People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of 08 Mai 1945 / Guelma | جامعة 08 ماي 1945 / قالمة

Faculty of Letters and Languages | كلية الآداب واللغات

Department of Letters and English Language | قسم الآداب و اللغة الانجليزية

OPTION: LINGUISTICS

The Role of Diagnostic Test Results in Adapting Syllabus Content

The Case of: Algerian 2nd Year Secondary Schools

A Dissertation submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfilment of

the Requirements for Master's Degree in Language and Culture.

Submitted by: **Supervised by:**

Miss. Mabrouka BENOUARET Ms. Naziha BENKAMOUCHE

Miss. Souha KHELIFATI

Board of Examiners

Chairperson: Mrs. Amina BOUDRA (MA/B) Univrsity of 8 Mai 1945 -Guelma

Supervisor: Ms. Naziha BENKAMOUCHE (MA/A) University of 8 Mai 1945 -Guelma

Examiner: Mrs. Mounya ABDAOUI (MA/A) University of 8 Mai 1945 –Guelma

2019/2020

Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

My parents,

My siblings,

To my partner Souha

BENOUARET Mabrouka

Dedication

This modest work is dedicated to:

My parents,

My sister and brothers,

My friends,

My partner Aya

KHELIFATI Souha

Acknowledgments

Abstract

The present study attempts to inquire into the role of diagnostic test results in syllabus content adaptation. This investigation aims at exploring teachers' perceptions, views, and attitudes vis-à-vis the use of diagnostic test in syllabus modification. It intends to figure out the reasons for which secondary school teachers use the diagnostic test and the outcomes of its use. Also, it attempts to have a closer look at instructional content adaptation and the function pupils' diagnostic testing performs in this process. It is thereby hypothesized that if teachers make use of the diagnostic test results, syllabus content adaptation would be more effective. To check the aforementioned hypothesis and answer the theoretical questions of the research, the descriptive quantitative method was adopted. The latter is manifested through the administration of a questionnaire by means of which quantitative numerical data are gathered. A total of two-handed and six (206) second year secondary school teachers from all over Algeria constituted the research sample. The derived results unveil a positive relationship between the two main variables, which confirms the hypothesis set at the beginning of the research. Furthermore, according to the obtained data, the participant teachers appear to recognize the value and impact of diagnostic test on their teaching in general and on syllabus adaptation specifically. Besides, the findings have shown the effects of teaching experiences and individual beliefs on the process. It is highly recommended to reconsider the status of language diagnostic test and encouraging adaptation should become priorities that policymakers ought to take into serious account in the future.

List of Tables

Table of Contents

Appendicies

Appendix A: Teachers' Questionnaire

الملخص

General Introduction

It is beyond doubt that English language teaching and learning is gaining more importance in modern times; many educational reforms had taken place in different educational settings in order to properly implement the newly emerging lingua franca. To carry out these educational reforms, a set of procedures targeting material design, content implementation, and desired linguistic achievements were used. The various visions people had about English teaching/learning and the position this language occupied, whether as a second or a foreign language, resulted in the creation of a variety of syllabuses. The focus, content, target, and even theoretical assumptions that funneled the molding of these syllabuses widely diverged. Yet, all syllabuses, regardless of their differences, constituted a common reference point that sets out the stage for learning throughout the whole course. The frequently changing economic, social, and professional requirements brought by changes in order to dispel the dissatisfaction with the existing syllabus designs. Hence, change was inescapable, as the latter needed to prove its well functioning, to some extent, and its ability to account for and cope with the operating conditions underlying the target contexts.

In addition to reflecting the circumstances in which a syllabus operates, Syllabus designers need to account for the expectations and needs of certain people amongst which are the learners. Being the main consumers of the greater portion of syllabus content, learners' needs are central to the design phase. Who are the learners? What do they know? (Level of proficiency in the language), what are they supposed to know? And what are their aims behind taking this language course? These questions and other sorts of diagnostic investigation must take place prior to the design or even when adapting the syllabus content. In fact, making a diagnosis of learners at the onset of the design or modification process is crucial to ensure the consistency of the design, and why not its success later when actually implemented in a classroom setting. Accordingly, diagnostic assessment serves as meaningful

sources of information for teachers to know the quality of their teaching and the types of activities they need to work on. It does not only inform learners about their progress in learning, but it is also used to guide teachers in creating effective lessons and materials that go in harmony with the learning goals and learners' profile.

1. Statement of the Problem

In the language classroom, every learner is unique; learners' needs and wants are totally different, and finding the trade-off between such varieties of needs is a demanding and complicated task. So, the very existence of different pupils' profiles and traits in language classrooms has always been a challenge for the syllabus designer. They are requested to create an effective and an appropriate syllabus which accounts for all those pupils' needs appropriately. In addition, the growing interest in learning English made it hard if not impossible for a syllabus to cope with these conditions. Though there are many types of syllabuses each offering some given positive characteristics, when operating in similar contexts, some syllabuses would be found unsuccessful and inadequate. The Algerian educational context is no exception. As a matter of fact, the situation in Algeria is even worse because the learners and the learning conditions constantly change, but certainly not the syllabus provided by the Ministry of National Education. It could take decades before proper changes get implemented in the syllabus. Furthermore, the syllabus provided by the governmental authorities to the educational institutions is very general and likely irrelevant to each and every educational situation.

Eventually, secondary school teachers (the sample of the study) find themselves in a situation where they make changes and modifications to the syllabus to make it fit their actual classroom situation. They have to preserve the particularity of their teaching/ learning context through making appropriate changes to the instructional content to foster learning. Yet, the

top-down control the Ministry exercises on teachers made adaptation harder and minor. Besides, the lack of familiarity with the learners and the teaching materials and context affects the way teachers deal with adaptation, particularly with novice and less experienced teachers; they lack the necessary knowledge that would enable them to adjust the content to learners' needs. It is for these reasons that adaptation could be found less effective when it comes to accounting for learners' needs and reflecting their expectations. Therefore, the use of the diagnostic test could have an important role in helping teachers to adapt the syllabus content as it provides insights into learners' current knowledge and spots their strengths and weaknesses.

2. Aims of the Study

The current study aims at investigating the role of using diagnostic test outcomes in the syllabus adaptation. In addition, it seeks to determine whether teachers use diagnostic test results in syllabus content adaptation, and the ways they use the feedback to overcome the encountered drawbacks. It also aims to raise teachers' awareness about the role of diagnostic test in the teaching/learning process.

3. Research Questions

The present research seeks to explore the impact of using diagnostic test results on the syllabus' modification. Thus, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. Could the diagnostic test results affect the adaptation of the syllabus content?
2. What are the teachers' attitudes towards the use of the diagnostic test in the teaching/learning process?
3. How is the diagnostic information used in the syllabus modification?

4.   Research Hypothesis

The present research investigates the effectiveness of using diagnostic test results in the syllabus content adaptation. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: If teachers make use of the diagnostic test results, syllabus content adaptation would be more effective.

The null hypothesis implies that no relation exists between diagnostic test results and syllabus content adaptation. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H0: If teachers make use of the diagnostic test results, syllabus content adaptation would not be more effective.

5.   Research Methodology and Design

5.1.   Research Method

To testify the research hypothesis and answer the research questions, the descriptive quantitative approach has been used. The choice of the method is based on the numerical nature of research tools used to extract information about teachers attitudes and views about the role of diagnostic test results in syllabus adaptation. The questionnaire has provided the data needed for analysis and interpretation.

5.2.   Population of the Study

The research sample has been selected randomly; it is composed of two-hundred and six (206) second year teachers at secondary schools from all over Algeria. The reason behind opting to work with this sample is that all of these teachers have access to the same syllabus, text books, and have-more or less- similar requirements and responsibilities. Also, they are responsible for the diagnostic assessment, because the Ministry of National Education obliges

these teachers to administer a diagnostic test at the beginning of the year. So, they made up the appropriate sample for the research.

