UNIVERSITY OF BLIDA 02

Faculty of Arts and Foreign Languages

Department of English

MAGISTER DISSERTATION

Specialty: Didactics of Civilization and Literature

A SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION IN THE ALGERIAN CONTEXT: THIRD YEAR SECONDARY PUPILS: ALGIERS

By

Amina GHEZALI

Board of Examiners:

Dr. Dalila BRAKNI   MC A University of Blida   President

Pr. Mohamed MILIANI   University of Oran   Supervisor

Dr. FatmaZohra NEDJAI MCA (Ecole des Beaux Arts, Algiers) External Examiner

Blida, December 2013

DEDICATION

To my beloved parents

To my dear husband

To my princess, my daughter Wissem

To my beautiful niece Lydia

To my sister, and my brother

To my parents-in-law

To all my friends

ACKNOWLEDGEMENNTS

ABSTRACT

English has become increasingly the language of technology, progress and communication across the globe. This fact led to the increase in demand and urgent need of learning and teaching not only the target language but also its culture as well. Focusing on the inseparable relationship of culture and language, this thesis is concerned with the incorporation of the teaching of culture into the foreign language classroom particularly in teaching reading. Historically speaking, the Algerian educational system paved the way for making the progress of teaching /learning process by adopting several approaches and methods. However, our traditional classrooms still emphasis on the reading fluency at the expense of reading to learn and understand to cope with the changing world. Nevertheless, not only the school environment is responsible for the success or failure of the learning process, but there are other determinants. The social, cultural and even linguistic environment play crucial roles in forming active learners with rich knowledge. Therefore, teaching reading by emphasizing the culture represents a great challenge for both EFL teachers and their learners.

The current study is conducted with third-year secondary pupils at seven different secondary schools in Algiers. It tends to investigate teachers' and learners' understanding of culture and culture teaching and learning, the way they handle it in class when they read, and their views about its place in their socio-educational environment.

This dissertation is divided into four interrelated chapters; the introductory chapter which describes the educational system in Algeria and the place of English in the socio-educational context. The second chapter deals with some principal basics on reading and culture needed to explain the situation of reading in the Algerian context.

The third chapter presents the research procedures used for collecting and analyzing data then, reports on the findings obtained from the research tools and provides both qualitative and qualitative analyses. Lastly, on the bases of the findings obtained in this chapter, some recommendations and implications are drawn for EFL teachers and learners to improve reading performance taking into consideration the foreign culture of the language.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Pages

CHAPTER I: English in the Algerian socio-educational system

CHAPTER II: Reading comprehension and culture

CHAPTER III: FIELD WORK

CHAPTER IV: Recommendations and Suggestions

List of Tables

List of Figures

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBA: Competency-Based Approach

CBE: Competency-Based Education

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FC: Foreign Culture

FL: Foreign Language

NC: Native Culture

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition and language learning are among the topics that gave birth to a heated debate and many contrasting viewpoints among linguists. As far as the foreign language teaching is concerned, it has witnessed a significant change over the last few decades resulting in great emphasis on learners and learning. Indeed, foreign language learners are no longer regarded as passive and empty recipients waiting for linguistic pieces to be poured into their heads so as to be memorized and reproduce in vitro. Rather, they are active agents in their language learning who bring with them their cultural and social background to the process of learning. They can affect and be affected and their cultural attitudes and perceptions can play a role in deciding their success or failure in learning a foreign language and so a foreign culture.

Indeed, culture now is regarded as an integral part in the process of learning a foreign language as no language can be separated from its culture. Moreover, the culture in which each of us lives affects and shapes our feelings, attitudes, behaviors, as well as thoughts. It is largely through our culture that we see and interpret the world and evaluate the others. English language learning and teaching now involve more factors than cognitive functioning and phonetic development. Cultural influence of both the native and the target culture impact learning styles, instructions approached and language skills as reading and writing. Brooks (1964, 45)states:" Turning to culture, we deliberately shift focus away from language as such toward the people who use the language, where and how they live, what they think, feel and do. It is nowadays a common place in a language pedagogy that language and culture are intertwined".

As language is the mirror of culture and affected by it, we can not talk about learning a language without talking about learning its culture. Indeed, culture makes the rules of languages and affects their production and development. As far as reading is concerned, as it is a very complicated skill involving many aspects, it is an important aim for foreign language learning to master its culture by reading its foreign material. In turn, many problems and barriers will be encountered in reading for lacking of cultural knowledge on the target language.

Regarding the Algerian context, the Algerian learners have an unsatisfactory level of English especially in reading. This is due to different factors such as the Algerian socio-cultural context which does not give a great importance for learning English and especially reading despite the ever increasing demand of English as a language of communication, media, and globalization. Indeed, Algerian learners are not aware of the importance of this language and do not accept its culture. Adding to that, while teaching reading the main aim of the tasks is to make pupils read the texts and answer questions of comprehension, but in many cases the learners find themselves unable to answer correctly because of their lack of cultural knowledge, and because the teacher fails in explaining the cultural component.

Aims of the study:

Through this study, we aim at having a better understanding of culture teaching within foreign language education. We aim in particular at investigating the place of cultural component in the process of learning English at Secondary schools. We also aim at exploring the role of reading as a means to discover the culture of the other and enhance the cultural background of the learner. Another objective of this study is to analyze learners' views and perceptions towards the target culture and its influence on the process of reading.

Statement of the purpose:

The standards for foreign language learning in the twenty first century stress that learning about culture is an integral part of learning a foreign language. What is language if not a means of communication operating in a defined socio-cultural context. Such exploration is a necessary bridge to gaining valuable insights about one's own socio-cultural perceptions, attitudes and culture as well as the culture of the target language. According to our experience as a teacher of English at the university and at the secondary school, the majority of the Algerian learners of English find tremendous difficulties to read, understand and achieve comprehension of the texts in their English textbooks, even after several years of study. General dissatisfaction with English language teaching in Algeria, particularly at secondary school third year level, has led us to wonder whether the cultural component is adequately taken in teaching reading comprehension at this level. This questioning entails reference to various relevant concerns:

- Is English- speaking culture really integrated in the process of teaching reading comprehension?

- What cultural content should be taught to Algerian learners who do not have close contact with the native speakers of the target language, and have little opportunities to see how these foreigners think, feel, and interact?

- Does the integration of culture in teaching a foreign language lead to an effective reading process, or can reading be a window on the culture of the other?

- Can the integration of the target culture in teaching reading affect the competency and proficiency of the Algerian readers?

- How do Algerian learners respond to the target culture when reading a text compared to their native culture?

Hypotheses:

In order to give insight in the problems raised in this thesis, the following hypotheses have been elaborated. The first one focuses on the place of English culture in the Algerian education; the second one has to do with the materials used to teach reading in the textbooks; and the third is concerned with the learners.

Hypothesis one:

We hypothesize that the socio-cultural component of English language is not adequately incorporated in the Algerian educational system.

Hypothesis two:

We hypothesize that the materials used to teach reading comprehension do not help learners understand the culture of the target language, and there are not activities integrated in the lessons focusing on the target culture.

Hypothesis three:

We hypothesize that most of the Algerian learners at the Secondary level are not conscious of the importance of incorporating the cultural component in foreign language learning, and their environment does not encourage them to learn it.

Research means and procedure:

In order to enquire into the issues and hypotheses enunciated above, different means of data collection will be used in our investigation. To begin with, this research work is led through a quantitative analysis. To inquire into the teachers' viewpoints and beliefs about

the importance of integrating the cultural component in teaching a foreign language in general and reading comprehension in specific, as well as the place of culture in the official textbook, a questionnaire is designed and adapted to the targeted level. The questionnaire is divided into two parts, the first part deals with general information about the teacher. The second part deals with the integration of culture when teaching English and especially reading.

The same research means is suitable when surveying the learners, to throw light on their views and attitudes as regards reading in English and learning about English-speaking cultures. This questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part deals with general information about the learner. The second part is about learners' attitudes and perceptions towards reading and also their reading habits. The third part deals with including culture in their process of learning English and reading in English. Adding to that, in order to evaluate Algerian learners' ability to achieve the cultural meaning when reading in English, reading tests are administered to the pupils with whom the study is conducted.

Both qualitative and quantitative analyses have been used to answer the aims of this work.

Structure of the work:

The present research work displays an outline of four chapters in which the first starts with a general overview of the Algerian educational system and the place of English in the Algerian socio-educational system. It also includes the sociolinguistic profile in Algeria as it an important investigation to understand the position of English in Algeria and the attitudes of Algerians towards this international language.

The second chapter deals with necessary concepts about reading comprehension and culture to understand the nature of each one. The purpose is to highlight the attachment between learning reading in a foreign language which is English in our context and its culture. Adding to that, this chapter also shed light on the importance of integrating culture in learning and teaching reading and how they can influence each other.

In chapter three, we find the experimental work. It describes the research methodology including the participants chosen to conduct this study who are pupils of third year secondary level and secondary school teachers from Algiers. Besides the factors that have contributed to the choice of the above sample. Adding to that, it includes the tools used for the investigation represented in the questionnaires designed for teachers and learners, and reading tests to evaluate Algerian learners' proficiency and competency in

achieving comprehension while reading in English. In this chapter also we find the analysis of the data collected from the instruments used above. All the components are evaluated separately in order to have objective information about improving teaching and learning reading by integrating culture in the process of learning. To reach the objective of this experimental research, the pupils' tests and the questionnaires have been thoroughly analyzed. Then, the findings of the questionnaires are compared to those of the tests administered to the pupils.

The last chapter, as its name indicates, proposes some recommendations and suggestions which may help pupils overcome the difficulties they encounter in reading comprehension. It calls for an attempt to realize an effective reading teaching in the Algerian educational context, by encouraging them to be active agents in the process of learning reading in a foreign language by using their knowledge about the target language and understanding the culture of the other.

Lastly, our work ends with a general conclusion summarizing the main research findings, presenting the limitations of the study, some implications for future research.

CHAPTER I: ENGLISH IN THE ALGERIAN SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

1.1 Introduction

1.2 The general state of English as a foreign language

    1.2.1   The role of English as a Foreign Language

    1.2.2   Approaches to English language teaching as a Foreign Language

        1.2.2.1 The communicative approach

        1.2.2.2 The competency-Based Approach

    1.2.3   Reasons for unsuccessful English in Algeria as a Foreign Language

        1.2.3.1 Age

        1.2.3.2 Psychological factors

        1.2.3.3 Social factors

        1.2.3.4 Pedagogical factors

1.3 English as a foreign language in the Algerian educational context

    1.3.1   An overview of the Algerian educational system

    1.3.2   The place of English in the Algerian educational system

        1.3.2.1An overview of English Language Teaching/ Learning in Algeria:

1.3.2.2 The cultural dimension of EFL Education in Algerian Secondary textbooks

 1.3.3   Factors influencing EFL learning and teaching in the Algerian context

1.3.3.1 The socio-linguistic profile in Algeria

1.3.3.2 Socio-cultural factors

1.4 Conclusion

CHAPTER I

ENGLISH IN THE ALGERIAN SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

1.1 Introduction:

This chapter gives an overview of education in Algeria and Secondary schools in particular within which the present study was undertaken, the general state of education and the current condition of English learning as a foreign language in this socio cultural context. The discussions are set out to show the interrelationship among these constituents, which has given rise to the perceived problem and consequent questions of this research. The information given in this section is necessary since it helps to provide a clearer picture of why we have become interested in the mutual relationship between the language and its culture in which language is related specifically to 'socio-cultural identities' and EFL pedagogical practices and learners' behavior and performance during discursive practices. We divided the information in this chapter into two main sections: section 1.2 provides information on the general state of English as a Foreign Language, the role it plays, the approaches to teaching English and finally the reasons behind the unsuccessful English in Algeria. Section 1.3 gives an overview of English language in the Algerian educational system. First it describes the Algerian educational system, then the place of English in this system and finally the factors influencing EFL learning and teaching in Algeria.

1.2 The general state of English as a foreign language:

1.2.1 The role of English as a Foreign Language:

"Any literate, educated person on the face of the globe is deprived if he does not know English". (Burshfield Cited in Louznadji, 2003:78).

According to international statistics, the English language is the third largest in the world after Chinese and Spanish. It is spoken in 112 countries by 328 million speakers. The special phenomenon is that English is spoken all over the world and is not restricted to one area, as is Chinese. Edward Finegan summarizes this by saying that "though Chinese is spoken by a greater number of people, English is spoken around the globe and has wider dispersion than any other language" (Finegan, cited in Eichhorst, 2010:01). From its homeland, the United Kingdom, it has spread to other countries and continents like

America, Australia, New Zealand and Africa and become the lingua franca in many countries (Ibid).

One thing that all linguists and researchers of languages are sure of is the role that English plays nowadays. Anderman and Rogers point out that it has developed into a lingua franca (Anderman& Rogers 2005:1) which gives people the opportunity to communicate more easily and overcome borders. (Anderman& Rogers 2005:180). Joshua & Fishman sees "The expansive reach of English as undeniable and stoppable". ((Fishman cited in Eichhorst 2010: 1), and Sauer even defines it as "the most important language in the world". (Saur 2006:187). David Crystal proves that English is a global language by giving a short definition of the term: "A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country" (Crystal, 1997:2). That means, the language is not only mother tongue in many countries but is also present in other areas where it is either the official language or the language which is mostly taught to children, though it has no official status. (Crystal, 1997:3). The fact that English has gone through this "three-pronged development - of first-language, official-language, and foreign-language speakersgives it the status of a global language." (Crystal, 1997:4)

Nowadays it seems almost impossible to escape the influence of the English language. "The majority of the world's population is exposed to English every day via American brand names, advertisements and commercials, through subtitled Anglophone TV, film and DVD productions, lyrics and titles of all kinds". (Gottlieb, cited in Eichhorst 2010:1). Crystal even sees English as the most influential language ever when it comes to international relations. (Crystal, 2000:70).It is the chief language of world knowledge, technologies and computing. As Cook (2005:25) put it :

> In recent years, the growth of English has been further accelerated by a startling expansion in the quantity and speed of international communication and the rise of international operations linked to expanding U.S power and influence.... films, songs, television programmes, and advertisement are heard in English and seen in many countries where it is not the first nor even a second language.

The English language enjoys a great importance not just as an international but as a world language. Algeria is aware of the importance of English as it is a means to facilitate a constant communication with the world to gain access to modernsciences.

The use of English in particular social spheres is linked with political influences, economic opportunity resulting from the globalization process that is steadily gaining ground worldwide. Thus, English allows individuals to open the linguistic gates to international diplomacy, business negotiations, scientific research, academic conferences and tourism. Furthermore, the use of computer assisted linguistic devices and other tools such as multimedia and websites have significantly affected the state of English worldwide, and Algeria is no exception.

1.2.2 Approaches to English language teaching as a Foreign Language:

An approach as: "The sum of assumptions course designers make about language and language learning. This term gives a description of the many ways psychologists and linguists look at language …..it is a combined theory involving both language and the learning process" (Miliani quoted in Medjahed, 2011:73)

In speaking about the approaches to ELT, we should refer to two approaches which fit our context. The first one is the communicative approach which aims at helping learners acquire communicative competence; and since 2005, EFL teaching methodology shifted to use the competency –Based Approach answering the twenty first century needs and the world's new changes.

1.2.2.1 The communicative approach:

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) started developing in Great Britain in the 1960s, when British applied linguists began to question the assumptions underscoring Situational Language Teaching. Noam Chomsky was among the first ones to demonstrate that standard structural theories of language were incapable of accounting for the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences. Therefore, there was a shift from the insistence on the mere mastery of grammatical structures to the emphasis on communicative proficiency. Yalden (1987:61) summarized the essence of CLT thus:

> "It is based on the notion of the learners as communicators, naturally endowed with the ability to learn languages. It seeks to provide learners with the target language system. It is assumed that learners will have to prepare to use the target language (orally and in

written form) in many predictable and unpredictable acts of communication which arise both in classroom interaction and in real-world situations, whether concurrent with language training or subsequent to it."

Hymes (1972:16) stated that the goal of language teaching was to develop "communicative competence", which implied acquiring both an ability and knowledge to use language. In other words, communicative competence considers language as a tool used for communication. Not only does this competence aim to focus on the development of four language skills, but it also depends on the correlation between the skills. Canale and Swain (1980) claimed that it was common to use the term "communicative competence" to refer exclusively to grammatical competence. Yet, it is worth observing that the phrase "communicative competence" was also used to relate to the psychological, cultural and social rules which discipline the use of speech (Hedge 2000:54). Therefore, the communicative approach, which challenged the prevalent audio-lingual method, promoted the idea that social and cultural knowledge were necessary prerequisites for understanding and using linguistic forms. The classification of communicative competences proposed by Hymes (1972), and complemented by other theorists (Canale and Swain, 1980; Yule and Tarone, 1990; and Bachman, 1990; cited in Brown, 2000: 246-248) includes:

1. **Grammatical competence**: This can be associated with what Chomsky calls 'linguistic competence' and what Hymes refers to as what is 'formally possible'.
2. **Discourse competence**: It concerns the learner's ability to understand and be understood in various sorts of discourse be it oral or written.
3. **Sociolinguistic competence**: This requires the learner's capacity to comprehend the socio-cultural aspects of the context in which communication takes place.
4. **Strategic competence**: It refers to all that communicators use, both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, to cope with breakdowns in communication that can occur because of performance variables or lack of adequate competence.

1.2.2.2 The competency-Based Approach:

Competency-Based Education is an educational movement which emerged in the United States in the 1970's. According to Guskey (2005), CBE advocates the definition of educational goals in terms of "precise, measurable description of knowledge, skills, and

behaviours students should possess at the end of a course of study". (Guskey, 2005 cited in Ruth Ming Harwong, 2007:180). A key concept of this approach is competency meaning:

"A know-how-to-act process which integrates and mobilizes a set of capacities and skills and an account of knowledge that will be used effectively in various problem-solving situations or circumstances that have never occurred before.i.e. a competency continues throughout and beyond the school curriculum". (Louznadji, 2003)

In simpler terms, CBE focuses on the outputs or outcomes of learning.

This approach reflects a shift from the teacher who is responsible for transmitting knowledge into passive learners towards the learner who is supposed to be autonomous capable of coping with the changing world and utilize the skills acquired in the school environment for solving real-life problems.

In Richard's view, CBA seeks to teach learners the basic skills they need in order to prepare them for situations they commonly encounter in everyday life. Such an approach, as Auerbach (1986) puts it, has come to be accepted as "the state-of-the-art approach to adult ESL by national policymakers and leaders in curriculum development as well". (Auerbach, 1986: 411).

Larson and Weninger (1980) argue that there are three essential components in CBA. First, the skills that learners are expected to acquire must be defined with precision. Second, activities which permit learners to practice the clearly defined skills should be provided. Third, learner's ability to perform the skills must be assessed once instruction is completed. In other words, CBA includes the selection of competencies, instruction targeted to those competencies, and evaluation of learners' performance in those competencies.

The competency- Based Approach to language teaching aims at teaching language by taking into account the social context wherein language is used.

1.2.3 Reasons for unsuccessful English in as a Foreign Language:

Language is by far the most powerful and versatile medium of communication in any speech community.Deep and serious investigations conducted by many scholars claim that there are different factors which decide the success or failure of language learners. For some researchers, age can play a crucial role in the process of learning and language

learning can be attained only if it takes place at an early age. Others see that anxiety, and lack of motivation and self confidence can determine the success or failure of language learning. Language learning is also affected by other factors such as society and pedagogy.

1.2.3.1 Age:

Age which is considered to be of a great importance in language acquisition and language learning, engendered a great deal of controversy amongst researchers .Age has a great influence on the learning of languages for many reasons. First, during childhood there is a period known as "the critical period" when the human brain is most ready to receive input and to learn language. If the person does not acquire language during this period, he will find it almost impossible to do so later on. Brown (2007:57) defined the critical period as a "biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire"

Children are generally not aware that they are acquiring a language and thus, will learn automatically without having any social attitudes or values about one language or another. Another age factor influencing learning foreign languages is that children are not really afraid of making mistakes: they are more spontaneous than adults who are, most of the time, afraid of making errors or being laughed at.

1.2.3.2 Psychological factors:

During the process of foreign language learning, many factors seem to intervene. Besides age, researchers see that the psychological side plays a crucial role in language learning. These psychological factors include: firstly, anxiety that is considered as a natural phenomenon that all human beings experience, and whose degrees differs from an individual to another. Secondly, motivation and engagement.

1.2.3.2iAnxiety:

Another personality factor that may have an effect on foreign language learners is "anxiety ", which is somehow difficult to define. Spielberger defined it as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system ". (Cited in Brown 2007:161).

There is a distinction between two types of anxiety: "trait anxiety "and "state anxiety "Trait anxiety"is a permanent state of anxiousness, and it is unstable. Students havingthis type of anxiety, feel that they are unable to behave in a normal way because they do not have enough linguistic tools which help them to communicate freely.

State anxiety, on the other side, is related to a particular event or situation and it is more likely to appear in foreign language classes, where the student is controlled by the teacher who, for the student, does not tolerate mistakes. Anxiety can havea negative effect on foreign language learners. Researchers madeanother distinction between "debilitative "and "facilitative" anxiety, or what Oxford called "harmful "and "helpful" anxiety (Brown: 2007).

Facilitative anxiety is the tension that pushes the person to fulfill a given task and so, this type of anxiety helps the learner to do better. For example, the feeling of nervousness before giving a public speech is a sign of just enough tension to do the job. However, debilitative or harmful anxiety is the one which prevents the student from communicating freely; to the point that he all the time feels not relaxed and this may affect his achievement negatively.

Anxiety may be a source of competitiveness in the classroom, where students feel that they are in competition with one another, and this motivates them to work harder and express themselves. But, this is not the case all the time, because the fear of peers" and teachers" reactions may cause a threat for the learner and so, he prefers keeping silent to avoid any negative comment. Hence, it is important to signal that the teacher should establish a relaxing atmosphere inside the classroom in order to minimize, as much as possible, students' anxiety and make them feel at ease even when they make mistakes.

Moreover, some students may come with particular beliefs from the societies they live in, such as the idea that foreign language learning is a difficult task since a new and different culture will be introduced. All these factors might increase the learner's tensions and worries and so, will make the learning harder for him.

1.2.3.2 ii Motivation:

Motivation, which attracted attention of many researchers and teachers, is regarded to be one of the most important affective factors. Engagement and motivation are related

terms that sometimes are used interchangeably in the literature, but we believe the constructs should be distinguished from one another (Fredricks et al., 2004; Skinner et al., 2009). As just noted, engagement is a multidimensional construct that includes behavioral, cognitive, and affective attributes associated with being deeply involved in an activity such as reading; indeed, Fredricks et al. (2004) called engagement a meta-construct. By contrast, motivation is a more specific construct that relates to engagement but can be distinguished from it. Motivation is what energizes and directs behavior, and often is defined with respect to the beliefs, values, and goals individuals have for different activities (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Lambert and Gardner (1959) distinguished between integrative and instrumental motivation. While the former refers to the learner's wishes to belong to the target language culture, the latter had to do with the learner's wish to learn the target language for utilitarian purposes, for example, to get a job.

1.2.3.3 Social factor:

Language is an aspect of culture, and culture is an aspect of language. That is to say, language and culture are related. For Gonzalez (2004:58) "the more an individual is familiar with the culture of the host country, the easier it will be to communicate; and these factors in turn will promote integrative motivation and more rapid L2 learning ". Most of the studies came to conclusion that second language success depended on thelearner's attitudes. In other words, positive attitudes make the learner attain success and the opposite is true. Many surveys of the research demonstrated that there were different sources being able to affect language learning. In this respect, Spolsky (1969:237) claimed:

> "In a typical language learning situation, there are a number of people whose attitudes to each other can be significant: the learner, the teacher, the learner's peers and parents, and the speaker of the language. Each relationship might be well shown to be a factor controlling the learner's motivation to acquire the language." (Cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991: 178).

Other research saw the absence of the correlation between attitudes and language learning. That is, negative or positive attitudes do not necessarily mean failure or success in language learning. However, some social and cultural values that the person learns at home, at school, with peers and in the surrounding environment he lives in influence his motivation and attitudes. For instance, we find in some families that

people encourage or prefer learning scientific subjects, rather than learning foreign languages.

1.2.3.4 Pedagogical factor:

Another factor that is well worth mentioning here is pedagogy which is thought to have a powerful effect on language learning. While age and socio-psychological aspects affect only the learners' ability, pedagogical principles seem to have impacts on both teacher's and learner's ability. For example, deficiency at this level influences negatively by taking the teachers' and learners' motivation away. The Pedagogical deficiencies that can be cited are as follows:

1. Age at which English learning takes place, which is considered to be the critical age by many scholars.
2. Large number of learners in class and hours imposed to the teachers, which make the latter tired and less attentive.
3. Small number of hours devoted to English learning.
4. Unreliable orientation that makes many students study English against their will.
5. Lack of English post graduate teachers.
6. Absence of coordination among English teachers.
7. Absence of teacher training in some universities.
8. Lack of audiovisual materials, book, computers, etc.
9. Objectives of programs that do not correspond to the learners' need.
10. Number of examinations that makes the learners learn for the exam.

1.3 English as a foreign language in the Algerian educational context:

1.3.1 An overview of the Algerian educational system:

In Algeria under French rule (1930-1962) education was almost exclusively reserved to French and other European settlers and as a consequence only ten per cent of Muslim Algerians were literate at independence. (Merrouche,2006).The French colonial education imposed on Algeria was designed primarily to meet the needs of the European population and to perpetuate the European cultural pattern. A large majority of the students were children of the colonists. French was the language of instruction, and Arabic, when taught, was offered as an optional foreign language..

At the time of independence in 1962, the Algerian government inherited the remnants of an education system focused on European content and conducted in a foreign language by foreign teachers. Algerian authorities set out to redesign the system to make it more suited to the needs of a developing nation. The hallmarks of their program were indigenization, arabization, and an emphasis on scientific and technical studies. They sought to increase literacy, provide free education, make primary school enrollment compulsory, remove foreign teachers and curricula, and replace French with Arabic as the medium of instruction.

In the mid-1970s, the primary and middle education levels were reorganized into a nine-year system of compulsory basic education. Thereafter, on the secondary level, pupils followed one of three tracks--general, technical, or vocational--and then sat for the baccalaureate examination before proceeding to one of the universities, state technical institutes, or vocational training centers, or directly to employment. The process of reorganization was completed only in 1989, although in practice the basic system of schooling remained divided between the elementary level, including grades one to six, and the middle school level of grades seven to nine.

Many educational reform efforts have been recently launched in the majority of countries, among which figures Algeria. In fact, the Algerian authorities have felt the need to reform the system of education, a system which has been described as being 'doomed' by president Bouteflika prior to his election as head of state.(Benrabah, 2006:07). The Ministry of Education initiated a large scale educational reform program involving the three levels of education namely the primary, the middle and the secondary schools. This vast reform movement undertaken in July 2002 pits a learner-centered approach to learning against a teacher-led model of teaching. This reflects Roegiers' view that the mission of education is to instill such values as 'autonomy' and 'learning to learn' (Roegiers, 2006:03), which is learning to cope with the changes of the modern world and picturing learners as actively involved in the process of learning.

It seems that the goal behind undertaking an educational reform is a willingness to modernize the aims of teaching so as to adjust them to the new world and to offer an efficient instruction for learners.

The Algerian Educational reform revolves around three principle axes: teacher training, pedagogical reform and the general reorganization of the educational system. The valorization of teachers' status is a core element within this reform, the enhancement of their competencies and the mastery of the content to be taught. Pedagogical reform focuses on introducing new syllabuses and course books in all school subjects, and adopting the competency-based approach to teach them including foreign languages. As regards the organization of the educational system, it restructures teaching via the generalization of the pre-school, the reduction of the primary cycle into five years instead of six years and having four years in the middle school instead of having three years. (Ministère de l'Educationnationale, 2003:5-6).

As concerns EFL teaching, the recent reform consists essentially in adopting competency- Based Approach (CBA) as a new teaching paradigm. This change comes as an answer to the shifting demands of a consistently changing society affected by Globalization and where both actual roles of EFL alter and multiply. There is a strong desire on the part of authorities to depart from the previous teaching methodologies to a new one which aims at equipping the learners with necessary competencies required to function adequately in a wide range of real life situations. Indeed, the Education Reform has twofold aims which consist in forming a) well-trained work force, and b) good citizens. To achieve this, learners need to know how: 1) think for themselves 2) have confidence in their knowledge, and 3) be tolerant and open-minded. (Louznadji, 2008).

A further dimension of the reform in EFL education relates to its cultural contextualization. Within the Algerian context the issues of culture in foreign language teaching have always been/ are still subject to controversies. There is a lack of agreement among the decision makers and textbook designers about the attitudes to adopt towards the local/ national, the foreign/ target and the international/ global culture (s).

1.3.2 The place of English in the Algerian educational system:

1.3.2.1An overview of English Language Teaching/ Learning in Algeria:

"In a situation where the French language has lost much of its ground in the socio-cultural and educational environments of the country; the introduction of English is being heralded as the magic solution to all possible ills-including economic, technological and educational ones" (Miliani quoted in Medjahed, 2011:73)

Algeria has adopted English as foreign language in its schools and higher educational institutions. English is part of the educational curriculum at all levels in Algeria, and has been a compulsory subject for students from first-year in the middle school level until thelast year of the secondary level. This means that the Algerian pupils have to learn English exactly seven years, i.e., four years at the middle school level, and three years at the secondary school level. This new policy has been adopted to make progress in ELT by offering opportunity to learn English at an earlier age. Whereas, for higher education, that is, university, English is taught as a branch of study in the department of English or as a supplementary module in other fields of study such as, Physics, Biology, Economics, Sociology, etc. This tendencytowards teaching English in these fields of study is due to the fact that English is the language of science in this global era.

English is used in Algeria as a second foreign language after French. Recently, it has been noted that Algerian pupils have an unsatisfactory level of English in basically all skills despite the fact that the National Curriculum of the country made English a compulsory subject for students starting from middle school. The below-average proficiency of English among Algerian pupils should serve as a call for serious attention from policymakers, educators, and teachers. All agencies involved in the educational development of the country are already greatly concerned with English teaching, because while there is an ever increasing demand for international communication skills, Algerian pupils' low English oral proficiency is deeply unpromising for the development of the country general. The Ministry of Education has thus constantly emphasized that teachers need to reform their teaching approach to put less stress on rote learning, memorization, and the grammar-translation method, and to implement an approach that enhances communicative skills.

Algeria started redesigning the educational system for the purpose to improve the teaching/ learning process and obtaining high yields.

1.3.2.2 The cultural dimension of EFL Education in Algerian Secondary textbooks:

The cultural dimension in foreign language teaching materials has always attracted much debate among professionals and teachers. Two main reasons explain the controversies the issue raises mainly in post-colonial contexts. The first is related to the view that culture is what makes the Other different from us (Duranti, 1997). Kramschstates that "…..*both words and their silences contribute to the shaping of one's*

own and other's culture".(Kramsch, 1998:09). The second reason is related to the intricate relationship that exists between language and culture and its underlying representation. Any cultural content included in the teaching materials is prone to provide specific representations of identity and construction through the process of foreign language learning where the learners' source culture meets the foreign target culture.

In Algeria, English is taught as a second foreign language and is based on EFL textbooks produced locally and subject to the approval of the Ministry of National Education. Since Algerian learners are in a context which does not allow them direct access to "real" spoken or written English, the textbook is the main teaching/ learning aid that is meant to provide them with such an opportunity.

It is widely accepted that language teaching is closely associated with foreign culture teaching and that EFL textbook is an effective instrument for educational practice which at the same time reflects values and ideologies held by individuals and nations.

Textbook designers are aware that English cannot be taught in a cultural vacuum but do not always agree about where and what type of cultural content best fits the Algerian school. It should be the learners' local culture or the English- speaking countries culture, as the school *" exists within a larger educational system and , indeed, within an overall socio-political system in which social, cultural, religious, economic and political issues can all have an influence"* (Malamah-Thomas, 1987 cited in McGrath, 2002)

EFL textbooks are required to provide learners with secure and safe environments that foster their affective and cultural factors (Byram, 1995) but at the same the same time give them the opportunity to meet and discover the foreign culture.

In Algeria little though is directed to the evaluation of EFL textbooks mainly as concerns culture issues and their impact on the success/ failure of English teaching in the country. The change of textbooks or their replacement does not always result from a systematic evaluation but comes as part of a reform. Indeed, three successive EFL text books: *Think it Over* (1989), *Comet* (2001), and *New Prospects* (2007) have been designed for Algerian learners at their third year of secondary school.

It is worth noting that these three textbooks were commissioned by the Ministry of National Education as part of the repeated reforms whose aim was improving the process of English teaching/ learning in Algeria.

1.3.3 Factors influencing EFL learning and teaching in the Algerian context:

1.3.3.1 The sociolinguistic profile in Algeria:

Algeria suffered a more intense and prolonged attack on its language and culture than any other Arab country. Thus, the Algerian situation is complex, as it is at a crossroad of tensions between French the colonial language and Arabic, the new national language; classical Arabic versus colloquial Algerian Arabic, and the various Berber dialects versus Arabic. (Tabory&Tabory, 1987:64).

