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**Mechanisms of Assessment in Teaching Suprasegmental Phonology  
to 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Pupils of Ibn Saad Secondary School :**  
**Case of Stress**

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English as Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Magister in T.E.F.L and Applied Linguistics**

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**Academic Year : 2017**

## *Declaration of Originality*

I, ADDOU Sidahmed, declare that my thesis entitled "Mechanisms of Assessment in Teaching Suprasegmental Phonology to Third Year Pupils of Ibn Saad Secondary School : Case of Stress" contains no materials that have been submitted previously, in whole part or in part, for the award of any academic degree or diploma . Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

February 22nd, 2017

Mr.ADDOU, Sidahmed

# DEDICATIONS

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*I dedicate this work to those who gave*

*a meaning to my life,*

*My parents*

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*First and foremost, I would like to express my indebtedness to my supervisor professor Ali Baiche for his assistance, guidance, and insightful comments all along the elaboration of this thesis.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Imperfections in teaching and assessing the suprasegmental phonology in the Algerian secondary school cannot go unnoticed. Any observer of the Algerian EFL classroom must discern some anomalies in approaching the teaching of phonology. The purpose of this research is to examine the ways in which the phonological issue, mainly phonology stress, is generally perceived by secondary school EFL teachers, and to highlight some mechanisms that ought to be embedded in teaching and assessing this pronunciation aspect. To this effect, a case study research is conducted in Ibn Saad Secondary school (Tlemcen), using two main research instruments, a questionnaire for pupils and teachers, and an interview with a general inspector of English. The data collected are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results reveal that the failure in approaching the phonological issue owed to such factors as teaching misconceptions and the lack of teacher's knowledge. The research concludes with a set of mechanisms that could bolster the improvement of the area.

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## **Key to Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**AS:** Année Secondaire (School Year)

**BAC:** Baccalaureate

**BEG:** Brevet d'Enseignement Général

**BEM:** Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen

**CAE:** Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English

**CAPES:** Certificat d'Aptitude au Professorat de  
l'Enseignement du Secondaire

**CBA:** Competency- Based Approach

**CLIL:** Content and Language Integrated Learning

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching

**CPE:** Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English

**CRT:** Criterion- Referenced Test

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**FLL:** Foreign Language Learning

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**L1** Mother Tongue

**L2** the Second language

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# **General Introduction**



### General Introduction

Assessing the learnability of the sound system of the English language in the Algerian EFL classrooms has generally been problematic just like other language skills or even worse, owing to factors such as teaching and assessing misconceptions of the phonological aspect of the English language, and the lack of pertinent and effective assessment mechanisms. The choice of the topic stems from the fact that the importance of teaching of phonology stress is almost not realized, as this aspect of pronunciation is virtually ignored by most teachers. There is little evidence that the majority of them are familiar with such aspect of pronunciation and are therefore unable to help their pupils to acquire satisfactory pronunciation skills. Teachers generally concentrate on the teaching of different skills including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, while they give little attention to the teaching of the phonological stress or any other aspect of phonology. Recent classroom-based research has revealed that the analysis of the structural language which includes mostly grammar and vocabulary takes the lion's share in EFL language instruction. Such focus can also characterize the content of the teacher's lesson planning that displays a structure

## General Introduction

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oriented view of teachers. This may appear logical since the curriculum content puts considerable emphasis on the teaching of the accuracy of the language rather than fluency. This is probably due to the fact that such curriculum is exam oriented since learners are supposed to sit for a high stakes exam in the Algerian school.

A careful scrutiny of the time benchmark devoted to the teaching of this pronunciation aspect suggests that phonology instruction is nearly neglected. This neglect can also be due to the teacher's attitude towards teaching this aspect. The teacher's lack of confidence about his efficacy in teaching phonology may probably be because of the lack of training (Fraser, 2000), or because they lack the background knowledge to teach this element.

The learners have also their share of responsibility in the failure of the phonological course. The learners' perception of pronunciation instruction can stem from the nature of value they put on this aspect of learning, or the degree of motivation they have. The teachers' feedback on the learner's performance and the type of assessment being used can also be decisive factors for the learner' acceptance or refusal of this type of instruction. The

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efficacy of the teachers' training scheduled by the ministry of education needs also to be questioned. These meetings which are intended to foster teachers' instructional strategies, do not seem to be beneficial and welcomed by teachers who advance many critics about them.

The premises mentioned so far are intended to be explored throughout the present research work, by trying to bring an answer to the following research question : Why is the phonology lesson, in particular stress, in the third year secondary classrooms, doomed to failure ?

This question was further developed throughout three sub questions.

1. What kind of knowledge do teachers hold about phonology stress ?
2. How equal are opportunities for the integration of the phonological dexterity to other language skills ?
3. What perceptions do teachers and pupils hold about assessment of stress ?

These questions will be answered on the basis of the following hypotheses.

1. Lack of phonological knowledge in the teachers' repertoire generates imperfections in teaching phonology

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2. The time benchmark pertaining to phonology lies below the required standard.
3. Stress is taught to the exam rather than to the skill

In order to verify the validity of the aforementioned hypotheses, the researcher designed an exploratory case study research, using a triangulation technique which involved three main variables, the teacher, the learner, and the inspector. The first two were requested to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaires for teachers and the pupils were quantitatively oriented as they comprised closed-ended questions, Likert scale, and differential semantic meaning scale. This methodological perspective was corroborated by some statistical information to strengthen the analysis. The quantitative method, however, was targeted through the general inspector's interview which included a variety of open-ended and close-ended questions. For the sampling strategy participants were selected randomly to avoid bias. The procedure is that the selection is built on probability and to ensure that all population members had the same chance of being selected, and above all random samples are more representative than non-random samples.

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To conduct the study, the researcher devised four chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the literature review which comprises the theoretical background of assessment related to the topic of investigation.

The second chapter relates to a dependent variable which is the phonological issue. It illustrates part of the phonetic knowledge that can serve as a good grounding for teachers to address the phonological issue. The second part deals with teaching methodology in Algeria, the teaching methods that shaped ELT in post independent Algeria, with special focus on the current approach of Competency Based Approach., and the status of phonology in classroom instruction within the CBA.

The third chapter addresses the practical side of the research. It seeks to answer the research questions by verifying the provided hypotheses before concluding the results.

The fourth chapter concludes the whole research by providing suggestions and recommendations about teaching strategies and assessment procedures that can lead to better achievements in teaching phonology stress, and obviously leaving the door open to further exploration and potential refinements that can make this modest work more enlightening.



**Chapter one:**  
**Properties of Assessment**

## Chapter one : Properties of Assessment

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### 1.1 Introduction

It is common knowledge that assessment has become an integral part in language education. It is needed for a variety of purposes that can help reach effective teaching and learning. Assessment allows stakeholders like teachers, educators, learners, and even politicians to have access to valuable information on the learner's progress, address areas of weaknesses, and inform, mainly, teachers and learners about decisions to be taken about their teaching and learning respectively. Assessment can also tell whether the learning outcomes have been attained or not, and most importantly decide about the relevance of such assessment to educational context.

Furthermore, assessment is viewed as a framework for setting the learning outcomes on the basis of the learners achievements, and for planning the next teaching steps in response to specific needs of the learners. The primary concern of assessment is to provide guidance and feedback for the learner in order to create an appropriate learning environment. When assuming that promoting the student learning is the main drive of education, one would advocate that assessment lies at the heart of this process (Brown et al.,1997; Gibbs and Simpson, 2004; Ramsden, 2003).This importance is shown through the salient amount of time, money and effort that have been devoted to this prominent aspect of classroom activities either by teachers, administrators, or other stakeholders. The present chapter will discuss important issues relating to assessment as a system of overlapping processes that affect each other either positively or otherwise. This will involve



looking at what assessment is, the different forms it can take, and its implications to the classroom practices.

### **1.2 The Nature of Assessment**

Assessment in current language classrooms is generally viewed as a paper- and-pencil test intended to provide the teacher and the learner alike with information about the amount of knowledge that remains still unknown to the learner at the end of a language programme. The main concern of the learners is to use whatever strategies including cheating in order to get a good mark, hence assessment has the tendency to become rather strategies and mark-oriented. Sometimes assessment is the last thing teachers think about when they design their courses. These and other misconceptions about assessment have had pernicious effects on language learning as a whole.

In educational settings, there are many occasions where learners are being assessed intentionally or not, including different forms and purposes. Some of these are formal like a summative final exam while others are formative and may extend to a smile, a nod, or a threat of punishment that may have a significant impact on the learners positively or negatively. The variety of assessment forms may also have different consequences. Some are pass-fail based and may impact the choices and opportunities of the learners career. Others may include motivation of some pupils by critical assessment, or a feeling of dissatisfaction towards negative comments leading to a rupture with the subject and its teacher.

### **1.3 Pitfalls and Stereotypes**

The gap between teaching and learning on the one hand, and assessment on the other, has become so wide that most teachers

## Chapter one : Properties of Assessment

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and learners have developed negative attitude towards tests. These are generally coupled with a feeling of fear, anxiety, or dislike . when a test is anticipated, many learners may feel panic or confusion and discomfort. Others may view experience as an opportunity to prove their superiority over the other classmates. Many teachers regard tests not more than a means to pass and fail their pupils, and unfortunately there are going to be more losers than winners.

This feeling of discomfort according to Harris and McCan (1994) is mainly due to the kind of a divorce between teaching- learning on one hand, and assessment on the other. The rationale behind this divorce is that assessment does not feedback into teaching and learning on account of the following reasons. First , assessment and testing are thought to be the same. It is unquestionable that testing which is performed under specific conditions, is an important way of assessing learners. Conversely, other types of assessment like informal and self assessment are also significant though they are held under normal classroom conditions. The second reason for this misconception is that assessment is believed to happen at the end rather than amid the learning process, and many learners think that the kind of information about learning that is provided by this assessment is too late to feed into their learning and does not deserve to be formative. The next factor counting for this problematic is the kind of feedback provided after learning. The information about learning is provided in the form of a grade. This grading does not tell the learners about their learning problems, nor does it propose remedies to them.

Another problem affecting assessment is the manner the learners are assessed . So often the learners are tested in one aspect of the

classroom instruction. Teachers, for example, find it easier to test grammar and vocabulary than to test oral performance. Learners have the impression that they have been wasting their time trying to communicate in the classroom and consequently develop a stereotype over oral proficiency. In addition to this, many learners regard tests as a way to trap them in what they do not know, while they remain passive participants, and consequently tests for them are unfair and unreliable. Furthermore, teachers are generally under the pressure of learners, parents and school administrators, and this would prevent them from doing their assessment effectively and fairly. The stress factor is also another problem that hinders the process of assessment. Examination can have harmful effect on learning and teaching. When the examination is important and at high stakes, it is likely to dominate the classroom instruction, and if the testing does not fit into the objective of the course, then there is likely to be a negative washback (Hughes, 2003)

### **1.4 Evaluation, Assessment, and Testing**

There is a lot of confusion between these terms among their users. In order to better use evaluation, assessment and testing, it is worth defining these concepts and making discriminations between them.

#### **1.4.1 Evaluation**

It is an overall term that includes all factors that influence the learning process like course objectives, course design, and instructional material ( Harris & McCann, 1994). Evaluation is not confined to the learners achievement and language assessment, but extends to examine all teaching and learning and how the variety of assessment forms can inform educational decisions (Genessee, 2001) . Evaluation then implies an engagement in some process intended to provide information that will form the basis of a judgement

about a given situation . This situation is rather inclusive, which means that it takes into account such components as worthiness, appropriateness, validity, legality and so forth. In classroom setting, evaluation focuses on grades and may reflect classroom components other than course content and mastery level. These components may comprise discussion, cooperation, attendance, behaviour and verbal ability. This is another way to say that instructors or educational researchers tend to use evaluation in order to judge if a programme or instruction has met its intended learning outcomes.

### 1.4.2 Assessment

It can be referred to as the systematic collection of data to monitor the success of a programme or course in achieving intended learning outcomes for students. Assessment can be used to determine three main points : first, the learning outcomes, that is what the learners have learned ; Second, the process by which the learners have learned the material ; third, the learners ' approach to learning before, during, and after a course or a programme .The learners can be assessed before instruction to have an idea about what they already know by administering a pretest generally known as diagnostic test . Assessment can also determine what the learners are learning, so to call the process of learning, so that the teacher can adjust his teaching if needed. After instruction, assessment can be used whether or not learning has occurred. In this respect, summative assessment can be used to meet the end of change in knowledge, or to provide feedback to inform future teaching. According to Wiggins and McTighe (2005) Assessment stands for the act of defining the extent of achievements of the desired results; Assessment is an umbrella term that includes different ways of collecting evidence of the desired results. Gathering evidence may include observations and

dialogues, traditional quizzes and tests, performance tasks and projects, as well as students' self-assessments gathered over time.

Assessment, thus focuses more on learning than evaluation, and the two should not be regarded as synonymous. Assessment is the giving and using of feedback against standards to make it enabling in terms of improvement and goal meeting. Evaluation, by contrast, is more summative and credential-related. In other words, we need not give a grade—an evaluation—to everything we give feedback to. In fact, a central premise of argument is that understanding can be developed only through multiple methods of ongoing assessment, with far greater attention paid to formative (and performance) assessment than is typical. Assessment is a component of evaluation because it is concerned with the learner and with what the learner does, according to Brindley (1989).

### 1.4.3 *Testing*

It is a component of assessment and an important measuring instrument used to evaluate the learners' abilities in a specific skill. It is carried out in the classroom and used as an assessment technique in order to know about the learners' cognitive abilities and their language performance. Testing, in its two forms, formal and informal, is one of the most important tools used by the teacher to elicit information about the learner's competence and performance. Spolsky posits that "*language tests involve measuring a subject's knowledge of, and proficiency in, the use of language.*" (Spolsky, 1989: 56). Tests can allow the teachers to make decisions about ways to improve the quality of their teaching. They are also very helpful in setting academic standards and providing teachers with feedback that form the basis of the teacher's future decisions and remedial

work. According to Flavell “*a test is seen as a natural extension of classroom work , providing teacher and student with useful information that can serve each as a basis for improvement.*” ( Flavell, 1981 : 1). A test, then, is a natural part of the classroom practices, and can be an important source of information to form the basis to improve teaching and learning.

### 1.4.3.1 Test Typology

The needs for assessing the outcome of learning have led to the development of different test formats. First, *Proficiency* test which is intended to measure the learner’s ability in a language. It is based on what candidates have to be able to do in the language in order to be considered proficient. According to Harmer ( 2003) Proficiency test provides a general picture of a student’s skill and ability. This type of test can be used to have people admitted to a foreign university, to get recruited for a job , or obtain a qualification degree or certificate . The second is *achievement* test which is related to language courses. It is supposed to provide information on how successful individual students or the courses have been achieving objectives. Formative and summative tests can be good examples of achievement tests designed to measure learners language and skill progress in relation to the exposed syllabus. A third type of tests is the *diagnostic* test which aims to identify the weaknesses and strengths at the very beginning of the year. They are intended to ascertain what further teaching is necessary and to show the learners difficulties and gaps in their knowledge and language deficiencies during a course. The last type of test is referred to as *placement* test generally administered at the beginning of the year and intended to place students in their respective class level to start a teaching programme.

### 1.4.3.2 Norm-referenced and Criterion-referenced tests

Within the context of the learners' performance, tests can fall into two categories. Norm-referenced tests (NRTs) and Criterion-referenced tests (CRTs). The first provide information about the learner comparing to his peers. The candidates classification and pass-fail decisions partly depend on the performance of other learners. Richards et al. (1985) define NRTs as : *“a test designed to measure how the performance of student compares with the performance of another student whose scores are given as the norm .”* NRTs are designed to gauge global language abilities. Their purpose is to get an extended set of scores so as to have the low performance learners at one extreme end of distribution and those with high performance at another extreme, while the majority of the learners falling between the two extremes (Brown, 2005). In order to have acceptable standards of achievement, testers develop and administer a test, the results of which are interpreted on the basis of the performance of a norm; the norm here refers to a large group of testees who are similar to the individuals for whom the test is intended. Criterion-referenced tests(CRTs) are designed to give feedback to students, usually in the form of grades in relation to specific course objectives. In this respect, the teacher (test administrator ) is required to devote the appropriate time and effort in order to give appropriate feedback or "instructional value" as called by Oller (1979). Since the purpose of CRTs is to measure how much learning has occurred, the learners' performance is compared only to the amount of the material learned(Brown,2005). Reliable CRTs should be devised before instruction so that the test will meet the course objectives. This allows teachers to avoid 'teaching to the test';

The learner's performance is measured with respect to the mastery of instructional objectives.

### 1.5 Principles of Assessment

Any discussion on quality assessment would make it incumbent to involve a number of concepts that are fundamental to the reliability of the test and other forms of assessment. At this juncture it is useful to have an overview of what these concepts suggest to the field of education. Brown (1994) puts forward three requirements that are essential to quality assessment : validity, reliability, and practicality.

#### 1.5.1 Validity

The fact of being clear about what one wants to assess in a given subject area is known as validity. A better understanding of this construct would lead to ask the question 'does the assessment measure what it purports to measure ? For instance, when assessing listening, we must consider the students' understanding and not their ability to produce accurate language. So, in order to reach a valid assessment, we should have clear objectives of our assessment and then try to ensure meeting those objectives. However, reaching the goal of validity in assessment needs to have an idea of other aspects of validity. These aspects include content validity, construct validity, empirical validity, and face validity. Flavell posits in this respect:

*“The contents specification is important because it ensures as far as possible that the test reflects all the areas to be tested in suitable proportions and also because it represents a balanced sample without bias towards the test material which happens to be available”*

(Flavell, 1983: 11).



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*Content validity* means assessing the course content and outcomes using formats familiar to the learners. If students have spent a term studying a series of topics, then assessment should reflect what they have covered. In simple terms, teachers need to be certain that they are measuring what they are teaching ( White, 1986). Another aspect of validity is *construct validity*. “**A construct is any theory, hypothesis , or model that explains observed phenomena in our universe of perceptions,**” Brown (1994) states. Construct validity asks the question, “does the test actually tap into the theoretical construct as it has been defined? ” A test then can define the theory or hypothesis underlying it. For example, construct validity can state whether a given ability is hypothesized. In other words, it should show if a distinct ability exists in theory, can be measured, and is indeed measured in that test. When the underlying theories and methodology of language learning match the type of assessment, this refers to construct validity. *Face validity* is another type of validity which stands for the fact that a test should be viewed by observers ( testees, administrators , and teachers ) appropriate in measuring the knowledge or abilities it purports to measure. Mousavi posits:

***face validity refers to the degree to which a test looks right, and appears to measure the knowledge or ability it claims to measure, based on the subjective judgement of the examinees who take it the administrative personnel who decide on its use , and other psychometrically unsophisticated observers .***

( Mousavi, 2002 : 244)

The degree of appropriateness of a test to the knowledge or a skill to be measured represents its face validity. Testees besides

administrators should make their subjective judgement on tests as being valid to gauge their skills and knowledge.

### 1.5.2 Reliability

This term refers to the consistency of test scores when administered to the same group of learners at different times in two different settings . It should not make a difference to the test- taker to take a test under different occasions with the same performance and our assessment produces the same or at least similar results. Nunan states : **“Reliability refers to the consistency of the results obtained from a piece of research”**. (Nunan, 1992 :14) The reliability of assessment can be affected by factors such as the format, the content of the questions and the time allotted to take the test , which must all be consistent.

For instance , research in testing has shown that longer exams produce more reliable scores than brief tests (Bashman, 1990 ). Similarly, the more items a test has, the more reliable it is because this provides teachers with More samples of abilities . Reliability can also be affected by administration Factors like classroom setting (seating, arrangement, lighting, noise and Distractors, etc). In addition, the testee, psychological state of mind, and personality can also affect reliability. The basic concern of test development is to discard or minimize the effects of these factors on test reliability as these can pose a threat to this test principle (Henning 1987) .

### 1.5.3 Practicality

It is also a salient feature of good classroom assessment . Teachers are aware of the practical issues that relate to testing . A test that takes the student more time than it is required is impractical . Similarly, the cost and maintenance of a test such as copying,

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administration facilities and considerable financial means, affect the aspect of practicality . Also a test that is too difficult to perform and excessively developed lacks ‘instructional value ’in Oller’s terms ( Oller,1979 ).

### 1.6 Purpose of Assessment

Assessment of learning is the core issue for a variety of stakeholders at different Levels of society depending on the type and purpose of assessment. Chen (1994) states that assessment has different aims as shown in the chart. According to him, the reasons for assessing learning should be organized according to Administrative, instructional, and research functions. The chart below illustrates these purposes

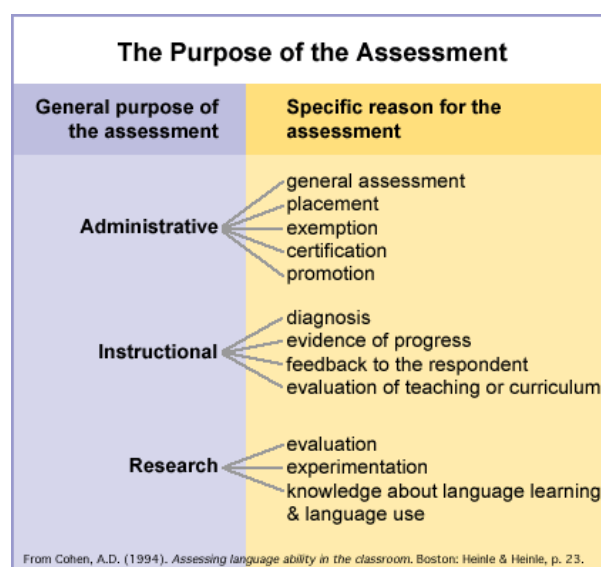


Chart1.1 : Reasons for assessing learning

The chart above illustrates the reasons for assessing learning, which should be organized according to Administrative, instructional, and research functions. According to Shrum and Glissan (2010) there is a paradigm shift in the assessment of classroom practices. The old paradigm was restricted to evaluate the learners by assigning

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them scores or grades while the new paradigm includes a variety of purposes :

- To assess learner's progress in terms of proficiency
- To assess attainment of the National Standards
- To guide and improve the learner's performance
- To evaluate and inform instruction and program design

On the other hand , Brown(2010) states that assessment is integral and continuous to The teaching and learning process , and should fulfill the following functions :

- Increasing motivation by serving as milestones of learner's progress.
- Knowing areas of strengths and identifying those needing remedy.
- Promoting the learner's autonomy by setting their own goal .
- Evaluating the teaching effectiveness.
- Provide feedback to improve learning.
- Pass or fail individuals .
- Predict success in future employment .

The list above can be divided into two main purposes ; one relates to *feedback* and the other relates to *accountability*. Feedback is intended to improve the quality of teaching and learning .Students are engaged in tasks according to which they are given encouragement, response, and feedback on their performance .

### 1.7 Forms of Assessment

Untangling the lexical conundrum relating to assessment implies the distinction of different forms of assessment. These forms can be identified in the following items :

### 1.7.1 Informal Assessment

It is a kind of assessment that occurs in normal classroom conditions in order to collect information about the learners' performance . This type of assessment is fulfilled without referring to test conditions relating to formal assessment. It is also known as continuous assessment since it is done over a specific period of time like a term or an academic year. Brown notes :

*a good deal of teacher's informal assessment is embedded in classroom tasks designed to elicit performance without recording results and making fixed judgements about student's competence .*

( Brown, 2000 : 5)

In the classroom, teachers intuitively assess their pupils' performance when speaking, listening, reading, or writing. They can have a clear idea about their learners' performance, learning handicaps, or problems of motivation. They are also able to know about their learners' attitude and how much endeavour they are doing in the classroom. Teachers are generally connoisseurs of their classrooms in terms of knowledge, mental capacities, and skills of their learners without being in need of formative test. First, it should define what they have to assess because it is impossible to assess all aspects of the classroom. Second, they have to set criteria for their assessment without relying on rough impressions. Finally, it is crucial to link informal assessment with other forms like formal assessment and self assessment, and the information gathered in informal assessment should help learners identify their weaknesses and better perform in formal tests.

### 1.7.2 Formal Assessment

This type of assessment refers to the tasks and procedures intended to test the skills and knowledge. According to Brown (2000) *“They are systematic , planned sampling techniques constructed to give teacher and student an appraisal of student achievement”*. To put it simply, all tests are formal assessment, but not all Formal assessment is testing. For example, projects are a form of assessment but they can by no means be tests. The purpose of making tests is to make decisions about the learner. If no decision is to be made as a result of the test, administering a test seems meaningless. This is due to the fact of having a clear idea about the decision to be made about the learner will help the teacher to identify the most appropriate test. Formal assessment should be seen as a complement to other forms of assessment like self assessment and informal assessment. The basic difference between formal and informal assessment is that the first is more valid and reliable, and consequently measures the learner’s ability in a more objective way than subjective forms of assessment like informal observation and self- assessment .

### 1.7.3 Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment aims to identify in which area a learner needs help and assistance. This kind of assessment happens at the beginning of a course or programme in order to allow the teachers to have an idea of what students are like in terms of cognitive abilities and what strategies and procedures they have to adopt in order to respond to those immediate needs. The type of information collected from diagnostic assessment is important for further activities and remedial work. This type of assessment generally focuses on weaknesses rather on strengths. Harris And McCann

point out that while “ **other types of tests are based on success , diagnostic tests are based on failure**” (Harris and McCann, 1994 : 29 ). This failure should be at the basis of any planning of further classroom instruction . Diagnostic information is vital for teachers in order to design further course activities and work out remedial activities. The information can also be useful for learners, as they can analyze their own problems and set their goals by themselves. As the purpose of diagnostic assessment was to diagnose learning difficulties in the individual learner, so that appropriate interventions could be planned and executed in a continuous process of instruction, diagnostic assessment is generally ranked in the line of formative assessment .

### 1.7.4 Summative Assessment

In terms of function and purpose, assessment can be identified in two main forms, **summative** and **formative** assessment. Summative assessment, also known as assessment OF learning, is directly related to the learner’s Performance. Brown posits “*summative assessment aims to measure, or summarize, what a student has grasped, and typically occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction .*” (Brown 2010 : 6). This is another way of saying that the implication of such assessment is to look back at what the learner has achieved in terms of language outcomes and language proficiency, and whether the learning objectives have been accomplished. In the context of summative assessment, the learner is supposed to sit for exams in order to be certified, that is to be assigned a grade or a score. This decision states whether the learner has achieved the required standard or not, at a specific time

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generally at the end of a term or course instruction (Torrance and Pryor 2008 : 8). The outcomes of such assessment, which are typically grades or percentages, are used by the teacher, schools or academic institutions to decide about the level of attainment, a degree of ranking or the merit of an aptitude or academic qualification.

In the classroom, summative assessment aims at improving learning since it allows the teacher to recognize the weaknesses and plan future remedial instructions. This judgemental procedure is not confined to the teacher, but also extends to the learner's opportunity to take the maximum profit of his failures by engaging in self assessment and holding more responsibility over his own learning. The same literature of assessment suggests a range of functions of summative assessment which aims at

- Measuring the learner's ability and understanding. Black (1999 ) Suggests that it helps to provide an overall judgement of achievement that may be needed for reporting and review.
- Giving feedback to the learners in different ways . Pelligrino et al., suggest that:

***“an assessment is a tool designed to observe the student's behaviour and produce data that can be used to draw reasonable inferences about what students know” .***

(Pelligrino et al. , 2001 :42 )

- To use feedback to inform the academic team through a measurement of success in teaching and learning. According to William (2000) summative assessment should provide information that can serve as a basis for teachers, administrators, and



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Policy makers to take decisions about teaching, learning, and education as a whole. It can also permit the whole society to be informed about the performance of the educational staff. In the same line of thought Pelligrino et al. suggest that

*“assessments serve a vital role in providing information to help students, parents, teachers, administrators and policy makers to reach decisions ”.*

(Pelligrino et al. , 2001 :42 )

- Judging the achievement of academic staff including individual teachers or schools as a whole ( Black 1991)
- To motivate students ( Assessment Reform Group .1999)

Black (1993) puts it in another way stating that summative assessment has three main functions , precisely :

1. The certification of the learner’s achievement.
2. The accountability of educational institutions and the education system by publicizing and comparing results.
3. The enhancement of learning by providing formative feedback.