5.3. Data Gathering Tools

In order to test the research hypothesis, a secondary school teachers' online questionnaire has been used to provide the necessary information about teachers' attitudes towards the use of diagnostic test results and their relation to syllabus content adaptation. The questionnaire has provided valuable data for analysis and interpretation, which helped check the research hypothesis and its theoretical assumptions.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation has been divided into three main chapters. The first two chapters are purely theoretical, and the last one encompassed the practical part of the research. Chapter one has tackled Syllabus adaptation. It has gone through definitions, types, approaches and importance. It has also dealt with the syllabus modification process and techniques. The second chapter has been devoted to the Diagnostic Test. It has moved from the general to the specific, from basic concepts related to assessment; to diagnostic test, its definition, types, use, and importance.

Chapter three "Field Investigation", has highlighted the description and aims of the research tool, and covered all the analysis and interpretation of the information collected from the administration of the questionnaire. Additionally, it has provided an explanation for the reached results. The dissertation has concluded with some pedagogical implications and recommendations in addition to the study limitations.

Chapter One

Syllabus Adaptation

Introduction

Teaching and learning a second or a foreign language is a very complicated and time consuming process. One cannot just teach/learn a language at once; it must be planned, organized, then presented gradually. The educational instrument that encompasses all of these operations is called the syllabus. In addition to being at the center of the teaching/learning process, the syllabus provides guidance and acts as a common reference to both teachers and learners. Nevertheless, the implementation of the syllabus by teachers inside the classroom differs; each teacher adapts the syllabus content to fit his/her learning situation, and satisfy his/her learners' needs.

This chapter is entirely devoted to the discussion of syllabus adaptation. It begins with a set of definitions of key concepts related to syllabus which are: syllabus design and curriculum. The term curriculum is often used as a substitute for "syllabus"; hence, a clear distinction between the two is provided. The chapter tackles the process of syllabus design by highlighting the major steps involved. It also introduces the various approaches to syllabus design proposed by scholars; and the different existing types of syllabuses in the literature about language teaching and learning with reference to each type's merits and drawbacks. The question of what should be taken into consideration while designing the syllabus is answered under criteria for syllabus design. Along with discussing the syllabus purposes, the chapter deals with syllabus adaptation as a final major title. Under the latter, the main reasons why teachers opt for adaptation and the objectives they wish to attain from this process are clarified. In addition to adaptation techniques, the role of teacher as syllabus adaptor and the importance of adaptation are provided.

1.1. Syllabus Design

Syllabus, curriculum, and syllabus design are all elements of instructional activity; they complement each other and have lots of points in common. Yet, they could stand apart in relation to some aspects. Below are some definitions and clarifications for these concepts.

1.1.1. Definition of Curriculum

In all educational systems, the curriculum is supposed to provide the general guidelines to all the factors included in the teaching/learning process. According to White (1988), the word curriculum stands for "the totality of content to be taught and aims to be realized within one school or educational system" (as cited in Berardo, 2007, p. 12). In this basic definition, White explained the concept in terms of the covered teaching items and the learning ends.

Nunan (1988, p. 8) proposed a broader definition to the word, mentioning all the processes involved in the making of a curriculum. He maintained that a "curriculum is concerned with planning, implementation, evaluation, management and administration of educational programmes". In their book, Yassi and Kaharuddin provided a more detailed version of Nunan's definition. They defined language curriculum as " all those activities include not only the what pupils learn, but how they learn it, how teachers help them learn, using what supporting materials, styles and methods of assessment and in what kind of facilities" (2018, p. 15).

In addition to the elements mentioned above, Candlin (1984, p. 35) shed light on the "ideological, social, psychological and pedagogical" factors that affect the curriculum creation and development; and the factors that may hinder the effectiveness of the Educational program when put into action.

A curriculum is then all encompassing in relation to the teaching and learning transaction. It considers each and every aspect moving from theories and assumptions, content, learners,

teachers, to objectives and goals, materials, and educational settings.

1.1.2. Definition of Syllabus

The syllabus is another important term in the field of teaching and learning, it was assigned many definitions by different researchers. Traditionally speaking, the way an instructional content is organized is called a syllabus (Richards, & Rodger, 2001, p. 25). But with the changing views about how language teaching and learning should be, the term came to acquire other meanings. Nunan provided a simple definition to the concept, in which he focused on the instructional material to be covered. He stated that the syllabus consists of "lists of content to be taught through a course of study" (2013, p. 66).

A syllabus is also seen as a document that clearly specifies the content, and the goals of teaching; but not the result of learning (Yalden, 1987a, p. 87). In his definition of syllabus, Breen emphasized the fact that a syllabus is a subcomponent of the curriculum. Besides, he made use of the components of syllabus to convey a broader image about the concept. Breen stated that the syllabus consists of "aims, content, methodology and evaluation". The syllabus covers all the topics of instruction and even plans tests. It also dictates the way of dealing with the content, and draws clear ends for instruction (2001, p. 151).

On his behalf, Widdowson (1984, p. 23) accented the nature of syllabus in his definition showing that the syllabus sets it all for learners and teachers, and draws a clear path for them to follow moving from specifying content, using materials, to accomplishing goals at the end of the course. He added "the syllabus is simply a framework within which activities can be carried out: a teaching device to facilitate learning" (p. 26).

In a nutshell, a syllabus is a detailed instructional tool that guides teaching and learning. It specifies what to teach, in what order to present it, how to present it, and for what purposes it is being taught.

1.1.3. The Difference between Curriculum and Syllabus

The term curriculum has been used interchangeably with the term syllabus at many occasions, more precisely in the available literature about education of the different educational systems in many countries. Like many scholars in the field, Berardo tackled this issue and stated that curriculum and syllabus are "closely linked and for some there is little difference. In North America, the two are interchangeable thus creating even more confusion" (2007, p. 11). It is therefore necessary to make a clear distinction between the two terms. According to Allen:

> [C]urriculum is a very general concept which involves consideration of the whole complex of philosophical, social and administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an educational programme. Syllabus, on the other hand, refers to that subpart of curriculum which is concerned with a specification of what units will be taught (1984, p. 61).

That is to say, the scope of the curriculum is wider than that of the syllabus; even the elements each of them covers vary to a great extent. In line with Allen, Dubin and Olstain (1986, p. 3) emphasized the difference in coverage of both curriculum and syllabus; describing the curriculum as an inclusive arrangement for teaching and learning, while portraying the syllabus as a detailed plan with predetermined objectives addressing a specific audience. Yalden shared the same view about syllabus and curriculum's scope. She maintained that the syllabus covers "content for a single course or subject", whereas the curriculum comprises of "the collectivity of course offerings at an educational institution" (1987a, p. 72).

> Further, Krahnke declared that:
>
> A syllabus is more specific and more concrete than a curriculum and a curriculum may contain a number of syllabi; For example, a curriculum may cover an entire school year,

while a language teaching syllabus may make up only one part of the curriculum (…) A curriculum may specify only the goals (what the learners will be able to do at the end of the instruction), while the syllabus specifies the content of the lessons_ used to move the learners toward the goals (1987, p. 9).

Krahnke held that the syllabus is a subcomponent of the curriculum, and it is more realistic than the latter. Unlike the curriculum, the syllabus does not only draw learning objectives, but also organizes the learning materials in the proper way to achieve them.

