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**The Competency-Based Approach in the
Algerian Secondary School**
**Case Study: Third year pupils at Lac Karrar
secondary school in Remchi**

*Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master in Language Sciences*

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Dedications

A special dedication to the most cherished souls in my life, my mother and father. I know it was not easy at all to raise me but hopefully, I will make you proud.

To my dearest brothers Younes and Hamza and my lovely sisters Sarah and Khaoula who helped and supported me in every step through this work.

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Abstract

Many nations have started reforming their educational institutions to keep up with the expectations and challenges of a more globally interconnected world. The Competency-Based Approach (CBA) has recently been introduced in Algeria in an effort to improve educational quality and encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning by being independent and at the center of the teaching-learning process.

After thirteen years since The Competency-Based Approach's adoption, this work is a tentative analysis to pinpoint a number of potential roadblocks and restrictions that prevented the CBA from being properly implemented in the Algerian High School. In order to achieve this, a case study that relied on a variety of sources and research techniques for data collecting was carried out at LAC KERRAR high school in the Wilaya of Tlemcen: (Remchi). 175 SE3 students and 15 English teachers were given questionnaires.

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed on the data gathered from the aforementioned research tools. The analysis of data showed that neither students nor teachers were prepared to modify their instructional strategies to meet the guiding principles and goals of competency-based education. This research underlines that in order to accomplish the goals of the Algerian educational reform, it is important to thoroughly understand the theoretical and practical foundations of the CBA.

Table of Contents

Dedications	i
Acknowledgments	ii
Abstract	iii
Key to Abbreviations & Acronyms	vi
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	viii
General Introduction	1
Chapter one: Literature Review	5
1.1 Introduction	6
1.2 History of the Competency-based Approach	6
1.3 Definitions	7
1.3.1 What is Competency-based Approach ?	7
1.3.2 Competence or Competency	7
1.4 Knowledge Transfer	8
1.5 Characteristics of the Competency-based Approach	8
1.5.1 Action-Oriented Approach	9
1.5.2 Problem-Solving approach:	9
1.5.3 Social Constructivist Approach	9
1.5.4 Cognitive Approach:	9
1.6 Roles in the Competency-Based Approach	9
1.6.1 Roles of the Teacher	10
1.6.2 Roles of the Learner	10

1.7	The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	11
1.8	Assessments	11
1.9	The competency-based language teaching classroom	12
1.10	Advantages and disadvantages:	14
1.11	Conclusion	15
Chapter II: Research Methodology		17
2.1.	Introduction	17
2.2.	Research Design	17
2.3.	Research Approach:	17
2.4.	Sample Population	18
2.4.1.	Pupils' Profile	18
2.4.2.	Teachers' Profile	18
2.5.	Data Collection	19
2.5.1.	Questionnaires	19
2.5.1.1.	Piloting the questionnaire	19
2.5.1.2.	Description of the Questionnaire :	19
2.5.1.3.	Analysis and Interpretation	20
2.5.2.	Interview	26
2.5.2.1.	Description	26
2.5.2.2.	Analysis and interpretation	27
2.6.	Discussion of the Main Findings	29
2.7.	Recommendations	29
2.8.	Conclusion	31
General Conclusion		31
Bibliography		40

Key to Abbreviations & Acronyms

%	Percentage
CBA	Competency-Based Approach
CBE	competency-based education
KT	Knowledge Transfer
MNE	Ministry of National Education
CBLT	competency-based language teaching
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
PCs	Personal Computers

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Students' Gender

Figure 1.2. Students' Age

Figure 1.3. Learners' motivation to learn English

Figure 1.4. Learners' Levels at English

Figure 1.5. Difficulties when learning English

Figure 1.6. Teachers' behaviors according to learners

Figure 1.7. Learners' attitudes towards teachers' performance

Figure 1.8. Activities' assignment

Figure 1.9. Time allotment

Figure 1.10. Project work knowledge transfer

Figure 1.11. The use of portfolios

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Traditional Versus Competency-Based Grading Style

Table 1.2: the Competency-Based Language Teaching Class work.

General Introduction

The improvement of the educational system is a top concern for all responsible authorities because it is the means by which future leaders may shape their people. In order to improve the efficiency and efficacy of education, Algeria has implemented a number of measures since 1962. Algeria has implemented a new educational reform based on structural functionalist presumptions that concentrate on specific issues/problems in order to enhance the quality of teaching-learning. Algeria is following in the footsteps of many aspirational nations throughout the world. Such conviction developed once it became clear that the various methods and strategies used by the Ministry of National Education were unable to address the new demands and challenges posed by globalization, and cutting-edge technology that the world is experiencing. Due to these circumstances, it became logical for countries to update and modernize their educational institutions in order to keep up with the times.

Due to these factors, Algeria implemented a modern educational reform in 2001 that affected practically all levels associated with this sector, including primary, fundamental, secondary, and even university education. We are interested in secondary education in this work.

In Algeria, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was thus quickly superseded by the Audio-lingual Method (ALM) once the country ended its solely French system in the 1970s. However, the behaviorist method, which is based on the stimulus-response principle and treats the student as a machine that reacts to the teacher's stimuli in order to learn, has a glaring shortcoming when it comes to producing communicatively fluent learners. In response to calls for change, the Communicative Approach (CA) made way for the "teaching with objectives method" in the 1980s. However, little was done to get Algerian schools ready for this teaching approach, especially in terms of classroom density and teaching resources/tools, hence it was deemed a complete failure.

Developing the learner's linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic proficiency involves placing a strong emphasis on language usage rather than teaching or studying the language system in isolation. In order to create effective FL learners who can communicate, understand, and be understood while interacting with native/native-like speakers, or abroad, it is necessary to shift from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness. Practically speaking, communicative competence as a new technique has

a wide scope because all instructional methods stop at the level of language knowledge mastery.

The statement of the Problem

The new change was first implemented more than ten years ago. However, the majority of teachers continue to have difficulty aligning their instructional strategies with the goals and tenets of the new strategy. It is now clear that requiring change alone will not be enough to properly enhance both student and teacher progress/development. The opposition mindset is predicted since it is difficult for teachers to embrace change as it is designed to happen without considering their expertise or professional possibilities.

As a result, the current research illuminates the challenges and limitations that, despite 13 years of persistent efforts, prohibit the implementation of CBA at the Algerian High School in connection with the teaching and learning of English. It also examines the barriers to achieving the new competences (interactive, interpretative, and productive) set forth in this approach, outlined by the syllabus creators, and announced by the Ministry of National Education.

The current work aims on the one hand at identifying the barriers and constraints that lead to failure in both students and teachers and revolve around three closely related constituents, namely the teachers' training, the students' attitudes and motivation toward FL learning, and the devised teaching materials. However, this study seeks to demonstrate the close relationship between these three didactic poles and, as a result, their influences on the implementation of the Competency Based approach.

After identifying the key challenges that instructors and students must overcome in order to successfully implement CBA principles in the classroom, this research is conducted. To accomplish this, we have developed the following questions, which we will attempt to address in this piece of work:

- a- What are the obstacles and constraints that hinder teachers to correctly implement the C.B.A and then cause a comeback to traditional practices?
- b- How do learners' motivation and attitudes affect EFL learning and thus the teachers' way of teaching?
- c- Do CBA principles and objectives go hand in hand with the designed teaching materials to respond to learners' interests and needs?

The researcher presented the following hypotheses as a result of the earlier queries:

H1: The theoretical and practical components of teachers' training programs for the new approach may be responsible for their inability to handle the CBA.

H2: The students have little or no incentive to study the English language since they are not interested in learning the foreign language, which in turn affects the teachers' methods of instruction.

H3: The CBA's goals and the training materials now in use are incompatible.

The organization of the research, the present research is divided into two chapters:

Chapter one deals with the literature review. This chapter intends to present the Competency-based Approach, its objectives, the targeted competencies, the teacher's and learner's roles, and the definition of some key concepts which have relation with the CBA implementation.

Chapter two includes the research methodology, the field work, the collection of data so as to answer the questions and hypotheses put beforehand. In addition, it provides analyses and interpretations to the data gathered, to come to some conclusions and suggest solutions to better the current situation that education in Algeria witnesses.

Chapter one
Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

Technology's increased access to knowledge and mobility changed the demands placed on the area of education and increased societal tolerance of diverse languages and cultures. Additionally, the level of expectations that can be justified by education in the field of social construction has been greatly increased by the need to master various positions within the society. Implementing a competency-based education in such a setting is a crucial concern in contemporary educational science.

