the tables in 'Pronunciation and Spelling'.

Pupils copy in all tables of 'Pronunciation and Spelling', using their textbooks.

With regard to the time apportioned to 'Pronunciation and Spelling', on Table 1, out of the 12 minutes allotted to the whole activity of listening and speaking, 7 minutes are devoted to the act of writing: to copying.

On Table 2 above, out of the 10 minutes of the whole activity, 6 minutes are apportioned to writing

On Table 3 above, out of the 13 minutes allocated to the whole activity, pupils copy for 8 minutes.

On Table 4 above, 5 minutes are set for writing, out of the 10 minutes of the whole activity.

On Table 5 above, 4 minutes are accorded to writing out of the 8 minutes of the total activity.

On Table 6 above, out of the 12 minutes of the whole activity, 7 minutes are set for writing.

3.4.1.3 Practise

After 'Pronunciation and Spelling' pupils in 'Practise' re-use what has been introduced in the conversation. In 'Practise' (see Table 1 above) pupils practice enquiring about someone's health and asking for advice, a function introduced in the opening conversation of the first sequence of file three. Using their textbooks, pupils are asked to match questions with their appropriate answers; two answers are provided for each question.

In 'Practise' (see Table 2 above) pupils, in a pair work, practice enquiring about someone's regular activities, a function dealt with in the opening conversation of file three. Here, they complete a questionnaire in which they write their regular activities, and their partners' regular activities in a table. In a pair work they report the answers to the whole class.

In 'Practise' (see Table 3 above) pupils in a role play try to find another way to explain how they can use some home remedies.

On Table 4 above, pupils work on inviting a friend, and accepting or declining the invitation, as a practice to what has been introduced in the opening conversation of sequence two, file four.

Last, on Table 6 above, pupils ask and answer questions using the interrogative adjective 'which', and substitute pronouns for nouns.

The two teachers, throughout 'Practise' are facilitators of learning: they engage pupils in tasks whose major purpose is to facilitate the transfer of input to a similar context. They are feedback providers as well.

Pupils in the 'Practise' section show their comprehension of the input they have been exposed to, through the activities they engage in, either individually (see Table 1 above) or in pairs, as on Tables 2,3,4 and 6 above. Pair or group work complies with the socio – constructive perception of learning under the competency-based approach.

The tasks pupils fulfil involve: matching and copying (Table 1 above), table completion (Table 2 above), transformation (Table 3 above), sentence completion (Table 4 above), and substitution (Table 6 above).

The textbook is the only teaching medium used. As for the time devoted to the whole section of 'Practise' on Table 1 above, out of the 10 minutes devoted to the whole activity, 5 minutes are allotted to writing.

On Table 2 above, pupils write for 9 minutes: the whole activity takes 15 minutes.

On Table 3 above, 7 minutes are accorded to writing, out of the 10 minutes devoted to all the activity.

On Table 4 above, 7 minutes are also set for writing, out of the 15 minutes of the general time of the activity.

On Table 6 above, writing takes 6 minutes, out of the 10 minutes the whole activity take

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

File: Three

Sequence: Three: Listen and Speak

TABLE 7

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
<p>Go Forward An activity suggested by the teacher consisting of a hand out that encloses the picture of a doctor, photocopied from Spotlight on English p.52, and in which pupils have to name and write some parts of the body.</p>	<p>Match the parts of the body written on the board with their appropriate parts on your hand outs.</p>	<p>Pupils match the names of the parts of the body with their corresponding parts.</p>	<p>Matching Pupils match the following names : a shoulder, a knee, an ankle , and an ear to the appropriate parts of the body.</p>	<p>Hand outs</p>	<p>10 minutes are devoted to the whole Activity. 4 minutes are devoted to writing</p>

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

TABLE 8

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

File: Three

Sequence: Three: Listen and Speak

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing			
<p>Go Forward (lp.57) Read the tips in this magazine , then complete the advice below in your exercise book.</p>	<p>Fill in the two boxes follows :</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="619 609 898 751"><tr><td data-bbox="619 609 711 751">To feel calm</td><td data-bbox="711 609 816 751">You should</td><td data-bbox="816 609 898 751">Go to bed early</td></tr></table>	To feel calm	You should	Go to bed early	<p>Pupils follow the teacher's model, and put the ten tips in boxes</p>	<p>Combination Pupils combine the first half the first part of the tips with the second part , using " should " . + Copying Pupils copy the correction, written by the teacher on the board, on their copybooks.</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>15 minutes are devoted to the whole activity . Writing is devoted 8 minutes.</p>
To feel calm	You should	Go to bed early						

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

File: Three

Sequence: Three: Listen and Speak

TABLE 9

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
<p>Go Forward (lp. 61) Just like medicines , some plants can relieve pains . Read about these common plants, then choose one of them and tell the class about its use .</p> <p>E.g. Headaches are relieved with lemon. The lemon is washed and cut into slices. The slices are applied on each temple and maintained with a cloth tied round the head.</p>	<p>Select a plant and write about the pain it can relieve Follow the model given on p.61.</p>	<p>Pupils select a plant and write about the pain it can relieve</p>	<p>Sentence expansion Pupils expand notes into sentences using the passive form .</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>12 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing is devoted 7 minutes.</p>

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

File: Four

Sequence: Three: Listen and Speak

TABLE 10

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
<p>Go forward (4 p.81) Underline the verbs ‘settle’, ‘polish’, and ‘move’. Look them up in a dictionary</p>	<p>Take your dictionaries and check these three verbs</p>	<p>Learners check the meaning ,then copy down the definitions on their copybooks, after an oral practice .</p>	<p>Recognition task: Pupils have to underline verbs . + Copying Pupils copy definitions on their copybooks .</p>	<p>Reference material : a dictionary. + Textbook</p>	<p>20 minutes are allotted to the whole activity . Writing takes 12 minutes.</p>

3.4.1.4 Go Forward

The teacher in file three, sequence one , ‘Go Forward’ (see Table 7 above), provides pupils with some lexis involving names of parts of the body, so that they can realize what an earache or a headache, for example, is. The teacher is inventive in that he added a self- made activity to complement the work on health and to consolidate and enrich pupils' lexis.

On Table 8 above, file three, sequence two, pupils after reading some tips related to health, practise giving some advice that can improve one's health and in which the modal ‘should’ is used. On Table 9 above, file three, sequence three, pupils read about some plants then select one of them to talk about its uses. Focus is on the use of the passive voice. In file four, sequence two, ‘Go Forward’ (see Table 10 above), pupils are required to underline given verbs, and to look them up in the dictionary, an activity that helps them increase their small stock of vocabulary.

The teacher initiates pupils to a learning strategy that is the use of the dictionary, and thus helps pupils develop strategies that can lead to effective learning. Pupils on their side, in an individual work, expand their vocabulary stock and act upon what they are learning; they check the meaning of those verbs by themselves.

In addition to the textbook, a hand out (see appendix 2), and a reference material a dictionary are used.

With regard to the tasks pupils perform in ‘Go Forward’ it has been observed that matching (see Table 7 above), combination and copying (see Table 8 above), sentence expansion (see Table 9 above), and copying definitions from a dictionary (see Table 10 above) are what characterize the tasks involved in ‘Go Forward’.

The time apportioned to writing throughout all the 'Go Forward' activities reveals that on Table 7 above, 4 minutes, out of the 10 minutes devoted to all the activity, are accorded to writing. On Table 8 above, writing takes 8 minutes out of the 15 minutes of the whole activity. On Table 9, 7 minutes are allotted to writing from the 12 minutes devoted to the whole activity. Last, Table 10 above shows that 12 minutes are set for writing, and the whole activity takes 20 minutes.

The total time allotted to these activities of 'listen and Speak', in both of files three and four, is 194 minutes, 109 minutes are devoted to writing. 56, 18% of the total time of 'Listen and Speak' is allotted to writing.