North Africa in general and Algeria in particular witnessed many invasions, some of which had a great effect on the Algerians and the local language. Besides, talking about Algeria's linguistic situation makes it a must to consider another language which is French, a language inherited after a long period of the French colonization (1830- 1962).

1.3.3.1.i Arabic:

The Algerian charter states that Islam is the religion of the state and Arabic is the language of the country. The largest part of the population speaks Arabic. In addition to that, must be added the more widespread use of Arabic in nationalist and Islamicist movements as a source of authenticity and identity as it is the language of Quran. Arabic is the national official language of the state and is represented under two forms: Classical Arabic which is taught at schools.

The second form of Arabic is its spoken variety which is used by all the Arab populations. This form varies from one person to another and from one region to another.

1.3.3.1ii French:

French was widely used during the colonization of France to Algeria. It has been deeply rooted in the Algerian society before and after independence. After independence, Algeria pursued a policy of Arabization, aimed primarily at displacing French from its colonial position as the dominant language of education and literacy. French stands as a second language. Though many attempts were taken to weaken the influence of the French language in favor of Classical Arabic, this did not succeed to make it disappear from the Algerians' lives and culture.

<u>1.3.3.1 English:</u>

English stands as a foreign language in Algeria. Algerians meet it only in the classroom where as the "national environment is far from being supportive" (Baloto quoted in Medjahed, 2011:73). Although the importance that English enjoys as a language of news, communication and business, the role it plays in the social and economic development of the country is not as much important as French does.

<u>1.2.3.2 Socio-cultural factors:</u>

In Algeria, English starts to be learned at about13 ofage.The delay in learning English, and the little exposure to this language make learners much influenced by their first language or by French. This influence is revealed at different levels: phonology, grammar, word-for-word translation, etc. Duskova (1969), for instance, found that interference from the other tongue was plainly obvious in errors of word order and sentence construction when she studied written errors in the compositions of Czech post graduate students (Krashen 1981, 65). This claim holds true for Algerian English learners who have a tendency to experience interference from their first language. The error frequently made by many students is the confusion between the grammatical structure of English and that of the Arabic language. This kind of interference occurs in the use of object pronouns like 'it' and 'them' as repetition of the subject of the same sentence.

Again, in Algeria, one can easily notice that students are much influenced by different sources of attitudes. Parents, for instance, are felt to be a crucial source of positive or negative attitudes. Their positive attitudes towards the target language encourage and motivate their children, but their negative attitudes do not. In some areas, parents and grandparents relate foreign languages to historical events. English and mainly French are still considered by some people to be the languages of enemy. This can be understood through some individual's reaction and answer, "It is not my language" when one asks them why they do not succeed in learning French or English. Students are not influenced only by their parents but also by their teachers. Most of them experience positive attitudes towards teachers who, for instance, insert the first language, from time to time, in their teaching, believing that these teachers are closer to them. This fact makes the students feel at ease and more confident with these teachers than with those who use only the target language. In addition to positive attitudes, students sometimes show

negative attitudes towards part time graduate teachers , thinking that the latter are less competent than the post graduate ones. These negative attitudes were so acute in our university that many students went to other universities or abandoned definitely their language learning.

Moreover, regarding the Algerian context, students are exposed to the target language only in classroom and not outside the classroom. However, recent empirical and theoretical work on language acquisition (Krashen 1981a, Stern 1981, Swain 1981) suggests that gains in second language proficiency are best achieved in situations where the second language is used as a vehicle for communication about other subjects rather than itself being the object of study (Wesche and Ready 1985: 90). Accordingly, one can say that "good language learners" (Krashen 1987:45) practice the target language, and the more they communicate in this language, the higher level of proficiency they reach, which is not the case in Algeria. So, the amount of exposure to the target language influences the learning of English in Algeria.

1.4 Conclusion:

The importance of English as a universal language and the advance of technology and educational reform are key-determinants for new developments in English language teaching and learning in Algeria. The role of English in Algeria is quite important as it is in many other developing countries. Since the independence of Algeria, English is being taught so as to meet the needs of the learners as well as the country.

In fact, the aim behind adopting a new policy for EFL teaching is to make progress in all aspects of life, social, economic, technological and cultural. In spite of this, Algeria is still away from enhancing the learners' proficiency because of many reasons. The present chapter has tried to analyze and describe the place of English in the Algerian socio-educational context with reference to third-year secondary level.

CHAPTER II: READING COMPREHENSION AND CULTURE

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Reading and reading comprehension

2.3 Interactive models of reading

    2.3.1 Definition of interactive models

        2.3.1.1 Rumelhart's Interactive- Activation Model

        2.3.1.2 Stanovich's Interactive- Compensatory Model

        2.3.1.3 The Anderson and Pearson Schema-Theoretic Model

        2.3.1.3a Definition of Schema

        2.3.1.3b Types of Schemata

2.4 Variability in Reading Comprehension

    2.4.1 Variability in readers

        2.4.1.1 Socio-cultural influences

        2.4.1.2 Inter-individual differences

    2.4.2 Variability in text

    2.4.3 Variability in activity

2.5 Social and motivational influences on reading

    2.5.1 Home influences on Reading

    2.5.2 Classroom influences on Reading

2.6 Definition of culture

2.7 Language and culture

2.8 Characteristics of culture

2.9 Cultural elements

2.10   Integration of culture in teaching foreign languages

2.11   conclusion

CHAPTER II

READING COMPREHENSION AND CULTURE

2.1 Introduction:

"…The study of reading is, in part, the study of language processes, including comprehension. What distinguishes reading most clearly from spoken language processes is the conversion process, or decoding. Beyond decoding, reading shares some linguistic and general cognitive processes with spoken language in the processes of comprehension." *(*Perfetti, Van Dyke and Hart, 2001). Reading is regarded as a communicative and social activity in modern English teaching theory. It is not only a process of simply decoding of singles and symbols of language, but it is also a very complicated and intricate work. As language is the fundamental element and the carrier of its distinctive national culture, the ability of understanding when reading in a foreign language is not only decided by the proficiency of language knowledge itself but also restricted by the national culture.

As culture plays a very important role in the process of reading a foreign language. We can not only focus on the study of lexical meaning, syntactic meaning, and grammatical meaning, but we should extract the cultural information contained reading materials in the target language.

Research on foreign culture and foreign language reading comprehension is reviewed to support the claim that foreign language reading is an interactive process, involving the interrelationship of cultural knowledge and discourse structure.

This chapter deals with the two concepts. The first part looks at what ' reading comprehension' means, and the different interactive models of reading . It also points the elements of variability in reading which are variability in readers, in texts and in contexts. Finally, the chapter examines the social and motivational influences on reading. The second part looks at what 'culture' means, exploring the relationship between culture and language and the characteristics of culture. It also tackles the cultural elements such as the beliefs, values, behaviors, and taboos. It deals also with the cultural differences and similarities and finally with the integration of culture in teaching a foreign language.

2.2 Reading and reading comprehension:

"Reading is a mystery, nobody knows how reading works and that reading in fact is a psycholinguistic game" (Goodman, 1967).

As any mental and psychological activity, reading has been a subject of a debate. There are many attempts to describe what the actual process of reading is as it is a difficult and complex process which entails a set of skills.

Other explanations of what reading is, focus on the process. MacLeish(1968;43). proposed that "reading firstly requires getting sounds from the printed page". As Goodman puts it "Matching sounds to letters, a process that is either oral or silent. Following this, meaning needs to be assigned to the sound and the information derived needs to be interpreted appropriately". (Grabe&Stoller,2002;09). This process of interpreting information to achieve comprehension is multidimensional. Harmer(2001;200).states that:" A reader uses a variety of clues to understand what the writer is implying, thereby moving beyond the literal meaning of the words to the contextually and conceptually implied meaning".

Chastain (1988;228). suggests that: "The reading process entails active, cognitive interaction between mind and text in order to interpret and comprehend the text". So, the reader's task is to activate linguistic and cultural background to find the intended meaning which means achieving comprehension. Here reading is defined as the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written text. The reader is an important and active determinant of reading comprehension in addition to the text. Indeed, Grabe and Stoller (2002, 56), Anderson (2007, 57), and Wallace (2003:3-4, 7) emphasize that reading process extends beyond the mechanistic and cognitive skills, and calls for interpretation, comprehension and critique in a search for meaning.

For Smith (1985;100), giving a specific definition to reading is merely not possible in fear of an "oversimplification" of such a complex process as reading.

Instead, he is inclined towards looking for a description and an analysis of the word because it has a "multiplicity of meanings", depending on what is being read (material), by whom (reader), and why or what for (purpose).

Readers of different intercultural abilities and cultural backgrounds can read a huge range of things starting from prose (texts, books,..etc), non-prose (maps, road signs, …etc) ending up with non-print (faces, eyes…..etc), each in his own way. (Smith,2004;179). From this, it becomes clear that reading in Smith's vision goes beyond the frontiers of the page, he refers to the person's trials to comprehend any experience by relating it to all that he already knows.

To sum up what is mentioned in each of the definitions above, there is a definition which deals with all the key aspects of the reading process: It is Marinak, et.al's. (1997,02):

"Reading is a dynamic process in which the reader interacts with the text to construct meaning. Inherent in constructing meaning is the reader's ability to activate prior knowledge, use reading strategies and adapt to the reading situation".

According to this definition, comprehension entails three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity in which comprehension is a part. These three dimensions define a phenomenon that occurs within a larger socio-cultural context that shapes and is shaped by the reader and that interacts with each of the three elements.

2.3 Interactive models of reading:

Many reading models have been developed to explain the process of reading comprehension in L1 and L2 readers. Three types of process reading models have been developed: the bottom-up (Gough, 1972; Rayner and Pollatsek, 1989), the top- down (Goodman, 1975, 1988; Smith, 1971) and the interactive models (Rumelhart, 1990; Stanovich, 1980).

2.3.1 Definition of interactive models:

The definitions of "reading" and "reading comprehension" have moved beyond mere explicit recall, word recognition, and mastery of phonemic decoding. The definitions now include—or perhaps are even replaced by—the dynamic, reciprocal interactions among reader, text, and the context of the reader's prior literacy schema. No longer is the quiet, private, solipsistic model of the reading process adequate; the new model, rather, is that reading is an interactive and complex process. Reading is an iterative, interactive process. Historically, models were developed that represented the reading process as either "bottom-up," starting with the perceptual processing of text and moving upward through word recognition to comprehension, or "top-down," starting with activation of prior knowledge and proceeding downward .

Emerging from decades of research in the fields of psychology and education, interactive models of reading suggest that bottom-up and top-down processes are active simultaneously. Multiple models have been posited that similarly describe the reading process in this manner with variations regarding the actual subcomponents detailed, the import of each and the relationships between them, and the timings of interactions (e.g.

Glushko, 1981; Kintsch& Van Dijk, 1978; McClelland &Rumelhart, 1981; Rumelhart, 1977; 1981; Stanovich, 1980; Verhoevan&Perfetti, 2008). In an interactive model reading is a process through which the dynamic interaction of the reader's background knowledge, the information inferred by the written language, and the reading situation context is constructing meaning. (Dutcher, 1990).

Rayner and Pollatsek (1989:467) explain that, 'in interactive models, readers are usually assumed to be drawing upon both top-down and bottom-up information before eventually settling upon an interpretation of the text'. It is also noted that the notion of 'interaction' includes the interaction between reader's prior knowledge and the information in the text. (Eskey and Grabe, 1988).

2.3.1.1 Rumelhart's Interactive- Activation model:

The central feature of Rumelhart's Interactive-Activation model is that the processing of information in reading is assumed to consist of a series of levels. Information flows in both directions at once − from lower to higher levels and from higher to lower levels. (Rumelhart&McClelland,1982: 60). The model consists of three different levels which contain processing units. Units are connected to the levels before and after them. Each connection is excitatory, meaning it makes a destination unit more active, or inhibitory. Each unit is also connected to each other unit within the same level by an inhibitory connection, introducing the element of competition. A network has an arrangement called an architecture.(Rumelhart& McClelland, 1981:378). The strength of Rumelhart's model lies in its allowance for interaction between lower-level processes (such as orthographic knowledge) with higher-order processes (such as semantic knowledge). (Samuels and Kamil, 1988). Readers are seen to play an active role in the process of reading because they are constantly hypothesize about the meaning of the text. They are able to use their orthographic, syntactic, semantic and lexical knowledge in order to perform a reading task.

Rumelhart's interactive model of reading synthesizes four different types of knowledge, simultaneously: syntactical knowledge, semantic knowledge, orthographic knowledge and lexical knowledge. This model begins with graphemic information being registered by the *visual information store* (VIS). All the different types of knowledge, then, interact with each other in the *pattern synthesizer* in order to produce the " most probable interpretation". (Rumelhart, 1990:588). The interactive model is viable because it allows a reader's background knowledge, such as cultural knowledge, to interact with other types of

knowledge possessed by the reader. Figure 1 presents this model that captures this dynamic process (Perfetti, Landi& Oakhill's, 2005).

Figure2.1: An Interactive Activation Model Reading (Perfetti, Landi& Oakhill, 2005)
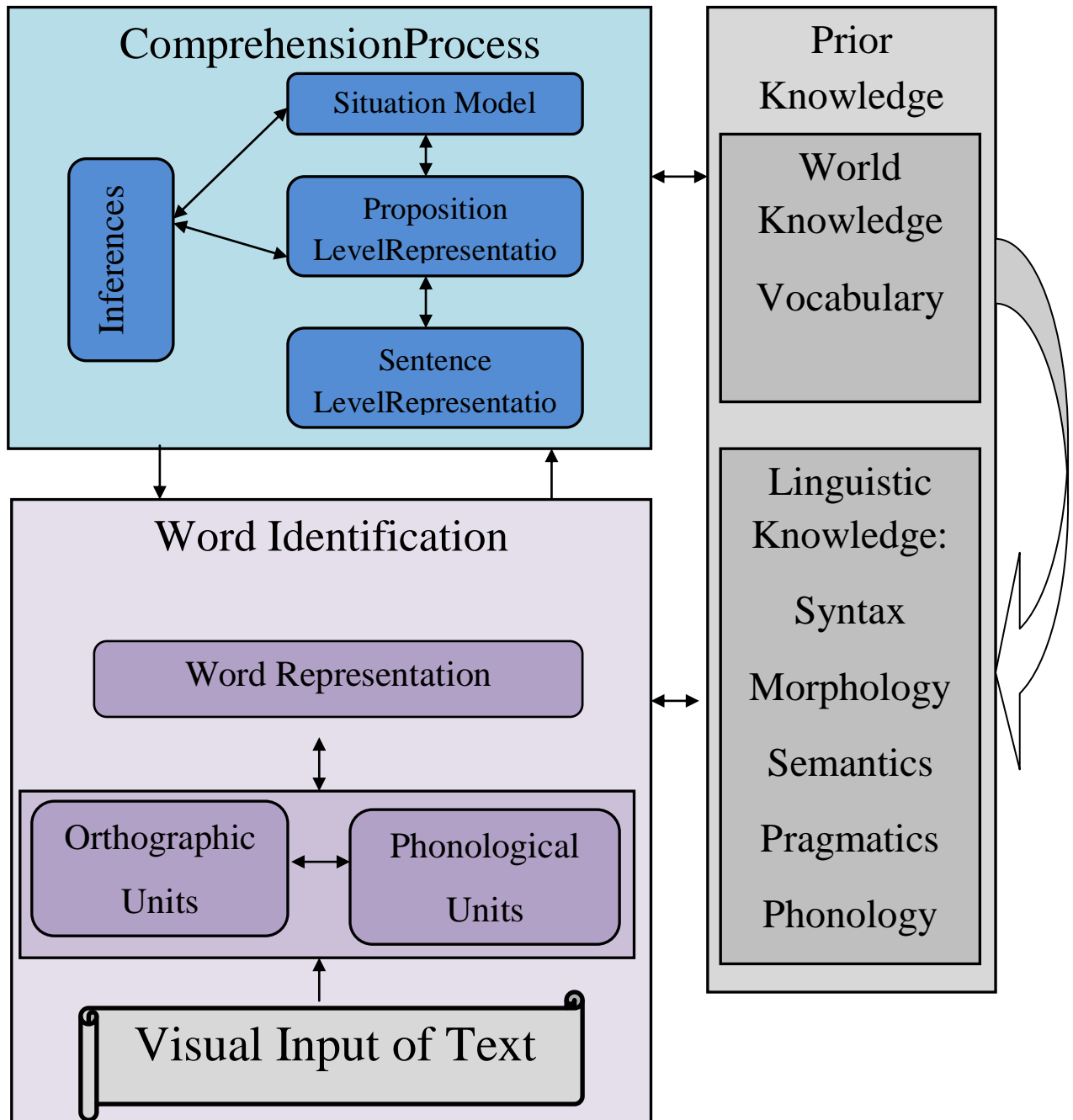
2.3.1.2 Stanovich's Interactive- Compensatory Model:

Stanovich's model takes Rumelhart's interactive model a step further by incorporating the notion of lower-level processes compensating higher-level processes and vice versa. It is also refers to as a compensatory –interactive model because it caters for

both skilled and unskilled reading. The interactive-compensatory model of reading was developed primarily to explain developmental and individual differences in the use of context to facilitate word recognition during reading. The interactive-compensatory hypothesis assumes that the reader is processing information simultaneously, not in sequential stages. The reader is looking at features, orthographic knowledge, semantics, syntax, and lexical(vocabulary) knowledge during the process.According to Samuels and Kamil (1988:32), "if there is a deficiency at an early print analysis stage, higher-order knowledge will attempt to compensate". It incorporates the compensatory mode which enables the reader to "at any level compensate for his or her deficiencies at any other level". The reader compensates in one or more of the knowledge sources by using information from remaining knowledge sources. For example, unskilled readers who face the problem of identifying the meaning of some difficult words in the text, but have knowledge about the topic of the text, can compensate for their weakness through their background knowledge. On the other hand, skilled readers who do not have the required content knowledge can compensate for their deficiency by way of their decoding skills Those sources that are more concerned with concepts and semantic relationships are termed higher-level stimuli; sources dealing with the print itself that is phonics sight words, and other word-attack skills are termed lower level stimuli.

The interactive-compensatory model implies that the reader will rely on higher-level processes when lower-level processes are inadequate, and vice versa. (Stanovichet al.1981:186).

2.3.1.3 The Anderson and Pearson Schema-Theoretic Model:

This model emphasizes the importance of background knowledge in reading comprehension. (Anderson et al 1986).

Schema theory is based on the belief that "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well" (Anderson et al in Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983:73). Thus, readers develop a coherent interpretation of text through the interactive of text through the interactive process of combining textual information with the information a reader brings to a text" (Widdowson in Grabe 1988:56).

Schema-theoretic research highlights reader problems related to absent or alternate (often culture specific) schemata as well as no-activation of schemata, and even overuse of background knowledge.

<u>2.3.1.3.i The definition of schema:</u>

The basic premise of schema theory is that text id ambiguous. As Carrell and Eisterhold (1983:76) write, " …….text, any text, whether written or spoken, does not by itself carry meaning. Rather, according to schema theory, a text only provides directions for listeners or readers to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own, previously acquired knowledge" .

Anderson and Pearson (1984), citing a study done by Halff, Ortony and Anderson (1976:52), write that a person's interpretation of the color *red* is different in each of the following compounds: *red strawberry, red barn, red sunset* and *red hair*. Thus, our background knowledge, and the context in which the word is placed, affects our interpretation of that word. Further, our interpretation of text is influenced by what we have read before.

<u>2.3.1.3.ii Types of schemata:</u>

Generally, there are three major types ofschemata, namely, linguistic schemata, formal schemata and content schemata.

➢ **Linguistic schemata:**

Linguistic schemata refer to readers' existing language proficiency in vocabulary, grammar and idioms. They are the foundation of other schemata. As is known, linguistic knowledge plays an essential part in text comprehension. Without linguistic schemata, it is impossible for the reader to decode and comprehend a text.

Therefore, the more linguistic schemata a reader has in his mind, the faster the reader acquires information and the better understanding the reader may get.

➢ **Formal schemata:**

Formal schemata are the organizational forms and rhetorical structures of written texts. They include knowledge of different text types and genres, and also include the knowledge that different types of texts use text organization, language structures, vocabulary, grammar and level of formality differently. Formal schemata are described as abstract, encoded, internalized, coherent patterns of meta-linguistic, discourse and textual organization that guide expectation in our attempts to understand a meaning piece of language. Readers use their schemata representations of the text such as fictions, poems, essays, newspaper articles, academic articles in magazines, and journals to help comprehend the information in the text.

Studies show that the knowledge of what type and genre the text is can facilitate reading comprehension for readers because the type of the text will offer evidence of the content of the text. Nonetheless, compared with the linguistic and content schemata, the formal schemata offer less power in the reading process. (Carrell, 1984).

> ➤ **Content schemata:**

Content schemata refer to the background knowledge of the content area of a text, or the topic a text talks about. They include topic familiarity, cultural knowledge and previous experience with a field. Content schemata deal with the knowledge relative to the content domain of the text, which is the key to the understanding of texts. Since one language is not only the simple combination of vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar but also the bearer of different levels of the language's culture.

On the whole, the familiarity of the topic has a direct influence on reader's comprehension. The more the reader knows about the topic, the more easily and quickly he gets the information of the text.

2.4 Variability in reading Comprehension:

2.4.1 Variability in readers:

Readers, when engaged in reading, are believed to go through an active and interactive process (Anderson, 1999; Grabe&Stoller, 2002:13). Such a process presumes that readers have or should have some background knowledge about the topic of the text. Anderson (1999:01), for example, explained reading as follows:

Reading is an active, fluent process which involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning. Meaning does not reside on the printed page. … Synergy occurs in reading, which combines the words on the printed page with the reader's background knowledge and experiences.

Readers show common experience as they read. Further, concepts, interests, views, and life styles of readers with common social and cultural backgrounds will also be reflected by how and what people read and what they take from their reading.

2.4.1.1 Socio- cultural influences:

Many researchers have observed that culture and society play a crucial role in the development of learners' preferences, styles, strategies and even outcomes. That brings us

to the relevance of the analysis of the socio-cultural factors that could influence the learner in reading skills.

To comprehend, a reader must have a wide range of capacities and abilities. These include cognitive capacities (e.g., attention, memory, critical analytic ability, inference, visualization ability), motivation (a purpose for reading, an interest in the content being read, self-efficacy as a reader), and various types of knowledge (vocabulary, domain and topic knowledge, linguistic and discourse knowledge, knowledge of specific comprehension strategies). All these capacities and abilities are taken from his/her socio-cultural context and make him/her different from another reader.

2.4.1.1 Inter-individual differences:

Reading comprehension may be simply defined as the ability to obtain meaning from written text for some purpose. It is a complex process that depends on adequate development of two component processes: word recognition and language comprehension. Language comprehension is the process whereby the individual is able to understand and relate the meaning of words and sentences encountered in spoken and written text, and combine them in ways that allow understanding of the broader concepts and ideas represented by those words and sentences.

Individual differences in knowledge, skills, and abilities that underlie word recognition and language comprehension, along with individual differences in dispositions such as the reader's motivation, goals, and purposes, are all important sources of variability in reading comprehension. (p51)

2.4.2 Variability in text:

The features of text have a large effect on comprehension. Comprehension does not occur by simply extracting meaning from text. During reading, the reader constructs different representations of the text that are important for comprehension. These representations include, for example, the surface code (the exact wording of the text), the text base (idea units representing the meaning),and a representation of the mental models embedded in the text. The proliferation of computers and electronic text has led us to broaden the definition of text to include electronic text and multimedia documents in addition to conventional print.

Texts can be difficult or easy, depending on factors inherent in the text, on the relationship between the text and the knowledge and abilities of the reader, and on the activities in which the reader is engaged. For example, the content presented in the text has a critical bearing on reading comprehension. A reader's domain knowledge interacts with the content of the text in comprehension. In addition to content, the vocabulary load of the text and its linguistic structure, discourse style, and genre also interact with the reader's knowledge. When too many of these factors are not matched to a reader's knowledge and experience, the text may be too difficult for optimal comprehension to occur. Further, various activities are better suited to some texts than to others.

2.4.3 Variability in activity:

The activity element refers to the reader's purpose and goals for reading text. Reading does not occur in a vacuum. It is done for a purpose, to achieve some end. Activity refers to this dimension of reading. A reading activity involves one or more purposes, some operations to process the text at hand, and the consequences of performing the activity. Prior to reading, a reader has a purpose, which is influenced by a cluster of motivational variables, including interest and prior knowledge. The initial purposes can change as the reader reads. That is, a reader might encounter information that raises new questions that make the original purpose either incomplete or irrelevant. When the purpose is externally mandated, as in instruction, the reader might accept the purpose and complete the activity; for example, if the assignment is "read a paragraph in order to write a summary," the compliant student will accept that purpose and engage in reading operations designed to address it. If the reader does not fully accept the mandated purpose, internally generated purposes may conflict with the externally mandated purpose. Such conflicts may lead to incomplete comprehension. For example, if students fail to see the relevance of an assignment, they may not read purposively, thus compromising their comprehension of the text. During reading, the reader processes the text with regard to the purpose. Processing the text involves, beyond decoding, higher level linguistic and semantic processing and monitoring. Each process is more or less important in different types of reading, including skimming (getting only the gist of text) and studying (reading text with the intent of retaining the information for a period of time).

Finally, the consequences of reading are part of the activity. Some reading activities lead to an increase in the knowledge a reader has. For example, reading the historical novel Andersonville may increase the reader's knowledge about the U.S. Civil War, even though

the reader's initial purpose may have been enjoyment. The American history major who reads an assigned text about the Civil War may experience similar consequences, although the reading activity was undertaken for the explicit purpose of learning. Another consequence of reading activities is finding out how to do something. These application consequences are often related to the goal of the reader. Repairing a bicycle or preparing bouillabaisse from a recipe are examples of applications. As with knowledge consequences, application consequences may or may not be related to the original purposes. Finally, other reading activities have engagement as their consequences. Good comprehenders can be engaged in many different types of text. Knowledge, application, and engagement can be viewed as direct consequences of the reading activity. Activities may also have other, longer-term consequences. Any knowledge (or application) acquired during reading for enjoyment also becomes part of the knowledge that a reader brings to the next reading experience. Learning new vocabulary, acquiring incidental knowledge about Civil War battles or bouillabaisse ingredients, or discovering a new interest might all be consequences of reading with comprehension.

2.5 Social and motivational influences on reading:

There has been a long-standing interest in how motivational and socialization factors influence learners' reading skills. These factors occur through everyday life within the learner's past, present and future, in all contexts: home, school, community, and the broader society.

2.5.1 Home Influences on Reading:

Several large-scale studies of educational achievement have demonstrated that factors in the home environment play a critical role in determining children's achievement motivation and performance in school. The best known of these studies in the United States was conducted by Coleman et al. (1966), who found that home factors outweighed school factors in determining children's achievement. Research in other countries also points to the importance of home influences (e.g., Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972; Douglas, 1964). Since parent-child interaction is the most important home influence on children's later achievement behavior in school. Parents' involvement and the home reading environment are very important factors helping learners' achievement.

2.5.1.1 Parental Aspirations, Expectations and values:

Family resources associated with parents' aspirations and education often imply increased learning opportunities both at home and in school. It would seem that parents who have confidence in their children's abilities and have high expectations for their performance would have higher educational aspirations for their children. Parents can foster the development of reading motivation in their children by:

a. Holding high expectations and evaluating their performance .

b. Being involved in the achievement-related activities.

Adding to that the kind of attributions parents give when their children succeed or fail on reading tasks and how this influence learners' own interpretations of success and failure, can play a crucial role in the process of learning. Parents' communication with their children of social issues and aspects of culture can greatly influence the way of reading. It could be said that success in reading depends on the learner environment helping mediate and negotiate cultural borders which leads to correct understanding of foreign materials.

Consequently, parents' involvement plays an important role in fostering their children's success in reading either by participating in their reading activities or by influencing their views and motivation towards reading in general and reading foreign materials specifically.

Asher(1988:113) stated that: "the more parents participate in a sustained way at every level_ in advocacy, decision- making and oversight roles, as fund-raisers and boosters, as volunteers and paraprofessionals, and as home tutors_ the better for students achievements".

2.5.1.2 The Home reading environment:

Another way of how parents can be involved to help their children in the process of reading is by providing appropriate reading materials in the home. Research indicates a positive relationship between the number of books in the home and children's reading ability (Sheldon &Carillo, 1952; Lamme& Olmsted, Note 4). The influence of material availability likely is mediated by the ways in which parents become involved with those materials. For instance, the extent to which parents model reading activity, read to their children, and otherwise encourage their children to read, should influence whether children become good readers. Several studies have shown that parental involvement in reading to their children and parental provision

of reading materials predicts later reading ability (e.g., Bing, 1963; Brezinski, 1964; Dix, Note 5).

Thus, research points to the importance of having reading-related materials in the home as well as having parents being involved with their children in reading-related activities. This kind of involvement should have a number of positive influences. From a cognitive perspective, parents who read to their children are increasing their children's reading-relevant skills. From a social-motivational perspective, this involvement communicates that reading is a pleasurable activity, and one that provides children with an opportunity to interact positively with their parents. This sort of pleasurable interaction should motivate children to read more.

2.5.2 Classroom influences on reading:

Although home factors have an influence on learners' reading process, the school environment is important as well. Numerous studies have investigated the role of classroom as an environment for reading. The social and motivational influences in school, of particular importance would seem to be learners' attitudes toward reading, the teacher- student relationship, and the reading materials used in classrooms.

2.5.2.1 Learners' Attitude Toward Reading:

Numerous studies have assessed the relationship between learners' reading attitudes and reading performance. Not surprisingly, the results generally show that good readers have more positive attitudes toward reading than poor readers. (Askov& Fischbach,1973; Groff, 1962; Hake, 1969; Kenneday&Halinski, 1978;Shepps &Shepps, 1971; Zimmerman &Allebrand, 1965).

Connections between the academic curriculum and the personal experiences of the learners, and more specifically, are stimulating activities that connect students to the content they are learning. These interactions also provide motivation for students to read more about what they are learning. Indeed, motivation to read and engagement in reading are also other factors that have to be examined in addition to learners' attitudes. Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, and Wellborn (2009) described engagement as a reflection or manifestation of motivated action, and noted that action incorporates emotions, attention, goals, and other psychological processes along with persistent and effortful behavior. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) defined behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects of school engagement. Behavioral engagement is direct involvement in a set of

activities, and includes positive conduct, effort and persistence, and participation in extracurricular activities. Emotional engagement covers both positive and negative affective reactions (e.g., interest, boredom, anxiety, and frustration) to activities, as well as to the individuals with whom one does the activities (teachers, peers). It also comprises identification with school. Cognitive engagement means willingness to exert the mental effort needed to comprehend challenging concepts and accomplish difficult tasks in different domains, as well as the use of self-regulatory and other strategies to guide one's cognitive efforts.

Learners' engagement in reading activities, is defined as interacting with text in ways that are both strategic and motivated (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). More broadly, engaged readers as motivated to read, strategic in their approaches to comprehending what they read, knowledgeable in their construction of meaning from text, and socially interactive while reading (Guthrie, McGough, Bennett, & Rice, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie, Wigfield, &Perencevich, 2004). "Reading motivation is the individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading". (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000: 405). So, learners' attitudes and motivation affect greatly the process of reading.

2.5.2.2 The teacher-learner relationship:

Though the textbook provides much material and guidance –text, vocabulary, grammar and exercises- yet this material is language in print, not the language that expresses a living mind. The teacher has to transform those silent, inactive printed symbols into living speech.(Rodriguez and Fernanda,1980: 308)

The way teachers interact with their students exerts a significant influence on students' achievement in reading and motivation to achieve. Teacher'sexpectations is an important factor. Research indicates that teachers perceptions of and expectations about their students are affected by student race and social class. Indeed, teachers express more positive attitudes towards students from high social classes and they believe that student social class is the most important factor for predicting school success. However, teachers could be guilty of a more subtle form of bias, even if their perceptions are data-based. It is an educator's task to go beyond the data given; that is, to expect that a learners' behavior can be transformed with appropriate instruction and structuring of the educational environment. Paladry (1969) conducted a study in which he compared first-grade reading achievement scores of two different groups of teachers.

One group of teachers thought that boys and girls had an equal chance to learn to read. The other group believed that girls learn to read more easily. Reading achievement scores for the students did not differ in September. However, by May, the group of students whose teachers believed girls learned to read more easily showed significant sex differences favoring girls. There were no sex differences in reading achievement in the other group. This study suggests how teachers' beliefs in learners' educability influences their achievement.

