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**EFL Teachers' Beliefs about the Project Work under the
Competency-Based Approach:
A Case Study of Secondary School Teachers in Mila**

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Didactics of Foreign Languages

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Abstract

The adoption of a competency based approach in teaching/learning English as a foreign language entails the direct application of “Project Work” as a tool for competency development and evaluation. Project work, in essence, helps learners gain practice, achievement and autonomy in learning tasks. However, despite the theoretical positive attributes allotted to the project work, its practical process is still unclear for most EFL teachers in the secondary school. In other words, its implementation and evaluation are largely subject to teachers’ beliefs and convictions. Therefore, this study attempts to make the project work’s realization more methodical and reliable so as to ensure its success in the EFL context. This can be done by improving the way the project work is assigned by suggesting a list of recommendations to be followed by these teachers. In addition, a detailed checklist is provided for them to make its evaluation more systematic and, thus, more effective.

List of Abbreviations

CBA: Competency-Based Approach

CBLT: Competency-Based Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ENS C: Ecole Normale Supérieure de Constantine

ESL: English as a Second Language

NB: Number of Students/Teachers

L2: Second Language

PBM: Project-Based Methodology

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TPB: Theory of Planned Behaviour

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

%: Percentage

Q: Question

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General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

In order to bridge the gap between the knowledge acquired at school and real life, the competency-based approach was adopted in the Algerian secondary education. One of the most distinctive features of the competency-based approach is its integration of the project work as part of the learning strategy. However, despite the project work's importance, there seems to be no agreement among EFL secondary school teachers on how it should be realized to guarantee its benefits in the Algerian EFL secondary school classes. In other words, its implementation and evaluation/ assessment depend to a great extent on teachers' beliefs, which are worth exploring in this context.

2. Aims of the Study

This study aims at investigating EFL teachers' beliefs about the implementation as well as the evaluation of the project work under the competency based- approach in secondary education. It is also an attempt to determine a clear and, hopefully, a reliable framework for the realization of the project work i.e., the two processes of implementation and evaluation.

3. Research Questions

In this study, we endeavour to answer the following questions:

- 1- Do EFL teachers in the secondary school assign projects for their pupils?
- 2- How do EFL secondary school teachers implement the project work?
- 3- How do EFL secondary school teachers evaluate the project work?

4. Research Hypotheses

We hypothesize that if EFL secondary school teachers are convinced of the role that the project work plays under the competency-based approach, then they are more likely to assign

it and, therefore, look for the appropriate ways to implement and evaluate it. However, if EFL secondary school teachers are not aware of the project work's role under CBA, then they are less likely to assign it and, thus, they are not well-informed about how to implement and evaluate it.

5. Methodology

5.1. Data Collection Tools

We have chosen the questionnaire as a research tool in order to conduct this study and answer the previously mentioned questions. It is composed of three sections. The first section aims at gathering background information about the participants' gender, educational level and teaching experience. The second section revolves around teachers' awareness of the key features of the competency-based approach. The third one deals with how EFL secondary school teachers implement and evaluate the project work under CBA.

5.2. Population and Sample

Our population of interest is composed of EFL teachers from different secondary schools in Mila. To achieve the aim of the study, 50 questionnaires were administered. However, just 40 of them were returned. As a result, a sample group of 30 teachers was selected at random. All our informants are full-time teachers. Among them there are 20 females and 10 males. All of them are university graduates. 6 of them are BA holders, 14 of them are MA holders and 10 of them have graduated from the Teachers' Training School in Constantine. The vast majority of these teachers are experienced. Just two of them have been teaching English for less than 2 years.

6. Structure of the Study

This research work is divided into three chapters. The first two chapters represent the theoretical part that reviews the existing literature about teachers' beliefs about the project work under the currently practised approach i.e., CBA. The third chapter is the empirical part.

Chapter one deals with teacher's beliefs. It attempts to shed light on how teacher's philosophy i.e., beliefs affect their classroom practices, interaction with the learners and the teaching/ learning process in general.

Chapter two is further divided into two sections. The first section deals with the competency-based approach, by providing a concise definition of the concept "Competency". Then, the focus shifts to the approach's characteristics, theoretical framework and competency language teaching in Algeria. The second section is devoted to the project work. Its definition is given, its theoretical basis is discussed and its benefits in the English language settings are highlighted. Besides, this section explores the stages of the project work, the role of the teacher and the possible problems that he/she may encounter while adopting the project-based methodology in teaching EFL.

Chapter three is the practical part. It deals with the methods and procedures for data collection. It describes the research instrument (the questionnaire) used in this study. It also contains data analysis and interpretation of the findings together with their implications. Some recommendations are given to enhance the implementation and evaluation of the project work in this context.

Chapter One

Chapter One: Teachers' Beliefs

Introduction

The vast majority of statements made in schools or published in literature are not statements, but they are beliefs. It is widely accepted that people use those beliefs to justify their behaviours and that thoughts and actions are interactively related. In other words, what people think, believe, and feel affects how they behave (Bandura, 1999).

Beliefs about language teaching play an important role in a language teacher and in a course, as both the means and the subject matter itself. Now, there is an agreement that language teachers acquire their beliefs about teaching through their life experiences, prior schooling, professional education, and teaching practice (Gabillon, 2012).

This chapter outlines the central research context and introduces key concepts. In order to understand the nature and importance of beliefs, this chapter defines the meaning of beliefs drawing on both its tacit and explicit forms, recognising that there is a difference between this meaning and that of knowledge. In an effort to improve teacher' self-awareness in this respect, this chapter fosters the notions of change and resistance to change. The intention is to enable teachers to become reflective practitioners and to stress that teachers should be aware of their belief systems and constantly monitor how much their actions reflect those beliefs or cope with them.

1.1. Philosophical Views on Teachers' Beliefs

There is no common definition of the concept "beliefs". According to (Lewis, 1990, as cited in Pajares, 1992, p.308), "In the world of human thought.... the most fruitful concepts are those to which it is impossible to attach a well-defined meaning." Similarly, differing understandings of teachers' beliefs result in the spread of "teachers' beliefs" (Borg, 2003).

Thus, Research on teachers' beliefs has indicated how slippery the concept of pedagogical beliefs is to define, and how intricate it is to observe (Pajares, 1992). Ajzen (1991, as cited in Goh, Zhang, Hong & Hua, 2005, p.59) specified that they are "ideas and theories that teachers hold about themselves, teaching, language, learning and their students." Pjares (1992, as cited in in Galvis, 2012) noted that they are composed of "a large number of interacting, intersecting, and overlapping beliefs" (p. 97).

1.2. Beliefs and Knowledge

The confusion lies in a clear distinction between the two terms: beliefs and knowledge. As such, beliefs are accepted as true by the individual holding it, whereas knowledge must actually be true in some external sense (Borg, 2001). On the other hand, Goh, Zhang, Hong & Hua (2005) stated that beliefs are not so much different from knowledge since beliefs constitute a form of knowledge. However, beliefs have stronger affective and evaluative components than knowledge. They are values which are effective in perceiving knowledge as feasible or essential. Hence, beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and outline tasks and problems. Simultaneously, a teacher's beliefs are also more prominent than a teacher's knowledge on determining his or her classroom activities. This, then, makes them stronger predictors of behaviour (Pajares, 1992).

1.3. Sources of Teachers' Beliefs

Another point that needs to be elaborated on is the ways in which teachers actually develop their beliefs in relation to the content and process of teaching; that is through a process of enculturation and social construction (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). They can be formed by chance, social history and culture, an intense personal experience, or a succession of events (Pajares, 1992). In Algeria, for example, most teachers have long teaching hours, heavy workloads, and limited availability of academic materials, which make it difficult for them to keep up to date with the latest developments in English Language Teaching (ELT).

In particular, they do not have many chances at all to be exposed to, and so become aware of, new ideas in relation to features of ELT.

According to Gilakjani (2007), the sources of teachers' beliefs are as follows:

1. **Teachers' experience as language learners:** A lot of teachers know that they were previously learners and how they were taught and these helped them form their beliefs about teaching.
2. **Experience from teaching:** Teaching experience is the main source of teachers' beliefs in that how a specific method is used for a specific group of learners may result in the beliefs about that method.
3. **Teachers' personality:** Some teachers prefer a particular method because it corresponds to their character.
4. **Education-based or research-based principles:** Teachers can get their beliefs from learning principles of second language acquisition research, education, or schools of thoughts like psychology. (p.80)

Since this study explores how the context influences teachers' beliefs and how these in turn shape their practices, it is critical to discuss their significance in teaching.

1.4. Impact of Beliefs on Instruction

Research proves that beliefs are crucial to our personal and professional lives. Borg (2001) demonstrated that beliefs play an important role in defining behaviour, organizing knowledge, guiding evaluation, identifying and bridging the main perceived and actual gaps in Foreign Language teachers' professional development. Apparently, they closely monitor language teachers to adopt their teaching tactics for coping with everyday language teaching challenges, influence their over-all well-being, and figure out language learners' learning environment.

Generally speaking, teachers interpret “ambiguous situations” in ways that are consistent with their beliefs, Li Xu (2007) asserted:

Beliefs also serve as a foundation for setting goals and standards by framing what is viewed in detail and focusing teachers' attention and energy. Similarly, they delimit what is peripheral, determining what teachers do not see, emphasize, or examine. Because beliefs help teachers to make sense of what they experience in the classroom, they create meaning for teachers. Moreover, they prepare teachers to experience certain emotions by mapping pleasant feelings onto some experiences (i.e., success or failure) and unpleasant feelings onto others. (p.1398)

Solis (2015) pointed out that teachers' beliefs are particularly important if we consider that they are part of the base allowing making pedagogical instructions and decisions, both in and out of the classroom. At the same time, they have an influence on the student's motivation to learn.

It is therefore important for teachers and students to be aware of these beliefs, analyse them, and make them explicit in order to manage, successfully, the integration of the new knowledge to their previous ideas and notions.