1.2 History of the Competency-based Approach

The experimentalism school of thought and John Dewey's work in the early 1900s are the ancestors of competency-based education, or CBE. A long history of educational and learning theories' philosophical underpinnings and techniques can be found in the concept of competency. The three most significant ones are constructivism, behaviorism, and cognitive theory. Vocational education and progressive education are examples of its forebears (Flowers, 1990; Stoffle, & Pryor, 1980). As schools worldwide strive to implement their own variations of competency-based curricula, competency-based education (CBE) is rapidly gaining popularity (cf. Ash, 2012; Mulder, Eppin, & Akkermans, 2011; Nederstigt & Mulder, n.d.; Wong, 2008).

In the 1950s, educators like Benjamin Bloom expanded and popularized CBE in the United States. CBE has its foundations firmly rooted in the Behaviorist tradition. It gained popularity in the US in the 1970s due to its application in programs for vocational training. In the 1980s, the method was adopted in Europe, and by the 1990s, it was also being used to assess professional skills in Australia. Performance-based learning, criterion-referenced learning, and capabilities-driven instruction are just a few of the names CBE has gone by throughout its growth (Bowden, 2004).

CBE explicitly focuses on what learners can do rather than on what they know because there is insufficient evidence demonstrating a connection between knowledge of a subject and the capacity to use that information in context (Smith & Patterson, 1998). Focusing on measurable, observable, and objective outcomes is the primary tenet. The method calls for students to exhibit value-added abilities that are evaluated by focusing on results rather than procedure (Bowden, 2004; Guskey, 2005).

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 What is Competency-based Approach (C.B.A)?

Many attempts were made to define the term "Competency-Based Approach" when it was being reviewed. Here are a few of them, as stated by eminent professionals, academics, and researchers in the area:

For Richards & Rodgers:

The CBA movement in education is one that emphasizes the results or outputs of learning. Instead of focusing on what students are expected to learn, CBA addresses what they are expected to do. It alludes to a movement that supports outlining educational objectives in terms of exact, quantifiable descriptions of the information, abilities, and behaviors that students need to have at the conclusion of a given course of study. (2014, p. 151)

While Savage, L. claims that:

A functional approach to education known as CBA prioritizes life skills and assesses whether or not students have mastered them based on their actual performance. The US Office of Education described it as a "performance-based process" that leads to the demonstration of the mastery of fundamental and life skills required for the individual to function effectively in society. (1993, p.15)

Whereas Schnek, A. E. states that:

Instruction that is outcome-based and flexible enough to meet the changing requirements of students, teachers, and the community is known as CBA. Competencies are based on a set of outcomes that are produced from an analysis of tasks that are frequently needed of students in real-world scenarios. They describe the student's capacity to apply fundamental and other abilities. (1978, p.141)

1.3.2 Competence or Competency

It's difficult to narrow down the definitions of "competenc(e)y" because there are so many. In his renowned book LISAN AL-ARAB (1997, p. 413), Ibn Manzûr.

Competency, also known as **el-kafa'a** or **el-kifa'ya** in Arabic, refers to the equality and similarity of two things, people, etc. The capacity to do a task to perfection is, in fact,

competence at work. Additionally, there is almost any distinction between kafa'a كفاءة and kifa'ya كفاية.

For the French : Le Grand Larousse Illustré (2015, p.277) defines : La Compétence: n.f : « capacité reconnue en telle ou telle matière, et qui donne le droit d'en juger. ». Roughly translated as: proven ability in a particular subject and that gives the right to judge.

For the English: "The ability to do something well" and "a skill that you need in a particular job or for a particular task" are the definitions of competency, respectively, from The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015, p.304). As a result, according to Gonczi (1996), a competent individual is one who possesses the qualities required to perform their work to the required standard.

1.4 Knowledge Transfer (KT)

The CBA actively promotes knowledge transfer, or the application of previously acquired skills in one environment to another. Knowledge transfer is concerned with how prior knowledge affects current knowledge and how subsequent knowledge affects the ability to recall prior knowledge.

Thus, knowledge transfer/sharing is the process by which prior knowledge, concepts, and experiences are transferred from one learning environment to another in order to contribute to problem-solving. Therefore, knowledge transferability is a skill that should be developed through the development of competencies and the effective use of information, rather than by rote memorization because it is difficult to recall material that has been memorized by heart. In a related study, Salvin (2003) argues that no matter how fully something is mastered, it is unlikely to be applied to new circumstances.

1.5 Characteristics of the Competency-based Approach

Policy makers and other key figures in higher education have acknowledged the advantages of this competency-based approach. They contend that CBA holds the key to ensuring that all social classes have access to high-quality education. The Ministry of National Education (MNE) in our nation offered a helpful analysis of the variables influencing the implementation of CBA programs and found four essential characteristics:

1.5.1 Action-Oriented Approach

It does this by emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge that is ingrained in functions and abilities. These will enable the student to utilize language in real-life circumstances outside of the classroom effectively in addition to competently. The objective is for pupils to develop into independent learners who can handle the demands of the outside world.

1.5.2 Problem-Solving approach:

It puts students in circumstances that test or assess their ability to solve difficulties and impediments, forces them to think, and allows them to learn by doing. Instead of placing focus on knowledge or the capacity to discuss language and abilities, overt behaviors are prioritized. As a result, task- or performance-centered orientation is prioritized by CBA since languages are best learnt when they are utilized to solve problems.

1.5.3 Social Constructivist Approach

It believes that social engagement with other people is the primary means of learning. In other words, learning is concerned with the creative application of a newly constructive understanding about the language through the process of social interaction with others, rather than the transfer of pre-determined knowledge and know-how to be reproduced in vitro.

1.5.4 Cognitive Approach:

According to Bloom, all educational goals can be divided into cognitive (related to information), affective (related to attitudes, values, and emotions), or psychomotor (related to bodily movements) categories. According to his theory, cognitive objectives are organized in a hierarchy, and learners must accomplish lower order goals before moving on to higher ones.

1.6 Roles in the Competency-Based Approach

The clear change from the student being a passive recipient of knowledge to the learner being an active participant and not just a container for information is what makes this widely adopted technique exceptional. In fact, there is a shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach. The CBA has shifted the center of gravity from the

instructor to the learner by placing more focus on learner-centered learning (Hannafin, Land & Oliver, 1999, pp. 115–140).

1.6.1 Roles of the Teacher

In the same way that Albert Einstein famously said, "I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn," the function of the teacher shifts from one of knowledge provider to that of facilitator. The all-knowing instructor must leave the stage as a sage in order to remain a guide off to the side.

This does not mean that teachers no longer give information, but they simply open the door for their students and permit them to pass through while providing smart direction.

Richards & Rodgers (2014) define CBA teachers as materials developers, materials resource assemblers, assessors, and coaches who direct students toward usage of acceptable learning strategies and to provide required guidance and support for this goal. They give their pupils the resources, exercises, and practice chances (Paul, 2008). The success of the class depends heavily on the caliber and authenticity of these resources.

1.6.2 Roles of the Learner

According to Richards & Rodgers (2014, p. 159), students in CBLT are considered active participants in the learning process. We think that the students' involvement in the classroom should also shift. They won't be able to only rely on the teacher and the classroom for knowledge any longer. They ought to train as apprentices instead. Their responsibility will be to develop, expand, and integrate knowledge (Jones et al., 1994). Activities in the CBLT classroom must be focused on developing students' capacity to successfully perform a task in the real world. The best resources will be real-world examples of a capability (such as finished job applications or recordings of complaints about services). The resources aid in giving students the fundamental know-how, attitudes, and behaviors needed to fulfill the competency standards. (Rebecca Klein-Collins 2013, p.9)

1.7 The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

It is undeniable that the Competency-Based Approach helped to modernize the teaching-learning process, liberate language learners, and give teachers new responsibilities in the classroom. The employment of ICTs in the classroom provides students with a dynamic learning environment, which is one step toward modernizing education.

To reach a predetermined degree of mastery of a specific information set, CBA students work autonomously utilizing technologies like computers, PCs (Personal Computers), the Internet, electronic books, radio recordings, etc. At the same time, it gives students the flexibility they need to study, which is essential for both learning quality and mastery.

1.8 Assessments

In a competency-based class, assessment refers to the overall process of observing or tracking the development of the students. In actuality, it is (Rebecca Klein-Collins, 2013) the collection of proof and documentation on the accomplishments and results of learners as an essential component of the teaching-learning process. As a result, CBE has drawn a lot of interest due to its direct assessment paradigm, which can be either **formative** or **summative**.

First, formative assessments are used to gauge a learner's progress toward proficiency. Formative assessments must be regular and precise. They are rarely assessed because their aim is to gauge development and reveal strengths and flaws. The majority of assessments in CBE will be formative.