2.5.2.3 Reading materials:

Students' involvement in reading is undoubtedly influenced by the kind of reading materials school provide. Uninteresting reading primers would cause special problems for learners having little prior exposure to reading materials in the home. Research by Asher (1979) assessed whether children's interest in the material they are given relates to cultural and social differences in reading comprehension (Asher, 1977; 1980).Interesting material better maintains the reader's attention; that is, the reader is more motivated when presented with high-interest materials. Another element is that readers have more knowledge about topics they are interested in, and thus can more easily understand passages about those topics. "High-interest material" describes an interaction between the reader and the material. Material that is fascinating for one child may be dull for another.

Classroom influences can be summarized in the following practices(Wigfield,2008)

- *Autonomy support* is based on premises from self-determination theory (Ryan &Deci, 2009) that giving students some control over their own learning is motivating.

- *Interesting texts* refers to the practice of providing an abundance of high interest texts in the classroom.

- *Strategy instruction* concerns the kinds of reading strategies teachers teach.

- *Collaboration* is the social discourse among students in a learning community that enables them to see perspectives and to socially construct knowledge from text (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

- *Praise and rewards* involve the ways in which teachers provide feedback to students (Brophy, 1981). Rewards are often used in reading instruction and other instructional programs as a way to build students' motivation (Gambrell&Marniak, 1997).

- Students are *evaluated* in classrooms in a myriad of ways. Some methods of evaluation

can provide meaningful information about student learning and actually can support student motivation (Afflerbach, 1998).

- Finally, *teacher involvement* represents the teacher's knowledge of individual learners, caring about their progress and pedagogical understanding of how to foster their active participation (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

2.6 Definition of culture:

Due to its complex nature, the word "culture" cannot be easily defined. It is believed to be one of the most complicated words as it can be seen from different perspectives. Hence, no definition can fit all relevant contexts. Some people reduce culture meaning to food, holidays, lifestyle….etc. However, it cannot be restricted to these meanings because culture is a combination of beliefs, customs, shared values as well as common history, geographical location, language and religion that a group of people share. Edward Burnett Taylor states in his Primitive Culture (1871):

"Culture ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".

To start with, for Hudson (1980:74) culture may be described as "socially acquired knowledge .i.e. as the knowledge that someone has by virtue of his being a member of a particular society". For Marcuse, "culture should be a specific set of beliefs, and opinions, of conquest and of tradition, forming the background of a society". (1970:311). Byram (1989:15) defines culture as "the whole way of life of the foreign country including but not limited to its production in the arts, philosophy and high culture in general". More specifically, Valette highlights the two major components of culture in the following broad sense:

> "One is anthropological or sociological culture: the attitudes, customs, and daily activities of people, their way of thinking, their values, and their frames of reference. Since language is a direct manifestation of this phase of culture a society cannot be totally understood or appreciated without knowledge of its language. The other component of culture is the history of civilization. Traditionally representing the "culture" element in foreign language teaching, it includes geography, history and achievements in the sciences, the social sciences and the arts". *(Cited in Valdes, 1986:179).*

From this definition, we can distinguish between two meanings of culture. It can refer to the social life, family institutions, customs, and leisure activities…..of a given society. So it can be related to the civilization and society's contributions to the world.

The social scientist Richard Brislin says that " culture refers to widely shared ideals, values, formation and uses of categories, assumptions about life, and goal directed activities that become unconsciously or subconsciously accepted as right and correct by people who identify themselves as members of a society". (Quoted in Kramch, 1995:83).

This definition includes not only patterns of behavior but also patterns of thought (members of a society sharing asset of meanings related to various aspects including religion and ideologies). No society exists without a culture which influences the way people think and behave. Indeed, Brown :163)defines culture as a way of life. People exist, think, feel, and relate to others within the context of culture. "It is the 'glue' that binds a group of people together".

Based on these definitions, culture clearly involves both behavior and perceptions. In fact, Seelye states that in a broad concept, culture involves all aspects of human life.

2.7 Language and culture:

"Language is the principle means whereby we conduct our social lives, when it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex way".(Kramch, 1998: 04).

Since no language exists in a cultural vacuum, many scholars have analyzed and commented the relationship between language and culture. Brown describes their relationship as following:" A language is part of a culture and culture is a part of language, the two are intricately interwoven. So that we cannot separate them without losing the significance of either language or culture". As supported by Mitchell and Myles, language and culture have an interdependent relation. "Language and culture are not separate, but are acquired together, with each providing support for the development of the other" (p.235).   Furthermore, Kramsch (1998) relates language to identity and culture. She believes that there is a natural connection between speakers' language and their identity, in other words, by their accent and vocabulary, speakers are identified to a given speech community. Speakers draw a social importance, pride, historical, and cultural unity by using the same language as the group they belong to. In the same context, Byram (1989:41) argues that:

"Language pre-eminently embodies the values of meaning of a culture, refers to cultural artifacts, and signals people's cultural identity. Because of its symbolic and transparent nature; language can stand alone and represents the rest of cultures phenomena."

Moreover, Byram (1989:15) believes that language is a tool to express speakers' knowledge and perception of the real world. Thus, it reflects their cultural concepts and values. He goes on saying that one cannot learn a language and neglect its culture because speaking a language means expressing its culture, exchanging a language embodies a particular way of thinking and living.

Language is bound up with culture in different ways. First language expresses speakers' beliefs, points of view, and assumptions about the real world. People of the same group utter words which express common experiences. That is they refer to facts, events, and ideas that are shared and known among the same social group. Second, members of the same social group create experiences through language. They give meaning to them through the way they interact with each other either with verbal aspects like face-to-face conversations, speaking on the phone or non verbal ones such as gestures. For instance, the way of sending an e-mail or a message creates a meaning that the members of the same society can understand. Thus, language always embodies cultural reality. Thirdly, language itself is seen as a cultural value. In fact, it is through language that speakers identify themselves as members of the same social group having the same culture (Kramsch, 1998:21). All in all, Kramsch puts three links between language and culture whish can summarized as follows:

- Language expresses cultural reality.
- Language embodies cultural reality.
- Language symbolizes cultural reality.

In the same vein, Fishman (1985) is the sociolinguist who has dealt most with this issue. As Kramsch, he identifies three links between language and culture. First, Language is an inseparable part of culture because it is impossible to ignore the place of language in a given culture. Hence, in order to understand a given culture it is crucial to study its language. The second link, is that language reveals the ways of thinking and norms which are common in the culture. Finally, "language as a symbolic" of culture. That is, language can be considered as a symbol to defend or attack, foster or reject the culture associated with it. Fishman summarizes the relationship between language and culture as follows:

❖ Language as part of culture.

❖ Language as an index of culture.

❖ Language as symbolic of culture. (Cited in Risager 2006:13-14).

However, the most influential scholars dealing with this issue are Edward Sapir and Benjamin Wolf .Their theory is known as "Sapir-Wolf theory" (Yule,2006).According to them, people from different culture think differently and so they perceive the world in a different way. They claim that the Eskimo speakers' view of the world is different from that of the English one because the word "snow" has different meanings in the Eskimo language. For example, snow on the grounds, snow in the air..etc, however, there is only one meaning for the word "snow "in the English language. So, language obliges the speech community to a restricted view of the world. (Steinberg, 1995).

2.8Characteristics of culture:

Cushner andBrislin (1996) outline several characteristics for culture. These characteristics touch on both concrete and abstract facets. As such, they enable a better understanding of the true nature of culture.

First, they believe it to be human, i. e., it is all that is related to humans and made by them; it is not merely something that exists in nature. As already mentioned, this point was particularly stressed by Brooks.

Second, culture has subjective and objective facets. Subjective culture has to do with the beliefs, values, norms and assumptions about life that underlie people's behaviours and attitudes, in other words, "the invisible, less tangible aspects of a group of people" (Cushner and Brislin, 1996: 6). Objective culture means material visible culture, i.e., "things as the artifacts people make, the food they eat, the clothing they wear, and even the names they give to things." (Cushner andBrislin, 1996: 6). Some of the less tangible cultural aspects remain implicit and not discussed. These aspects mostly underlie intercultural miscommunication and misunderstanding, when people from different cultures behave on the basis of different perspectives and find themselves consequently frustrated. It is actually perplexing for them to speak about or figure out what is going on when it is the subjective elements of their culture that are in conflict with those of others. Hinkel (1999: 5) explains: "One of the prominent qualities of cultural values, assumptions, and norms acquired in the socialization process is that they are presupposed and not readily

available for intellectual scrutiny." Weaver, 1993; in Thanasoulas, 2001) believes that the most important part of culture is that which is internal and hidden, i.e., what lies in the deep sub-conscious of its bearers. Reference is made here to the values, thought patterns and assumptions which underlie people's behaviours and ways of life. Weaver states that they are what lies below the water level of an iceberg, the water level of conscious awareness, and hence their significance.

Third, culture is socially and collectively constructed and transmitted. It follows that it is not innate but learned. Jandt (1998:8), puts it clearly that "Culture is not a genetic trait. All these cultural elements are learned through interaction with others in the culture." Besides, cultural values, beliefs and worldviews are learned right from childhood. In this regard, Hilgard et al. (1958; in De Jong, 1996: 27) state: "The process of growing up includes learning to behave in ways expected by our society. We usually accept group values without much reflection and without awareness that peoples of other cultures may not share these values. If our culture values cleanliness, promptness, and hard work, we try to be clean, prompt, and industrious." Because culture is learned and is learnable, it can thus be taught.

Fourth, according to Cushner and Brislin, a culture enables its bearers to readily communicate much information via few words or gestures. This is known as the 'cooperative' principle. In other words, people belonging to the same culture are able to 'Fill in the blanks' and to deduce what is not explicitly stated, on the basis of their shared cultural knowledge.

Fifth, people are likely to react with emotion when their cultural norms and values are violated in cross-cultural encounters .

Sixth, the values and norms of culture are unquestionable. It happens that individuals or groups rebel against some of them; for example, adolescents may challenge authority or conventional social order, but this is generally temporary and they end up joining the main stream culture. Besides, a cultural value remains a 'value' though it may be compromised in real-life situations. It is worth mentioning, however, that cultural beliefs, attitudes and worldviews may change. For instance, the western civilization was, among other things, built upon the belief that nature is to be 'conquered'. Now, the relationship man / environment has changed. Indeed, efforts are being made to protect the environment and clean it up. Another example of

cultural change is the status of women in most world cultures. After world war two, women began to work outside the home and started to share what was exclusive to men. Accordingly, family roles shifted in that men had to assume, to some extent, more responsibility as far as housework and children care are concerned. It should be remembered, nevertheless, that for a long established cultural belief to change, there need be much time and will.

2.9 Cultural elements:

There are different types of cultures across the world and each culture has its unique essence. While defining the term "culture", there are several elements that together constitute the culture of a particular region or the culture of particular people.

Cultural beliefs, values, behaviours, taboos and stereotypes are subsumed under the cultural umbrella.

2.9.1 Beliefs:

Cultural beliefs are the commonly held norms and moral standards of a culture, the standards of right and wrong that set expectations for behaviour. These beliefs are usually rooted in the culture's symbolic inheritance and include the roles that are appropriate for particular persons. Samovar, Porter and Jain (1981; in Damen, 1987) identify three types of beliefs: experiential, informational and inferential. The experiential type is based upon a person's experiences, the informational type has to do with information acquired interpersonally and the inferential one transcends direct observation and information. Inferential beliefs are based on logic and thinking. It goes without saying that patterns of thinking are culture–specific.

2.9.2 Values:

Values are a set of beliefs made up of rules for making choices. *Values* are a culture's standard for discerning what is good and just in society. Values are deeply embedded and critical for transmitting and teaching a culture's beliefs. Values help shape a society by suggesting what is good and bad, beautiful and ugly, sought or avoided. Values often suggest how people should behave, but they don't accurately reflect how people do behave. Values portray an *ideal culture*, the standards society would like to embrace and live up to. But ideal culture differs from *real culture*, the way society actually is, based on

what occurs and exists. Cushnerand Brislin (1996: 318-319) believe that values significantly shape and pervade one's life: "People make judgments and draw conclusions about what is and what is not of value. These judgments give rise to certain presuppositions from which people act with little or no conscious awareness. These presuppositions learned during childhood, play a pervasive role in all areas of people's adult experiences." values change through time and may only be embraced by some and not others in the same culture; certain aspects, however, remain valid for a very long time. Individual courage and initiative, team spirit (or support from all the members of the team) are examples of American cultural values (Kramsch: 1993).

2.9.3 Behaviours:

Behaviours are the way people act, based on their learned beliefs and values. Behaviours that one group of people consider improper may be practiced on a routine basis by those in another group. The set of behaviours an individual is expected to do as a consequence of his social position is in fact his role in the society. An individual may assume a number of different role in his daily interactions with other individuals: "Productive, efficient, and healthy persons are able to shift roles as needed (e.g., from participant to leader, from employee to spouse) and understand the appropriate behaviors in each context." (Cushner and Brislin, 1996: 297). For these persons, it is not difficult to realize that other people who have different cultural frameworks have themselves different roles and expectations in different contexts.

2.9.4 Taboos:

Members of a culture are psychologically and physically shaped to observe taboo-related rules. The word 'taboo' can be defined as a "prohibition about social life in general, concerning religion, social life ".Others added that a taboo is something that you should not do in front of people. Some stresses more the social dimension of it saying that it is " a law that is strictly prohibited in a given community". In other words, a taboo is an act or a word which religion or custom considers as forbidden. Once taboos are formed in a society, references to them become taboos as well. Some cultures may consider certain topics taboo; hence, these are not raised in public, and may only be discussed among people who may know each other very well. For instance, the subject of how much you earn is taboo in the UK but not in other cultures, whereas

homosexuality is a subject many British people are comfortable with, but a clear taboo in many other countries. Taboos change as societies change, so topics such as divorce and depression and illnesses such as cancer and AIDS may not be as taboo as they used to be (interestingly, almost no universal taboos have ever been identified, but many are shared by almost all cultures - incest, patricide and cannibalism are three examples).

In every language, there seem to be some words of such strong affective connotation that they cannot be used in polite discourse. Some of such words are probably universal, for example, those that relate to excretion and sex. Further, in both Eastern and Western cultures, fear of death engenders fear of words that relate to it. Therefore, expressions as 'pass away' and 'depart' are usually used as substitutes for 'die'.

Knowledge of the non-verbal and verbal taboos of a culture is essential to successful communicative interactions, and should thus be discussed in language classrooms and textbooks, as part of cultural instruction. In many cases, foreign people realize the existence of the rules associated with taboos only after they have violated them. People who do not respect these rules may face total embarrassment, or other more serious outcomes, for a taboo is by definition (culturally) insulting.

2.9.5 Stereotypes:

A stereotype is a belief or an opinion held by one group that the majority of a different group can be classified by the actions, appearance or attitudes of a few members of that group. In other words, it is an unanalyzed attribution of some characteristics to all members of a cultural group. An expression such as ''that's typical of those people...'' (Koyama, 1992: 6) is 'typically' stereotypical. A stereotype is hence a form of prejudice that is due to a rough overgeneralization, a judgment made on the basis of little or no evidence. From a cultural perspective, society is considered to be the basis of stored knowledge and stereotypes as public information about social groups that is shared among the individuals within a culture. Therefore, once a stereotype has emerged within a culture, it takes on a life of its own and influences social behaviour in ways beyond that of the actions of any individual. For Hartman & Husband, at this point, stereotypes depend not so much on direct perception (and misperception) of the social environment as on the existing manifestations of those stereotypes in the behaviour and

language of the society. The cultural approach to stereotyping "emphasizes that stereotypes are learned, maintained and potentially changed through the language and communication of culture". Language transcends the individual and offers a means of storing stereotypic beliefs at a collective consensual level. (Neil et al.1996:25). As an example of stereotyping, The Americans in general are usually stereotyped as gregarious, the Germans as very disciplined, and the French as individualists (Kramsch, 1993). Similar stereotypes exist in Algeria about its neighbouring countries. For instance, Tunisians are viewed as 'polite' but 'secular' and 'greedy'.

2.10 Integration of culture in teaching foreign languages:

'Culture' in language teaching and learning is usually defined pragmatically as a/the culture associatedwith a language being learnt. (Byram and Grundy, 2002).Kramsch (1993) argues that a foreign culture and one's own culture should be placed together in order for learners to understand a foreign culture. Learners' interaction with native speakers or text will require them to construct their own meanings rather than having educators simply transfer information about people and their culture, and therefore non-native speakers should have opportunities to make their own meanings and to reflect on both the target culture and their own. Kramsch (1993) refers to this as establishing a "sphere of interculturality". Moreover, what educators should always have in mind when teaching culture is the need to raise their students' awareness of their own culture (Straub, 1999) and 'the target culture' (Wei, 2005:55), to cultivate a degree of intellectual objectivity essential in cross-cultural analyses (Straub, 1999, cited in Wang, 2008:4). Teachers and program developers are asked (Coleman, 1996; Holliday, 1994; McKay, 2002) to take the learners' socio-cultural background into consideration in choosing materials and pedagogical approaches for particular contexts of teaching since ignoring the students' norms and expectations – that is, what students bring to the classroom- is denying the learners' experiences (Dogancay-Aktuna, 2005:100), and thus a lack of consideration of variations in cultures of learning can lead to frustration and subsequent failure in language classrooms (Li, 1998; Holliday, 1994). Mastering in a language requires learners' mastery of the cultural contexts in which the language occurs (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996:27 in Peterson and Coltrane, 2003).

Linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language (Krashen, 1999). Language learners need to be aware, for example, of the culturally appropriate ways to address people, express gratitude, make requests, and agree or disagree with someone. They should know that behaviour and intonation patterns that are appropriate in their own speech community may be perceived differently by members of the target language speech community. They have to understand that, in order for communication to be successful, language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behaviours (Peterson and Coltrane, 2003). According to Thanasoulas (2001), more specifically, the teaching of culture should make learners aware of speech acts, connotations, etiquette, that is, appropriate or inappropriate behaviour, as well as it should provide them with the opportunity to act out being a member of the target culture. Besides, foreign language teachers should be foreign culture teachers; therefore, they need to have the ability to experience and analyze both the home and target cultures (Byram, Morgan and Colleagues, 1994).

Tomalin&Stempleski (1993:7-8), modified Seelye's (1988) "seven goals of cultural instruction", and listed the goals of teaching culture as follows:

1. To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviors.

2. To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.

3. To help students to become more aware of conventional behavior in common situations in the target culture.

4. To help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.

5. To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.

6. To help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.

7. To stimulate students" intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people.

With the rapid increase in foreign language learning recently, intercultural communication has gained significance. However, culture teaching is a field that is in its

infancy and thus is starting to evolve. Chastain (1976) claims that in order for the learner to be engaged in communication and cooperation tolerantly, he needs to figure out the contrasts between different cultures. In their study on English Language Teaching (ELT) students, Byram and Morgan (1994) mention that students can notably benefit from culture classes in order to develop their language skills, cultural awareness and views towards native and target nations.

According to Cullen (2000), there is a variety of possible sources of information for teaching culture: Video, CDs, TV, readings, internet, stories, songs, newspapers, literature etc.

2.10 Conclusion:

Language and culture are closely associated and interrelated. Hence, the teaching of culture in foreign language classrooms should be always present particularly in reading activities. In fact, foreign culture is present when reading in a foreign language by activating the prior knowledge acquired during the whole process of learning. Therefore, it is necessary to enrich the cultural background knowledge by introducing culture in foreign language textbooks and other extra materials to be read at home or in classroom.

CHAPTER III: FIELD WORK

3.1 Introduction

3.2. RESAERCH METHODOLOGY DESIGN

   3.2.1 Research method

   3.2.2 Participants

   3.2.3 Data collecting tools

3.2.4 Piloting

3.3 TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

   3.3.1 Introduction

   3.3.2 Description of teachers' questionnaire

   3.3.3 Analysis of teachers' questionnaire

3.4 PUPILS' QUESTIONNAIRE

   3.4.1 Introduction

   3.4.2 Description of pupils' questionnaire

   3.4.3 Analysis of pupils' questionnaire

3.5 PUPILS' READING TESTS

   3.5.1 Introduction

   3.5.2 Description of pupils' reading tests

   3.5.3 Analysis of pupils' reading tests

 3.6 Interpretation of the results

 3.7Pedagogical Recommendations and Suggestions

   3.7.1 Introduction

   3.7.2 Recommendations and Suggestions

 3.7 Conclusion

CHAPTER III

FIELD WORK

3. Introduction:

In the present chapter, the methodological approach and the research design of the study are introduced. Besides, participants and tools of data collection are exposed, i.e., the researcher describes and discusses the process of data collection. At last but not least, the data analysis methods are presented.

3.1. THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

3.1.1 Research method:

This research work as an exploratory-study, in which we have tried to explore a situational phenomenon, attempts at diagnosing teaching/ learning reading in English from a socio-cultural perspective. In other terms, investigating the place of foreign culture in the process of reading in English, stand behind such difficulties and the way our language teachers try to overcome their obstacles, underlying the challenges which are considered here as another important issue that the researcher needs to explore while conducting this research work.

Maxwell *et al* (quoted in Given 2008: 323) assert that *"the term explanatory research implies that the research in question is intended to explain, rather than simply to describe, the phenomena studied."*

While gathering data for this research work, both quantitative and qualitative data has been collected. The questionnaire mainly used for quantitative data whereas, reading tests have been administered to collect Qualitative data.

To obtain more reliable answers to the problematic, a case study was adopted in this research of a particular situation to help us gathering data about the place of English – speaking countries culture in the Algerian society in general and the educational system in specific through reading. Despite the importance of English in all over the world as an international language, our pupils are not aware that English speaking culture is an important part of their process of learning. Moreover, neither pupils nor teachers realize the importance of reading as a window on the culture of the other on the one hand. On the other hand, the importance of the cultural background knowledge in reaching comprehension when reading in English.

In this regards, the case study conducted in this research is appropriate to explore the real place of culture in the process of learning English through reading in the Algerian context.

Case study is an intensive investigation that highlights on providing a detailed account of one or more cases. For instance, one might study a classroom that was given a new curriculum for oral skills. It is also useful for testing whether theories and models actually work in the real world; Yin (1994; 13) proposes:

"A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident"

Hence, case study is a research methodology based on an in-depth investigation of a single individual, group, or event to explore causation in order to find underlying principles. Gillham (2000;01) wrote:

"A case study is one which investigates an individual, a group, or multiple cases to answer specific research questions and which seeks a range of different kinds of evidence, evidence which is there in the case setting, and which has to be abstracted and collated to get the best possible answers"

It can include quantitative evidence as well as qualitative one, relies on multiple sources of evidence and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions. In brief, it can be based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence.

3.1.2 Participants:

At the centre of any investigation into educational phenomena, are the participants that constitute the core of the study. The subjects of the study were EFL teachers and pupils of third year literary and scientific from different secondary schools in Algiers.

3.1.2.1 Teachers' profile:

Twenty five EFL teachers were required in this investigative study in order to elicit information about integrating cultural component in teaching reading in English in the Algerian context.

Accordingly, our informants were selected at random, regardless of their age, sex, background, and their experience in teaching English at the secondary level.

The purpose of including them in this study was to have more relevant data as they are the transmitters of the foreign culture in the classroom, and they are the direct observers of their learners.

3.1.1.2 Pupils' profile:

The informants were sixty four third year pupils from seven different secondary schools from different areas in Algiers. The pupils pursue their studies under core curriculum in both literary and scientific streams. The informants were randomly assigned from different classes in different schools.

The purpose of choosing third year secondary level was that this is the last step in the secondary education and the door to the new world in the high education then to the world of work. Our aim was to find out whether these pupils have gathered enough cultural background about the cultures of English- speaking countries so that they will be able to deal with any cultural issue.

During this phase of research, the subjects expressed their willingness to respond to the tests and accepted to participate in the current study.

The following table summarizes the number of pupils and teachers who were involved in this study, and the schools they come from.

Secondary schools	Area	Number of teachers	Number of pupils
OkbaIbnNafaa	Bab El Oued	03	08
El Idrissi	1er Mai	02	08
Birtouta	Birtouta	05	09
CherifSebbahi	AinNaadja	03	13
AbdellahSedik	Birkhadem	06	11
OuridaMedad	El-Harrach	03	07
Mohamed Boudiaf	Dar El Beida	03	08
Total		25	64

Table3.1: Participants' Numbers and schools

3.1.3 Data collecting tools:

 As far as this study is concerned, we have tried to make use of the following research instruments to get qualitative and qualitative data. A questionnaire was administered to EFL secondary school teachers. Another questionnaire and reading tests were administered to Third year secondary school pupils.

In this way, triangulation is an important approach to combine both qualitative and quantitative research. Triangulation is defined as the mixing of data or methods so that divers viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon the topics, and so it gives credibility to the data (Olsen 03:2004). Indeed, triangulation of sources is locating similar information from various sources and using similar analysis to confirm findings in the data. Malterud (2001: 487) states that, "Qualitative studies can also be added to quantitative ones, to gain a better understanding of the meaning and implications of the findings".

3.1.3.1 Questionnaires:

A questionnaire as one of the most useful tools is often perceived as a partly valid research instrument to elicit available information from the informants; the case here is the EFL secondary schools teachers in Algiers.

 According to Brown (cited in Dornyei 2010:03):

> "Questionnaires are ant written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or by selecting from among existing answers"

Nevertheless, Kothari (1990) indicated some limitations of this method for some respondents may not return the questionnaire in time despite several reminders; and there is a risk of collecting incomplete and wrong information, particularly when the respondents are unable to understand questions properly.

 In order to achieve the purpose and objectives of the study, a questionnaire was administered to EFL teachers from different secondary schools in Algiers.

Thirty questionnaires were given to fifty EFL teachers from seven different secondary schools in Algiers. In order to have correct and anonymous answers, we gave time to the informants. The questionnaires were collected the next day by moving to the

schools again. The total number of the filled questionnaire was 20, as some informants refused to answer. The teachers were required to answer eighteen questions by ticking the right answer and making sentences where necessary.

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part includes teacher's background information, the second part deals with the integration of culture in teaching English in general and reading especially.

In the questionnaire, we have used both types of questions closed- ended and open- ended.

Closed-ended (or "closed question") is a question for which a researcher provides a suitable list of responses (e.g. Yes / No). This produces mainly **quantitative** data.
Open-ended (or "open question") is a question where the researcher doesn't provide the respondent with a set answer from which to choose. Rather, the respondent is asked to answer "in their own words". This produces mainly **qualitative** data.
As an example of the closed questions, we have used the following question:
Q11: Do you think that learning about a foreign culture is a threat to one's native cultural identity?

Yes ⬭   No ⬭

As far as the second category is concerned, an example has been used:

Q5: How would you define the word "culture"?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………….

 3.1.3.2 Pupils questionnaire:

In order to collect data from different sources, another questionnaire was administered to Third Year Secondary School pupils from seven different secondary schools in Algiers.

Sixty four questionnaires were given to sixty four Third Year Secondary School pupils at seven different secondary schools in Algiers. We tried to be present while the pupils were filling the questionnaires in order to be sure they answer collectively and understand the questions as they were in English. The total number of the filled questionnaires was sixty four, all the informants accepted to answer. The pupils were

required to answer eighteen questions by ticking the right answer and making sentences where necessary. In order to get pupils' views and perceptions about culture through reading in English, the questionnaire contains both types of questions open and closed questions:

As an example of the closed question, this question has been used:

Q8: How often do you read English books?

Always ☐   Sometimes ☐   Rarely ☐   Never ☐

As an example of the open question, this question has been used:

Q15: If yes, why is it important?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part includes pupil's background information, the second part deals with reading habits and attitudes, and the third part deals with the concept of culture in learning English.

3.1.3.3 Reading tests:

In an attempt to have an insight on the pupils' cultural background knowledge and how they use it to understand texts in English , we have chosen to use reading tests, almost viewed one of the acceptable tools to gather qualitative data about pupils' ability to comprehend texts in English containing cultural information.

According to Noville (2005:36), "A test is an instrument or procedure that proposes sequence of tasks to which a student is to respond. The results are then used to form measures to define the relative value of the trait to which the test refers".

 He added: As mentioned above, in order to obtain qualitative data, reading tests were administered to third year secondary schools. The test contains two passages with disordered paragraphs. The first text was about "Beauty and the Beast", the second text chosen from the American folklore "Bloody Mary". Pupils were asked to read both texts and try to puttheir paragraphs in order. Then, they were given three questions to check their comprehension .The first text contains six short paragraphs, the second one contains

five paragraphs, and the first was given to help the pupils. The time allowed was sixty minutes.

The majority of the pupils refused to do the tests since reading activity is one of the tasks they consider difficult and boring because they claim that they do not understand English.

"A pilot, or feasibility study, is a small experiment designed to test logistics and gather information prior to larger study, in order to improve the latter's quality and efficiency".

A pilot study is normally small in comparison with the main experiment and therefore can provide only limited information on the sources and magnitude of response measures. The aim of a pilot study is to try out the research approach to identify potential problems that may affect the quality and validity of the results.

Neville (2005:26) stated that:

> "The main purpose of a pilot study is to assess whether a questionnaire has been designed in a manner that will elicit the required information from the respondents. This process allows weaknesses in the questionnaireto be detected so that they can be removed before the final form is prepared".

He added, the typical weakness that are found in questionnaires include:

- Ambiguities in the phrasing of questions.
- Excessive complexity in the language that has been used
- Inappropriate response categories for some questions
- Some questions are redundant.

In order to reduce the risk of bias in the questionnaires, and so to detect the problems and difficulties that we may face during the study, a pilot study was conducted for the sake of relevance.

As mentioned before, some samples were given to both the EFL teachers and third year pupils from some secondary schools in Algiers with the aim of checking out the shortcomings of the questionnaires and minimize the risks of bias.

After conducting the pilot study, we have detected some problems, and this was mainly due to the following reasons:

- ➤ The structure of the study: in the first phase of the construction of the questionnaire, we tended to ask 20 questions without trying to put them under clear and distinct rubrics, and this made the questionnaire unclear, and the readers couldn't understand the aim of the questionnaire.
- ➤ Useless of some questions, and the repetition of others: we felt that some ideas were repeated, besides some questions were useless and did not provide any help for the study.

3.1.5 Data analysis procedure:

To shed light on the position of culture in the EFL teaching/ learning situation by paying more attention to the importance of reading in this process and the perceptions of both EFL teachers and Third Year Secondary schools towards the place of the culture of the other in their lives. This research work has been carefully conducted, using a variety of researcher tools to collect reliable data.

Taking into consideration the needed information for this work and the data sources which have been used; i.e. EFL teachers, third year secondary pupils and the reading tests, the instruments have been carefully selected in order to meet our specific objectives and aims. Data have been collected for three main reasons:

- To answer the research questions
- To find evidence to the hypotheses that have been set.
- To suggest some recommendations that may improve the teachers' and pupils' perception towards the English language and especially its culture, as well as motivate our learners to be active readers.

For the sake of gathering reliable data, triangulation as a key-parameter in this research work was present. Bryman stated:"*Triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of research question in order to enhanceconfidence in the ensuing findings*"

Webb et al. (1966:03) added:

"Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more
Independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of
Its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive
Evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement
Processes".

"The integrated characteristics of mixed methods make it possible to address different aspects of the same research problem. It is also particularly practical when dealing with research topics such as culture learning". (Wen-Hua Du, 2001:93). The visual model of the mixed methods design is shown in the following figure:
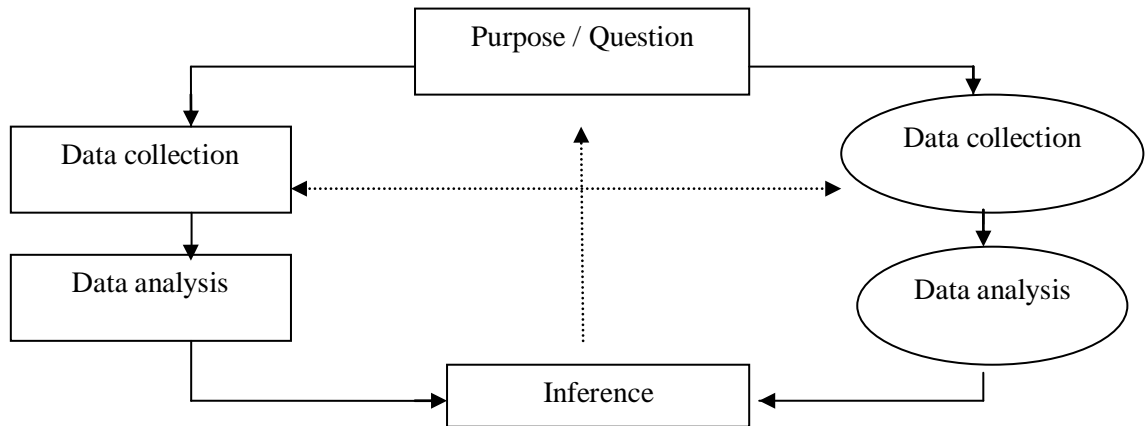
By A. Tashakkori and C.Teddlie, 2003: 688

The first procedure is characterized by the use of questionnaires for both teachers and pupils which was in April 2013 (See Appendix A) . The main purpose of using the questionnaires was to gather a large amount of information quickly about the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and pupils about the integration of culture in learning/ teaching reading in English. It is a useful instrument that provided us with structured data that has been used to achieve our purpose to find whether our teachers and pupils are aware of the importance of culture when reading in English, and of reading to enrich the cultural background knowledge.