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

TABLE 11

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

File: Three

Sequence	Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Lesson Duration One Hour	Material and media used	Timing
	<p>Read the conversation , then answer the questions (p.53)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does Sally want to obtain when she says " can I go to Wang's party? " 3. What can you say about the word 'must' ? 	<p>Read the conversation then answer the questions on your rough books.</p>	<p>Pupils read the conversation, then give written answers to the questions. Alter an oral correction, pupils copy down the answers, written by their teacher on the board , on their copybooks.</p>	<p>Answering questions + Copying Pupils copy the answers written by the teacher on their copybooks.</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>15 minutes are devoted to the whole activity . Writing takes 5 minutes.</p>
	<p>Practise(3p.53) What do these signs mean? Write in full. E.g. A: No dogs! What does that mean? B: It means you mustn't go in with your dog.</p>	<p>Read the example and do the same with the other signs.</p>	<p>Pupils write in full what the given signs mean.</p>	<p>Information transfer: Pupils transfer information from one form to another i.e.from a linguistic form (pictures) , to a linguistic form(dialogue).</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>12 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing takes 7 minutes.</p>

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

TABLE 12

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

File: Three

Sequence: Two: Discover the language

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
<p>Read the conversation then answer the questions (p.58)</p> <p>1. Do you know words that derive from the underlined words (terribly- badly). Write them down in your exercise book.</p> <p>4. What's the grammatical form of the words that are before the underlined words?</p>	<p>Answer questions n° 1 and n° 3 on your copybooks.</p>	<p>Pupils answer Questions 1 and 3 on their rough books then copy the correction , written by the teacher on the board , on their copybooks.</p>	<p>Answering questions</p> <p>+ Copying</p> <p>Pupils copy down the correction.</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>8 minutes are allotted to the whole activity. Writing takes 5 minutes.</p>
<p>Practise (p.58)</p> <p>2. Put the words in the right order to get correct sentences (don't forget the capital letters)</p> <p>-works he hard - these handle carefully boxes - he angrily the see to manager asked</p>	<p>Re-order the words to get correct sentences. Don't forget capital letters.</p>	<p>Pupils re-order the sentences.</p>	<p>Ordering</p> <p>Pupils put in the correct order scrambled sentences.</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>7 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing is devoted 5 minutes.</p>

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Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

TABLE 13

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

File: Three

Sequence: Three: Discover the language

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
<p>Read about vitamins(paragraph A p.61)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Copy down the paragraph on your exercise book. Underline all the verbs. Circle the subject of each verb. 	<p>Read passage A. At home copy it down on your copybook. In class, answer questions 2 and 3.</p>	<p>Pupils answer questions 2 and 3.</p>	<p>Recognition task</p> <p>Pupils underline the verbs and their subjects .</p> <p>+ Copying</p> <p>Pupils copy the passage at home .</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>12 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing is allotted 5 minutes.</p>

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

TABLE 14

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

File: Four

Sequence: One: Discover the language

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' ta	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
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<p>Read the conversation on p.76 Answer questions 2 and 4</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What's he doing when he says 'you want to join us?' 3. What's she doing when she says 'would you like to join me?' 	<p>Read the conversation and answer , on your 2 and 4.</p>	<p>The pupils answer the questions ,then copy written by the teacher on the board .</p>	<p>Answering questions</p> <p>Pupils answer questions :2 and 4 + Copying</p> <p>Pupils copy the correction.</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>15 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing 9 minutes.</p>
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Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

TABLE 1:

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

File: Four

Sequence: Two: Discover the language

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media	Timing
<p>1. Read the conversation (p.81) then copy it in your exercise book .</p> <p>Practise (4p.82)</p> <p>What are your plans for the future?</p> <p>Write about two things you are going to do next year.</p> <p>Two things you are not going to do next summer .</p> <p>Two places you are going to visit soon.</p>	<p>At home copy down the conversation.</p> <p>Write two sentences about your future plans next year, two sentences about your intentions in the negative form.</p>	<p>Pupils write four sentences.</p> <p>Two in the affirmative form, and two in the negative form.</p>	<p>Copying</p> <p>Pupils copy the conversation from their textbooks .</p> <p>Copying</p> <p>Pupils copy down the sentences, written by the teacher on the board, on their copybooks.</p>	<p>Textbook</p> <p>Textbook</p>	<p>10 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing is allotted 7 minutes.</p>

3.4.2 Discover the Language

In file three, sequence one, ‘Discover the Language’ (see Table 11 above), pupils read a conversation then answer two questions one involving the consolidation of the use of the modal ‘can’, in asking for permission and the other question requires pupils to deduce from the conversation what the modal ‘must’ expresses.

Then, ‘Practise’ follows (Table 11 above) where pupils practise the use of the modal ‘must’ in its negative form, already introduced in a contextualized framework i.e. the reading passage with which ‘Discover the Language’ starts. Pupils write in full what some given signs mean. In addition to the focus this activity provides on a language form (the use of modals), it makes pupils rehearse in the class a type of behaviour they can perform in real- life. Pupils might be asked to interpret some signs outside school, traffic signs are one example of those signs.

Pupils carry on practising grammar forms in a context, in file three, sequence two (see Table 12 above), they are asked to read a conversation and to answer two questions that involve adverbs and what they modify. Pupils are then required to copy the answers on their copybooks.

In ‘Practise’ (Table 12 above), pupils re-order sentences without forgetting capital letters, focus is on where adverbs are placed in comparison to verbs.

In file three, sequence three (see Table 13 above), pupils are asked to read a short passage and to underline all the subjects and their verbs so as to raise their awareness to how the active and passive forms are devised. As homework, pupils have to copy down the passage.

In file four, sequence one (see Table 14 above) pupils have to read a passage and to answer two questions that relate to enquiring about someone's likes and to

inviting. Pupils answer the questions on their rough books then copy the correction from the board.

In file four, sequence two (see Table 15 above), pupils after reading a conversation copy it down.

In 'Practise' (Table 15 above) pupils continue discovering the regularities of English. They are required to write sentences in which they express their future plans in affirmative and negative forms. They are, also, asked to write two sentences about two things they are going to do next summer, two things they are not going to do, and two places they are going to visit.

Teachers along the 'Discover the Language' section, of both files, engage their pupils in activities, and help them understand the regularities of the language in an inductive way. They guide pupils in their discovery of grammar rules and help them develop learning strategies. Pupils on their side are active learners who analyze and formulate hypotheses about the underlying rules, then confirm or disconfirm those hypotheses. In this section of the file, pupils work individually. No pair work is involved; each pupil infers language regularities by himself or herself. It is all too beneficial, in that each pupil will devise his/her own strategy that helps in inferring rules.

The tasks encompassed in the 'Discover the Language' section of both files involve the use of the textbook only, and comprise copying (see Table 11 above), information transfer through the use of the modal 'must' (see Table 11 above), answering questions and copying, (see Table 12 above), ordering (see Table 12 above), recognition task and copying (see Table 13 above), copying (see Tables 14 and 15 above).

As far as the time devoted to writing is concerned, it has been noticed that on Table 11 above, 15 minutes are devoted to the whole activity and pupils spend 5 minutes in writing.

The 'Practise' activities pupils carry out, on Table 11 above, devote 7 minutes to writing from the 12 minutes the whole activity takes.

On Table 12, above, the whole activity is set 8 minutes; 5 minutes are devoted to writing. The 'Practise' section takes 7 minutes; 5 minutes are set for writing.

On Table 13, above, out of the 12 minutes of the whole activity, 5 minutes are allotted to writing.

On Table 14, above, writing is set 9 minutes and the whole activity takes 15 minutes.

On Table 15, above, the whole activity is assigned 10 minutes; 7 minutes are accorded to writing.

The time allotted to 'Discover the Language', in both files, is 79 minutes, out of which 43 minutes are devoted to writing. Writing is set 54, 43 % of the total time.

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

File: Three

Learn about Culture

TABLE 16

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
<p>Grand mother remedies (p.65)</p> <p>Now , say how much you know about home remedies .Write about them .</p>	<p>Select a health problem, and write about a home remedy to relieve it . Use the passive form .</p>	<p>Pupils select a health problem and write about a home remedy.</p>	<p>Guided writing Pupils write about a home remedy following one of the models provided on page 65.</p>	<p>Textbook</p>	<p>20 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing is allotted 2 minutes.</p>

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

File: Four

Learn about Culture

TABLE 17

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
Read the cartoons on P.89, then complete the table on your hand outs .	Complete the table on your hand outs from the cartoons p.89. Alter table completion, write a small paragraph about your favourite cartoon .	Learners complete the table on their hand outs, then write a small paragraph.	Information transfer Pupils transfer information from on form (table) to another form (a paragraph). + Copying Pupils copy the paragraph, written on the board by the teacher, on their copybooks.	Hand outs	45 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing takes 20 minutes.