- **Drawbacks**

Readers of the literature on assessment may come to the conclusion that assessment can have detrimental influence on learning. Black and Williams (1998), suggest that summative assessment is not always a good means to elicit knowledge of the learners . On the other hand, Falchikov ( 2005) highlights many concerns associated with summative assessment

- bias in teacher’s judgements and problem of reliability
- negative influence on learner’s motivation .
- It encourages surface learning rather than deep learning
- It triggers students’ stress.

According to Pelligrino (2001) summative assessment is unlikely to capture the expected knowledge and understanding. The kind of information provided by this assessment is limited about learning and does not help teachers identify the kind of required intervention to improve learning. In addition they are not fair and equitable since they align with the teaching material .

### 1.7.5 Formative Assessment

Also known as assessment FOR learning, formative assessment is an ongoing process involving both teachers and learners at formal and informal levels. Teachers gather information and evidence about the student's learning and use it to inform their future teaching and promote effective learning. It can be beneficial to the learners when they use it to make their own decisions about their own needs and take their learning in charge. According to Brookhart & Moss ( 2006) formative assessment is a process which partners teachers and learners in gathering evidence about learning in a systematic and continuous way to improve the learner's achievement.

Black & Williams express it differently when they state that it refers to:

*all those Activities undertaken by teachers (and their students in assessing themselves), which provide formative feedback to shape and develop the teaching and Learning activities in which both teachers and students are engaged .*

(Black & Williams, 1998 : 18)

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Formative assessment is used continuously through a class period actions undertaken by both teachers and their learners in order to collect information about teaching and learning and find possible ways to improve them .

Promoting effective learning is the chief concern of formative feedback as it fulfills the functions of instruction and accountability . As an instructional tool it allows the teacher and the learner to engage in a give and take process of declarative and procedural knowledge. As an accountability tool it is used to know whether learning has taken place. This aim can be summarized in the following list of items which is by no means exhaustive.

- Giving learners helpful feedback .
- Giving the teacher feedback .
- Identifying the learner's future learning needs .

To put it otherwise the main concern of formative assessment lies in recognizing errors, hardships and shortcomings in the learner's work. It also serves as a basis for information about the kind of advice and remedial work needed to be given to the learners to reach improvement .This is another way of saying that formative assessment uses information from the present in order to look forward to the future. At this particular juncture, a question that is worth asking and answering is what kind of practice should teachers involve in formative assessment? In search for an accurate answer to this question, a lot of research work has been made . One of these views relate to Black and Williams ( 1998), who suggest that there are four aspects that account for formative assessment : Questioning , feedback , sharing criteria , and self assessment .*Questioning* is a clear and important aspect of classroom since it takes a considerable time in teacher's classroom instruction .

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Teachers often ask questions in different ways and forms fitting the context of instruction. answers from the part of the learners allow the teacher to capture evidence about the student's learning and provide appropriate feedback to the learners; In other words, the teacher should be able to invest and interpret the learners' answers into meaningful actions .

*Feedback* is another important component of assessment in the learning process. Hounsel (2004) defines feedback as “ **any information , process or activity which affords or accelerates student learning** ” based on comments relating either to formative or summative assessment activities. In the same line of thought William and Black (1996) identify feedback as it is a key component of formative assessment, and any assessment that diagnoses students' difficulties and provides constructive feedback leads to significant learning gains.

A successful learning lies behind an assessment that unveils learning hardships , and gathers the necessary information that can be best exploited for the sake of promoting learning. Furthermore , feedback provides the teacher with guidance which enhances Learning whenever used appropriately . Pelligrino et al. suggest that “ **learning is a process of continuously modifying knowledge and skills** ” and that feedback has a pivotal role to “ **guide ,test , challenge or redirect the learner's rethinking .**” Pelligrino et al., 2001 : 234) Giving feedback to students implies engaging the teacher into a dialogue with the learner so as to discuss the learners' work in the present in order to have a positive influence on their future achievement .

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*Sharing Criteria* is another important aspect of formative assessment. It goes without saying that before initiating an instructional course teachers are supposed to go through the learning objectives and familiarize their learners with the learning outcomes prior to any unfolding of the units of instruction, which, unfortunately, does not seem to be the case when it comes to assessment. Teachers need to identify the kind of learning they are expecting from their learners who also need to know about the quality of a good work when being assessed. This is another way to say that students need to share ideas with their teachers about what they need to do with their feedback comments in order to use feedback effectively and enhance their learning. Saddler points out that in order for the learners to take advantage of feedback they need to “*possess some of the same evaluative skills as their teachers*”. He furthers the idea that it is important for learners “*to hold a concept of quality roughly similar to that held by the teacher*” (Saddler, 1989:56). This means that the learners need to understand what important elements or criteria should characterize their work to call it a good work. In the same line of thought teachers need to identify the kind of learning expected to occur during their course of instruction, and then use assessment to many fold functions in order to :

- Know the kind of learning that occurred in the classroom.
- Ascertain the learner’s assimilation respectively.
- Have a judgemental view of teaching quality .
- Figure out the next learning stages.
- Adapt the teaching strategy accordingly .

On the other hand, feedback, though a powerful means to improve the learner’s achievement, is less useful when used alone

. Hattie and Timperley state that “ *feedback has no effect in a vacuum ;To be powerful , in its effect , there must be a learning context to which feedback is addressed* ”.( Hattie and Timperley, 2007 :82 ). By a learning context, Hattie and Timperley refer to a formative assessment system which has three component parts : Feed-up , Feedback , and Feedforward .

### 1.7.5.1 Feed-up

It aims at ensuring the learner’s understanding of the purpose of the Lesson, by including the way it will be assessed. It concerns that part of Learning process in which both teachers and learners share in identifying what and when it will be learned. In this respect MCTighe and O’Connor identify three elements that shape learners’ perceptions of their ability to learn. *Task clarity* (when the learners understand the learning goal and know how to be evaluated as learners) ; *relevance* ( when the learning goals are meaningful to the learners ) ; *potential for success* ( when learners believe in their success in learning). Establishing a lesson’s *purpose* and communicating it to the learners lies at the heart of this learning stage. A lesson’s purpose displays the content of instruction, the role of the learners, and the learning expectations. Fisher, Frey and Rothenburg (2008) call these the content purpose. When used together, these elements clearly show what will be learned ,what the learners will do with the content , and how they will work with others to accomplish these tasks .

Another element in feed-up system is *motivation*. It is closely linked to the purpose since the learners decide if they are interested in the purpose of the lesson . It is closely linked to the purpose since the learners decide if they are interested in the purpose of the lesson .Motivation has always been considered an essential element to

success . If someone wants to succeed in something, they have to do something to achieve it. Motivation has been in different ways. Williams and Burden state that motivation is “*a state of cognitive arousal*” which provokes “*a decision to act*”(Williams and Burden 1997 :120). They further the idea that the strength of motivation is based on how much value the learner places on the outcome he or she wishes to achieve .When discussing the issue of motivation, it is worth noting that a distinction is made between *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* motivation. *Extrinsic* motivation relates to the outside factors urging the individual to achieve a goal, while *Intrinsic* motivation comes from within the individual .

Most researchers and methodologists have come to the view that intrinsic motivation is more crucial element to the learning process than extrinsic motivation. When the learners come to love the course, they are likely to succeed .

### **1.7.5.2 Feed-back**

Frey and Fisher(2011) identify formative assessment where learners receive feedback about their work and performance and learn about their level of achievement .As feedback reassigns back responsibility to the learner, it should be instructive, meaningful in order to have a positive effect on the learner. Teachers need to approach feedback like other aspects of instruction. It should be tailored to the needs of the learners. It should include encouragement, support, and correction by revealing to the students that progress is being made. Teachers also need to be knowledgeable regarding feedback in term of its levels and forms in order to better implement this aspect of assessment for the benefit of learners .

### ❖ Levels of Feed-back

According to Frey and Fisher (2011), feedback has got four levels that have a big influence on its effectiveness . Each level ought to be consistent with the goals that were set in the feed-up process.

*Feedback about the task:* This level is relating to the performance of the learner who is provided with feedback about the task he or she fulfills. This level of feedback has a corrective dimension as the teacher often identifies and transmits correct and incorrect answers, requests additional information, and directs the learner's attention to specific knowledge. This level of feedback is known as *corrective feedback*. Ellis (2009) recognizes several types of feedback which comprise direct corrective feedback wherein the teacher provides the learner with correct information, indirect corrective feedback wherein the teacher identifies errors but does not provide corrections, and metalinguistic corrective feedback wherein the teacher helps with clues the students to correct the mistakes. However, the most commonly used by the teacher is corrective feedback ( Airasian, 1997), as it is used to address the mistakes.

*Feedback about the processing of the task:* This kind of feedback happens while the task is being performed ; it stems from different processes relating to classroom practices . Self reliant and autonomous learners have the ability to monitor those processes and direct themselves towards successful learning.

*Feedback about self regulation:* This level of feedback stands for the fact that the Learners use self assessment as a means to measure the extent of their knowledge, cognitive abilities and strategies, and how efficient they are in achieving their performance aims. In doing



so they have to regulate their behaviour and actions in order to reach those aims.

*Feedback about the self as a person:* Though it appears to be ineffective when used alone, this kind of feedback can be beneficial when it causes a change in the student's behaviour, attitude, effort and engagement ( Klugher &Denisi,1998 ). Appraising statements like 'good job, or 'well said, are welcomed by the learner though they do not seem to cause a big change in the student's interest as they do not provide specific information about the task performed. This type of feedback is often connected with other types of feedback and should target the student's effort in the task completion .

### ❖ **Criteria for Feedback**

In order to be effective, feedback must meet the following requirements or Criteria. As suggested by Wiggins (1998), feedback should be timely, Specific, understandable, and actionable.

*Timely:*feedback must be provided as soon as possible, that is, the sooner, The better. It should be closely linked to the student's performance in terms of time. Time gap between performance and feedback should be reduced to the maximum. In this respect, Brookhart posits that “ *feedback needs to come while students are still mindful of the topic, assignment or performance in question*”. (Brookhart, 2008 :10 ). Such feedback provides learners with information that are likely to help them learning the content, and the chances of improvement are very high. By contrast, if there is a wide gap between feedback and performance, students are contented with a grade and pay no attention to the feedback because they may think that such feedback has come too late and does not deserve to

be considered. Worse than this, learners may go to question their teacher's commitment to their learning and the value of tasks they have performed .

*Specific* :When feedback is specific, it implies that it informs the learners where they are good and where they are bad . This is likely to urge the learners to make adjustments and improve their performance . However, when feedback is generic, the learners find it hard to make any relevance of what they are learning with the learning goals . For the sake of illustration, telling the learner a grade does not seem as informative as when the teacher tells the student where he or she has done well and where they need to learn.

*Understandable* : In order to be effective, feedback should be meaningful to the learners who should understand the content of the feedback . A Feedback which is provided in a different language is not likely to show the students where they did well and where they still need to focus next. If we consider a feedback that includes difficult terms that learners do not understand, not much good would come of that . Tighe and O'Connor further the idea by questioning this aspect of feedback if “*learners can tell specifically from the given feedback what they have done well and what they could do next time to improve .*” (Tighe & O'Connor, 2005 :12)

If the learner does not provide answers to this question , then learning has not probably taken place .

*Actionable*: A sound feedback should form the basis for action . Learners should act in self adjustment, review, practice, improvement, retrial as a response to the information they get from the feedback. These actions generally overlap with feedforward that will be discussed later.

### ❖ Forms of Feed-back

Feedback is familiar to teachers in three different forms . It can occur In an oral form, a written form, or peer feedback.

*Oral feedback* : most feedback occurs in spoken form. It should be wisely planned in terms of time and action. To act positively, learners expect a calm setting, focusing on positive points rather than weaknesses, using appropriate supportive voice that creates a sense of respect to the learner. These qualitative aspects like setting ( Frey & Fisher, 2011), structure ( Jeff Zwiers,2008), and tone (Dweck , 2007) are important to consider when providing feedback to students .

*written feedback* : As much of the students work is done in a written form teachers should rely on written feedback rather on oral one . Like oral feedback , written feedback should have a respectful tone and an actionable structure. This implies that the form of the feedback should not be too inclusive in a way to cause negative impact on the learner, nor should it be too restricted as this might lead the learner to think that too little feedback shows that they didn't make any mistakes while they did, or that the teacher's correction was not more than mere skimming of the written text . The content of the feedback is another important dimension of the feedback that should reflect the teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning . More often, teachers have the tendency to mark and comment deviations from conventions (e.g. ,capital letters,punctuation, indenting, ...) rather than provide feedback about the content .

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According to Icy Lee (1998), there are several ways that reflect the teacher's deviations from providing feedback about the content, most importantly :

1. Teachers mostly focus on the language exponents with little attention to accuracy .
2. Teachers have the tendency to locate errors and correct them for students believing that this allows the students to learn to locate and correct their errors .
3. Teachers use error codes that the learners are not able to decipher
4. Teachers provide scores to the student's writing though they know that these draw the learners' attention away from the teacher's feedback .
5. Teachers restrict their feedback to weaknesses although strengths should be focused.
6. There is more emphasis on errors from the part of the teacher though they believe that mistakes are unavoidable .

A favourable learning environment is not based solely on teacher's feedback, no matter how thoughtfully it is delivered. Therefore, being aware of this idea, many teachers turn to peer feedback to provide a further support for students .

*Peer feedback* : is a classroom practice where feedback is provided by one learner to another learner. It allows the low performance learners to learn from those of high performance. Peer feedback can be administered during or after the practice of an assignment. Comments from peers are called peer feedback. This can take the form of corrections, opinion, suggestions, ideas provided by students to each other. Thus, feedback can foster learners cooperation, autonomy, and confidence, and support students interaction.

According to Atay and Kurt ( 2006 ) peer feedback provides diversity with teaching. In a peer feedback session, students work with their peers to do more practice; students anxiety becomes lower and learning motivation can be higher.

### 1.7.5.3 Feed-forward

Feedback is not always efficient mainly if it does not respond to the criteria mentioned earlier. In order to have the power of change, feedback must go hand in hand with feed-forward. When performance forms the basis for teachers' future decisions, learning can take place and achievement can be improved. Thus, new understanding takes the place of misconceptions from previous learners' instruction and experiences. The teacher-student interaction, and peer interaction, discussion, evidence of claims, and questions are all necessary steps to realize that change in the learners way of thinking and misconceptions . In the same line of thought Allen posits “ **conceptual change is socially mediated** ” (Allen , 2010 : 156) ; that is, replacing misconceptions by correct conceptualizations will probably take place when learners interact with other learners. When the teacher identifies errors and misconceptions he or she is involved in the feed-forward system since it permits him to make sound decisions about which students need further correctional instructions in relevant areas. Put simply , teachers use their knowledge of these mistakes to decide about what to teach next and the appropriate way to teach it. In this way, feed-forward makes a part of a whole formative assessment system.

### 1.8 Formative Assessment System

So far, it has been shown that a formative assessment system should comprise three main components : feed-up, feedback and

feed-forward. Formative assessment is most beneficial when it is endorsed by an instructional framework that responds to the learners' needs (Fisher & Frey, 2007). When instructional framework is implemented, teachers use assessment information and classroom performance as a basis for instructional decisions and future actions to meet the learners' needs in ways that build their confidence and competence. This is the core of formative assessment. In the same vein, pundits have suggested another effective model of instructional framework namely Gradual Release of Responsibility Instructional Framework that endeavours to shape how learning can be realized within intentional interactions through a gradual transition from the teacher to the learner.

### 1.9 Gradual Release of Responsibility Instructional Framework

This model of instructional framework suggested by Pearson & Ghalager (1983) states that cognitive work comprises a slow transition from teacher modeling to joint responsibility between teachers and learners, to independent practice and application by the learners. The foundational theories of this model of instruction include Jean Piaget's work on cognitive structures (1952); Lev Vygotsky's work on zones of proximal development (1962 – 1978); Albert Bandura's work on attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (1965). All of them suggest that learning occurs through intentional interactions which lead to the occurrence of learning. According to Fisher and Frey (2008) the model of gradual release of responsibility has got four components: *Focus lesson*, That is, where the teacher establishes the purpose of the course and conveys it to the learners in the form of learning outcomes. *Guided instruction*: the teacher ensures and facilitates

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understanding while working with groups of students by supporting his instruction through questions and cues in order to release gradually responsibility to the learners.

*Group work* : This component states that learners work collaboratively in groups in order to achieve an oral or a written task. Group members should contribute to this effort to be productive, and seize the opportunity to consolidate the knowledge they acquired before they can use it independently.

*Independent learning* : finally, learners take the whole responsibility of learning inside and outside the classroom. Many independent learning activities can be used as formative assessments in order to check understanding and decide about future instruction. These four components should characterize every lesson not necessarily in the order provided above, in order to ensure that learning has really taken place .

Formative assessment provides both teachers and learners with information about teaching and learning . It helps teachers identify weaknesses in their teaching and decide about what corrective teaching activities should be planned and what to teach next. It also informs students about their learning ,what they understand, and what they still need to learn. Teaching does not necessarily imply learning as we may teach many things that the learners eventually do not learn . Here comes the role of formative assessment that distinguishes teaching from learning, a system that includes feed-up, feedback, and feed-forward, and makes learning happen .

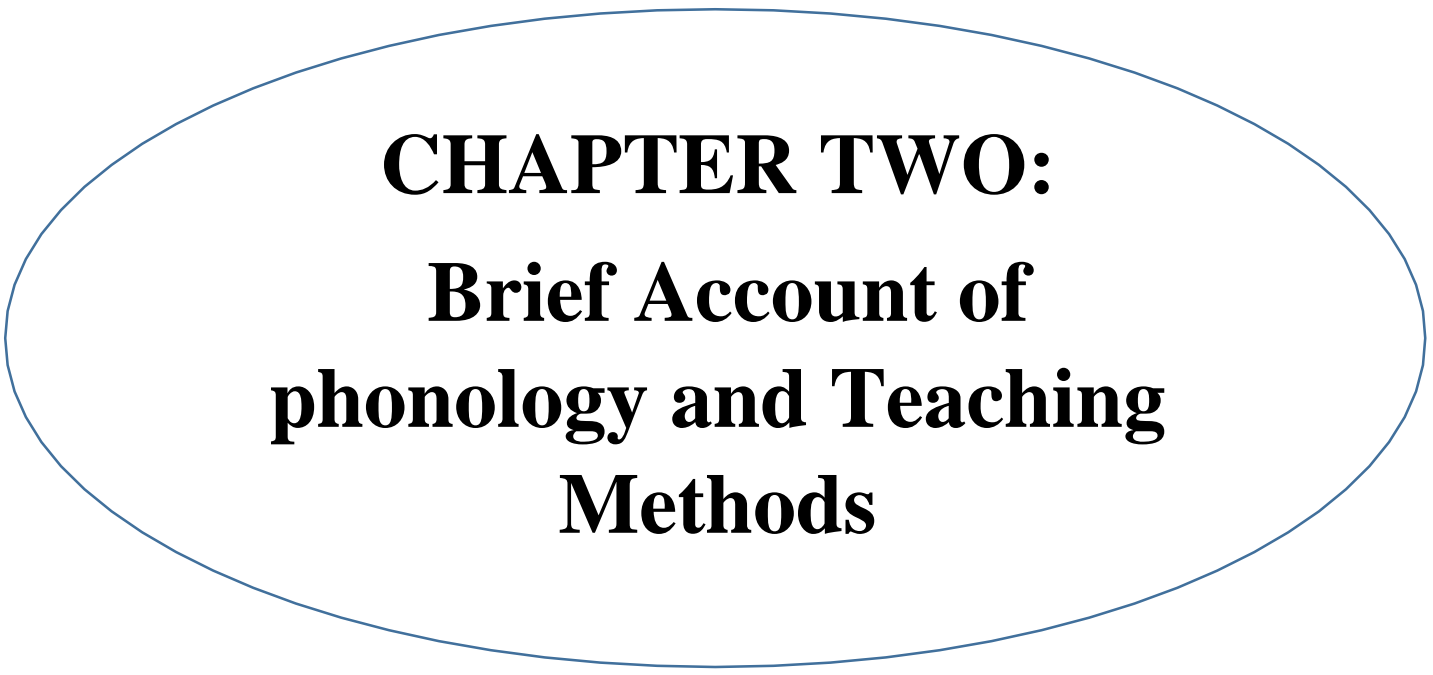
### 1.10 Conclusion

Assessment which is an umbrella term, contrary to the conceptions held by many EFL teachers, is an important tool for a successful education. Teachers, educationalists, and other stakeholders have come to realize its importance in shaping the future of successful teaching and learning, and the policy of education of the country.

The gap or divorce between teaching and learning, that has long labelled EFL teaching practices is no more tolerated. Assessment is a process-based teaching task that characterizes every action and moment of classroom instruction. It can tell whether learning has occurred or not, on the basis of the learners' achievements. Additionally, assessment can provide a boatload of data about the learner's performance, the efficiency and relevance of teaching materials, and classroom environment to form the basis for future teaching actions and education policies.

Assessment can take many forms, most important of which is the formative assessment. In order to realize school improvement and achieve academic reforms, formative assessment should be implemented as a system wherein information about the learner's performance ought to be used to guide future instructional actions, wherein a balance should be created between feed-up, feedback, and feed-forward to enhance students' understanding. Formative assessment should be viewed as a teaching principle that has to lead the ongoing teaching process to ensure that learning occurs for all learners .





**CHAPTER TWO:**  
**Brief Account of**  
**phonology and Teaching**  
**Methods**

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### 2.1 Introduction

Being conscious about the current challenges that are faced by Algeria, and thoroughly aware of the pivotal role the country has to play in a global world, the authorities engaged into a set of political, economic, social, and most importantly educational reforms in order to keep abreast of the latest developments and synchronize with changes that have shaped every aspect of today's life. As a global language that has its share in the socio-political decisions of the country, English language teaching has been subject to a set of methodological alterations that all aimed to promote its learnability and take advantage of its overwhelming use to have access to the world knowledge and skill transfer. It is in this context that the latest teaching novelty, namely Competency-Based Approach, has been adopted by the Algerian educational system. The theoretical assumptions underlying such methodology have direct implications on the whole process of its implementation, from its curriculum design to its teaching materials including the textbook, and every aspect of language instruction. The phonological aspect of language teaching which is no exception, seems to have been given a share in the course instruction like other phonological elements which have been introduced in the secondary school textbooks.

In this perspective the first part in the present chapter attempts to provide a brief account of phonology to shed light on the nature of sound system of English and its importance in meeting intelligibility which lies at the heart of teaching

phonology. It also seeks to depict how suprasegmental feature of stress is important for pronunciation and what implications it has for the teaching of this aspect in the light of 3AS competency based textbook. This part also seeks to evaluate the method of phonology instruction in 3AS coursebook (New Prospects), and how teachers perceive the issue of phonology.

### 2.2 The Scope of Phonology

The acquisition of a foreign language pronunciation by an EFL learner draws heavily on the mastery of the foreign language sound system which is the aspect of two inter-related areas, phonetics and phonology. These areas are important in teaching pronunciation as Broughton et al. (1980) posit :

*the teacher must understand the way the sounds of English are systematically used within the sound structure of English so that he can clarify his own objectives in pronunciation teaching .*

(Broughton et al,1980 :50)

Making a distinction between Phonetics and Phonology is worth mentioning at this particular juncture as these have the commonality of sound and may cause confusion to some teachers and learners. Furthermore, matters of speech sounds of English can be grasped only if they are fulfilled through the study of both phonetics and phonology. Roach states:

*only by studying both the phonetics and the phonology of English is it possible to acquire a full understanding of the use of sounds in English speech.*

( Roach, 1991 :43) .

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As the focus of the research is phonology, a surface reference only would be made to the phonetic aspect of sound. Phonetics, then, tackles the speech sound in terms of its physical aspects, that is, the way sounds are articulated. Ogden defines Phonetics as “*a systematic study of the sounds of speech, which is physical and directly observable.*” (Ogden, 2009 :1). Phonetics divides concrete utterances into individual speech sounds. It is concerned with *Parole* in Saussure’s terms and *Performance* to use Chomsky’s terms as these two concepts deal with actual language use. When producing speech, air movement is controlled through the vocal tract which includes throat, mouth and nose. The speech can be studied in three different ways: *Articulatory phonetics* which describes in detail how the speech organs are involved in the production of speech sounds. *Acoustic phonetics* that deals with the physical properties of the speech sound. It analyses the movement of air as sound passes from the mouth of the speaker to the ear of the listener. *Auditory phonetics* studies the perception of the speech sounds when they reach the listener’s ear and how they are processed in his brain. Kreidler states that

***phonetics deals with speech in its purely physical aspects - the ways sounds are articulated by the speaker, the acoustic properties of sound waves, and the effects that these have on the ear of the hearer.***

(Kreidler, 2004 :5)

In contrast to Phonetics, Phonology deals with the abstract side of the language. It is concerned with the business of description of the sounds that we use in speaking, the functions

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of phonemes and how they relate to each other. It is interested in the speaker's knowledge of the sound system. To put it otherwise, phonology is concerned with *langue* to use Saussure's term, and *competence* to use Chomsky's term (Skandera and Burley 2005).

In the realm of phonology, the sound is central to the speech process since it serves as medium to convey a message which is shaped by the grammar and vocabulary of the language. Every language consists of a system of sounds that makes it possible to distinguish one message from another, or one word from another. This difference in sounds of English is identified through patterns of phonemic difference or contrast (Broughton et al 1980). The best way to illustrate this statement would be the following example. The word *fat* is distinguished from the word *mat* and the word *hat* and *hot* involving the phonemes /f//m/, /h/, /æ /, /t/. These phonological sounds allow a distinction in words and messages. Most descriptions of the sound system of English are based on patterns of phonemic contrast to make distinction between words.

### 2.3 Teaching and Learning Phonology

Phonology as an important aspect of pronunciation teaching refers to the ways sounds are produced and organized into phonemes to create meaning of words and utterances. The structure of the sound system involves segmental features like vowels and consonants, and suprasegmental features such as stress and intonation ( Broughton et al ,1980). Teaching these aspects contributes to a successful communication and ensures intelligibility . Richards et al state :

*Pronunciation (also known as phonology) includes the role of individual sounds and sound segments, that is, features at the segmental level, as well as suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation.*

(Richards et al.2002:175)

Within the same context, some consideration has been attributed to these two aspects as they have been inserted in teaching school curricula under pronunciation teaching units, reflected regularly in sequences as has been the case for CBA secondary school textbooks. Field research has proven that the degree of attention given to the teaching of phonology varies from one teacher to another. Some teachers keep discarding phonology from their teaching contexts, which may explain the learners pronunciation failure. In this vein, Brown posits *“In spite of its recognized importance in communication, Pronunciation is still a marginalized skill in many ESL programs”*. (Brown,2010:1).

Other teachers, however, seem to be ignorant about their pronunciation teaching objectives, and consequently they lack awareness of the role of phonology in achieving intelligibility and effective communication. In the same line of thought these teachers seem to be unaware of some of the crucial roles they have to fulfill in EFL classrooms. The aforementioned factors are also likely to affect the learnability of the phonological aspect of the language.