Although the participants (teachers) were not observed and were given time to fill the questionnaire, many of them refused to turn back the questionnaires because they were incomplete. Some of them said that they had not time to fill them and others said that they forgot. The other group of teachers and all the pupils welcomed the idea of participating in this work and they were so glad to be part of it.

The following tables illustrate the structures of the two questionnaires:

A / teachers' questionnaire:

Rubric	Label
One	General Information
Two	The integration of culture in teaching reading in English

Table 3.2: Teachers' Questionnaire Structure

B / Pupils' questionnaire:

Rubric	Label
One	General Information
Two	Reading habits and Perceptions
Three	Integrating culture when reading in English

Table3.3: Pupils' Questionnaire Structure

We have divide the questionnaires into these rubrics in an attempt to structure this research work and make it clear for the participants to enable them to answer easily, as well as to provide us with useful insights into the EFL teaching / learning situation.

Before administering the questionnaires to both teachers and pupils, the researcher has explained the purposes of this research work in order to get their cooperation. The questionnaires have been collected by the researcher. Here is an idea about teachers' and pupils' participation to the questionnaires realization:

Schools	Number of questionnaires administered	Number of questionnaires returned
OuridaMedad	05	03
OkbaIbnNafaa	05	03
Mohamed Boudiaf	04	03
El Idrissi	04	02
Birtouta	07	05
AbdellahSeddik	06	06
CherifSebbahi	04	03
Total	35	25

Table3.4: Teachers' Participation

As it can be noticed, the total number of the questionnaires that have been administered was thirty-five (35),while the number of questionnaires we have received was twenty- five because of a set of reasons. We are going to discuss the reasons behind the reduction of the number of the questionnaire returned back later when discussing the results and interpreting the findings.

Schools	Number of questionnaires administered	Number of questionnaires returned
OuridaMedad	07	07
OkbaIbnNafaa	08	08
Mohamed Boudiaf	08	08
El Idrissi	08	08
Birtouta	09	09
AbdellahSeddik	11	11
CherifSebbahi	13	13
Total	64	64

Table 3.5: Pupils' Participation

The second procedure was characterized by the use of reading tests which aimed at finding out whether out pupils are able to understand the texts given in English and put their parts in order. Besides, our purpose was to evaluate our pupils' cultural background knowledge and whether they activate it when they read in English.

As our pupils find the reading activity a difficult and boring task, many of them refused to participate in this research work, and so we found great difficulties to persuade the pupils to do the tasks. We tried to insist on the fact that the real need of these tests was for the sake of gathering information, and not to judge their levels.

There have been two groups of pupils who participated depending on their way of doing the tests. The first group welcomed the idea and tried to do their best to help us. The second group, admitted their weak level in English, and so they did what they could according to their level.

The texts were chosen by the researcher, given then collected across the seven secondary schools. (See Appendix C and D). The use of these tests has constituted a great

help for us to gather valuable information which can be used later as a useful resource. Here is an idea of pupils' participation in the reading tests:

Schools		Number of tests done
OuridaMedad.	El Harrach	05/06
OkbaIbnNafaa	Bab El Oued	03/06
Mohamed Boudiaf	Dar El Beida	06/06
Birtouta School	Birtouta	02/06
AbdellahSeddikBirkhadem		05/06
CherifSebbahiAinNaadja		05/06
El Idrissi	1er Mai	04/06
Total		30/42

Table3.6: Pupils' Participation in the reading tests

3.2 Teachers' questionnaire:

3.2.1 Introduction:

The aim of this questionnaire is to explore the place of culture in teaching English in general and reading in particular in the Algerian secondary schools. It also attempts to investigate teachers' views about the importance of integrating culture in the process of teaching reading in English and interrelationship between reading and culture. The questionnaire will, therefore, help us to know how important culture is when teaching reading in English and whether teachers' are aware of the role that culture plays to facilitate the comprehension of English texts using the cultural background knowledge that can be got from reading .

3.2.2 Description of teachers' questionnaire:

This questionnaire aims at getting some information about EFL teachers who teach at different secondary schools in Algiers: AinNaadja, Birkhadem, Dar ElBeida, El-Harrach, Bab El Oued, 1er Mai, and Birtouta. The questionnaires contain information about teachers' status, their experiences, whether they have been to any English speaking

country. Their viewpoints about teaching reading and integrating culture when teaching it, as well as their definition of culture and the topics and the themes they think pupils should be introduced to. The questionnaire contains seventeen questions requiring answers with yes/no, or picking up the appropriate answer from a set of options, or open questions asking the teachers to justify their choice. The questionnaire is divided into two main sections. The first section aims at obtaining general information about the teachers; their status, are they confirmed, probationer or substitute (Q1), how long they have been teaching English at a secondary school (Q2) and the name of the school where they teach (Q3), and the last question in the first section is about whether they have visited any English –speaking country (Q4). The second section aims at obtaining information about their perception about the integration of culture in teaching reading in English. In (Q5) they are asked to define the word according to them, in the following question (Q6) they are required to say whether they think that teaching/learning culture is an important part in teaching/ learning English, then to justify their answers. In (Q7) teachers are asked whether they think that reading is taught properly in their institutions. In (Q8), teachers are asked about the time they spent in teaching reading in a week. (Q9) is about whether teachers discuss cultural issues while teaching reading. The following question(Q10), is about how teacher treat culture when teach reading. In (Q11) teachers are asked whether they think that learning a foreign culture is a threat to one's native cultural identity. Then they are required to justify their answers. In (Q12) teachers are asked about whether they find difficulties in explaining cultural information in English texts. (Q13) is about the topics and themes pupils should be introduced to when reading in English. Then, in (Q14) they are asked whether they choose texts to relate the foreign culture to pupils' cultural environment and background. In (Q15), teachers are required to say whether they think they have in-depth knowledge about English speaking cultures to teach about them in reading. (Q16) is about whether the textbook "New prospects" offer enough cultural knowledge. The last question (Q17), teachers are asked whether the cultural content presented in the reading texts is suitable to the pupils' level, to the pupils' cultural background or to the curriculum goals.

3.2.3 Data Analysis:

In this work we have randomly chosen twenty- five (25) teachers teaching at seven different secondary schools in Algiers. (See table1.3)

Thirty- five questionnaires were distributed to EFL secondary school teachers at the seven secondary schools in Algiers, and twenty- five questionnaires were returned back yielded a total return of approximately 71%.

As it has been said before, the questionnaires have been filled by twenty-five EFL teachers: Three (03) teachers from OuridaMedad Secondary School, El Harrach; Three (03) teachers from OkbaIbnNafaa Secondary School, Bab El Oued; Three(03) teachers from Mohamed Boudiaf Secondary School, Dar El Beida; Two (02) teachers from El Idrissi Secondary School, Place du 1er Mai; Six (06)teachers from SeddikAbdellah Secondary School, Birkhadem; Five (06) teachers from Birtouta Secondary School; and Three (03) teachers from CherifSabahi Secondary School, AinNaadja.

As a result, the distribution of teachers' proportions has been as follow: (12%) for teachers from El Harrach, (12%) for teachers from Bab El Oued, Dar El Beida and AinNaadja, (24%) for teachers from Birkhadem, (20%) for teachers from Birtouta, and (08%) for teachers from 1er Mai. The following pie-chart represents the percentages of teachers' participation:
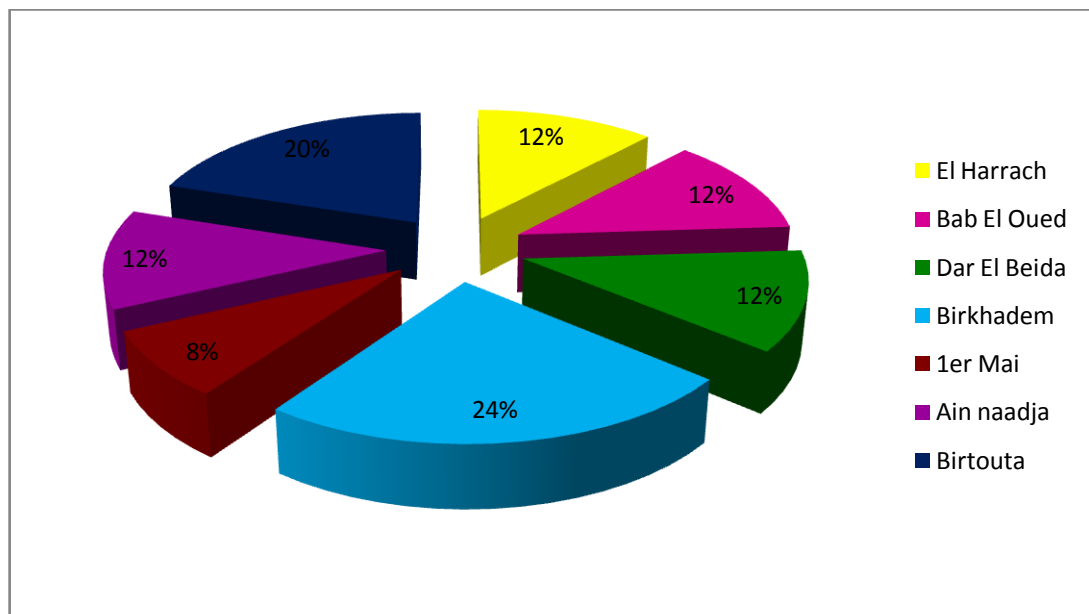
Figure 3.1: Teachers' participation

Question02: Status:

Status	Number	Rate
Confirmed	15	60%
Probationer	08	32%
Substitute	02	8%
Total	25	100%

Table3.7: Teachers' status

Question03: How long have you been teaching English?

In order to explore more the place of culture in the process of teaching/ learning English through reading in the Algerian context, it seems important that teachers reflect on their practice and experience on this issue. The majority of teachers' experience ranges between 1-5 years (52%), then 28% of the teachers have more than 10 years of experience. The rest of the teachers (20%) their experience ranges between 5 and 10 years. The table below shows the findings:

Years of teaching English	Number	Rate
Less than 5 years	13	52%
Between 5 and 10 years	05	20%
More than 10 years	07	28%
Total	25	100%

Table3.8: Teachers' Experience
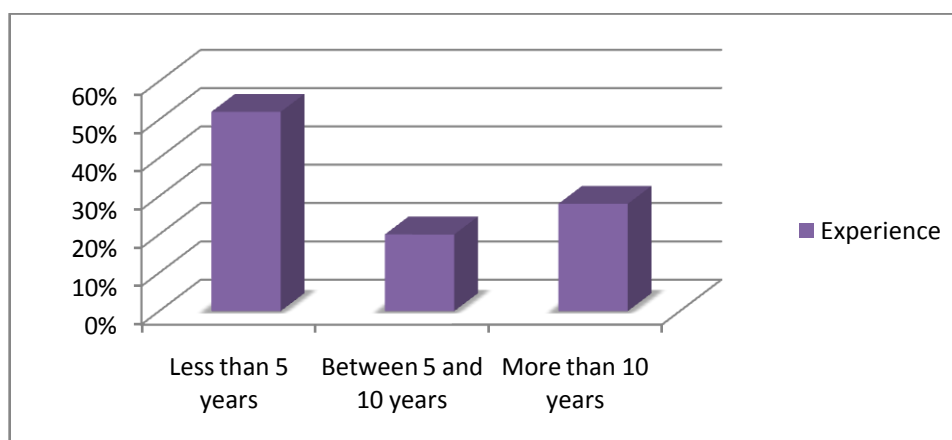
Figure3.2: Teachers' Experience

Question04: Have you ever visited England, USA or any English speaking country?

This question was designed to get an idea about whether the informants have a direct contact with the culture of the foreign language they teach. Teachers who have this contact will be more interested in dealing with cultural issues, and so their pupils would benefit a lot from their experiences through detailed explanations, examples and comparison between the native and the target culture. Unfortunately, it is clear that most of the Algerian teachers (80%) do not have this opportunity. They rely only on the knowledge they acquired from the university. As a result, most of them face difficulties to explain cultural information in English texts because of the absence of the direct contact with the target culture.

Answers	Number	Rate
Yes	05	20%
No	20	80%
Total	25	100%

Table 3.9: Teachers' visit to English speaking countries
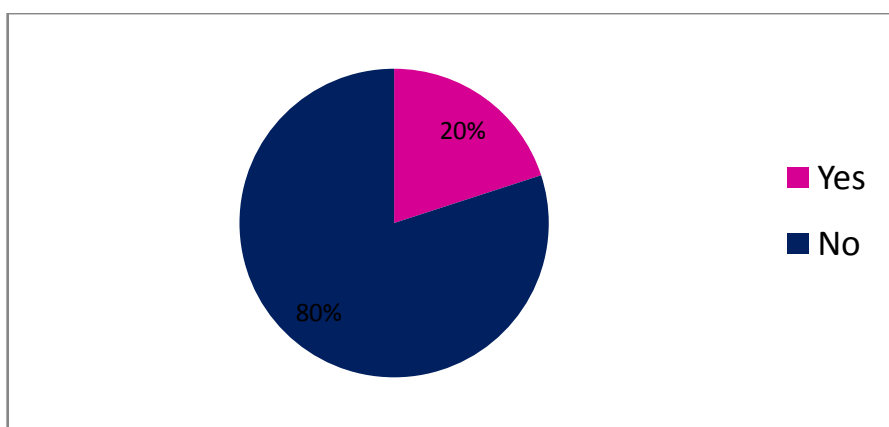
Figure3.3: Teachers' visit to English speaking countries

Part two: the integration of culture in teaching reading in English

Question05: How would you define the word "culture"?

This question seeks to reveal information about teachers' definition of the word "Culture" since the meaning of this concept is so important for them as language teachers. 40% of the informants defined the word in behavioural terms, while 24% in functional

terms. Another 24% focused on literary features. 12% of the informants gave it a limited definition.

Definitions of culture	Number	Rate
✓ **A set of behaviours, customs, patterned way of living**	10	40%
✓ **A system of thoughts, values and norms**	06	24%
✓ **Literature, civilization and art**	06	24%
✓ **To have general information in different fields**	03	12%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Table3.10: Teachers' definitions to the word "Culture"

Question06: Do you think that teaching/learning culture is an important part in teaching/learning English?

This issue attempts at revealing whether the Algerian teachers are aware of the importance of culture when they teach English in reading activities. 56% of the teachers considered teaching culture as important, while 44% saw it as a very important element. In contrast, no teacher chose the last option (no, not important). Consequently, there is no doubt that all the teachers agreed that culture is an essential element in teaching English and particularly reading.

The justifications provided by the teachers can be summarized as follow:

- It is important in order to know how to behave as we are facing different people with different beliefs.
- It helps to improve the language and to get as much as possible of vocabulary
- It helps pupils to deal with any people in any situation.
- It is important because the context makes the language easier to learn.
- Culture facilitates language by helping imagining the situations and so the discourse that should be used.
- Teaching language without teaching meaningless symbols to which the pupil may give wrong interpretations.

The importance of culture	*Number*	*Rate*
Yes, very important	11	44%
Yes, important	14	56%
No	0	0%
Total	25	100%

Table3.11: the importance of culture according to teachers
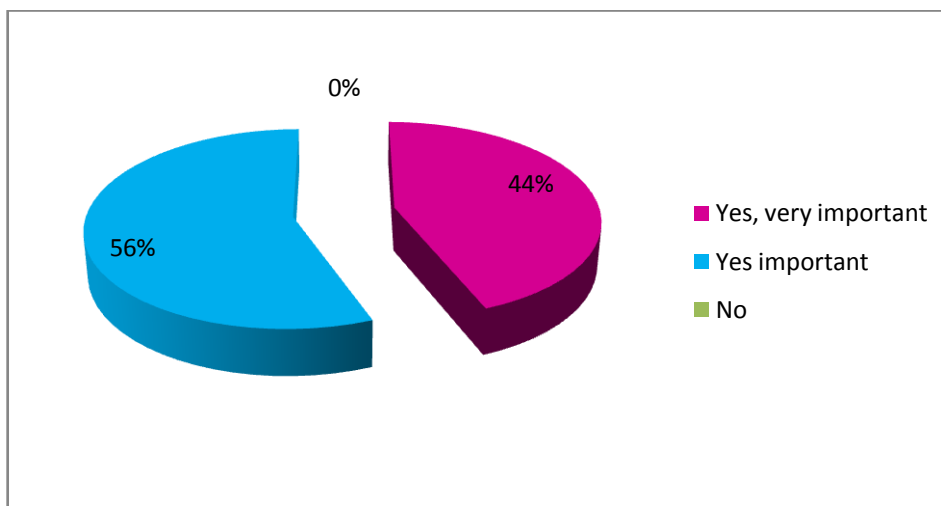
Figure 3.4: The importance of culture according to teachers

Question07: Do you think that reading is taught properly in your institution?

This question aimed at knowing whether the Algerian teachers are satisfied with the way of teaching reading in their institutions, this includes the materials provided, the time devoted and the topics chosen in the textbook. 56% of the teachers said that it could be improved by choosing more divert and motivating topics and devoting more time. They added that this does not concern the third year only but it has to start earlier. 40% of the teachers are not satisfied with the way reading is taught with. Only one teacher said that it is well taught.

Answers	Number	Rate
Yes	01	04%
No	10	40%
Could be improved	14	56%
Total	25	100%

Table3.12: Teacher's views about the way of teaching reading in their institutions
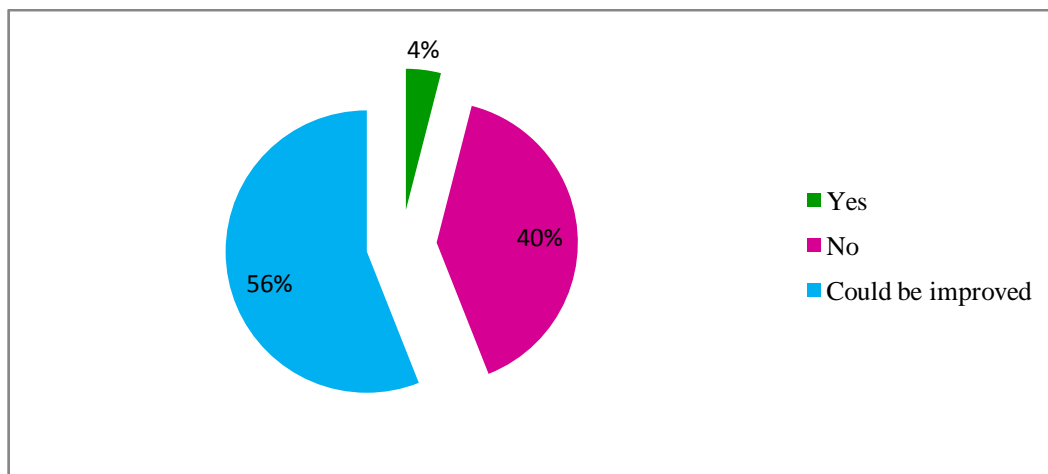
Figure3.5: Teacher's views about the way of teaching reading in their institutions

Question08: Approximately how much time per week is spent to teach reading?

In order to know whether the time devoted for reading activities allows teachers to discuss cultural issues comfortably, we asked them about how much time per week is spent to teach reading. 28% of the teachers said that reading session takes only one hour. 20% said they do a reading activity in two hours, while 28% said they spent three hours in order to deal with all the points of the reading session. 24% of the informant spent four hours to make sure that the learners understand the texts, the new vocabulary and acquire new cultural information.

Answers	Number	Rate
One hour	07	28%
Two hours	05	20%
Three hours	07	28%
Four hours	06	24%
Total	25	100%

Table3.13: Time spent per week in teaching reading
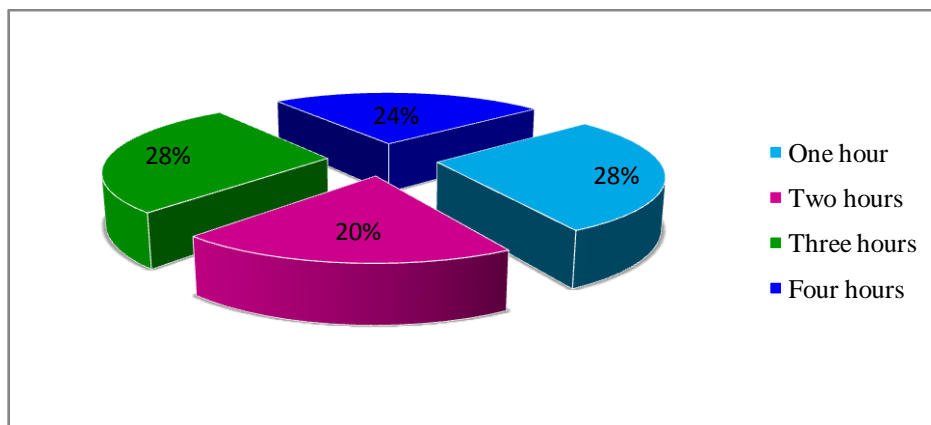
Figure 3.6: Time spent per week to teach reading

Question09: Do you discuss cultural issues when teaching reading?

Since the majority of the Algerian learners cannot travel abroad and have a direct contact with foreigners, teachers are the only source of the cultural information. Therefore, in order to enrich learners' cultural knowledge, teachers have to discuss cultural issues while reading a text in English. 56% of the teachers do so as they are aware of the importance of the interaction in the classroom to broaden learners' cultural knowledge. 40% of the informants rarely discuss cultural issues with their learners. Only one teacher never does so.

Answers	Number	Rate
Yes	14	56%
Rarely	10	40%
Never	01	4%
Total	25	100%

Table 3.14: discussion of cultural issues with pupils
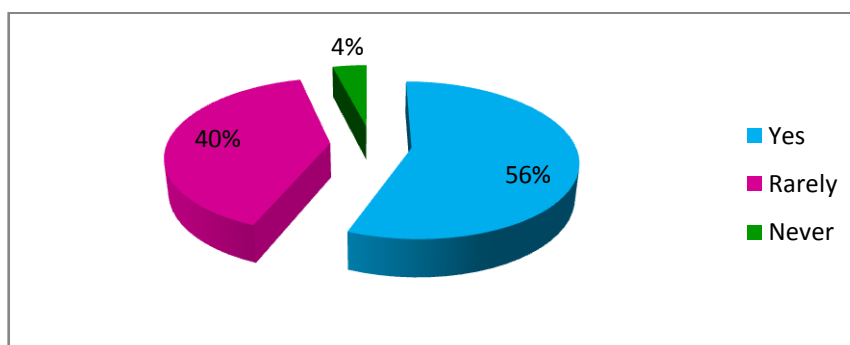
Figure 3.7: Discussion of cultural issues with pupils

Question10: when teaching reading in English, is culture to be treated as:

a. *Supplementary optional material*
b. *An integral part of language learning*

Since teachers' perceptions and views play an important role in the process of learning/ teaching a foreign language plays, this question aims at finding how our teachers treat the cultural component when teaching reading which greatly influence pupils' views and attitudes. The majority of the teachers (64%) think that culture is to be deliberately included in texts and activities being an integral part of foreign language learning. The rest (28%) found that cultural is a supplementary optional material that can never influence the process of learning a foreign culture.

Answers	Number	Rate
✓ **Supplementary optional material**	07	28%
✓ **An integral part of language learning**	16	64%
✓ **No answer**	02	8%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Table3.15: Treatment of culture when teaching reading
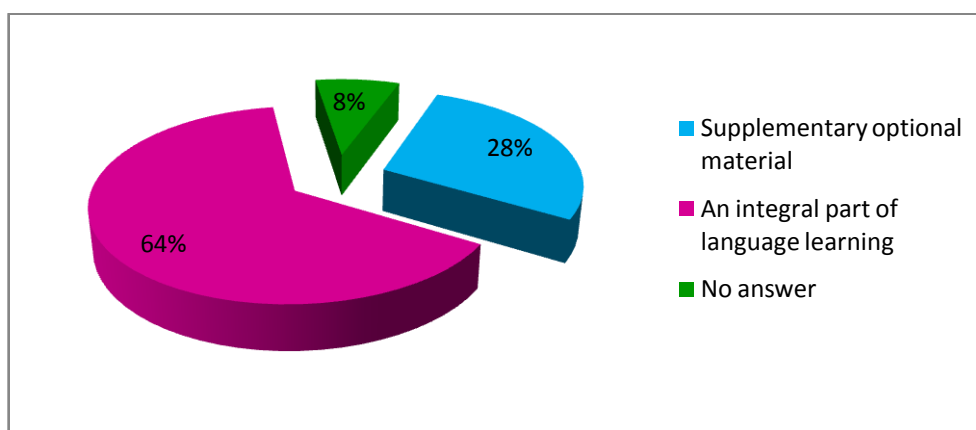
Figure 3.8: Treatment of culture when teaching reading

Question11: Do you think that learning about a foreign culture is a threat to one's native cultural identity? (Please, justify your answer)

The great majority of the teachers 96% agreed that learning about a foreign culture does not threaten one's native cultural identity. Only one teacher said that it does.

Please, justify your answer.

Only one teacher did not justify her answer. Most of those who pointed to the importance of cultural knowledge in clarifying meaning and broadening the pupils' general knowledge, believe that learners should be "open to all cultures", they should learn "to deal with the other" and accept "cultural differences" and "by learning a foreign culture they acquire new information and enhance the use of the language".

Some teachers stated that learning about a foreign culture is not a threat to one's native cultural identity as it is additional to help learning a language. However, some teachers added that it can be a threat depending on how the learner classifies his/her according to the foreign culture.

Answers	Number	Rate
No	24	96%
Yes	1	04%
Total	25	100%

Table3.16: Teachers' views about whether learning a FC is a threat to NC
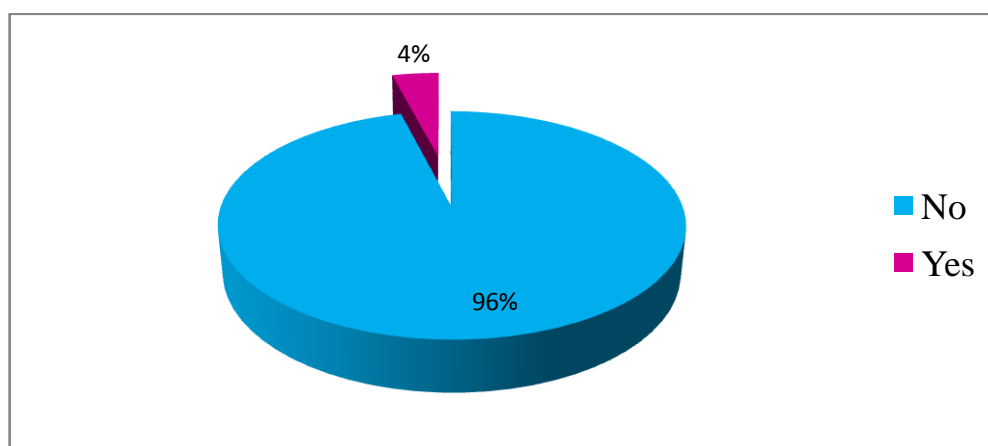
Figure3.9: Teachers' views about whether learning a FC is a threat to NC

Question12: Do you find difficulties in explaining cultural information in English texts?

According to the findings, 64% of the teachers sometimes face difficulties when explaining cultural information in English texts, 20% of them always find difficulties and few teachers 16% do not face difficulties when dealing with cultural issues. This explains why teachers do not discuss cultural issues with their pupils and this can be justified by the

insufficient knowledge of teachers about the English speaking cultures or because of the lack of materials.

Answers	Number	Rate
Yes	05	20%
Sometimes	16	64%
No	04	16%
Total	25	100%

Table3.17: The possibility to find difficulties to explain cultural issues
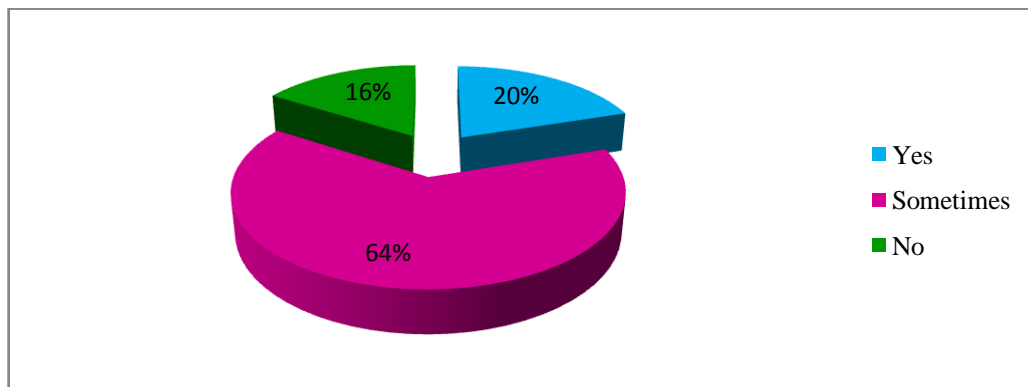
Figure3.10: The possibility to find difficulties to explain cultural issues

Question13: Which topics or themes should pupils be introduced to when reading in English?

This questions aims at finding the topics and themes that teachers may find attractive and interesting to read about them in English. "Daily life" and "beliefs and values" got the highest rates, 64% and 44% respectively, 36% of the answers singled out "literature", 32% for "History" and only 24% for an intercultural topic " Ethnic relations and racism". The last topic teachers want to deal with in a reading activity is customs and art with a rate of 16%. No other topics related to intercultural issues or technology in this era of globalization like: stereotypes or technology devices.

Topics	Number	Rate
✓ **Daily life and routines**	16	64%
✓ **Customs and art**	04	16%
✓ **Beliefs and values**	11	44%
✓ **History**	08	32%
✓ **Literature**	09	36%
✓ **Ethnic relations and racism**	06	24%
✓ **Others**	0	00%

Table3.18: Topics pupils should be introduced to when reading in English
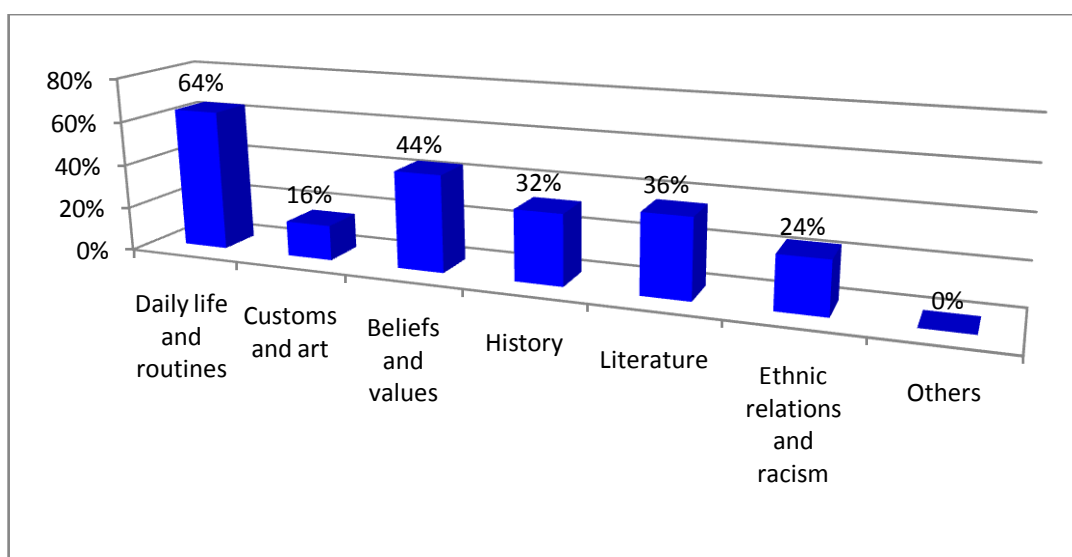
Figure3.11: Topics pupils should be introduced to when reading in English

Question14: when teaching reading, do you choose texts to relate the foreign culture to the pupils' cultural environment and background?

This issue attempts to reveal whether Algerian EFL teachers choose texts to relate the foreign culture with the pupils' cultural background in order to clarify the difficult cultural point that may hinder the understanding of a text in English. 28% of the informants sometimes do so. The majority sometimes bring extra texts to facilitate the comprehension. 24% of the teachers do not do so and rely on the texts available in the official textbook.