3.4.3 Learn about Culture

In file three, 'Learn about Language' (see Table 16 above) pupils discover that besides the medicines and plants, that can be used to cure illnesses, people resort to some grand mother remedies. After reading with their teacher about some grand mother remedies and what they can cure, pupils are asked to select a health problem and to write about a home remedy.

In file four, 'Learn about Culture' (see Table 17 above) pupils are provided with a handout (see appendix 3) enclosing a table to be completed. Table completion relies on extracts of cartoons, pupils read from their textbooks. Pupils have to complete the table with the cartoon name, the date of appearance, the author, the characters, and the place of publication.

Pupils, then, have to select their preferred cartoon, and to put the information provided in the table in a small paragraph. Together, teacher and pupils, develop a model paragraph which is written by the teacher on the board, and copied down by pupils on their copybooks. Generally speaking, in 'Learn about Culture' pupils are exposed to extracts from real –life in which they re- invest what they have previously learnt in the 'Learn the language' section.

The two teachers are once again facilitators of learning, and resource persons consulted by pupils so as to learn about some cultural aspects. Through this open window on some cultural aspects, teachers help pupils develop an understanding of different ways of life of another people.

Pupils work individually under teacher's guidance, in order to explore and discover documents related to the topic of the file.

The textbook is used in file three, whereas handouts are distributed on pupils in file four. Guided writing (see Table 16 above), information transfer and copying (see Table 17 above) are the tasks pupils undertake in 'Learn about Culture'.

Out of the 20 minutes assigned to the whole activity, 12 minutes are devoted to writing (see Table 16 above).

On Table 17, above, 45 minutes are set to the whole activity, and writing is allotted 20 minutes.

'Learn about Culture' in both files takes 65 minutes, writing is devoted 32 minutes.

Writing is apportioned 49, 23 % of the total time.

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

TABLE 18

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

File: Three

Check

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
3 page 67 5 page 67 6 page 67 9 page 68 11 page 68 12 page 68 13 page 68 14 page 69 15 page 69	See 'Check' pages: 67, 68, 69.	Pupils write, the selected activities by the teacher, on their copybooks.	Copying Pupils copy the correction, written by the teacher on the board, on their copy books.	Textbook	50 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing is allotted 25 minutes.

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

File: Four

Check

TABLE 19

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners 'task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
2 page 90 5 page 91 6 page 91 10 page 91 11 page 92 13 page 92 14 page 92 15 page 92	See " Check " (pages 90, 91, 92).	Pupils do the activities on their copybooks using their pencils.	Copying Pupils copy the correction , written on the board by their teacher ,on their copybooks.	Textbook	45 minutes are devoted to the whole activity. Writing takes 20 minutes

3.4.4 CHECK

With regard to 'Check', it has been noticed that out of the total number of 18 activities suggested, 9 activities were conducted through the written medium (see Appendices 4a, 4b, 4c). Activities are n° 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 (see Table 18 above).

Activity n°3 requires pupils to form adverbs from adjectives when possible; activity n°5 involves the completion of a dialogue with the appropriate preposition; activity n°6 involves crossing the odd word; activity n°9 backs the use of the modal 'must' or 'mustn't'; activity n°11 is about giving pieces of advice using 'should'; activity n°12 is about sentence completion with the right modal; activity n°13 comprise unscrambling sentences and writing a conversation; activity n°14 encompasses the correction of spelling mistakes; activity n°15 involves the correction of mistakes. Similarly, 'Check' in file four (see Table 19 above) incorporates 16 activities (see appendices 5a, 5b, and 5c). Out of the total of 16 activities, 8 are carried on, in writing: activities n° 2, 5,6,10,11,13,14 and 15.

Activity n°2 comprises ordering sentences to get a conversation; activity n°5 is about conversation completion; activity n°6 requires pupils to complete a conversation with the correct verb form; activity n°10 involves rewriting a conversation using the right punctuation; in activity n°11 pupils have to add the missing words to get correct sentences; to write instructions in a more polite way is what activity n°13 involves; in activity n°14 pupils need to depict spelling mistakes and to correct them; in activity n°15 pupils have to write answers to questions.

Teachers, throughout this section, can evaluate their teaching procedures. They decide on the basis of pupils' performance whether some remedial work is needed. Pupils, on their side, assess their achievements, and consolidate their acquisitions.

The textbook is the medium used, and pupils engage in copying the correction from the board on their copybooks.

Out of the 50 minutes devoted to all the selected activities in 'Check' of file three, pupils spend 25 minutes in writing (see Table 18 above).

On Table 19, above, 20 minutes, out of the total of 45 minutes devoted to the whole activity, are allotted to writing.

All the activities in 'Check' take 95 minutes, writing is devoted 45 minutes. Writing is set 47, 36% of the total time.

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

File: Three

Your Project

TABLE 20

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners' task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
<p>You and your friends are going to make :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a good health guideOr- a herbal guide-	<p>The teacher explains the procedural guidelines stated in the textbook on page 70.</p>	<p>Pupils listen carefully to their teacher .</p>	<p>Creative task Pupils are given freedom in the selection of vocabulary, structure and ideas that suit best their subject .</p>	<p>Reference material:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- dictionary- Internet <p>+</p> <p>Human sources :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- teachers- parents...	<p>55 minutes</p>

Setting: Boughaba Robia Middle School

File: Four

Your Project

TABLE 21

Book : Spotlight on English Book II

Lesson Duration: One Hour

Activity suggested	Teacher's instructions	Learners 'task	Task type	Material and media used	Timing
You and your friends are going to write a story and to make it into a strip cartoon.	The teacher reads the procedural guidelines stated on page 93.	Pupils listen carefully to their teacher .	Creative task Pupils are free to select the vocabulary , structures, and ideas that help them complete their projects.	Reference material: - dictionary - Internet + Human sources : - teachers - parents....	55 minutes

3.4.5 Project work

The whole file climaxes with a project work; all the aforementioned sections have but one goal, to prepare pupils for the project work, and to enable them integrate what has been acquired in a similar context. The project is pupils output; it is an evidence of pupils' grasp of the input they are introduced to, in previous sequences.

The project work is the task that allows enough room for creativity, free choice of lexis, and language forms.

In file three (see Table 20 above) pupils need to prepare, in a group work, a medical or herbal guide.

The teacher reads from the textbook the steps pupils ought to follow and explains the procedural guidelines. In here, the pupils have to work as a group in order to:

- Choose: plants (herbs, vegetables, fruits) that they will describe. Prepare a questionnaire / an interview about their good effects on health.
- Decide who does what:
 - Collect plants, pictures, cut out.
 - Make the drawing.
 - Investigate about plants (ask your biology teacher, your mother, herbalist)
 - Investigate about common illnesses (ask your school nurse, doctor, and mother), they are also supposed to work individually in order to:
 - make an appointment with a doctor, a nurse or a biology teacher.
 - give him / her questionnaire to fill in.
 - make an interview, with him/her.

- Back home expand on their notes and write about what they heard during the interview or what they read from the questionnaire.

and as a group work , they are required to:

- show their projects to one another. Discuss and correct their writing, and check
 - if the information are correct and true
 - the spelling of the words is correct
 - the drawings are well done
 - the pictures are appropriate.

They, then, select for the final draft when the texts are ready, the spelling, and the grammar are once again checked, correction is done, illustrations are stuck on sheets of paper, and their work is evaluated to discover the negative/positive points. Texts are, then, typed or written, and are combined with the illustrations, and sheets are bound and given a title.

In file four (see Table 21 above); pupils are asked to make a cartoon strip as part of a group work.

The teacher explains the steps, stated in the textbook; pupils need follow to complete their projects.

Pupils have to, in a group work:

- choose:
 - the theme
 - the kind of cartoon : a comic one , an adventure one , a horror one ...
 - the situation (real or imaginary).
 - which and how many characters : animals, humans or aliens ?

- what situation? Where? When? And how long?

Pupils need also to decide who does what:

- who looks for the material

- who draws the characters

- who writes the texts (in the bubbles).

As an individual work each pupil looks for a cartoon to read, and tries to get some ideas.

Each group member has to write a part of the cartoon, and one or two pupils make the drawings.