1.5. Mismatches between Beliefs and Actual Practices

A great deal of empirical evidence on teachers' perceptions (beliefs and knowledge) suggests that the complexity of defining beliefs constructs has led to a reported mismatch between teachers' beliefs and actual classroom practices (Borg 2003). As such, classroom practices are a set of teaching strategies and methods of instruction and management employed in the classroom in order to expand students' cognitive and skilful perceptions, and achieve the desired teaching objectives (Khader, 2003). Therefore, the contextual factors, so far, are still most widely recognized accounting for the discrepancy between teacher cognition and classroom practice (e.g. school culture and its norms and values) which may lead to

tension. For example, a teacher who knows about culturally proficient teaching, but who simultaneously holds deficit beliefs, by viewing students from diverse backgrounds, could hold heterogeneous beliefs that are unreliable (Khader, 2003).

Ellis (2008, as cited in Spawa & Hassan, 2013) claimed: “If beliefs influence the actions that learners perform to learn a L2, they cannot be ignored by teachers” (p.452). That is to say, little learning is likely to occur if there is a mismatch among teachers’ and students’ belief systems. It leads to a big hole in second language teaching and learning, especially in oral communication skills, and reduce learners’ confidence and performance. Further, teachers are dissatisfied and frustrated because expectations could not be seized.

As well as teacher subject knowledge and beliefs, teacher behaviour is widely believed to influence teacher effectiveness.

1.6. Beliefs and Behaviour

1.6.1. The impact of Beliefs on Behaviour

Beliefs are seen to be the strongest factors through which we can predict teaching behaviour (Pajares, 1992). Hence, behaviours are assumed to be influenced by beliefs, subject knowledge and self-efficacy. The relationships with beliefs are hypothesized to be reciprocal. For that reason, Muij and Reynolds (2002) claimed:

Belief systems are dynamic and permeable mental structures, susceptible to change in light of experience. The relationship between beliefs and practice is also not a simple one-way relationship from belief to practice, but a dynamic two-way relationship in which beliefs are influenced by practical experience. (p. 5)

Muij and Reynolds (2002) asserted that knowledge is based on effective teaching, and on a range of behaviours that are positively related to student achievement in basic skills. The relationship between teacher behaviours and student outcomes can identify factors correlating student achievement and attainment.

Many situational factors affect behavioural outcomes. Such causal ambiguity provides a fertile ground for misjudgement. When belief about the effects of actions differs from actuality, behaviour is weakly controlled by its actual consequences until repeated experience instils realistic beliefs. Yet, it is not always one's beliefs that change in the direction of social reality (Muij and Reynolds, 2002).

1.6.2. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour

Many studies were interested in reviewing the numerous factors influencing behaviour and to what degree beliefs represent cognitive, affective or evaluative qualities. Ajzen (1991) found that it is the teachers' educational and professional experiences in life that help shape their pedagogical system. Through his Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), one's beliefs are linked to behaviours in various fields such as teaching.

According to Azjen (1991), the three factors (attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control) are influenced by one's beliefs. They shape an individual's intentions which are eventually translated into specific action applying the innovation.

Briefly, as it is described in Hana (2010), human action is guided by these considerations: behavioural beliefs (beliefs about the likely consequences of the behaviour), normative beliefs (beliefs about the normative expectations of others) and control beliefs (beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behaviour)

A schematic description of the theory is shown in figure (1):

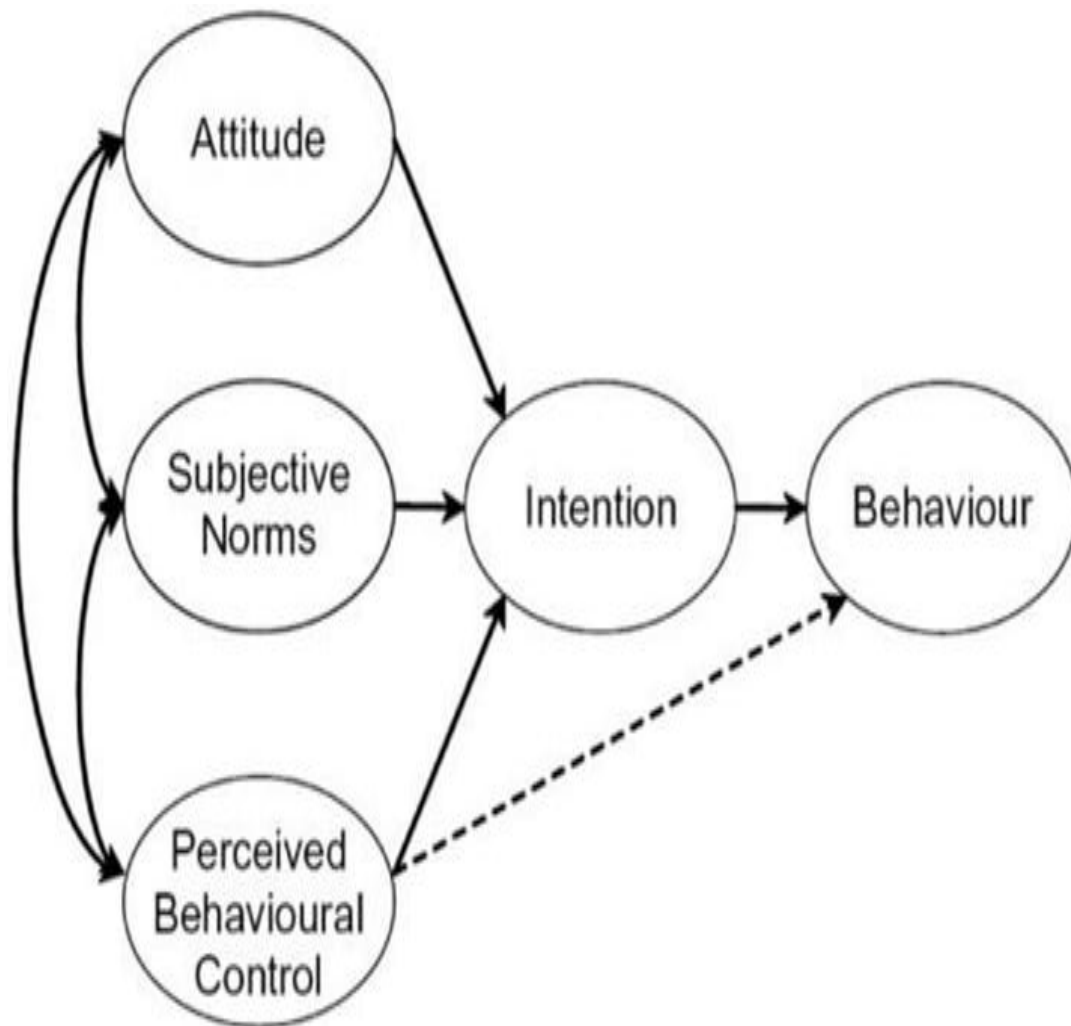


Figure (1): Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991, p. 182)

According to the figure, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control predict the intention, which in turn predicts the behaviour. Background variables, as demographical factors, are supposed to influence the behaviour through the three determinants and the intention. Attitudes, subjective norms and the perceived behavioural control, explain the behavioural intention before the behaviour takes place. The intention is a good predictor of the actual behaviour. Theory also says that the perceived behavioural control is an estimate of the skills needed for expressing the behaviour and the possibility to overcome barriers. Hence, a direct influence of perceived behavioural control on behaviour is expected. The actual behaviour leads to feedback about the expectations of the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

1.7. Teachers' Beliefs, the Process of Change and Resistance to Innovation

1.7.1. Teachers' Beliefs and the Process of Change

Before teachers can be expected to change their beliefs, they need to first be made aware of them (Borg, 2006), as beliefs may be held unconsciously. He argued that teachers must keep a continuous process of personal reflection and that it is by becoming aware of their beliefs that they come to understand their own implicit theories and the ways these theories influence their practice. It is regarded as a major aspect of teachers' professional lives as there are some contextual factors (external and internal) affecting the enactment of teachers' belief to their teaching practices, for instance: students' learning, the environment, training, and professional development, etc.

Pennington (1990, as cited in Renandya, Gallo & Richards, 2001) described positive change as central to the professional life of a teacher. She commented that "a distinguishing characteristic of the notion of teaching as a profession is the centrality of career growth as an on-going goal" (p.6). Some teachers probably view this as challenge and in this manner these factors support them to enact their beliefs. Other factors may hinder them from employing beliefs. Utami (2016) argued:

Some factors are beyond the teacher's authority to change and modify, such as education related policy and curriculum standard. Some factors still give hopes for the teacher to employ their beliefs into their teaching practices depending on how creative, resourceful and innovative the teachers are in doing their profession. (p.141)

The negative ones can be changed basing on agendas planned by both the teachers and the school administrator: workshop on teaching methodology, training on professional development, seminars on pedagogical and professional aspects and even giving financial support for teachers to extent their study to higher level.

1.7.2. Acceptance of Innovation and Resistance to Change

Spicer (as cited in Hana, 2010) said:

People resist to changes that appear to threaten basic securities. People resist proposed changes they do not understand. People resist being forced to change. Changes generated in one subculture ..., if they are to be accepted in another subculture, must be made understandable and given clear value. (p.34)

According to Rogers (2000, as cited in Hana, 2010), adoption is a complex process, requiring commitment, venture, and a well-focused tactics:

One of the greatest pains to human nature is the pain of a new idea...it makes you think that after all, your favourite notions may be wrong, your firmest beliefs ill-founded...Naturally, therefore, common men hate a new idea, and are disposed more or less to ill-treat the original man who brings it. (p.35)

Further, Kennedy and Kennedy (1996, as cited in Mulet, 2003) pointed out "beliefs about the innovation, about its consequences and the contextual variables associated with it are all important in determining behaviour...." (p.4). For them, innovation is about engaging teachers in what is abstract, in terms of tasks, methodological skills and changing their ideas about what leads to good teaching. Changes at one point of the innovation dimension need to be going along with changes at other points of the dimension. Supporting this, Kennedy (1987, as cited in Mulat, 2003) suggested:

If the theory underlying the method represented in the textbook is something, which represents an innovation to the users [teachers], problems can arise if no further strategies are implemented to explain the changes to the teachers and to train them in new techniques. (p.27)

Schools need to establish teams to spearhead change efforts, and to prepare the larger staff for the new initiative that should be ready to embrace new initiatives. As a result, teacher preparation for professional development programs would require continual innovation.

Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has brought several implications for the study. First, teachers' pedagogical beliefs are an important aspect of any school culture and thus their implementation in practice requires thorough investigation. There have been many theoretical arguments for understanding teachers' beliefs, instructional practices, feedback choices, and professional development. Second, teachers are required to implement new assumptions, adopt new roles, and adjust to new challenges regarding teaching and evaluating learners. Innovation is introduced on the expectation that teachers would see its benefits, and thus they would easily implement it. Third, the mismatch between intended and real teaching remains an integral part of initiatives. Those initiatives include the project work under the competency-based approach in EFL classes which is the concern of the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two: Project Work under the Competency-Based Approach.

Introduction

This chapter consists of two sections. The first section opens up with a short definition of the key concept “Competency”, which is a necessity in this context. Then, it deals with the competency-based approach; its theoretical framework and main characteristics. It also gives a short overview of competency language teaching in Algeria with focus on the three main targeted competencies and how they are made concrete; observable and measurable through the realization of the project work, which is the main concern of the second section. This latter is an attempt to shed light on how the project work is implemented and evaluated by EFL teachers and the problems they may come across while assigning it for their pupils. However, before considering these points, the project’s definition is provided, its theoretical basis is highlighted and its benefits are unfolded.

2. 1. The Competency -Based Approach

2.1.1. Definition of the Notion Competency

Before considering the Competency-Based Approach, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by competency. Mrowicki (1986, as cited in Bataineh & Tasnimi, 2014) defined competencies as follows:

Competencies consist of a description of the essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours required for effective performance of a real-world task or activity. These activities may be related to any domain of life, though have typically been linked to the field of work and to social survival in a new environment. (p.3)

According to Bader & Hamada (2015), competencies are:

The result of integrative learning experiences in which skills, abilities, and knowledge interact to form bundles that have currency in relation to tasks for which they are assembled and demonstrations are the result of applying competencies. It is at this level that performance can be assessed. (p.10)

Competency is then a combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities that lead to demonstrable and measurable behaviours as a manifestation of this competency.

2.1.2. Theoretical Framework of the Competency- Based Approach

Richards and Rodgers (2001, as cited in Nkwetisama, 2012) held that the competency - based approach focuses on the outcomes of learning. It addresses what learners are expected to do rather than what they are expected to learn about. It advocates the determination of learning goals in terms of measurable and precise descriptions of knowledge, skills and behaviours, expected from the part of learners at the end of a course of study. Likewise, Bowden (2009) asserted that determining outcomes in explicit and precise ways are prerequisites for a successful career.

Emphasis on observable behaviours goes back to the origins of CBA which drew on industrial and business models that specified outcomes in terms of behavioural objectives. Similarly, work related and survival oriented language teaching relies widely on the competency-based model, so as to teach students the basic skills they need for daily life situations (Bader & Hamada, 2015).

For Docking (1994, as cited in Bader & Hamada, 2015), CBA is:

Organized not around the notion of subject knowledge but around the notion of competency. The focus moves from what students know about language to what they can do with it. The focus on competencies or learning outcomes underpins the

curriculum framework and syllabus specification, teaching strategies and assessment.

(p.8)

Accordingly, CBA is focusing on what learners can do with language not what they know about language. The curriculum, the syllabus, the teaching strategies and assessment tools are organized around competency development rather than language knowledge (Bader & Hamada, 2015).

2.1.3. Characteristics of the Competency-Based Approach

The competency-based approach has the following features:

First, CBA is action oriented. That is to say, it brings about language learning to the acquisition of know-how fixed in functions and skills. It allows learners to be effective and competent language users in real life situations outside the classroom (O'sullivan & Bruce, 2014).

Second, it is a problem-solving approach. It puts learners into situations where they check/test their capacities to overcome obstacles and problems. Problems make learners think and they learn by thinking (O'sullivan & Bruce, 2014).

Third, CBA is a social constructivist approach. In other words, learning can occur through social interaction not only within the pages of the copybook or the walls of the classroom. CBA invites pupils to collaborate to construct knowledge through the creation of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) introduced by Vygotsky (1978) who explained that learners acquire new strategies and knowledge as they engage in collaborative activities and internalize the effects of knowledge together (Shabani, Ebadi & Mohammad, 2010).

Fourth, it is a cognitive approach and it is indebted to Bloom's taxonomy. Bloom claims that all educational objectives have to do with attitudes, values and emotions; he said that

cognitive objectives form a hierarchy by which learners must achieve lower order objectives before they can achieve higher ones (O'sullivan & Bruce , 2014).

Fifth, evaluation under CBA needs to be performance based. It is of two types, formative or summative. The formative is ongoing and continuously used all along the route toward the prescribed competency. Summative assessment, on the other hand, determines competency mastery. It is administered as a final test and is considered objectively quantifiable. Assessment under the CBA needs to consider not what learners know, but how far they can meet the standards of the specific tasks. It is also criterion-referenced instead of norm-referenced (Aurebach, 1986).

Last but not least, instruction is individualized, student-centred in context, level, and pace. Objectives are defined in terms of individual needs; prior learning and achievement are taken into account in developing curricula. Instruction is not time-based and students progress at their own rates and concentrate on just those areas in which they lack competence (Aurebach, 1986).

2.1.4. Competency -Based Language Teaching in Algeria

According to Bader & Hamada (2015), the competency-based instruction extended to language teaching is called Competency based Language Teaching or CBLT. CBLT in Algeria targets three competencies: to interact orally in English, to interpret oral and written messages, and to produce authentic oral and written messages. These competencies are also termed as interactive, interpretive and productive respectively. So as to achieve those competencies, learners are placed in front of problem situations that stimulate their cognitive abilities and its resolution requires the integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The socio-constructivist view of learning, advocated here, is promoted through project work which is the pillar of CBA. In a group work, learners throughout a real life task

performance display the targeted competencies. Assessment is also criterion-referenced (Bader & Hamada, 2015).

After defining the term competency, considering the theoretical framework and characteristics of CBA and highlighting its targeted competencies in the Algerian curriculum, it is high time to expatiate upon the project work in the second part of this chapter.

2.2. The Project Work

2.2.1. Definition of a Project

Beckett (2002) provided the following definition:

A long-term (several weeks) activity that involves a variety of individual or cooperative tasks such as developing a research plan and questions, and implementing the plan through empirical or document research that includes collecting, analysing and reporting data orally and/or in writing. (p. 54)

Similarly, Papandreou (1994) defined project work as “an approach in which indirect teaching is employed, and evaluation focuses upon the process as well as the product of the students’ work” (p.41).

Furthermore, Fried-Booth (2003) considered a project work as a learner-centred and collaborating activity which is driven by the need to create an end-product. She added:

The route to the end-product brings opportunities for students to develop their confidence and independence. It also enables them to work together in a real-world environment by collaborating on a task which they have defined for themselves and which has not been externally imposed. (p. 6)

Though each of the previously mentioned definitions stress a different aspect of project work, they all consider it as a group work in which a number of students are involved mainly to achieve collaborative ends rather than competitive ones.

2.2.2. Theoretical Basis of the Project -Based Learning

According to Ke (2010), project-based learning takes constructivism as its theoretical basis. Constructivism holds that knowledge cannot be taught, but must be constructed by the learner. It is a problem-oriented learning approach in which the learner is expected to construct his or her own reality based on a personalized understanding of learning materials. It emphasizes students' engagement in active, intentional, authentic, reflective and social dialogical learning. Applied to second language learning, just as Brown (2002, as cited in Ke, 2010) put it, "...problem solving is clearly evident...as the learner is continually faced with sets of events that are truly problems to be solved" (pp. 100-101).

For John Dewey (1916, as cited in Sikandar, 2015), knowledge takes place in concrete and meaningful situations, through spontaneous activities of children. Dewey's methods of teaching were based on the principles of learning by doing activities in connection with life of a child. Such approaches to teaching and learning follow strategies like project based or problem based method of learning.

According to Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Shabani, Ebadi & Mohammad, 2010), the secret of effective learning lies in the nature of the social interaction between two or more people with different levels of skill and knowledge. Vygotsky's most widely known concept is the "Zone of Proximal Development", which he (as cited in Shabani, Ebadi & Mohammad, 2010) defined as: " the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 238).

2.2.3. Benefits of Project Work in Foreign Language Settings

The following paragraphs go over the main benefits of incorporating project work in foreign language settings.

First, the process leading to the end-product of project-work provides opportunities for students to develop their confidence and independence. In addition, students demonstrate increased self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning. Students' autonomy is enhanced, especially when they are engaged in project planning (e.g. choice of topic). A further frequently mentioned benefit relates to students' increased social, cooperative skills, and group cohesiveness. Another reported benefit is improved language skills. When students engage in purposeful communication to complete authentic activities, they have the opportunity to use language in a relatively natural context and participate in meaningful activities which require authentic language use (Fragoulis & Tsiplakides, 2009).

Authentic activities refer to activities designed to develop students' thinking and problem solving skills which are important in out-of-schools contexts, and to foster learners to learn. Among other characteristics, authentic activities have real-world relevance, provide the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives, enhance collaboration and reflection, and allow competing solutions and diversity of outcome.

Moreover, project-based learning provides opportunities for "the natural integration of language skills". A further benefit is that because project work progresses according to the specific context and students' interests, it guarantees motivation, engagement and enjoyment. From a motivational perspective, projects are more meaningful and can promote learning (Fragoulis & Tsiplakides, 2009).