### **2.3.1 The Teacher’s Role**

Facilitating learning in the classroom is the chief purpose of teachers. This can be attained only by adopting a variety of roles



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in EFL classrooms. Teachers have always been asked to play countless different roles. Most importantly, teachers have been called upon to foster learners autonomy by changing their teaching style and sharing some of their leadership with their learners. Some pundits recommend that teachers ought to be rather democratic, and seeking into building a positive learning environment based on a good rapport with the learners. In this vein Harmer states :

*as teachers, we are called upon to play many different roles in a language learning classroom, our ability to carry these out effectively will depend to a large extent on the rapport we establish with our students, and our level of our knowledge and skill.*

*(Harmer, 2007 :75)*

Most recent methodologies have the tendency to be learner-centered as teachers are invited to be less involved in the teaching process and leave room for the learners to feel more responsible and take their own learning in charge. This wave of instruction under the banner of ‘stop teaching, let them learn ’ implies that the teacher needs to be only a guide on the side.

According to Kenworthy (1987), part of the role of the teachers in the realm of phonology, is their need to check stress and if it is appropriately used; they need to provide continuous feedback about the kind of oral performance of the learners who need to know what to pay attention to probably due to misconceptions they may hold, or inaccurate assumptions they may make about the way English is pronounced. Teachers should raise their awareness regarding the importance of suprasegmentals like stress and intonation

because these can affect the message conveyed to the listener. In addition to this, teachers need to ponder over the relevant tasks and procedures to approach pronunciation issues in order to better fit the learning styles and approaches of their learners.

### **2.3.2 The Learner's Role**

Any more seen as recipients that have to be filled with knowledge, learners in recent teaching methodologies are required to respond to the teacher's role in the classroom. The best way to meet this requirement is to reach learning independence. According to Rubbin and Thomson(1982) the learners ought to find their own way without relying too much on the teacher's guidance, and create their own opportunities for learning and practice. The learners' primary role is to try to be autonomous in learning, and endeavour incessantly to acquire a good pronunciation. In this sense Kenworthy posits :“ *success in pronunciation will depend on how much effort the learner puts into it* ”(Kenworthy,1987 : 2). The learner's willingness to hold himself responsible for his own learning is of high importance to a successful learning process. The learner should respond positively to the teacher's feedback by taking action and monitoring his own effort to maximize his prospects for improvement.

### **2.3.3 Factors Affecting the learning of phonology**

Research in the field of phonology has revealed a set of factors counting for learning pronunciation (Kenworthy,1987). Among these, *the native language* which has a direct influence on the learner's pronunciation. The speech sound system of the native language and sound features like stress and intonation are

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likely to affect a foreign language learner's pronunciation. The more the difference is with the native language, and the more the difficulty the learner will have to pronounce the sound of the foreign language.

A second influence on pronunciation learning is the *learner's age*. It is believed that this factor determines the accuracy of the learner's pronunciation. Foreign language learners are considered to find it difficult to master the sounds of a foreign language. This idea is supported by Brown(1987) who claims that there is a biological timetable that can favour the language acquisition, and beyond which it is difficult to achieve. Brown refers to this notion as 'the critical period' which is

*a biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire. The critical period hypothesis claims that there is such a biological timetable.*

( Brown,1987 :42 )

Another important factor affecting the learning of phonology is the *amount of exposure* . The more the learner is exposed to pronunciation, the better the acquisition will be. A learner who lives in an English environment where he is surrounded by English speakers, is likely to acquire a pronunciation skill more quickly and effectively than a learner who is less exposed to English pronunciation. Conversely, in a non-English-speaking country, English is used only in scholastic contexts whereby learners are exposed to English within a specific benchmark of time. This restricted exposure is likely to reduce the advantage of pronunciation development. According to some researchers,

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exposure to pronunciation doesn't matter as much as the learner's response to phonological courses. Kenworthy(1987) states that “ *it is not merely exposure that matters, but how the learner responds to the opportunities to listen and to use English*”. Though exposure is sometimes regarded as an unnecessary factor, its contribution to pronunciation development is unquestionable.

The last factor that is thought to impact the learning of pronunciation is *motivation*. Some learners are so concerned with pronunciation that they request feedback. The strength of their motivation depends on how much value they place on the pronunciation outcome they want to achieve (Williams & Burden,1997 ). If the learners are unconcerned with pronunciation matters, it means that they are not placing value on pronunciation outcome. In this case teachers can intrude to affect the last factor and spark the learners' motivation for good pronunciation by demonstrating to the learners why it is essential to approach the phonological level, and how important good pronunciation is for intelligibility. They can make their learners acquainted with how much progress they have made and how well they are doing towards pronunciation success.

According to Harmer(2007), we can distinguish between two kinds of motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The first is caused by outside factors like the need to prepare for an exam. The second type of motivation, intrinsic motivation, however, comes from inside the individual like the desire to speak native- like English and enjoyment of the learning process.

Most of the researchers agree that intrinsic motivation is likely to lead to more successful learning and better achievement results.

### **2.3.4 Goals of Teaching Phonology**

Many English language teachers focus on the study of grammar, vocabulary, acting out dialogues, getting their learners to participate in skill activities and encourage them to become competent readers and listeners. Yet little attempt is made from the part of these teachers to teach phonology overtly, and possibly this is due to the fact that they feel nervous in addressing this issue, or perhaps they have more important things to teach, and pronunciation teaching for them is only a waste of time and effort, or may be because they think that engaging themselves with their learners in the study of the sound system may lead them to get into the trouble of confusion and bewilderment, and consequently they end by putting this teaching element at the bottom in the list of priorities. In this respect Fraser (2000) states that the cause of this neglect is the lack of confidence in teaching pronunciation efficiently to EFL learners and to the lack of training which has resulted in misgivings among these teachers.

Many teachers, then, fail to conceive of this salience and end by giving little attention to the teaching of phonology, and this may provide an explanation to the weaknesses and low achievements in pronunciation.

#### **2.3.4.1 Intelligibility vs Perfection**

As mentioned earlier, being ignorant about the pronunciation teaching objectives and the lack of awareness about the teaching

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of phonology are likely to affect the whole learning acquisition. Getting learners to communicate effectively implies that teachers ought to set goals for teaching pronunciation. In this vein, it is believed that there are two trends shaping the goals of teaching phonology, ‘nativeness’ and ‘intelligibility’ (Davies, 2005).

The first paradigm defining the goal of pronunciation is to reach native-like pronunciation. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that EFL learners should attain or approximate a native-like pronunciation. At least this has been the cause for many past years until it was realized that this is inappropriate for most learners as it is required for a limited number of professions like teachers, air-traffic controllers, or telephone operators, whose pronunciation should approximate the native accent in order to be understood. In such situations, repetition and second tries are not permitted because these are open to risk (Kenworthy 1987).

By contrast, most researchers and teachers believe that being understood by the listener should be the chief purpose of teaching pronunciation. In this line of thought, Broughton et al. (1987) state that *“the aim of pronunciation teaching must be that the students can produce English speech which is intelligible in the areas where they use it.”* The teacher’s instruction, they furthered, is *“only to ensure intelligibility, not to achieve a total set of native-speaker-like variations”* (Broughton et al, 1987 : 57)

Kenworthy (1987) also used the term ‘understandability’ to refer to intelligibility. The number of words understood by the

listener defines the rate of intelligibility of the speaker; that is, the more accurate pronunciation is provided, and the more intelligible the speaker is. However, if a sound is mispronounced, that is, one sound feature is substituted for another, the listener is likely to fail to grasp the message, and the speech would be unintelligible and lead to communication breakdown.

Setting intelligibility as a goal rather than native-like-pronunciation implies an attempt to reach the threshold of understandability. In this context, Broughton et al (1987) provide an example that can better illustrate the point. The sound /t/, that can be uttered in isolation, can, in the middle of a word like *matter* sound like /d/ or /ð/. These sound variations are valid in context for the word *matter*. But if the speaker uses another sound like /s/ or /f/ for the sound /t/ of the word *matter*, the speaker would be unintelligible.

### 2.3.4.2 Intelligibility and Prosodic Features

Prosodic features like stress, pitch, and intonation can have an immeasurable influence on understandability of the speech. Intelligibility entails more than using word correct order or suitable lexical items. Incorrect stress use or inappropriate pitch and intonation will hamper the listener in assimilating the message of the speaker. Prosodic features, also known as suprasegmentals, are crucial elements that count for conveying information to the listener. A high-pitched voice can indicate that the speaker is either frightened or excited. If, on the

contrary, he uses a lower pitch, the speaker is likely to be tired, bored, or fed up. Intonation, likewise, has important meaning to

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convey. It can also tell what someone means and how they feel about it. Sustaining this idea, Richards states: *‘words stressed incorrectly or within inappropriate pitch or intonation will impede the learner in getting the intended message across’* (Richards&Renandya,2002 :188)

Similarly, stress in English words is of significant importance to intelligibility. In polysyllabic words one syllable will have the quality of prominence or stress. Such prominence is due to some pronunciation features like loudness and length of vowels. If the speaker doesn’t make a syllable more prominent than others, or stresses the wrong syllable, the listener is likely to be unable to identify the word. This is because the stress pattern is an important aspect of a word’s identity (Kenworthy,1987 ).

Evidence has shown that native speakers depend largely on the stress pattern to identify the words when listening, and when a native speaker mishears a word, this is due to the incorrect use of stress by the foreigner. The best way to illustrate the point is by giving the example of two mispronounced words *written* and *comfortable*. When the first is stressed on the second syllable instead of the first, it will be perceived as *‘retain’*, and when the second *‘comfortable’* is stressed on the third syllable, it is perceived as *‘come for table’*. These two examples show clearly how stress pattern is essential for both the speaker and the listener to manage communication.

### 2.4 Approaches to Teaching Phonology

The proliferation of teaching methodologies has made it clear that no one specific methodology has been adopted as the



standard fashion in EFL teaching to reflect considerable controversies among researchers in the field of education. However, some approaches have been recognized in the teaching of phonology. As cited in Djebbari (2014), two main approaches have been identified by Celce- Murcia et al(1996) :

### **2.4.1 The Intuitive-Imitative Approach**

According to this approach the learner listens and imitates the speech sounds of the target language. This method best fits beginners at their early learning stage. At this stage learners can take advantage of the multi sources available through modern technologies, audiotapes, videos, and computer-based programmes, that can offer better access to authentic speech models.

### **2.4.2 The Analytic-Linguistic Approach**

This approach is backed up by the presentation of supporting tools and pedagogical aids provided on the basis of explicit, structured instruction , exhibiting illustrated phonological elements such as phonemic alphabet and charts of speech organs. According to Murcia et al.(1996), this approach provided a complementary function to the Intuitive-imitative approach.

### **2.5 Building the Phonological Awareness**

Phonological awareness is the ability to understand the phonological structure of spoken language. Fitzpatrick (1997) better defines it as *“the ability to listen inside a word ”*. It helps learners understand the sound structure of language by identifying the different elements that compose the spoken language such as words, syllables, rhymes, and phonemes.

When learners develop phonological awareness, they demonstrate an understanding of how the English sound operates in words. This is why teachers should have a good understanding of the learners' phonological knowledge to help in planning to address their needs.

The phonological structure of the spoken language can be identified under the dichotomy of two levels of segmentals and suprasegmentals.

### 2.5.1 Segmentals

They refer to those components of phonology that relate to individual speech sounds, or phonemes that are combined within the sound system. Skandera and Burleigh( 2005) define segmental as “ *the segmentation of language into individual speech sounds provided by phonetics*”. The key focus of segmental phonology is the function and possible combinations of sounds within the sound system, and not the production, the physical properties, or the perception of such sounds.

#### 2.5.1.1 The Phoneme

The phoneme is considered the chunk that can contribute to the building of a word, i.e, it is thought to be the fundamental part of the word. Linguistics defines it as the minimal unit of a sound. Thus it is the smallest part that can alter the meaning of a word. Its study deals with the function of sounds. /p/ and /b/ are considered two phonemes in English because they distinguish park from bark. Phonemes can also be vowels . The vowels i,u,e,æ, for instance, can distinguish the words *pin, pun, pen, pan* from one another, as a result they are phonemes (Birjandi&Salmani-Nodoushan, 2005:10).

Doubtless, any language in the world has a number of phonemes that differentiate meaning and go in accordance with the number of sounds. Phonemes represent the sounds of speech in languages but are not letters. The following example is a good demonstration of the point. The words ‘flocks’ and ‘phlox’ share the same phonemes but are different in terms of meaning. So phonemes of the language correspond to the smallest sum of symbols to disambiguate the foggy graphical image for both native speakers to read and a foreign learner to pronounce (Birjandi, & Salmani-Nodoushan,2005).

### 2.5.1.2 The Syllable

A syllable can be identified as a unit of pronunciation which is larger than a sound but smaller than a word. Syllables can consist of a single vowel sound (V), or they can combine vowels and consonants (C). In terms of phonetic description, syllables can be manifested in the following forms.

A syllable has a centre (also called peak or nucleus) which is produced with little or no obstruction of air, and is therefore produced by a vowel. The minimal syllable is the personal pronoun I / ai / .

A syllable has a center preceded by an onset which is produced by an obstruction of air, and therefore, formed by consonants, like in the word *tar* / ta:/ , *shy* /ʃaɪ /.

A syllable where there is no onset and the centre is followed by a coda which, like the onset, is produced with obstruction of air, and therefore, formed by one or more consonants. Such syllables are like in the word *art* /a:t/.

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The remaining sorts of syllables have both an onset and a coda such as in the words park /pa:k/, or the word beat /bi:t/

Other forms of syllables have been identified by phoneticians, however they have been ignored at this stage of literature, as they are of no significance to the present work.

English syllables, then, are of four types; minimal syllable, a centre syllable with a beginning and no termination, a syllable with a termination and no beginning, and a syllable with both termination and beginning ( De Lacy, 2007:163 ). The following table can best illustrate different forms of the structure of a syllable :

Structure	Syllable	Phonetic Transcription
V	I	/aɪ/
CV	key	/ki:/
CCV	tree	/tri:/
CCCV	spre	/spri:/
CVC	seek	/si:k/
CCVC	speak	/spi:k/
CCCVC	scram	/skræm/
CCCVCC	striped	/straɪpt/
VC	an	/æn/
VCC	ant	/ænt/
VCCC	ants	/ænts/
CVCC	pant	/pænt/
CVCCC	pants	/pænts/
CCCVCCC	splints	/splɪnts/
CCVCC	Stamp	/stæmp/
CVCCC	texts	/teksts/

Table 2.1 Structure of the syllable

According to auditory phonetics, perception of the centre of syllable with regard to the listener is clearer than the onset and offset. This prominence is due to the combination of the centre

and its surrounding. It should be pointed out that each phoneme has its specific duration, quality, pitch, i.e., sonority; however, centres (vowels) are more sonorous than consonants (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005) . As far as the phonological approach is concerned, a syllable is a combination of phonemes

### **2.5.1.3 Prominence Theory**

Contrary to some languages such as Japanese, for instance, whose syllable structure is often formed with a consonant followed by a vowel like *TOYOTA*, or Arabic and Hebrew which have a particular way to organize their sounds in a linear way to form syllables, English, however, builds its syllables in an alphabetic way, that is, vowels and consonants appear as letters in orthography, hence words are thread in one or more syllables.

Of further importance in detecting the number of syllables in a particular word is conveying messages in communication. However it is not easy to recognize the number of syllables because of their different structures .The easiest way to detect the syllable is the prominence theory which means to count the number of vowels that are considered peaks surrounded by consonants or by zero consonantal segments ( Connor.O.J.D, 1973: 200 ).

### **2.5.1.4 Pulse Theory**

In addition to the prominence theory that can help in detecting the number of syllables, pulse theory is also helpful for exposing the number of syllables in words. It defines the

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syllable as sounds resulted from one chest pulse (Connor.O.J.D,1973).

According to Ampeer Crambe, breathing is the core of speech in the sense that exhalation of the air which is technically called egressive pulmonic air stream is similar to pulsation, i.e., each air pressure caused by the diaphragm forms a muscle contraction and a chest pulse which in turn forms a syllable. So human language hinges upon the pattern of chest pulses (Hanun,1992: 65). More simply put, it is argued that the production of a syllable requires the chest pulse or burst initiator which means muscles of the chest are tightened including lungs therefore an energy is provided by these muscles(Davenport & Hannahs,2005:73).

### 2.5.2 Suprasegmentals

They refer to those features of pronunciation that cannot be segmented. Suprasegmental phonology describes those features that extend over one segment or sound, and includes stress, rhythm, and intonation. Such features are also called prosodic features. Suprasegmentals such as stress can't be approached without prior knowledge of the syllable. Placing stress on specific syllables requires the learner to identify the syllable first. In this vein, Thornbury (2002) contends that “*in order to identify and assign stress, it is important, therefore, that learners understand what a syllable is*”. Identifying the syllable is an important pre-requisite for the stress pattern. This component will be discussed in the following sections.

### 2.5.2.1 Intonation

Intonation refers to the musicality of the language, i.e., the tune that is added to the words and tells about the feeling of the speaker. Languages are different in terms of intonation. English tunes are different from other languages' tunes, so it is very important to learn the meaning of the English tunes. The following example may explain this clearly. The expression 'Thank you' can have two tones; when it is produced with high voice and ends with low voice, it indicates genuine gratitude, but when said with a low level and ends with a high level it denotes casual acknowledgement which is of less importance (Connor,1980 :108).

Intonation can also inform us about the mood of person whether they are nervous or calm, or charming or rude. This is the universal view about intonation in transmitting the emotional content or attitudes such as happiness, sadness depression.

In addition to conveying feeling, intonation can show grammatical differences between statements and questions, in another way, it bears grammatical information (Ashby,2011: 180). Intonation is used to express two things:

- Variation of pitch to transmit or alter a meaning
- Synonym of prosody which stands for sound quality, rhythm and rise of the sound (Roach, 1992: 56).

Intonation refers to when, why and how the speaker rises or keeps his pitch once speaking (Birjandi & Salmani, 2005).

### 2.5.2.2 Stress

Stress can be defined as energy provided by the organs of speech due to muscular effort. It also stands for loudness, i.e., some syllables are produced louder than others, therefore perceived immediately compared to some others because they are prominent. Ladefoged (1969) argues that stressed syllables are made by the contraction of muscles in the rib cage and an increase of movement of muscular activity that are made unconsciously. Stress with regard to the listener is detected by some audible phenomena not the changes that occur in chest movements. These phenomena can be found in combination with others or alone and are listed as follows:

- Loudness, i.e., a stressed syllable is louder than the unstressed one
- Pitch, that is, a stressed syllable has a higher pitch
- Length, that is to say, it contains a longer vowel
- A stressed syllable may be composed of all vowels of the language except for schwa.

So, to know that these characteristics are not present in a stressed syllable, other characteristics may take place and are as follows:

- Speech is spoken softly
- Lower voice
- Short vowel
- The occurrence of schwa (Bickford & Floyd, 2006).



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Stress is very important in English, hence its application is fundamental to give the right meaning to the word, and if for instance a learner pronounces wrongly a word stress in front of a native speaker, difficulty appears in decoding the meaning (Kenworthy, 1987:28).

Rules of stress in English depend on three things: syntactic, morphological, and phonological information.

**2.5.2.3 Syntactic Information:** It means the parts of speech which can show the different places of stress e.g. `insult as a noun and in`sult as a verb, con`tent as an adjective and `contents` as a noun, and `present as a noun (gift) and `present as adjective (not absent),and present as a verb.

### **2.5.2.4 Morphological Information:**

The word in English may be simple that is made up of only one base like arm, baby, circle, fat, manage and compound which is built up with two bases such as armchair and are either stuck together ,or hyphenated or separated by a blank, and complex that consists of a radical and a prefix like disarm, encircle, mismanage, renew, or a radical and a suffix as (babyish, fatten, happiness, management), or radical surrounded by a suffix and prefix like (mismanagement, unhappiness) ,or two radicals and a suffix like babysitting, square dancer ,or a radical and two suffixes as (fattening, sharpener).It should be pointed out that the morphological structure of the word plays a important role in indicating the place of stress

### **2.5.2.5 Phonological Information:**

We mean by phonological information the data that can be drawn from the syllable, i.e., whether the syllable contains a free

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vowel or not, or ends with a consonant, because the nature of the last two syllables can determine the position of stress. Without further ado, here are the types of syllables whose ultimate and penultimate entail the free vowels, vowels that can be located at the end of the syllables,.

see, seat sue, suit spa, calm, bay, bait go, goat law, laud, by, bite cow, scout toy, void, agree, remain, rely, destroy, cellophane, anecdote, arena aroma, diploma, hiatus, horizon.

As far as the following words are concerned, the division of syllables is made with consonants, i.e., their penults end with a consonant. enigma, veranda, parental, detergent, amalgam, abacus, cinema, generous, melody, evident (Charles, 2004 :180).

### 2.6 ELT in the Algerian Secondary School

The importance of English has been globally recognized as English has become the language of science and technology and the condition for achieving development in its broader sense. This global dominance is due to the power of its nations like the United States and Great Britain in all fields of life. Crystal states that

*International dominance is not solely the result of military might. It may take a military powerful nation to establish a language, but takes an economically powerful one to maintain and expand it.*

( Crystal, 1997 :9)

Furthermore, with the advent of globalization phenomenon where the world has shrunk into a village –like planet, and the worldwide use of the internet allowing limitless access to information, English has clearly become a dominant language in

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all non-English speaking, expanding circle countries in the world including Algeria.

Oscillating between the trend of Arabisation of the educational system to get back the cultural identity of the Algerian people, and French, as the language of the colonial power over Algeria spanning over one hundred and thirty two years and being wanted as the first foreign language in post-independent Algeria, English was able to be seen as a dynamic factor for innovation and modernisation. The increasing role of English in technological achievements among advanced nations urged the Algerian authorities to rank it a major determinant of education policy in Algeria. The British council (2013) stated :

*It was felt that English as a historically neutral language in the Algerian context would be able to play the modernising role that was hoped for from French but without the colonialist and non-Islamic associations that French had.*

(British Council, 2010 :13)

Being aware of the learners'needs and challenges of the information age in a global world wherein the physical distance has become meaningless, the Algerian educational authorities believed that English language teaching is certainly to bring about multifaceted benefits pertaining to all aspects of life, ranging from instrumental motivation to facilitating technology transfer and international communication. It is in this sense that English language has been introduced in the Algerian secondary

school. The development of the educational system in Algeria made it compulsory for the educational authorities to consider the introduction of English as a necessary component in the curriculum in order to keep abreast of the latest developments in the world.

### **2.6.1 The Goals of Teaching English in Secondary Education**

The aims of teaching English in the secondary school can be said to be at variance. It can allow the Algerian society to get involved in the process of modernization by joining the English speaking communities using English for all types of interactions. This involvement which is based on scientific and cultural exchange of ideas and experiences, help better understand other nations' cultures and lifestyles. Part of the president's speech before the setting up of CNRES (National Commission for Educational System Reform) in 2001, emphasized that being a factor of social and individual development and a boosting motive for professionalism and expertise, the English language will have to provide learners with assets for success in the world of tomorrow. Additionally, it is intended to be a performance linguistic tool.

The more effectively used, the better the learners will be in coping with academic, scientific, and professional environments, by calling upon their skills and capacities to cope with problematic situations in different contexts of their lives .

In the light of the national curriculum of English for 3AS all streams (2011), the aims of teaching English in Algeria revolves around three main points:

### **2.6.1.1 Linguistic and Communicative Aims**

Teaching English in Algeria seeks to provide the learner with a solid linguistic foundation in areas such as grammar, syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, and oral and written production. Communicating effectively and assertively is also at the heart of teaching a foreign language, besides opening future prospects for tertiary education where English is an important tool for scientific research and communication, allowing proficient learners to have access to the world knowledge.

### **2.6.1.2 Methodological and Technological Aims**

They include the consolidation of cognitive abilities through pertinent tasks based on analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. Besides this, they may also involve promoting the learning and self-assessment strategies, and engaging learners in the process of oral and written documenting, be it scientific, technical, economic, or literary. Technological aims are no exception for learners who are urged to help themselves by the use of technological means like the computer and the internet to fulfill their research.

### **2.6.1.3 Cultural and Socio-professional Aims**

These objectives pertain to enfavouring interdisciplinary contents of different learning subjects to better exploit the learners' newly acquired knowledge. They should also extend to the development of the learners' intellectual curiosity, and exposing them to different civilization contexts, mainly the Anglo-Saxon cultures like British, American, African, and Canadian. In this vein Thomson(2007) states *“to learn a language is to be nurtured or apprenticed into the life-world of*

*individual host people and groups*”. Learning a language, then, implies the knowledge of its culture. Language and culture are symbiotic and represent two faces of the same coin.

### **2.6.2 A Short Account of Teaching Methods**

This part is intended to provide a short description of English language education in Algeria, focusing mainly on the teaching methods that have been adopted by the Algerian educational system. Since 1962, the post-independent Algeria has witnessed the implementation of several approaches, like elsewhere in search for an ideal method that would suit all types of learners and ensure a successful foreign language learning. Throughout the post colonial history of Algeria, methods have waxed and waned owing to factors such as inventiveness in finding more efficient ways of teaching languages. The teaching methodology in Algeria can be said to have made a shift from language-centered to learner-centered approaches. This shift can be best illustrated through the following methodologies:

#### **2.6.2.1 Grammar Translation Method**

This method dominated the field of teaching in Algeria from 1960s to 1970s through the prescribed textbook *L'Anglais par la Literature* by Richard and Hall. Learners were intensively exposed to grammar and vocabulary which they had to memorize, and the teacher played the central role in classroom practices. As no attention was given to pronunciation and communication, based on the mastery of grammatical rules governing the written form of the language that have to be memorised, and a list of vocabulary to be learnt by heart, Little or no emphasis is given to oral ability. The teacher remained the

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central element in the classroom viewed as the main source of knowledge. No attention was given to pronunciation and communication, the learner had little or no chance to communicate in the target language. Baiche contends :

*A course that emphasizes translation and language usage along with vocabulary memorization on the one hand, and very little or no attention is reserved for pronunciation and communicative aspects of the language on the other.*

( Baiche, 2008: 55)

Pronunciation was the last thing teachers thought about in their teaching practices. The main focus was the mastery of grammatical rules and memorisation of vocabulary to achieve accuracy.

### 2.6.2.2 The Direct Method

Based on the assumption that a foreign language is learnt in the same way as a mother tongue. The direct exposure to the language leads to its acquisition. There is an emphasis on oral ability as learners are encouraged to be directly involved in the process of communication. Lado posits :

*the direct method assumed that learning a foreign language is the same as learning the mother tongue that is exposing the student directly to the foreign language impresses it perfectly upon his mind*

(Lado, 1964 :5)

This method was implemented in Algeria in 1970s, and some of its cultural contents, however, didn't consort with the

Algerian cultural context, and consequently was soon abandoned.

### **2.6.2.3 The Structural Approach**

Views language as a system of complex grammatical rules gradually presented to the learner until the whole structure is mastered. This method introduced in Algeria in ELT secondary school classrooms in the early 1970s, This method that had an exaggerated focus on the structure was realized to have pernicious effect on the interactive aspect of learning and the development of communicative aspect of learning.

### **2.6.2.4 Communicative Language Teaching**

As a response to the former methods that some how neglected the communicative aspect of language, the CLT focus was to engage learners in real-life situations that necessitate communication in the target language In this vein Berns(1984) states that *‘language is interaction’* the Algerian context revealed that there was a real gap between theory and practice in the sense that a number of unpredictable factors have not been taken into account such as learners population and background, and language difficulties. It wasn't easy for teachers to teach within the CLT instructional framework in the classroom. Baiche(2008) states that *“in our situation, from the start the communicative approach was difficult to apply due to many factors such as the physical conditions in the classrooms”*. (Baiche, 2008 : 65 )Additionally, teachers didn't seem to have grasped the meaningful practice of CLT as they found it difficult to abandon the old traditions of grammar-oriented courses they used to teach . This resistance was an additional



obstacle that hindered the sound implementation of the approach, and as a result CLT did not meet the expectations.