In a group work they show their writing to one another, discuss and correct them, make sure the story is coherent, and try to answer the following questions:

- What can we add?

- Is the spelling of the words correct?

- Is the situation funny? Or sad?

- Are the drawings well done?

- Are the pictures collected appropriate?

Pupils, then, select for the final draft, when texts are ready, they check again the spelling, and grammar, and evaluate their work (positive / negative points)

Both teachers are facilitators of learning in that they explain what steps ought to be followed before the attainment of the final output. They are resource persons consulted by their pupils for information or advice. They are researchers because they carefully study the topic of the projects, and try to find information about it. They are co- learners who might come to know what they did not know before.

Still, they are counsellors who advise pupils having problems with their project work, and evaluators and providers of feedback.

Pupils, on their part, are researchers who investigate about their topics. They are active learners who act upon what they are learning, and who try to find solutions to the problem – situation with which they are confronted. They are co – evaluators in that they evaluate one another’s projects, with their teachers' help. After the presentation phase, pupils and teachers decide which project ought to be presented to other classes, as the best project. They are auto-evaluators since they assess their own achievements, try to improve them, and structure their learning.

They are problem–solvers; they try to find solution to the problem –situations they are confronting. Once the problem surmounted, pupils develop problem solving skills. Project work involves a group of pupils collaborating, in order to develop a solution to the problem- situation, and present it to a wider audience; this collaboration promotes social skills.

The project is a creative task, in which pupils use some reference material such as books, dictionaries, or the Internet. Pupils can also consult their teachers and parents. Besides, project is a task carried out in a different linguistic setting, it can be performed outside as well as inside school context.

Projects are accomplished in a week time.

3. 5. Findings and comments

3. 5.1. Activities

Bloom's Taxonomy categorizes educational objectives as cognitive, relating to information, affective involving attitudes and values, and psychomotor underlying bodily movement.

Still, Bloom identifies six levels within the cognitive domain from the simple recall of information, to the highest order classified as evaluation. Learners have to achieve lower order objectives before higher ones.

From what has been observed, the activities proceed in a 'bottom-up' way through Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive objectives. Pupils are called to activate their background knowledge, through the pictures they are provided with in the opening sections of each sequence; recall of information is the lowest level also known as knowledge. Pupils, then, move to the second level: comprehension, whereby they display their ability to grasp the meaning of the conversation. Application takes place at the 'Practise' and 'Go Forward' sections; pupils apply what has been learnt in the opening section of the sequence, in other contexts. Through the 'Discover the Language' section, pupils are called to analyze the structure of a given passage. Pupils hypothesize then confirm or disconfirm their hypotheses, and infer rules. Furthermore, analysis can also take place in the 'Learn about Culture' section: pupils compare their culture with the FL culture. At the project level, pupils combine and re-invest the skills, knowledge and capacities they acquired throughout the file. Synthesis involves combination. Evaluation of one's acquisitions and achievements takes place after project work, through teachers' feedback, peer evaluation, or the self-assessment grid pupils have to complete.

Besides those lower order objectives, pupils have to achieve before higher ones, we find out that the two conditions Slavin (see chapter two) states, for the transfer of knowledge and skills, are met through out the activities designed. Pupils go through many instances of practice, before being asked to transfer what they learnt to another context. Additionally, the situation of transfer is similar to the initial situation; pupils in file three describe illnesses, enquire about someone's health, suggest, express permission and prohibition, enquire about someone's regular activities, and talk about discoveries and remedies. The context of transfer, the project work, involves the preparation of a good health guide. Both situations are similar, they relate to health.

Similarly, in file four, pupils learn about cartoons in all three sequences before completing a project in which they write a story and put it in a cartoon strip.

3.5.2. Teachers ' roles

Teachers in the 'Pronunciation and Spelling' instances present opportunities for writing that are strictly controlled, pupils have to produce error-free writing so as not to develop bad writing habits.

In the 'Practise' and 'Go forward' sections, teachers are not strictly controlling, they are facilitators and guides, since error-free writing is no more targeted.

In project work, teachers give pupils more freedom in words and structures' selection.

3.5.3 Pupils' roles

As far as pupils are concerned, their major role is to mobilize the knowledge and skills acquired, and to re- invest them in a new situation. The project is the context in which their competences become apparent. The projects involve written productions.

3.5.4 Task type

From what has been observed, and as far as writing is concerned, out of all the written activities involved copying is the prevailing activity (as indicated in all observation tables provided over all the activities above).

2AM pupils come from a different writing system, Arabic, in which they are used to write from right to left, and copying can but reinforce their acquaintance with a new writing direction, that is from left to right; even if pupils have been initiated to this new writing direction in French as their second language.

When pupils copy down words as in the ‘Pronunciation and Spelling’ parts they practise putting in conventional graphic form combinations of letters.

Both teachers fuse the teaching of phonetic units with practice in word spelling through the integration of the four skills: pupils listen, repeat, read then write.

Besides, copying at the word level trains pupils in sound/spelling correspondence, especially that this correspondence in English is not always clear. Harmer (The practice of English) states that “a single sound (or more correctly, a single phoneme) may have different spellings (paw, poor, pore, pour, daughter), and the same spelling may have different sounds (or, word, information, worry, correspond) (256).

Copying at the sentence level (see Tables 1,8,14 and 15) gives pupils practice in putting words together to form sentences, and when pupils copy paragraphs (see Tables 13 and 17) they come to learn that sentences put together form paragraphs.

The words, sentences and paragraphs pupils copy acquaint them with the conventions of capitalization, punctuation and lay out. While copying they learn that they begin a new sentence with a capital letter, that a full stop marks the end of a

sentence, that a question mark ends a question, and that a conversation implies two persons taking turns while addressing each other.

In a competency-based approach, copying helps pupils acquire a “mechanical competence” indispensable for the production of intelligible messages. Handwriting, spelling, punctuation and presentation add clarity to what is written.

Accurate copying is very important because as stated by Rivers, it trains pupils in careful observation (246).

Contrariwise to the perception of copying as an unworthy activity, pupils can be called, in real-life contexts, to copy an address or a timetable. To be able to transfer activity to real-life, pupils need to gain skill in it at school.

In addition to copying, pupils complete a table in writing, (see Table 2) as a reinforcement to what has been practised orally, ‘enquiring about someone’s regular activities’. Similarly, they complete sentences (see Table 4) as reinforcement to what is introduced orally ‘inviting’ and ‘accepting or declining invitations’.

Pupils also write to transform sentences from the active to the passive voice (see Tables 3, 9, and 16); to substitute pronouns for nouns (see Table 6); to use the modal ‘should’ (see Table 8); to use the modal ‘must’ (see Table 11) and to use ‘going to’ (see Table 15). Writing in the aforementioned activities is a recycling tool of what has been practised orally, it is an adjunct to speech that aids memorization and imprint of what has been learnt orally.

Writing is also used as a back up to grammar: pupils write to reinforce the grammar patterns; they practise their knowledge of grammar through writing.

Nearly all activities selected in 'Check' of both files are reinforcement to grammar patterns. In other cases, pupils write to increase their vocabulary repertoire; when copying down definitions of verbs from the dictionary, (see Table10), they come to acquire new lexis.

The project work is the context where pupils re-invest their acquisitions; competences manifest themselves at the project level, all the projects are written outputs.

When preparing their projects, pupils do not just apply what they learnt before, but learn new information, as they research their topics. Thus pupils not only apply schemata but extend them as well. They also develop better cognitive abilities because they are called to think, plan, analyze and revise their products.

Still, pupils do not just learn new information, when they use what they already learnt in another context, but they act upon what they are learning; they research, lead interviews, make appointments, and read stories. They derive knowledge through an active participation: there is some kind of experiential learning which is all too beneficial to promote real-life skills since pupils get involved in real-life contexts.

The adoption of project pedagogy gives writing another dimension; pupils write not just for reinforcement purposes, they write for communication. Throughout the assigned projects pupils set a purpose for their written outputs. In file three they have to make a health guide; in file four they need to write a story and to make it in a cartoon strip. Besides the purpose, writing for communication entails a real audience other than the teacher, pupils direct their written reports, or projects, to their classmates and to other 2AM classes, the best project is displayed to other classes.

Having an authentic audience is a real motivational factor for pupils who will redouble efforts so as to be seen in a good light by their peers.