Second, summative assessments can use a range of measurement techniques and are performance-based. A competency cannot be evaluated using paper and pencil unless it is a writing competency. (Richards & Rogers, 2014; Sturgis, 2012; Sturgis & Patrick, 2010). Like activities, assessments must be authentic since they call for the application of knowledge and skills in order to complete a task.

Nobody can deny the fact that traditional classes and competency-based ones have different assessment practices. O'Connor (2002) enumerates the following discrepancies between assessments and grades in traditional classes and those in competency-based classes:

Table 1: Traditional Versus Competency-Based Grading Style

Traditional Classrooms	Competency-based Classrooms
One grade is given per assignment. An assignment may be a quiz, a test, homework, project, or anything the student must complete.	One grade is given for each specific competency. Students may be assessed throughout the process but these formative assessments will not typically be considered in the final evaluation.
Assessments are based on a percentage system. Criteria for success may be unclear.	Standards are criterion or proficiency-based. Specific criteria and standards are made available to students ahead of time.
Traditional grades may rely on a mix of assessment, achievement, effort and behavior to determine the final grade and may include late penalties and extra credit.	Grades measure only achievement. Information about effort and behavior may be reported but it is not part of the competency assessment. There are no penalties or extra credit given.
Everything goes in the grade book regardless of purpose. Every assessment score is included in determining the final grade no matter when it was collected during the module. The final grade determines whether the student advances to the next level.	Students advance only upon mastery of the competency

1.9 The competency-based language teaching classroom

In the competency-based approach, the teacher's job is to support students in actively participating in their own learning rather than just imparting information to them. What typically happens in schools using this method of teaching English is shown in the table below:

Table2: the Competency-Based Language Teaching Class work.

The goal	For learners to apply a variety of English-speaking abilities and knowledge in real-world communication contexts that may differ from the contexts in which they obtained those abilities and information.
The role of learners	<p>All elements of the lesson actively involve the students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They understand the norms and patterns of language; • They plan for and employ techniques to help them learn and communicate better. • They regularly speak, read, write, and listen in communicative contexts in order to convey ideas, information, or messages.
The role of teachers	<p>By giving students experiences that cater to their interests and needs, teachers encourage their participation in the classroom. The majority of the time, teachers are in charge of enabling what takes place in the classroom.</p> <p>fostering an environment where students can work actively without fear of making mistakes; presenting language in a way that allows students to decipher rules and patterns and learn from their mistakes; offering communicative practice in English that aids students in improving their listening, reading, writing, and speaking abilities;</p>
The types of tasks	The objective of communication is the main emphasis of the tasks employed in competency-based instruction. They demand that students take an active role by adopting communication methods, mobilizing the language, and thinking about the language, contexts, and scenarios.

1.10 Advantages and disadvantages:

A CBA, or more specifically a CBLT, has many benefits. First of all, according to Nunan (2007, p. 425), CBLT emphasizes "language as a tool for communication rather than language knowledge as a means in itself." It encourages accountable and responsible teaching. According to Norton (1987), who was referenced by Sullivan (1995) while discussing the advantages of CBE, students' confidence is increased by CBE since they can develop the competences needed to perform in the actual world. Another advantage of CBE is that the trainer acts as a facilitator and spends more time working with students one-on-one or in small groups than giving lectures. According to popular belief, a competences approach has four benefits:

- 1- The competences are precise and applicable, and they are related to the learner's interests and requirements.
- 2- The student can determine whether the competencies appear to be applicable and useful;
- 3- Since the competencies being taught and tested are clear and accessible, the learner is aware of precisely what needs to be learnt;
- 4- One competency at a time can be mastered so the student can see what they have learned and what they still need to acquire.

Standards set by CBA must be specified and evaluated in light of reality. Additionally, it makes educational instruction more productive (Corcoran, 1976 as referenced in Stoffle & Pryor, 1980).

When considering the drawbacks of CBLT, Auerbach (1986) notes that detractors of CBLT contend that this strategy contains underlying assumptions about reality and social order. Being value-governed, it sets its own standards. Because it assigns social roles to students and strengthens the power system, it is determinist. Teaching overt actions also seems mechanical and discourages critical thinking.

Critics of CBLT also place it in the reductionist camp. In other words, the complexity of the entire language is not represented by the total of the distinct aims. CBLT promotes bottom-up processing, which prevents students from seeing the big picture. It places a focus on tangible results. However, not all learning can be seen. The intricacy and

fluidity of language and the educational process are obscured when results-only attention is given, and as a result, creativity and innovation may be stifled. Language is creative and unexpected by nature; it does not involve the gradual acquisition of distinct forms.

Another critique is that, despite CBLT's promises to the contrary, it disempowers students by pre-specifying standardized skill lists and engaging in a protracted process of information collection prior to instruction. In order for CBLT to be learner-centered, needs must be determined cooperatively rather than as a need for instruction. According to Corder (1967), referenced in Aurebach (1986), a learner-based syllabus can only be established through classroom engagement.

According to Sullivan (1995), if teachers aren't given training and follow-up support, they have a propensity to revert to their previous roles as traditional teachers. According to Tollefson (1986), there are no reliable methods for creating competencies for the majority of programs. On the other hand, it is impossible to operationalize many of the sectors.

1.11 Conclusion

Students in competency-based education are only given rewards for successfully completing real-world tasks. Each student should ideally receive an initial evaluation at the start of a course to determine their level of competency. After that, students move forward with their independent learning while receiving extensive informational feedback from their teachers. At every stage of their work, students are aware of where they stand and what has to be done for them to reach the competency criteria.

Some have questioned this strategy, claiming that it may be difficult or impractical to define every ability required for a given circumstance. However, proponents contend that students are more likely to learn how to utilize the language in real-world situations if they receive clear instructions and helpful feedback from their instructors because:

Clarify the procedures, the methods that the students behave, and the teacher will appear more transparent.

By demonstrating to the student that mistakes and doubts are acceptable, you can support and direct their efforts. Increase the importance of student collaboration. Next

go on to formative evaluation in practical settings. Open to various fields, and willing to discuss approaches and interdisciplinary issues with his peers. Whatever one's point of view, it is undeniable that competency-based education is more common than ever. Since the strategy involves a significant modification of the teaching profession, both students and teachers must leave their comfort zones and take on new roles for it to be successful. This unfamiliarity may initially cause unease and discomfort, but as the classes go on, the advantages ought to become obvious. However, there is no assurance that students and teachers will achieve adequate results if they attempt to adopt a competency-based approach without making the necessary modifications in their behaviour. On the other side, if they both accept their new responsibilities, they may discover that learning is more efficient.

The researcher will discuss the use of the competency-based approach in the Algerian educational system in the following section of this chapter to determine if they are in harmony or not.

Chapter II

Research Methodology

2.1. Introduction

According to Dudovskiy (2018), descriptive studies are used to describe, explain, and justify study findings of a phenomenon or sample population's behaviors. The first chapter was theoretical, with a review of the research on: The Competency-Based Approach in the Algerian High School. This chapter includes two sections: the first one is dedicated to observe the CBA in action in our classrooms, touch the instructional materials, experience the teacher and student's actions and reactions, hear their sounds, observe the knowing-doing operation, and feel the environment's reaction to the overall approach. While the second section will attempt to examine the actual implementation of the Competency-Based Approach inside our schools and will highlight the limitations and obstacles which prevent the reaping of its fundamental competencies. This will be done through an ordered stage that includes several methods, specifically, textbook analysis, classroom observation, questionnaires, and interviews.

2.2. Research Design

Selecting a research method is one of the main stages in conducting any research work. The research design is therefore "a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analyzed" Parahoo (1997, p.142). Akhtar (2016, p.1) explained that "; Research design can be considered as the structure of research, it is the "Glue" that holds all of the elements in a research project together, in short, it is a plan of the proposed research work"

To complete this research design, the researcher chooses a mixed-method approach, so that the researcher will be able to use different kinds of data and strategies.

2.3. Research Approach:

Grover (2016) described research approach as the plans and procedures for conducting research that include everything from general assumptions to specific data collecting, analysis, and interpretation methodologies. To achieve the research's objectives, the current study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. "A mixed methods research is the systematic blending of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in study or evaluation" Chen (2006, p.1).

The goal for researchers using the mixed methods approach to research is to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of the quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie) . According to Clark and Creswell (2014), using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a research project produces better results than using only one.

2.4. Sample Population

Vocrell (2006, p.43) describes sampling as “an approach that allows a researcher to select a sub-group (sample) from a larger group (population) and then utilize that subgroup as a basis for making judgments about the broader group”.