### **2.6.2.5 Competency Based Approach**

Among the methods that have been enthusiastically embraced as a panacea for the language teaching problems is the Competency Based Approach (CBA). The implementation of CBA aimed at bridging the gap between the context of learning and the context of language use in order to make learning meaningful. Most importantly, It is learner-centered. This dimension suggests that learners will no more rely on the teacher as a fountain of knowledge; they have to be active and take the driving seat as to integrate, produce, and extend knowledge. They should work towards being autonomous learners. They ought to think critically and find ways to motivate themselves. Teachers, conversely, are restricted to act as facilitators and guides.

Competency-based education lastly introduced in the Algerian educational setting relates to the outcome-based instruction, and is constantly adaptive according to the needs of the learners, teacher, and the community. Competency Based Education(CBE) targets what the learners are able to do rather than what they are expected to learn (Weddel, 2006). It addresses an alternative assessment rather than a score-based traditional assessment. Sudsomboon et al.(2007) depict CBE as the kind of education which allows a practical and measurable performance through skills and knowledge use by attained individual's effective training.

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In this context and within the educational reforms in the Algerian secondary school, the newly designed competency-based textbooks including 'New Prospects' included a variety of tasks and activities leading to a set of language, skills and strategies outcomes that called for changes in teaching styles, learning strategies, and assessment approaches (Woods,2008).

The need for changes in the instructional approaches and the assessment mechanisms, calls for changes in the in-service and pre-service training programmes to equip the teachers with the necessary competencies and skills to approach the new teaching paradigm.

### 2.6.3 The Competency-Based Learner's Textbook

The CBA was introduced in Algeria in 2003, and it is being applied till today. Its implementation aims at bridging the gap between the context of learning and the context of language use in order to make learning meaningful. Most importantly, in the light of the stated approach, the designed textbooks, At the Crosswords, Getting Through, and New Prospects, respectively designed for 1AS, 2AS, 3AS secondary classes, are founded on three main competencies : interpretation, interaction, and production.

As the focus of the present work is more concerned with 3AS level, a general description of the third year textbook will be provided about the competency-based coursebook of New Prospects which complies with the curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education. This textbook offers a variety of tasks intended to develop the learners' competencies, and consolidate their knowledge of functional English in terms of lexis,

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grammar and phonology. Such activities seek to develop the primary skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, besides other methodological skills such as the procedure to collect data, and how to conceive of a project work and the way to present it to the class.

Texts of course have been selected in response to the themes presented in each unit, and cater for the different needs of the learners. The textbook consists of six mandatory units as illustrated below:

UNIT ORDER	Theme	Stream	Hour / week
one	Ancient Civilizations	LE LP	5h 4H
two	Ethics in Business	S-M- GE	3H
three	Education in the World	LE LP	5 H 4 H
four	Consumers and Safety	S-M- GE	3 H
five	Astronomy	S-M- GE	3 H
six	Feelings and Emotions	LE LP	5 H 4 H

**Table3.1** Teaching units with relative themes and time allotted

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The six units mentioned in the table are meant to be completed within around 25 hours each. Each unit includes two main parts, *Language outcomes* and *Skills and strategies outcomes*. The first part contains two sequences, *Listen and consider*, and *Read and consider*. The two sequences are leading to the *Around the text* rubric which tackles the language dimension of the texts through the study of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation and spelling. These linguistic tools are meant to be internalized so as to be reinvested in the next sections. The two sequences mentioned earlier end up with the rubric named *Think, pair, share* where the learners are required to re-invest what they have learnt for the sake of a written production.

The second part *Skills and strategies outcomes*, comprising two other sequences, *Listening and speaking*, and *Reading and writing*, aims at practising the primary skills, and the social skills like collaborative work and peer assessment. The two sequences terminate with a writing task to concretise the acquired skills. An essential part and novelty in the textbook that receives a great emphasis in the syllabus is the project work. It is process and product-oriented. The learners are involved in a set of cognitive skills whereby they have to think, analyse, discuss the allotted issues; they have also to produce a written document that they have to communicate to their peers.

A last component of the teaching unit is the assessment rubric that appears at the end of each sequence. This section aims to urge the learners towards becoming autonomous learners by increasing responsibility over their classroom

performance. The learner is expected to consolidate the acquired competencies, and strengthen his strategies of learning. Sometimes this assessment is coupled with peer assessment where the learner thinks, pairs and shares with his fellow partners his learning experience so as to become a competent language user.

### **2.6.4 The Phonological Issue in CBA-Based Textbook of 3AS**

The examiner of the EFL classrooms in the Algerian secondary school education must come out with the idea that most of the teaching activities pertain to the study of grammar and vocabulary and other such skills as reading and writing while little effort is made to teach pronunciation. This has been the general trend of EFL classrooms where phonological courses were not more than hints despite the changing waves in teaching methodologies that recommended more focus on the communicative aspect of teaching and learning. It is truism that the teaching of this aspect has been made more explicit in the current textbooks under Competency Based Approach as opposed to the former methodologies . In this vein Baiche posits :

*by comparison to previous textbooks ( Spring1, Newlines,Midlines,etc) and foreign language methodologies in our schools where pronunciation was only implicit in speaking and reading aloud , pupils are now gradually introduced to some phonetics.*

Baiche ( 2009 :152)

The aspect of pronunciation has been made explicit as phonological elements were introduced in the CBA-based

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textbook. The communicative orientation of the 3AS textbook is reflected in the inclusion of pronunciation sections, namely, ‘*Pronunciation and Spelling*’ which tackles chunks of the English sound system.

However, phonology acquisition in the secondary school still presents a real challenge for teachers and pupils alike since teachers seem to face difficulties in displaying this aspect of language to their learners and probably fail to handle the issue on the basis of sound theoretical approaches .

Before one can settle down to the phonological issue, it would be wise to situate the English subject in terms of time allotment according to the Ministry’s official yearly planning for 3AS. The following table reflects a crystal clear picture of the annual planning in terms of specific units of time benchmark according to streams .

Stream	Annual Timing	Weekly Timing	Time / unit
3 LP	108 H	4H	24/28H
3 LE	108H	4H	24/28H
3 S/M/TM	81 H	3H	18/21

**Table 3.2** Ministry’s yearly planning for 3AS

As shown in the table above the literary streams are expected to cover the annual English course within a total time of 108hours, considering 4 teaching hours a week to fulfill each unit at a maximum of 28 hours time. The scientific streams, however, are less timed by 81 hours a year, and three teaching

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hours a week to tackle the teaching unit in not more than 21hours.

As an important component of the language outcomes characterising the course instruction of the third year secondary school classrooms, phonology appears in two sequences **listen and consider**, and **read and consider**, under the rubric of **Pronunciation and spelling** which revolves around the issues of stress, intonation, pronunciation of final ‘ed’, and strong and weak forms. The following tables illustrate the layout of the phonological issue in the 3AS textbooks according to the literary and scientific streams.

UNIT/THEME	Sequence of <b>listen &amp; consider</b>	Sequence of <b>Read &amp; Consider</b>
1. Ancient Civilizations	Strong and weak Form of was/were	Final ‘ed’
2. Ethics in Business	<b>stress</b> in words Ending in ‘ics’	<b>stress</b> shift in words with the same root
3. Education	weak form of modals could and ought to	Pronunciation of final ‘s’ / <b>stress</b> in words ending in ‘tion’
6. Feelings & Emotions	Un/Accented ‘h’ Reading the consnt cluster ‘ngth’	Final ‘ed’

**Table 3.3** Phonological occurrence in the 3AS textbook ( literary stream)

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As for the scientific streams, the task of pronunciation is presented as shown in the table below :

UNIT/ THEME	Sequence of Listen&Consider	Sequence of Read&Consider
2.Ethics in Business	stress in words Ending in 'ics'	stress shift in words with the same root
4Advertising & food safety	Stress shift from verb to noun	Stress in content words vs function words
5 Astronomy & the solar system	Stress in two syllable words	Pronunciation of plural final 's' and 'es'
4. Feelings& Emotions	Un/Accented 'h' Reading the consnt cluster'ngth'	Final 'ed'

**Table3.4** Phonological occurrence in the 3AS textbook(scientific stream)

As illustrated in the two tables above, the phonological issue appears in the four mandatory units for both the literary and scientific streams. Yet, what is to be noticed is the limited occurrence of the phonological issue in the units. In fact, a simple tabulation of the phonological frequency reveals that this aspect appears only at the level of two sequences(Listen and Consider, and Read and Consider) rather than in the four sequences. Hence, the task of phonology is estimated to be tackled only occasionally. This limited occurrence can be sustained by the time benchmark allotted to this language outcome. The following table imparts an estimated time allotment for the phonological issue in each unit on the basis of the textbook phonological course content.



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UNIT	Time allotted for phonology instruction per year
1	1 hour and a half
2	1 hour
3	1 hour and a half
4	1 hour
5	2 hours
6	1 hour and a half

**Table 3.5** Time allotment for phonology course instruction

The little occurrence of phonology is, therefore, quite visible because a little time is devoted to this aspect of teaching. When it comes to the phonological stress, something worse can be expected. Like other aspects of phonology, it occupies a little room for instruction. The time devoted to teach stress can be said to be critically short. The following table better explains what is being advanced.

Unit	Sequence	Phonological Stress
Ethics in Business	Listen& Consider	<b>Stress</b> in words ending in 'ics'
Ethics in Business	Read& Consider	<b>Stress</b> shift in words with the same root
Education	Read& Consider	<b>Stress</b> in words ending in suffix 'tion'
Advertising	Listen& Consider	<b>Stress</b> shift from verbs to nouns
Astronomy	Listen& Consider	<b>Stress</b> in two syllable words

**Table 3.6** Phonological stress in 3AS textbook

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The table shows clearly that the total sessions pertaining to stress instruction do not exceed five sessions. If we assume that a single stress course is covered within an approximate time of half an hour, the total time of teaching stress will not exceed two hours and a half per year. Therefore it would be fair to say that the time devoted to this aspect of pronunciation is by no means adequately designed. Two hours and a half time per year for teaching the phonological stress is really less than insufficient, and proves that this important aspect of pronunciation is suffering segregation in EFL classroom instruction.

The phonological issue similarly appears in the last rubric of self assessment where it is expected to be assessed amid other language outcomes in not more than one hour session.

If the total annual amount of time were to be evaluated, the table above would suggest that the annual phonological course content is scheduled to be fulfilled within an approximate time of nine (9) hours in a total annual course time of 108 hours for literary streams and 81 hours for scientific streams. In other words, statistically speaking phonology represents only 8.33% for the literary streams and for the scientific streams of the total annual English course programme, which is another way to say that learners have little exposure to this aspect of phonology. These accurate premises will form an important basis for analyses in the next chapter.

### 2.7 Conclusion

The foreign language sound system, which deals with both phonetics and phonology, has an immeasurable importance to pronunciation teaching in EFL classrooms. Such importance lies in achieving intelligibility which should set the focus of any phonological course. Learners ought to be made aware of the structure of the sound system which involves both segmentals like the vowels and consonants, and suprasegmentals like stress and intonation. As has been demonstrated, suprasegmental features of stress can make a considerable difference in the meaning of utterances. It can provide three different kinds of data. It can yield syntactic information, that is, data which are helpful to the hearer to distinguish words from each other; morphological information such as words consisting of base, radical, prefix, or suffix; or phonological information that can be drawn from the syllable to determine the position of stress. This is the reason why this aspect of pronunciation should be taught and assessed carefully and adequately.

Like intonation, stress ought to be presented systematically as an integrated part of the coursebook for the teaching of English as a foreign language. Stress cannot be taught in isolation. Its systematic presentation supported by drilling tasks to the learners can highlight the stress patterns to help learners produce them in a comfortable way, and achieve intelligible communication.

Communication or communicative competence of the learner which is one of the key features of the CBA , as shown earlier,

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does not seem to be congruent with the textbook phonological content and the classroom practices. Tabulations and numerical data have provided clear evidence that the phonological stress, as a major component of pronunciation and a determinant factor for intelligibility, suffers neglect in teaching practices, and needs to be revisited.



**CHAPTER THREE:**  
**Research Design and Data**  
**Analysis**

**Chapter Three : Research Design and Data Analysis**

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### 3.1 Introduction

The focus of the present chapter will be on the practical side of the research area which includes the definition of the research problem, and analysis and interpretation of data that have been gathered through the use of questionnaires imparting a great deal of evidence on the phonological issue in third year secondary school textbook. To this effect, the researcher has adopted a mixed method including qualitative and quantitative models which seek to explain patterns in behaviour in approaching the teaching and assessment of phonology and mainly stress, to 3AS pupils. The qualitative research method targeted an in-depth understanding of the reasons for failure in the teaching and learning of phonological stress. In order to strengthen reliability of the results and compensate for subjective character of qualitative method, a quantitative aspect was added to the study in order to allow an objective treatment to data collection and analysis. As for the data collection instruments, these comprised a questionnaire addressed to both teachers and pupils, and an interview with the general inspector of English. For a better corroboration of the work, extra statistical data based on the learner's textbook were used to add precision to words.

### 3.2 Research Objectives

The chief objective of the present study has been to highlight the factors that generally led to the teachers' failure in teaching the phonological stress to secondary school pupils, and how these were often coupled with the teachers' cognitive stance and inappropriate perceptions, and to demonstrate how the fossilized traditional assessment procedures have significantly contributed

to this failure. This research also seeks to highlight some assessment mechanisms that can be recommended in the teaching of suprasegmental phonology. Strangely enough, very little is said about the phonological issue in the Algerian EFL classrooms as how to approach this issue contrasting with other language skills which occupy the lion's share in classroom practices, teachers' seminars, and study day debates and presentations.

### **3.3 Statement of the Problem**

Although the Competency Based Approach has been implemented for nearly fourteen years, and started to lose its aspect of novelty in the secondary school, there is no clear evidence that it has been implemented appropriately. This veracity can be concretized through the classroom practices and teachers' perceptions of the teaching elements and the poor methods of their implementation because teachers and stakeholders alike have failed to fully grasp the practical dimensions of this approach. This misunderstanding and confusion have labelled almost every aspect of classroom instruction including teaching and assessment practices.

As the primary focus of the present work concerns the phonological issue, this research attempts to shed light on the ways phonology is perceived by teachers in terms of teaching and assessment in order to explain the failure in teaching the suprasegmental stress, before making some suggestions regarding mechanisms which ought to be adopted to teach and assess the phonological stress to secondary EFL learners. In attending to this main objective, the major research question that has guided the study was :



Why is the phonology lesson, namely that of stress, in the third year secondary classrooms, doomed to failure ?

This question is developed into the following sub questions :

1. What do teachers hold in terms of knowledge relating to phonology stress ?
2. How is the phonology dexterity integrated among other language skills ?
3. What perceptions do teachers and pupils have about assessment of stress ?

The investigation of these questions led the researcher to the following hypotheses :

1. The lack of phonological knowledge in the teachers' repertoire generated imperfections in teaching phonology
2. The time benchmark pertaining to phonology lies below the required standard.
3. Stress is taught to the exam rather than to the skill

### **3.4 Methodology**

In order for the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of a problematic, he had to view it from different perspectives , and through the eyes of others to meet the criteria of objectivity. In this respect, Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that reality can be constructed in a sociable way wherein different experiences and views are braided into shaping a different perception of a subject-matter, according to which “ *the researcher must attempt to understand the complex and often multiple realities from the perspective of the participants*”(Lodigo et al., 2006 :9).

It is in this vein that the researcher tried through an exploratory

case study to explore and understand the problem and bring solutions and ideas on how to solve this issue ; in other words, this case study seeks to answer the question ‘what’ is the problem and ‘how’ it can be solved. Yin(1984) states that a case study “ *is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context ...and in which multiple sources of evidence are used*’.

In order to better build the knowledge about the sample population, the researcher strived to collect the necessary data that were qualitatively and quantitatively examined, for the sake of providing accurate description of his informants who include both pupils and teachers of the secondary school. In order to reach a holistic understanding of the phenomenon, and compensate for the shortcomings of each of the methods, the researcher opted for the use of a mixed method; that is, the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to provide different layers of analysis. In this vein Dornyei (2007) states :

*We gain better understanding of a complex phenomenon by covering numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data. Words can be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can add precision to words.*

( Dornyei,2007 :45)

In order to meet the criteria of a good sampling which includes representativeness, generalizability, and homogeneity, participants were selected through a simple random sampling technique, itself a component of probability sampling. The procedure is that the selection is built on probability and chance to ensure that all population members had the same chance of

being selected, and above all random samples are more representative than non-random samples.

### **3.4.1 Participants**

The sample population targeted informants in the educational setting. The sample population included both teachers and pupils of the secondary school, besides the general inspector of English, and whose description follow.

#### **3.4.1.1 Pupils' Profile**

The research study targeted a population of third year secondary school literary and scientific streams who have been studying English as a foreign language for at least six years. The sample population included 29 pupils ( 7males and 22females), most of them aged between 17 and 20 years old. These pupils were regularly enrolled during the academic year 2015-2016 in Ibn Saad secondary school located on the outskirts of the municipality of Tlemcen in the west of Algeria. These pupils speak Arabic as their mother tongue and share the same linguistic and cultural background.

These pupils have been targeted in the present research since they are expected to sit for a decisive test namely Baccalaureate exam by the end of the academic year, and which will give them access to tertiary education. These 3AS pupils, being the oldest in the secondary school in terms of age, are supposedly aware of the English subject they are to learn for further education and use for their real life contexts.

#### **3.4.1.2 Teachers' Profile**

The present study involved thirteen secondary school teachers (males and females)whose teaching experience ranged between ten and twenty years. These teachers were randomly

chosen during a seminar that gathered a large number of teachers of English from different secondary schools across the municipality of Tlemcen. They are supposed to be holders of 'Licence' degree from Algerian universities, and were actually in charge of teaching the three secondary school levels of 1AS, 2AS, and 3AS all streams pupils.

Involving such teachers in the process of research stems from the fact that they are directly involved in the process of teaching the phonological issue, and in charge of prepping their learners for the baccalaureate exam, needless to recall, these teachers are also supposed to be aware of teaching the dimension of sound in English language course instruction under the umbrella of Competency Based Approach.

### **3.4.2 Research Instruments and Data Collection**

Besides the important data source of the learner's textbook that yielded valuable statistical information about the phonological occurrence in the whole programme, and the time benchmark devoted to the teaching and assessment of stress as a significant aspect of phonology, there were two data collection instruments: the pupils and teachers questionnaires which constitute the most reliable source of data, and an interview guide with an inspector of English in order to check the different sources of the teachers' misconceptions of the phonological issue. In the hope of viewing the phenomenon from different angles, the researcher adopted the triangulation technique to combine different views, those pertaining to the teacher, the learner, and the observer (the inspector in this case). Each side of the triangle covers a different scope of knowledge that is assessed in connection with others in order to achieve accuracy

and credibility to the topic of investigation. Triangulation, then, entails the multiplicity in using independent methods of obtaining data in a single investigation in order to achieve the same results. Johnson noted, *“the value of triangulation is that it reduces observer or interviewer bias and enhances the validity and reliability ( accuracy ) of the information. ”*

(Johnson,1992 :146)

### 3.4.2.1 Questionnaire for Pupils

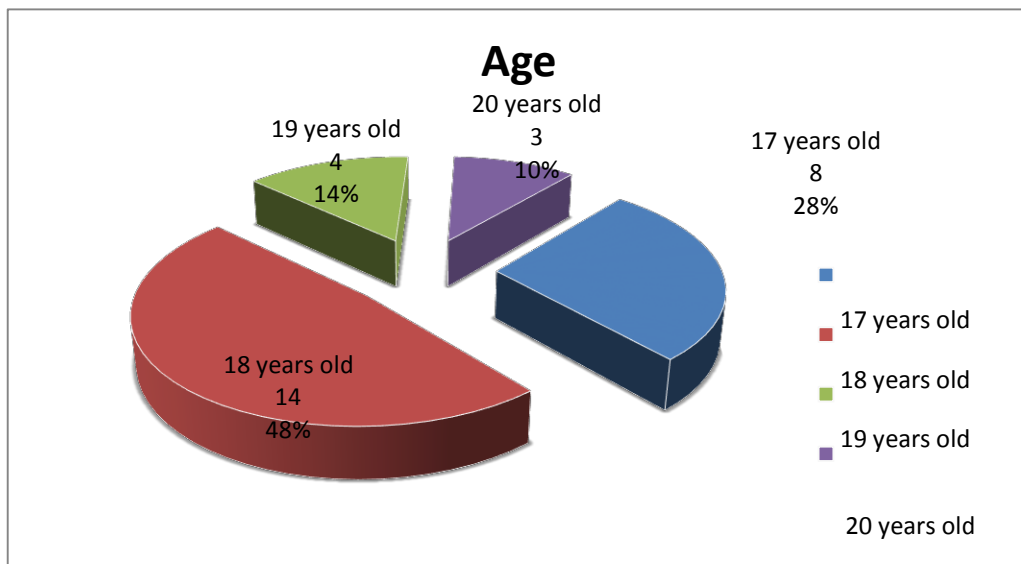
Considered as an effective, practical tool, a reliable source of evidence, and an important research instrument, a questionnaire was developed to allow the researcher to assess the learnability of the phonological aspect in the Algerian EFL classrooms .A questionnaire is intended to yield three types of data about respondents, factual data like age and gender and topic-related facts, behavioural data relating to actions taken in teaching and learning, and attitudinal data pertaining to the knowledge and beliefs held by informants about a subject matter.

In a competency-based context where the learner is regarded as the central element in the learning process, and as a reliable source of information, twenty nine pupils of 3AS level of both scientific and literary streams in Ibn saad secondary school classrooms, were invited to fill in the questionnaire after the researcher had explained to them how they were expected to approach the questions. The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed to gather evidence about the topic under investigation. Questions targeted factual, behavioural, and attitudinal information, and reflected research questions and hypotheses. The questionnaire main focus was, then, to gather the necessary data about the reasons for the teaching failure, and

## CHAPTER THREE: Research Design and Data Analysis

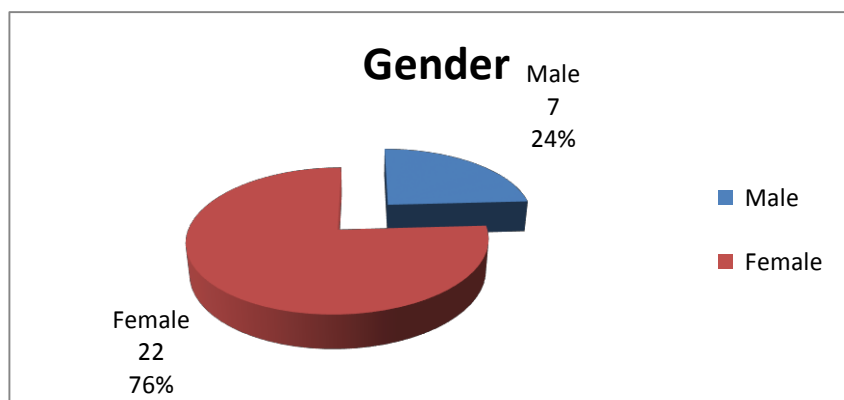
the learners' limitations in order to unveil the different mechanisms used in teaching and assessing the supra segment of phonological stress.

The type of questions used in the questionnaire were restricted to close-ended questions and multiple choice questions in order to elicit quantitative data likely to endorse and facilitate a quantitative-based research method on the one hand, and to make it easy and time efficient for the respondent to complete the questionnaire on the other.



**Figure 3.1** Pupils' Age

The chart states that the learners' age ranges between 17 and 20 years old. Nearly half of the pupils are 18 years old to show that at this age, pupils are supposed to have some awareness of their responsibility over their learning.

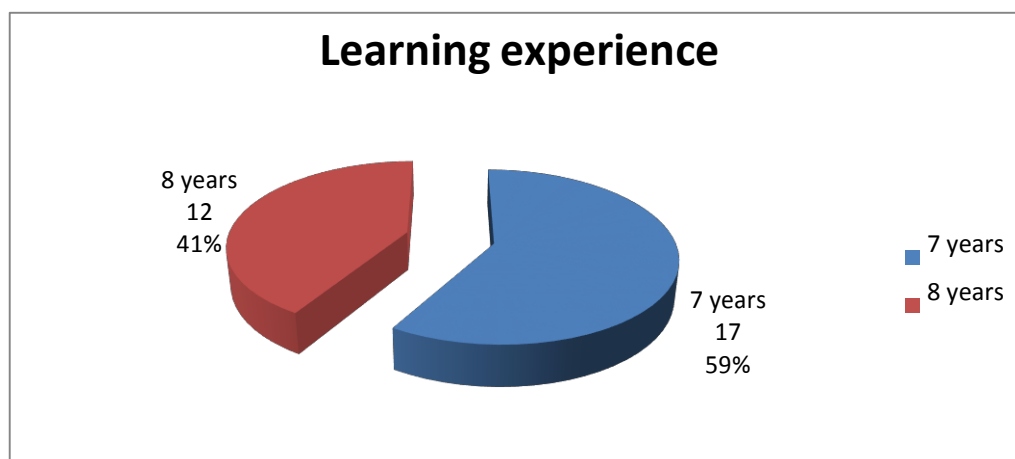


**Figure 3.2** Pupils' Gender

This question was intended to give an idea about the gender of the informants. The information yielded by the questionnaire showed that the classroom was composed of twenty two female and seven male pupils.

**Question1** : How long have you been learning English ?

Through this question, the researcher aimed to elicit information relating to the amount of time the pupils spent learning English.

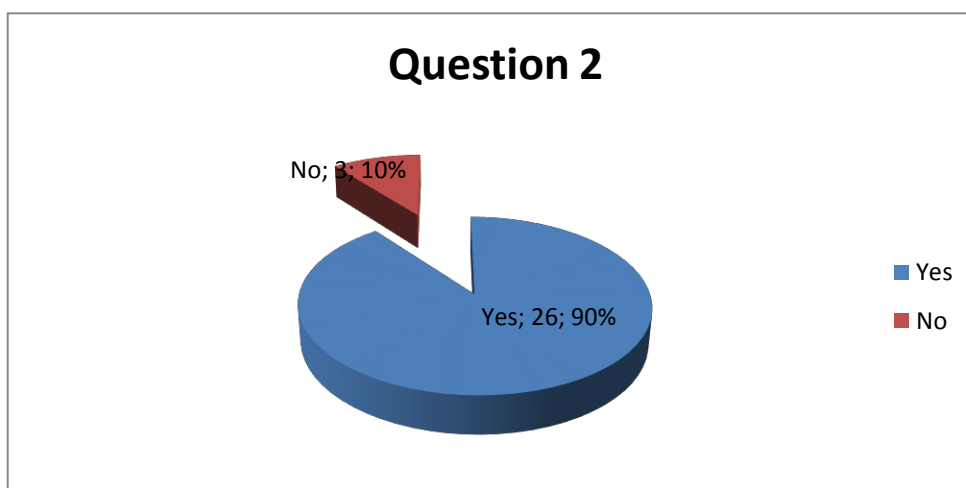


**Figure3.3** Pupils English learning experience

This graph shows The learning experience swang between seven and eight years.Learners are supposed to have acquired some basic knowledge of the English language, part of which is the phonological system and the primary pronunciation issues.