Via project work, pupils realize that before reaching a final product some steps ought to be followed: planning, drafting and revising. Those steps are as important as the final product that is why a whole hour is devoted by the teacher to the explanation of the series of actions involved in the accomplishment of the final output. Three phases are involved: the preparation phase and implies planning, the realization phase and encompasses drafting and revising, and the presentation phase in which projects are presented under their final form. Projects are process, as well as product, oriented; the two aspects are equally important.

During the planning phases of their project work, pupils put pen to paper. In file three they take notes during the interview they are asked to lead with a doctor, nurse or biology teacher. In file four each pupil writes a part of the story to be put in a cartoon strip. All what pupils write at such a preliminary phase of the project work helps in generating additional ideas, and ways of conceiving their projects at later phases. Had not they written, pupils could not recall all the details of the interview, for example. The permanent aspect of writing renders it a potent tool that prompts further ideas and helps record information.

In both files the information gathered is checked, whether true or not; the spelling mistakes are corrected, then the final draft is selected. When the texts are ready, spelling mistakes and grammar are once again checked. In so doing, pupils realize that writing does not proceed in a linear way; one does not follow strictly prescribed steps one after the other but can go through a step, and then come back to it, before moving to another one.

Writing, be it in project work or in classroom tasks, profits pupils who find difficulty learning through the oral medium. Pupils do not, all, approach learning in the same way, they have different learning styles; writing is one way of coping with pupils who learn better, when they write. Some learners remember more about a subject through writing than listening or speaking. The written activities designed in 'Spotlight on English' are one way of considering this disparity in learning among pupils.

Further, when 2AM pupils write, they are learning English. Emig, quoted in Raimes (Why Write?), views that when one writes he/she goes through all the three stages, Bruner lists, for our representation of the world that are the enactive mode, the iconic mode, and the symbolic mode. The representation of the world is turned into a verbal language, and this involves the symbolic stage; this verbal language is then devised into an icon i.e. the product, by the enactive hand. When one writes s/he makes use of his/her hand, eye, and brain (40). Drawing on Emig's words, writing is unique in its use of brain, eye, and hand. No other skill, but writing, combines all three modes. If English in Algerian middle school is a foreign language hardly used outside the classroom context, encouraging pupils to use their brains, eyes, and hands can maximize the learning of this foreign language.

Last but not least, pupils write because it is the means by which their performance in the FL is examined; learners' abilities in classroom exams and in external exams, such as BEM, are evaluated through the written medium. Even though the competency -based approach claims to give priority to oral skills, in practice no oral test is devised to assess aural/oral abilities; only written exams help teachers get a better picture of their pupils' language competence.

3.5.5. Material and media used

The observation grids demonstrate that pupils use the textbook, handouts, and reference materials such as dictionaries. The material and media used provide a stimulus to writing; they initiate writing, and provide exposure to the written language.

It has been noticed that no aural material is provided. The absence of such materials can explain the focus on writing in the 'Listen and Speak' sections, writing may appear to fill in the gap the absence of audio material leaves.

3.5.6. Timing

Throughout this tentative observation, we remarked throughout the description of classroom procedure, that a considerable time is devoted to writing.

Half, if not more than half, of the time allotted to the whole activity is devoted to writing. Out of the 433 minutes, the sum of the total time of the activities observed, 229 minutes are set for writing. The latter is allotted 52, 88% of the total time.

A considerable time is apportioned to writing in comparison to listening and speaking, under a competency -based approach that claims to give priority to oral skills.

To wrap up all this, we can say that writing is used as a recycling tool that reinforces what has been practised orally, as in the 'Listen and Speak' sections; is as a back up to grammar patterns, as in 'Discover the Language'; and is a communication tool, as in the project work . It is a skill used throughout all file sections.

Conclusion

In conclusion to this chapter, we can say that the two files' structure description, and the observation we led, prove that writing is present throughout all the sections of the

two files, even in the sections supposed to promote aural/oral skills such as 'Listen and Speak'. It has also been noticed that considerable time is devoted to writing, more than half of time is set for writing.

Chapter Four: Pedagogical implications and recommendations

Introduction

Qualitative improvement of learning requires a constant evaluation of the curricula, and the current classroom practices so as to cope with the evolving needs of the society. The Algerian ministry of education opted for a new approach namely the competency-based approach, supplied an official syllabus in 2003, and implemented the course with a textbook 'Spotlight on English' book II, for second year middle school pupils.

This chapter is undertaken in an attempt to bring around some pedagogical implications to the learning and teaching of writing under the competency-based approach, in second year middle school, from the academic and practical conclusions of researchers as well as the classroom observation effectuated in the present study. It also aims to recommend some guidelines as a modest contribution to the improvement of the teaching and learning of writing under the Competency-based Approach.

4.1 Pedagogical implications

As might be known by every one involved in the field of teaching, the clear cut distinction between the four skills is a bygone era; there might be a focus on one skill, in comparison to the others, at a particular moment of the course but all of them have to be integrated in order to ensure an improvement in the learning context. In real -life, the four skills are not used in a particular order. One does not listen first, then speaks, reads and at last writes; the four skills are used, as and when one needs them.

4.1.1. Writing as a skill

Writing under the Competency-based Approach is a valuable tool that can enhance oral proficiency, since the Competency – based Approach accords priority to oral skills. It is a skill that helps pupils record what has been practised orally, when pupils listen to the teacher speaking, repeat then write, they are exposed to an input through more than one medium, and this results in a better retention of what has been learnt

Likewise, writing helps pupils assimilate the grammatical forms encountered, through the writing activities devised to help them infer the regularities in the language. Writing helps fix, firmly, what has been learnt orally, the new vocabulary, and language structures.

4.1.2 Writing as a process

Additionally, writing under the Competency-based Approach is not only a product where formal features are taken into account, but a final form and a set of stages that involve pupils in planning, drafting, and revising. Writing, in project work is assigned another dimension; it is not a straightforward act, pupils move forward and backward along the writing process. Through project work, pupils realize that writing is a learning process; they learn to write by writing, and develop linguistic skills when they plan, draft, and revise.

4.1.3 Writing as a product

Writing, at such early stages of language learning, helps set up in pupils the writing habit. When they write pupils gain acquaintance with a FL skill. But this skill has to be built step by step, and the mechanics of writing and grammar seem to be the

laying foundations for intelligible writing, they are important pre-requisites that enable pupils convey meaning through print.

4.1.4 Writing as a group product

When a whole group is encouraged to realize a production project, writing becomes a less apprehended act by pupils; there is a sense of common achievement, and an evaluation of a whole group's writing, this will encourage pupils to take risks in writing.

4. 2. Pedagogical recommendations

Change must happen in individuals first, and it is only then that this change can be extended to larger groups and institutions. That's why we recommend a change in teachers first of all, because they are the ones to implement those new directions in the teaching of English as a foreign language at Algerian second year middle school.

4.2.1 Seminars for teachers

Teachers need to know what the Competency- based Approach is, in terms of language theory, learning theory, design, and procedure so as not to feel insecure and under pressure. Seminars, on regular intervals, will be of great help for teachers, especially if mentors present model lessons, and collaborate with novice teachers. Along mentors, guest speakers well-versed in teaching practices can be invited to enrich the meeting. Presence of all teachers can help in improving the teaching quality, and in fostering collaboration among them. Such seminars can direct some teachers to teach the way they are required to teach, and not the way they were taught. If such seminars cannot be held, teachers can form local teachers' groups, and hold regular meetings to discuss the implementation of the Competency-based Approach. They can take turns in planning and executing lessons in such meetings, every group member

must prepare at least one model lesson. By the end of the year, all lesson models can be grouped in a document for future use, or consultation.

4.2.2 Aural material

For an approach that advocates priority to oral skills, the absence of aural material constitutes the Achilles' heel of the Competency-based Approach. The use of taped material or cassettes, involving native-speakers, will provide learners with authentic material, how much valuable in a setting where English is taught as a FL, where instructional materials may be the only contact learners have with English, and where learners do not have opportunities to practise speaking and listening in authentic contexts. Instead of reading scripts, the teacher can make learners listen to short dialogues related to the topic of the file, as part of the opening conversation of the 'Listen and Speak' section. This taped material will break with routine, and will bring variety to classroom activities. Correspondingly, aural material will place fewer burdens on the teacher, and will increase learners' motivation to perform such dialogues. Equally important is the enhancement of aural/oral skills of teachers and learners alike.