Answers	Number	Rate
Yes	07	28%
Sometimes	12	48%
No	06	24%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Table3.19: Use of texts to relate the FC with the NC
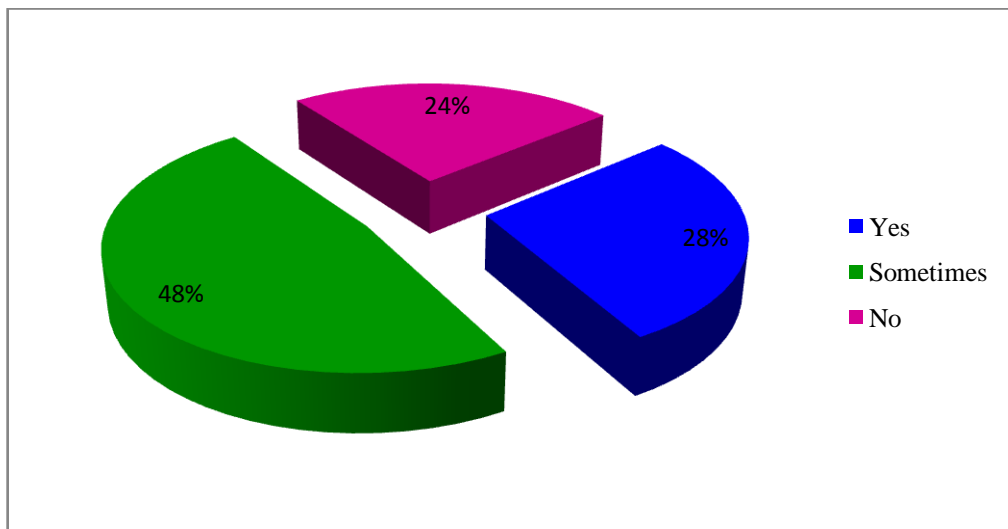
Figure3.12: Use of texts to relate the FC with the NC

Question15: do you think that you have in-depth knowledge about English –speaking cultures to teach aboutthem in reading?

Teachers' attitudes toward their knowledge about English-speaking culture affect the amount of cultural information they give to their learners. Indeed, a teacher with a positive attitude and who has an in-depth knowledge can provide the learners with helpful explanations, encourage them to accept the cultural differences by pointing out the positive elements in the foreign culture and the most important enrich the cultural knowledge which allows them to read texts without obstacles. Unfortunately, most of the Algerian teachers (80%) do not think they have an in-depth cultural knowledge to teach about it, while 20% of them said that they have.

Answers	Number	Rate
Yes	05	20%
No	20	80%
Total	25	100%

Table3.20: teachers' opinion about their knowledge about English-speaking cultures
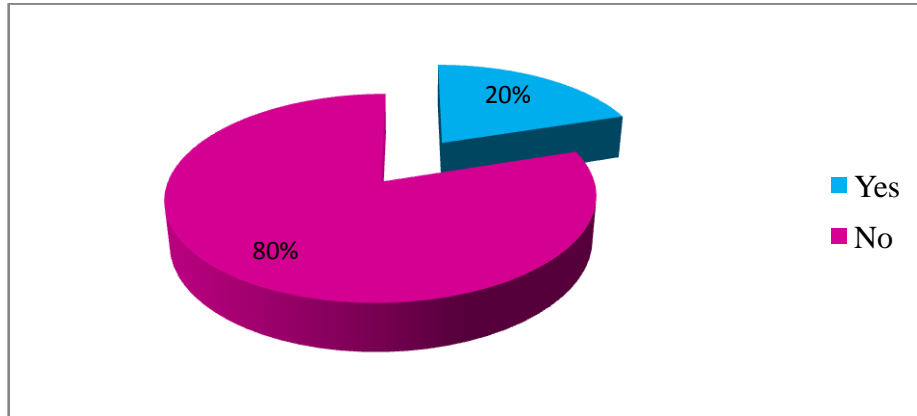
Figure3.13: Teachers' opinion about their knowledge about English speaking cultures

Question16: Does the textbook "New Prospects" offer enough cultural knowledge?

The official textbook is the only available source that helps the Algerian pupils to discover the foreign culture. Therefore, this question was asked to know what teachers think about whether the textbook "New Prospects" offers enough cultural knowledge. 64% of the teachers are satisfied with the amount of cultural information presented and said that it offers enough. 4% said that it offers a lot of cultural knowledge, whereas 32% of the teachers think that what the textbook offers is not sufficient to develop the cultural knowledge of the pupils.

Answers	Number	Rate
Yes, a lot	01	04%
Yes ,enough	16	64%
No	08	32%
Total	25	100%

Table3.21: Teachers' opinion about the cultural content of the Textbook "New Prospects"
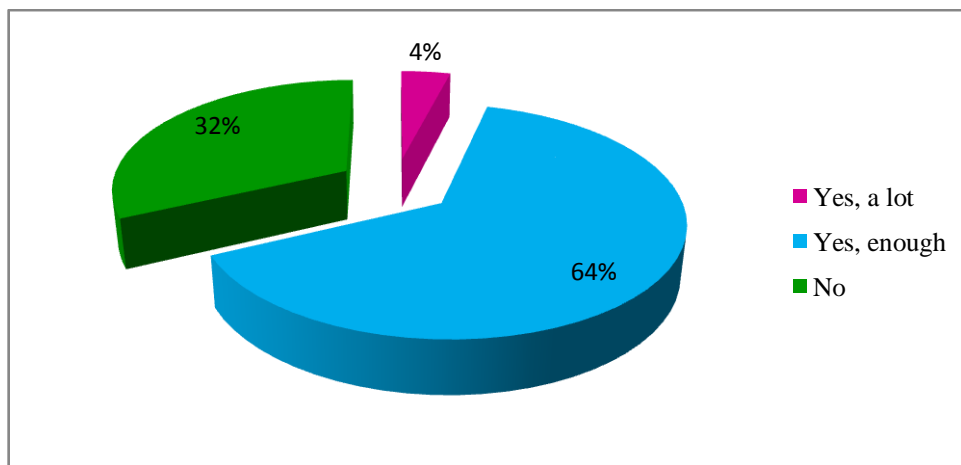
Figure3.14: Teachers' opinion about the cultural content of the Textbook "New Prospects"

Question17: If yes, is the cultural content presented in reading texts:

 a. *Suitable to the pupils' level*
 b. *Suitable to the pupils' cultural background*
 c. *Suitable to the curriculum goals*

This question was issued to elicit information about the suitability of the cultural content presented in reading texts in the official textbook according to teachers.24% of the informants did not answer the question. 32% of them assumed that the content is suitable for the pupils' level, while 24% said it is suitable for the curriculum goals. The rest 16% think that it is suitable for the pupils' cultural background acquired during the learning years.

Answer	Number	Rate
a. **Suitable to the pupils' level**	08	32%
b. **Suitable to the pupils' cultural background**	04	16%
c. **Suitable to the curriculum goals**	07	28%
d. **No answer**	06	24%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Table3.22: Suitability of the cultural content presented in the textbook "New Prospects"
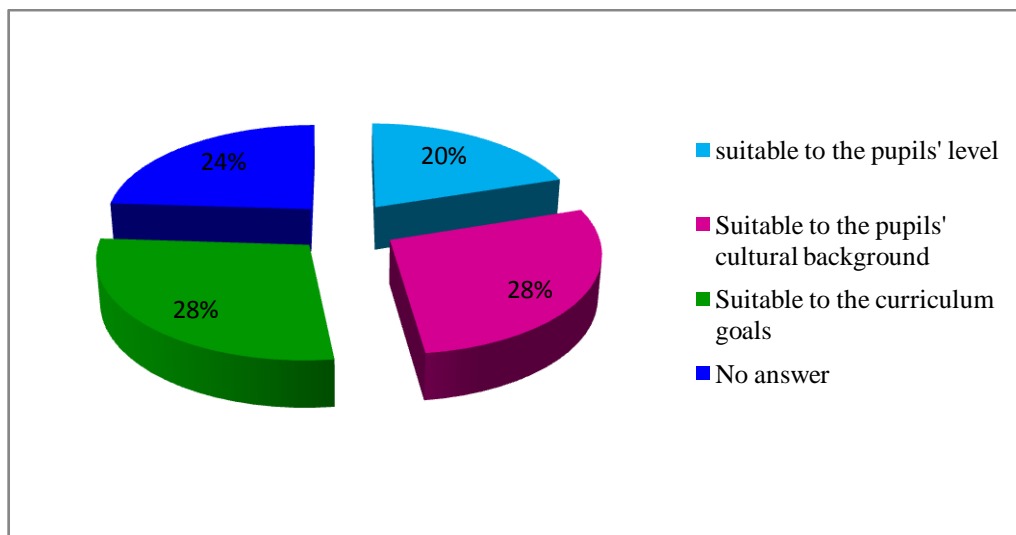
Figure3.15: Suitability of the cultural content presented in the textbook "New Prospects"

3.3 Pupils' questionnaire:

3.3.1 Introduction:

The aim of this questionnaire is to explore the place of culture in learning English in general and reading in particular. It also attempts to investigate pupils' views about the importance of learning culture when learning reading in English. The questionnaire will, therefore, help us to know how important culture is when learning English and whether pupils' cultural background knowledge can help them to better understand English texts.

3.3.2 Description of pupils' questionnaire:

This questionnaire aims at getting some information about Third year secondary pupils who live in different areas in Algiers :AinNaadja, Birkhadem, Dar ElBeida, El-Harrach, Bab El Oued, 1er Mai, and Birtouta : their parents educational background their viewpoints about reading in general, and reading in English in particular, their reading habits, as well as their views about integrating culture when reading in English . The questionnaire contains seventeen questions requiring answers with yes/no, or picking up the appropriate answer from a set of options, or open questions asking the students to justify their choice. The questionnaire is divided into three main sections. The first section aims at obtaining some information about the students, how long they have been studying English (Q1), their parents' educational background (Q2) and (Q3), the languages they speak (Q4), as well as their level in English (Q5). In the second section, students are asked about their reading habits and perceptions. In (Q6) they are asked whether they like

reading, students are asked to specify the language they usually read through (Q7), and whether there are in their family people who encourage them to read in English (Q8). In the following question (Q9) they are asked to say what a good reader for them is. In (Q10) they are asked about the documents they read outside the classroom to study English. The last question in the second section (Q11), is about the atmosphere of the classroom when they have a reading session. The third section aims at obtaining information about the place of culture in pupils' process of learning English in general and reading in particular. In (Q12) they are required to define the word "culture" according to them. The following question (Q13), pupils are asked whether culture is important when learning English. In (Q14) they are required to justify their answers. The following question (Q15) is about the topics they want to deal with in reading activities in the classroom. In (Q16) they are asked whether learning a foreign culture represents a threat to one's identity and religion. Here, the pupils are required to justify their answers. In the last question, (Q17) pupils are asked whether they think they have a sufficient knowledge about English-speaking cultures that enable them to understand a text in English easily.

3.2.3 Data Analysis:

In this work we have randomly chosen sixty four (64) pupils studying at different secondary schools in Algiers. (See table3.1)

Sixty questionnaires were administered, and all the questionnaires were returned back which means (100%) of the questionnaires were answered without difficulties. However, in some questionnaires some questions that need direct answers or justification were not answered, the latter represents (10%). The questions have been left incomplete, because the respondents were not able to write in English or because of their low level in English.

As it has been stated before, the questionnaires have been filled by sixty (60)third year secondary pupils: Seven (07) respondents from OuridaMedad Secondary School, El Harrach; Eight (08) respondents from OkbaIbnNafaa Secondary School, Bab El Oued; Eight (08) respondents from Mohamed Boudiaf Secondary School, Dar El Beida; Eight (08) respondents from El Idrissi Secondary School, Place du 1er Mai; Ten (10)respondents from SeddikAbdellah Secondary School, Birkhadem: Six (06) respondents from Birtouta Secondary School; and Thirteen (13) respondents from CherifSabahi Secondary School, AinNaadja.

As a result, the distribution of pupils' proportions has been as follow: (11.66%) for pupils from El Harrach, (13.33%) for the pupils from Bab El Oued, Dar El Beida and Place de 1er Mai, (16.66%) for pupils from Birkhadem, (10%) for pupils from Birtouta, and (21.66%) for pupils from AinNaadja. The following pie-chart represents the percentages of pupils' participation:
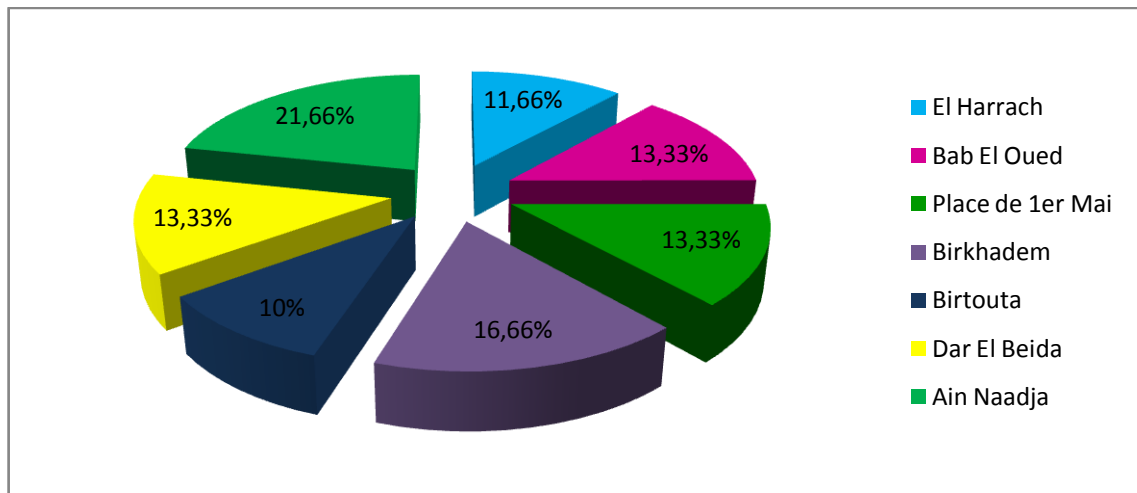
Figure3.16: Pupils' participation

This current study aims at generating percentages for each secondary school, then for the entire population. This has been done mainly to get an idea about each school and each region separately. The results have been provided in forms of tables, then using bar graphs or pie-charts to have a clear vision of the results. In this respect, Brown supports this idea, stating that:

> "A great deal of information is often included in charts and graphs, which are, after all, powerful and visually attractive ways to represent a lot of information in a small space……… visual representations can be an important aid to understanding bothstrengths and weaknesses of statistical study"

The main aim of the first rubric in pupils' questionnaire was to gather general information about Third Year Secondary School pupils from seven schools in Algiers. That helped us to draw a clear profile for those pupils being involved in this work, information such as: age, gender, place of residence, father's and mother's educational background, the languages spoken, how long they have been studying English, and pupils' level in English, constituted a helping background for our study.

As far as the first question is concerned, our participants' ages were between seventeen and nineteen. In this exploratory study, the questionnaires were administered to 60 pupils literary and scientific streams from seven different schools in Algiers during the school year 2012-2013. The sample consisted of the two sexes: 37 females and 23 males; so that this research embodied all the population to collect various data. The ages of the pupils were between seventeen and nineteen.

Gender	Number	Rate
Males	27	42.18%
Females	37	57.81%
Total	64	100%

Table 3.23: Pupils' gender
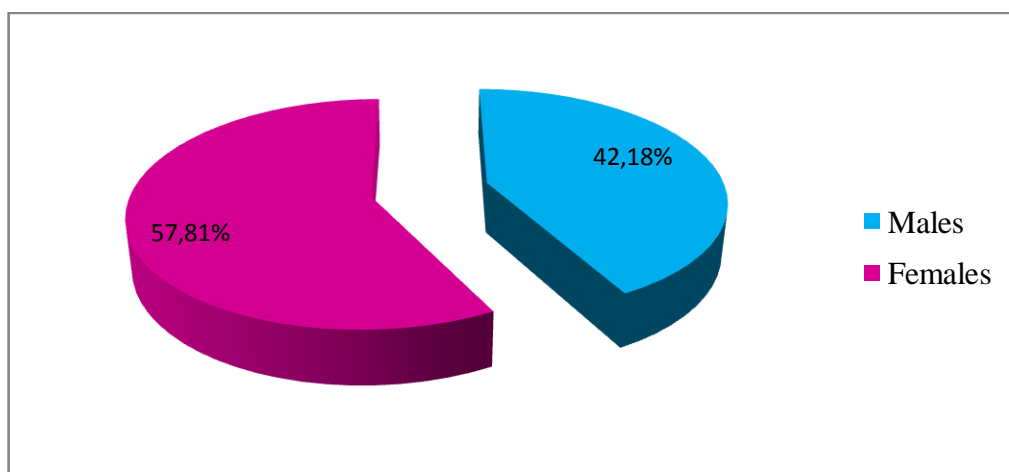
Figure 3.17 : Participants' Gender

Question 01: *How long have you been studying English?*

To investigate the time spent in learning English, the table shows that most of the participants (75%) have been studying English for seven years. i.e. four years in the middle school and three years in the secondary school. Eleven 11 pupils(18.33%) have been studying it for eight (8) years which means that they might be repetitive. (3, 33%) have been studying English for nine (9) years, and only (1.66%) have been studying English for ten and eleven years which indicates that those students have started learning this language at the primary school level and this might be an advantage for them.

Schools	7Years	8Years	9Years	10Years	11Years
OuridaMedad El Harrach	**7**	0	0	0	0
OkbaIbnNafaa. Bab-El-Oued	**6**	**2**	0	0	0
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida	**5**	**2**	0	1	0
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai	**6**	**2**	0	0	0
Seddik Abdellah Birkhadem	**6**	**1**	2	0	1
Birtouta	**6**	0	0	0	0
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja	**9**	**4**	0	0	0
Total	**45**	**11**	02	01	01
Rate	**75%**	**18.33%**	**3.33%**	**1.66%**	**1.66%**

Table 3.24 Years of learning English
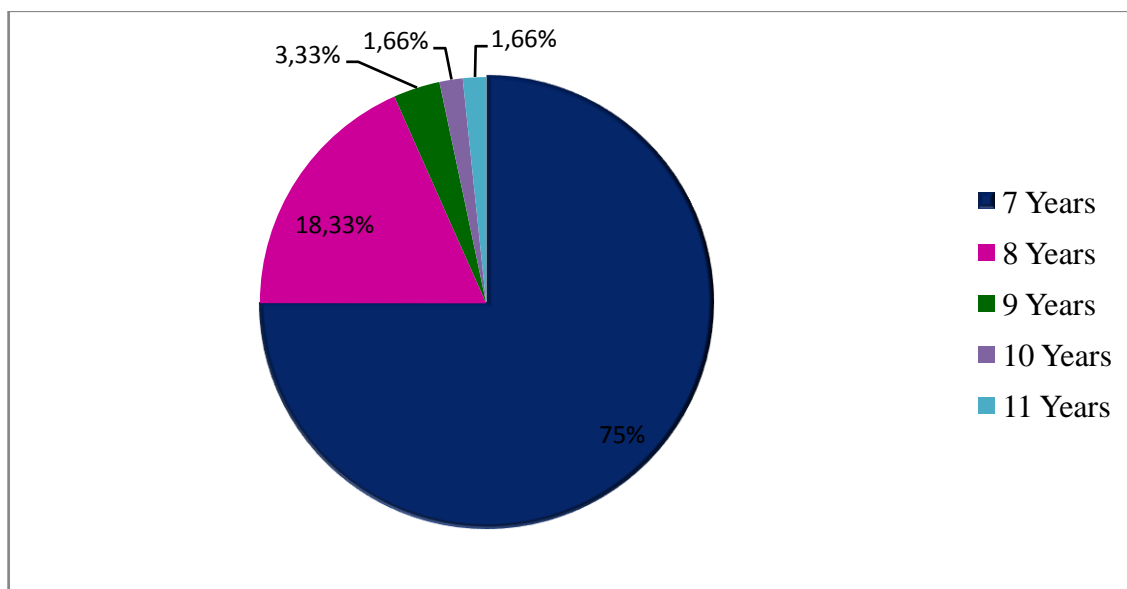
Figure 3.18: Years of learning English

Question02: *What is your father's educational background?*

As the table below demonstrates, only 7, 81% of fathers who have no educational level, which is quite normal since our participants live in urban areas where usually people have the advantage of being educated and attending at least the primary school. The great majority of pupils' fathers have a secondary level with a rate of 39, 06%. This implies that our participants have an educational support at home as their educated fathers may help them in their studies, discuss with them socio-cultural issues or at least encourage them. 31.25% of fathers which is an interesting rate, have a university level and thus their children may have a stronger support as fathers can influence them positively by introducing them the culture of the others and showing them how to cope with changes. 15.62% of fathers have a middle level. The rest of the fathers (6.25%) have a primary level.

schools	University	Secondary	Middle	Primary	None	Total
OuridaMedad.	03	03	01	00	00	**07**
OkbaIbnNafaa	03	02	01	01	01	**08**
Mohamed Boudiaf	03	02	01	01	01	**08**
EL-Idrissi	03	04	00	01	00	**08**
Seddik Abdellah	02	07	00	00	02	**11**
Birtouta	02	04	01	01	01	**09**
Cherif Sabahi	04	03	06	00	00	**13**
Total	**20**	**25**	**10**	**04**	**05**	**64**
Rate	**31.25%**	**39.06%**	**15.62%**	**6.25%**	**7.81%**	**100%**

Table 3.25: Fathers' educational background
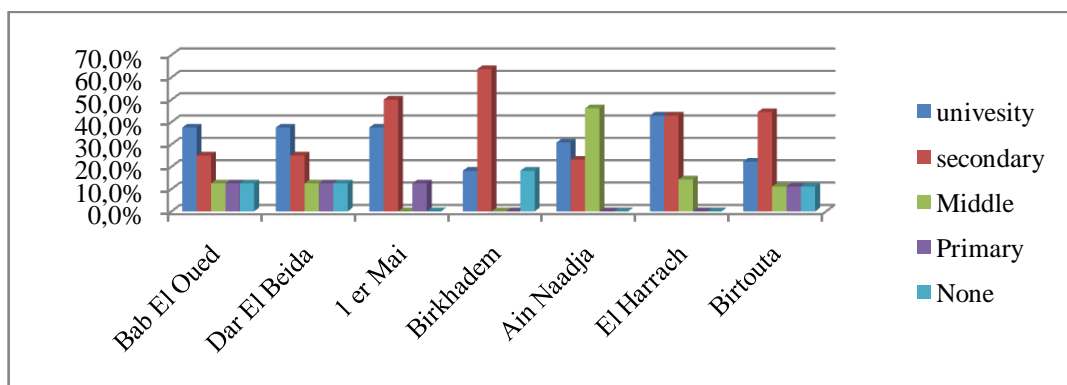
Figure3.19: Fathers' educational background

Question 03: *What is your mother's educational background?*

Pupils' mothers who have a university level represent39, 06% of the population. This interesting rate means that a great majority of them attended school. This can be extremely beneficial for pupils because generally mothers are more influential than fathers. The close relationship between mothers and their children and the time they spent together comparing to fathers, play an important role in shaping their children's views and perceptions, as well as in their educational attainment by helping them while reading when they find difficulties to understand texts. 21,87% of mothers attended secondary schools which is also an important rate. Thus, pupils have an educational background which influences their process of learning in general and English as a foreign language in specific. Also 21, 87% of mothers attended middle schools; 9, 37% have a primary level and only 7,81% have no educational level.

Schools	University	Secondary	Middle	Primary	None	Total
OuridaMedad	03	03	01	00	00	**07**
OkbaIbnNafaa	03	01	03	00	1	**08**
Mohamed Boudiaf	04	02	01	01	0	**08**
EL-Idrissi	02	01	02	03	00	**08**
Seddik Abdellah	06	02	01	00	02	**11**
Birtouta	02	02	01	02	02	**09**
Cherif Sabahi	05	03	05	00	00	**13**
Total	**25**	**14**	**14**	**06**	**05**	64
Rate	**39.06%**	**21.87%**	**21.87%**	**9.37%**	**7.81%**	**100%**

Table3.26: Mothers' educational background
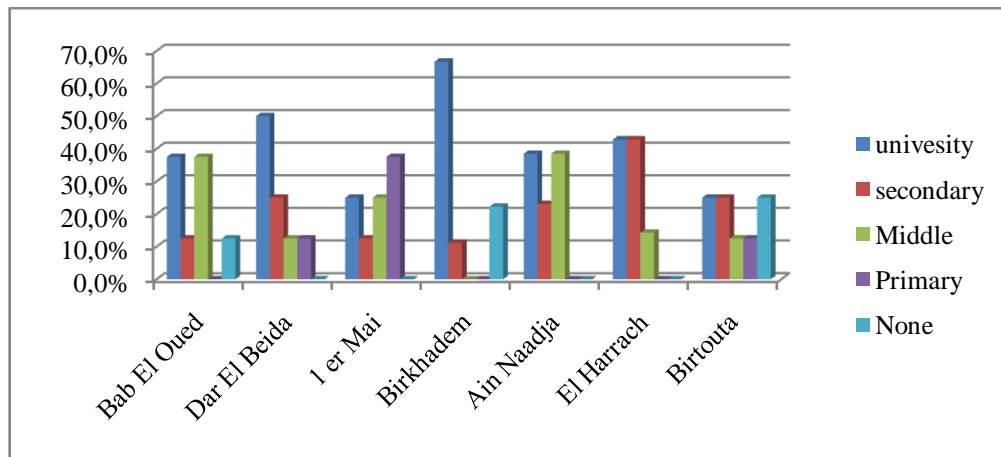
Figure3.20: Mothers' educational background

Question04: *What are the languages that you speak?*

As the table indicates, all our paricipants (100%) speak Arabic. It is normal as it is the mother tongue. As far as French is concerned, 36 pupils which represents 56.25% of the population speak it. Although pupils started learning French at the primary school, more than the half of our participants do not speak French. Pupils started learning English from the middle school which is a little late, this explains the low rate of pupils who speak English which is 39, 06%.

Schools		Arabic	French	English
OuridaMedad.	El Harrach	07	05	05
OkbaIbnNafaaBab-El-Oued		08	03	01
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida		08	06	03
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai		08	08	04
Seddik Abdellah	Birkhadem	11	08	03
Birtouta School Birtouta		09	01	02
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja		13	10	07
Total		**64**	**36**	**25**

Table3.27 : Languages spoken by pupils
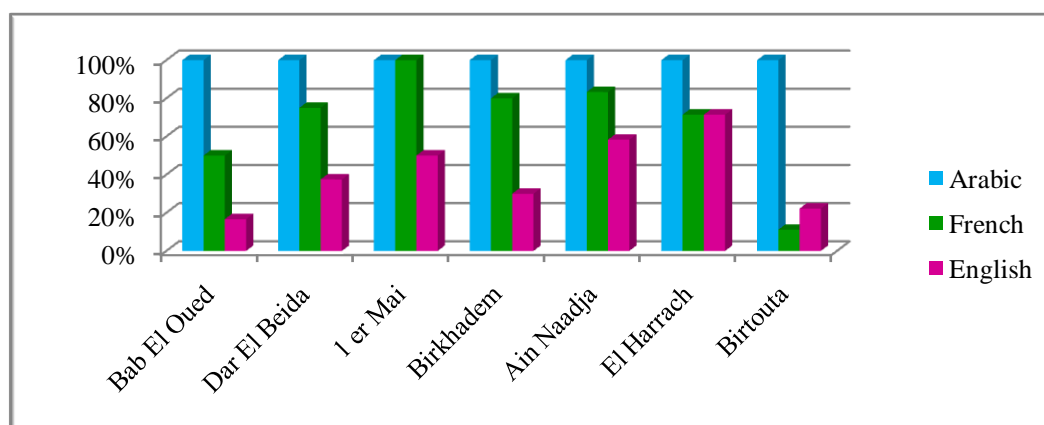
Figure3.21 : languages spoken by pupils.

Question05: *What is your level in English?*

The majority of the pupils claimed that they have an average English with 56,25% of the population, whereas 23,43% said that they are good, and 20,31% of them said that they are bad at English. These results show pupils' evaluation of their English and how they see themselves as English learners. This evaluation may be based on different factors as their marks in English, their teachers' assessment or on the way they deal with texts, movies, books or other materials in English.

Schools	Good	Average	Bad
OuridaMadad. El Harrach	02	05	00
OkbaIbnNafaaBab-El-Oued	04	04	00
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida	01	04	03
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai	02	04	02
Seddik Abdellah Birkhadem	02	04	05
BirtoutaSchoolBirtouta	02	05	02
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja	02	10	01
Rate	**23.43%**	**56.25%**	**20.31%**

Table3.28: Pupils' level in English
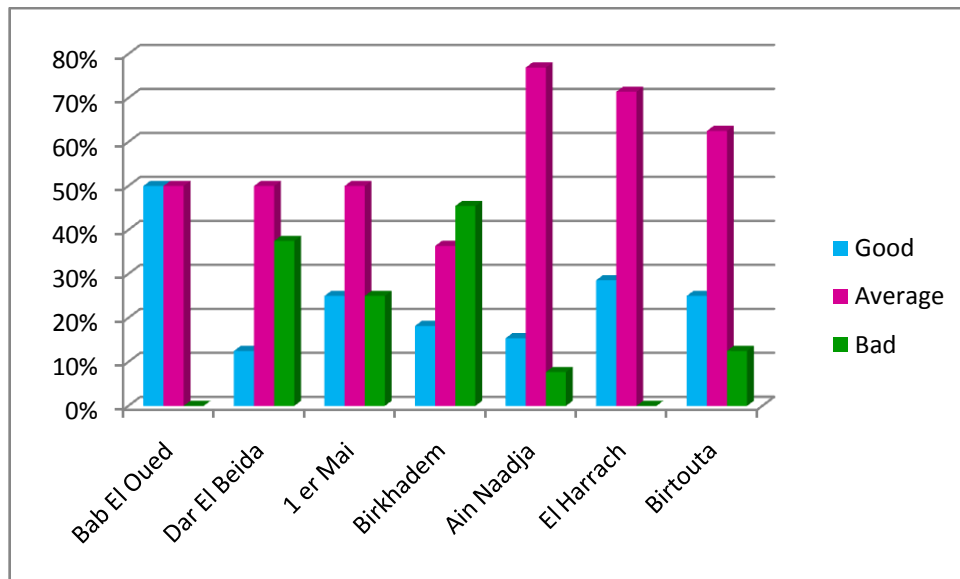
Bar-graph3.4: Pupils' level in English

The next pie-chart summarizes the results:
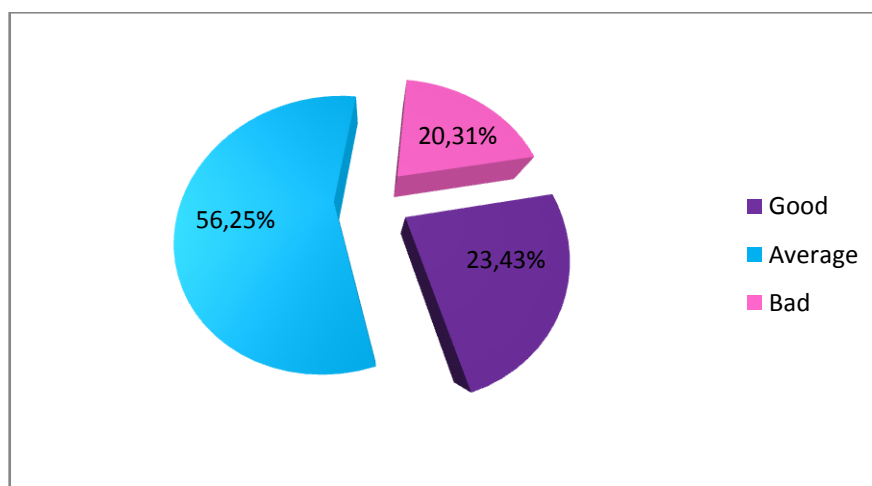
Pie-chart3.4: Pupils' level in English

Section Two: _Reading habits and perceptions_

Question06: Do you like reading?

The majority of the participants said that they like reading with 67, 18% of the population. This means that these pupils may have a good cultural background knowledge which they get from reading. Reading can enrich their knowledge according to the topics and themes they read about. This may help them in their studies as their schemata help them to make links between what they already know and the new information they have in

the texts and so understand them easily. The rest of the population (32.81%) said that they do not like reading. This may be due to different factors. For instance, the absence of motivation, the activity of reading may be boring for them, or they are not interested in reading.

SCHOOLS		YES	No
Ourida Medad El Harrach		05	02
Okba Ibn Nafaa Bab-El-Oued		06	02
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida		05	03
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai		05	03
Seddik Abdellah	Birkhadem	08	03
BirtoutaSchoolBirtouta		07	02
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja		07	06
Total		**43**	**21**
Rate		**67.18%**	**32.81%**

Table3.29: Pupils' preference of reading
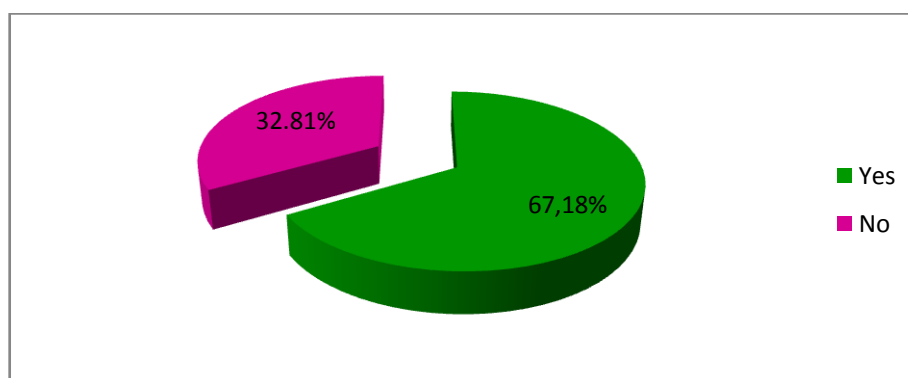
Figure3.23: Pupils' preference of reading

Question07: *In which language do you prefer reading?*

The results show that 59 ,37% of the participants prefer reading in French, whereas 39.06% prefer reading in Arabic; and only 17,18% prefer reading in English. The majority of pupils claimed that they read in French. They may do so because of the environment they live in, or their attitude towards French. Moreover, French is taught from the primary level and it is given more importance than English in the Algerian society. Although it is the mother tongue, a small number of pupils said that they prefer reading in Arabic.