Selecting the way of gathering data and from whom it will be obtained is an important step in a research study. In this case, of study, the researcher opted for the representative sampling in order to gain time, increase the validity of the work, and avoid biased results. Lavrakas (2008) explained the representative sample as one that ensures external validity in relationship to the population of interest the sample is meant to represent. In fact, in this type of sampling each and every element of the population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample.

2.4.1. Pupils' Profile

The research sample consisted of one hundred seventy five (175) 3rd year secondary school pupils from Lac Karrar secondary school. The researcher has chosen the 3rd year level to be the case under investigation because students at that level have a strong language foundation that allows them to present a variety of speeches and be exposed to new real content.

2.4.2. Teachers' Profile

This study also incorporates the participation of fifteen (15) English subject teachers with extensive teaching experience at Lac Karrar secondary school .They were a mixed gender group, with nine (9) males and six (6) females, each having their own set of qualifications. Since they had a direct view of the students and the learning process at the classroom, they constitute a source of guidance and recommendations for us to corroborate our findings.

2.5. Data Collection

To carry out this research, the researcher opted for the questionnaire. These methods is chosen on purpose to check the teachers' way of teaching, and more importantly the learners' motivation towards learning English as a foreign language and their compliance with the CBA's objectives. The researcher believes that this kind of research will probably ensure the maximum degrees of both validity and reliability.

2.5.1. Questionnaires

A questionnaire, created by Sir Francis Galton (Anol 2012, p.74), is merely a "tool/instrument" for gathering and logging data regarding a certain topic of interest. It primarily consists of a list of questions, but it also contains clear instructions, space for responses, and administrative information to record responses from respondents in a uniform way. In reality, quantitative research—that is, research that is concerned with numerical data—is typically connected with organized questionnaires.

Despite their drawbacks, we picked questionnaires for our purposes because they are profitable, allow for the collection of the greatest amount of data, require the least amount of time, and aid in describing, comparing, and explaining. Therefore, we made every effort to create questions that respondents could read, comprehend, and answer in a meaningful way.

2.5.1.1. Piloting the questionnaire

Whatever you did as a researcher, concerns about the clarity and usability of the questions—especially those given to learners—remain due to responses from respondents. Naturally, a sample questionnaire was provided to a randomly selected set of informants (15 learners), who completed it to determine if they had any difficulties or ambiguities when responding to the questions about learning in general and learning English in particular. This phase, hopefully, was reassuring and gave me piece of mind because the category I had selected had no trouble comprehending or answering the questions.

2.5.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire :

We conducted a semi-structured questionnaire where both multiple choices questions and open-ended questions were combined. This questionnaire is initiated with an

introduction that includes the study objective, This questionnaire includes nine (9) questions. It was done for the objective of checking the pupils' attitudes towards learning English and the use of this language. The questionnaire is a modified version from a previous questionnaire done by DJEROUANE, F. (2018) titled: "The Competency-Based Approach in the Algerian High School: Analyzing Constraints and Obstacles".

It is notable that the questionnaire was sent on April 20th, 2023 online via the web site of Google.docs in order to facilitate the process of the data collection. The researcher examined the data collected from the participants using the Excel program after gathering it from the participants. It's a piece of software that aids in data analysis and organization, as well as providing graphs. The researcher was the one who interpreted the final results.

Absolutely, the questions were presented to the informants in an easy-to-understand format with an Arabic translation, which increased their motivation to answer honestly.

2.5.1.3. Analysis and Interpretation

Practically, the responses are retrieved and analyzed using computations, graphs, as well as thorough explanations, in order to reach unambiguous conclusions.

Question One: **What is your gender ?**

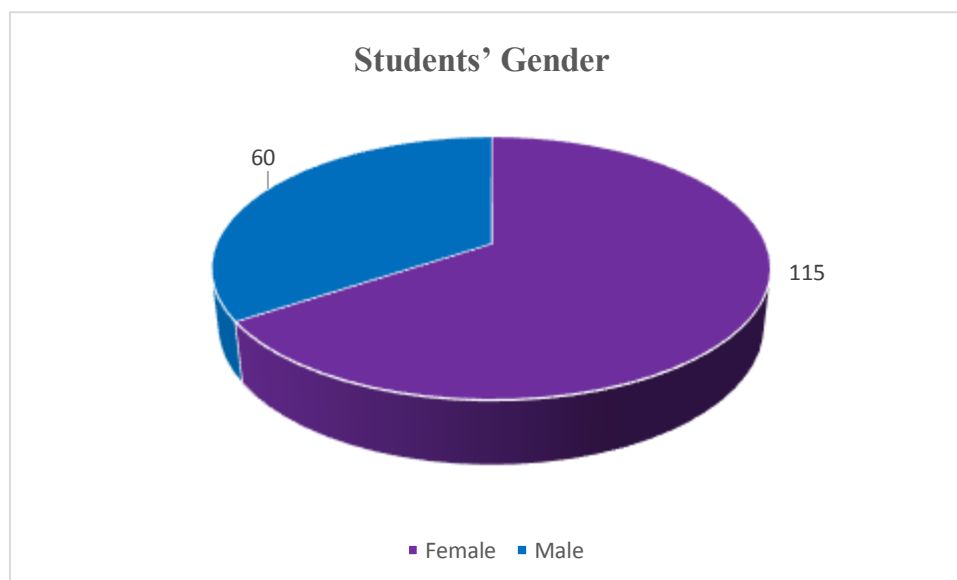


Figure 1.1

This was requested in order to gain a better understanding of the participants.

We can see from the Figure 1.1 that our main audience is females (115) and that the minority is males (60), leading us to infer that females make up the majority of SE3 pupils at Remchi High school.

Question Two: **How old are you?**

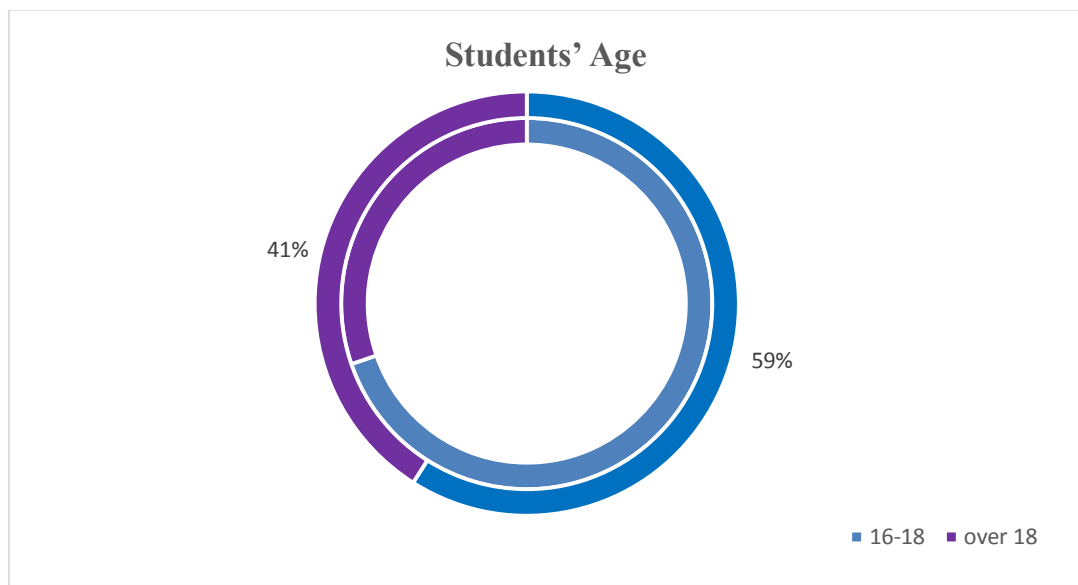


Figure 1.2

This question was used in order to ensure we appeal to the most suitable audience. Through the Figure 1.2, we remark that students' age scope ranges between 16 years and over 18 years. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of participants are between the age of sixteen (16) to eighteen (18) years old. And forty-one percent (41%) are between eighteen (18) and over. This lets us suspect that they may show more desire to express their views about the topic under investigation.

Question Three: Why do you like learning English?