4.2.3 Dictation

As far as writing is concerned, we recommend the reevaluation of dictation as a written activity that helps teachers check whether pupils arrive to discriminate certain sounds; dictation can also test pupils listening comprehension, i.e. whether they understand what the teacher says or not. Dictation combines training in listening comprehension with practice in sound/spelling correspondence. It provides a listening comprehension check, and gives practice in using some language forms and vocabulary. It also allows practice in information transfer because pupils transfer the information heard, from an oral form into a written form. Dictation needs involve short sentences previously

dealt with orally, so as not to be a tiresome activity, especially for those who have difficulties in listening comprehension.

4.2.4 Dictogloss

Dictogloss is a writing activity in which pupils re-create already heard material. It is a good activity for vocabulary construction and listening comprehension check. It helps in the improvement of aural skills. Teachers can ask their pupils to recreate very short stories related to the topic of the file, together teachers and pupils can realize how funny the recreated stories are; it is a very interesting and motivating activity.

Dictation and dictogloss are good activities for listening comprehension check, under a Competency- based Approach that advocates priority to oral skills

4.2.5 Project work

With regard to projects, the culminating part of the file, it would be preferable if they are hand written not typed on a computer, so as to give pupils some practice in spelling and to raise their consciousness to the mistakes they can make. Typing on a computer will not allow such identification of mistakes. When evaluating pupils projects teachers have to take into account how correctly and creatively they used what they have learnt along the file, and not how successful they were in reproducing what they have acquired. A whole group grade will reinforce the merits of collaboration, that's why teachers are required to assign the whole group only one grade.

4.2.6 Portfolio assessment

Portfolios can be used by teachers as an alternative means of assessment that complements timed tests pupils perform in school. This type of assessment can give the teachers a clearer picture of their pupils' linguistic abilities, since more than one sample is involved. Still, portfolio assessment will give more value to project work, a key

component of the Competency-based Approach; pupils will redouble efforts so that they can get good grades when their folders are evaluated and graded. Teachers can adopt a holistic scoring in which they score the entire portfolio, or an analytical scoring in which every item is scored separately.

4.2.7 Teaching portfolio

Not only learners can use portfolios, teachers as well can use them to document their reflections, and performance. In so far as a new approach has been embraced by the Algerian educational system, teachers can keep record of their reflections on educational reforms, and can show what sides they take on such reforms. Teachers can also insert in their portfolios, the reasons for which their pupils are learning English, the objectives of the courses they are teaching, the method they are implementing, the instructional materials they use to support what they are presenting, the activities they are using, and some assessment guidelines. Teaching portfolio is intended to promote teaching practices, and to consider what has been achieved, and what remains to be done. But for an effective evaluation of teaching practices, teachers have to involve other colleagues in consulting their documents; this can be very beneficial to all practitioners in the educational field. Added to the benefits teaching portfolios provide, is that teachers write their reflections, and this act of writing helps them organize their thoughts, and gives their ideas an everlasting nature. There can be no denying the fact that teachers are overloaded with work inside and outside school, but teaching portfolios can be very effective, if they are conceived as a step towards teachers' development instead of a workload.

Conclusion

All in all, change is a process that needs patience, time and efforts. What has been sown today cannot ripen unless it takes its time. That is why the Competency-based Approach needs to take its time, before one can decide about its effectiveness.

This chapter has tried to consider some pedagogical implications, as far as writing under the Competency -based Approach is considered. We attempted to suggest some recommendations for a profitable change that can promote the learning and teaching of writing for second year in middle school.

General Conclusion

The present study attempted to highlight the place of writing under the Competency-based Approach with special reference to Algerian second year middle school pupils. The current research showed that writing is a powerful tool for learning English as a foreign language. It is a skill that cannot be acquired but through formal instruction. That is why teachers need consider the teaching of writing with great care especially if beginning learners are involved, as is the case of our population of study.

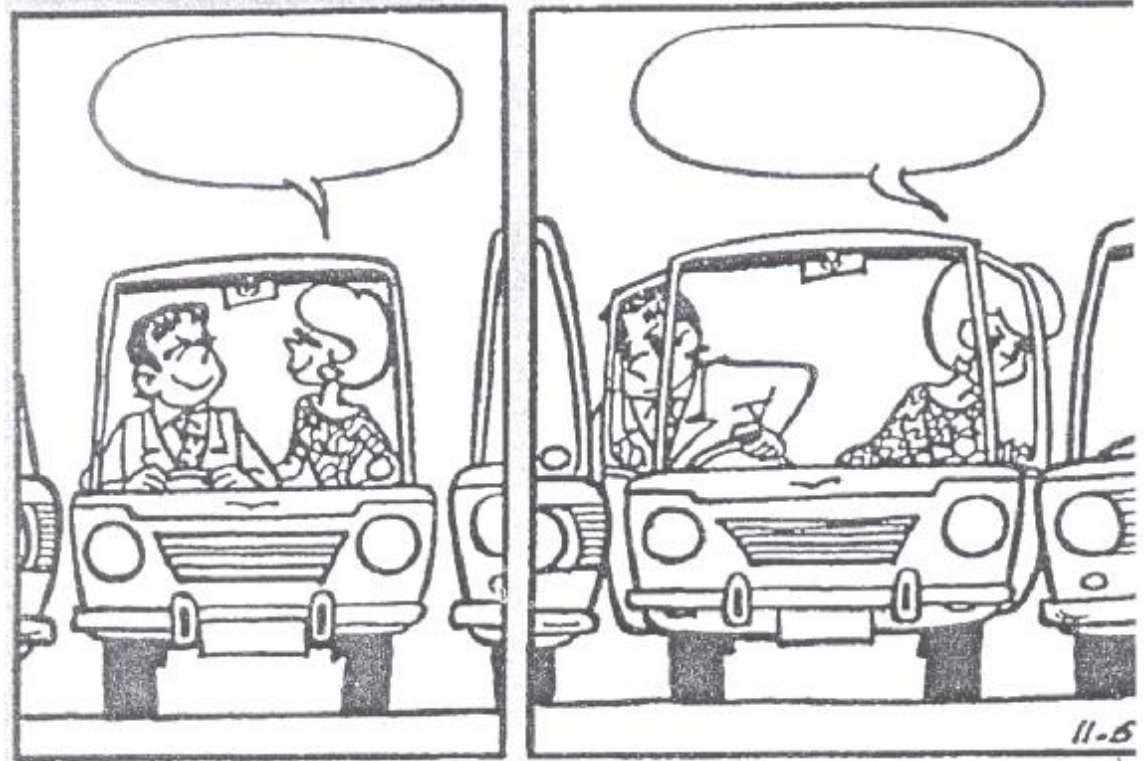
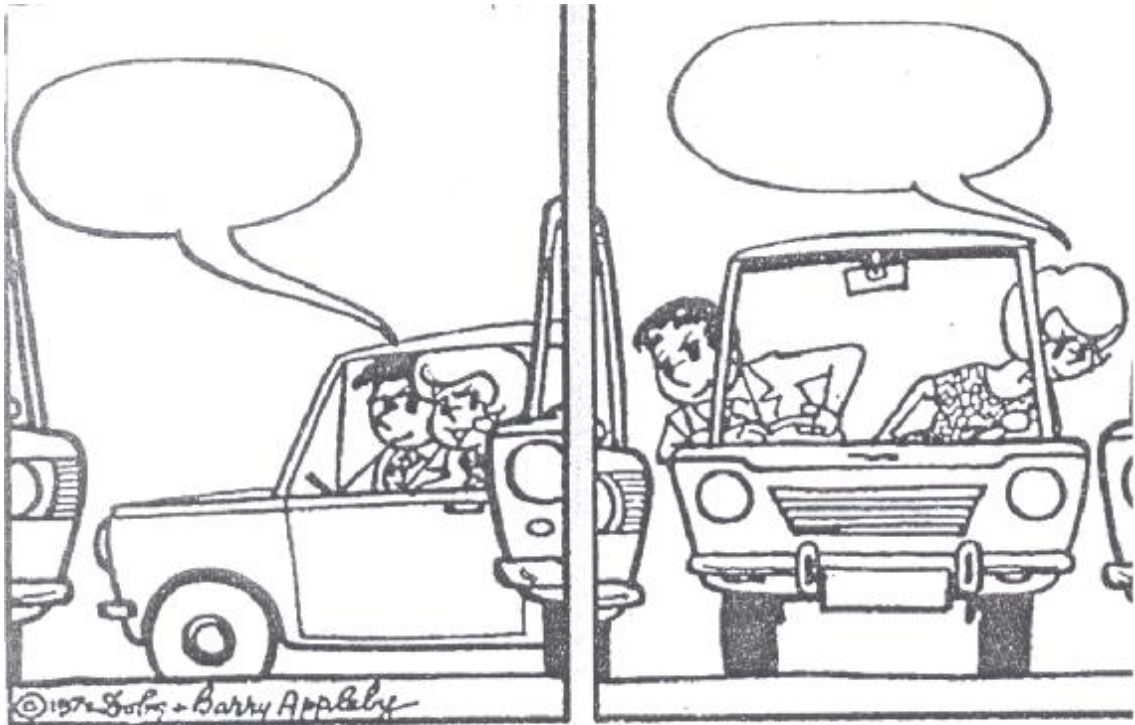
Writing is unique in its use of brain, eye, and hand; it is used to learn English as a foreign language. The advent of the Competency-based Approach, as a teaching methodology that claims for the priority of aural/oral skills, put forward the question of the status of writing under this approach.