Furthermore, another set of reported benefits pertains to the development of problem-solving and higher order critical thinking skills. These skills are very important since they are

life-long, transferable skills to settings outside the classroom. Finally, project work encourages motivation, fosters group cohesiveness, increases expectancy of success in target language, achieves a rare synthesis of academic and social goals, reduces anxiety, increases the significance of effort relative to ability, and promotes effort-based attributions (Fragoulis & Tsiplakides, 2009).

2.2.4. Stages of Project Work

Each project is unique because each learner or group of learners is different. Projects can be changed and adapted for specific purposes. However, each project should go through certain stages and development.

2.2.4.1. Opening

The first stage suggested by Lipova (2008) aims at developing positive group dynamics, introducing learners to a communicative language approach and introducing textual data (content and process materials) for research activities. This stage includes also restricted language input by the teacher who teaches especially those language items which the students need for completion of the task.

2.2.4.2. Topic Orientation

Legutke and Thomas (1991, as cited in Mahrovà, 2010) argued that in this stage pupils “Focus on a possible topic and explore its interest value in terms of insights into the topic, and situations and opportunities for language practice and development” (p. 22).

This stage’s objectives are: to sensitize learners towards the theme and mobilize existing knowledge, to arouse curiosity and to allow for the exchange of personal experiences (Mahrovà, 2010).

2.2.4.3. Research and Data Collection

According to Lipova (2008), this is often the longest stage of a project. It involves preparation for the research and its execution. The aims of this stage include: defining the nature and extent of project tasks, learning how to carry out research, means of investigation and recording and how to research textual data and complete the target task.

Fried-Booth (1990) divided this stage into two parts. The first one deals with the design of written materials including preparation of questionnaires, maps, tables, etc. At this stage, reading and writing will be practised most. The second one concerns group activities and the execution of the research itself. Students can work individually, in pairs or in groups, outside or inside the classroom.

2.2.4.4. Preparation of Data Presentation

After the research, students are asked to work with the information they had gathered and process the data in order to create the final product or presentation. Fried-Booth (1990) distinguished two basic tasks of this stage which are: collecting information and organizing materials. In the first task, speaking and discussions are the most important parts as students have to present and explain the collected data to other members of the group. In the second task, students create the end product. Though many skills are practised naturally during this task, the prevailing skill is writing.

2. 2.4.5.Presentation

The final presentation differs with respect to the project, product and the audience. Mostly, it involves presenting information to live audience using the appropriate media, directing the event of the presentation and interacting with the audience (Lipova, 2008).

Presentations can be aimed at other groups of the same class or for an external audience (e.g. other classes at school, parents or audience outside school). The presentation is oral but presenters use a wide range of visual materials as a support for their oral performance (Lipova, 2008). Fried-Booth (1990) added that the main skill practised is speaking.

Though the time devoted to the presentation is short in comparison to the time devoted to other stages, this stage is very important for the students because it is another experience which will be useful for their future life. Very often each group has only a limited time to perform their presentation. However, it is a good exercise not only in speaking the language, but also in rhetoric. This phase helps overcoming stress and stage fear and finally experiencing the success and recognition of other classmates (Lipova, 2008).

2.2.4.6. Evaluation

In this stage, learners and teachers assess knowledge gained of the topic, of group and teacher interaction, procedures and materials used, language gains and deficits, examples of learners' work, and possible unintended learning outcomes (Fragoulis & Tsiplakides, 2009). Evaluation should always take place at the end of each project though Fried-Booth (1990) suggested regular weekly reviews during the project.

Evaluation includes both pupils' performance and the final product. Usually, a whole-class discussion is held at the end of the project and often a written evaluation in a form of a questionnaire is issued (Lipova, 2008). Besides, pupils can write their own diaries or reports about what they have learnt during working on the project. They can determine the criteria for success and failure and discuss their individual work in the project (Mahrova, 2010).

Evaluation allows both the students and the teacher to once again think over the benefits of the project work. The teacher can also critically evaluate his teaching work and take lessons for his next professional development (Lipova, 2008).

2.2.5. Role of the Teacher

Although the responsibility for project work is given to the pupils, a teacher's role is not insignificant. According to Kavlu (2015), the teacher plays different roles depending on each stage of the development of the project work. These roles can be summed up in the following paragraphs.

The teacher has an initiating role. That is to say, he/ she decides about the most suitable time for a project and how long it should last. Then, he should also introduce a broad discussion topic which may develop naturally into a project.

During the project, the teacher is an advisor; being prepared to advise and help if the pupils ask for it. He is also a referee. He is assisting to solve out arguments and differences of opinions. From time to time groups will report their activities to the whole class. On these occasions, the teacher can take on the role of an objective chairperson.

Finally, when the project is coming to its end, the teacher becomes an organiser being actively involved in the organization of displays, and the final production of written reports, etc. As an evaluator, he encourages the pupils to evaluate the project process for themselves. He should also be prepared to comment honestly on what the students have achieved.

Overall, the largest single factor in successful project work is the teacher's belief and commitment. The project work requires the teacher to adopt a new, enthusiastic attitude, to acquire a wide range of skills and to leave the traditional supreme position. It might be said that 'leadership' is replaced by 'partnership' in project-based learning (Kavlu, 2015).

2.2.6. Possible Problems of Project Work

There is still not enough relevant data for a greater research which would make all aspects of project work clear and accessible, and which would enable a detailed teaching of

project work in EFL context (Lipova, 2008). In view of that, many problems may arise when using the project work.

To begin with, the major factor that may be frustrating for teachers while adopting the project work is time. Hutchinson (1992, as cited in Lipova, 2008) argued “When choosing to do project work you are making a philosophical choice in favour of the quality of the learning experience over the quantity” (p.30). As a result, much time is consumed. Nevertheless, if there is lack of time, little projects can be assigned to be done individually at home.

Second, Fried-Booth (1990) included also monitoring, especially with longer projects. The teacher needs a reliable feedback in terms of language learning. He has to find out if any learning is actually taking place. It is also hard to assess how much each learner contributes to a group project. In this respect, Kavlu (2015) argued that Careful management and implementation of the projects is essential for students’ success. If teachers are not properly trained or equipped with the needed skills and abilities, they might not be able to help their students learn effectively. Fried-Booth (1990) suggested using weekly reviews, as a means of monitoring.

Third, during the long-term projects the initial motivation can decrease and personal problems among the pupils can occur. Fried-Booth (1990) suggested various solutions. For example, the teacher can intervene and talk with students about the possible roots of problems and how to solve them. Also, the teacher may suggest doing something different. Besides, the teacher can invite other staff and students. They can listen to short-term results; this often helps as new stimulus for the next work and motivation for the project. Finally, if things turn out extremely badly, it is possible to end the project without achieving the final goal. The teacher should, nevertheless, try to end it on a positive note and focus on all items that had been learnt.

Conclusion

In sum, the competency based approach makes the learners learn by themselves. It is a very effective method of teaching English. It fulfils the learners' needs and makes them participate in their own learning through the realization of the project work. The project work within CBA is a hard task, involving time and efforts on the part of the pupils and teachers alike. For that reason, EFL teachers have to be quite aware of how to implement and evaluate it in their classes in order to ensure its effectiveness and fruitfulness.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three: Field Investigation on Teachers' Beliefs about the Project Work under the Competency-Based Approach.

Introduction

This chapter is the practical part of the study. It aims at investigating EFL teachers' beliefs about the pedagogical implementation and evaluation of the project work under the CBA in secondary education in the Wilaya of Mila. The general design of the study, the research tools and procedures, the data collection and results are presented in this chapter together with their pedagogical implications and future recommendations.

3.1. Means of Data Collection

The project work implementation and evaluation is a serious issue in various educational settings. To examine the specificities of this activity, a questionnaire is designed with the aim to explore teachers' beliefs about the project work under CBA. Basically, this study is intended to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data on how teachers' beliefs affect the implementation and evaluation of the project work under this approach. This aim will be attained mainly through an examination of teachers' experience, their engagement in the teaching of project work and their perceptions of the feedback they provide on students' performances.

3.2. Population and Sample

To achieve the above aim, the present questionnaire was administered to 50 teachers in different high schools in the Wilaya of Mila. However, just 40 of them were returned. As a result, a sample group of 30 teachers was selected at random. Among them there are 20 female teachers and 10 male teachers. All our informants are university graduates. 6 of them are BA holders, 14 of them are MA holders and 10 of them have graduated from the Teachers' Training School in Constantine (ENSC). All our informants are full-time teachers.

The majority of them are experienced. Just two of them have been teaching English for less than 2 years.

3.3. Teachers' Questionnaire

3.3.1. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 18 questions distributed on three parts. The first part consists of three questions. The second part contains three questions, while the third part contains twelve questions. There are three questions which require from respondents to answer with "Yes" or "No". Fifteen questions are multiple choice questions, among them there are five rank questions.

3.3.1.1. Background Information.

This part contains three questions from (Q1 to Q3). It seeks to identify the teachers' professional background. The study of this background information would help in interpreting teachers' responses which may give an idea about whether teachers' practices stand behind any theory, experience or not.

3.3.1.2. Competency –Based Approach in EFL Secondary Schools in Algeria:

This part contains 3 questions from (Q4 to Q6). The first question aims at exploring teachers' views about the distinctive features of CBA. The second one aims at identifying the three main competencies targeted by CBA in the Algerian context. The third one aims at deducing from teachers what a competent student should possess. In short, these questions attempt to find out whether teachers are really aware of the philosophy behind CBA; to produce a competent student able to communicate in English in different real life situations.

3.3.1.3. Teachers' Beliefs about the project work

This part contains 12 questions from (Q7 to Q18). It aims at investigating teachers' beliefs about the implementation and evaluation of the project work. Questions from (Q7 to Q11) seek to identify teachers' beliefs about assigning and monitoring the project work. Questions from (Q12 to Q15) aim at exploring the teachers' strategies/ techniques when correcting the project work. Questions from (Q16 to Q18) seek to identify teachers' opinions about the benefits of the project work as well as its future implementation in EFL secondary schools.