1.1.4. Definition of Syllabus Design

The process of putting into action the different linguistic views, or in Toney's words the "attempt to convert principle into operational practice" is referred to as syllabus design (1984, p. 7). It represents the link between the cognitive theory and knowledge, and the desired objectives of the educational programs. Syllabus design is essentially concerned with "selecting, sequencing and justifying content" (Nunan, 2004, p. 6). This is pretty much a narrower view of the term, as it focuses solely on deciding upon the instructional materials.

A more comprehensive view into syllabus design suggested that syllabus design involves multiple processes concerning the what, why, and how content is to be implemented. That is to say; it moves from the choice of " "units" of classroom activity", to "the "sequence" in which they are to be presented" (Robinson, 2011, p. 294). So for some, the main aspects of syllabus design are not merely the selection and organization of content. Syllabus design is also about the choice of relevant activities and methodologies that are presumed to assist in objectives' accomplishment.

1.2. Approaches to Syllabus Design

The currently existing syllabuses have been the result of various design approaches that are

established on the basis of what type of content to teach, and what objectives to be attained at the end of instruction. Different organizational design patterns were introduced in the form of dichotomies characterizing the foreign language syllabus. Wilkins (1976) differentiated between synthetic and analytic syllabuses, on his part; Nunan (1988) distinguished between product and process syllabuses. Another distinction between Type A and Type B syllabuses was initially made by White (1988).

1.2.1. The Synthetic/ Analytic Approach

Wilkins described the synthetic language teaching as "one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up" (1976, p. 2). This traditional approach to language teaching is motivated by the notion of simplifying content to learners, and presenting it increasingly in the form of chunks. It is the learners' responsibility then to assimilate and use that linguistic whole presented during a course of instruction in real life.

The analytic approach on the other hand is need oriented. Its primary goal is to fulfill learners' needs through presenting larger content portions at once, and it is up to learners to analyze and pick what suits them from the communicative activities performed. As Wilkins put it, the analytic approach is "organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes" (1976, p. 13).

1.2.2. The Product Oriented / Process Oriented Approach

The product-based approach was introduced by Nunan to designate a syllabus where "the focus is on the knowledge and skills which learners should gain as a result of instruction"

(1988, p. 27). The product-based syllabus emphasizes the different linguistic items that learners acquire by the end of the course; it is an outcome-centered approach to language learning.

While the process-based approach refers to the syllabus which focuses on the "learning experiences themselves" (1988, p. 27).The process oriented approach accents how the content is planned to be learned. In other words, the essence of this design type is the set of techniques involved in learning a language.

1.2.3. The Type A / Type B Approach

According to White (1988), the type A syllabuses are related to the ends of the language learning and teaching process. In this type, the students' needs are not at the center of the design; teachers are the ones responsible for determining content objectives. The type A syllabus is accordingly a product oriented and synthetic syllabus (as cited in Bazyar, Dastpak, & Taghinzehad, 2015, 164).

The type B is concerned with the way learners should learn given linguistic units in order to develop an overall communicative competence. The objectives of this syllabus reflect the learners' original purposes of taking the language course in the first place. It is then a process based and an analytic syllabus (as cited in Bazyar, Dastpak, & Taghinzehad, 2015, 164).

1.3. Types of Syllabuses

The different views about language teaching and learning affected the way syllabuses' content, method, and materials are selected and used. As a result, a range of syllabuses was introduced to the field, each offering a set of educationally attractive features and implementational constraints. The main six types of syllabuses discussed in the literature about course design are presented below.

1.3.1. The Grammatical Syllabus (Structural / Formal)

The grammatical syllabus is the oldest existing syllabus in language teaching, it is claimed to be an extension of the grammar-translation method (Murphy, 2018, p. 8). Wilkins asserted that the starting point of every syllabus is the grammatical syllabus, as the grammatical elements are central to all syllabuses (1976, p. 7). According to Krahnke, the grammatical syllabus is characterized by a heavy emphasis on teaching the target language's grammar, in addition to occasional glances at words' construction and pronunciation (1987, p. 16). This implies that the teaching units' choice in the formal syllabus is based on the grammatical, phonological, and morphological features of the target language. Berardo agreed with Krahnke, and he went further saying that the structural syllabus "specifies structural patterns as the basic units of learning and organizes these according to such criteria as structural complexity, difficulty, regularity, utility, and frequency" (2007, p. 49).

Being essentially founded on grammatical grounds, the content of this syllabus is easily organized, explained, and presented. Besides, this culture-free primary focus on grammar teaching allows for fast and effective learning. Even the learners' level evaluation would not be difficult for teachers (Krahnke, 1987, p. 27-28). However, the structural syllabus neglects the learners' actual needs and reduces their motivation as it moves systematically from one grammatical element to another that learners would not probably use (Wilkins, 1972, p. 255). Breen (1987, p. 86) believes that this use of non-authentic materials is very tricky because learners think they are learning a language while all what they are learning is its rules.

1.3.2. The Situational Syllabus

The inadequacies noticed in the structural syllabus led to an alternative approach, the situational one; that focuses on situational needs rather than grammatical units. According to Krahnke (1987, p. 16) "a situational syllabus is the one in which the content of language

teaching is a collection of real or imaginary situations in which language occurs or is used".

In this type of syllabus, learners are initiated to various linguistic situations that may or may not take place in real life. Rajaee, Abbaspour, and Zare asserted that this syllabus directs focus to a non-linguistic element, the situation, emphasizing the teaching of language within a context. That is why the situational syllabus's designer selects situations he/she expects the learners to encounter (2013, p.66).

Boosting learners' motivation is one of the positive characteristics of a situational syllabus, since it is learner rather than subject oriented (Wilkins, 1976, p. 16). The content of this syllabus helps learners become competent users of the language, not necessarily achieving a total communicative competence, but knowing more or less the cultural and social norms of the target culture and act accordingly while communicating (krahnke, 1987, p. 49). Yet, the choice of the situations presented to the learners is the result of a mere intuition. Even the predetermined dialogues used inside the classroom are less likely to be performed the same way in actual settings. Moreover, this habit formation method kills learners' ability to think outside the box (p. 49-50).

1.3.3. The Functional/ Notional Syllabus

With the rejection of the situational language teaching, the need to find another approach that develops real communicative competence away from grammatical structure mimicry arose. This eventually led to the creation of the communicative language teaching (Richards, & Rodgers, 2001, p. 153-154). The functional/notional syllabus was the result of this approach shift. But, before providing a definition of the syllabus it is necessary to explain the two terms: function and notion. Nunan defined functions as "the communicative purpose of language" and notions as "the conceptual meanings including objects, entities, states of affairs, logical relationships and so on" (1988, p. 35). A functional/notional syllabus is then

organized around the purposes a language is used for, and the meaning it conveys in communication (Rahimpour, 2010, p. 1662). In line with Rahimpour, Wilkins asserted that the essence of this syllabus is the communicated meanings of the language rather than its grammatical structure. Unlike the grammatical syllabus, the notional syllabus focuses on communication upshot (1976, p. 18).

In fact, the functional/notional syllabus develops learners' ability to interpret, understand, and use the target language effectively (Breen, 1987, p. 89). Nevertheless, there is no obvious criterion for the selection and grading of instructional content; nor an insurance that the former accounts for all learners needs (Nunan, 1988, p. 36).

1.3.4. Skill- Based Syllabus

Another prominent type of language syllabuses is the skill-based syllabus. Kara (2001, p. 70) stated that skill-based syllabus "Considers language as an accumulation of skills. To acquire a language is primarily a problem of acquiring these skills". It basically deals with the "sub-skills, sub-processes and activities" essential to language learning (Thayniath, 2017, p. 274). Richards explained this notion the same way, saying that becoming a competent language user entails learning a number of "micro-skills" of the target language (2001, p. 159). He put forward a set of advantages of the skill-based syllabus:

- They focus on behavior or performance.
- They teach skills that can transfer to many other situations.
- They identify teachable and learnable units (p. 161).