The field investigation carried out by means of observation grids helped us record the writing activities of two second year classes, at Boughaba Rokia Middle school in Constantine. The results came to infirm our hypothesis that importance, in the Competency-based Approach, is given to oral skills.

The observation of the two classes mentioned above revealed that considerable time, half if not more than half the time, is devoted to writing. Furthermore, with regard to the claims of the Competency-based Approach which advocates priority to oral skills, writing is not only practised throughout the entire file, but it also squats in the sections intended to promote aural/ oral skills.

The suggestions presented at the end of the research aim at helping teachers improve their understanding, and their implementation of the Competency-based Approach. Still, these suggestions try to cast light on the importance of writing as a learning tool.

APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 2



APPENDIX 3



Read the cartoons on page 89, then complete the table below.

Cartoon	Date of appearance	Author	characters	where was it published?

words to learn

humorous = Funny
 speech = Dialogue
 enjoy = like
 cartoon = Comic
 called = Named
 boy = Kid

real ≠ unreal
 young ≠ old

which cartoon do you prefer?
 write a small paragraph about it:

APPENDIX 4 a



1. How do these things make you feel ?

5
points

e.g. taking a hot bath makes me feel relaxed.

- taking a hot bath / relax
- eating salt / thirsty
- having a temperature / hot
- eating too much / sick
- watching TV / relax
- exercising / tired

2. Agree with these statements.

5
points

e.g. A : Dad is a careful driver.

B : That's right. He drives carefully.

- My uncle is a hard worker.
- Linda is a quick learner.
- Charles is a good swimmer.
- Ken is a slow reader.
- Sami is a fast runner.
- My cousin is a bad writer.

3. Form adverbs from the following adjectives when possible.

5
points

- heavy / good / happy / early / serious / fat / old / small / fast / terrible

4. When did it happen ?
Write sentences.

3
points

e.g. The London Underground was opened in 1863.

- 1863 The London underground (open)
- 1826 The first photograph (take).
- 1879 The electric bulb (invent).
- 1885 The motor cycle (invent).
- 1928 Penicillin (discover).
- 1945 The atom bomb first (use).
- 1953 Mount Everest first (climb).

5. Complete the conversation with the right preposition.
Use of / with / to / in / for

5
points

A : You don't look very well ! Do you feel OK ?

B : No, I think I'm getting a cold. What should I do ... it ?

A : You must stay home and gobed.

B : You're right. I've got a sore throat, too.

A : Take an infusionsome honey. You'll feel better.

B : Another suggestion ?

A : Yes, get a big box tissues !

6. Cross the odd word out.

6
points

headache - chest - cough - toothache

arm - leg - finger - coat.

sugar - salted - peppered - oiled

warm - cold - fresh - cook

fast - old - quietly - quick

gently - lovely - rapidly - well

APPENDIX 4 b

7. Read the hospital rules then write sentences in the active voice

4
points

- HOSPITAL RULES**

 - Breakfast is served to patients at 8.30.
 - The rooms are cleaned every day before 8 o'clock.
 - The post is delivered every day at 9 o'clock, except on Sundays.
 - Visits are permitted three times a week from 1 to 3 o'clock p.m.

The head of the hospital
J. Atkinson

8. Write the passive form of the verbs in brackets.

5
points

When I entered the waiting room, I (invite) to sit down and to wait for about ten minutes. I (give) some magazines. Then a man arrived, he (ask) to wait in the waiting room with the other patients. He wanted a cigarette, but (not allow) to smoke. As he got angry he (show) the no-smoking notice stuck on the wall.

9. Must or mustn't ?

5
points

- I'm becoming very fat, I..... take some exercise...
- You've got flu, you go out.
- I feel tired, I have a rest.
- The dentist said he brush his teeth more often.
- You look depressed, youwork so hard.

10. Transform these sentences using 'must'.

5
points

- It is vital for you to stop smoking.
- It is necessary for him to go on a diet.
- It is important for us to take some exercise.
- You're obliged to have a rest.
- He will certainly see a dentist.

11. What must you do ? Give pieces of advice.

4
points

- to be slim, I
- to keep fit, I
- to lose weight, I
- to become stronger, I

12. Complete the sentences with the right modal :

- can / can't /
- could / couldn't /
- must / mustn't.

4
points

- Youfinish your homework before going to bed.
- It's really late. you drive me home ?
- Sorry, we phone before coming.
- It got so dark that we see the path.
- She looks upset . She have a problem.
- Do you think they find the doctor's address.
- you give me an appointment, please ?
- You stop eating cakes. You're becoming fat.

13. Unscramble the sentences and write the conversation.

10
points

How are you not so good I have a sore throat that's too bad did you take anything no I didn't well try some honey with lemon ugh that must be sour no no - really try it really works

APPENDIX 4 c

14. Correct the spelling mistakes.

3
points

- carefully angrily horribly noisily quietly awfully

15. Correct the mistakes.

5
points

- He look worried. What's the problem ?
- He's a fast runner. He runs fastly.
- I have fever. I'm cold.
- You should taken an aspirin.
- You mustn't ate too much. You'll become fat.

16. Ask questions about the underlined words.

5
points

- He lifts weights twice a week.
- We must visit our friend, he's ill.
- Betty's dog bit me.
- A bee stung me in the garden.
- I saw the dentist last Monday.

17. What do these sentences express ?

6
points

- You must take some rest.
- Can you help me, please ?
- You should take an infusion.
- You mustn't go out.
- Could you give me an appointment, please ?
- I can lift heavy things.

18. Translate into a language you know.

6
points

- You've got a bad cough.
- Let's have a look at your throat. You've got tonsillitis.
- I've had flu three times this winter.
- Has your baby got a fever ?
- When you have a sore throat, take some lemon juice mixed with honey.
- He had insomnia last night because he was stressed.

APPENDIX 5a

heck

1. Ask for advice. Use these verbs : read, visit, watch, eat, listen

4
points

- e.g. - *What would you like to read ?*
 - *I'm not sure . Which book would you recommend ?*
 - *I suggest "Tom Sawyer". It is very interesting !*
 - *Thank you, but I'll read "Lucky Luke".*

Tom Sawyer / Lucky Luke
 fast food / Pizza
 Batman / Spiderman
 Pyramids / Taj Mahal
 Jazz / Rap

2. Order the sentences to get a conversation.

5
points

- Hi, Phil. How are you ?
- See you, bye !
- The Black Giants and the Tigers.
- Hello Tony. This is Phil.
- Hey, that sounds like a terrific game. I won't miss it. What time does it start?
- Well, I don't know. Who's playing?
- 3 o'clock. Let's go in my car. I'll pick you up at 1.15.
- Great. Thanks a lot, Phil. See you tomorrow.
- Fine. Thank you. Listen, I have an extra ticket for the baseball game tomorrow. Do you want to go with me ?

3. Fill in the gaps then match the invitations in column A with the responses in column B.

6
points

A

What you (do) tomorrow ?
 Would you like to go out ?
 you (do) anything on Saturday night ?
 Do you want to see a movie ?