3.3. 2. Data Results and Analysis of the Questionnaire

3.3.2.1. Background Information

Question One: Are you?

- a. Male
- b. Female.

This question aims at investigating whether our informants' gender would possibly affect their ways of implementing and evaluating the project work.

Options	Number of teachers	%
a-Male	10	33.33%
b- Female	20	66.66%
Total	30	100%

Table 01: Teachers' Gender.

Table 01 shows that ten teachers (33.33% of the population) are males and twenty teachers (66.66% of the population) are females. This data indicates that the majority of

teachers are females. This implies that gender affects teachers' personality which in turn influences their perceptions of the best teaching techniques and strategies. Thus, the implementation of the project work is affected.

Question Two: What is your degree?

- a. BA degree (Bachelor of Arts)
- b. MA degree. (Master of Arts)
- c. Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy)
- d. Others please specify.....

This question aims at determining whether our informants' intellectual levels affect their teaching EFL in general and the implementation of the project work in particular. Thus, the underlying assumption is that the type of diplomat promotes effectiveness.

Options	Number of teachers	%
a-BA degree	6	20%
b-MA degree	14	46.66%
c- Ph.D.	00	00%
d- Others	10	33.33%
Total	30	100%

Table 02: Teachers' Degree.

Table 02 shows that fourteen teachers (46.66% of the population) have MA degree. Six teachers (20% of the population) have BA degree. Ten teachers (33.33% of the population) have other degrees, more precisely certificates from the Teacher Training School in Constantine (ENSC). None of the teachers (00%) has a Ph.D.

This indicates that all our informants are qualified to teach at the secondary school. However, this may also imply that these teachers are different in terms of communication skills, writing and speaking. Therefore, their beliefs towards the implementation of the project work depend to a great extent on their theoretical training to teach EFL.

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

- a. Less than one year
- b. 1-6 Years
- c. 6-10 Years
- d. 10-20 Years
- e. More than 20 Years

Experience can produce good teachers or at least affect the teaching practices. This question seeks to investigate if EFL teachers’ experience can affect the project’s implementation and evaluation.

Number of years	Number of teachers	%
a-Less than 1 year	02	6.66%
b-1-6	05	16.66%
c-6-10	15	50%
d-10-20	06	20%
d-More than 20	02	6.66%
Total	30	100%

Table 03: Teachers’ Experience in Teaching English

Table 03 shows that two teachers (6.66% of the population) have less than one year

experience in teaching English. Five teachers (16.66% of the population) have an experience between one year and six years. Fifteen teachers (50% of the population) have an experience of more than six years. Six teachers (20% of the population) have an experience of more than ten years, but less than 20 years. Only two teachers have more than 20 years in teaching.

The fact that the project work is a highly complex task makes its teaching even more difficult, especially for less experienced teachers. The latter, may be less acquainted with a variety of techniques concerning its implementation and evaluation.

Having gathered adequate information about the informants' background, it seems reasonable now to analyse teachers' beliefs towards the Competency-based Approach in EFL secondary schools.

3.3.2.2. Competency-Based Approach in EFL Secondary Schools in Algeria.

Question Four: Which of the following features are distinctive to CBA?

(In case you choose more than one option, please rank them in order of importance)

a. Personal Learning.

b. Meaningful contexts.

c. Cooperative /interactive Learning (with peers, teachers)

d. Constructive Learning.

e. Multi-disciplinary approach.

This question aims at finding out if our population of study is aware of the key or distinctive features of the currently practised approach i.e., the CBA.

Answers	Number of teachers	%
B	04	13.33%
c	04	13.33%
b+c+d	10	33.33%
a+b+c+d+e	12	40%
Total	30	100%

Table 04: Teachers' Beliefs about the Distinctive Features of CBA.

Answers to question five reveal that four of the respondents (13.33%) believe that learning under CBA should occur in meaningful contexts. For them the teacher should create or look for meaningful contexts in which students will experience, in a natural way, the relevance and the meaning of the competencies to be acquired.

Four teachers (13.33%) conceive of learning as a cooperative and interactive process. According to them, learning occurs when pupils work in groups to enhance interdependence, discussion and critical thinking. Each individual in the group has responsibilities and is held accountable for aiding in the completion of the assignment.

Ten of our informants (33.33%) add the fact that CBA is a constructive approach. These teachers conceive of learning as a process for constructing pupils' knowledge through interaction with their environment. Twelve others (40%) are aware of all the key features of the CBA. It is clear then that the majority of the informants (22) are aware of the fact that CBA fosters pupils' cooperation and knowledge construction through interaction with peers or the environment which can be achieved through project work.

Question Five: What are the main competencies that the CBA targets in the secondary school curriculum? (In case you choose more than one option, rank them in order of importance)

a. Interacting orally in English.

b. Interpreting oral and written messages.

c. Producing oral and written messages.

d. Others, please specify

This question aims at finding out whether EFL secondary school teachers are conscious about the competencies they have to build up in their pupils.

Options	Subjects	%
a. Interacting orally in English.	04	13.33%
b. Interpreting oral and written messages.	03	10%
c. Producing oral and written messages.	02	6.66%
a+ b	01	3.33%
a+c	04	13.33%
b+ c	01	3.33%
a+ b+ c	15	50%
Total	30	100%

Table 05: Teachers' Beliefs about the Main Competencies Targeted by CBA in the Algerian Secondary School Curriculum.

The results show that four teachers (13.33%) select “interacting orally in English” only. These teachers believe that pupils learn better when using their speaking skill. Three teachers (10%) focus on “Producing oral and written messages.” For them, pupils learn much better when using both of their listening and reading skills. The third competency is chosen by two teachers (6.66%). Obviously, they think pupils learn better when using their speaking and writing skills. One teacher (3.33%) prioritize interaction and interpretation while another one

(3.33%) prioritize interaction and production. Four teachers (13.33%) give priority to interpretation and production. It should be noted that the majority of teachers, fifteen teachers (50%), hold the belief that all the already mentioned competencies are equally important. Thus, pupils should develop all of them in order to be competent i.e., to be able to communicate effectively in English in real life situations.

Question Six: According to you, what should a competent student possess?

- a. Skills.
- b. knowledge.
- c. attitudes.
- d. behaviour.
- e. values.

Tightly related to the previous one, this question attempts to discover how secondary school teachers of English conceptualise competent learners. As a result, their understanding of the concept “competency” may be revealed.

Options	Number of teachers	%
A	01	3.33%
a+b	01	3.33%
a+b+d+e	08	26.66%
a+b+c+d+e	20	66.66%
Total	30	100%

Table 06: Teachers’ Beliefs about What a Competent Pupil Should Possess.

As it is demonstrated in table 06, twenty informants (66.66%) believe that a competent pupil should possess all the elements mentioned earlier. Eight teachers (26.66%) reveal that a competent pupil does not necessarily have attitudes. One teacher (3.33%) focuses on knowledge and skills only. Another teacher (3.33%) views mastering skills as enough to judge a pupil as competent or not.

The majority of teachers are aware of what makes up a competent pupil. It is, therefore, crystal clear that a competent pupil should possess knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that lead to demonstrable and measurable behaviours as a manifestation of this competency. For that reason, the project work is used by secondary school teachers either to foster the targeted competencies, or evaluate them. However, its implementation has always been subject to teachers' beliefs, which are the concern of our enquiry in the next part of the questionnaire.

3.3.2.3. Teachers' Beliefs towards the Project Work.

Question Seven: Do you assign the project work?

a. Yes

b. No

If no, please justify.....

Secondary school teachers in Algeria are supposed to apply the CBA through Project-Based Methodology. In fact, this question aims at knowing if project work is used in the EFL classroom.

Answers	Number of teachers	%
a. Yes	28	93.33%
b. No	02	6.66%
Total	30	100%

Table 07: Teachers' Assignment of Project Work for their Pupils.

The results show that project methodology is followed by the majority of the informants (twenty eight teachers), and the project work is totally considered in their classrooms. These teachers argue that today's students, more than ever, often find school to be boring and meaningless. Assigning the project work would change the atmosphere. Pupils will become active members, not passive. A project engages their hearts and minds, and provides real-world relevance for learning. Furthermore, after completing a project, students understand content more deeply, remember what they learn and retain it longer than is often the case with traditional instruction. Because of this, pupils who carry out the project work are more capable of applying what they know and can do in new situations.

Two teachers, however, do not assign the project work for many reasons. They argue that their pupils do not know how to prepare a project work. Even when they prepare a school assignment, it does not necessarily reflect their personal effort. It reflects the work of "Mr Google" as it was called by a teacher referring to the phenomenon of ready-made projects on the net, whereby, pupils can access an unlimited number of prepared works without making any effort. They also think that the project work is time consuming and not always feasible. Furthermore, they are convinced that in case of relying on PBM, there is a risk of making the learners more dependent on their peers. The brilliant pupils will work hard on the project while the other members of the group will not contribute to the whole process.

Question Eight: Do you assign the project work as a tool for... (In case you choose more than one option, please rank them in order of importance)

- a .Teaching
- b .Learning
- c .Testing

This question aims at identifying the purpose for which our informants assign the project work. It is also an attempt to find out if this purpose affects the way teachers implement and evaluate the project work.

Options	Number of teachers	%
a. Teaching	02	6.66%
b. Learning	22	73.33%
c. Testing	06	20 %
Total	30	100%

Table 08: The Purposes for Which Teachers Assign the Project Work.

The results show that two teachers (6.66%) assign the project work as a tool for teaching. These teachers argue that they often replace it with writing assignments, especially with third year classes. Third year pupils are often reluctant to carry the project out because they are busy all the time. In addition, they are required to present it orally while oral performance is not marked in the BAC Exam!

Six (20%) of the teachers associate the goals to test learners competencies. This entails that these teachers use the project work as a tool to evaluate whether the targeted competencies have been attained by the pupils or not. Evaluation must be thorough and

criterion referenced, but our informants did not provide us with any clue about how it should be conducted.