While developing a skill through using simple organized tasks may lead to higher linguistic achievements, the use of heavily structured ones would not lead to similar

preferable conclusions. The content of teaching must be kept simple or learners would get confused and learning would not be successful (Krahnke, 1987, p. 57).

1.3.5. Task-Based Syllabus

Rahimpour described task-based syllabus as "one in which the content of the teaching is a series of complex and purposeful tasks that the students want or need to perform with the language they are learning" (2010, p. 1662). In this type of syllabus, the learners are central to the activities' selection phase. The activities could be modified at any time by the teacher to ensure better results and develop students' "higher-order thinking skills"; learners are required to induce information at the end of each task (Krahnke, 1987, p. 59).

Task-based syllabus is highly recommended in language teaching; it accounts for all learners' needs and quickly develops necessary linguistic competences, along with cognitive ones (Singireddy, 2014, p. 147). Unless contextual, instructional, or comprehension problems arise; the results of task-based language teaching would still be effective (Pandia, 2017, 21).

1.3.6. Content-Based Syllabus

Content-based teaching refers to "an approach in which teaching is organized around the content or information that student will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other syllabus" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 204). It is not really a language teaching syllabus; it is designed to teach other subject matters. The priority of the content-based syllabus is "the development of language through classroom activities. It enhances the language through different contents and/or in the context of various types of information" (Sekhar, & Swathi, 2019, p. 6).

Though the teaching of language is incidental in content-based instruction, the language used is authentic (Nunan, 1988, p. 49). Ellis claimed that learning whatever topic using a

different language would not make learners proficient language users, their grammatical and sociolinguistic skills would not develop much (2003, p. 235). It could even lead to worse results, like learners neither learning the content nor the language (Mohan, 1986, p. 13).

1.4.   Purposes of Syllabus

The Syllabus occupies a very important position in language classrooms. Widdowson indicated that the syllabus provides the blueprint and frame work for teaching and learning a language, it is "a teaching device to facilitate learning" (1984, p. 26). Yalden agreed with Widdowson, and stated that the existence of a syllabus is necessary to produce an efficiency of two kinds. The first one is the pragmatic efficiency; it refers to the preplanned teaching and situation with all of its aspects. The second type of efficiency is the pedagogical one, it is concerned with the administrative regulations that control the students' learning process and guarantee the learning outcomes (1984, p. 14). A syllabus according to Hutchinson and Waters is very important as it fulfils many purposes. It divides linguistic content into smaller controllable teaching items, which make learning and teaching easier. The well planning of the syllabus makes students and sponsors feel comfortable with their investments in language classes. The syllabus draws a clear path and objectives for teaching and learning, while reflecting the purposes and content. It puts forward a set of materials to be used, and ensures consistency and uniformity across the system; and finally it provides the basis for assessment and evaluation (1987, p. 83–84).

Matejka and Kurke expressed the same purposes presented by Hutchinson and Waters in their way. They considered the syllabus as contract "agreement between you [teachers] and the students", a "communicative device" for course content and objectives, a "plan" or organization for course content and tasks; and a "cognitive map" with the teacher being the guide who knows "the destination, what routes we [learners] will take, detours needed, and

the method of travel" (1994, p. 115-117). In the same respect, Slattery and Carlson further emphasized the facilitating role the syllabus plays in the teaching and learning process. They argued, it "communicates the overall pattern of the course so a course does not feel like disjointed assignments and activities, but instead an organized and meaningful journey" (2005, p. 159).

1.5. Criteria for Syllabus Design

Due to the fact that syllabus design is a compound complex process, different criteria must be taken into consideration by the syllabus designer to guarantee the success of the whole process. Webb (1976) established a set of guidelines to be followed while designing a syllabus. The following are the criteria he proposed:

- progress from known to unknown matters.

- appropriate size of teaching units.

- a proper variety of activity.

- teachability.

- creating a sense of purpose for the student (as cited in Kaur, 1990, p. 4).

Syllabus design should follow a logical sequence achieving learnability, moving from the learners' current knowledge to higher, more complex, and suitable knowledge levels and amounts. The elements included in the syllabus must reflect their significance and explainability. The design procedure could be influenced by different factors varying from purely "linguistic" to "non-linguistic" ones. Amran classified the factors into:

- Linguistic variables, which include the linguistic relations, between the language to be taught and the language or languages that the student uses in his daily activities.

• Non-linguistic variables, which range from policy to social, cultural, technological and administrative variables (as cited in Kaur, 1990, p. 4).

1.6.   Framework of Syllabus Design

Designing a syllabus has always been a challenging task for the syllabus designer, chiefly for its demanding nature. In order to overcome this issue, many scholars insisted on dividing the syllabus design process into different stages for its success. Before moving to the discussion of syllabus design phases, a recapitulation of the traditional and contemporary trends in syllabus design and their focus points must be provided.

According to Pandia, the traditional way of design is content oriented; the dominant syllabuses types were grammatical ones following in their design four main phases: limitation, grading, presentation, and testing. The coming of the communicative approach changed the way people view language teaching and learning, which led to a change in the syllabuses' format (2017, p. 10). Generally speaking, the contemporary syllabuses' designs go through the following stages proposed by Taba (1962): needs analysis, objectives formulation, content selection, content organization, learning activities selection and organization, and content evaluation (as cited in Pandia, 2017, p. 10).

For Breen (1987, p. 83), a syllabus design must go through the "focus upon" stage in which the designer chooses "aspects of target-language knowledge and capability". The designer would select from the target-language those aspects that serve the objectives of teaching. Then comes subdividing, or "the breaking down of selected content into manageable units." Finally, there is sequencing or "the marking out of the content along a path of development". Munby (1984) put forward three main organizing principles for the syllabus

design: needs analysis, content specification, and syllabus organization (as cited in Yalden, 1987b, p. 35)

The following are the most common stages in design proposals suggested by researchers in the field.

1.6.1. Needs Analysis

The concept of needs analysis emerged in the 1920's and started gaining importance between 1960's and 1980's. It was mainly associated with the teaching of English for specific purposes (ESP). Needs analysis is concerned with identifying circumstances of the learning and the learners' purposes behind taking such course (Hutchinson, & Waters, 1987 p 59). Brown defined needs analysis as the "systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information" about learners and the learning situation, so that to control learning and meet learners needs (1995, p. 36). Graves argued that needs analysis is the process of gathering, interpreting, and later using data about learners in making decision about learning and learners (2000, p. 100). It is through needs analysis that syllabus designers or teachers could access a phenomenal range of information that would be used to ameliorate teaching and learning.

Needs analysis serves a multitude of purposes. It could be conducted before implementing a program or integrated into it to check its relevance to learners' needs. It could also be conducted for the purposes of evaluating preexisting programs, and pointing out their deficiencies in relation to learning/teaching expectations (Pushpanathan, 2013, p. 3). Yet, the main purpose behind conducting needs analysis is to help teachers put together different parts of a bigger picture. It is about identifying language skills and communicating abilities which help learners perform particular roles (Singireddy, 2014, p. 145).

1.6.1.1. Classification of Needs

Needs is the umbrella term encompassing all of those learners requirements; it was explained by Brown (2016, p. 13) as "wants, desires, necessities, lacks, gaps, expectations, motivations, deficiencies, requirements, requests, prerequisites, essentials, the next step, and x +1 (where x is what students already know, plus the next step, or 1)."

In order to categorize needs, many classifications were introduced. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 55-61) differentiated between target needs and the learning needs. The target needs are concerned with what the learner needs to do in the target situation. It includes necessities "what learner has to know", lacks "the necessities the learner lacks", and wants, which represent what teaching content learners prefer. While the learning needs are chiefly about how the learner can acquire the language needed in particular situations. It is divided into learning strategies and constraints, which stand for the learning styles and methods learners prefer; and the situational constraints and limitations that could hinder the teaching process respectively.