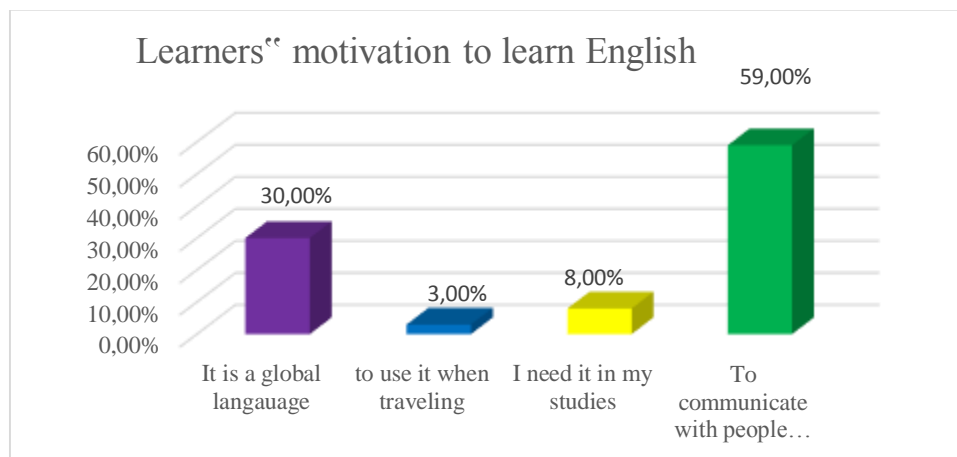


Figure 1.3

In response to the question about students' motivation for learning English, through the figure 1.1, (59%) of the participants said they learn English to communicate with others around the world," (30%) related their answer to the fact that English is a global language. The final two numbers are either related to its significance in their studies (8%) or when traveling overseas (3%). From that, we come to the result that the majority of our participants use English to communicate.

Question Four: Your level at English is.

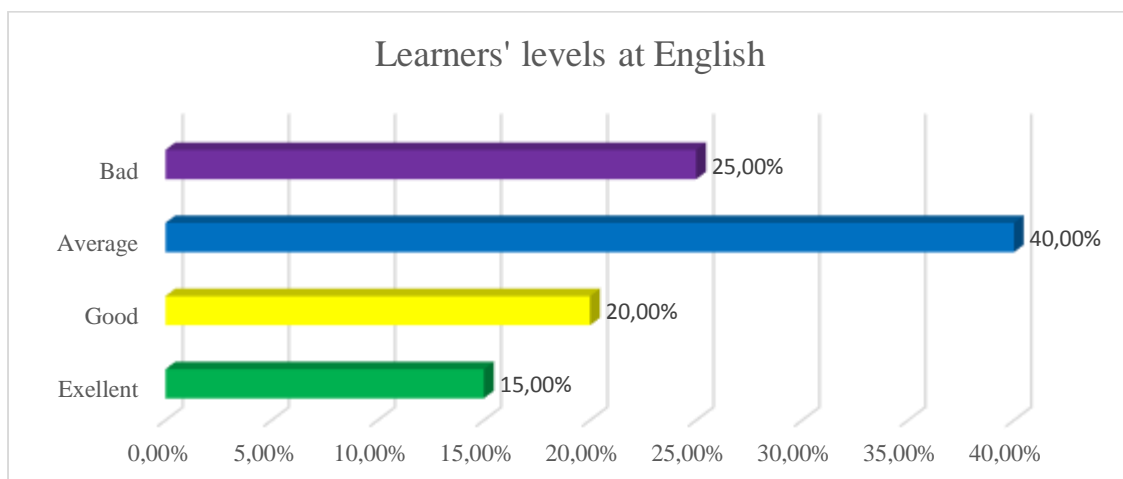


Figure 1.4

Relying on the obtained data in question two, only (15%) of our informants confirmed that they have an excellent level while (20%) selected the good level. The majority (40%) ticked average to say that they are not satisfied. Yet, (25%) of the respondents state that they have a bad level.

Question Five: **Where do you find difficulties when learning English?**

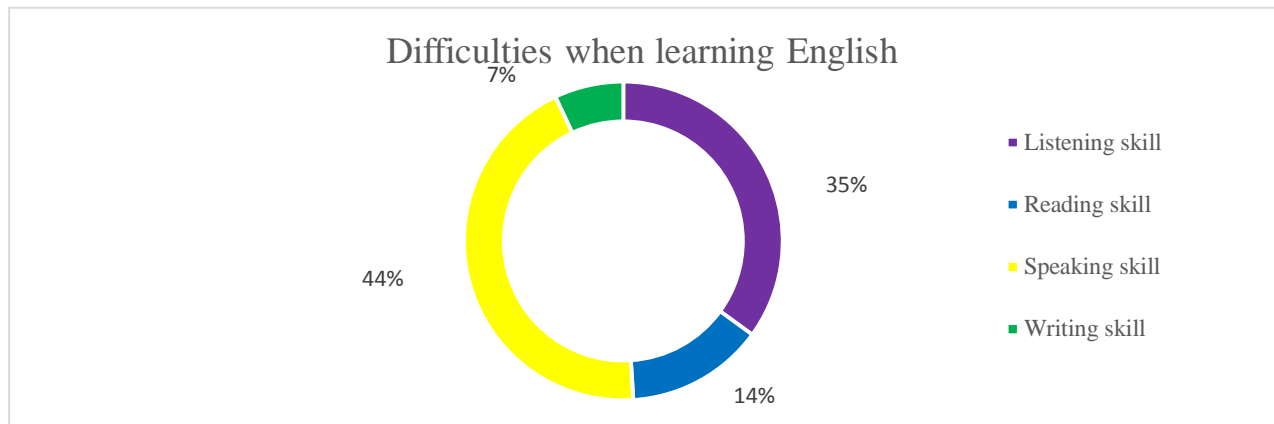


Figure 1.5

This ring chart can tell us why we formerly said that either most of our respondents have an average or bad level, i.e., as it is shown; most of the students have deficiencies in almost every skill. The first three competencies look as if in harmony with (44%), (35%), and (14%) to understand that the respondents overcome problems with both receptive and productive skills. But, the last percentage (7%) is doubtful since the writing skill is not that easiness.

Question Six: **Does the teacher warm you up before the lessons?**

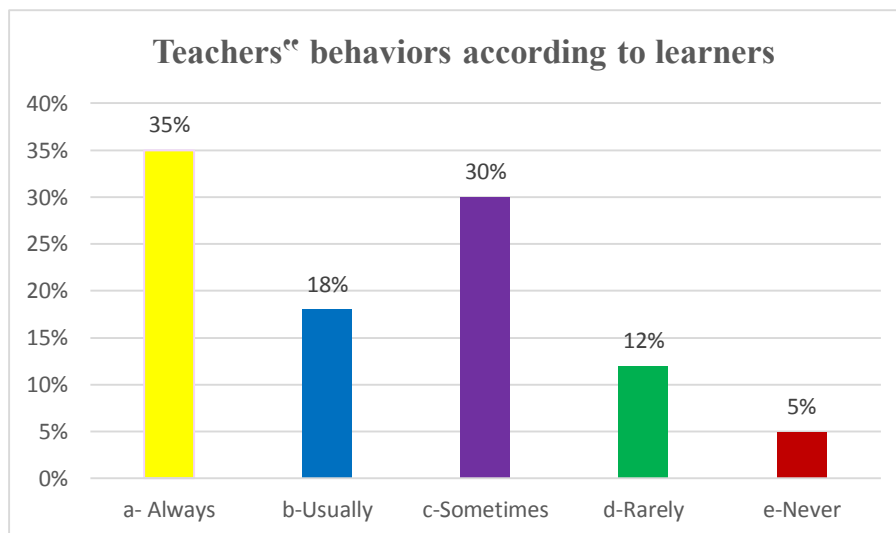


Figure 1.6

When the learners were asked about the warming up session as it is shown in the chart, (35%) certified that their teachers always warm them up before the lessons, and (30%) said they (teachers) sometimes do. On the other hand, (18%) ticked the usually box while (12%) and (5%) stood between rarely and never.

Question Seven: Does the teacher explain and simplify things for you?