English is the least chosen comparing to Arabic and French, and this can explain the levels of the pupils in English.

Schools	ArabicFrenchEnglish		
Ourida Medad El Harrach	04	04	00
OkbaIbnNafaaBab-El-Oued	04	02	03
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida	02	06	02
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai	02	07	01
Seddik Abdellah Birkhadem	06	08	01
BirtoutaSchoolBirtouta	07	01	02
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja	00	10	02
Total	**25**	**38**	**11**
Rate	**39.06%**	**59.37%**	**17.18%**

Table3.30: Languages pupils prefer reading in
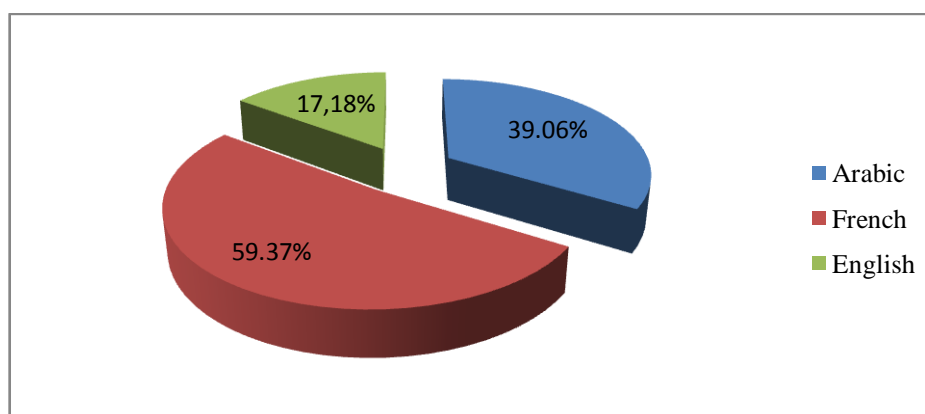
Figure 3.24: Languages pupils prefer reading in.

Question08: How often do you read in English?

The table indicates that our participants who prefer reading in English do not read a lot. Indeed 1.56% of the pupils always read in English. This is may be because of the absence of the reading habit as there are other things pupils may do in their spare time. However, an interesting number with 43.75% of the population sometimes read in English. They do not read regularly but from time to time. 25% of the pupils rarely read in English. A quite interesting number of the participants, 29.68% of the pupils never read in English. This may be due to the social environment they live in, to the unavailability or the high

prices of English books or they are not able to understand texts in English. The results are shown in the next bar graph

Schools	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
OuridaMedadEl Harrach	00	03	03	01	07
OkbaIbnNafaaBab-El-Oued	00	05	00	03	08
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida	00	01	03	04	08
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai	00	03	02	03	08
Seddik Abdellah Birkhadem	01	04	02	04	11
BirtoutaSchoolBirtouta	00	05	04	00	09
Cherif Sabahi Ain Naadja	00	07	02	04	13
Total	**01**	**28**	**16**	**19**	**64**
Rate	**1.56%**	**43.75%**	**25%**	**29.68%**	**100%**

Table3.31 : Frequency of reading in English
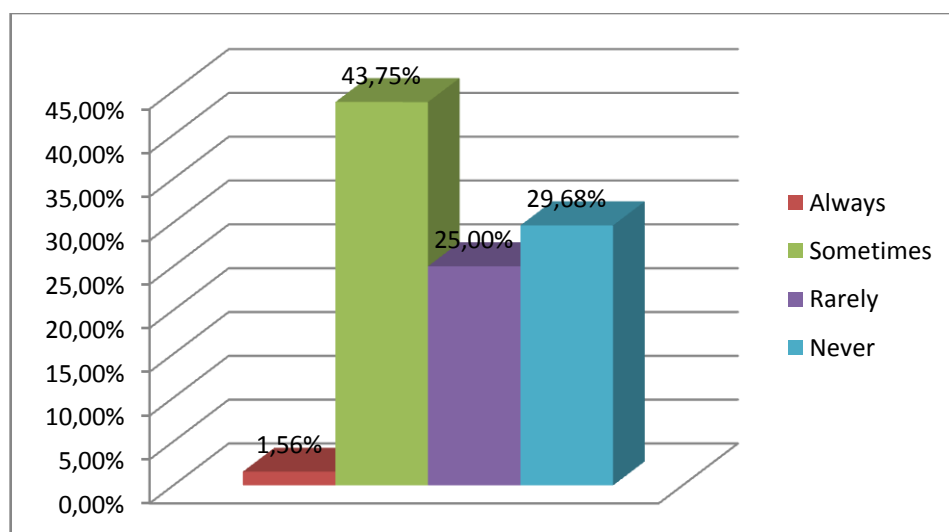
Figure3.25: Frequency of reading in English

Question09: Is there any one in your family who encourages you to read in English?

As the results show 65,62% of our participants are encouraged by their families to read in English which means that families play a positive role in enhancing their children's reading habits especially in English as it has became an international language. The family support can greatly influence pupils' perceptions, attitudes and habits. The rest of the population which represents 34, 37% are not encouraged to read in English. Thus, these pupils do not have the family support they need to perceive the world clearly and learn

how to learn, which means learn how to cope with the changes of the modern world where English becomes the dominant language. The bar graph displays the results in details.

SCHOOLS		YES	NO	Total
OuridaMedad.	El Harrach	06	01	07
OkbaIbnNafaaBab-El-Oued		06	02	08
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida		02	06	08
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai		04	04	08
Seddik Abdellah	Birkhadem	07	04	11
BirtoutaSchoolBirtouta		08	01	09
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja		09	04	13
Total		**42**	**22**	**64**
Rate		**65.62%**	**34.37%**	**100%**

Table3.32: Family encouragement for pupils to read
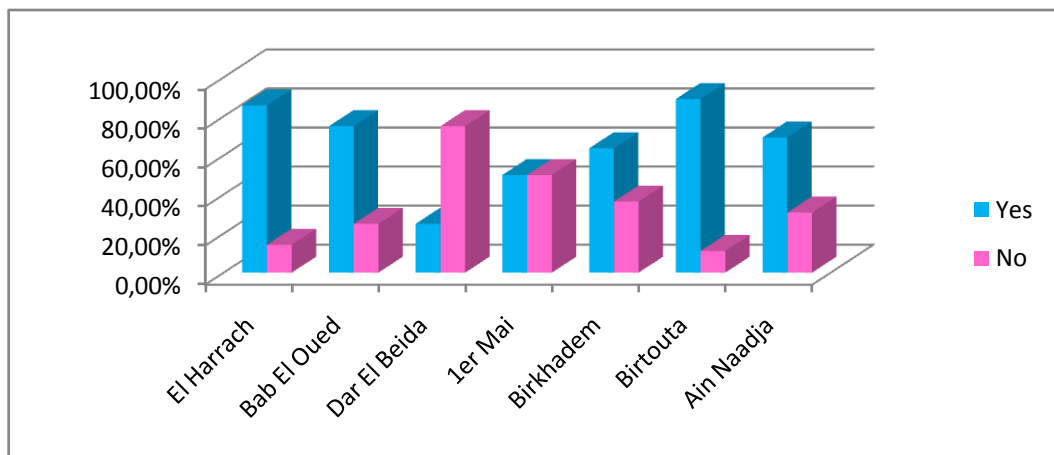
Figure3.26.1: Family encouragement for pupils to read

The following pie-chart summarizes the results .
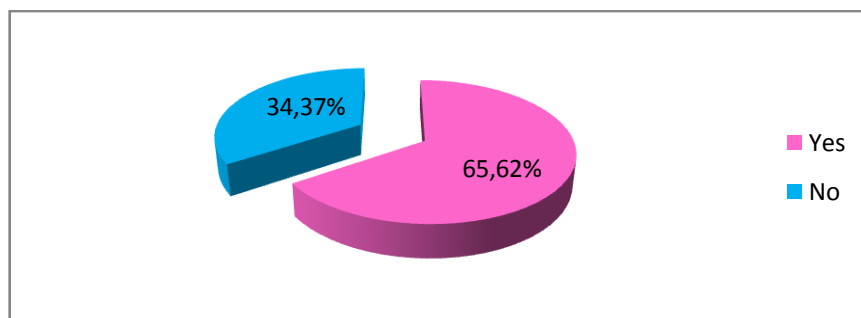
Figure3.26.2: Family encouragement for pupils to read

Question10: What do you think a good reader is?

   a. *Who reads the text fluently.*
   b. *Who understands the topic of the text.*
   c. *Who understands all the words of the text.*

This question aims at finding out whether our pupils are aware of the importance of their cultural background knowledge when reading in English. The results indicate that 60, 93% of the participants think that a good reader is someone who understands the topic of the text which means getting the general idea. Thus, our participants are aware of the importance of their background knowledge when reading a text in a foreign language. Indeed, they cannot understand the topic without having previous knowledge about it. 34, 37% think that a good reader is someone who is able to understand all the words of the text. They think that understanding a text is based on the amount of vocabulary they have, if they know so much words they can understand the text easily. Only 4, 68% of the participants claimed that a person who reads the texts fluently is a good reader.

Schools	A	B	C
OuridaMedadEl Harrach	01	03	03
OkbaIbnNafaaBab-El-Oued	00	04	04
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida	00	02	06
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai	01	06	01
Seddik Abdellah Birkhadem	00	09	02
BirtoutaSchoolBirtouta	01	08	00
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja	00	07	06
Total	**03**	**39**	**22**
Rate	**4.68%**	**60.93%**	**34.37%**

Table3.33: Pupils' definition of a good reader
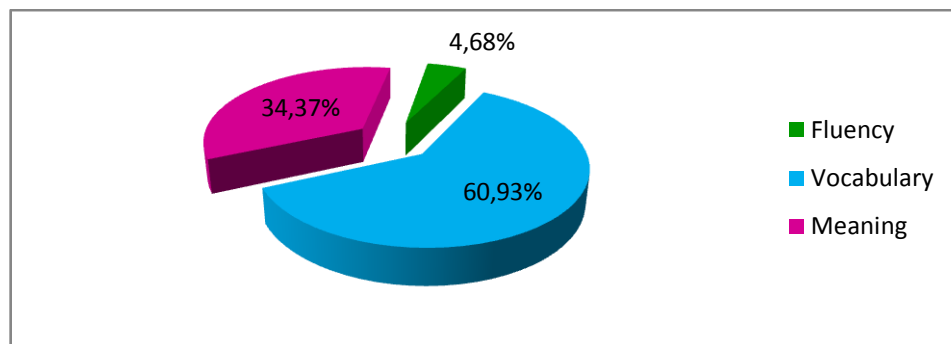
Figure3.27: Pupils' definition of a good reader

Question11: What the documents that you read to study English outside the classroom?

Since the Algerian classes are generally large and the time allotted to learn English and to read in English is limited, Algerian pupils are not exposed sufficiently to both English language and culture. In this regards, we saw it of vital importance to know whether the pupils tried to learn English by reading outside the classroom. As the results indicate, 45, 31% of the participants claimed that they read short stories because the can finish them rapidly. 37, 5% of them said that they read articles from internet as it is the easiest way to find documents in English. Only 9, 37% said that they read novel, and 21, 87% of the participants said that they do not read at all because either they do not like reading or because documents in English are not available.

Schools	Novels	Articles from internet	Short stories	None
OuridaMedadEl Harrach	03	06	02	00
OkbaIbnNafaaBab-El-Oued	00	04	03	03
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida	00	03	03	02
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai	00	03	03	02
Seddik Abdellah Birkhadem	01	04	01	05
BirtoutaSchoolBirtouta	01	00	09	00
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja	01	04	08	02
Total	**06**	**24**	**29**	**14**
Rate	**9.37%**	**37.5%**	**45.31%**	**21.87%**

Table3.34 :Documents read by pupils to learn English
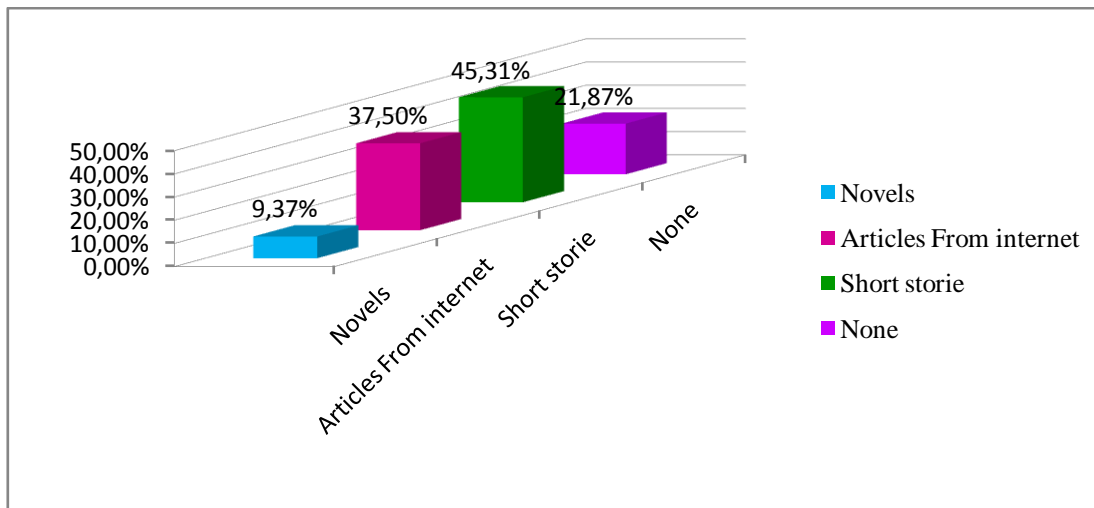
Figure3.28:Documents read by pupils to learn English

Question12: When you have reading activity, is the atmosphere of the classroom?

a. *Friendly*

b. *Boring*

c. *Neutral*

This question attempted to know how pupils fin the atmosphere of the classroom when having a reading session. Table demonstrates that 34.37% found the atmosphere friendly which helps them learn comfortably by discussing the issues mentioned in the text with the teacher and interacting with each other as active learners. This kind of atmosphere encourages pupils to read and appreciate the reading activity, which allows them to activate their background knowledge.

Unfortunately, 31, 25% of the participants said that they find the atmosphere boring and so they are not motivated to read or to discuss cultural issues with their teacher. They added that the main reason to find it boring is that they find the texts difficult and the teachers do not help them to understand them. The rest of the participants (34, 37%) found the atmosphere neutral; they read the text silently without discussing the ideas mentioned or giving their viewpoints.

Schools	Freindly	Boring	Neutral
Ourida Medad El Harrach	04	01	02
Okba Ibn Nafaa Bab-El-Oued	03	01	04
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida	00	05	03
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai	04	03	01
Seddik Abdellah Birkhadem	03	02	06
Birtouta School Birtouta	02	04	03
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja	06	04	03
Total	**22**	**20**	**22**
Rate	**34.37%**	**31.25%**	**34.37%**

Table3.35 : The Classroom's atmosphere
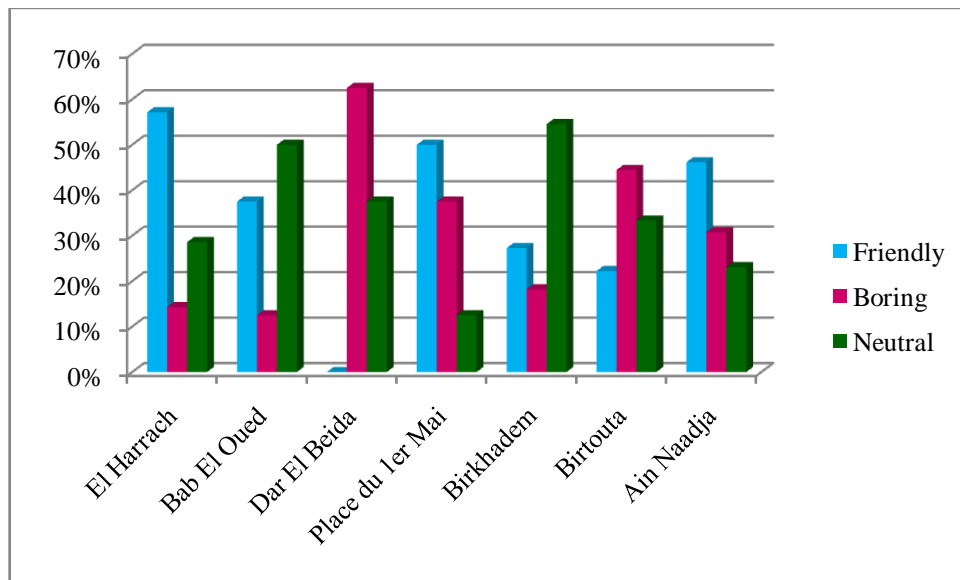
Figure3.29.1: The Classroom's atmosphere
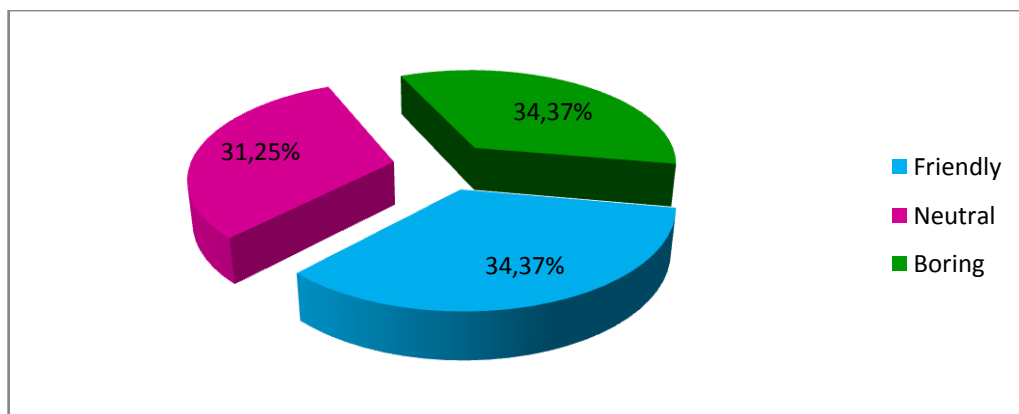
Figure3.29.2: The Classroom's atmosphere

Section Three: Integrating culture when reading in English

Question13: How can you identify the word "Culture"?

This issue was of a great importance, for it sought to obtain data with reference to pupils' definition of the word culture. It should be mentioned here that these definitions were given by the respondents themselves and we did not provide them with possible suggestions. Table clearly shows the different definitions of culture given by the participants. The results demonstrated that 42, 18% of the participants were not able to identify the word "culture", this may be because their teachers never talked to them about culture or they are not interested in it as they do not realize its importance in the process of learning English as a foreign language. The rest of the population gave different answers which varied between: civilization, tradition, art, life, information, science and education.

Definitions	Frequency	Rate
✓ **It is civilization**	06	9.37%
✓ **It is traditions**	04	6.25%
✓ **It is knowledge**	05	7.81%
✓ **It is art**	03	4.68%
✓ **It is sport**	03	4.68%
✓ **It is to have information about everything**	03	4.68%
✓ **It is agriculture**	01	1.56%
✓ **It is life**	02	3.12%
✓ **It means things happened in the past and became old, that we should repeat**	02	3.12%
✓ **It is the personality of a person**	02	3.12%
✓ **It expresses the success of humanity**	01	1.56%
✓ **It is education**	02	3.12%
✓ **It is science**	03	4.68%
✓ **No answer**	27	42.18%
Total	**64**	**100%**

Table3.36:Pupils'' definition of the word "culture"
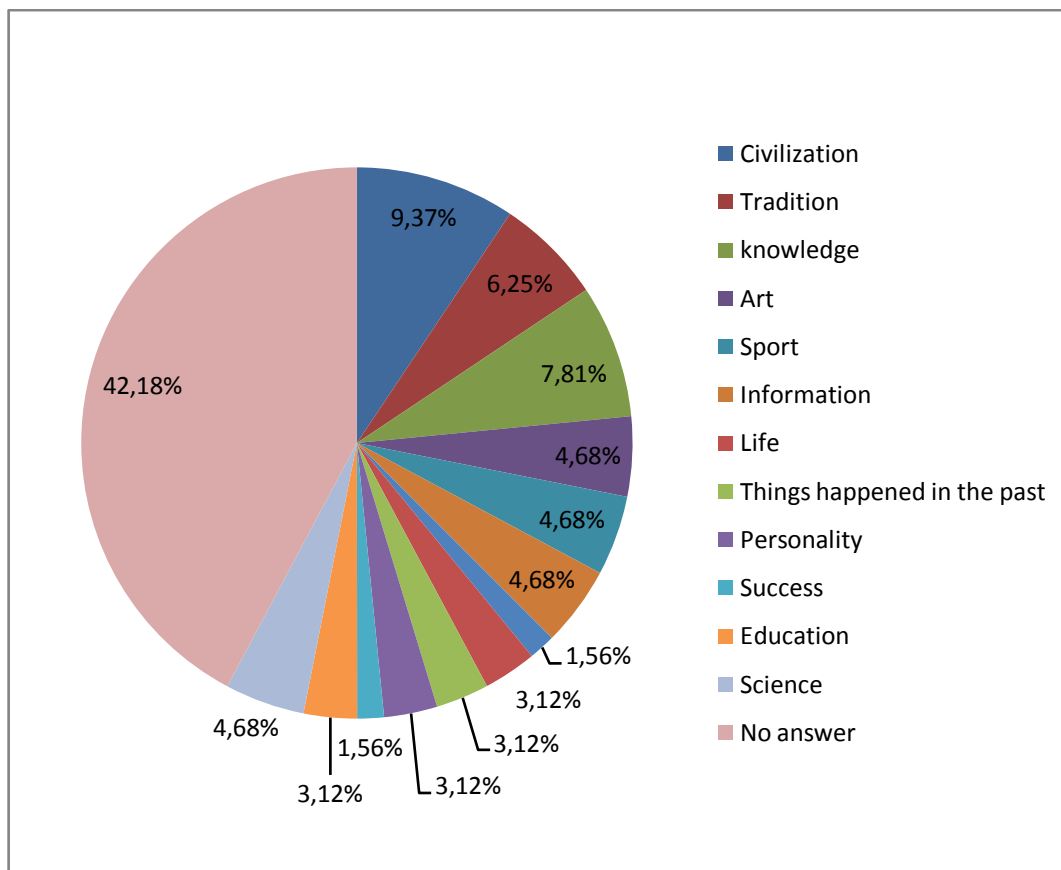
Figure3.30: Pupils' definition of the word "culture"

Question14: Do you think it is important to learn the culture when you learn English?

This issue attempted to get knowledge about whether the pupils think that culture is important when they learn English since more than the half of them could identify culture. The findings presented in table indicated that the majority of the informants 67, 18% thought that culture is very important when learning English.

On the contrary, 32, 81% of them, said that culture is not important to learn English but there are other elements more important than culture like vocabulary.

SCHOOLS	YES	NO
OuridaMedadEl Harrach	04	03
OkbaIbnNafaaBab-El-Oued	08	00
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida	03	05
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai	03	05
Seddik Abdellah Birkhadem	06	05
BirtoutaSchoolBirtouta	07	02
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja	12	01
Total	**43**	**21**
Rate	**67.18%**	**32.81%**

Table3.37 : The importance of culture in learning English
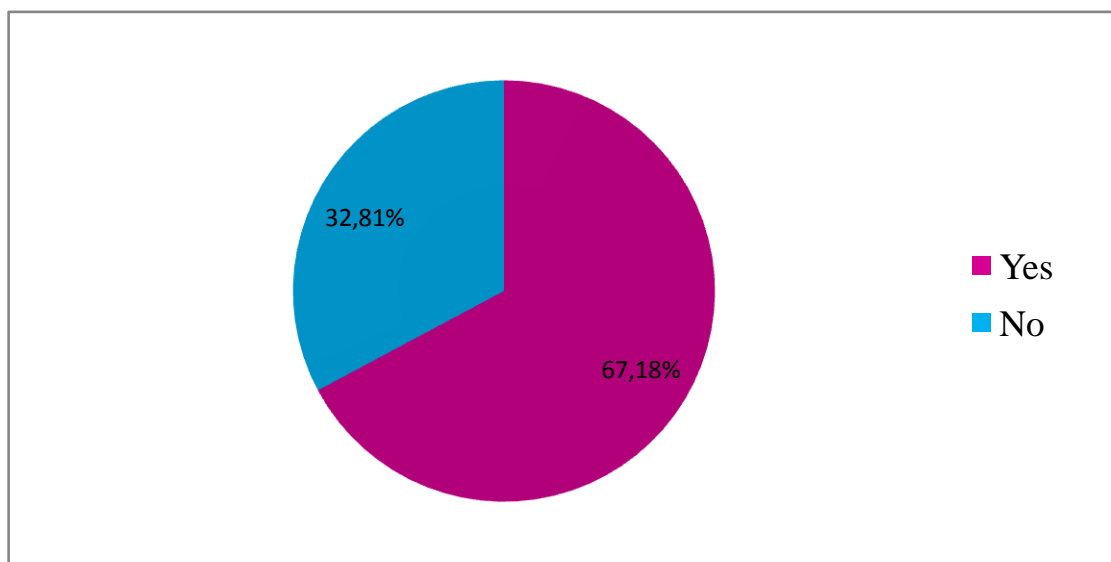
Figure3.31: The importance of culture in learning English

Question15: If yes, why is it important?

To elicit information from the secondary school subjects about their views concerning the importance of culture in the process of learning English; the respondents gave different answers according to their views, perceptions and knowledge. We have not given choices in order not to limit the answers of the participants and so have a true answer. The majority 71, 87% of the pupils did not answer this question. We have summarized the answers in the following:

- ✓ English is a rich language and if we want to have information or how people think we should learn English, and it is preferable to learn the culture first.
- ✓ We should have information about other countries and learn their cultures in order to understand daily life.
- ✓ To enrich my knowledge
- ✓ It is important because it helps us to understand more the English language.
- ✓ To help yourself when you travel outside your country.
- ✓ It is important because it is the most developed in the word.

Question16: *which topics do you want to deal with in reading activities?*

For the purpose to elicit information about which topics pupils want to deal with in a reading activity, the results showed that the majority 45, 31% preferred daily life and routines as they found it interesting to know how the foreigners live and behave. 31.25% of the participants liked reading about the history of English –speaking countries to know how they lived and what they achieved. A small number of the respondents 17.18% are interested in festivities and customs, they said that it is extremely important to learn about the customs of the English-speaking countries to know how to deal with them in case they travel abroad. Only 9.37% of the participants preferred literature as they think it is the only way to understand how a foreigner thinks.

Schools	Daily life and routines	Festivities and customs	Literature	History
OuridaMedad	04	01	01	01
OkbaIbnNafaa	04	02	01	01
Mohamed Boudiaf	03	04	00	01
EL-Idrissi	05	00	00	03
Seddik Abdellah	06	00	01	04
BirtoutaSchool	03	01	02	03
Cherif Sabahi	03	03	01	07
Total	**29**	**11**	**06**	**20**
Rate	**45.31%**	**17.18%**	**9.37%**	**31.25%**

Table3.38: Topics pupils prefer dealing with in reading
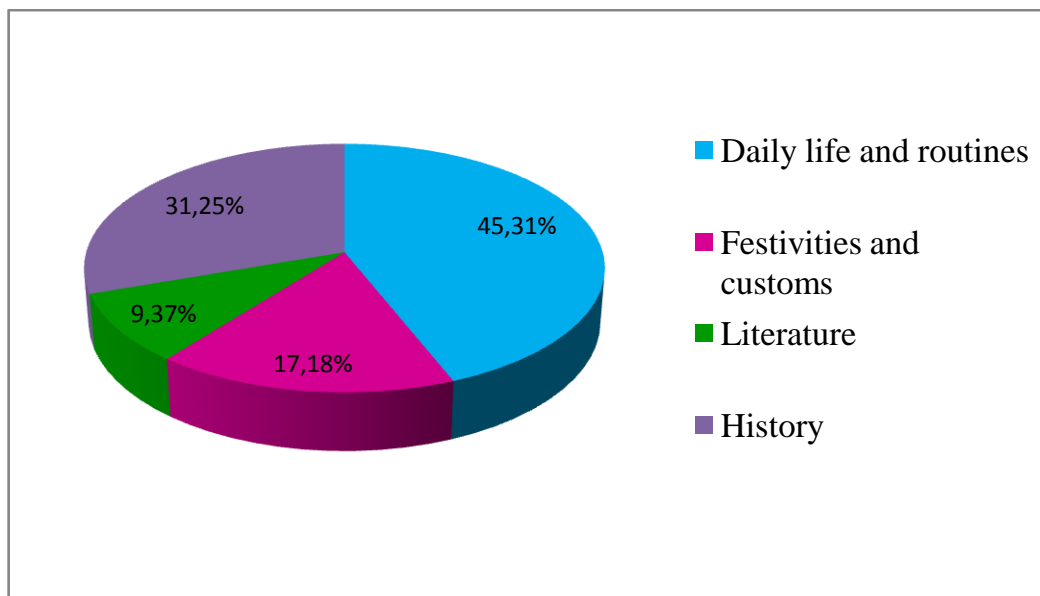
Figure3.32: Topics pupils prefer dealing with in reading

Question17: Do you think that learning a foreign culture is a threat to your identity and religion? (Please, justify your answer)

As far as the issue whether the pupils think that learning a foreign culture is a threat to their identity and religion is concerned, the results revealed that 82, 81% of the participants thought that it is not a threat, while 17, 18% thought it is. This question required a justification to understand the reasons from the participants' perspectives. No choices were given in order to have true answers without the influence of the researcher. The answers of the participants have been summarized in table (3.39). 42.18% of the respondents did not give any justification because they could not express their opinions in English. The rest of the pupils gave different answers, 3.12% said that a foreign culture cannot touch our identity if we believe in it, 10.93% said that we learn a foreign culture just to communicate, 21.87% justified that it is not a threat as we can take good things from them.

SCHOOLS		YES	NO
OuridaMedad.	El Harrach	01	06
OkbaIbnNafaaBab-El-Oued		02	06
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida		01	07
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai		01	07
Seddik Abdellah Birkhadem		02	09
BirtoutaSchoolBirtouta		03	06
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja		01	12
Total		**11**	**53**
Rate		**17.18%**	**82.81%**

Table3.39: Pupils' views about whether learning a foreign culture is a threat

Pupils' justifications	frequency	Rate
✓ **It can never touch our identity if we believe in it**	02	**3.12%**
✓ **We learn it just to communicate**	07	**10.93%**
✓ **I will never change my religion**	07	**10.93%**
✓ **If someone has a strong faith, it cannot influence him**	07	**10.93%**
✓ **We can take good things from them**	14	**21.87%**
✓ **No answer**	27	**42.18%**
Total	**64**	**100%**

Table3.40: pupils' justifications about whether learning a foreign culture is a threat

Question18: Do you think you have a sufficient knowledge about English speaking cultures to help you understand a text in English easily?

This question aims at finding out whether our pupils think that they have a sufficient knowledge about English –speaking cultures that enable them to understand texts in English easily. The majority of the participants 60, 93% thought that they do not have a sufficient cultural background knowledge that enables them to understand a text without difficulties. Considering the place of English in the Algerian society in general and in the educational system in particular, the Algerian pupils are not sufficiently exposed to the English culture which limits their cultural background knowledge. Pupils who read documents in English, have foreign friends speaking English, or travel abroad and have

direct contact with foreigners may develop their cultural background knowledge. 30,06% of the participants said that they have sufficient knowledge.