Berwick (1989, p. 55) introduced a classification to needs on the basis of the conflicting views on what the needs are. He presented the "felt needs" or "expressed needs"; they designate what learners wish to learn. The "perceived needs" on the other hand refer to what the teachers plan to teach in a given course based on what they have noticed. At a given point, the felt needs may contradict with the expressed ones.

Another classification was provided by Brindley, he proposed the "objective" and "subjective" needs. Objective needs are based on "factual information about learners, their use of language in real-life communication situations as well as their current language proficiency and language difficulties". However, the subjective needs refer to information derived from the analysis of information about learners' "personality, confidence, attitudes, ...

wants and expectations with regard to the learning of English and their individual cognitive style and learning strategies" (1989, p. 70).

1.6.1.2. Munby's Model of Needs Analysis

Munby (1978) has presented a new influential model for needs analysis. His Communicative Needs Processor was the result of the shift from the focus on content to the focus on learners and the learning needs. It eventually led to the establishment of nine parameters to consider while conducting needs analysis, which are the participants, purposive domain, setting, interaction, instrumentality, dialect, target level, communicative event; and the communicative key (p. 34-39). Although, this new approach to needs analysis has been subject to many criticism for being mainly "too mechanical, and for paying too little attention to the perceptions of the learner"; it is still be used today to diagnose learners needs (Nunan, 1988, p. 20).

1.6.1.3. The Shift from Needs to Goals and Objectives' Setting

Through the use of a multitude of qualitative and quantitative data gathering tools like questionnaires, conferencing, surveys, and so on; the needs analysis process could generate a tremendous amount of data to be utilized later by the syllabus designer (Graves, 2000, p. 107). The collected data from the needs analysis elucidate the course goals and short-term objectives. This step involves translating information into goals in first position. Brown (1995, p. 71) explained goals as "general statement concerning desirable and attainable programme purposes and aims based on perceived language and situation needs". Needs analysis informs framing relevant goals to learners' needs and expectations. Setting feasible and realistic goals at this stage is very important in order to move to the next step of defining objectives.

A Learning objective could be seen as "a specific statement that describes the particular knowledge, behavior, and/or skills that the learners will be expected to know or to perform at the end of a course or a program" (Brown, 1995, p. 73). Shaping goals must progress in consistency with learning objectives, as the fulfilment of goals contributes to the fulfilment of long-term learning objectives. Establishing well-planned goals and objectives would make transition easier from one phase to the other for the syllabus designer. As put by Tabari "clear goals and objectives give the teacher a basis for determining which content and activities are appropriate for her[or his] course. They also provide a framework for evaluation of the effectiveness or worth of an activity" (2013, p. 872)

1.6.2. Content Specification

The information collected via needs analysis help in deciding what to teach and in what order, it determines content selection, sequencing and justification. It also specifies the type of syllabus to be adopted. The syllabus could be either a grammatical one with emphasis on rules and structures, or semantic with emphasis on meanings and language skills (Reilly as cited in Sanal, 2016, p. 189). The content selection phase is concerned with making decisions about the instructional content and its incorporation within the suitable syllabus for given learners and learning situation. Selecting content is not a random process; it must follow predetermined criteria.

As an attempt to clarify example criteria for content selection, Trim (1973) put forward three basic principles. The syllabus designer must take into consideration learners' progress from initial to final stages of instruction and choose content accordingly. A second criterion is to select multipurposes linguistic elements. Thirdly, the designer must reflect learners language needs and uses while selecting content (as cited in Kaur, 1990, p, 10).

1.6.3. Content Organization

After having selected what to teach, the turn has come to order and organize the instructional content following specific guidelines; so that, teaching would move smoothly and easily. The sequencing of content could move deductively from specific to general, or vice versa following an inductive order. It could also move from what is known to learners to the unknown (Kaur, 1990, p. 11-12). In this regard, Corder (1973) tried to offer a proximal view about how a well-organized syllabus should be. He maintained that "the ideal syllabus would be one in which the sequencing of items taught logically derives from and presupposes the learning of some previous items" (as cited in Kaur, 1990, p. 12).

1.6.4. Syllabus Implementation

Regardless of how well a syllabus is designed, its implementation could mismatch its purposes and orientations. This is what Tomlinson (2006) explained, he argued that the fulfillment of certain segment of learners' needs is what the majority of instructional materials aim at. This unreliable overgeneralization of minority needs to the rest of learners would make the syllabus design and later its implementation problematic (as cited in McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara, 2013, p. 61).

To achieve a more or less effective implementation of the language syllabus, Maley (1984) suggested a number of factors including cultural, educational, organization, learner, teacher, and material. The culture of target situation affects the success of implementation, as a society could be either "outward-looking and welcomes innovation, or inward-looking, seeking inspiration from deeply-rooted traditional values". Educational factors refer to ideological and philosophical views about teaching and learning languages. Another factor to consider is the organizational element, which is about the way an educational system functions. The availability and familiarity with the instructional materials also influence the syllabus's

implementation. A final factor is the teachers' experience and the learners' backgrounds (as cited in Berardo, 2007, p. 41). The more a teacher is well prepared and trained on the new syllabus, the more positive and effective he/she would deal with the implementation (Sabbah, 2018, p.139).

1.7.   Syllabus Adaptation

Instructional materials, especially syllabuses, play a vital role in language teaching/ learning classes; they provide a reference and context for its users. Nevertheless, making adaptation to the content is very crucial as it would help increasing the outcomes and maximize the effectiveness of instruction.

1.7.1. Definition of Adaptation

Although most instructional materials including the syllabus are carefully designed, actual classroom implementation would reveal many defects in the design simply because of the impossibility for a syllabus to account for all influential factors in all the target situations. For Dubin and Olshtain, syllabus designers are "quite removed from actual classroom instruction" and whom see syllabus design as "a non teaching assignment" (1986, p. 1). With the syllabus, the guide for teaching and learning; being relatively detached from the different learning contexts where it is operating; teachers opt for adaptation as a kind of solution to these inadequacies the syllabus displays. Adaptation is more than needed in this situation to overcome the design gaps.

In order to adapt a syllabus, it is necessary to go through adoption. Adoption refers to the process of selection and implementation of a given syllabus, while adaptation is defined by McDonough et al. as "a process subsequent to, and dependent on, adoption" (2013, p. 61). It

is concerned with making the essential modification to fit teachers' use, learners' needs, and the context's requirements.

1.7.2. Reason for Adaptation

When working with a syllabus, the teacher "interprets and reconstructs that syllabus; so that it becomes possible to implement it in his or her classroom" (Breen, 1984, p. 50). This entails that every learning situation is unique and requires specific modifications. Consequently, adaptation could be performed for many reasons. McDonough et al. (2013) proposed a set of motives that trigger adaptation such as lack of materials' authenticity, materials' difficulty, too little topics coverage … and so on. Teachers could adapt for a variety of other reasons, but generally speaking, all aspects of target situation could be subject to adaptation like "aspects of language use, skills, classroom organization, supplementary materials" (p. 68).

The desire to cope with the distinct circumstances and factors influencing every teaching/ learning situation is what calls for adaptation in Cunningsworth (1995, p. 136) opinion. He believes that McDonough et al. missed the element of the learner as a motive for adaptation. So, he added that adaptation is the process by means of which teachers could account for learners' expectations and learning styles, teachers/learners' relationships, learning materials, and syllabus limitations.