### Question 2 : Do you like learning English ?

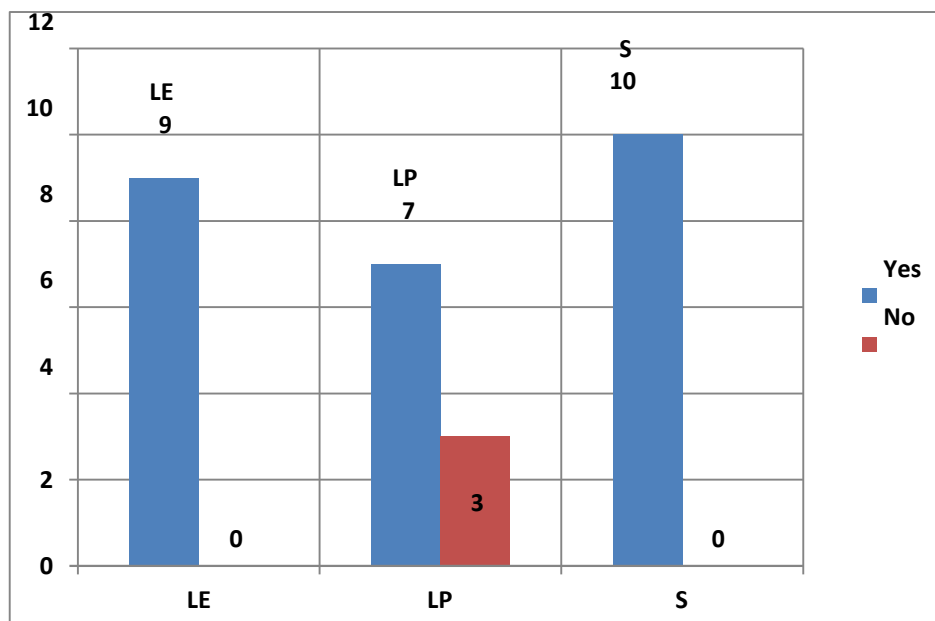
This question aimed at unveiling learners' attitude toward learning English. In fact the majority, that is, 90 % conceded that they loved learning English while a minority of 10% only admitted that they gave no attention to the language.



**Figure 3.4** Learners' interest towards learning English

If the question is considered according to the streams as shown in the chart below, the questionnaire reveals that the 'yes' option is absolute for the entire sample population of LE(Langues Etrangeres) and all S( scientific) streams, while nearly half of the respondents of LP ( lettres & philosophy ) with categorical negative answer do not give importance to English. Subquestion : option A) you like learning English because  
option B) you don't like learning English because



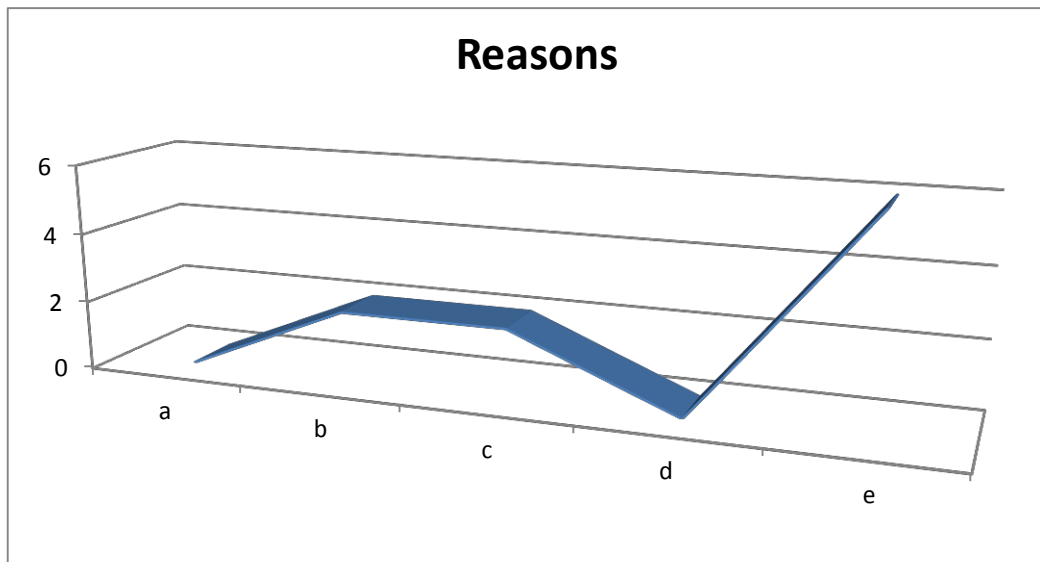


**Figure 3.5** Absolute frequency of desirability and non-desirability of learning English

The bar graph above furthers the question of desirability of the foreign language and clearly shows that all scientific stream and Foreign languages informants lay a high value on its learnability, while a remaining minority of the philosophy stream display no interest to the language.

**Subquestion : option A) you like learning English because  
option B) you don't like learning English because**

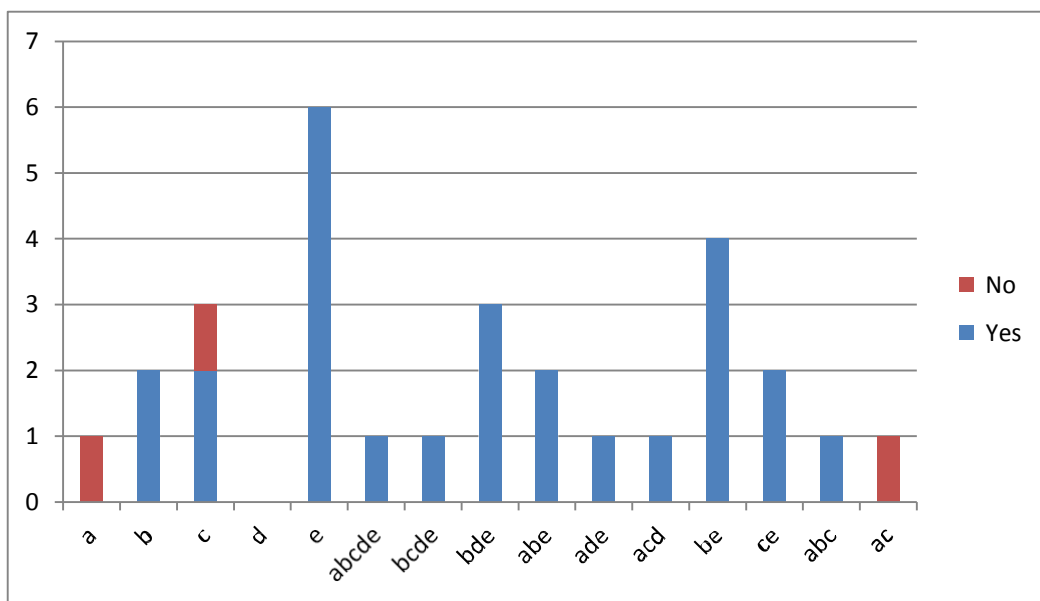
These sub questions are intended to uncover the real motives that lie behind the learners' desire or rejection of the English Subject. The learners wish to learn the language stems from various factors such as easiness, communication, the BAC exam and being of an international status. The factors and motives of the learners' interest is better shown in the two following charts (fig. 3.6) and (fig.3.7).



**Figure 3.6** Motives behind interest in learning English

As shown in the chart, a big majority are maintaining this tendency because they believe that this language occupies a high status in the world and is widely used as necessary tool for communication.

These results provide valuable information about the students interest and motivation in learning English is due not only to BAC exam, but also to the importance of this language as a necessary tool for communication.

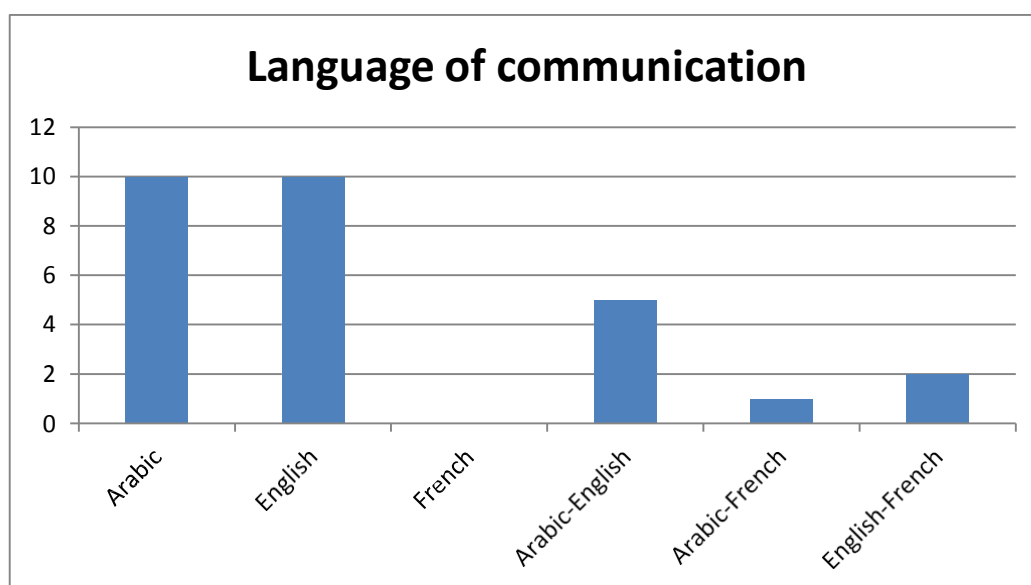


**Figure 3.7** The total score for the two sub questions A and B showing factors counting for acceptance and refusal of English.

The bars in the graph show that most importantly pupils have opted for the status of English as an international language, necessary for today's communication, and an important means for graduation.

**Question 3** Which language do you use to communicate in an English session ?

This question targets the learners' strategies in classroom language learning. It intends to show to what extent learners use the foreign language to improve their pronunciation and develop their speaking competence.

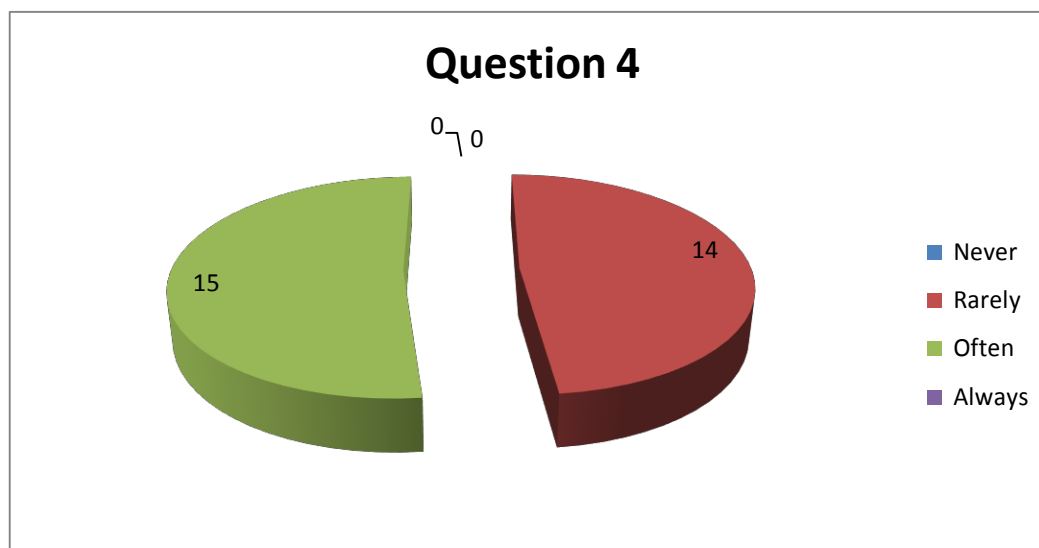


**Figure 3.8** language of communication in the classroom

This chart states that the informants' answers have revealed that L1 and L2 are equally used as means of interaction by most of the respondents. The intensive use of the mother tongue is likely to affect the foreign language acquisition, and reduce the learners' potential of developing the pronunciation skill.

**Question 4 :** How often do you study pronunciation ?

The aim of this question is to know about the frequency of the phonological issue in the whole English course study, and how aware the learners are of the need for this component to develop their communicative competence.

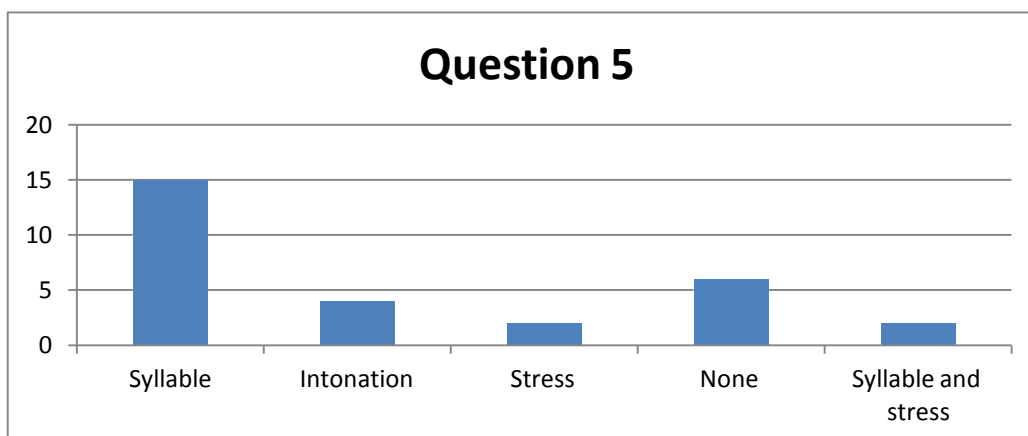


**Figure 3.9** The frequency of phonology in ELT classrooms

Respondents' answers have confirmed that it is not always teachable even if half of the learners believe that the pronunciation is being often taught, which is not the case in the course programme discussed in the previous chapter.

**Question5:** Which aspect of pronunciation do you know better ?

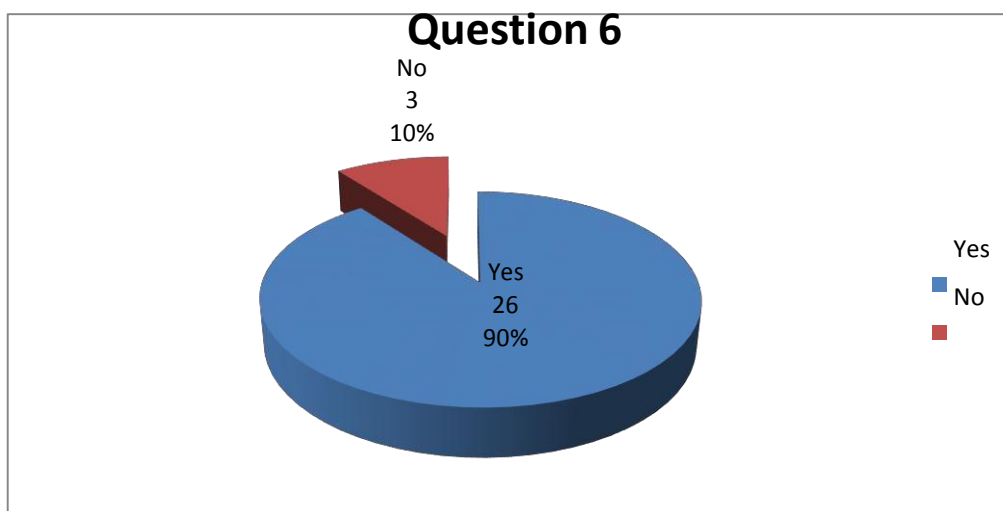
As part of the present work seeks to tackle the teaching of stress, this question was devised to elicit learners' opinions regarding the knowledge they have of pronunciation. Respondents were required to state which aspect of pronunciation they knew better than others.



**Figure 3.10** Aspects of pronunciation mostly known to pupils  
 This chart evidenced that most of them know much about the syllable but just a little about phonological stress.

**Question 6** :Do you think stress is necessary to learn pronunciation ?

This question was introduced in order to know about the significance of stress for learners, and the kind of perception they hold about this aspect of pronunciation.

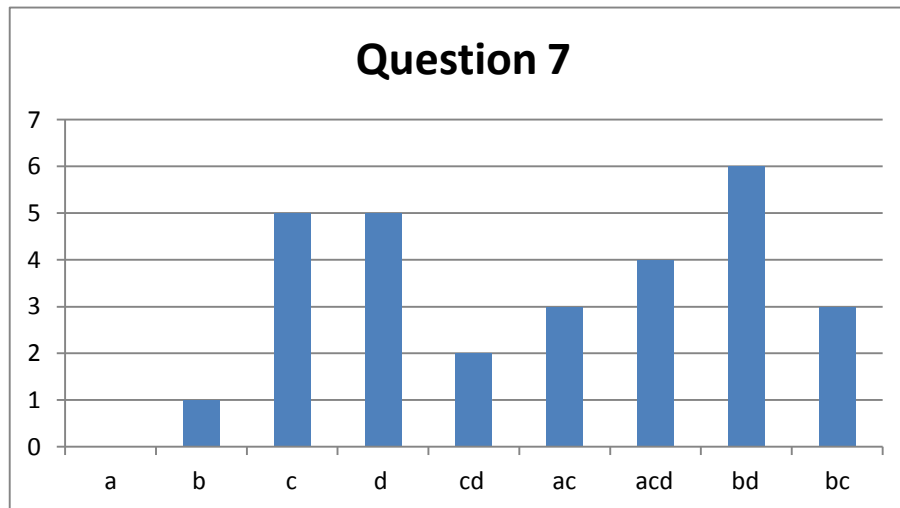


**Figure 3.11** : The importance of stress for pronunciation

Twenty six out of twenty nine, that is, 90% percent of the informants admitted stress as a salient component for learning pronunciation. In other words, learners are aware of the importance of learning stress as a means to achieve effective communication

### Question 7 : Why do you learn stress ?

In order to better understand the previous question, the researcher required his informants to state the reasons that justify the necessity of learning stress by suggesting a multiple choice question ( MCQ) to support their opinions.



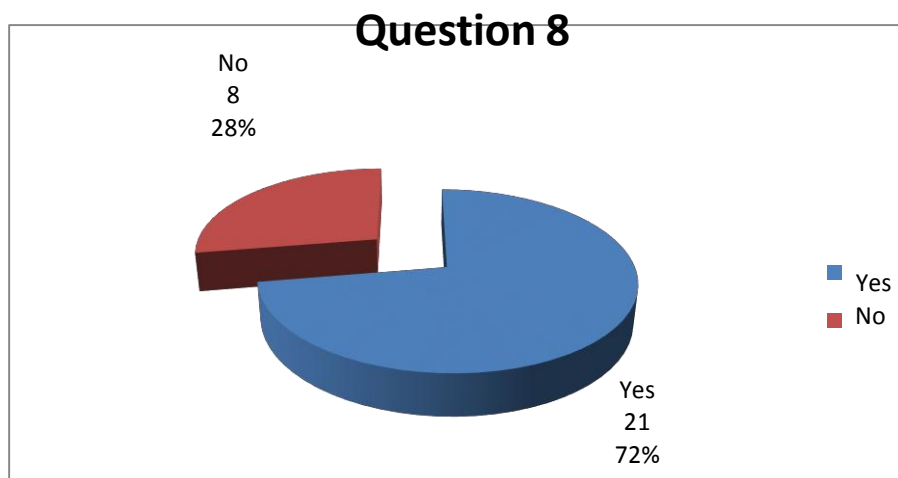
**Figure 3.12** : Reasons for learning stress

The data gathered revealed that a large number of pupils opted for answers C and D stating that they learn stress because it is a part of the BAC examination, and being an important tool to master pronunciation. These premises partly strengthen the notion of ‘learning to the test’ that defines the main students’ objective of learning English.

### Question 8 : Do you like to assess your learning of stress ?

As assessment is an integral part in teaching-learning process, providing teachers and learners with valuable information that can help them identify their strengths and weaknesses and bring the necessary remedies to their teaching

and learning contexts, the researcher intended to elicit information about the learners' attitude towards assessment.

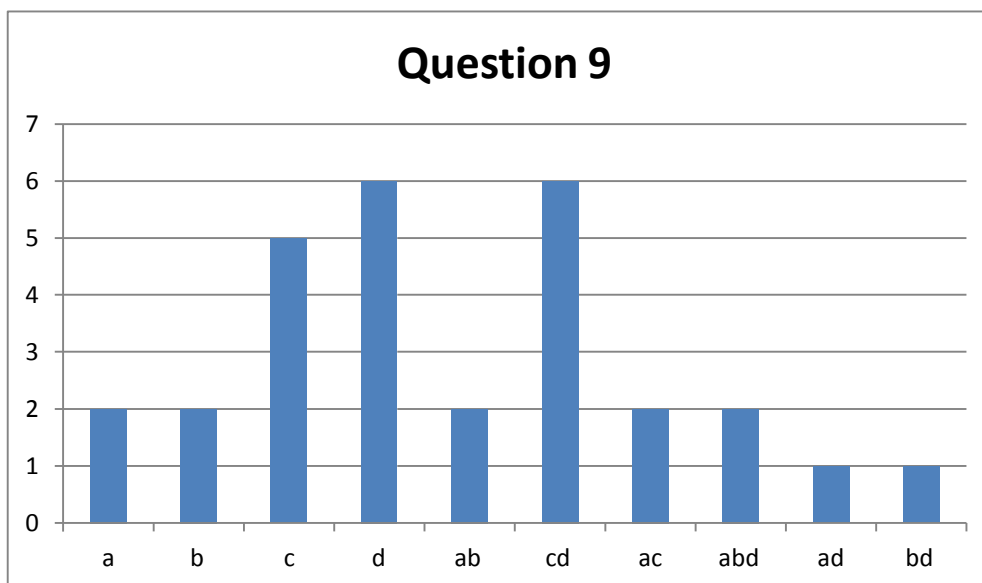


**Figure 3.13:** The pupils' awareness of assessment of stress

The results revealed that 72% of the informants expressed their desire to undergo assessment while learning the phonological stress while 28% of them showed no interest to this kind of instruction, and stated their complete indifference to the issue.

### **Question9 :** How do you like to be assessed ?

Within the context of assessment the researcher wished to explore the matter further by tapping the learners' awareness of the forms of assessment and which ones are preferred to them. As there are a variety of means of assessment, some have been proposed to the informants to allow them to state which they would prefer.



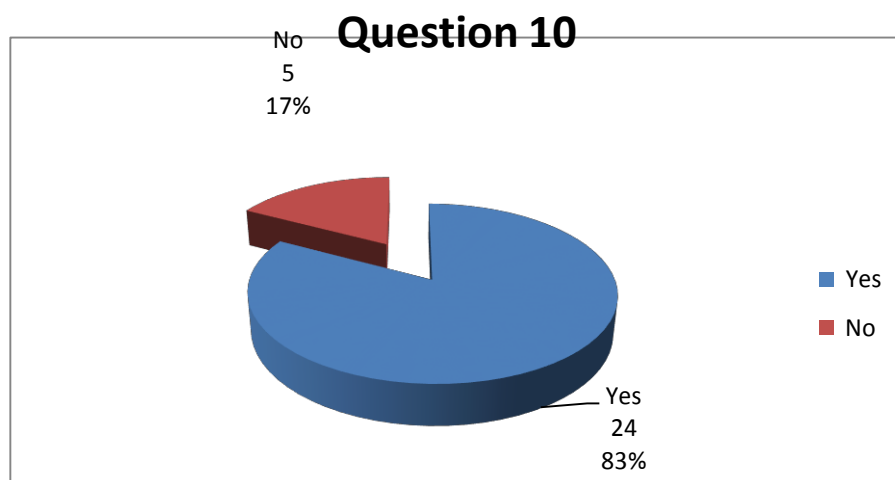
**Figure 3.14** : means of assessment

Evidence showed that most the pupils favoured continuous classroom practice and home practice over other assessment techniques.

**Question10:** Does Self assessment develop your English language Learning ?

The aim of this question was to know about the learners' awareness of assessment and whether learners use self assessment to enhance learning. As a key component part of the research area, assessment was involved in the research work to capture information about the learners' perceptions of assessment and if they used self assessment as an effective tool to check progress and detect learning weaknesses, and bring remedies by finding appropriate strategies of learning.





**Figure 3.15** Learners' perception of self assessment

The informants' answers evidenced that 83% of them took advantage of this learning device in order to promote their learning, while 17% of them did not seem to have any idea about what assessment meant for their learning.

### 3.4.2.2 Interpretation of the Results

The phonology issue in the Algerian secondary school is a thorny issue that has long been neglected as it does not seem to have been adequately approached in terms of teaching and assessment. The poor achievements of the learners in pronunciation and specifically in the learning and application of stress can better explain this failure. In this respect, The data collected from the pupils' questionnaire are intended to yield some information to highlight some variables relating to the learning of stress. In order to better carry out this interpretation, it would be advisable to handle the results from the perspective of attitudes of learners towards the issue of phonology, facts relating to the learners' knowledge of phonology and occurrence of the phonological course in the English syllabus, and lastly the

behavioural procedures that pertain to classroom practices and external contexts.

As far as the attitudinal perspective is concerned, the questions that have been posed have yielded considerable amount of information on the learners who manifested a big interest in learning English. Respondents' answers have shown that for the scientific and foreign languages streams, the big majority of the learners are holding a positive view of the English language. In fact 100% of them (scientific streams) like learning English (fig.3.6) while the LP streams are divided between those who like it and those who don't. The reason behind this attitude lies in the belief that English as being international, widely used for communication, and an important linguistic tool for university studies, which explains the importance of English for these learners. When it came to their perceptions of the phonological issue, 90% of them claimed that the phonological stress is worth studying because it is part and parcel of pronunciation, and can better serve communication purposes (fig.3.10). The assessment of stress had its share in the respondents' view as 72% of them declared that they considered assessment as a key factor of learning stress (fig.3.12). On the other hand, 83% admitted the positive role of self assessment in enhancing their learning. These perceptions should be considered as determinant factors for learners' motivation.

From a behavioural standpoint, and relating to classroom practices, the respondents stated that they used both L1 and L2 in classroom interactions (fig.3.6) to show that what goes on in EFL classrooms does not really reflect the CBA principles that

insist on the intensive use of English to meet the competency of interaction. In other terms of classroom practices, assessment of stress was taken for granted. Most of the respondents (72%) insisted on the use of assessment. Most of them expressed their desire to be assessed through homework and continuous practice, as a means to gauge their progress and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

From another cognitive angle, important information was elicited throughout the questionnaire to show the amount of knowledge pupils possessed on phonology. The researcher inquired into the basic suprasegmental units. The results showed that the learners had more knowledge on the syllable than any other element (fig.5.9)

The premises at this particular stage are not taken for granted, and remain to be cross-checked in terms of reliability through the next research instruments.

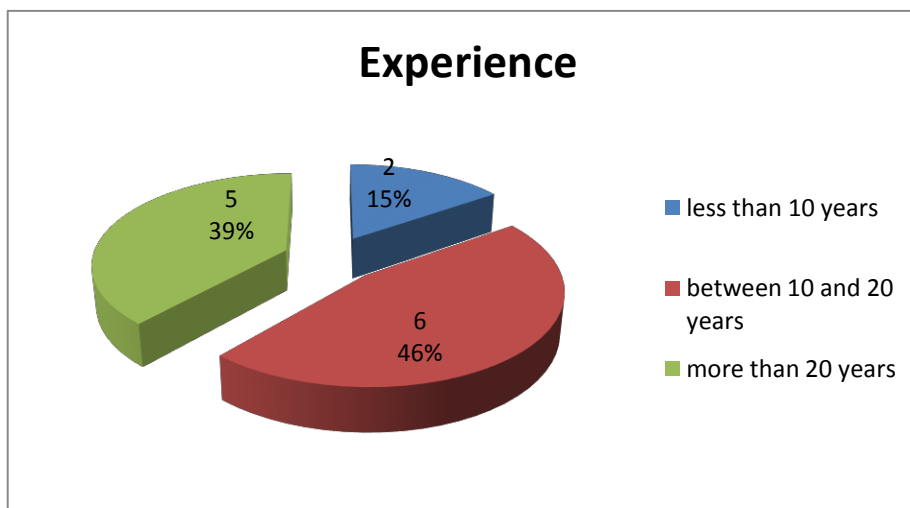
### 3.4.2.3 Questionnaire for Teachers

The second kind of questionnaire targeted an important pedagogical authority, the teacher. The questionnaire split into two rubrics was designed to capture information about teaching, whereas the second draws on assessment. The questions varied between close-ended, differential semantic meaning scale, and Likert scale questions. The last two elicitation techniques are also used by researchers because they allow researchers to avoid writing long statements, and, instead use a tick between bipolar adjectives at the extremes, that is both them are used to evaluate the same target.

#### **RubricA : Teaching**

**Question1:**How long have you been teaching English ?

This question rather refers to the profile of the teachers in terms of the experience they spent in teaching the English language in the secondary school.