SCHOOLS	YES	NO
OuridaMedadEl Harrach	03	04
OkbaIbnNafaaBab-El-Oued	03	05
Mohamed Boudiaf Dar-El-Beida	03	05
EL-Idrissi Place de 1er Mai	03	05
Seddik Abdellah Birkhadem	04	07
BirtoutaSchoolBirtouta	03	06
Cherif Sabahi Ain-Naadja	06	07
Total	**25**	**39**
Rate	**39.06%**	**60.93%**

Table 3.41: pupils' views about their knowledge about English speaking cultures
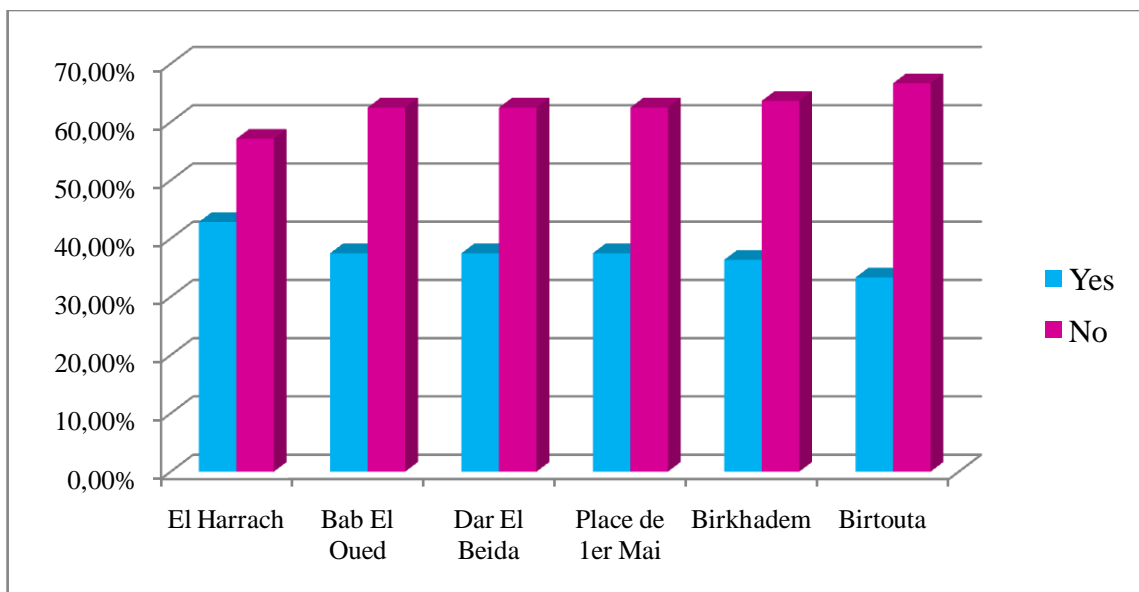
Figure3.33.1: pupils' views about their knowledge about English speaking cultures

The following pie-chart summarizes the results:
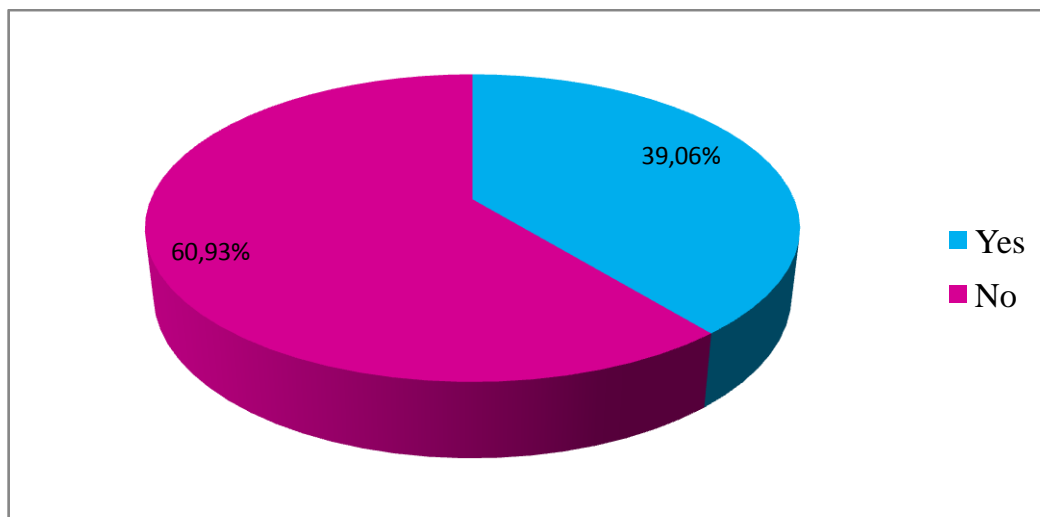
Figure3.33.2: pupils' views about their knowledge about English speaking cultures

3.4 Pupils' reading tests analysis:

3.4.1 Description of pupils' reading tests:

Due to the complex nature of culture learning, the selection of the research method for this kind of study has to be flexible to accomodate multifaceted reasearch questions. In this research work, we heva tried to find a "fair" tools to objectively evaluate the tested knowledge.

The use of reading tests in this work as a type of research methods aimed at gathering qualitative data, thrugh assessing the cultural background knowledge of the Algerian pupils in the third year secondary school. The tests sought to assess the effects of cultural content of texts in English in the process of reading comprehension by examining how can the cultural background knowledge of the pupils influence their comprehension.

Two tests were administered to third year pupils. The first test was bout a very famous fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast" which is read by the pupils in the primary school in Arabic, the second test was about the famous scary Ameriacan story " Bloody Mary" which is from the Ameriacn folklore.

The texts contained six diordered paragraphs, the first step of the test was to read the stories and put their parts in order.The second step was to answer three questions to check the comprehension of pupils at the level of identifying information from the story (explicit information) and at the level of inference (implicit information). The pupils who

were chosen randomly were given 60 minutes to read the two stories and answer the three comprehension questions. The questions are presented in the following table :

Level of comprehension	Text one: "Beauty and the Beast"	Text two: "Bloody Mary"
Explicit information	✓ What did each of the three daughters want as a present?	✓ Why did Mary's father hate her?
Implicit information	✓ What is the general idea of the text? ✓ What is the message of the text?	✓ What is the general idea of the text? ✓ What is the message of the text?

Table: 3.42: Reading tests' questions

3.4.2 Data Analysis:

As mentioned before in section (3.1.5 Data Analysis Precedure), not all the participants have done the tests, 28,59% refused to answer and returned the tests as they were. 71,41% of the participants accepted to do the tests, but only 63.33% of the tests were completed as the majority of the participants did not answer the comprhension questions.

The following figure displays pupils' participation in the reading tests:
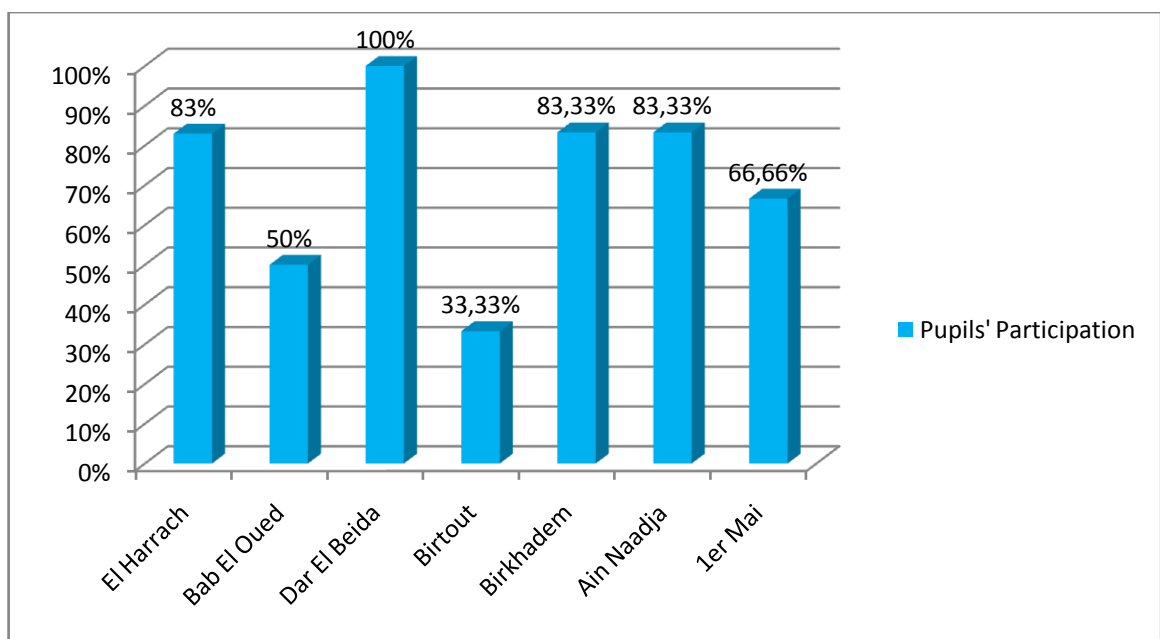
Figure3.16: Pupils' participation in reading tests

However, the numbers of the completed tests that we have studied in this work are shown in the following table:

Schools		Number of completed tests	Rate
Ourida Medad	El Harrach	3	15.78%
Okba Ibn Nafaa	Bab El Oued	2	10.52%
Mohamed Boudiaf	Dar El Beida	4	21.05%
Birtouta School	Birtouta	1	5.26%
Abdellah Sedikk	Birkhadem	3	15.78%
Cherif Sebahi	Ain Naadja	3	15.78%
El Idrissi	1er Mai	3	15.78%
Total		19	100%

Table3.43: Number of tests completed in each school
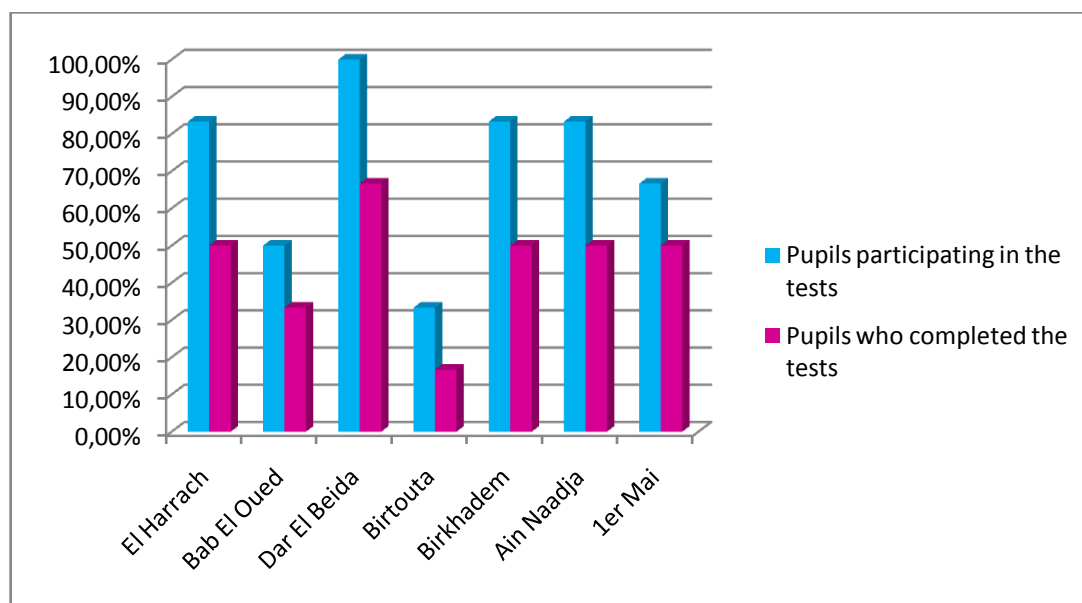
Figure3.17: pupils' participation and complete of tests

Step one:

A/ Read text number one "Beauty and the Beast" and put its parts in order:

In this step the pupils were asked to put the parts of the famous fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast" in order, and the first paragraph was given as a key to help the pupils. As this tale is known by almost all the pupils as they read it in the primary school in their

mother tongue, 78.94% of them were able to put the paragraphs in the correct order, while % of the participants gave a completely wrong order this may be due to their weak English. The rest of the participants (11%) did mistakes in just two paragraphs

Answers	Number	Rate
Correct order	15	78.94%
Some mistakes	2	22.22%
Completely wrong order	2	22.22%
Total	19	100%

Table3.4.4: Paragraphs' order of the first text
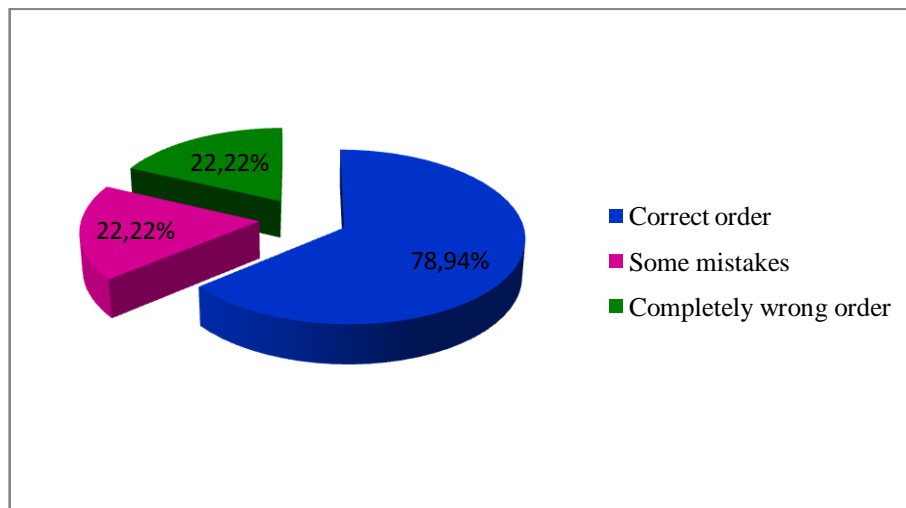
Figure3.18: paragraphs' order of the first text

B/ Read text number two "Bloody Mary" and put its parts in order:

This text "Bloody Mary" is a scary tale from the American folklore, which means that it contains American cultural information. Most of the pupils are not familiar with the title, big number of them asked about the meaning of the word "Bloody". When they were asked to put the parts of the story in order, they found difficulties because they do not know the story. Only 15,78% could put the paragraphs in the correct order justifying that they saw it in the American movies. The rest, 84,21% of the participants could not find the correct order claiming that the English used in this story was difficult. The following table shows the findings:

Answers	Number	Rate
Correct order	03	15,78%
Wrong order	16	84,21%
Total	19	100%

Table3.45: Paragraphs' order of the second text
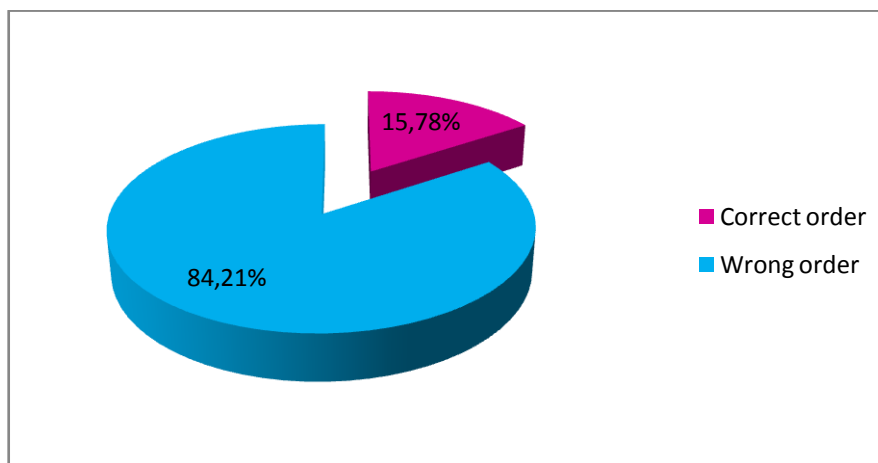
Figure3.19: Paragraphs' order of the second text

Step Two:

A/ Read again the text "Beauty and the Beast" and answer the following questions:

Question01: What did each of the three daughters want as a present?

This explicit question aimed at finding whether the participants were able to look for specific information in a text which contains familiar cultural information. Since the question was direct, and the information has been already know by the participants 94,73% of them could answer the question, while 5,26% were unable to give a complete answer in a correct way. To note here, although almost all the pupils found the answer, just some of them wrote the answer in a correct grammatical sentence.

Answers	Number	Rate
Correct answers	18	94.73%
Wrong answers	01	5.26%
Total	19	100%

Table3.46: First question answers (Text one)
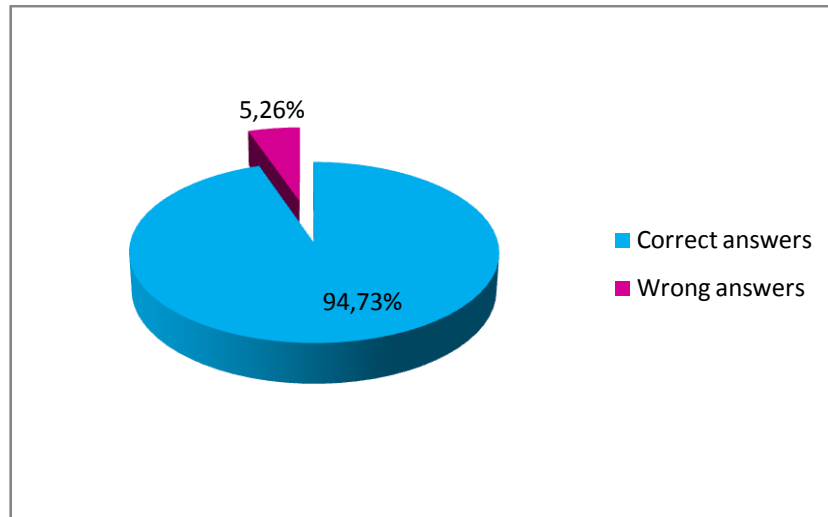
Figure3.20: First question answers (Text one)

Question 02: What is the general idea of the story?

The purpose behind asking this question was to further explore pupils' ability to comprehend a text with a cultural content. The problem raised here was that more than the half of the participants were not able to write their answers correctly though they knew the answer.10,52% of the informants answered in French, while 5,26% answered in Arabic. The rest 84,22% could give an acceptable answer. The answers of the pupils were summarized as follow:

- ✓ The text is about a beast who took Beauty to marry her.
- ✓ Because the seller took the rose, the beast took Beauty.
- ✓ The mistake of Beauty's father
- ✓ The story of beauty
- ✓ The love of Beauty for the beast

Question03: what is the message of the text?

The question sought to reveal whether the pupils could understand the message from the text, and so achieved comprehension. Effectively, 68,42% of the participants could give acceptable answers since they knew the story. Whereas, 31,57% of the informants were not able to give appropriate answers because they could not construct sentences in English.

Pupils' answers were summarized as follow:

- ✓ External beauty is not the most important
- ✓ The real beauty is the internal beauty
- ✓ The father's love
- ✓ The consequence of kindness
- ✓ Who cares about people gets good things
- ✓ Kindness is powerful to change people

B/ Read again the text "Bloody Mary" and answer the following questions:

Question01: Why did Mary's father hate her?

Several studies emphasize the importance of cultural beliefs and social milieu in foreign language learning as possible determinants of the degree of comprehension. For this reason, this question was designed to see whether foreign language learners need their cultural background to find specific detail in a text that contains foreign culture information. The findings showed that two thirds of the participants could not find the answer because of their limited cultural knowledge about English-speaking cultures. Indeed, they said that the text was confused and not clear. Although the answer was clearly stated in the text, 52,63% did not answer correctly. Whereas 47,36% answered by taking out directly from the text.

Answers	Number	Rate
Correct answers	09	47.36%
Wrong answers	10	52.63%
Total	19	100%

Table3.47: Pupils' answers (Text two)
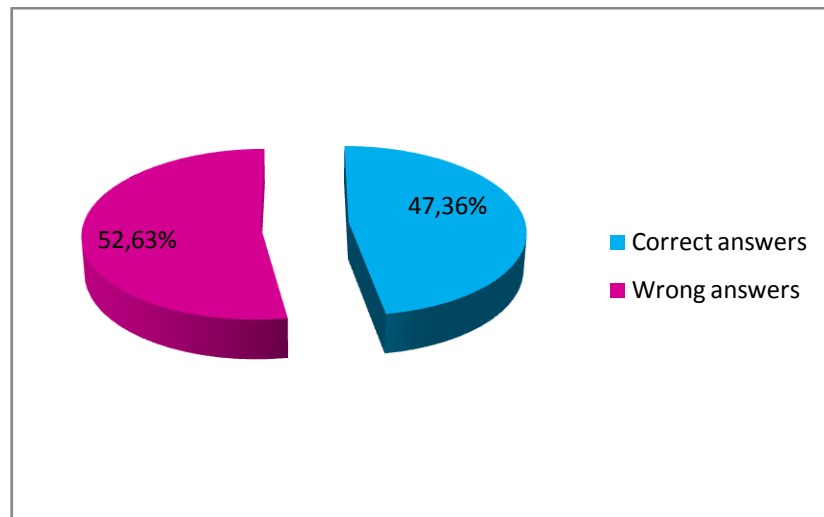
Figure 3.21: pupils' answers (Text two)

Question two: what is the general idea of the text?

The aim of this question was to discover whether pupils could be able to extract the general idea from a text with American culture content. 47.36% could successfully find the idea, while the rest of the participants 52.63% were not able to find it. Some of the participants who failed in finding the general idea claimed that they could not find it because of their low level in English and the words were so difficult, the others said that although they have average level in English, they are used to read and understand the text. They added that they did not find the idea not because of their level but because of the content of the text. The answers of pupils were summarized as follow:

➢ The evil Old Man Whales who killed his daughter Mary
➢ The death of Mary
➢ The appearance of bloody Mary in the mirror.
➢ Old Man Whales and his daughter
The rest of the answers were just words, and not structured sentences.

Question03: What is the message of the text?

This question was extremely difficult for the pupils. Getting the message means well understanding the text and this what the participants were not able to do. 15.78% of the informants gave acceptable answers, while 31.57% did not answer. The rest 52.65% gave some words as answers.

The answers of the pupils were as follow:

➢ Never kill a child
➢ Accept what you have
➢ Do not punish people for mistakes they did not do.

3.6 Interpretation of the results:

Thissection isdevoted to the discussion and interpretation of the results sorted out from the analysis of both teachers' and pupils' questionnaires **.**The major purpose of this explanatory research was to find out the factors that affect the comprehension of third year secondary pupils when they read in English from a socio-cultural perspective; and to explore whether the cultural component is taken into consideration in the process of teaching/ learning English as a foreign culture in the Algerian schools.

The findings of this section based on the views and experiences of the participants (teachers and pupils) regarding the difficulties and challenges the usually encounter, are analysed and interpreted. Both teachers and learners have approximately similar response concerning their perceptions on culture and its integration in the process of learning English in Algeria, though they differ in the interpretation of the difficulties they may face when reading or teaching reading.

In fact, the qualitative and quantitative data revealed that reading in the target language depends upon different determinants, particularly the learners' reading habits, perceptions and interests towards the foreign language and their cultural background knowledge. Moreover, the learners' language low proficiency. Such factors are the result of the cultural and social milieu they live in and the unclear image they have on foreign languages.

All these reasons lead both teachers and pupils to misuse the strategies that should be followed in reading sessions, and let pupils opting between two ways in classroom context: read silently without learning any new information and be a passive learner, avoid reading completely and so reading becomes the most boring activity. Outside the classroom, pupils refuse to read which affects the amount of knowledge they acquire which in turns affects their comprehension when reading in classroom. In fact, the findings have revealed that all these factors are interrelated and influence the comprehension of pupils when reading in English.

Concerning the role of cultural content and discourse schemata on the reading comprehension of foreign language learners, the data gathered in this section has revealed that they are consistent with those being identified by the following:

➢ Flores (1982) and several studied reported in Hudelson (1981, 1984) support the view that foreign language proficiency can be enhanced through the reading process.

➢ Parkins (1983) and Blachowicz found that the construction of meaning may be "marred" by language interference or the readers' developing English language competency. Clarke (1979) calls this "short- circuit" hypothesis: language proficiency in a second language places a ceiling on reading performance.

➢ Hudson (1982) indicates that existing prior knowledge or induced schemata can override the short-circuiting effect of limited second language proficiency.

➢ Hudelson (1981) mentions that it appears to be an interactive relationship of language proficiency and schemata in second language comprehension, even though reading is similar across various languages.

➢ People with high amounts of prior topic knowledge comprehend text better than those with lesser amounts. (Anderson & Pearson ,1984)

➢ People who know more word meanings comprehend text better than those who know fewer. (Graves, 1986).

As mentioned earlier in (section 2.3.1), there are three models that can be included to describe reading as an active process, namely Rumelhart's Interactive-Activation model, Stanovich's Interactive- Compensatory Model and The Anderson and Pearson Schema-Theoretic Model. Based on these interactive models, to manage with the difficulties of reading comprehension achievement, appropriate strategies are applied for developing reading skills and increase awareness of the importance of prior knowledge to encourage learner to read in English, really can have great impact on their reading proficiency. The three models constitute three processes: processing of the information in reading through a series of levels, focusing on the context to facilitate word recognition and compensate for the readers' deficiencies, and the activation of the background knowledge when reading. Effectively, the three models are necessary to achieve comprehension when reading in a foreign language.

Considering the data extracted from the informants, these interactive models play a determinant role in developing reading proficiency within the Algerian context. Firstly, Interactive-Activation model which supports that information flow in both directions at once – from lower to higher level and from higher to lower levels can enhance FL learners to deal with all the sources of information in a text that lead them to a successful comprehension as maintained by many EFL teachers and pupils that no one can understand a text in English without having a minimal knowledge about its vocabulary, phonology, morphology, grammar and culture.

Secondly, it been explained that the Interactive- Compensatory Model focuses on the individual differences in dealing with a text and supports autonomy to compensate for the deficiencies at any level. Thus the learner is provided with multiple opportunities to get meaning by simultaneously processing the information and looking at language features.

Lastly, the Schema- Theoretic mode supports the importance of the cultural background knowledge that the learners bring to the process of reading. Thus, incorporating interesting and meaningful topics in reading material can avoid boredom and encourage pupils to read outside the classroom in order to enrich their background knowledge. Creating a vital and motivating atmosphere closely linked with the socio-cultural background of the learners and their interests can extremely influence their attitudes toward reading and the strategies they use to read.

Furthermore, discussing aspects and issues of the foreign culture in the classroom context can be positive in many ways: it broadens learner's cultural knowledge and help them to accept the other, it motivates the learners to search more and understand how the others live, behave and think, it also develop in cross- cultural competence of the learners and prepare them to be open-minded members in the new era of diversity and globalization, and finally it reconstructs the limited view of reading as boring activity and makes it a tool that helps learners explore the culture of the other as they cannot have a direct contact with it, and at the same time activate the already acquired knowledge.

It is worth to mention here that although reading is an important skill in the process of learning a foreign culture, many learners and teachers neglect it. Hence, reading tests are recommended for the sake of highlighting the status of reading tests in the pedagogical settings.

Regarding these challenges and the nature of reading as a very active process that needs different kinds of knowledge (section2.2), the EFL teachers are insisting on that reading skills have to be given greater position, and various measures have to be taken to let learners profit from reading which is an open window on the cultures of the world. In sum, they required to:

- Allow more time to reading session in order to be able discuss freely cultural issues with the pupils
- Encouraging pupils to read by organizing workshops in the school under the supervision of the language teachers.
- Vary the reading materials and provide topics of learners' interests, taking into account their social and cultural background and knowledge.
- Provide special tests during the academic terms to assess the pupils' reading performance
- Create a motivating atmosphere to improve the reading skills of the learners.

Despite the fact that our pupils spent seven or more years learning English as a foreign language, they are still incapable of analyzing a text appropriately, and they often make unforgivable mistakes that should not be done in a class of final exam and in the last step of the secondary education. This is due to a number of causes such as the influence of the socio-cultural environment especially the family where English does not enjoy a great importance comparing to French, the absence of the reading habit in the Algerian context which leads to the absence of exposure to the English- speaking cultures, and as most of the pupils claim, the incompetency of some teachers in the middle school which may discourage the pupils to learn English in general and to read in particular.

The analysis of the data in relation to the participants' view about the integration of culture in the process of teaching/ learning English revealed that teachers and learners are aware of the fact that since language and culture are interrelated, no one can learn a foreign language without learning its culture

The most important place where to learn the foreign culture is the classroom context. Indeed, the interaction between the teachers who bring their pedagogical content knowledge and the learners through the discussion of cultural issues mentioned in reading materials can improve the quality of reading comprehension.

This point has proved by Shulman (1986b:07):

> "…the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations_ in a word, the most useful ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others…..pedagogical content knowledge also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult: the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons".

From the results obtained, it has been noticed that EFL learners are required to read extra materials in English and not rely only on the official textbook, to understand and to use English in their social environment. These findings have confirmed the research hypotheses in that the reading materials can not alone help learners understand the culture of the target language, and there are not enough activities integrated in the lesson that focus on the target culture.

3.8 Conclusion:

During this study, valuable insights were gained in accordance with the research questions and objectives. Moreover, the results obtained from the participants allowed us to confirm our hypotheses and draw evidence concerning the place of culture in the process of learning English in the Algerian context and whether it is adequately incorporated in teaching reading skills. We could also gain information about the available strategies to enhance the reading skills by improving learners' cultural background knowledge.

This study has cast light on the attitudes of pupils toward reading in English and on the challenges they face in the process of learning a foreign language. It provides evidence on that the socio- cultural context of both the learner and the teachers has a real impact on the learners' achievement. The study focused on the role of teachers to integrate culture adequately and to use the necessary means to activate the learners' reading skills, in an attempt to achieve comprehension. The next chapter provides some pedagogical suggestions and recommendations in an attempt to improve the situation of learning/ teaching both English language and culture**.**

CHAPTER IV : RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Recommendations for Teachers

    4.2.1 Teachers professional development

    4.2.2 Teachers dealing with the learners

    4.2.3 Authentic materials

4.3 Recommendations for syllabus designers and decision-makers

    4.3.1 Reconsideration of the textbook content

    4.3.2 Teacher training development

    4.3.3 Schools' Collaboration

4.4 Recommendations for parents and social peers

    4.4.1 Promoting parental involvement

    4.4.2 Raising socio-cultural awareness

4.5 Pedagogical suggestions

    4.5.1 Classroom context

4.5.2 Teachers' role:

4.6 Conclusion

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 Introduction:

In this last part of the current study, and for the sake of improving the EFL teaching/ learning process, we have tried to present some suggestions and recommendations which may help the EFL teachers overcome the obstacles they may face in the teaching process and improve the situation of culture integration when teaching reading.

In the light of the results obtained, a set of suggestions about the teachers' qualifications and roles in forming active and open-minded learners have been proposed. As it has not been possible to deal with all the issues, some suggestions have been afforded to open the doors for further research.

4.2 Recommendations for teachers:

When investigating the integration of English- speaking cultures in teaching reading, it has been noticed that the EFL teachers who play a crucial role in transmitting this foreign culture have not the needed pedagogical knowledge. This may be considered as one of the main causes for such failure in this process, regardless learners' needs, lacks and wants and their levels of proficiency. Therefore, in this section, we tried to provide some pedagogical implications about the teachers for the sake of promoting EFL teaching situation.

4.2.1 Teachers professional development:

Algerian teachers are reluctant to teach about culture, just any instructor might be uneasy about teaching a subject without any in-depth knowledge or training. Therefore, for the purpose of functioning adequately, the EFL teachers need to acquire professional competencies which have been selected as the central element of teachers training, in keeping with the new emphasis on professionalization. Twelve competencies have been suggested to help define what can realistically be expected of newly graduated teachers

The professional competencies have been grouped together to form four categories as follows:

🌐 **Foundations:**

1. To act as a professional inheritor, critic and interpreterof knowledge or culture when teachingstudents.

2. To communicate clearly in the language ofinstruction, both orally and in writing, using correctgrammar, in various contexts related toteaching.

🌐 **Teaching act:**

3. To develop teaching/learning situations that are appropriateto the students concerned and the subject contentwith a view to developing the competencies targeted inthe programs of study.

4. To pilot teaching/learning situations that are appropriateto the students concerned and to the subject contentwith a view to developing the competencies targeted inthe programs of study.

5. To evaluate student progress in learning the subjectcontent and mastering the related competencies.

6. To plan, organize and supervise a class in such a way asto promote students' learning and social development.

🌐 **Social and educational context**

7. To adapt his or her teaching to the needs and characteristicsof students with learning disabilities,social maladjustments or handicaps.

8. To integrate information and communications technologies(ICT) in the preparation and delivery ofteaching/learning activities and for instructionalmanagement and professional development purposes.

9. To cooperate with school staff, parents, partners inthe community and students in pursuing the educationalobjectives of the school.

10. To cooperate with members of the teaching team incarrying out tasks involving the development andevaluation of the competencies targeted in the programsof study, taking into account the studentsconcerned.

🌐 **Professional identity:**

11. To engage in professional development individuallyand with others.

12. To demonstrate ethical and responsible professionalbehaviour in the performance of hisor her duties.(Adapted from Gauthier et al.2001: 55).

4.2.2 Teachers dealing with the learners:

Considering that teachers are the main transmitters of the foreign culture to the learners in the classroom context, they have to be so aware about the way they deal with

their learners when tackling cultural issues. Hence, one of the important tasks of the foreign language teacher is to make them see through reading materials that just as the foreign language is a key to the foreign culture, so is the foreign culture to the foreign language: they should be learned together.

The pupils need to realize that a good command of grammar and lexis in necessary but not sufficient for a successful understanding when reading in a foreign language. They should be helped to recognize that such elements as the significance of silence, the appropriacy of language forms or the topic of the conversation to the situation, the interlocutor's assumptions and expectations are equally important and different across cultures. They need to see their reading materials of English more than linguistic objects.