1.7.3. Objectives of Adaptation

Offering teachers freedom to make modifications to their teaching materials is of a significant value. It enables them to make materials more convenient to: themselves, target learners and contexts on the one hand. On the other hand, adaptation would help reducing "mismatches" among the previously mentioned elements and within the material itself

(Tomlinson, & Masuhara, 2018, p. 82). In consistency with Tomlinson and Masuhara, Halim and Halim maintained that adaptation is a prerequisite to maintain harmony between all the elements operating in the teaching/learning context; it increases the "appropriateness" of instructional materials to educational contexts (2016, p. 633).

As an attempt to maximize the effectiveness of the syllabus content, teachers adapt to personalize, individualize, or localize the material. Personalizing materials refers to "increasing the relevance of content in relation to learners' interests and their academic, educational or professional needs". This implies that learners are at the center of the adaptation process, and modifying the content to meet their expectations is the primary goal of the teacher. A second main objective for adaptation is to individualize content. Individualization targets "the learning styles both of individuals and of the members of a class working closely together". The teacher aims through individualizing to spotlight learner's cognitive and learning styles differences and include them in adaptation. Another objective for adaptation is to localize materials, it is related to the "the international geography of English language teaching" which dictates how learning and even adaptation must be. The more the content reflected students' needs, highlighted their differences, and considered the status of the English language; the more effective adaptation would be (McDonough et al., 2013, p. 69).

1.7.4. Techniques of Adaptation

The numerous shortcomings the syllabuses exhibit impels the use of multiple adaptation techniques, weather the problem is with skill coverage or with topic selection, Cunningsworth recommended the following techniques for adaptation:

- Leaving out some parts of the material

- Adding materials (published or your own)

- Replacing material with something more suitable

- Changing the published materials to make it more suitable for your use (1995, p. 136).

McDonough et al. mooted some adaptation techniques that could be used whether separately or combined by teachers for a variety of contents and objectives. They have suggested addition, deletion, modification, simplification, and reordering. Addition is the procedure which involves insertion of extra linguistic items and activities to make up for the insufficiency of coverage with respect to time allocated for the element. Unlike addition, deletion is about the removal of elements found to be inappropriate, offensive, or unnecessary from the materials. Teachers could go for modification of some aspects in the content to ensure efficacy. Modification could take the form of rewriting or restructuring. The rewriting involves introducing "models of authentic language, or set more purposeful, problem-solving tasks", while restructuring is about changing the structure of the class so to perform role-plays for instance. If the content is complicated for learners, teachers would plump for content simplification mainly through rewriting. One last technique proposed by McDonough et al. is reordering; teachers could make a new plot through rearranging and putting element in the syllabus in a different sequence (2013, p. 69-76).

1.7.5. The Teacher as a Syllabus Modifier

Given that the syllabus is of great worth in any educational institution, it grew untouchable and unquestionable for some people in the field. Yet, many others rejected the sacredness of the syllabus and called for widening the scope of interest while designing, adopting, and adapting the syllabus (Stern, 1984, p. 7-10). As supporters of this view, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 94) asserted, "a syllabus is not a divine writ. It is a working document that should be used flexibly and appropriately to maximize the aims and processes of learning".

In parallel with Hutchinson and Waters, Brumfit (1984, p. 79) believes that a syllabus must be regarded as a "negotiated" document where teachers must have a saying. He further added that "instead of seeing it as a way of innovating from above, we should see it as a way of creating a broad framework for clarification, and therefore gradual change, of the best current practice". A syllabus must not be merely thought of as an extension of a curriculum, but also a tool for bringing improvements with teachers in charge of making relevant adjustments. Teachers know a lot about their learners; they are more qualified to decide what applies best to their learners and teaching situation. Their participation in syllabus adaptation is more than mandatory; it is indispensable (Masuhara, 1993, as cited in Tabari, 2013, p. 869). Tomlinson added:

> Teachers spend far more time observing and influencing the language learning process than do researchers or materials developers. Yet little research has been done into what teachers believe is valuable for language learning and little account is taken of what teachers really want (1998, p. 22).

In spite of that, having a syllabus facilitates the teachers' job, as not all of them are apt to design a syllabus. Graves insisted that teachers could follow a syllabus, but still could "make decisions about what to emphasize, leave out, augment, and review and how to practice, how much, with whom, and when" (1996, p. 4).

1.7.6. The Importance of Adaptation

Conventionally, materials' adaptation has proven its effectiveness at several levels in the field of language learning and teaching. Saranceni claimed that "adaptation is a vital step towards the production of innovative, effective and, most of all, learner-centered/ classroom-centered materials" (2003, p. 73). The appropriate use of adaptation helps updating and

developing instructional materials, including the syllabus, on the one hand. On the other hand, the material would be tailored to better fit the learners and the classroom context.

The benefits of adaptation do not only end at the instructional content level, but it exceeds it to the psychological level. McGrath (2002) maintained that even cognitive and behavioral processes of the learners could also be affected by adaptation because the latter would help enhancing motivation; consequently improving learners' level and learning outcomes (as cited in McDonough et al., 2013, p. 65). Learners are not the only ones to benefit from material's adaptation, Tomlinson and Masuhara (2006) argued that adaptation affects teachers likewise. The teaching task would be more exciting and teachers would be more motivated to do their best (as cited in McDonough et al., 2013, p. 65).

Conclusion

The main focus of this chapter is syllabus use and adaptation, it uncovered pretty much all prominent notions and aspects related to this vast field of research. It was unveiled that syllabus is an essential element in the teaching and learning transaction; it determines the roles of all agents involved. Moreover, the chapter has dedicated itself to the discussion of the content modification. It has shown the importance of the process of adaptation in learning and teaching especially in modern times.

Given the fact that English is receiving a growing interest, it became harder for language syllabuses to handle the new variables added to the equation. Hence, the chapter has shown that adaptation is now getting more popular; it is applied by teachers all over the globe to make the teaching input relevant to the learning context. It has also highlighted the role teachers play when in charge of adaptation; they stand closer to the learners and the context of

teaching. Therefore they could make the needed adjustment that would enhance the effects of instruction.

Chapter Two

Diagnostic Tests

Introduction

Language testing sparked the interest of many researchers due to its effective role with regard to various aspects of language teaching. Effective testing is considered as one of the key factors of success in the field of language teaching and learning. In particular, the diagnostic test as a type of testing is very useful for data gathering purposes. Language teachers generally make a kind of diagnosis for their learners to check their level of proficiency and language use prior to actual class instruction. The administered diagnostic test could reveal a good deal of information about learners that would affect the teaching and learning process, mainly as far as materials selection and adaptation are concerned.

This chapter, entitled 'diagnostic test', addresses the discussion of educational language tests, with an emphasis on the diagnostic one. In addition to definitions, basic classifications, criteria for evaluation and approaches to test design; the chapter examines the test construction process and the essential design steps. Moreover, the significance of tests use in an educational setting is provided. The second part of the chapter sheds light on the diagnostic test. It tackles the main qualities attributed to the diagnostic test, and the benefits its use brings. Besides, the chapter provides an insight into the application of diagnostic test in language classrooms. Finally, the chapter deals with the correlation between the syllabus content modification and the data the diagnostic test generates.

2.1. Testing and Assessment

Testing and assessment are integral parts of the teaching/learning process. Their interrelatedness makes them seem alike, while in fact, each concept has a distinctive meaning.

2.1.1. Definition of Assessment

The term assessment is very important in the educational field. According to Clapham (2000), assessment refers to the set of instruments and ways used to measure student's knowledge (p. 150). Miller, Linn, and Gronlund (2009, p. 26) added that assessment is not only a variety of procedures; but also a tool to specify and check learning goals attainment, and evaluate learners' progression. Pellegrino, Chudowsky, and Glaser (2001, p. 20) viewed assessment as a part of the educational system, it provides guidance for learners, teachers, and administrators to improve the quality of education. They went further saying that assessment embodies three main foundation stones, which are theories of language learning, views about the selection of materials and methods, as well as the principles of interpretation of the obtained results. Angelo (1995) introduced a more inclusive view about assessment. He argued that assessment is:

An ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance (as cited in Macayn, 2017, p. 1).