The purpose of the project work for the great majority of teachers i.e., twenty two teachers (73.33 %) is to target the learning goals or competencies. This implies that these teachers assign the projects as learning tasks to be carried out by the pupils in groups outside the classroom. Therefore, for them the project work is a whole process that should be planned and managed or monitored carefully to ensure its success. Nevertheless, these teachers often encounter some obstacles which are tackled in the next question.

Question Nine: What are the difficulties you may come across when implementing the project work?

(In case you choose more than one option, please rank them in order of importance)

- a. Overcrowded classes
- b. Learners' lack of knowledge and skills.
- c. Time constraints
- d. Plagiarism
- e. Never
- f. Other problems, please specify.....

This question aims at accounting for what contextual factors may affect Teachers' practices during the execution of the project work.

Options	Number of teachers	%
a. Overcrowded classes	09	26.66%
b. Learners lack of knowledge and skills.	04	13.33%
c. Time constraints	04	13.33%
d. Plagiarism	03	10%
e. never	00	00%
a+b+c+d	10	33.33%
Total	30	100%

Table 09: Contextual Factors Influencing Teachers' Implementation of the Project

Work.

The results indicate a high level of agreement among teachers about the mentioned factors. Ten teachers (33.33%) rank all factors in the same place. Nine teachers (26.66%) say that the implementation of the projects is affected by overcrowded classes. Four teachers (13.33%) refer to the fact that learners' lack of knowledge and skills hinder their practices. Other four teachers (13.33%) stress time constraints as a basic factor that delays the project implementation and three others (10%) emphasize on plagiarism.

Teachers, who claim that "overcrowded classes" influence their practices, find it difficult to establish sufficient interaction with all the pupils during the project work. For them, monitoring the project progress, maintaining discipline, checking comprehension for all and making sure that everyone is contributing to the whole group are hard to be done in such type of learning.

Teachers who have time constraints problems claim that the project work is time consuming. Its successful realization needs extra sessions and more effort. For other teachers,

Pupils' lack of skills and knowledge limits engagement in the learning process. This affects teachers' practices in general and the assignment of the project work in particular.

Three teachers refer to plagiarism. This is due to lack of self-motivation and self-esteem to produce and write the project. However, directing the learners' steps may give them great sense of achievement in the projects process. They should learn from their teachers to do what is right and honest, to be hard workers, and dedicate much of their spare time to be able to master the skills adequately in order to get rid of these bad habits.

It is worth mentioning that all teachers believe they are largely influenced by certain factors when assigning the project work since none of them opt for the response 'Never'.

Question Ten: How do you monitor the progress of the projects? (In case you choose more than one option, please rank them in order of importance)

- a. Reminding your pupils of the time limits.
- b. Reminding the group members of their roles and responsibilities.
- c. Supply further information and documents.
- d. Correct some first drafts.
- e. Other suggestions, please.....

This question aims at eliciting information about the ways through which learners are supervised by their teachers during the realization of the project work.

Answers	Number of teachers	%
A	08	26.66%
b	12	40%
a+b+c+d	8	26.66%
e	02	6.66%
Total	30	100%

Table 10: Teachers' Monitoring of Project Work Progress.

The results show that eight teachers (26, 66%) rely on all these strategies in order to maintain control and assistance without preventing students from taking responsibility for their work. According to this group, the project work is so complex that learners need regular support by their teachers. Thus, teachers need to bear in mind what materials and resources will be accessible to their students to assist learners in managing their time, and to apply their new knowledge and skills, etc.

Twelve teachers (40%) remind the pupils of their roles and responsibilities. For those teachers, every part of the process belongs to each individual and needs each student's total involvement. Eight teachers (26.66%) remind learners of the time limits. According to them, learners should learn how to manage and value time. Two teachers do not choose any of the answers provided, but they comment that in order to monitor how effectively group members are working together on a project, it is required from group members or a group leader to submit (in writing) or present (orally) progress reports on a regular schedule, either every week or every two weeks.

Question11: How do your pupils present their projects?

a. Making oral presentations.

b. Submitting written forms.

c. None of them

Other ideas if you did not choose any.....

Projects need to be seen, read and admired, so teachers schedule the last project session as a presentation. This question aims at eliciting opinions and suggestions of teachers on the ways through which they go with their learners after they submit their projects.

Options	Number of teachers of teachers	%
a. Making oral presentations.	07	20.33%
b. Submitting written forms	13	40.33%
c. None of them	02	06.66%
a+b	08	20.66%
Total	30	100%

Table 11: Teachers' Strategies for Project Work Presentation.

The results show that seven teachers (20.33%) rely on oral presentations of the projects at the end of each unit. Thirteen teachers (40.33%) want the written forms of the projects. Eight teachers (40.33%) focus on evaluating the submitted written forms in addition to the evaluation of oral presentations during the learning process. Two teachers (6.66%) do not opt for any of these ways.

The teachers who rely on oral presentations of the projects assume that though the time devoted to students to develop and deliver oral work is short in comparison to the time devoted to other stages, it is very important because it is another useful experience for the pupils' future life.

The teachers who opt for the written forms of projects have reasons that defend their choice. For them, successful projects require having well-structured written productions and access to authentic resources where possible. It is a good opportunity to discover something new about academic English writing form, through engaging students in projects that allow them to construct their own knowledge.

Eight teachers choose both the oral and written forms of project work. Both techniques are crucial for three reasons. First, in order to make corrections, pupils need sufficient time to reflect and make use of conscious rules, which in most cases are considered to be impossible in natural and unprepared speech. Furthermore, over-correction of written forms of projects lead to a lack of focus on what is being said. Third, the speaker needs to have knowledge of the rules in order to make use of them.

Only two teachers do not respond to this question. One teacher indicates that he or she hasn't yet assigned it for the learners because he/ she does not know how to do so. The other teacher finds it a waste of time with learners who lack the simplest mechanisms in English.

Question Twelve: How often do you provide feedback on your pupils' projects?

a. Never.

b. Give feedback alternatively on students' projects.

c. Give feedback occasionally on students' projects.

d. Always.

This question aims at investigating the frequency of feedback provided during the whole process of project because the more feedback is provided on students' projects, the more they would improve their competencies.

Options	Number of teachers	%
a. Never.	02	6.66%
b. Give feedback alternatively on students' projects.	07	20.33%
c. Give feedback occasionally on students' projects.	07	20.33%
d. Always	14	40.66%
Total	30	100%

Table 12: Teachers' Frequency of Feedback Provision

Table 12 shows that fourteen teachers 'always' provide feedback on students' projects. Seven teachers give feedback occasionally on their students' projects. This is because they focus on the oral presentations. Seven others give feedback alternatively on students' projects. Only two teachers 'never' give feedback.

These results confirm the fact that the majority of teachers are aware of the importance of giving feedback in developing the pupils' level. It improves their proficiency level though it is challenging, especially for weak learners. The frequency of feedback provision depends on the approach used during the stages of the project.

Question Thirteen: When projects are submitted, do you correct them

- a. In class with oral presentation.
- b. At home and provide written feedback on learners' projects.
- c. At home and then organize oral class correction.
- d. Only at home.
- e. none of them.

This question aims at finding out about how teachers evaluate their pupils' projects, how they correct the final product and what type of feedback they provide.

Options	Number of teachers	%
a.	06	20%
b.	18	60%
c.	03	10%
d.	01	9.99%
e	02	6.66%
Total	30	100%

Table 13: Teachers' Beliefs about Project Work Correction and Feedback Provision

Six teachers (20%) prefer that their learners' present projects in class .They believe that it is the best way to help pupils improve their oral proficiency in English, increase their self-confidence and train themselves on how to overcome stress and stage fright. The teacher gives feedback orally taking into account the learners' level and the topic under discussion.

Eighteen teachers (60%) correct the projects at home and provide written feedback on learners' projects. They highlight all the mistakes, circle or underline them using simple and clear language to let the learners correct them individually. Focusing only on the written form is due to many limitations, such as overcrowded classes, time constraints...

Three informants (10%) correct the projects at home and arrange classroom oral presentations. Feedback should be given more importance and devotion by means of "Feedback sessions" (increasing the project workshop sessions per week) to make learners responsible for their projects, to write more, talk more, and correct more. These techniques develop learners' self-correction skills and confidence. Teachers should be available without feeling bored or tired of giving it.

One single teacher corrects the projects at home. Using that way can save teachers' efforts on one hand, and raise students' awareness and assessment skill on the other hand. At the beginning teachers train the students and go with them step by step till they will be able to assess themselves skilfully. Teachers spend much time when doing this. Feedback is stressed by the teacher through remarks and marks.

Two teachers do not evaluate pupils' projects because they do not assign them at all.

Question Fourteen: After correction what kind of rewards do the learners get?

- a. Marks
- b. Oral Rewards
- c. Both
- d. None of them.

If no, please justify.....

Due to its importance in learning, this question is specifically designed to explore the teachers' ways to reward learners after correcting their projects.

Options	Number of teachers	%
a. Marks	06	20 %
b. Oral Rewards	04	13.66%
c. Both	18	60%
d. None of them	02	6.66%
Total	30	100%

Table 14: Teachers' Encouragement of Projects' Realisation

The results reveal that 6.66% of teachers do not do such a task. They have already explained (Question 08) that they do not assign the project work. They often replace it with writing assignments, especially with third year classes. They provide written feedback on pupils' pieces of writing, but never give marks.

Eighteen (60%) of informants mark their pupils' projects and give oral comments as well. The project work needs much energy and a long period of time to be achieved by the learners who are, indeed, in need to be rewarded both in terms of marks and oral rewards. Through rewarding and praising, teachers encourage and help the learners in preparing better projects.

Six (20%) teachers opt for rewarding their learners through marks as they are not going to present it orally but rather prepare the written forms only. In fact, the common obstacle in project work is the learners' lack of how to present data.