B

Well, my father (visit) my brother at college. But my mother and I (be) home. We'd love to come !

Sorry, I can't (work) overtime. How about Saturday ?

We (have) friends over for a barbecue on Sunday. Would you and your parents like to come?

Can we go to a late show ? I (stay) at the office till 7.00. after that I (go) to the gym.

4. Write sentences about what you are going / not going to do next week.

5
points

- exercising
- cook
- eat out in a restaurant
- go to internet café
- see a film
- go to the stadium
- read a detective story
- meet friends
- organize a birthday party

APPENDIX 5 b

5. Complete the conversations.

4
points

Boy : When is the plane going to take off ?
 Steward : Right now. Are you comfortable, young man ?
 Boy :we.....to have a cartoon ?
 Steward : No, I'm sorry.
 Boy : you..... serve breakfast ?
 Steward : Yes, we to serve it soon.

6. Complete the conversation with the correct verb form.

7
points

A : Are youanything next weekend ? (do)
 B : I.....anything special (not do).
 A : Well, we're a picnic. (organize). Would you like to come ?
 B : Sure ! What timeyou..... ? (start)
 A : Ten o'clock.
 B :you..... the bus ? (take)
 A : No, I..... (drive)
 B : Wherewe..... ?(meet)
 A : In the parking lot.

7. Look at your timetable and write five true sentences about things you're going to do tomorrow.

5
points

8. What are you going to do

5
points

- this weekend ?
- next summer ?
- in the holidays ?
- when you finish college ?

9. Your pen-friend lives in London, but you have never met him. You're going on a trip to England and he's going to meet you at the airport. Write a letter to him describing what you look like and tell him what you're going to wear the day you arrive.

10
points

Dear X, I'm happy you're going to meet me at the airport next...
 I really appreciate it. I

10. Rewrite the following conversation using the right punctuation.

4
points

Assistant : can I help you
 Nabil : yes I want a t-shirt
 Assistant : we've got lots of t-shirts which one do you want this one or that one
 Nabil : i like this red one how much is it
 Assistant : 900 dinars
 Nabil : how about that blue one
 Assistant : that blue one is 1200 dinars what size do you take
 Nabil : medium.
 Assistant : i'm sorry that's a large one we haven't got any blue ones in your size

APPENDIX 5 c

11. Add the missing words to get correct sentences.

4
points

A : How are you going spend New Year's Eve ?

B : I not going to do anything special.

A : Are you going to stay home ?

B : Yes. Unless I get invitation.

A : Do you want join us ? My uncle going to organize a party

B : Of course, I like to. What time the party going to start ?

A : Around 8.00.

B : Great !

12. Use this page of a diary to write what Eva is going to do next Monday.

4
points

SATURDAY 12 MAY

- Go to school in the morning and study until 12.00.
- Clean home, prepare a salad, make an envelope and watch a funny cartoon.
- Arrange to meet Olga at 4.30.

13. Write these instructions in a more polite way.

5
points

- Come with me.
- Take the dog for a walk.
- Help me with my exercise.
- Lend me your walkman.
- Show me the way to the post-office.

14. Find the spelling mistakes and correct them.

5
points

- What woud you like for dinner ?
- I have tikets for a football game.
- We'll met at my house at 3.00.
- Are you going to the cinema togeter ?
- I'm going to meet him tomorow.

15. Write questions for the answers.

5
points

- A :** ?
B : Oh, these trousers ? They are £12.
A : ?
B : No, thanks. I prefer to stay at home.
A : ?
B : Yes, I'd love to. I like cartoons.
A : ?
B : It's almost one o'clock.
A : ?
B : I'm going there with my cousin.

16. Liz is planning her weekend. Complete the paragraph with the right preposition.

4
points

Bill : What's the matter you Liz ?

Liz : I'm really tired.

Bill : You must have a break !

Liz : You're right. So tomorrow I'll get up ... 9.00. I'll have breakfast ... 9.30. Then I'll take a warm bath. I'll go ... the hairdresser's. I'll have lunch ... a nice restaurant, then I'll go ... see a film. After that, I'll come back home ... watch my serial.

Bill : ...And then, I'll take you out for dinner !

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Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the position of writing under the Competency-based Approach. It takes the specific case of the learning and teaching of English as a foreign language in the Algerian middle school.

At the origin of this concern lies the fact that the early years in learning a foreign language are very determinant in establishing solid foundations in writing. Not less significant is the vital importance of writing as the means by which pupils' performance is examined, in the Algerian educational system. Interest in the current investigation is also motivated by what the advent of a new teaching methodology, the Competency-based Approach, brings as far as the status of writing is concerned.

To achieve this aim, classroom observation is the tool used for the present investigation. Such means of research allows direct contact with what takes place in the classroom.

As might be expected, the results of the investigation not only show that writing as practised in the observed classrooms is used to help fix what has been practised orally, but also and more interestingly that within the overall frame of an approach that is considered as emphasizing oral skills, pupils write more than they speak, and that considerable time is devoted to writing in comparison to speaking. Further, writing as practised in the classrooms observed, squats in the sections intended to promote oral skills.

ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث المتكون من أربعة فصول ، علاوة عن المقدمة والخاتمة الى البحث عن مكانة الكتابة في مقارنة التدريس بالكفاءات وهذا شعورا منا بأهمية الكتابة كأداة تواصل والوسيلة التي تمتحن بها كفاءة الطلبة في الامتحانات .

في الفصل الأول قمنا بالتعريف بمهارة الكتابة ومقارنتها بالمهارات الأخرى التكلم والقراءة ثم تطرقنا الى أهم المراحل التي يمر بها التلميذ لتطوير مهارة الكتابة . وبما أن الكتابة لاكتسب الا عن طريق التعلم تعرضنا بالتفصيل الى أهم مقاربات التدريس في الكتابة وفي ختام هذا الفصل تم التطرق الى وسيلة تقييم الكتابة .

في الفصل الثاني تم تحليل مقارنة التدريس بالكفاءات والتعرض الى مكانة الكتابة تحت أهم المقاربات التعليمية للغات .

أما الفصل الثالث فيحتوي على دراسة ميدانية تظم اختبار ملاحظة قسمين من السنة الثانية متوسط ووصف تحليلي للمحورين الثالث والرابع من كتاب اللغة الانجليزية للسنة الثانية بمتوسطة بوعابة رقية بقسنطينة ، وهذا لاثبات أو دحض الفرضية التي تقول بأن الأولوية تحت مقارنة الكفاءات تعود للمهارات الكلامية ، فتلاميذ السنة الثانية يكتبون أكثر مما يتكلمون.

وجاءت النتائج لتطعن صحة الفرضية المقدمة ، فنسبة الوقت الذي تأخذه الكتابة تتعدى نسبة الوقت المخصص للكلام والكتابة متواجدة في كل النشاطات.

أما فيما يخص الفصل الرابع فهو عبارة عن مقترحات متواضعة تهدف الى المساهمة بقسط قليل في تطوير تعليم وتدريب الكتابة تحت مقارنة التدريس بالكفاءات .

Résumé

Le présent travail de recherche a pour but d'investiguer la place accordée à l'écriture sous l'Approche par Compétences au niveau de la deuxième année moyenne, une approche qui affirme accorder priorité aux habilités orales.

Notre intérêt pour cette recherche est fondé sur l'important rôle que joue l'écriture comme outil d'apprentissage, surtout que le système éducatif Algérien l'utilise pour examiner les performances des élèves, et ainsi déterminer leur accès aux classes supérieures.

Pour atteindre l'objectif ci-dessus, l'observation de deux classes de deuxième année moyenne a été choisie comme outil d'investigation. Des grilles d'observation sont utilisées pour enregistrer toutes les activités écrites des élèves, le rôle des enseignants, le rôle des élèves, le type d'activités, moyens pédagogiques utilisés, et le temps que prend les activités écrites.

Les résultats de cette observation montrent que l'écriture est non seulement considérablement répartie tout au long des activités suggérées, et que le temps réservé à l'écriture est important en comparaison avec le temps de toutes les activités, mais aussi que l'écriture squatte dans les sections supposées promouvoir les habilités orales.

A la fin de cette recherche, un nombre de suggestions pédagogiques est présenté pour essayer d'améliorer la qualité de l'apprentissage et de l'enseignement de l'écriture sous l'Approche par Compétences.