In the above definition, assessment is described as a procedure used to continuously collect information about learning progress throughout evaluating and monitoring students' learning. It uncovers the objectives of teaching and controls their execution.

Thereby, assessment is the process of monitoring students' learning over time. Throughout its grounded practices in the field of language teaching and evaluation, it enables teachers and administrators to target the objectives of the educational programs. Assessment facilitates the

interpretation of students' scores and performances to make necessary improvements in the quality of teaching.

2.1.2. Definition of Test

Generally speaking, the word test refers to the "procedures used to elicit certain behavior from which one can make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual" (Carroll, as cited in Bachman, 1990, p. 20); tests are then tools that help revealing information about people. In the scholastic field, a test is the equivalent of "a series of questions that you[test taker] must answer or actions that you must perform in order to show how much you know about a subject or how well you are able to do something" (Collins Online Dictionary, 2020). Likewise, Rahman (2016, p. 102) defined an educational test as means for checking test takers' level and abilities. A test, Rahman added; "demonstrates one's competence-incompetence, ability-inability; and that shows someone's position in the scale consisting of variables such as fail, pass, average, satisfactory, good, and excellent."

According to Allen, a language test is related to learners' degree of mastery of a given language. She argued, "Language testing is the practice and study of evaluating the proficiency of an individual in using a particular language effectively" (as cited in Fulcher, n.d, para. 1). Language test is "an instrument for measuring language abilities" (Douglas, 2014, p. 2), it helps eliciting how much of a given language a learner knows because what matters the most in learning/teaching languages is the learning outcome (Stern, 1983, p. 340).

Henceforth, a language test is a systemic evaluative device that examines the level of a particular skill or/and knowledge that has been reached by learners. It helps revealing examinees' capabilities using formal techniques.

2.1.3. The Difference between Assessment and Testing

After digging into the meanings of both terms assessment and test, it becomes easier to highlight the differences between them. Green (2004) asserted that the assessment is much wider than testing; it covers a "broader cycle of activities". Tests are concerned with scoring planned evaluations for students, and then making inferences about their performances; while assessment encompasses other activities like observations, assignments, and portfolios (p. 6-7).

Like Green, Brown (2003) stated that assessment is a set of techniques used to evaluate students amongst which are tests, hence testing is part of assessment. Tests are prepared and administered at particular time to check learners' linguistic accomplishment, with them being aware of the time of the test. Assessment, on the other hand, is an "ongoing process that encompasses much wider domain" it could be "incidental" or "intended" (p. 4).

2.2. Approaches to Test Design

The different language tests are constructed on the basis of various approaches and views, nevertheless each aims to assess learners' abilities and progress. A number of the existing approaches to test design are introduced and discussed below.

2.2.1. Direct versus Indirect Approaches to Testing

Hughes (2003, p. 17) distinguished between direct and indirect testing. He stated that direct testing is based on the assumption that test's objectives and learners' responses highly coincide. The direct relationship between the test and the participants appears when the performance reflects exactly the test's aims. Teachers are required to construct a test with realistic qualities to achieve authentic results. Rea (1985) stated that the direct approach requires the integration of "linguistic, situational, cultural, and affective constrains," which

cooperate in the process of communication. Ergo, direct language testing is characterized by high face validity and can draw out specific aspects of language behavior (as cited in Sujana, 2000, p. 6).

On the other hand, the indirect approaches to testing suggest that the best way to measure the target skill is to measure its sub skills; as there is a high probability that the mastery of sub skills may indicate the mastery of the major ones (Sujana, 2000, P. 6). The indirect testing allows test makers to test using a limited number of activities to gather evidence about a given skill. However, the data gathered might not clearly define the real participants' ability (Hughes, 2003, p. 18).

2.2.2. Discrete Point versus. Integrative Testing

Discrete approach refers to the type of testing in which each element within the test assesses specific ability (Hughes, 2003, p. 21). In his definition of discrete point tests, Madsen (1983) declared that "each item tests something very specific, such as a preposition or a vocabulary" (p, 9). In harmony with Madsen, Brown (1996, p. 29) stated that these tests "measure small bits and pieces of a language". He also added that the approach was built on the belief that language could be divided into several elements to be tested partly. The approach was highly criticized for language decontextualization and the lack of authenticity (Brown, 2003, p. 8).

The need for authentic and communicative tests led to the emergence of integrative testing. Heaton (1975, p. 16) asserted that the approach involves "the testing of language in context and thus concerned primarily with meaning and the total communicative effect of the discourse". For Brown, cloze tests and dictation are good examples of this approach, they best demonstrate the integration of the four skills which is required to assess the overall language

ability (2003, p. 8). Hughes declared that the integrative approach "requires the candidate to combine many language elements in the completion of a task" (2003, p. 21). He maintained that the discrete point tests are indirect tests, whereas the integrative testing is similar to direct method testing.

2.2.3. Communicative Language Testing

Due to the shift in the language teaching views, the communicative approach was introduced. It was inspired by Hymes's leading theory at that time, the communicative competence theory. The rise of communicative language teaching was accompanied by an increased interest in authentic tests' construction, the need for such kinds of tests was recognized and much research was done in the field since then (McNamara, 2000, p .16).

According to Carroll (1982, p.1), this approach to language testing is concerned primarily with the communicative use of language. It focuses on the measurement of learners' communicative proficiency in "real life or at least life-like" situations, it is interested in the appropriate use of language in interaction rather than the linguistic structure itself. Communicative testing targets learners' ability of using the suitable form, at the correct time, with specific addressees (Canale & Swain 1980, p. 27). Following Carroll, Kitao and Kitao held that the tasks in a communicative language test must reflect authentic activities. If the test is intended for receptive skills then the test must measure learners' ability to effectively interpret the written or oral materials. However, if the test is designed for the productive skills, the appropriateness of learners' utterances in relation to the context would be the object of measurement (1996, para. 2). So, the overall purpose of communicative language assessment is to put the communicative competence of language learners under test.

Therefore, designing communicative language tests is difficult, it involves a lot of work from the part of teachers; there are many details that require careful attention like the scoring, the types of activities, the time ... (Morrow, 2018, p. 3-5). This approach to assessment received its share of criticism throughout the years, yet it is still used.

2.2.4. Performance Based Assessment

Performance based assessment is "the logical choice in a well-developed, integrated, and pedagogically sound curriculum" (Gonzalez-LIoret, 2013, p. 170). Given that performance-based assessment is a "learner centered approach"; it got more attention from the language programs' makers. The approach is more oriented towards informal assessments rather than formal planned tests. Its main characteristic is the integration of two or more skills within an authentic task; so as to evaluate the learning progress (Brown, 2003, p. 10).

Nodoushan (2008, p. 1) explained that performance-based assessment is the type of assessment that "utilizes tasks conducted by students that enable them to demonstrate what they know about a given topic." It is interested in assessing the way learners would perform in relation to the teaching units presented. In accordance with Nodoushan, Naeim maintained that performance based assessment would reveal learners true level of proficiency in language use, as it provides "valid measure of people's real abilities, rather than their mere knowledge" (2014, p. 43).

2.3. Types of Language Tests

Language testing sphere offers a multitude of options for test makers to choose from, however; the language test's selection process is not done at random. The test makers need to decide upon the nature of the information they hope the test would generate. Besides, they have to set clear goals for the evaluation they are making, and finally choose the type of test

that best suits their use (Allison, 1999, p. 75). The following are the main types of language tests.