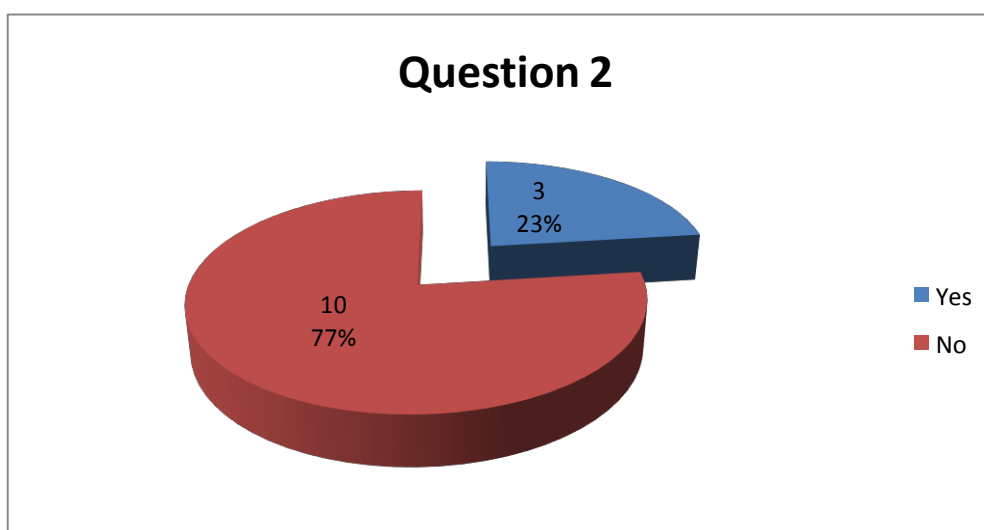
**Figure 3.16** Teaching Experience

Evidence has shown that five teachers out of thirteen, that is, 39% of them taught English for more than twenty years, while six of them (46%) have been teaching English between ten and twenty years. The two remaining teachers, however, have less than ten years teaching experience. This means that the large majority are more or less experienced in ELT.

**Question 2 :** Have you ever received any special training in teaching phonology

The aim of this question is to elicit some data about the inservice or preservice training in didactics of phonology. Training programmes have been regularly organized by the ministry of education to get the teachers acquainted with new instructional approaches under the CBA principle. Long, costly, and time consuming seminars and study days were spent on

enlightening teachers on how to better approach different skills in classroom practices under the newly introduced CBA. In this line of thought, the researcher wanted to know about how much attention has been attributed to the phonological issue in teachers' programmes.



**Fig.3.17.** Phonology training programme.

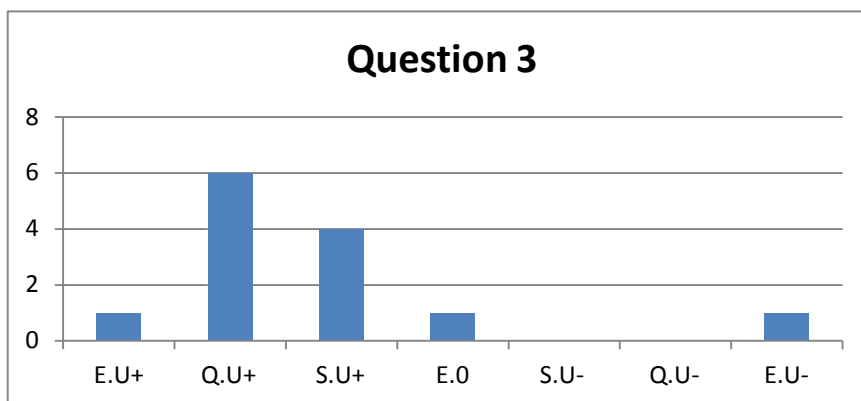
The data acquired revealed that 77% of the teachers, that is ten of them had not received special training in phonology, while three teachers only admitted having been trained in the area. These numbers suggest that a few of them are likely to have acquired some phonological knowledge.

**Question 3 :**Teaching 'stress' to pupils is( plse put a tick)

useful 1 , 2 , 3 , 4 , 5 , 6 , 7 useless

This question was provided in the form of an elicitation

technique named Differential Semantic Meaning Scale. This technique is intended to measure directly the teachers' attitude towards the usefulness of teaching stress to pupils.



**Figure 3.18** Results of the Differential semantic meaning scale

E.U : Extremely Useful

Q.U : Quite Useful

S.U : Slightly Useful

E.O : Either or/ neutral

E.U : Extremely Useless

Q.U : Quite Useless

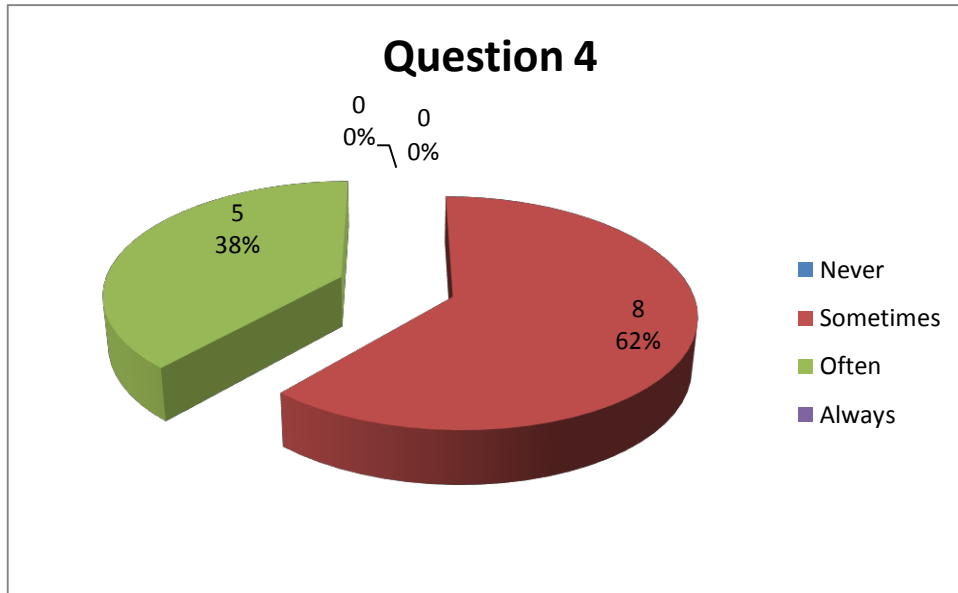
S.U : Slightly Useless

As shown in (fig.3.18), the vast majority of the teachers conceded that teaching stress to the learners is quite useful. Another good number of teachers admitted that it is slightly useful, whereas just a small minority feel that its teaching is only useless

**Question 4 :** How often does the lesson on Stress appear in the course unit ?

This question aimed to capture some information about the occurrence of the phonological lesson in the unfolding of the English programme. How often learners are exposed to

phonological stress was the target information to be provided by the informants.



**Figure 3.19** Frequency of stress lesson occurrence

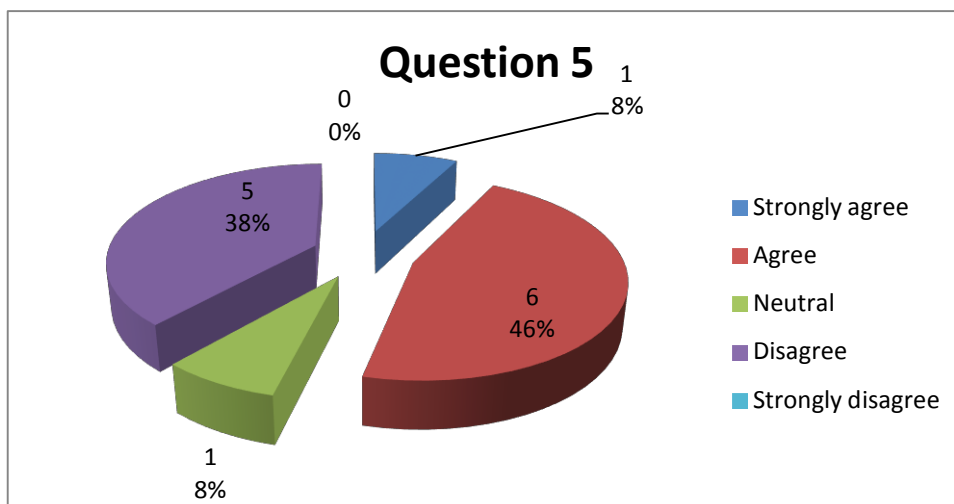
The chart clarifies that informants expressed through a rate of 62% (eight teachers) that it was sometimes taught. The remaining five forming 38% opted for the frequency of its teaching.

### **Question 5** : Stress is taught to prepare pupils for high stakes exams

Strongly agree  agree  neutral  disagree  strongly disagree

This query was forwarded in the form Likert scale, the famous type of closed ended items, which consists of statement about which respondents have to state to which extent they agree or disagree about it. Responses are ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Informants specify their level of agreement or disagreement regarding a statement provided on the basis of agree/disagree scale. The statement established a correlation between the teaching of stress and the cause of being assessed in the Bac exam. The scale designed to evidence to what extent teachers agreed or disagreed, showed that nearly

half of the informants agreed that the phonological stress is taught to the exam.



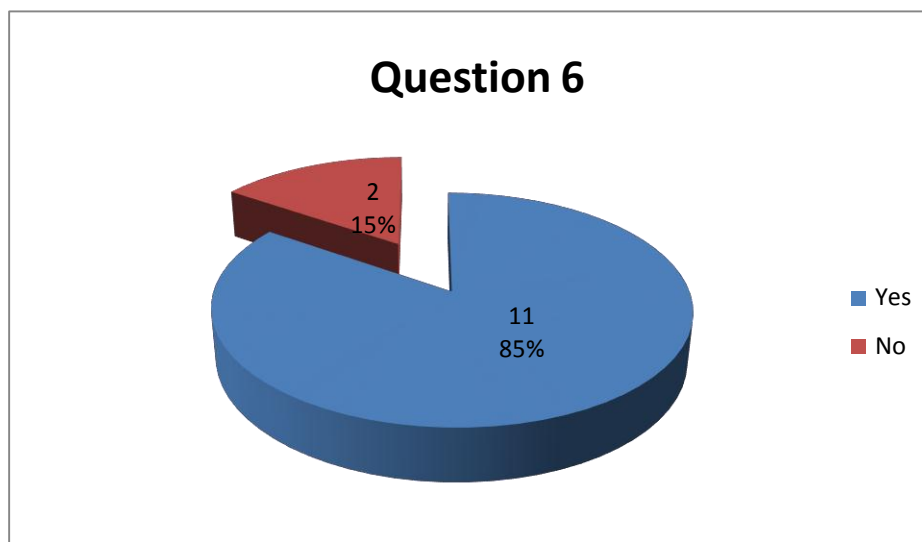
**Figure 3.20** : Correlation between teaching stress and the BAC

As shown in the graph, the scale designed to evidence to what extent teachers agreed or disagreed, showed that nearly half of the informants agreed that the phonological stress is taught to the exam.

**Question 6** : Do your pupils respond positively to the teaching of stress ?

This question aimed to elicit information about the learners attitudes towards the phonological issue. It also tries to capture information on how they reacted when exposed to classroom instruction that addresses the phonological stress.





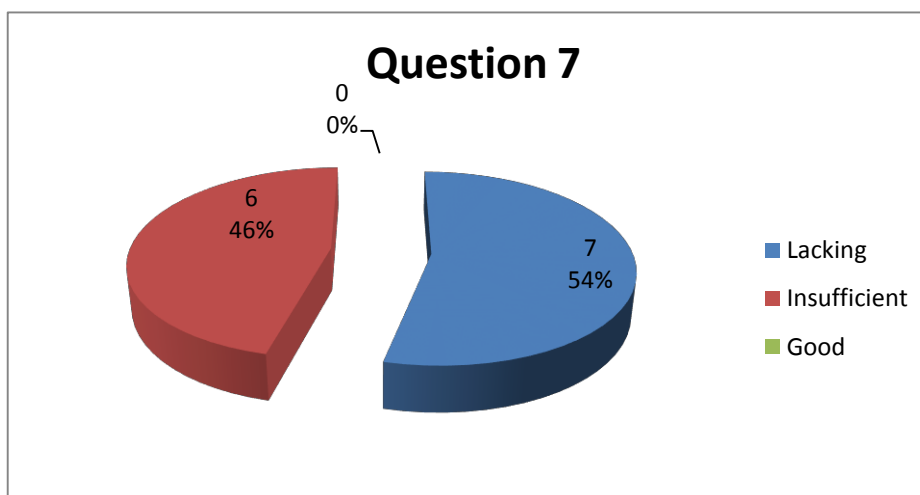
**Figure 3.21** : Pupils attitudes to learning stress.

The respondents claimed by 85% that their pupils are highly motivated to learn pronunciation-related issue of stress. This means that they proved to have a positive attitude towards learning phonology.

**Question7** : The pupils' basic knowledge of stress is :

- a) Lacking   b) insufficient   c) good

The focus of this question was to learn about the teachers' impressions on their learners basic knowledge of stress they had acquired in previous stages of education. The essence of this question is that it tries to draw some evidence about the kind of learners' knowledge that can be invested in enhancing the phonological course and improving the learners' pronunciation.

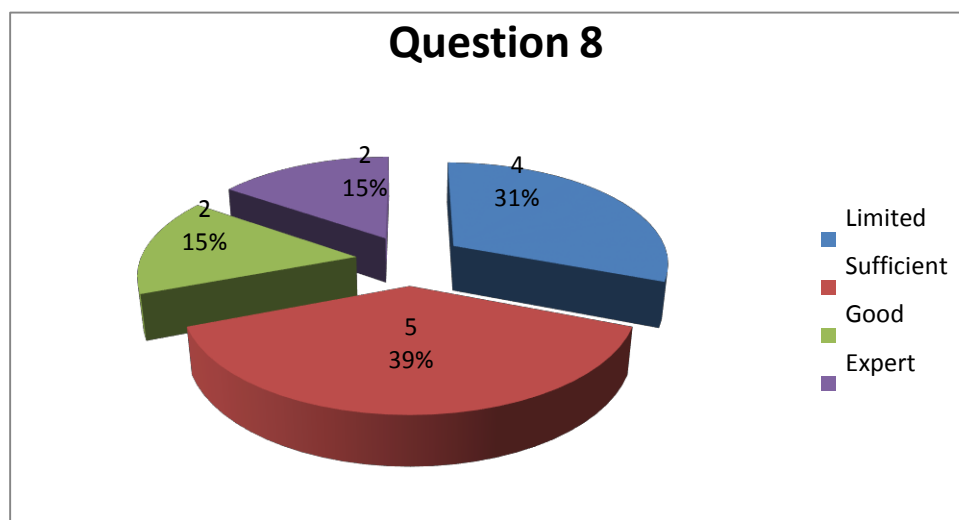


**Figure3.22** : learners' knowledge of stress.

The answers provided according to the chart have reflected a high disinterest from the part of the learners in the field of phonology. All teachers approved of their learners' knowledge of phonology as swinging between lacking and insufficient. This demonstrates the challenge teachers are facing in teaching this aspect of classroom instruction.

**Question 8** : How good is your knowledge of phonological stress ?

Contrary to the previous question that was intended to elicit information about the learners' knowledge of stress, the current question targets the teachers' knowledge of phonological stress.

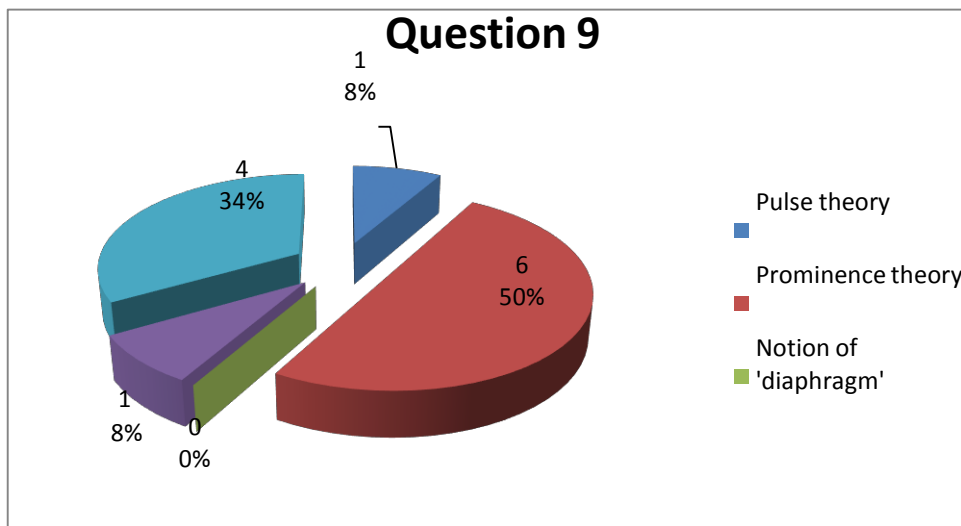


**Figure 3.23** : Teachers' knowledge of phonological stress

As shown in figure (3.23), two teachers claimed to possess a good mastery of the phonological stress, while five teachers, that is, 39% of them claimed to handle sufficient knowledge of phonology. On the whole, the information yielded by the graph show that the issue is within the grasp of most of the teachers.

**Question 9** : Identifying a syllable requires the knowledge of the following theories(see Appendix)

This question was designed to check the validity of the answers pertaining to the previous question. It aims to demonstrate the teachers' knowledge of the phonological stress through identifying the theoretical approaches such as pulse theory and prominence theory.



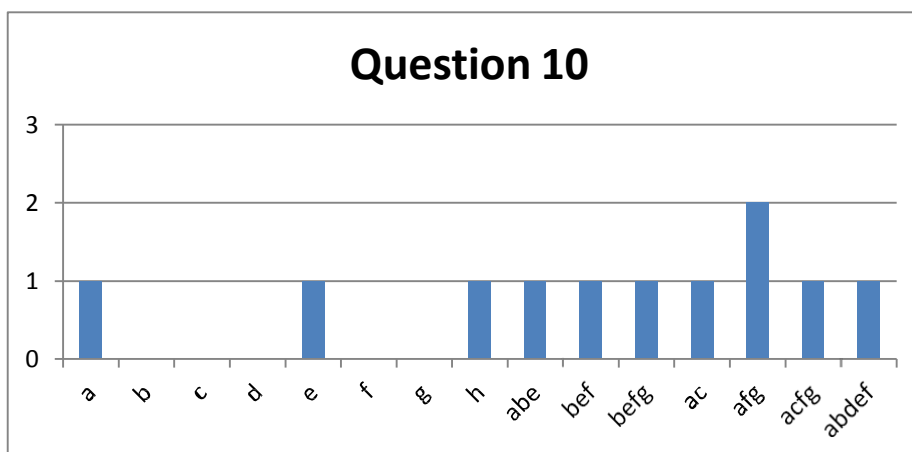
**Figure 3.24** : Teachers' knowledge of the syllable

(N.B. One teacher did not give any answer.)

The evidence proved that 50% of the informants (six teachers) have knowledge of the prominence theory, while 34% (four teachers) of the respondents use the pulse theory to approach the phonological stress. The remaining two teachers know about the notion of 'peak' and 'diaphragm'.

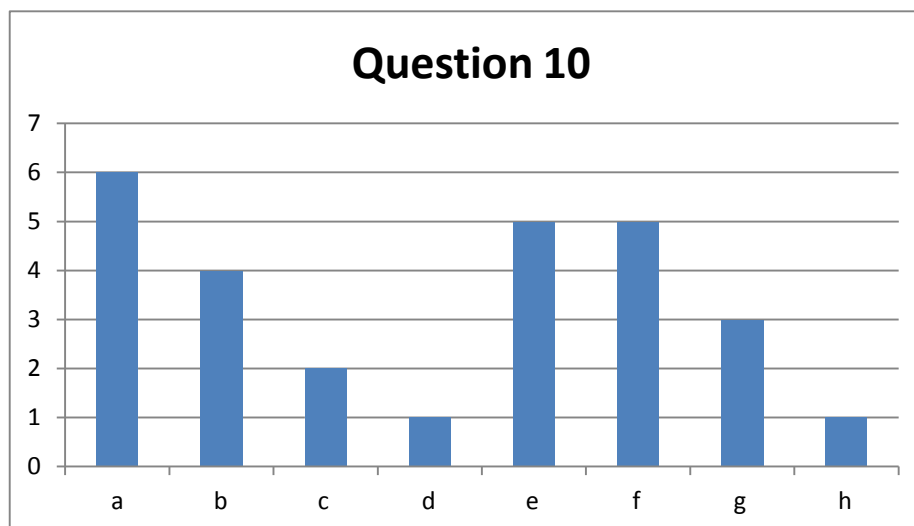
**Question 10:** Which of the variables need to operate to teach stress?

In order to go deeper into the teachers' knowledge of phonology the researcher furthered the query to ask informants about the factors of prominence that governed the use of stress.



**Figure 3.25** : Teachers' knowledge of factors of prominence

The data gathered illustrated that most of the respondents identified mainly three factors, loudness of the sound unit, facial movements, and the sound articulation. Other answers varied between the choice of other variables like pitch, more clarity of articulation. Strangely enough, the variable stating 'none of the above' was considered by some informants.



**Figure3.26** : Knowledge of factors of prominence by frequency

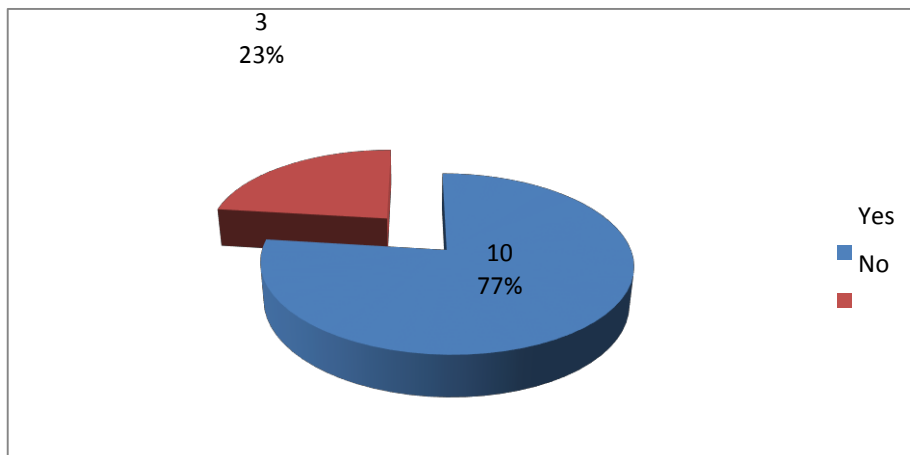
This chart is a furthered illustration to the previous figure showing the teachers' knowledge of factors of prominence.

### **Rubric B : Assessment**

**Question 11** : Do you assess the learning of stress ?

Since Assessment is regarded as an integral part in the teaching Learning process, and being an independent variable to the phonological issue under investigation, the researcher inquired into the assessment issue in order to know whether this aspect of language instruction is being implemented in EFL classrooms to assess the learnability of stress. As shown in the chart below, 77%(10) of the participants admitted that they assessed the learning of Stress While 23%(3) of them stated that they didn't.

**Question 11**

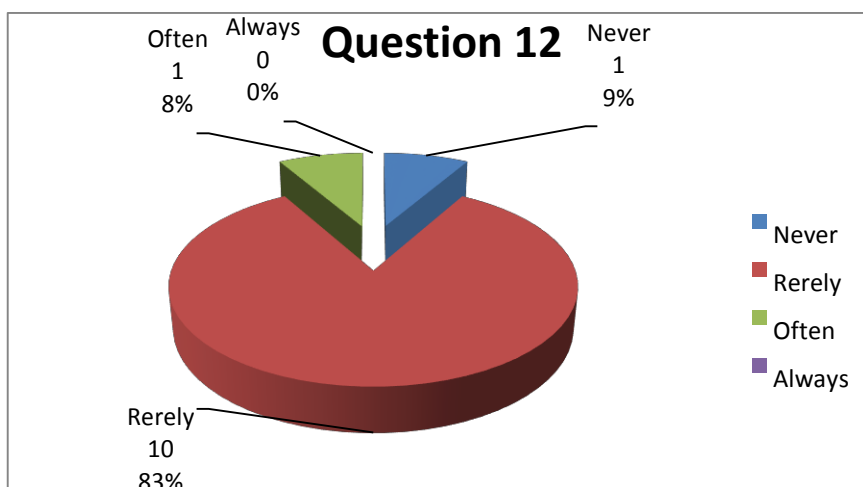


**Figure 3.27 :** Teachers’ assessment of stress

As shown in the chart above, 77%(10) of the participants admitted that they assessed the learning of Stress While 23%,that is of them stated that they didn’t.

**Question12 :** How often do you assess the stress ?

To scrutinize the issue of stress, this question was asked in order to have an idea about the degree of learners’ exposure to this kind of language instruction in terms of assessment. answers revealed that 83% (10 teachers) of the respondents rarely did it. However, 9% (1 teacher) stated he never did it.

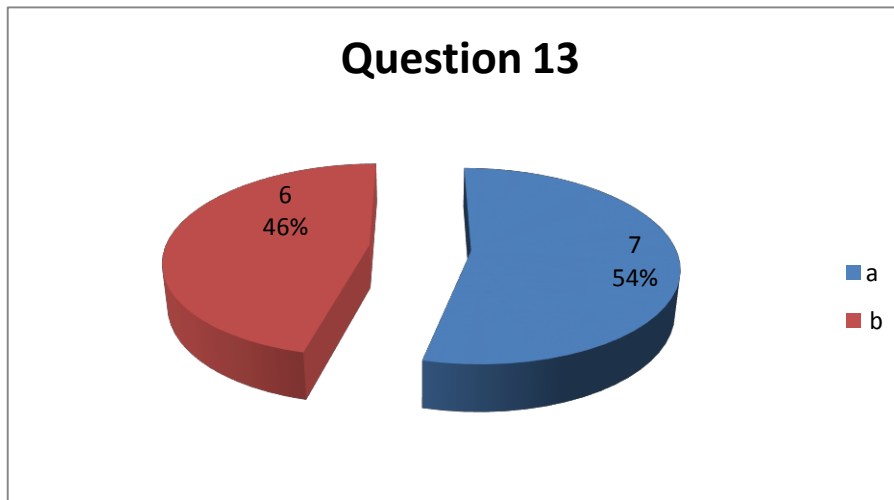


**Figure3.28 :** The Frequency of assessing stress

Answers according to the chart revealed that 83% (10 teachers) of the respondents rarely dealt with assessment. However, 9% (1 teacher) stated he never did it.

**Question 13** : When assessing stress, teachers target (seeAppendixB )

As a crucial factor to the topic of research, this question was designed to elicit information concerning the objective of assessing the phonological stress by teachers.

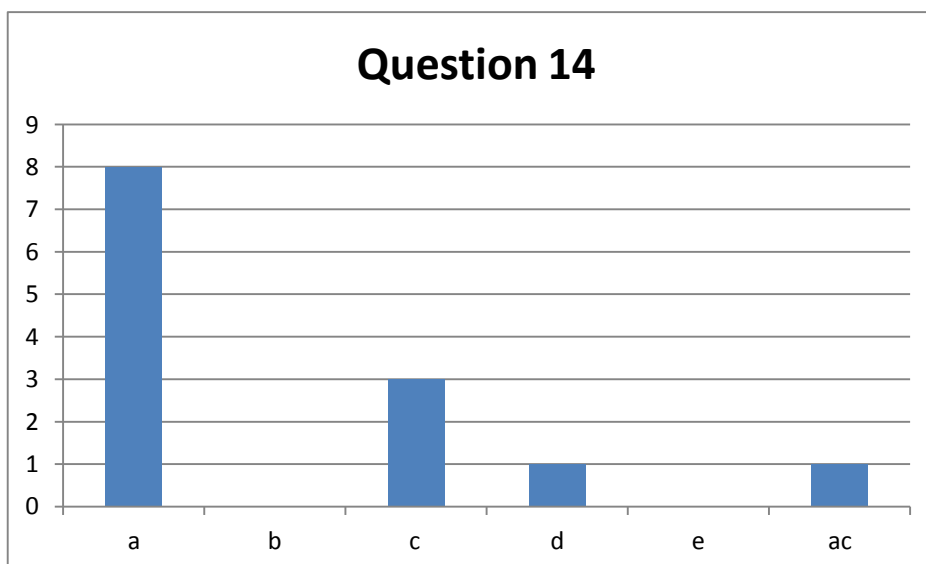


**Figure 3.29** : Teachers' objective of teaching stress

The teachers' answers were divided between those who favoured the aim of high stakes exam by 54% ( 7 teachers), and those who opted for the skill of proficiency by 46%(6teachers).