Four (13.66%) teachers reward their pupils orally. These teachers suggest giving extrinsic reinforces, like oral praising or hugs, something given to the student in front of the other students ,simple rewards as a nod, a smile, thumbs-up, an exclamation of joy in the target language, or a gentle chuckle is effective with any class if it has been done at the right moment. Rewards must be fair and regular for all students, but also must vary for each project.

Question Fifteen: If you give marks, what proportion of the average mark of the term does' the project get in comparison to other tests?

a.10% b.30% c. 40% d. 50% and more e. No one

This question aims at finding out teachers' perceptions of the learners' projects grading process. Being aware of students' attitudes help teachers make use of appropriate techniques.

Options	Number of teachers	%
a.10%	03	10%
b.20%	08	26.66%
c.30%	08	26.66%
d.40%	03	10%
e.50% and more.	06	20%
f. No one.	02	6.66%
Total	30	100%

Table 15: Teachers' Perceptions of Project Work Grading Techniques

Three respondents attribute 10% of marks to projects. Eight respondents attribute 20% of marks to project works. Other eight respondents attribute 30% of marks to projects. Three respondents attribute 40% of marks to projects. Six respondents attribute more than 50% to marks. In fact, According to (Lakehal, 2008, as cited in Khelifi, 2013, p. 416-417), “regular testing... is an integral part of the Algerian system of education... ; therefore, students are indirectly forced to learn, not for the sake of learning, but rather to secure passing marks.”

Only two teachers do not grade projects. Those are the ones who do not assign it at all.

In order to make effective grading, teachers should play an active role through helping learners to measure their mistakes in order to react effectively to next projects.

Question sixteen: In your opinion, does the realization of the project work provide a real situation for the integration of the competencies the learners are required to master by the end of the course?

a. Yes b. No c- Do not know

If yes, please say how.....

Options	Number of respondents	%
a. Yes	28	93.33%
b. No	00	00%
c-Do not know	02	6.66%
Total	30	100%

Table 16: Teachers' Perceptions of the Integration of the Targeted Competencies in

Project Work Realization

For 28 of the respondents (93.33%), the realization of the project work provides real situations for the integration of the competencies the learners are required to master at the end of the course. This information may explain the fact that they are able to determine the main competencies of EFL projects. One teacher states that the effectiveness of projects lies in the accomplished competencies and can be determined by learners and teachers. Teachers find that projects are excellent tasks to develop or evaluate the targeted competencies.

Two teachers (6.66%) do not know if the realization of the project work provides this opportunity for the pupils because they do not assign it at all.

Question Seventeen: through assigning the project work, you are aiming at:

a. Helping pupils to practise accurately certain linguistic forms.

b. Encouraging pupils to communicate effectively in different situations.

c. Helping pupils to develop their social skills (cooperation/ collaboration).

d. Instilling some good values (beliefs and attitudes) in your pupils.

e. Developing pupils' autonomy, self-esteem and efficacy.

This question aims at finding out if secondary school teachers are aware of the benefits of the project work for their pupils.

Answers	Number of teachers.	%
a+b+c	07	23.33%
a+b+c+e	05	16.66%
a+b+c+d+e	18	60%
Total.	30	100%

Table 17: Teachers' Awareness of the Benefits of the Project Work

Eighteen informants aim at helping pupils to practise the acquired language aspects related to grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation accurately. They want to encourage them to use the learnt language skills and competencies to communicate in different situations. For them, the project work also helps pupils to collaborate and cooperate among each other and learn good values: autonomy, self-esteem and efficacy. Thus, it is clear that the majority of teachers are aware of how beneficial the project work is for their pupils.

Question Eighteen: Whatever your opinion and reasons, do you think 'Project Work' as a teaching, learning, and testing procedure, should be:

- a. Improved? Through better teaching learning conditions (reduce class size, organize special workshops at school, diversify resources materials and documents, allocate more time, etc...)
- a. Abolished? Because it causes much more troubles for both teachers and learners; takes too much time and energy without positive results in learners' proficiency development.

This question aims at investigating teachers' attitudes towards the future of the project work under the CBA in their classes relying on their experiences.

Options	Total	%
a. Improved.	30	100
b. Abolished	00	00
Total	30	100%

Table18: Teachers’ Opinions about the Future of the Project Work in EFL Secondary Schools

The findings show that all of the informants opt for the improvement of the project work. None of them wants it to be abolished. That means that our informants has really experienced the benefits of the project work in their classes regardless of the difficulties they faced during its implementation and evaluation. However, teachers want to work in better conditions i.e., with less crowded classes, more materials and more time.

3.4. Discussion of the Results.

This field study about teachers’ beliefs towards the project work under CBA reveals valuable data that will help us answer the research questions and confirm one of the suggested hypotheses. After carrying out this investigation, we come to the conclusion that almost all (28) EFL teachers at the secondary school assign the project work. That means teachers are quite aware of the crucial role that the project work plays under the CBA. This also implies that the teachers are convinced of the project’s benefits for their pupils. They believe that if used correctly, the project work develops pupils’ critical thinking skills and cooperation, and increases motivation towards learning in general. That’s why; teachers are using a variety of techniques and strategies to implement and evaluate it. Therefore, we can say, that these findings confirm hypothesis one and answer the second and the third research questions. However, these two processes i.e., the implementation and evaluation of the project work are largely influenced by teachers’ beliefs and some external factors such as overcrowded classes

and time constraints. Consequently, these two processes need to be improved. In other words, they should be made more systematic and more effective to guarantee the project's success and fruitfulness in the EFL secondary school context.

3.5. Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

3.5.1. For The effectiveness of Professional Development.

This study highlights some interesting points to be considered when integrating the project work in secondary schools. In this study, most teachers hold learner-centred pedagogical belief and try to adjust their beliefs to external requirements to respond to EFL language programs. However, some teachers are not aware and lack the understanding of the integration of language competencies and unit objectives. Those beliefs have a great impact on present and future educational policies.

One pedagogical implication has to do with teaching practice. From this study, it is possible to see how teachers' decisions presented in class come not only from their beliefs but also their experience. It is possible to see the complexity of these practices due to the diversity of pedagogical situations such as, lack of teaching, training and preparation that help in bridging the gap between their beliefs and practices.

One more interpretation has to deal with teachers' awareness of what responsibilities of teaching a foreign language they should have in mind when teaching and about the relationship between what they think and what they do. Teachers have ample opportunities to question their practices to minimize the inconsistencies between their beliefs and practices. As noted by Pajares (1992), "Attention to the beliefs of teachers . . . can inform educational practice in ways that prevailing research agendas have not and cannot." (p. 329)

Moreover, Pajares (1992) added, "when beliefs are clearly conceptualized, when their key assumptions are examined, when precise meanings are consistently understood and when

specific belief constructs are properly assessed, they can be the single most important construct in educational research.” (p. 329) Thus, focusing attention on beliefs about teachers’ capacity and knowledge is the beginning of a long way to teachers’ professional development.

3.5.2. For Effective implementation of the Project Work

These points are worth considering when incorporating the project work in EFL secondary schools:

- EFL projects should be applied in order to develop learners’ higher –order cognitive skills, cooperative skills and the ability to deal with real life issues.
- Pupils should be provided with topics that suit their levels and interests.
- Students choose the topic and are provided with only broad themes which could be adapted individually. This would increase learners’ interest in the topic and responsibility for the final product and presentation.
- Dividing the students to balanced groups would work more effectively.
- Many important aspects of projects are best done in classes where teachers work regularly and know the students personally.
- Learners should realize the benefits of the project work and appreciate opportunities they have during its accomplishment.

The realization of the project work should be systematic. For that reason, we suggest that EFL secondary school teachers follow Stoller (1995) model for orchestrating their project work:

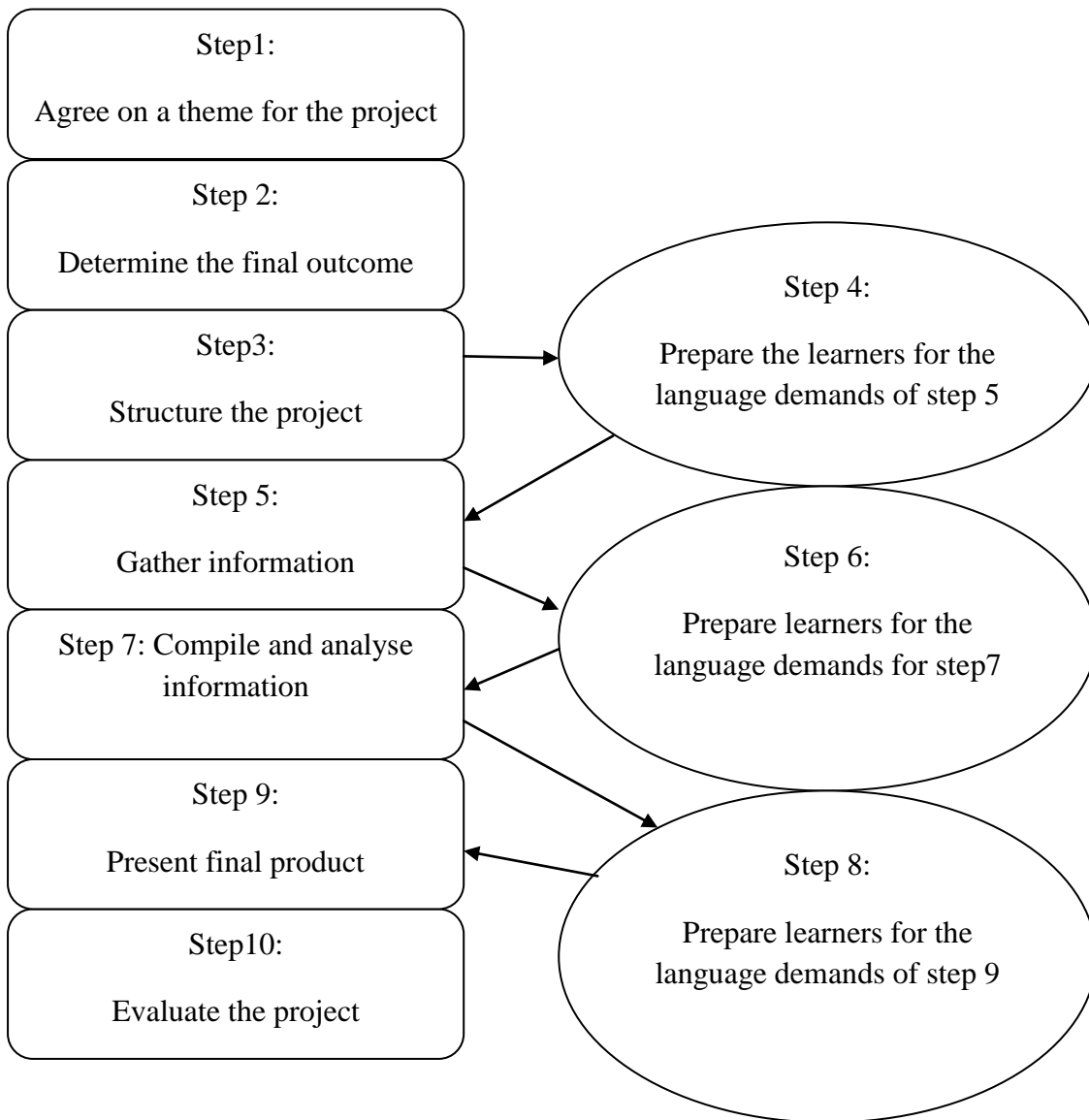


Figure (2): Developing a project in a language classroom. (Source: Stoller, 1997, p.2)

3.5.3. Implications for Effective Evaluation of the Project Work

Responding to students' projects is probably the most challenging part in teaching the Language projects. It doesn't only demand a tremendous amount of time and a great deal of intellectual activity, it also affects to a large extent students' psychological state and learning desire.

Evaluation when carried out correctly and at the right time and place is the most important aspect of ensuring the success of many projects. Thus, effective teachers take time to critically examine what learners do, identify their needs and preferences (at the meta-cognitive level), and adopt the right feedback strategy.

It should also be noted that each project may have unique requirements in certain circumstances. Teachers should attempt to develop suitable evaluation mechanisms. It is recommended that further education should be given to teachers about the aspects of evaluation so as to encourage them to use these tools often and correctly.

For evaluation to be vigorous, teachers should provide well-timed feedback because it enhances effectiveness, and awareness as opposite to delayed feedback which weakens its effectiveness. Including positive remarks on the corrected projects as well as analysing the gaps is also important since it increases the pupil's self-esteem.

Oswald (2005, as cited in Hadi, 2012, p.161) has provided teachers with two samples of project evaluation, we have selected the one below because it seems more practical for teachers

Did learners?	No	Slightly	Generally	mostly	Yes
	0	1-2	3	4	5
1-Do independent research to find information for the project?					
2-Apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate somehow process the information?					
3-Support their work with pictures, drawing, photographs or graphic organizers (charts, graphs, mind maps, Venn diagrams, etc.)?					
4-Prepare a project that is interesting for their classmates?					
5-Include the planning tool they used to collect and organize their ideas?					
6-Correctly use the required tense to develop their project writings					
7-Correctly use the language forms seen in the unit to develop their project writings?					
8-spell and punctuate their work correctly?					
Mark/Learners' total score..../40 =.....points of 20					

Table 19: A sample of project evaluation. (Source: Hadi, 2012)

Conclusion

Teachers should pay attention to their ways of assigning and evaluating the English language projects. They should take three significant factors into account: The type of the students (whether they are discouraged or motivated by the project), the type of the topic (whether it is authentic or immeasurable), the type of the methodology (whether it has a major effect on the learners' self-repair).

General Conclusion

Our thesis discusses teachers' beliefs towards the project work under the competency-based approach. All chapters of the theoretical part are based on relevant methodology books and provide a theoretical background and preparation for the practical part.

The theoretical part outlines major foreign-language teaching beliefs and methods related to their approach to project work. It also tackles the competency-based approach; its distinctive features and the competencies it targets in the Algerian context. In addition, it discusses the implementation and evaluation processes of project work. Furthermore, it introduces the role of the teacher during project work. The thesis marginally touches on the challenges and possible problems of project work which the teacher should consider in advance.

The practical part is based on a questionnaire which is carried out with high-school teachers. It is based on data collection and producing a final conclusion which is designed as practical advice for all EFL teachers. It tackles the project work in terms of its realization and evaluation.

The findings reveal insightful information on effective teaching of the project work. First, effective classroom implementation of the project work requires understanding of the importance of planning and delivering instructions. Simultaneously, effective classroom evaluation requires an understanding of the role of evaluation in planning and delivering feedback. It calls for Teachers' familiarity with a variety of methods and procedures when dealing with projects. Teachers should be active agents of change using previous results to modify projects environments.

All in all, project work in English language teaching is an effective method of teaching and learning which naturally integrates language competencies. Using language for a specific

purpose increases learners' motivation to speak and to share their opinions and ideas. For a project to be successful both the teacher and his learners have to be prepared for a new style of working. Pupils should be encouraged to deal confidently with the stages of the project work and go deeper into the complexities of the English language to achieve success. This thesis proves that the benefits of project work clearly outweigh all possible problems.

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Appendix

Teachers' Questionnaire.

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is a data collection tool on the implementation as well as the evaluation of the project work under the currently practised approach i.e., the competency-based approach in order to prepare a Master's dissertation. Your contribution will be of great help to make the research work achieve its objectives. You are kindly required to answer the questions by ticking (√) your choices in the corresponding boxes or complete with your own information whenever necessary.

I. Teachers' Background:

1- Are you?

Male

Female

2- What is your degree?

BA degree (Bachelor of Arts)

MA degree (Master of Arts)

Ph.D.(Doctor of Philosophy)

Others, please specify

3- How long have you been teaching English at the secondary school?

Less than 1 year

1-6 years

6- 10years

10- 20 years

More than 20 years

II. The Competency-based Approach (CBA) in EFL Secondary Schools in Algeria:

4- Which of the following features are distinctive to CBA?

Personal-learning

Constructive learning

Meaningful Contexts

Multi-disciplinary approach

Cooperative/interactive learning (with peers and /or teachers)

5- What are the three main competencies that the CBA targets in the Secondary School Curriculum?

Interacting orally in English

Interpreting oral and written messages

Producing oral and written messages

Others. Please specify.....

13- When projects are submitted, do you correct them:

- In class with oral presentation?
- At home and provide written feedback on learners' papers?
- At home and then organize oral class correction?
- Only at home?

14- After correction, what kind of reward do the learners get?

- Marks Oral reward (encouragement, advice, etc...)
- Both of them. None of them.

If no, please justify.....

15- If you give marks, what proportion –of the average mark of the term does ‘The Project’ get in comparison to other tests and exams?

- 10% 30% 40% 50% and more None.

16- In your opinion, does the realization of the project work provide a real situation for the integration of the competencies the pupils are required to master by the end of the course?

- Yes No

17- Through assigning projects, you are aiming at:

- Helping students to practise accurately certain linguistic forms.
- Helping students to communicate appropriately and effectively in different situations.
- Helping students to develop their social skills (cooperation and collaboration)
- Instilling some good values (beliefs and attitudes) in your pupils.
- Improving pupils' behaviour and strengthening their personalities.
- None of the above. All of the above

18- Whatever your opinion and reasons, do you think ‘Project Work’ as a teaching, learning, and testing procedure, should be:

- Improved? Through better teaching learning conditions (reduce class size, organize special workshops at school, diversify resources materials and documents-, allocate more time, etc...)
- Abolished? Because it causes much more troubles for both teachers and learners; takes too much time and energy without positive results in learners' proficiency development.

Thanks for your Collaboration.

Résumé

L'usage de la méthode de l'approche par compétence, dans l'enseignement de la langue Anglaise comme langue étrangère, même à la pratique directe de l'idée du projet de travail comme moyen de progression des compétences et de leurs évaluations. Car il aide les apprenants à acquérir les informations et de les utiliser à accomplir leurs tâches. Mais malgré la positivité de la théorie, sa pratique reste ambéguë pour la majorité des enseignants de la langue anglaise comme langue étrangère au niveau secondaire. La pratique et l'évaluation du projet de travail sont deux opérations soumises à la croyance et la conviction personnelles des enseignants. C'est pourquoi, cette étude vise à rendre la pratique et l'évaluation du projet de travail plus organisé et efficace. Et donc, assurer sa réussite par l'intermédiaire d'une série de consignes proposées par cette étude. De plus, les enseignants concernés peuvent se référer au tableau suggéré pour le même but, afin de faciliter cette opération d'évaluation du projet et lui donner plus d'efficacité.

ملخص

إن اعتماد منهج المقاربة بالكفاءات في تدريس/ تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية يؤدي عمليا الى التطبيق المباشر لفكرة مشروع العمل كأداة لتطوير الكفاءات و تقييمها لأنه يساعد المتعلمين على كسب المعلومات و استعمالها لا نجاز المهام. و لكن بالرغم من ايجابياته النظرية، يبقى تطبيقه غير واضح لمعظم مدرسين اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الثور الثانوي بطريقة أخرى، تطبيق و تقييم مشروع العمل هما عمليتان خاضعتان وبنسبة كبيرة لاعتقادات الأساتذة و قناعاتهم الشخصية لهذا تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى جعل عمليتي تطبيق و تقييم مشروع العمل أكثر تنظيم و فعالية و بالتالي ضمان نجاحه عبر إتباع مجموعة من التوصيات المقترحة من طرف هذه الدراسة الميدانية. إضافة إلى ذلك، يمكن للأساتذة المعنيين الاعتماد على الجدول المقترح في نفس الصدد لتسهيل عملية تقييم المشروع و منحها أكثر نجاعة و فعالية.