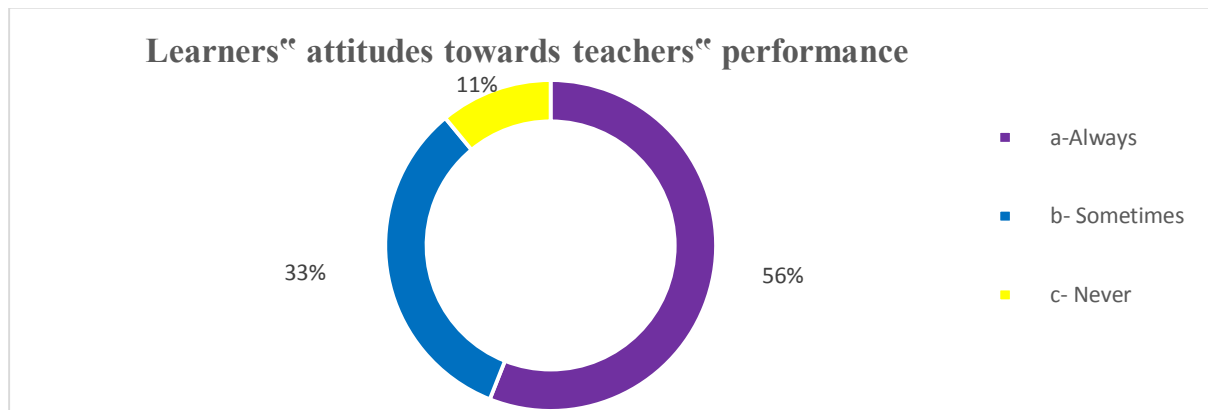


Figure 1.7

What seems positive in this ring chart is that 90, which means (56%) of the respondents told us that their teachers always explain and simplify matters for them, and (33%), chose sometimes. Yet, the number of those who ticked never was just 29, that is to say (11%) only.

Question Eight: Does your teacher encourage working in pairs and groups?

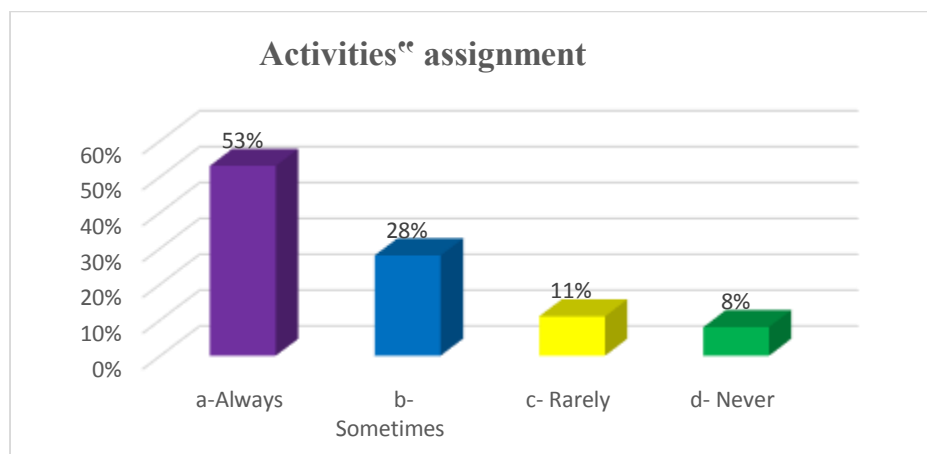


Figure 1.8

The above figure suggest that teachers, according to their learners, are playing their roles in terms of encouraging learner-learner interaction. Indeed, (53%) reckoned that they always do, and (28%) think this happens sometimes. Lastly, (11%) said they (teachers) rarely boost them while (08%) notified that their teachers never energize collaborative work.

Question Nine: Does your teacher give you enough time to do tasks?

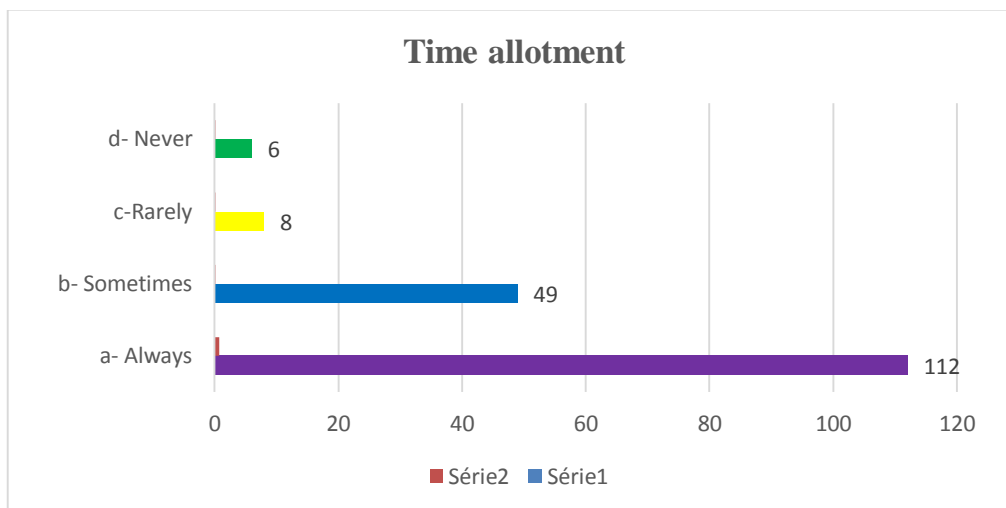


Figure 1. 9

In reference to figure 1. 7, most of our respondents (77%) vouched that their teachers always give them enough time to do tasks, and (14%) think that they sometimes do. Only a few informants chose respectively either the rarely or the never box with (6%) and (3%).

Question Ten: Does the project work help you use the acquired knowledge outside the classroom?

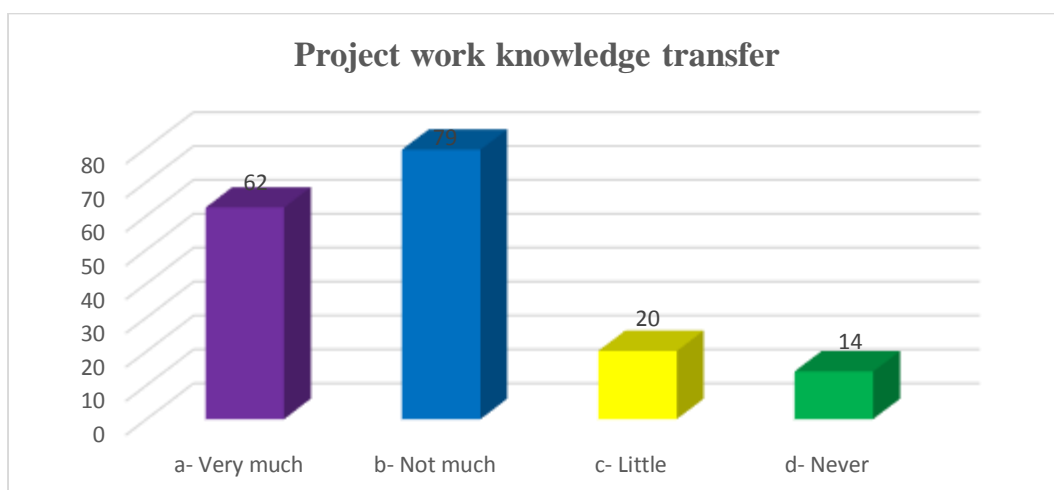
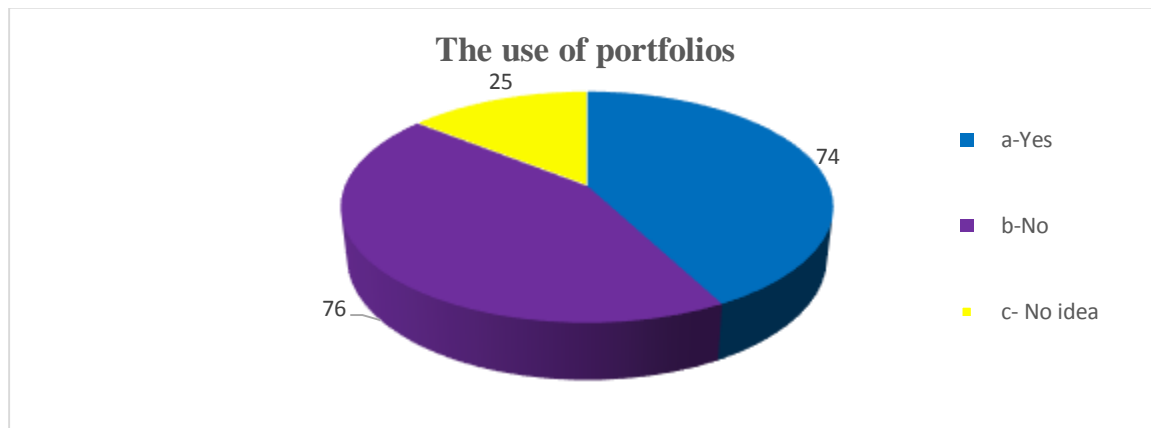


Figure 1. 10

Regarding the project work, the percentages in the above chart, signalize that it is not really helpful though we could not ignore them. Generally, (39%) insisted that it helps them very much where as (46%) told us not much. Yet, (10%) said that the project work assists them only a little, and (5%) preferred to tick the never box since they (according to them) gained no benefit from it.

Question Eleven: Do you use portfolios?