**Question 14** : Which form of assessment do you endorse in teaching stress ?

This question was meant to capture information about the type of assessment teachers generally use in order to improve the teaching of stress.



**Figure 3.30** Teachers' prioritized form of assessment

Most teachers seemed to have given priority to formal assessment. The second largest group of informants have favoured diagnostic assessment ; self assessment was slightly supported while none of them gave attention to peer assessment.

### 3.4.2.4 Interpretation of the Results

The questionnaire to teachers was meant to reflect their perceptions of the phonology issue. As experienced secondary school teachers, they are expected to yield valuable information about the phonological issue in EFL classrooms, and how it is taught and assessed, under the umbrella of the CBA. The results of the questionnaire will be analyzed through a pattern of analysis including three main variables in order to reach a correlational link with the research questions and the research hypotheses. These variables represent the cognitive aspect of teaching and assessment, the behavioural dimension of EFL classrooms, and the factual data pertaining to the educational field. Regarding training in phonology, 77% of the respondents stated that they did not receive training to improve



### CHAPTER THREE: Research Design and Data Analysis

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its instruction, which implies this had to be invested in the teaching of phonology. Concerning the destination of teaching phonology stress, teachers, using the Likert scale, approved by 46% that they teach stress for the sake of high stakes exam, the BAC, while 38% of them disagree and think it is for other purposes. The result of question 8 is important to consider in the sense that it shows that the teachers are massively knowledgeable of the stress issue. Question 9, however, was on purpose misleading because only two answers are valid, pulse and peak theories. Some teachers pretended to know such notions as trap whereas these do not exist at all.

Concerning the behavioural questions, this questionnaire shows that the basic knowledge of the learners on the whole is insufficient to learn stress which needs a background knowledge. Next, in terms of assessment, most teachers assess the learning of stress, however this is rarely done. Also respondents admit that massively they teach this aspect of phonology for the sake of the BAC exam, which is another way to say that the CBA targeted competency of oral production is not in the agenda of the learning objectives. Finally, most teachers agree that they use assessment as a means to sustain the phonological stress.

On a factual basis, it is worth mentioning that nearly all teachers agree that the phonological lesson is taught on occasional basis, which means that this premise consorts with the numbers provided in the table( 3.4). To round off, the

aforementioned results remain to be crosschecked through the third research instrument which is the inspector's interview.

### 3.4.2.5 Interview with The General Inspector

A more reliable research instrument that was also used is the interview. It is generally designed to gather qualitative data. Greffee (2012) defines the interview as *“a person-to-person structured conversation for the purpose of finding and/or creating meaningful data which has to be collected, analyzed, and validated.”* As the interview can allow the researcher to compare answers from different participants, and investigate phenomena that are not directly observable, the researcher seized this instrument to interview a general inspector of English. This person represents the local educational authority having access to different sources of official information. The researcher organized an outdoor meeting with him. He is a 59 year old man, having taught English for 29 years, and currently holding the position of general inspector. He was politely requested to be interviewed on educational matters, specifically the status of the phonology issue in language education. The inspector was glad to be of assistance to the present work because, he said, it targeted a tricky problem for teachers. The questions addressed to him included the following ( Appendix C)

#### **Rubric A :** The phonological profile

1.How often do you organize seminars ?

Rarely       sometimes      always

2.What are the most important aspects of teaching that you

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target in seminars ?

3. Have you ever scheduled the teaching of pronunciation in

seminars or study days ?      yes      no

4. What is the frequency of teaching pronunciation to pupils ?

Scarcely       often       always

5.How important is stress to pronunciation ?

Useful       useless

6.Do teachers manage teaching phonology stress or do they fail ?

7.What is stress taught to ?

exam scores      pronunciation skill

8.Do EFL classroom instruction and practices reflect the principles of the CBA ?

### **RUBRIC B : Phonological knowledge**

9.How do you qualify the teachers' knowledge of stress ?

10.What specific approaches do they need to teach stress ?

11.Do you think pupils are ready to learn stress ? why ?

### **RUBRIC C : Assessment**

12.How do teachers conceive of assessment ?

13.Do teachers assess pronunciation/stress ?

14.Is phonology assessed to exams or to the skill ?

15. What alternative assessment do you recommend to assess phonological stress ?

### 3.4.2.6 Results and Interpretation

The first question was devoted to teacher training which is of great benefit to in-service teachers as it allows teachers to develop their teaching skills and strategies. The researcher targeted the frequency of training during the school year. The respondent said that they were generally organized twice a year. This answer shows clearly that the training received by teachers is too limited in terms of time. As for the second question that addressed the aspect of teaching targeted in seminars, the answer clearly stated that they revolved around how to teach the four skills, class management, lesson planning, but never pronunciation happened to be the target of the seminar. This answer clearly contradicts with the claim of teachers that they had been trained in pronunciation teaching, let alone the phonological stress that constitutes a small particle in the field of phonology. When it came to the frequency of phonology in the classroom, as a frequent visitor of EFL classrooms, the informant confirmed that this was scarcely done. The information elicited from teachers consorted with the teachers' answers and the statistics about the phonological occurrence discussed earlier (table3.5). The informant furthered his replies that stress is important for pronunciation as it ensures intelligibility of the speaker, which goes with what other informants declared regarding this point. For the sixth question, the respondent insisted that on the whole teaching stress is doomed to failure though the learners look somehow motivated, and they rather focus on the primary skills like reading and writing. Concerning the question whether stress was taught to the exam or to the skill, the respondent said it was unquestionably

done for the sake of the BAC exam. This answer also reflects teachers and learners' answers in the questionnaire though some of them related the aim to the oral proficiency. The inspector also revealed an important premise about the classroom instruction and the CBA principles that do not correlate to prove that teachers stick to the old fashioned, traditional ways of teaching.

The issue of phonological knowledge for both teachers and pupils was no exception to the interview. When asked about the teachers' knowledge of stress, the informant believed that they were lacking its background, contrary to what other informants claimed. As for the approaches to teaching stress, he denied having a single idea about them, contrary to what respondent teachers pretended knowing, except for what is being provided within the limits of the syllabus. The learners' readiness to learn phonological stress also sparked the inquisitiveness of the researcher and urged the informants to cite that they were generally lacking the background knowledge of phonology, which is probably a result of lack of learner's exposure to this type of instruction, and the poor quality of its teaching.

The last four questions focused on the assessment issue. The first question related to the teachers' perceptions of assessment. The informant insisted that teachers regarded assessment as part and parcel of their teaching practices. This idea was contained in teachers' reactions to the questionnaire, whereas for phonology, he said, assessment rarely occurred in teachers' classroom behaviour because, as mentioned earlier, the phonology issue itself rarely occurs in the English course.

When asked about the motives behind assessing stress, if it ever happened, whether to the skill or to the exam, the respondent assured that the exam was the target, and learners' performance in the BAC that mattered most for teachers, inspectors, and other stakeholders. As it was expected, this reaction applied to the teachers' answers to demonstrate the statistically performance-based assessment that characterizes the nature of the national education. The judgement of the success or the failure of the English course is based on the scores provided by formal tests or high stakes exams of English. To round off the interview, a last question was addressed on what alternative assessment could be suggested and what recommendations would be made to this issue of education. The respondent recommended the idea of formative assessment as an alternative to the traditional one; to him, the continuous assessment process should form the basis for any teaching situation to better inform teachers' decisions about classroom actions.

### **3.5 Summary of the Main Results**

The present research work ascertained the teaching and assessment of the phonological stress in the context of the Algerian secondary school EFL classroom. To this effect, a triangulation technique was adopted by the researcher in order to elicit useful information from three types of informants, the pupil, the teacher, and the general inspector, using two types of research instruments, the questionnaire and the interview. The type of data collected from the questionnaire and the interview yielded important information about the respondents, and highlighted salient facts about the key factors that affect the teaching and assessing of the phonological component. Quite

apart from consideration of data sources, some numerical statistics already demonstrated in the previous chapter have been seized in order to strengthen the arguments and add more reliability to the research findings.

A synchronisation of the results obtained from the two questionnaires and the interview generated important information about the validity of the proposed hypotheses. To better grasp these premises, the results can be summarized in the following segregated blocks

1. In terms of the phonological knowledge the inquiry uncovered a number of facts that accounted for the failure of the phonological component. It has been demonstrated that EFL teachers lack a background knowledge in phonology though the informant teachers claimed to possess some, as confirmed by the inspector. By asking teachers about the types of approaches to teach stress, the researcher had the intention to test the respondents about approaches that do not actually exist, and which they pretended knowing, except for pulse theory and prominence theory. It is worth knowing that the knowledge of such theories as prominence theory, chest pulse theory, and sonority theory is regarded as the first pre-requisite before one can identify the basic unit of stress which is the syllable. Knowing the stress pattern depends highly on mastering the syllable. Hence, without knowledge, teachers cannot respond to the needs of their learners, and consequently they are doomed to failure. Pupils respondents also as acknowledged by the teachers and the inspector generally arrive with poor phonological knowledge,

and this will have pernicious effects on the phonological element as a whole. These pupils, though demonstrating some motivation, claiming to be interested in learning English, and recognizing the importance of the phonological issue do not seem to cope with the pronunciation course and probably fail partly because of a poor modal of teaching.

2. From a different perspective, the type of in-service training that teachers receive annually does not seem to respond to the teachers' needs. Two seminars a year are not really sufficient to provide teachers with in-depth pedagogies to help them with pedagogical insights to cope with the diversity and complexity of the EFL classroom instruction, and recognize their teaching styles. Furthermore, such seminars focus generally on the traditional skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, or at best they can extend to classroom management, or unit planning, but never learn how to teach phonology and pronunciation. So, successful phonological lessons cannot be expected under such unfavourable factors.
3. Another scope of the discussion may lead to wonder about the aim of teaching phonology or teaching stress, as these two terms are used interchangeably. As reflected by most teachers and most importantly, the aim of teaching the issue is to allow learners to get the maximum score in the high stake exam (the BAC). As stated in Benmoussat(2003), covering the overloaded syllabus in due course makes the chief concern of EFL secondary school teachers, which may lead to a harmful teaching model known as 'teaching to the



test' or 'exam English'. In the same line of thought Alexander(1967) contends *“a formal examination with its bias towards the written language will only exert a pernicious influence on language learning when it is regarded as an end in itself.”*Therefore, the question of intelligibility and pronunciation skill acquisition can by no means be the main drive for such syllabus component. The learner is still regarded as a recipient that has to be filled with knowledge and provided with specific strategies to deal with in high stake exams. It is no more the learner of the CBA kind who is left to himself to construct his own vision of the world, who can do by using his knowledge and skills. In the classroom environment, he is felt to be left to the teacher's authority rather than to be autonomous and responsible for his own learning.

4. On a different scale, the research showed that the time devoted to the teaching of phonological stress is far below the standard benchmark. Statistically speaking, the phonological occurrence is estimated at 8,33% (table3.2) and ( table3.5) of the total English programme, which is another way to say that pronunciation issues are by no means tolerated at the expense of other aspects of language instruction. As demonstrated in chapter two, the total amount of time allotted to teaching phonology, and specifically stress, is really critical, and needs to be reconsidered. A total annual time of two hours and a half to teach stress is really deplorable and needs verification, mainly in the communication orientation of the current syllabuses that lay an important emphasis on interaction,

communication, and language use to achieve effective language learning.

5. When it comes to assessment, though held positively by teachers, and appears among other language exponents in the assessment phase of language, according to the third informant, the inspector, assessment does not really take place. The respondent teachers massively opted for formal assessment (fig3.28) which responds only to the score-based requirements of the exam, contrary to the inspector who recommended the use of formative assessment whose mechanisms will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

To round off, the results discussed so far served to verify the hypotheses throughout two reliable research instruments, the questionnaire and the interview, corroborated by some statistical elements evidenced from the learners' textbook, all of these provided clear answers to the research questions, and elucidated the validity of the statements reading the imperfections in the teaching and assessing being due to the lack of phonological knowledge, the time benchmark being below the required standard, and finally stress being taught to the exam rather than to the skill.

### 3.6 Conclusion

To conclude, the present chapter has included the practical side of the research work, and adopted a systematic investigation of the research topic. To this effect, a triangulation technique has been used to involve two research instruments, a teacher's questionnaire, a pupil's questionnaire, and an interview with the general inspector. Evidence was corroborated by some statistical data inferred

from the learners' textbook to add precision to the work. The method was quantitative and qualitative-based. The findings of the research yielded reliable data that positively verified the advanced hypotheses which stated that factors such as the teacher's lack of phonological knowledge, insufficient time devoted to teaching and assessing this aspect of pronunciation, and teaching phonology to exam purposes, counted significantly for the stress teaching demise. Promoting this teaching area suggested that the kind of mechanisms used to assess suprasegmental phonology may include a set of interrelated components, pertaining to the teacher who should be knowledgeable about the phonological issue, and more effective teaching strategies to promote the teaching of stress and pronunciation ; a curriculum that would let more time for the phonological component, and a formative assessment that would endorse a feed-up, feed-back, feed-forward-based formative assessment, the issue to be elucidated in the next chapter.



**CHAPTER FOUR :**  
**Suggestions and**  
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### 4.1 Introduction

In the third chapter, important premises have been demonstrated about teaching and assessing the phonological issue in the Algerian secondary school. The research work has permitted to prove that the phonological issue is at the bottom list of teachers' priorities in EFL instruction. It has also been evidenced that this indifference to the phonological issue owes essentially to teachers' lack of knowledge of the phonological stress, the restricted timing proportion devoted to its instruction, and the narrow perception of its teaching aim as being a means to get good scores in high stakes exams. Regarding the pronunciation issues as the Cinderella of language teaching, teachers continue to often place a low level of emphasis on this very important language skill. They feel comfortable in teaching reading, writing, listening and to a degree, general oral skills, but when it comes to pronunciation they often lack the basic knowledge of phonetics (not difficult to acquire) to offer. The whole trouble with it, is then, a system-based mechanism which needs to be considered to handle the issue in terms of teaching and assessment. The present chapter, then is deemed to present

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some suggestions about mechanisms to better approach the phonological stress and promote pronunciation teaching.

### **4.2 Phonology Neglected .**

As has been demonstrated throughout the research study, little time is allotted to the phonological issue in the textbook and the classroom instructional practices. This has of course been verified through statistical analysis which showed that the annual time devoted to teaching the phonological aspect of language does not exceed eight hours teaching within a total annual time amount of 108 hours per year. The pre-service training that is fulfilled through seminars, if it deserves to be called as such, is confined to not more than two times a year. What made it worse is that the agenda of such meetings is restricted to the elaboration of the conventional issues like the primary skills of reading, speaking, reading, writing, the class management issues, or lesson planning which never showed how to plan the teaching strategy for a course related pronunciation skill. These set of attitudes show the extent to which phonology issue is being neglected in the language instruction. As far as the teacher is concerned, there are, in fact,

two kinds of problems with pronunciation teaching. Firstly, it has the tendency to be neglected by teachers, and secondly it tends to be dealt with as a reaction to a particular classroom problem that arises during the course, rather than being planned on the basis of a teacher's lesson strategy. The tendency of being neglected does not mean that teachers are not interested in the issue of phonology, but rather to a feeling of doubt that springs from a lack of phonological knowledge. Furthermore, teachers feel squeezed and pressurized by time as they have to cover the syllabus within a specific period rather than provide an effective teaching (Benmoussat 2003).

### **4.3 Factors for Improving The Teaching of Phonology**

Many teachers admit the lack of phonological knowledge and the theory of pronunciation and find it necessary to improve the practical skills in the teaching of phonology and pronunciation in general. According to Kelly (2010) , teachers of phonology and pronunciation ought to identify their needs to improve the teaching of phonology. These needs can be identified in the following :

- ❖ A good grounding in the theoretical knowledge.
- ❖ Practical classroom skills.



- ❖ Access to good ideas from classroom activities.

A successful teaching of phonology, then requires the teacher to be knowledgeable and well-versed in the subject he has got to teach skilfully.

### 4.3.1 Teachers' Training

Teachers are continuously required to construct their professional identity in ongoing interaction with learners, by reflecting on their actions in the classroom and adapting them to meet the learners' needs. Sometimes this refers to the process in which the teachers work under the supervision of academic authority, namely inspectors, in order to gain some insights into how to improve their teaching practices. This process is sometimes known as professional development, a term that does not pertain to the sheer meaning of scarcely held in-service days and workshops. Professional development can be perceived as the continuous learning process in which teachers engage voluntarily to learn how best to adjust their teaching to the learning needs of their learners (Diaz-Maaggioli, 2004). The last

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school reforms in Algeria have called for a new role for professional development in the teachers' career as there is a strong correlation between teaching and the learners' success. Professional development, as opposed to other forms of training, in terms of supervision and evaluation, in that the supervision of teachers includes four kinds of teachers : pre-service, novice, tenured, and veteran (Nolan&Hoover,2003). The task of supervision involves a set of activities targetting four main ends, certification for pre-service teachers, induction for or admitting novices, and improvement, or remediation for tenured and veteran teachers. In the Algerian school system, it stands for 'nomination', 'stagiairization', 'titularization' through CAPES (certificat d'aptitude d'enseignement secondaire), respectively. An effective professional development targets different categories of teachers depending on the teachers' needs. As teachers progress through the stages mentioned earlier, they are likely to manifest a variety of needs (Huberman, 1989). These needs can be best met by taking part in timely professional development activities which include the following strategies :

### **4.3.1.1 Peer Coaching**

According to Cogan(1973), this strategy of professional development is based on three main features, planning, observation, and feedback labelled clinical supervision. It is a strategy according to which pairs of teachers, usually trained to do so visit each other' classes and advise each other on irrelevant teaching practices and provide insights on what went on in classroom instruction . Teachers themselves decide about the focus of observation and the necessary instruments that enable them to observe the use of the language , the way it is delivered, the methods of its assessment, and the recording of the learners' progress.

### **4.3.1.2 Mentoring**

This developmental strategy seeks to gather more experienced teachers with less experienced teachers for the sake of collaboration and feedback on training and learning. Novice teachers take advantage of the experience, knowledge, and expertise of veteran teachers, as mentors help with advice, support, and encouragement for their mentees, who in

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their turn, provide mentors with opportunities to reflect on their experience. The new teachers are always in need of help to understand the school environment and their decisive impact on the learners. Mentors also can help novice teachers with their pedagogical competence and strategies and how they are used in the practical classroom situation.

In the Algerian context this strategy has never been experienced by teachers of English, and seemingly to cope with the current trends of global education, the Algerian educational authorities have started to realize the importance of such professional development for the whole career of teachers and the learning potential of the learners, and consequently started to introduce such concepts into the teaching environment. Such awareness was reflected in last recommendations made by the inspectors of English to bring together the two types of teachers, knowledgeable experienced teachers with newly recruited ones, and allot the responsibility to the former to attend to latter. This attention was perceived during the last two years, and was concretized through the seminars that have

been organized to promote the strategy of mentoring in educational development.

### **4.3.1.3 Study Groups**

This strategy of professional development states that EFL teachers organize regular meetings to discuss the professional literature and analyze the learners' work. According to Birchak et. al.( 1998), study groups target interactions on agendas called protocols, which include lesson plans and specimen of the learners' productions as topic of their discussion. Such meetings provide occasions for teachers to interact in the language they teach.

### **4.3.1.4 Portfolios**

This type of strategy, also used in the context of alternative assessment of learners, enables teachers to record their achievements through documents and watch their progress towards a defined objective. A portfolio can be defined as a systematic collection of teaching artifacts and reflections. It can include four main items : a statement that states the philosophy

of the teacher's education, an objective statement, models of the learners or the teachers' work holding captions which explain the reason for their inclusion, and stating reflective conclusions. It can also include rubric that demonstrate the congruency between the teachers' goals and the other documents. According to teachers' reports this kind of strategy is still discarded and hasn't been introduced yet.

### **4.3.1.5 Participatory Practitioner Research**

Also known as action research, this professional development strategy includes groups of teachers providing a diagnosis of a problematic situation pertaining to the classroom or school environment, and planning and implementing an intervention in order to provide solutions and improve its conditions. This inquiry can cover issues relating to the pupil, school, or teaching strategies, language proficiency, and classroom procedures. The essence of using this strategy is to provide teachers with opportunity to explore the teaching strategies, verify their validity, and devise ways of improving them.

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By embracing these strategies of professional development, teachers are adopting the concept of reflective teaching in which they internalize the skills to change their teaching and become better at teaching over time. Liston and Zeichner laid an emphasis on three key features of reflective teaching.

- A reflective teacher takes responsibility for his own professional development.
- A reflective teacher is aware of and questions the assumptions and values s/he brings to teaching
- A reflective teacher examines, frames, and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice

(Liston & Zeichner, 1991 :36)

### **4.3.2 A Good Grounding in the Theoretical Knowledge**

As discussed earlier, among the needs that teachers have to identify in order to improve their teaching of the phonological issue, including the phonological stress, is a good grounding in the field of phonology. Since the focus of our study is the suprasegmental stress, teachers willing to promote their

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teaching in phonology ought to be knowledgeable about some fundamental approaches in order to teach this aspect of pronunciation. One of the basic elements that need to be recognized when dealing with the phonological stress is the syllable. It is the basic unit that has to be identified before a learner can proceed to the use of stress. The syllable is a basic unit of speech used phonetically and phonologically. In terms of phonetics, Roach(2000) states that syllables

*are usually described as consisting of a centre which has little or no obstruction to airflow and which sounds comparatively loud; before and after that centre (...) there will be greater obstruction to airflow and/or less loud sound.*

(Roach, 2000: 70).

In the monosyllable (one-syllable word) *fat* /fæt/, the vowel /æ/ is the “centre” where little obstruction happens, while we have complete obstruction to the airflow for the surrounding plosives /f/ and /t/. When it comes to the phonological definition, Laver(1994) defines the phonological syllable as “*a complex unit made up of nuclear and marginal elements*”. Nuclear elements are the vowels or syllabic segments; marginal



elements are the consonants or non-syllabic segments. In the syllable *faint* /feɪnt/, the diphthong /eɪ/ is the nuclear element, while initial consonant /f/ and the final cluster /nt/ are marginal elements ( Laver 1994: 114).

### **.4.3.2.1 Prominence Theory**

Definitions have been provided about the syllable on physiological, acoustic or auditory basis. According to the prominence theory, for example, which is based mainly on auditory judgements, the number of syllables in a word is identified by the number of peaks of prominence. In the word *entertaining* /,entə'teɪnɪŋ/ the peaks of prominence are represented by the vowels /e.ə.eɪ.ɪ/. However, this theory does not help much in discussions of syllable division.

### **4.3.2.2 Chest Pulse Theory**

This theory provides a definition of the syllable from the scope of muscular activities and lung movements in the process of speech. It has been shown throughout experiments that the number of chest pulses, accompanied by increase of air pressure can help identify the number of syllables produced (Gimson, 1980: 56), thus allowing to associate the number of syllables with the number of chest pulses. This approach, however, is not

valid in such cases as when two vowels occur one after the other, for example in words like *seing* /'si:ɪŋ/ or *playing* /'pleɪɪŋ/ the second chest pulse might be almost irrelevant and thus lead to an erroneous conclusion that such English words consist of one syllable only.

### 4.3.2.3 Sonorance Theory

Another approach that is worth noting is sonority theory. According to this theory pulses of pulmonic air stream in speech “*correspond to peaks in sonority*” (Giegerich, 1992: 132). The sonority of a speech sound is discussed as “*its relative loudness compared to other sounds*”(Giegerich,1992: 132) and each syllable corresponds to a peak in the flow rate of pulmonic air. Thus, we can describe nuclear elements, or syllabic segments as more sonorous than marginal, or non-syllabic elements.

Speech sounds can be classified according to their intrinsic sonority in a sonority scale. The sonority scale for English is given below . Voiceless segments are less sonorous than voiced ones and sonorants are more sonorous than obstruents ; vowels have more sonority than consonants, as open vowels are more sonorous than close vowels. As an example, The disyllabic

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word *painting* /'peɪntɪŋ/ has been modeled onto the sonority scale for a better illustration.

↑	vowels		✓				
<b>more sonorous</b>	approximants						
	nasals			✓			✓
<b>less sonorous</b>	fricatives						
	affricates						
↓	plosives	✓			✓		
		p	eɪ	n	t	ɪ	N
		→ <i>linear sequence of phonemes</i> →					

**Table4.1** Sonority Scale for segments, consonants and vowels

As it can be seen from the chart, there are two peaks of sonority in the phoneme string /p-eɪ-n-t-ɪ-ŋ/, namely the vowels /eɪ ɪ/. This is to indicate that the number of syllables is 2 as well. The sonority scale, like all the approaches outlined above, is of little help when it comes to delimiting separate syllables, however. The above stated approaches form the basis of any phonological course targeting the suprasegment of stress. The learners need to identify this complex element which is made up of marginal and nuclear elements, in order to be able to place the stress.

### 4.3.3 Planning Phonology vs Reactions

As part of the classroom practices, teachers generally have the tendency to perform their teaching as a reaction to the pupils' errors. For example, during the learner's performance, they may intervene to correct mistakes pertaining to the grammatical and lexical difficulties that arise during the unfolding of the lesson. Sometimes these interventions can relate to pronunciation features. The necessity of such remedial interventions is unquestionably a must for the sake of complete analysis of the language taught. However, what is abnormal in this respect is that when it comes to lesson planning, teachers tend to be more concerned with grammar and vocabulary than with the pronunciation issue. Though it appears in the official syllabus, it is the last thing to remember in lesson planning. Yet phonology as a skill focus should take its share in the planning of a lesson because this feature of pronunciation is necessary to language analysis and contributes to the development of the communicative skills.

Any analysis which discards the phonological aspects is incomplete and unfounded, and a lesson which focuses only on the structure and lexis should include pronunciation elements in

order to allow the learners to invest this feature to reach intelligibility in their communication.

While planning a lesson, teachers ought to anticipate the phonological problems their learners will probably encounter, and plan their lessons accordingly in order to provide a complete practice of language for their learners . Complete and accurate lesson planning, then should include these criteria of anticipating the learning problems and appropriate remedial interventions.

### **4.3.3.1 Kinds of Phonology Lessons.**

According to Kelly ( 2000), there are three kinds of phonological lessons. These can be considered in teaching pronunciation, and include integrated, remedial, and practice lessons.

#### **A) Integrated Lesson**

It is a type of lesson in which pronunciation with its different features constitute an integral component of the language analysis and the planning phase. Teachers should include these two elements in their pre-course preparation and have them reflected in their presentations and classroom practices. The

phonological aspect, then should be integrated without being segregated with other aspects for classroom presentation.

### **B) Remedial Lesson**

Remedial lesson refers to the type of lessons in which teachers deal with the problems of pronunciation straight at the time of their appearance for a better achievement of classroom tasks. Such lessons are also referred to as reaction lessons since teachers give reactions to the pronunciation errors at the time when they happen.

### **C) Practice Lessons**

The third kind of sample lessons are those in which the teachers set a phonological issue apart and teach it as a segregated feature with its own aims and strategies. Breaking the issue of the phonological stress down into teaching component parts of syllable, stress shift, primary stress, secondary stress can serve as a good example of practice lessons.