In order to achieve this, teachers should adopt the necessary strategies and techniques to help their pupils correct their view about FC and so overcoming obstacles they usually confront when reading in English. Based on the prevalent view "Practice makes perfect", teachers have to encourage their pupils to read by giving them a variety of topics, themes and activities to improve their reading skills. Furthermore, teachers are required to interact with their pupils and discuss different cultural issues. This can be done through creating games to encourage pupils discover the world of the other. In this context Gaudart (1999:289) stated:

> "it is sad therefore that techniques that can so effectively motivate learners are introduced into class with a great deal of fear and trepidation. Simulation and games are techniques that have been sidelined for a very long time, and I have spent 20years trying to get teachers to use the techniques in their classrooms".

In addition to that, Audio-visual materials can be used to present the everyday situations and demonstrate many cultural experiences. Pictures, movies, songs, and video tapes can really help in the reading activity as they help pupils memorize what they see and listen, and the most important to motivate them by creating a positive and friendly atmosphere. Thus, they might describe the behaviours they observe and discuss the cultural similarities and differences with the teacher.

4.2.3 Authentic materials:

It is important to note that textbooks should involve information related to foreign language culture because not language can be taught without direct reference to its culture.

119

In the Algerian context, textbooks do not sufficiently include cultural information related to the English-speaking societies. Unfortunately, our pupils rely only on the official textbook which leads to acquiring a very limited cultural knowledge. Adding to that, it is clear that most of the texts and dialogues in "New Prospects" are not authentic; they do not provide real life situations to the pupils to be familiar with the target culture.

Teachers are required to vary the sources from which pupils can view clearly the foreign culture and learn how to interpret a cultural element. "Exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting L2 material, through extensive reading, will produce a beneficial effect on learners' command of the L2" (Hafiz and Tudor, 1989:05). Hedge believes that extensive reading varies according to students' motivation and school resources. A well-motivated and trained teacher will be able to choose suitable handoutsor activities books for the students. Hedge (2003: 218) also states that since extensive reading helps in developing reading ability, it should be built into an EFL/ESL programmes provided the selected texts are "authentic" – i.e. "not written for language learners and published in the original language"- and "graded". Teachers with EFL/ESL learners at low levels can either use "pedagogic" or "adapted"texts. Moreover, extensive reading enables learners to achieve their independency by readingeither in class or at home, through sustained silent reading. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983:567)argue that SSR activity can be effective in helping learners become self-directed agents seekingmeaning provided an SSR program is "based on student-selected texts so that the students will beinterested in what they are reading. Students select their own reading texts with respect tocontent, level of difficulty, and length."

4.3 <u>Recommendations for syllabus designers and decision-makers:</u>

<u>4.3.1: Reconsideration of the syllabus content:</u>

In Algerian schools culture is introduced implicitly as it is considered as an extra option. The secondary school syllabuses for English refer only vaguely to the cultural component of the language. Cultural objectives are not formulated, and even the type or the nature of the culture to be presented is not specified. After seven or more years of learning English, third-year pupils are not able to tackle a single cultural topic from the English culture. The cultural content to be taught is to be organized on the basis of gradually increasing competence of the learners' language, and all culture areas are to perceive appropriate attention in an adequate manner. It is recommended to design a range

of sources which address the concept of the foreign culture and explain in what ways it is different from the native culture. Furthermore, providing motivating sources encourages learners to discuss the cultural points not only in the classroom context but also at home and in the social context. This leads to raise awareness about cross-cultural issues.

The educational aims of foreign language teaching should not only include the encouragement of seeking inside into the foreign culture but also developing positive attitudes towards it.

Algerian textbook authors are, thus , urged to reconsider their position vis-à- vis culture. Since the textbook remains the major source of cultural content, mainly because in Algerian situation, supplementary materials are simply not available for both teachers and learners; it cannot be produced without due consideration to the cultural dimension. Besides, teachers find it easier to integrate culture in their reading lessons, if they are assisted with a culturally sensitive material.

For culture to be adequately catered for the Algerian third year secondary textbook for English, there should be consideration of the following points:

- ✓ The cultural content suggested should be realistic. It needs to be more than encouraging positive attitudes of the foreign culture, but depicting it as it is with negative and positive facets. The cultural content should be up-to-date.
- ✓ It should make reference to facts, artifacts, institutions, thoughts, attitudes, values and assumptions.
- ✓ Culture is to be integrated in texts, but also in activities. The educational aim is not just to provide cultural information for learners but to make sure they understand and accept it as well.
- ✓ Textbooks should address cross-cultural issues and strengthens cultural dialogue and tolerance.

4.3.2 Teacher training development:

In order to ameliorate the teaching situation, the interested authorities should think of the "training" of teachers of language and culture instead of merely "language teacher training". This issue has been pointed out by the findings, as the majority of the teachers think that they do not have an in-depth knowledge about the English-speaking cultures to teach about them.

121

Teachers should benefit from some training in social sciences and cultural studies, and a background in technology for some teachers. In addition to that, the training has to be concerned with both theory and practice. Indeed, teachers have to be introduced to the concepts of "culture", and "intercultural competence". Furthermore, teachers need to have direct contact with foreigners in order to benefit from their experiences and discuss some cultural issues with them and construct a real view on how they think and behave.

As far as reading is concerned, teachers should be trained to know how to teach this skill as a transmitter of culture. They have to realize the learning goals included in teaching reading. Hedge (2003) states that any reading component of an English language course may include a set of learning goals for:

- ✓ The ability to read wide range of texts in English.
- ✓ Building knowledge of language which will facilitate reading ability
- ✓ Building schematic knowledge
- ✓ Taking a critical stance to the contents of the texts.

4.3.3 Schools Collaboration:

Cooperative and team learning is an important step toward a modern school. It is the use of small groups from different schools where learners collaborate to reach individual potential to learn and engage in team dynamics. With a mix of learners from different areas and classes, schools can really find the collaborative learning to have strong and consistent positive effects on understanding cultural diversity, and so team members become increasingly aware of cultural differences and more accepting of them. Not only it highlights differences but provides a vehicle for sharing similar approaches to solving problems when facing foreign culture information and interpret them from varied perspectives.

Fullan (1998: 08) reported:

> "Student achievement increases substantially in schools with collaborative work cultures that foster a professional learning community among teachers and others, focus continuously on improving instructional practice in light of student performance data, and link to standards and staff development support".

Therefore, it is required from decision- makers to create an atmosphere of collaboration between schools in order to invest learners' potentials and develop cultural competence as well.

On the other hand, a school with an effective learning culture maintains the image of professional community. Teachers value the interchange of ideas with colleagues. Strong values exist that support a safe and secure environment. There are high expectations of everyone, including teachers. There is strong, not rigid, leadership. (Deal and Peterson, 1990)

4.3 Recommendations for parents and social peers

4.3.1 Promoting parental involvement:

"When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life". (Henderson &Berla,1997:01). Not only teachers who are responsible in the teaching/ learning process, but even family is required to build the children's background knowledge, to improve their reading skills and help them to be successful learners. Indeed, families play a crucial role in their children's development and school success in both the home and school environment. Parents who are used to read with children's from an early age, and who discuss different cultural issues with them show a high proficiency of reading as their have a reach prior knowledge. Epstein stated: "Family practices of involvement are as or more important than family background variables in determining whether and how students progress and succeed in school". (1996:217). Thus, it is recommended to raise awareness among families to support their children in their process of learning and share with them as many home works as possible.

Adding to that, studies showed that pupils learn foreign culture through their parents, family members and relatives, television programs, friends, school, real life experiences, books, newspapers, magazines and songs. Hence, family and parents are the most effective factors in children's foreign culture acquisition. Family takes up a crucial part of a child's learning process since the first practice of actual education of the child comes from parents. Moreover,their experience contributes to the learning processes of their children. Cultural knowledge, also a part of education, can be transmitted to children continuously, depending on their cognitive capacities. Furthermore, the first culture that they are exposed to is that of their family. The knowledge gained from the family can be

useful in their subsequent expose to other cultures. Therefore, it is recommended that parents together with schools work on improving the reading skills of their children through enriching their knowledge about the foreign language and its culture.

4.3.2 Raising socio-cultural awareness:

Culture is integral to the learning process. It is the organization and way of life within the community of learners and teachers and directs the way they communicate, interact, and approach teaching and learning. The social, political and cultural forces that support the institution influence the teaching and learning environments. To advance teaching and learning, a collaboration of schools and society is required to correct the underlying values, beliefs, perceptions and assumptions of learners that may present the foreign culture as the culture of the enemy. This affects also their understanding of what they read as well as how they express themselves.

In a country like Algeria where the learners have not many opportunities to interact with English-speaking people and understand their culture, it is so difficult for them to interpret any cultural information related to their beliefs, customs, traditions, literature and civilization or accept it particularly taboos and stereotypes. Here, the raise of socio-cultural consciousness is required to best understand the other. Our learners should be aware about the fact that the way in which one sees the world is not universal but significantly molded by ones' life experiences, tempered by such variables as race, ethnicity, social class and gender. Understanding that an individual's perspective of these variables is more than a representation of experiences, and that they may not be shared by other, is a prerequisite for effective understanding of the culture of the other.

In order to form successful learners, ready to cope with any cultural situation and to able to make inferences when reading in a foreign cultural without threatening their native cultural identity as many Algerians claim, family and the social peers have to build positive attitudes and perceptions towards foreign languages, foreign cultures and reading in foreign languages since family and institution perceptions of cultural identity can greatly influence cultural learning environment. Furthermore, society and parents' attitudes significantly shape expectations for learning. Building a positive and engaging environment for learning through reading about the others and accept their way of living and thinking can help our learners achieve success and develop an intercultural competence.

Another important element in promoting socio-cultural awareness and transmitting the foreign culture is the media sources which have an essential effect on pupils in terms of their attitudes towards different cultures. As this source provides a great deal of cultural knowledge, it can be used in the Algerian schools to motivate learners and to improve their background knowledge.

4.5 Pedagogical suggestions:

This section highlights some suggestions for English language/ culture teachers while teaching reading:

4.5.1.Classroom context

Giving an exhaustive, in-depth account of all the changes affectingsociety and the education system, it is important to outline those that affect the learning/ teaching process. In particular, the classroom context the most important place where students meet the foreign language and its culture.

In teaching foreign culture, students' variability has to be taken into consideration in the classroom context. Indeed, all children bring unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to the classroom. EFL students'diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds can offer many resources for the entire classroom including:

- ➢ *Information* -- about other and their cultures, customs, and resources;
- ➢ *New perspectives* -- about the world, about society, about beliefs; and
- ➢ *Opportunities* -- for exposure to other languages, for sharing ways of thinking and doing things that might otherwise be taken for granted.

  For these reasons school context has to be:
- ➢ The classroom should be predictable and accepting of all students.
- ➢ Instructional tasks should involve students as active participants
- ➢ Instructional interactions should provide support for student understanding.
- ➢ Provide opportunities for meaningful language use in a variety of situations
- ➢ Make learning relevant to students' experiences and backgrounds
- ➢ Build in-depth investigation of contents, and design activities that promote higher order thinking.
- ➢ Provide additional support for understanding English.
- ➢ Let students know what is expected of them.

> Develop the use of discovery process in order to make learners construct new knowledge by using what they already know.(Zehler, 1994:1-17)

4.5.2 Teachers' role:

Teaching has, for a long time, been approached from an abstract viewpoint,as though teaching involved only the formal dispensation of sterileknowledge to disembodied students in a non-social, non-historic context. Theactual situation, though, is completely different. Teachers play a major role insociety, and their work is subject to a range of internal workplace pressures andexternal societal pressures that influence their role, their target audience,namely their students, and the subject matter taught. The classroom, far frombeing a closed system free from outside influences, is intrinsically molded andshaped by a series of influences that define its nature and its operations. Thework of teachers today has undergone considerable change, and reflects newpressures that present specific challenges to teachers and teaching institutions.

In order to develop students' competencies,teachers must work in collaboration with other members of the teaching team orwith the teachers who teach other subjects to the same group of students. Thecycle-based model implies that teachers monitor student progress in cooperationwith other members of the teaching team and of the school staff. This approachwill require teachers to review their relationship to the different types of knowledge: subject-specific knowledge, the knowledge contained in the schoolprogram, and the competencies students are expected to develop. It alsoencourages school staff to pool their professional expertise and decision-makingresponsibilities and to work as part of a team. (Gauthier, et al 2001,04).

As far as the activities that teachers can provide when teaching a FL and its culture, we can mention two types of activities according to what they can be aimed to:

❖ *To enhance students' communicative competence*
  > Oral presentations (project work)
  > Classroom debates
  > Texts with activities
  > Role play
  > Short video analysis

❖ *To enhance students' intercultural communicative competence*
  > Cultural islands

126

- ➢ Celebrating festivals
- ➢ Religious issues
- ➢ Routine and daily life

4.6 Conclusion:

It is clear that what brings the teaching/learning of a culture when teaching/ learning a foreign language to the forefront of educational interests is the realization of the importance of culture in understanding the features and characteristics of the language taught/ learnt.

In teaching/ learning culture reading plays a crucial role in that it helps acquiring the culture of the others through tackling different topics related to their cultural elements and identity. Moreover, the success in reading depends on how much cultural knowledge one knows. Therefore, this interchangeably relationship requires us to enhance the reading habits in our learners and to correct the misunderstanding about reading in a foreign culture particularly in this new era of openness, globalization, and technology.

Teachers should have the competency required for building a rich knowledge through reading, by either using or correcting the background knowledge learners bring with them to the process of learning. Since, the prior knowledge is already shaped by the attitudes and perceptions of the social environment of the learner. Family, schools and media affect the way learners perceive the foreign culture. Therefore, it is worth noting that our classroom contains a wide range of learners differing in their abilities, knowledge, confidence, motivation and learning styles and attitudes, and the EFL teachers should create safe and enthusiastic atmosphere so as to help them develop their reading skills, and incorporating the cultural component, regardless of their basic diversity.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In this exploratory study, we attempt to stop the light on the inseparability of culture and language in teaching reading, explaining that culture introduction is an effective way to enrich pupils' knowledge and promote their cultural awareness and language proficiency. Furthermore, the process of teaching/learning a foreign language should imply the inclusion of the cultural aspects and components connected to such language, and not just focus on grammar and vocabulary particularly in reading as it may include a variety of topics and themes that cannot be familiar to the pupils. It has been

concluded that unfamiliarity of cultural knowledge is one of the important determinants that lead to the low achievement of reading by which the learners face difficulties to extract and comprehend the meaning of the texts. They usually tend to avoid reading which makes the situation worse as it affects the amount of prior knowledge they acquire.

There is no doubt that the challenges facing teaching/ learning a foreign language are increasing in this new era of globalization and technology. Hence, the present work is an exploratory research on Third Year secondary pupils in Algiers which aimed at pointing out the importance of the cultural component in enhancing the learners' reading skills.

The scope of this study was to reveal the main reasons behind the negative attitudes towards reading in English and the role that the socio-cultural environment of the learner plays in the process of a learning this foreign language and in place given to the culture of such a language, in an attempt to raise awareness of the importance of the socio-cultural milieu in improving reading performance by tackling cultural issues in every day discussions.

Therefore, the rationale behind this study is to contribute to the improvement of pupils' reading proficiency, and provide useful implication for both EFL teachers and learners to overcome the obstacles they generally encounter when they tend to take part in reading activities in classroom.

After formulating the research questions and hypotheses, we provided a general context for the research problematic. In addition, we tried to give a clear picture of EFL teaching/ learning situation in Algeria at the secondary school level. Then, we tried to give an overall picture on reading and culture in order to show their interrelationship. Coming the most important phase in this research study, we indicated theoretically the research methodology being used along this study in order to tackle effectively the research problem.

In this context, two distinct tools were used in this study, the questionnaires administered to both teachers and learners and the reading tests for learners of secondary schools. Then the data was collected, analysed and then interpreted. The results drawn from the collected data confirmed our hypotheses. The last chapter was devoted for suggestions and recommendations to the EFL teachers as well as their pupils in secondary schools, in order to improve learning/ teaching reading skills taking into consideration the

cultural component which broadens the learners' knowledge and develop their strategies when reading.

As this issue is so important and rich, it should be examined in further studies to highlight other aspects of the reasons behind ignoring culture in our schools and finding solutions to improve the situation of teaching English and its culture in the Algerian schools.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Anderson, R.C.., & Pearson,P.D.(1984). *"A Schema- Theoretic View ob Basic Processes in Reading Comprehension"*. In P. D. Pearson, R. Barr, M.l. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds). The Handbook of Reading Research (pp.255-292). New York: Longman.

2. Anderson, N.J. (1999). *Exploring Second Language reading: Issues and Strategies.* Boston, A: Heinle&Heinle

3. Asher, S. R. (1977). *Six differences in reading achievement.* (Reading Education rep. No2) Urbana, Il: Center for the Study of Reading.

4. Asher, C.(1988). *Improving the school-home connection for poor and minority students.* The urban Review.20, 109-123.

5. Askov, E. N. &Fischbach, J. W. (1973). *An investigation of primary pupils' attitudes towards reading.* Journal of Experimental Education, 41, 1-7.

6. Auerbach, E. R, *"Competency- Based ESL: One Step Forward or Two Steps Back?"*. TESOL Quarterly, Vol.20,N°.3, 1986, pp.411-429. Available: www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com

7. Benrabah, M. (2007). *Language-in- Education Planning in Algeria: Historical Development and Current Issues.* Language Policy, Vol 6, Iss2. Pp 225-252. Available: www.link.springer.com

8. Bing, E. (1963). *Effect of childrearing practices on development of differential cognitive abilities.* Child Development, 34, 631-648.

9. Bill Gillham. (2000). *Case study research methods.* British Library. Bodmin Cornwell.

10. Brezinski, J. E. (1964). *Beginning reading in Denver.* The Reading Teacher. 18, 16-21

11. Brophy, J. (1981). *Teacher praise: a functional analysis.* Review of Educational research. 51, 5-32.

12. Brown , H.D. (2007). *"Principles of Language Learning and Teaching".* New York: Longman.

13. Byram, M. (1989) *« Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education »* Multilingual Matters Ltd.

14. Canale, M and M, Swain (1980) *"Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second Language Teaching and Testing".* Journal of Applied linguistics,1,1: 1-47

15. Carrell, P. L. (1984). *"Schema theory and ESL Reading: Classroom implications and applications.".* Modern Language Journal, 68(4), 332-343..

16. Carrell, P.L and Eisterhold, J.C (1983).*" Schema Theory and ESL Reading Pedagogy".* In Carrell, P.L. Devine, J.

17. Chastain, K.(1988). *Developing second- language skills.* (3rded). San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brave Jovanocich.

18. Coleman, J.S et al. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity.* U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare. Washington , D.C: U.S. government Printing Office.

19. Crystal, D (1997) *« The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language » 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press* .

20. Davie, R, Butler, M. & Goldstein, H. (1972). *From birth to seven.* London: Longman.

21. Douglas, J. (1964). *The home and the school.* London: MacGibbon&Kee.

22. Duranti, A. (1997). *Universal and Culture- Specific Properties of Greetings.* Journal of Linguistic <u>Anthropology</u>. Vol7, Iss 1.pp 63-97. Available: www.onlinelibrart.wiley.com

23. Eccles, J. & Wigfield, A (2002). *Teacher expectations and student motivation.* In J.B. Dusek (Ed), *Teacher expectancies.* Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, in press.

24. Eichhorst, K. (2010). *The Role of English as a World Language.* Druck und Bindug: Books on Demand GmbH, Norderstedt Germany. Available on www.book.google.dz.

25. Gardner, R. C,(1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The role of attitudes and motivation.* London: Edward Arnold Publishers.

26. Gaudart, H. (1999). *Games as teaching tools for teaching English to speakers of other languages.* Simulation & Gaming. 30(3), 283-289.

27. Given, L. (1983). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative research Methods.*UK: SAGE Publications, Inc.

28. Goodman, K.S. (1967). "*Reading: A Psycholinguistic Guessing Game*". Journal of Reading Specialists, (4).Vol 6. Available: www.tandfonline.com

29. Gonzalez, V.(2004). *Second Language Learning": Cultural Adaptation Processes in International Graduate Students in US Universities".* U.S.A: University Press of America.

30. Grabe, W. (1988). *Reassessing the Term Interactive",* in Carrell, P.L, Devine, J. and Eskey, D.E. (eds). :56

31. Grabe, W.&Stoller, L.F,(2002). *Teaching and researching reading.* Harlow, England: Pearson Education.

32. Groff, P,J. (1962). *Children's attitudes toward reading and their critical reading abilities in four content-type materials.* Journal of Educational Research, 55, 313-317.

33. Hake, J.M. (1969). *Covert motivations of good and poor readers.* The Reading Teacher, 22,731-738.

34. Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* (3[rd]ed). Pearson Education Limited.

35. Hedge, T, *"Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom",* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000

36. Hymes, D.H. (1972). *On Communicative Competence.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

37. Kenneday, L. D,&Halinski, R. S.(1978). *Measuring attitudes :An extra dimension.* Journal of reading, 18, 518-522.

38. Kintsch, W.& Van Dijk, T. A.(1978). *Toward a model of text comprehension and production.* Psychological Review, 85, 87-108.

39. Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and Culture in language teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press..

40. Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and Culture.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

41. Krashen, S.D. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning.*Pergamon Press Inc. Electronic version.

42. Krashen, S. D.(1987). *Principles and Practice in second language acquisition.* Practice-Hall Englsih Language Teaching.

43. Larson, J and Weninger, A.J, (1980).*English Programs Should Be Competency Based'',* The English Journal, Vol.69, N°.8, pp.8-12

44. Larson- Freeman, D& Long, M.H.(1991). *An introduction to Second Language Research.* Candling, C.N (ed). Longman :

45. Louznadji, M. (2003). *English Open Doors (3^{em} AS).*Oran IbnKhaldoun. House of Publication.

46. Marcus, H. (1970). *Culture et societé.* Les Editions de Minuits

47. McClelland, J. &Rumelhart, D.E. (1981). *An interactive activation model of context effects in letter perception: part I. An account of basic finding.* Psychological Review, 88, 375-407.

48. Medjahed, F. (2011). *Teaching English in Algerian Secondary Schools: State of Art.* In Communication, Science, and Technology.N°09. Oran. ENSET. Available :www. IMG/File/article_12.pdf

49. Merrouche, O.(2006) :*The Long Impact Of French Settlement on Education in Algeria* .Working paper CWP14/06. Algiers.

50. Miliani, M. (2000). *Teaching English in a Multilingual Context: The Algerian Case.* In Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies. Vol, 6.pp. 13-29

51. Ming Har Wong, R. (2007). *Competency-based English Teaching and Learning:* Investigating Pre-service teachers of Chinese' Learning Experience. Available :www.ugr.es

52. Paladry, J. M.(1969). *What teachers believe, what children achieve.* Elementary School Journal, 69, 370-374.

53. Perfetti, C.A, Van Dyke, J.& Hart, L.(2001). *The psycholinguistics of Basic Literacy.* Annual Review of Applied Linguistics.21, 127-149.

54. Richards, J.C. and Rogers, T.S.(1986). *Approaches and methods in language teaching: A description and analysis.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

55. Risager, K. (2006). *Language and Culture Global Flow and Local Complexity.*Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. : 13-14

56. Roegiers Xavier, *« l'Approche par Compétences dans l'Ecole Algérienne''* Algiers : O.N.P.S,2006.

57. Rumelhart, D.E. (1977). *Toward interactive model of reading.* In S. Dornic (Ed). *Attention and performance VI,* Hillsdale, N. J: Erlbaum.

58. Sheldon & Carrillo, W.D.(1952). *Relation of parent, home and certain developmental characteristics to children's reading ability.* Elementary School Journal, 52, 262-270.

59. Shepps, F, P,&Shepps, R, R.(1971). *Relationship of study habits and school attitudes to achievement in mathematics and reading.* Journal of Educational Research, 65, 71-73

60. Shulman, L.S (1986). *Those who understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching.* Educational Researcher, 15(2), 4-14.

61. Smith, L. E (1985) *"EIL versus ESL/EFL: What's the difference and What Differences does the Difference make?"* in FORUM, October 1985 (pp2-6)

62. Smith, F (2004). *Understanding Reading".* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates , Inc :

63. Stanovich, K. E. (1980). *Toward an interactive- compensatory model of individual differences in the development of reading fluency.* Reading Research Quarterly, 16, 32-71.

64. Stanovich, K.E, & West, R.F. (1981). *The effect of sentence context on ongoing word recognition: Tests of a two-process theory.* Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance, 49, 717-727.

65. Tomalin, B. &Stempski, S. (1993). *Cultural awareness.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

66. Valdes, J, M. (1986). *Culture in Literature.* In J,M. Valdes. (Ed). *Cultural Bound: Bridging the Cultural Gap in Language teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp.198-218.:17

67. Widdowson, H.G. (1978). *Teaching Language as Communication.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

68. *Wigfield, A,Guthrie, J. T. (2008). The role of reading engagement in mediating effects of reading comprehension instruction on reading outcomes.*Psychology in the Schools, *45, 432-* 445.

69. Yalden, J. (1987). *Principles of Course Design of Language Teaching.* NJ: Prentice Hall International

70. Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research: Theory, Methods and Practice* Beverly, Calif: Sage Publications

71. Zimmerman, I, L.,&Allebrand, G. N. (1965). *Personality characteristics and attitudes toward achievement of good and poor readers.* Journal of Educational Research, 59, 28-31.

Appendices

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is a part of a research work. It aims at finding out whether Algerian teachers take into account the cultural component when teaching English reading. Your experience at the secondary level is a valuable information to achieve the objectives of this study.

Part one: General information

Q1: Status:

      a.   Confirmed teacher   ☐
      b. Probationer   ☐
      c.   Substitute teacher   ☐

Q2: How long have you been teaching English at the Secondary level?

Less than 5 years ☐ Between 5 and 10 years ☐ More than 10 years ☐

Q3: Where do you teach?
…………………………………………………………………………..

Q4: Have you ever visited England, USA or any other English speaking country?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

Part Two: The integration of culture in teaching reading in English

Q5: How would you define the word "culture"?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………

Q6: Do you think that teaching/learning culture is an important part in teaching/ learning English?

    Yes, very important ☐   Yes, important ☐   No ☐

(Please justify your answer)

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………….

Q7:Do you think reading is taught properly in your institution?

    Yes ☐   No ☐   Could be improved ☐

Q8: Approximately how much per week is spent in teaching reading?

………

…….

Q9: Do you discuss cultural issues while teaching reading?

    Yes ☐   Rarely ☐   Never ☐

Q10: When teaching reading, is culture to be treated as:

    a. Supplementary optional material ☐
    b. An integral part of language learning ☐

Q11: Do you think that learning about a foreign culture is a threat to one's native cultural identity?

          Yes ☐   No ☐

 (Please justify your answer)

………

………

……………………………………………………………………….

Q12: Do you find difficulties in explaining cultural information in English texts?

    Yes ☐   Sometimes ☐   No ☐

Q13: Which topics or themes should pupils be introduced to when reading in English?

    a. Daily life and routines ☐
    b. Customs and art ☐
    c. Beliefs and values ☐
    d. History ☐
    e. Literature ☐
    f. Ethnic relations and racism ☐
    g. Others .please specify…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Q14: When teaching reading, do you choose texts to relate the foreign culture to the pupils' cultural environment and background?

    Yes ☐   Sometimes ☐   No ☐

Q15: Do you think that you have in-depth knowledge about English speaking cultures to teach about them in reading?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

Q16: Does the textbook "New Prospects" offer enough cultural knowledge?

Yes, a lot ☐   Yes, enough ☐   No ☐

Q17: If yes, is the cultural content presented in reading texts:

    a. Suitable to the pupils' level.   ☐
    b. Suitable to the pupils' cultural background. ☐
    c. Suitable to the curriculum goals. ☐

PUPULS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Section one: General information

Age: …………………..   Gender:…………………..

Place of residence : …………………………..

Q1: How long have you been studying English?

....

Q2: What is your father's educational background?

   University ☐   Secondary ☐   Medium ☐   Primary ☐   None ☐

Q3: What is your mother's educational background?

   University ☐   Secondary ☐   Medium ☐   Primary ☐   None ☐

Q 4: What are the languages that you speak?

   a. Arabic ☐   b. Berber ☐   c. French ☐   d. English ☐

Q5: Is you English: Good ☐   average ☐   bad ☐

Section Two: Reading Habits and Perceptions

Q6: Do you like reading?   Yes   ☐   No   ☐

Q7: In which language do prefer reading?

          Arabic   ☐   French   ☐   English   ☐

Q8: How often do you read English books?

          Always ☐   Sometimes   ☐   Rarely   ☐   Never   ☐

Q9: Is there anyone in your family who encourages you to read in English?

     Yes ☐   No   ☐

Q10: What do you think a good reader is?

   a. Who reads the texts fluently   ☐
   b. Who understands the topic of the text   ☐
   c. Who understands all the words of the text   ☐

Q11: What are the documents that you read to study English outside the classroom?

     Novels ☐   Articles from internet ☐ Short stories ☐   None   ☐

Q12: When you have reading activity, is the atmosphere of the classroom you study in:

Friendly ☐   Boring ☐   Neutral ☐

Section Three:Integrating culture when reading in English

Q13: How can you identify the word "culture"?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

Q14: Do you think it is important to learn the culture when you learn English?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

Q15: If yes, why is it important?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Q16: Which topics do you want to deal with in reading activities?

Daily life and routines   ☐

Festivities and customs   ☐

Literature   ☐

History   ☐

Q17: Do you think that learning a foreign culture is a threat to your identity and religion?

Yes   ☐   No   ☐

Q18: Do you think you have a sufficient knowledge about English speaking cultures to help you understand a text in English easily?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

PUPILS' READING TESTS

TEXT 01:Beauty ad the Beast

W~~hen the~~ seller finished his business, he set off home. While he was coming back, he saw a castle. He stayed there for the night. The door was open and nobody was inside. Dinner table was served, so he sat to eat.

R~~emember~~ing his daughter, he bent down to pick it. When he did, a horrible beast appeared. He started blaming the seller for his ungratefulness. To save his life, the merchant agreed to bring his daughter, Beauty, to live with the beast.

W~~hen he~~ finished food, he went upstairs. It was now late, so he went to bed and fall fast asleep. When he woke next morning, there was coffee and some fruit by his bedside. As he went towards the garden and fetch his horse, a large rose caught his eye.

W~~hile she~~ was staying with her family, Beauty dreamt that the Beast was dying. Soon she returned to him. When she arrived, the Beast was really very ill, Beauty cried bitterly and prayed him not to die. She promised to be his wife. As soon as the Beast heard her, he became a handsome young king.

They married and lived happily forever.

B~~eauty~~ accepted and went to live with the Beast to spare her father's life. The Beast was very kind and generous to her. One day, she dreamt that her father was very ill. She asked to leave and made promise to come back.

1As a seller was setting off for market, he asked each of his three daughters what she would like as a present on his return. The first daughter wanted address, the second a necklace, but the third, whose name was beauty, just wanted a rose.

Questions:

Part 1: Read the text carefully, then put its part in the correct order.

Part 2: comprehension

- What did each of the seller's daughters want as a present?
- What is the general idea of the text?
- What is the message of the text?

PUPILS' READING TEST

TEXT 2: Bloody Mary

"Faaaaather...." a voice hissed softly. Old Man Whales screamed and whirled around. Blood Mary stood smiling at him and her tongue was bleeding. She pointed above her head, and Old Man Whales saw a rope looked inviting, hanging there. Obediently, Old Man Whales placed his hands on the rung of the ladder and started to climb.

1 Old Man Whales was an evil man who loved money more than anything in the world, except his wife. When his beloved wife died childbirth, Whales fell to pieces and hated the child – a little girl named Mary - that had killed his wife. He neglected her. In spite of this cruel treatment, Mary grew differently.

Two nights later, when Old Man Whales came back home, he found Mary standing in the kitchen on a pool of steaming blood. "Faaaaaather...." Bloody Mary hissed. Old Man Whales screamed and leapt out the kitchen door. When he glanced over his shoulder, the apparition was gone.Old Man Whales fled from the house in panic

As Mary reached adulthood, the resemblance to her dead mother was striking. Whales saw his dead wife every time he looked at the daughter who had caused her death.

After nearly a week, he decided it was safe to return to his house.He wanted to wash and a shave after sleeping so many nights in the barn. When he looked in the mirror, he saw the glowing red eyes and face of Bloody Mary.

One night, Whales lumbered into Mary's bedroom and stabbed her repeatedly. Mary woke screaming and thrashed around in agony as blood spurted everywhere and fell to the floor. When she was dead, Old Man Whales carried her,dug a grave and tossed her body into it.

Questions:

Part one: Read the text and put its parts in the correct order.

Part two: Comprehension:

- Why did Mary's father hate her?
- What is the general idea of the text?
- What is the message of the text?