The last question bought about interesting numbers, i.e., (43%) told that they use portfolios to keep assessing themselves through, and (51%) said no they do not. In contrast, (6%) apprised that they have no idea about something called portfolios.

Figure 1.11

2.5.2. Interview

The interview is defined according to Kvale (1996, p.174) as “a conversation, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the [life-world] of the interviewee” with respect to interpretation of the meanings of the 'described phenomena'. In order to collect consistent and comparable data, the current study uses a structured interview with a predetermined format in which questions are asked in the same sequence. Furthermore, this form of interviewing is referred to as a standardized open-ended interview (Patton 2002), as it employs pre-determined questions. However, this research instrument is used in conjunction with the questionnaire to provide further explanation, accuracy, and consistency of the results acquired.

2.5.2.1. Description

This structured interview is open-ended in the sense that the informants are free to reflect on their ideas and express themselves about the research topic in their own words. This research instrument was administered on April 30th, 2023. It is made up of eight (08) questions, each of which is designed to collect information regarding the knowledge and attributes needed for this study. The interview was directed to a sample of (15) secondary school teachers of English language. It was recorded with fourteen teachers and handwritten by one teacher because he took it with him since he had not had enough

time to record it. Then, she gave it back one week later. We aimed at collecting a broader range of data in connection with the objective of our topic which concerns the implementation of CBA so as to diagnose accurately the difficulties that can prevent the true practice of this approach.

2.5.2.2. Analysis and interpretation

The questionnaire was distributed to fifteen teachers of both genders; males and females, this section will analyse the findings:

Question 01: How long have you been teaching English at the secondary school?

The large number of teachers that referred to seventy percent (70%) have more than 10 years of experience, while only one teacher has seven years of experience. After the results, we ponder that the majority of the Secondary school English teachers are not beginners and have a great experience.

Question 2: What kind of degree (s) do you have? (Master/Licence/PES “ENS”)

27% of the respondents have a PES degree (Professeur de l’Enseignement Secondaire) a diploma delivered by the „l’Ecole Normale Supérieure, roughly translated as “Teachers” Training College”. As 46% of the targeted teachers have a „licence diploma” of the classical system which is a four-year university training course provided by the Department of Foreign Languages at the university level. The last category composed of those who earned a master degree 27% in the new system the master is awarded after three years of licence at the faculty plus two years of master studies.

Question 3: Do you have an idea about the language approaches and methods implemented in Algeria?

The data collected after administrating this question related to CBA, were amazing in which all the 15 respondents said they have an idea about the Competency-Based Approach to reach a percentage of 100% that seems somehow positive.

Question 4: When have you become familiar with CBA?

56% of our respondents mentioned that they have become familiar with CBA while pursuing their studies at the university while 44% of the informants said during in-service training sessions. But none seemed to have knowledge about this approach via other resources or during initial training in the ITE.

Question 5: Which of the following stand as roadblocks to the implementation of the CBA?

The main obstacles according to our informants are the reduced timing, the class over-crowdedness, and the learners' lack of motivation. As well as the lack of practice in the training sessions.

Question 6: Does the syllabus meet the objectives of the CBA?

The teachers' answers indicate that the vast majority of the informants think that the current syllabus "somehow" meets the objectives of the CBA, and only 3% believe it "very much" does. Yet, 6% told the researcher that they have "no idea".

Question 7: Is the time spared to the teaching of the English Language enough?

The statistics show that 50% of the administered teachers see that the timing allotted to English is not sufficient whereas 40% of them said it is "somehow" enough. On the other hand, 6% think it is sufficient, and 3% of the respondents claimed that they have no idea.

Question 8: If no, what do you suggest?

The answers indicates that more than half of the respondents 56% suggested to lighten the syllabus, and another 54 teachers proposed to review the textbook content. Yet, 30% of the informants said that the educational authorities have to dedicate more time to the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Question 9: After approximately 13 years, are yousatisfied with the CBA implementation?

The majority of the teachers 70% stated that they are “partly” satisfied while 23% told the researcher they are “not at all” feeling good with the CBA implementation. Only one teacher mentioned his “full” satisfaction on the current methodology.

2.6. Discussion of the Main Findings

This section aims at discussing, interpreting, and summarizing the gathered data from teachers' and students' questionnaire and interview to diagnose accurately the difficulties that can prevent the true practice of the CBA approach.

In actuality, it was found through analysis of pupils' questionnaires and teachers' interview that neither students nor teachers were prepared for the adoption of the competency-based approach. On the one hand, despite being the main focus of the CBA, the students were unable to manage their learning, maintain their independence, or even take independent action to build knowledge. However, the secondary school English teacher appeared unprepared and had weak practical skills. The significant majority acknowledged the need for more training to properly execute the principles of this adopted approach, i.e., they have some ideas about the approach and its implementation but lack experience in putting those concepts into practice and making CBA the center of the teaching process inside their classrooms.

Due to the overcrowding and dearth of teaching-learning resources in Algerian EFL classrooms, it is not acceptable to establish a CBA's atmosphere. Achieving the desire and excitement in Algeria to transition to a competency-based education will, however, if sensible solutions, such as teacher training, syllabus review, and other recommendations, are implemented.

2.7. Recommendations

The implementation of the CBA approach in the EFL classroom is seen as a difficult task. This investigation aims to find a way to make the process of learning English as a foreign language easier:

All of the official partners in the educational system must first and foremost reach

agreement in order for the Competency-Based Approach to be implemented properly. In order to resolve the issues that prevent at least a passable application of the CBA in Algeria, educators, parents, students, inspectors, school heads, and decision-makers should gather around a discussion table and engage in an objective discussion of the subject. It is simple to point the finger at someone or something, especially teachers, for the current state of affairs, but the truth is that they are products of the entire educational system in which they operate. Successful change requires careful planning, thorough justification, and demonstration to educators, including supervisors, administrators, and teachers.

Additionally, it is important to interact with all pedagogical and administrative stakeholders to determine what has and has not been effective in terms of pre- and in-service training materials, pedagogy, administration, etc. In these gatherings, social partners and practitioners might offer ideas or suggestions for resolving conflicts between the student and the classroom, the textbooks, and the teacher. Indeed, a revision of the existing programs and a re-adjustment in accordance with the educational principles of the CBA became necessary, necessitating an urgent re-evaluation of the textbooks by specialists, inspectors, experienced and retired teachers, cartoonists, and drawers. This does not imply that the organization and substance of the 2003 textbooks are completely unacceptable. In order to revive the didactic triangle and provide the learner a better position.

Finally, the researcher, as a teacher in the field, assumes that educators and experts in our country strongly believe in the re-formulation of the educational objectives in a more explicit and adequate way so that to respond to the issues and challenges in place and ensure a more appropriate relevance of education in an ever changing society. Unless we install competencies in our learners that make them able to become autonomous in developing their analytical capacities, mobilizing their knowledge acquisition and synthesizing when facing new problem-situations, the school cannot ensure its function of education, socialization, and qualifications.

In a nutshell, when the principles are internalized, the strategy of the approach is effectively applied, the materials are provided, and the teacher development programs

are structured, advances in school reforms are attainable.

2.8. Conclusion

All in all, the analysis and interpretations of the collected data through the findings of both pupils' questionnaire and teachers interview, revealed that neither pupils nor teachers were ready for the implementation of the competency-based approach. The students were unable to manage their learning, maintain their independence, or even take independent action to increase their knowledge, despite being the CBA's primary focus. Finally, we supported the work with some recommendations in favour of the Pupils and the Teachers of Lac Karrar secondary school.

General Conclusion

Nations continue to face increasing demands from globalization on all fronts, including the economic, scientific, political, and technical. The idea that the purpose of education is to enable students to memorize abstract information and retrieve it later for use is no longer relevant today. Instead, education must empower and equip students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to face challenges in their daily lives and to be active, effective, doers, and productive members of society.

Undoubtedly, reforms to the Algerian educational system were and are being made in order to achieve the aforementioned goals. The Competency-Based Approach has therefore been introduced as a learning philosophy that aspires to develop independent, self-made, exploratory, and innovative learners who take responsibility for their learning. The latter should, of course, be carried out under the sage and astute direction of the teachers who are expected to rely on the CBA principles whenever the teaching-learning process is in progress. Unfortunately, this is not the case; rather, what is seen is a "bitter truth" that the Algerian educational system is failing since, on the one hand, our students are dependent on their teachers much more and could not progress in their learning without them. On the other hand, instructors are still dependent on the traditional models of instruction, making it impossible for them to abandon their outdated methods in favor of the competency-based approaches, which have proven to be more effective.