In the Algerian context the kind of practice and integrated lessons, as it has been demonstrated in previous chapters , are observable but the trouble is that they are dealt with just in a superficial way, let alone the time benchmark that is very low and doesn't seem to foster this aspect of pronunciation.

### **D) Systematic Representation of Phonology.**

Devoting more space and tasks in the textbook to phonological representation of the language is of paramount importance to the enhancement of learning phonology. This would be more relevant and beneficial if the learner is continuously exposed to direct and indirect learning of phonology. By direct learning, the teaching of phonology and particularly stress, should take the quality of being systematically taught to the learners throughout specific and frequent phonological course content in the textbook. Learners, for example will be more familiarized with the issue as they are more exposed to the issue of phonology. Indirect teaching of stress pattern implies the use of formative assessment as a means to enhance the learning of the phonological stress, and improve the use of stress in the learners' utterances. To do so, teachers may resort to the integration of this pronunciation skill among other language skills such as reading and listening. This would allow more exposure and familiarity of the learner with the issue of phonology, which may help in the acquisition of the pronunciation skill.

A systematic representation of phonology also implies introducing some remedies in term of time allotment. Time

allotted to the teaching of phonology, mainly the phonological stress, proved to be irrelevant to the context of teaching in which the phonology-based skill of communication lies at the heart of the current teaching methodology of CBA. While a lot of emphasis is recommended on the oral aspect of learning, there are too few opportunities for the phonological skill among the other conventional skills like reading and listening. This lack of emphasis which proves the extent to which this dexterity is being neglected, makes it incumbent more than any time before to reconsider and revisit the time benchmark devoted to the teaching of phonology in order to fit the salience of the phonological stress to the communicative expectations of the current teaching methodology and interactive objectives.

### **4.3.3.2 Tasks and Techniques**

A successful pronunciation may require the learners to implement a number of techniques that the teacher can adopt in his teaching of pronunciation skill, and that learners may find practical and motivating. Such techniques may include the following:



### A) Drilling and Imitation

In term of practice lesson, by practitioners have suggested a number of techniques that can foster different aspects of pronunciation. This technique can be divided into three further steps : imitation, explanation, and practice.

*Imitation* It is regarded as the primary step towards pronunciation perfection. Teachers should get their pupils to imitate ( Intuitive- Imitative Approach) This is an opportunity for them to copy their teacher's model of pronunciation. Yet, other samples may be used like listening to native speakers' pronunciation and imitating native patterns of pronunciation. Teachers should expose one specific issue at a time. This will help the learner concentrate on one single aspect and find it easy to improve it. However, if the focus is on different pronunciation issues at a time, learners will have the tendency to be confused.

*Explanation:* right after imitation and drilling of the issue of phonology, teachers can explain to their learners how sounds are biologically operating. For instance, teachers can display the organs of speech and how these can be articulated in order to produce a given aspect of pronunciation. Sometimes teachers can refer to L1to explain because the contrastive reference can

## CHAPTER FOUR : Suggestions and Recommendations

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be motivating to pupils and bring some assistance in understanding features of sounds. According to Fries(1952),and Crystal(2003) through contrastive analysis of two different languages, teachers can anticipate the difficulties of pronunciation encountered by their learners.

*Practice* : The third step after imitation and explanation is the practice of the sound pattern. Minimal pairs, for example, are examples of sound patterns that can be used in drilling. Minimal pairs in which two words are different in only one sound like tick – sick, shop – cop, mat- cat, and so forth are good examples of the sounds to be highlighted to be taught to learners. Within the same context tongue twisters can also be a good technique to teach the difference of phonemes or sounds.

### **B) Motivation and Exposure**

Research has demonstrated that when learners have a personal goal or a professional motive for learning English, this is likely to influence them to learn phonology in order to acquire a native-like pronunciation (Gardner&Reyes, 2004). In this respect, it would make more sense to make reference to personal motivation(Fishman1977) rather than instrumental motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Personal motivation is likely to urge the learner to take the initiative by himself to respond to

his needs. Teachers can use a variety of strategies to arouse the learners' innate desires for the course of phonology. Teachers, for instance, can spark the learners' interest in a pronunciation class by highlighting the importance of stress for the speaker's intelligibility. Such perceptions held by the learners are likely to urge them to take responsibility of their own learning, and willingly engage in the classroom phonological practices.

**4.4 Formative Feedback** One of the most crucial roles of the teacher is to provide feedback to the learners. This feedback lies at the heart of assessment because it has a significant impact on the learner's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It is a key feature to successful learning process and the teacher learner partnership, and also aims to improve the learners opportunities for learning. Opportunities for teachers to give formative feedback to learners arise from activities and interventions, including informal interactions, classroom situations, formative assessment activities, group work, pair work, project-based work, and so forth. These activities provide opportunities for formative feedback, and can contribute to the learner's formative feedback and learning. Feedback, then, does not have a single source, like teachers but it can also come from peers

## CHAPTER FOUR : Suggestions and Recommendations

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and friends. This assessment is also characterized by day- to-day use of evidence by the teacher to guide the learner's learning, and everyday practice must be based on learning theories of how pupils learn.

According to Greenstein ( 2010), there are three essential principles of formative assessment on the basis of the data gathered from different sources :

### 1. Formative assessment is learner focused.

Formative assessment should also be learner- centered, that is, the focus should not be on how teachers teach, but on how learners receive instruction and how well they understand it. Teachers gather information about the learners' progress and learning needs, and invest them in instructional adjustments. Teachers must show their learners how to self assess in order to improve their learning. To sum up, this kind of assessment provides assistance to teachers in terms of :

- Identifying the learners' needs and adapt their instruction to these needs.
- Observing the learners' achievements.
- Devising motivating tasks for their learners.

## CHAPTER FOUR : Suggestions and Recommendations

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- Directing their learners towards self assessment.
- Encouraging learners to seize learning opportunities.

### 2. Formative assessment informs instruction.

Teachers assess their learners' progress in order to evaluate their classroom instruction. Assessment outcomes are reflected on by both the teacher and the learner. Formative assessment provides information for the teacher to develop his teaching strategies and learners' strategies. Formative assessment fulfills the following functions :

- It keeps learning, instruction, assessment in line.
- Entails careful and purpose-related teaching and learning strategies.
- It makes assessment an integral part of instruction.
- It shapes teachers' decisions in classroom instruction.

### 3. Formative assessment is outcome based

Formative assessment insists on achievement of goals rather than checking if the objective of instruction was met or not. In doing so, teachers and learners must have a clear idea about the learning goals. Teachers know what they are to teach and pupils know what they are to learn. Teachers

## CHAPTER FOUR : Suggestions and Recommendations

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should continuously provide feedback to learners about progress, pointing out areas to be improved . They should also guide learners to get to their goals. The learners' work should be assessed on the basis of the quality and not on the learners' attitude. To sum up Formative assessment

- Focuses on learning outcomes.
- Makes lesson aims understood to pupils
- Create a relation between what learners know and the planned objectives.
- It generates accurate data about the learners' performance.

Teachers and learners should be regarded within a rapport of partnership where learners seize every opportunity to interact with their teachers. Learners should be let gradually responsible for their learning, starting from the teacher's modeling with the highest degree of responsibility where the teacher conveys the purpose of the language outcome to the learner (*focus lesson*) , to a shared responsibility between the teacher and the learner where the teacher facilitates understanding (*guided instruction*),to peer learning where the learner works collaboratively with his peers to consolidate the knowledge

## CHAPTER FOUR : Suggestions and Recommendations

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(*group work*), and finally to *independent learning* where the learner assesses his learning by himself . As stated in the first chapter, since learning occurs through intentional interactions (Vigotsky's Zones of Proximal Development), this modal of Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework can provide an ideal framework to fit the teaching and assessing mechanisms.

### 4.5 Conclusion

Chapter four displayed a number of recommendations relating to the way the phonological issue could be approached in terms of teaching and assessing. Teachers have been recommended to adopt a set of measures in order to better cope with the teaching and assessment of this aspect of pronunciation teaching. Other recommendations extended to the improvement of the 3AS textbook in terms of a systematic representation of the phonological content, and the time benchmark that ought to be revisited.

Recommendations included the implementation of classroom techniques that can be invested in the teaching and assessment of the phonological stress such as drilling, explanation, and continuous practice.

Other suggestions were made to help teachers acquire a good grounding in phonology, such as knowledge of some phonological approaches that can sustain teachers in achieving better results with their learners. Teachers could also engage into professional development, the kind of training in which teachers engage willingly into a process of development whereby they identify their needs and adopt some strategies



## **CHAPTER FOUR : Suggestions and Recommendations**

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to become reflective teachers. Such strategies include peer coaching, mentoring, study groups, and portfolios. Such strategies are beneficial to both teachers and their pupils. In addition to these actions, teachers were advised to integrate the pronunciation issue on equal basis with other language skills in lesson planning. Careful planning of this issue is likely to add more value to the teaching and learning of pronunciation.

Another mechanism recommended was the adoption of a formative assessment through which teachers can continuously provide feed back for their learners, an assessment which is based on feed-up, feed-back, feed-forward . This assessment could be sustained by the instructional model of gradual release of responsibility, wherein the learners take self assessment and peer assessment as a scaffold to foster their learning .

These instructional strategies include every aspect of language instruction, and all may contribute to the achievement of mechanisms that are integral to a successful teaching-learning process.

Despite the endeavour devoted to the fulfilment of this research work, this dissertation remains a humble initiative to approach the phonological issue in the current 3AS secondary

## **CHAPTER FOUR : Suggestions and Recommendations**

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school EFL classrooms, and a lot of work needs to be done to better address this issue and improve the area for a successful language teaching and learning.



# **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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### GENERAL CONCLUSION

Teaching the phonological stress, like other aspects of pronunciation is likely to suffer segregation from other learning skills. Teachers have generally the tendency to lay more emphasis on primary skills as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and neglect the teaching of phonology, or at best scarcely teach it. From fear of being confused and bewildered, teachers try to avoid approaching this aspect of pronunciation because they believe that the oral dimension of stress is far from being tested and has no value mainly in high stakes exams. Teachers' training in this area is also likely to be deficient because teachers have never reported having received a training in phonology. Learners have also reported that pronunciation classes were rather boring and useless as these are areas in which they are not tested . Such bottom-up, top-down perceptions represent a real obstacle to the acquisition of pronunciation skill .

The secondary school EFL classrooms in Algeria are no exception to this attitude. Teachers and learners' misconceptions about the phonological course are to bring about pernicious effects on pronunciation teaching. In order to probe into this

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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problematic, the researcher conducted a study so as to shed light on reasons of such misconceptions and bring highlighting answers to how these phonological elements ought to be taught and assessed . To this effect, a case study research was conducted in Ibn Saad secondary school, in the municipality of Tlemcen. A research question was formulated with corresponding sub questions with their hypotheses respectively to answer the following research question : Why are phonological courses like stress doomed to failure ?

This question was further developed throughout three sub questions wondering about the kind of knowledge have acquired about phonological stress; whether this pronunciation dexterity is approached on equal basis as other skills; and how teachers and pupils conceive of assessment of phonology stress.

These questions will be approached through the following hypotheses.

1. The lack of phonological knowledge in the teachers' repertoire generated imperfections in teaching phonology

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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2. The time benchmark pertaining to phonology lies below the required standard.
3. Stress is taught to the exam rather than to the skill

To carry out the investigation, two questionnaires for teachers and pupils were administered, and an interview with the general inspector of English was arranged to gather the necessary data. These were qualitatively and quantitatively assessed, and an additional statistical support was added to support the data gathered. For the sampling strategy participants were selected on the basis of probability random sampling technique. The selection of participants was based on probability and all sample population had the same chance of being selected, and above all random samples are more representative than non-random samples.

After the data had been gathered, a detailed analysis was carried out, corroborated by some statistics about the occurrence of the phonological issue and the degree to which learners are exposed to the issue of stress. The results revealed important data strengthened by the technique of triangulation, and which appear as follows

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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- The teachers suffered a lack of phonological knowledge.
- Classroom instructions do not really reflect the CBA philosophy
- The phonological issue was poorly taught and assessed
- The benchmark of time devoted to phonology is irrelevant

These results validated the hypotheses advanced earlier.

In order to unfold the process of the research, four chapters were elaborated.

Chapter one and chapter two dealt with the literature review which pertains to the area of assessment and phonology besides situational analysis of the Algerian secondary school which depicted the teaching methodology in post independent Algeria with a special focus on the phonological issue in the third year secondary school classes. These chapters were essential to the research work because they addressed the topic of investigation.

Chapter three tackled a detailed research analysis whose main results were mentioned above.

Finally the fourth and the last chapter concluded the research by suggesting that the teaching and the assessment of the phonological issue in the Algerian secondary school needed to be revisited, and consequently remedial proposals were

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

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forwarded towards a set of mechanisms in which varied strands of formative assessment have to be braided to enhance this aspect of teaching and learning, a mechanism which harmonizes the tunes of different classroom variables to achieve a successful language learning.





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# **Appendices**

## Appendix A : Pupils' Questionnaire

Dear pupils,

You are kindly asked to answer the following questionnaire designed to collect information about your learning of 'stress' and your needs concerning the skill of communication. This is also an opportunity to express your viewpoint about the English subject .

Age : .....

Gender :        Male                       Female  

### 1. How long have you been learning English ?

7 years       8years       9years       More  

### 2. Do you like learning English ?

Yes               No  

#### A. You like learning English because

- a) it is easy
- b) it is a necessity for today's communication
- c) it counts for the BAC exam
- d) it is used to complete studies at university
- e) it is an international language

#### B. You don't like learning English because

- a) it is difficult to learn
- b) it is not important
- c) it is badly taught

## Appendices

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**3. Which language do you use to communicate in an English session ?**

Arabic  English  French

**4. How often do you study pronunciation ?**

Never  rarely  often  always

**5. Which aspect of pronunciation do you know better ?**

Syllable  intonation  stress  none

**6. Do you think stress is necessary to learn pronunciation ?**

Yes  No

**7. Why do you learn stress ?**

a) because it is part of the programme

b) because it is necessary to develop the communicative skill

c) because it is part of the BAC exam

d) because it helps better master the pronunciation of English

**8. Do you like to assess your learning of stress ?**

Yes  No

**9. How do you like to be assessed ?**

a) through written tests

b) through oral tests

c) by doing homework

d) through continuous classroom practice

**10. Self assessment develops your English language learning**

Yes  No

**Thank you for your help.**

## Appendix B : Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear Teachers ,

I would be most grateful if you could fill in this questionnaire intended to collect information about the teaching and assessment of 'stress' in the current Algerian EFL classrooms . It aims to probe into the teachers' behaviour ,attitude and knowledge of the phonological aspect of the language , and how these affect their teaching and assessment of stress .

Please tick in the appropriate box at your convenience

### A) *Teaching*

**1.How long have you been a teacher of English ?**

years

**2 . Have you received any special training in teaching phonology ?**

Yes

No

**3.Teaching 'stress' to pupils is** (please put a tick )

Useful ..... : ..... : ..... : ..... : ..... : ..... : ..... useless

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

**4. How often does the course of stress appear in the course unit ?**

Never  Scarcely  Often  Always

**5. Stress is taught to prepare pupils for high stakes exams( BAC).**

strongly agree  agree  neutral  disagree   
strongly disagree

**6. Do your pupils respond positively to the teaching of stress ?**

Yes

No

## Appendices

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### 7. The pupils basic knowlege of stress is :

- a) lacking     b) insufficient     c) good

### 8.How good is your knowledge of phonological stress ?

- Limited     sufficient     good     expert

### 9. identifying a syllable requires to know :

- a) Pulse theory   
b) Prominence theory   
c) notion of ‘ diaphragm’   
d) notion of ‘ peak’   
e) no theory

### 10. Which of the variables below need to operate to teach stress ?

- a) loudness of the sound unit.   
b) length of the sound unit.   
c) difference in quality .   
d) pitch.   
e) more clarity of articulation.   
f) facial movements .   
g) sound articulation.   
h) none of the above.

### ***B) Assessment***

**11. Do you assess the learning of stress ?**

Yes  No

**12. How often do you assess the stress ?**

Never  rarely  often  always

**13. When assessing stress , teachers target**

a) high stakes exam.

b) the skill of oral proficiency.

**14. Which form of assessment do you endorse in teaching stress ?**

a) formal assessment

b) informal assessment

c) diagnostic assessment

d) self assessment

e) peer assessment

**15. Do you invest the assessment results in teaching phonology ?**

Yes  No

Thank you very much for your help

### Appendix C :The Inspector's Interview

#### Rubric A : The phonological profile

1.How often do you organize seminars ?

Rarely  sometimes always

2.What are the most important aspects of teaching that you target in seminars ?

3. Have you ever scheduled the teaching of pronunciation in seminars or study days ? yes no

4. What is the frequency of teaching pronunciation to pupils ?

Scarcely  often  always

5.How important is stress to pronunciation ?

Useful  useless

6.Do teachers manage teaching phonology stress or do they fail ?

7.What is stress taught to ?

exam scores pronunciation skill

8.Do EFL classroom instruction and practices reflect the principles of the CBA ?



## Appendices

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### **RUBRIC B** : Phonological knowledge

9. How do you qualify the teachers' knowledge of stress ?
10. What specific approaches do they need to teach stress ?
11. Do you think pupils are ready to learn stress ? why ?

### **RUBRIC C** : Assessment

12. How do teachers conceive of assessment ?
13. Do teachers assess pronunciation/stress ?
14. Is phonology assessed to exams or to the skill ?
15. What alternative assessment do you recommend to assess the phonological stress ?

## ص لختسم

دفل حبصا س يردن ايج ولونفلا و عصاخ رينلا يف عطاقم غللا قيزيلجنلا ١١ ءلاسم فكئاش قيسلاب ريشكل نم ءذناسلا

قايسلان بدلان ولضفي يدافت امس يردن ارظن قنلخلل قنبلسلا يئلا امنولمحي لوح اده عوضوملا و اقالطرا نم هذه قركفلا  
ءاج اده ثحبلا نم لجا فوقا ولا ءارو بابسا مده قنلخلا و جاتنسلا قنلا س يردن و مپونف رينلا و يئ اده  
ي رجا ثحب لوح ذيملا ماسقالا قنوناثلا قنناهنلا نبا دعص ناسم لئب و يذلا لمعتسا هين ناييسا ءذناسلا و

تؤولا س يردنل قنباقم عم شنفم ءداملا و دئا بضا اده ثحبلا نع ديكات تايضرفلا يتلا لوف مدعب رفون ذانسلا يلع قنلخلا  
ميدف تاح ارتقا بصت يف قنرعملا قمزلا س يردنل مده قنصاخلا قنوصلا و كلذك مدعل ءاطعا ءصحلا قنرورضلا نم  
ايج ولونفلا يئلا مبي اهنؤلك ضرغل ناحتمل ١١ لادب نم قراهملا قنملا كلا و اهدعب م  
تايلا س يردنلا و مپونفلا يلع ءاوسلا

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### ABSTRACT

Teaching and assessing the suprasegmental phonology has become a thorny issue as it tends to be neglected by many secondary school teachers. To this effect, a research case study was carried out to investigate the reasons behind these misconceptions. A triangulation technique was adopted grouping three types of informants, teachers, pupils, and the general inspector of English. The research was qualitatively and quantitatively oriented. The hypotheses were positively verified , to demonstrate that the lack of teachers' phonological knowledge, the irrelevance of the teaching time benchmark, and teaching phonology to the exams, are factors at the heart of the problematic. The research rounded off by suggestions about possible mechanisms to adopt in teaching and assessing the issue.

**Key words : teaching – assessing- phonology- case study - triangulation**

### Résumé

L' enseignement et l'évaluation de phonologie constitue un vrai défi pour les enseignants du cycle secondaire, puisque la majorité d'entre eux préfèrent l'éviter dans leurs classes. C'est ainsi que la présente étude s'inspire de cette problématique pour apporter des réponses qui expliquent les raisons de ce mécontentement de l'enseignant de cet aspect de langue. A cet effet, l'analyse et triangulation des données a partir des questionnaires de professeurs et élèves, ainsi qu'une interview avec l'inspecteur général d'Anglais, ont donné des résultats révélant que les professeurs sont soumis à de fausses idées concernant la phonologie, et que c'est principalement le manque de connaissances à cet égard, le volume horaire pour son enseignement, ainsi que l'objectif détourné vers l'examen, sont à l'origine de cet échec. C'est dans ce sens que des suggestions ont été présentes pour mieux cerner cet aspect d'enseignement dans un cadre d'évaluation formative.

**Mots clés : évaluation – phonologie- triangulation- connaissance**

## SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

### **Title :**

*Mechanisms of Assessment in Teaching  
Suprasegmental Phonology to 3rd year Pupils of  
Ibn Saad Secondary School : Case of Stress*

### Introduction

The lack of pertinent and effective teaching and assessing mechanisms, and misconceptions of the phonological aspect of the English language have significantly affected the learnability of the sound system of the English language in the Algerian EFL classrooms and had bad repercussions on the acquisition of the pronunciation skill. The choice of the topic stems from the fact that the importance of teaching of the phonological stress, as an important aspect of pronunciation, is almost not realized, as this aspect is virtually ignored by most teachers. There is little evidence that the majority of them are familiar with such aspect of pronunciation and are therefore unable to help their pupils to acquire satisfactory pronunciation skills. The teaching of different conventional skills such as listening, reading and writing, is so engrained in the teachers' teaching methodology that they give little attention to the teaching of the phonological stress or any other aspect of phonology. Recent classroom-based research has revealed that the analysis of the structural language

which includes mostly grammar and vocabulary takes the lion's share in EFL language instruction. Such focus can also characterize the content of the teacher's lesson planning that displays a structure oriented view of teachers. This may appear logical since the curriculum content puts a considerable emphasis on the teaching of the accuracy of the language rather than fluency. This is probably due to the fact that such curriculum is exam oriented since learners are supposed to sit for a high stake exam in the Algerian schools. The time benchmark devoted to the teaching of this pronunciation aspect is also an important factor which suggests that phonology instruction is nearly neglected. Devoting two hours and a half yearly to teach a crucial factor to pronunciation and communication skills, is really paradoxical to the tenets of any teaching method targeting the competency of interaction as is the case for the current Competency Based Approach. These factors, besides others, constitute the core issue of investigation of the present research work, in order to bring explanation to the reasons behind the failure of teaching and assessing this suprasegmental feature of stress to the pupils of the secondary school.

## **Research Objectives**

In order to probe into this problematic, the researcher conducted a study so as to shed light on reasons of such misconceptions and bring highlighting answers to how the phonological elements ought to be taught and assessed . the factors that generally led to the teachers' failure in teaching the phonological stress to secondary school pupils, and how these were often coupled with the teachers' cognitive stance and inappropriate perceptions. It also seeks to demonstrate how the fossilized traditional assessment procedures have significantly contributed to this failure, and highlight some assessment mechanisms that can be recommended in the teaching of suprasegmental phonology.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The focus of the present work concerns the phonological issue. This research attempts to shed light on the ways phonology is perceived by teachers in terms of teaching and assessment in order to explain the failure in teaching the suprasegment of stress, before making some suggestions regarding mechanisms which ought to be adopted to teach and assess the phonological stress to secondary EFL learners. In attending to this main

objective, A research question was formulated with corresponding sub questions and their hypotheses respectively to answer the following research guiding question :

Why is the phonological course, namely the course of stress, in the third year secondary classrooms, doomed to failure ?

This question is divided into three sub questions :

1. What kind of knowledge do teachers hold about the phonological stress ?
2. Are there equal opportunities for the integration of the phonological dexterity as other language skills ?
3. What perceptions do teachers and pupils hold about assessment of stress ?

To investigate these questions, the researcher forwarded the following hypotheses :

1. The lack of phonological knowledge in the teachers' repertoire generated imperfections in teaching phonology
2. The time benchmark pertaining to phonology lies below the required standard.
3. Stress is taught to the exam rather than to the skill

The researcher tried through an exploratory case study to explore, understand the problem, and bring solutions and ideas on how to improve this issue ; in other words, this case study seeks to answer the question 'what'is the problem and'how' it can be solved.

## **Methodology**

To have an in-depth understanding , a case study based research was conducted in Ibn Saad secondary school, in the municipality of Tlemcen. To carry out the investigation, two questionnaires for teachers and pupils were administered, and an interview with the general inspector of English was arranged to gather the necessary data. These were qualitatively and quantitatively assessed, and an additional statistical support was added to sustain the data gathered. For the sampling strategy participants were selected on the basis of probability random sampling technique. The selection of participants was based on probability, and all sample population had the same chance of being selected, for all random samples are more representative than non-random samples. The sample population included pupils who have been studying English as a foreign language for at least six years; Twenty nine (29) pupils ( 7males and 22females), most of them were aged between 17 and 20 years old. These pupils were regularly enrolled during the academic year 2015-2016 in Ibn Saad secondary school located on the outskirts of the municipality of Tlemcen in the west of Algeria.

The second type of informants involved thirteen secondary school teachers (males and females) whose teaching experience ranged between ten and twenty years. These teachers were randomly chosen during a seminar that gathered a large number of teachers of English from different secondary schools across the municipality of Tlemcen. They were supposed to be holders of 'Licence' degree from Algerian universities, and were actually in charge of teaching the three secondary school levels of 1AS, 2AS, and 3AS all streams pupils.

These teachers were directly involved in the process of teaching the phonological issue, and in charge of prepping their learners for the baccalaureate exam, needless to recall, these teachers are also supposed to be aware of teaching the dimension of sound in English language course instruction under the umbrella of Competency Based Approach.

For the sake of a triangulation technique, the researcher organized an interview with the general inspector of English in order to check the different sources of the teachers' misconceptions of the phonological issue, and to view the phenomenon from different angles.



The triangulation technique was corroborated by some statistics inferred from the teaching occurrence of the phonological issue amid other aspects of classroom instruction.

### **Summary of the Main Results**

After the data had been gathered, a detailed analysis was carried out, corroborated by some statistics about the occurrence of the phonological issue and the degree to which learners were exposed to the issue of stress. The results revealed important data strengthened by the technique of triangulation, and which appear as follows:

- The teachers suffered a lack of phonological knowledge.
- Teachers lacked training in the teaching of suprasegmentals.
- Classroom instructions did not really reflect the CBA philosophy
- The phonological issue was poorly taught and assessed
- The benchmark of time devoted to phonology is irrelevant

These results validated the hypotheses advanced earlier.

In order to unfold the process of the research, four chapters were elaborated.

Chapter one and chapter two dealt with the literature review which pertains to the area of assessment and phonology besides situational analysis of the Algerian secondary school which depicted the teaching methodology in post independent Algeria with a special focus on the phonological issue in the third year secondary school classes. These chapters were essential to the research work because they addressed the topic of investigation.

Chapter three tackled a detailed research analysis whose main results were mentioned above.

Finally the fourth and the last chapter concluded the research by suggesting that the teaching and the assessment of the phonological issue in the Algerian secondary school needed to be revisited, and consequently remedial proposals were forwarded towards a set of mechanisms in which varied strands of formative assessment have to be braided to enhance this aspect of teaching and learning, a mechanism which harmonizes the tunes of different classroom variables to achieve a successful language learning.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude the work, a number of recommendations relating to the way the phonological issue could be approached in terms of teaching and assessing. Teachers were recommended to adopt a set of measures in order to better cope with the teaching and assessment of this aspect of pronunciation teaching. Teachers could acquire a good grounding in phonology, and engage in professional development. Other recommendations extended to the improvement of the 3AS textbook in terms of a systematic representation of the phonological content, and the time benchmark that ought to be revisited the adoption of a formative assessment through which teachers can continuously provide feedback for their learners, an assessment which is based on feed-up, feedback, feed-forward. This assessment could be sustained by the instructional model of gradual release of responsibility, wherein the learners take self assessment and peer assessment as a scaffold to foster their learning.