By attempting to provide answers to the following issues, this study aimed to contribute to the ongoing popular and scholarly discussion surrounding the most recent reform(s) that had an impact on Algeria's educational system: What are the obstacles and constraints that hinder teachers to correctly implement the C.B.A and then cause a comeback to traditional practices?

This research tried to contribute to the current popular and academic debate regarding the latest reform (s) which touched the educational system in Algeria through trying to answer the following questions:

- a. What are the obstacles and constraints that hinder teachers to correctly implement the C.B.A and then cause a comeback to

- traditional practices?
- b. How do learners' motivation and attitudes affect EFL learning and thus the teachers' way of teaching?
 - c. Do CBA principles and objectives go hand in hand with the designed teaching materials to respond to learners' interests and needs?
 - d. Based on the three questions above, the researcher formulated the following hypotheses:
 - e. We hypothesize that the failure of teachers to cope with the CBA could be the theoretical and practical deficiencies related to their training courses on the new approach.
 - f. We hypothesize that the learners are interested in EFL learning, but they show little or no motivation towards English Language Learning which in turn influences the teachers' way of teaching.
 - g. We hypothesize that the utilized teaching materials do not exactly suit the prospects of EFL learners and the CBA's objectives.

Consequently, the study was split into two primary portions. The first one focused on a review of the literature where we discussed the Competency-Based Approach as a teaching-learning strategy and how it was used in the Algerian educational system. The second chapter, however, covers the technique, data collecting, data analysis, and interpretation of the results.

The three proposed hypotheses were confirmed by planning and carrying out an exploratory case study. The findings showed that this reluctance to change is present in both teachers and students in Algerian EFL classrooms. These classrooms were overcrowded, where discipline issues prevented teachers from implementing this strategy, which requires concentration, in addition to the appalling lack of equipment like ICTs, which are now considered to be an integral part of the teaching-learning process when implementing CBA. In fact, such classrooms are far from being appropriate for creating an environment keen on CBA instructions..

This study revealed that a number of barriers prevent students from achieving the competencies that the CBA is aiming for, including inadequate time allocated to teaching English, a lack of didactic resources, an emphasis on theoretical rather than practical issues in in-service training programs, and an unprepared teaching environment that discourages students from learning effectively. Other reasons, such as a lack of exposure to real-life communication, a rigid curriculum, the absence of informal assessment, and the rigidity of the textbooks, also contributed to the worse state of education in our nation. Therefore, it is everyone's job to review and fix everything that has to do with EFL, from the top down.

It is ethical to state that the current study had flaws and that many important factors were overlooked, either because the researcher was unaware of these problems due to his imperfections' nature or for other legitimate reasons. The nature of the research topic, the methodology chosen, the tools used, the sample population, and the study's environment are just a few of the many variables that could lead to data limitations. Furthermore, generalizations are difficult to draw, especially when the sample population is limited, which is another criticism of case study research. In reality, the researcher is of the opinion that any attempt to generalize the results from a sample of 175 pupils and 15 teachers is risky. However, the results revealed the challenges and limitations that secondary school teachers and students deal with on a daily basis because of the CBA and provided insights into teaching techniques in the EFL classroom.

However, given the many limitations, particularly those pertaining to teacher preparation, the results thus far may not be relevant for tomorrow. It should be remembered that success cannot be guaranteed, even if all the tools are in place, the time volume is increased, the number of students in the classrooms is decreased, and the curriculum is simplified. In reality, the current research would spawn a new discussion on how to improve Algeria's educational system so that it produces more innovative, active, and productive individuals.

In conclusion, it seems obvious to say that by following the CBA's guiding principles and implementing the new curriculum, the latter will help to liberate teachers and students from the restrictions and challenges that had kept them from improving for many years and to spread out their knowledge, know-how, and know-how to be. Therefore, it is vital to analyse the obstacles that prevent the CBA from becoming a reality, but this will undoubtedly be successful when it is based on double-way, i.e., top-down and bottom-up collaboration among all the stakeholders.

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Appendices

Questionnaire to Students

For the purpose to collect data about The Competency-Based Approach in the Algerian Secondary School, you have been chosen to answer the questions below:

Q1: You are a... ..

a-Male

b-Female

Q2: You age is

a- 16 –18

b- Over 18

Q3: Why do you like learning English ?

a- It is a global language

b- To use it when travelling

c- I need it in my studies

d- To communicate with people around the world

Q4: Your level at English is.....

a-Excellent

b-Good

c-Average

d-Bad

Q5: Where do you find difficulties in learning English ?

a-Listening comprehension

b-Reading comprehension

c-Speaking

d-Writing

Q6: Does the teacher warm you up before the lessons ?

a-Always

b-Usually

c-Sometimes

d-Rarely

e-Never

Q7: Does your teacher explain and simplify things for you ?

a-Always

b-Sometimes

c-Never

Q8: Does your teacher encourage working in pairs and groups ?

a-Always

b-Sometimes

c-Rarely

d-Never

Q9: Does your teachers give you enough time to do tasks ?

a-Always

b-Sometimes

c-Rarely

d-Never

Q10: Does the project work help you use the acquired knowledge outside the classroom?

a-Very much

b-Not much

c-Little

d-Never

Q11: Do you use portfolios?

a-Yes

b-No

c-No idea

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

The Interview

- 1- *How long have you been teaching English at the secondary school?*
- 2-: *What kind of degree (s) do you have? (Master/Licence/PES “ENS”)*
- 3- *Do you have an idea about the language approaches and methods implemented in Algeria?*
- 4- *When have you become familiar with CBA?*
- 5-: *Which of the following stand as roadblocks to the implementation of the CBA?*
- 6- *Does the syllabus meet the objectives of the CBA?*
- 7- *Is the time spared to the teaching of the English Language enough?*
- 8- *If no, what do you suggest?*
- 9-*After approximately 13 years, are yousatisfied with the CBA implementation?*

Summary:

Many countries around the world have undertaken new reforms that have disrupted education systems in order to create harmony with the challenges and requirements of a globalized world. In Algeria, an educational system known as Competency Based Approach has recently been adopted to improve the quality of education by pushing learners to take responsibility for learning by being separated from their teachers, but rather the basis and centre of the teaching and learning process. Data collected from the aforementioned research tools have been analyzed in quantity and quality. Triangulation of results revealed the unwillingness of learners or teachers to adapt their teaching practices to the principles and objectives underlying competency-based education. Accordingly, this research confirms that mastering the theoretical and practical foundations of an in-depth analysis of Algerian education is crucial for achieving the objectives of Algerian educational reform.

Résumé:

De nombreux pays du monde entier ont entrepris de nouvelles réformes qui ont perturbé les systèmes éducatifs afin de créer une harmonie avec les défis et les exigences d'un monde globalisé. En Algérie, un système éducatif connu sous le nom d'approche axée sur les compétences a récemment été adopté pour améliorer la qualité de l'éducation en poussant les apprenants à prendre la responsabilité de l'apprentissage en étant séparés de leurs enseignants, mais plutôt la base et le centre du processus d'enseignement et d'apprentissage. Les données recueillies à partir des outils de recherche susmentionnés ont été analysées en quantité et en qualité. La triangulation des résultats a révélé le manque de volonté des apprenants ou des enseignants d'adapter leurs pratiques d'enseignement aux principes et aux objectifs sous-jacents à l'éducation axée sur les compétences. En conséquence, cette recherche confirme que la maîtrise des fondements théoriques et pratiques d'une analyse approfondie de l'éducation algérienne est cruciale pour atteindre les objectifs de la réforme éducative algérienne.

المخلص

لقد قامت عديد الدول عبر العالم بإصلاحات جديدة مشت أنظمة التعليم من اجل خلق تناغم مع التحديات ومتطلبات عالم خاضع للعولمة. تم مؤخرا في الجزائر تبني نظام تعليمي يعرف بالتقارب بالكفاءات لأجل تحسين نوعية التعليم عن طريق دفع المتعلمين الى تحمل مسؤولية التعلم بكونهم منفصلين عن معلمهم، بل هم أساس ومركز عملية التعليم والتعلم.

تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها من أدوات البحث المذكورة سابقاً كما ونوعاً. كشف نتليث النتائج عن عدم استعداد المتعلمين أو المعلمين لتكييف ممارساتهم التدريسية مع المبادئ والأهداف التي يقوم عليها التعليم القائم على الكفاءة. وبناءً على ذلك، يؤكد هذا البحث على أن إتقان الأسس النظرية والعملية لتحليل السلوكيات النقدية بعمق أمر بالغ الأهمية لتحقيق أهداف الإصلاح التربوي الجزائري.

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