2.3.1. The Proficiency Test

A language proficiency test aims at measuring test takers proficiency level in language use, without any reference to specific language course or a given language teaching/ learning context (Dickins & Germaine, 1992, p. 47). Heaton (1975) similarly defined language proficiency test, focusing on its purpose of evaluating individuals' language proficiency no matter what kind of educational backgrounds they have (p.172). It independently assesses individuals' language command against a set of pre-established criteria.

Yet, proficiency tests are not that general after all because they are restricted by specific language requirements. Proficiency tests are not exclusively bound to the measurement of "general attainment", these tests could also assess "specific skills in the light of the language demands made latter on the student by a future course or job" (p.173). That is why proficiency tests are sometimes called "Specific Purposes (SP) tests" (Alderson, Clapham, & Wall, 1995, p. 12). Subsequently, this type of tests is seen as "measurement procedure aimed at determining the examinee's ability to receive or transmit information in the test language for some pragmatically useful purpose within a real-life setting" (Clark, 1975, p. 17). People could take proficiency tests not only to check their level, but also for personal, professional and educational purposes.

2.3.2. The Placement Test

As its name suggests, a language placement test is intended to place learners' into corresponding language classes based on their language proficiency level (Dickins & Germaine, 1992, p. 47). Holster and Lake (2012, p.24) asserted that placement tests "measure broad abilities such as aptitude, overall proficiency, or general language skill, rather than

being based on the content of particular class". In simple words, placement tests seek to anticipate students overall ability before admitted to a given program.

Brown (1996, p. 11) argued that the purpose of placement tests is to "reveal which students have more of, or less of, a particular knowledge or skill; so that students with similar levels of ability can be grouped together". He believes that placement tests could bring about a lot of benefits; creating homogenous classes by putting together learners with analogous language skills and levels would make language teaching easier. With similar needs to process, language teachers would not struggle in setting and achieving the learning goals (p. 21). Unlike proficiency tests, placement tests could be based on either a language instructional course or an independent language program (Alderson et al., 1995, p. 11).

2.3.3. The Achievement Test

Achievement or attainment tests are formal tests that aim at checking how much of a language course content learners have grasped (Heaton, 1975, p.172). Language achievement test, Dickins and Germaine claimed; would provide "specific information in the form of descriptive statements with which you [teacher] can plan for the next stage of teaching or for a classroom change of some kind" (1992, p. 47). The results of achievement test would help teachers make adjustments where necessary in their courses. Hughes stated that achievement tests are of two kinds: final achievement tests and progress achievement tests. He defined final achievement tests as:

Those administered at the end of a course of study. They may be written and administered by ministries of education, official examining broads, or by members of teaching institut-ions… the content of a final achievement test should be based directly on a detailed course syllabus or books and other materials used (2003, p. 12).

Final achievement tests are then based on a syllabus, and are constructed to check the course's long-term objectives' attainment, while progress achievement tests "are intended to measure the progress that students are making. They contribute to formative assessment … these tests too should relate to objectives," more specifically "a series of well-defined short-term objectives" (p. 14). The scope of evaluation of this test is less wide than that of the first type; it is related to objectives of smaller pieces of instruction like units.

2.3.4. The Aptitude Test

In very simple words, a language aptitude test is a test that "assesses aptitude for learning a language" (Heaton, 1975, p. 173). Nevertheless, since the word aptitude could mean a lot of things semantically speaking; defining this concept is of crucial importance for the understanding of aptitude tests. A language aptitude is both a linguistic and psychological construct that denotes "the specific talent for learning a foreign or second language" (Wen, Biedroń, & Skehan, 2017, p. 1). It is used interchangeably with other terms such as "talent, giftedness, language learning ability or even sometimes with learning expertise" (Ameringer, Green, Leisser, & Turker, 2018, p. 6). So, language aptitude refers to a natural inborn quality that represents the readiness of an individual to learn a given language.

Henceforth, a language aptitude test is used to identify those learners who are most likely to succeed in the language program. Heaton (1975, p. 173) emphasized that this test is "designed to measure the student's probable performance in a foreign language which he or she has not started to learn". In line with Heaton, Valette (1977, p. 5) maintained that the language aptitude test is "a prognostic measure", it predicts language learning success or failure before actual instruction begins. In other words, the aptitude test results could tell whether this learning experience would be pleasant for learners, allowing them to proceed quickly and easily from one level to the other or not.

2.3.5. The Diagnostic Test

Although the term diagnosis is commonly used in the field of language testing, only few diagnostic tests are constructed and developed (Heaton, 1975, p. 173). A diagnostic test is used to spot light learners areas of strength and weakness vis-a-vis language use and instructional goals, and helps planning remedial measures where needed. The more specific skills the diagnostic test deals with, the harder its construction gets (Alderson et al., 1995, p. 12).

The ultimate aim of diagnostic tests according to Hughes (2003, p. 15) is to "create profiles of the student's ability" in order to facilitate and guide learning and instruction. Nevertheless, unless a considerable number of learners face the same problem, teachers would not make eliminating a given language proficiency problem their priority. Though individual problems are not completely disregarded; teachers' main interest is the collective errors learners make (Heaton, 1975, p. 173). Usually, these tests are administered at the onset of classroom instruction. Still, teachers could administer a diagnostic test at the middle of the course to check on the progress of learners (Brown, 1996, p. 15).

2.4. Criteria for Tests Evaluation

In order for a language test to be effective, it needs to adhere to the following principles.

2.4.1. Practicality

Bachmen and Palmer (1996, p. 36) stated that practicality "is a matter of the extent to which the demands of the particular test specifications can be met within the limits of existing resources". In this regard, they have classified the addressed resources into three types: human resources, material resources and time. Human resources include assessment task creators, the scorers, and the test administrators; whereas material resources include the

testing environment, and equipments like test papers and videotapes. The element of time has to do with the period of test administration. Brown (2003) provided four criteria for a practical test. A practical test:

- is not excessively expensive,

- stays within appropriate time constrains,

- is relatively easy to administer, and

- has a scoring/evaluation procedure that is specific and time-efficient (p. 19)

Jin (2018, p. 2) summarized the aforementioned points, saying that a practical test is related to the resources put under test designers and teachers' control. For the purposes of constructing, administering, and scoring a test that will provide valuable information about teaching and learning.

2.4.2. Reliability

Another important quality an effective language test must have is reliability. It is often described as "consistency of measurement" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 19). Brown's definition of reliability provides an explanation for this notion of consistency in measurement. Brown held that a test, as a tool of measurement; should "give the same results every time it measures (if it is used under the same conditions), should measure exactly what it is supposed to measure (not something else), and should be practical to use" (1996, p. 185). This entails that reliability could be achieved only if a test maintains scores stability, precision, and suitability across testing situations. On his part, Henning (1987) provided a more inclusive version of consistency in scoring. When test scores reflect "similar results when measurement is repeated on different occasions or with different instruments or by different persons" the test is said to be reliable (p. 73).

Various factors could influence a test's degree of reliability varying from learner-related factors, rater-related factors, environment-related or administrative- related factors, to test-related factors. Firstly, "fluctuations in the learner" diminishes the test's reliability. Sometimes, when teachers administer a test on separate occasions for the same learners they would not obtain consistent scores. If learners Know about the test's date, received some kind of feedback on their first test, or have forgotten about the previous test experience; the scores of similar tests would greatly differ. Consequently, the tests' reliability would be lost. The psychological and physiological state of the learner is another factor that affects the reliability of the results. Changes in examinees' mood and instability caused by boredom, fatigue, or sickness affect the way they perform on tests. So, the test results would not accurately reflect the true level of proficiency of these learners. Secondly, the subjectivity or more often the absence of scoring criteria leaves space for human errors from the part of test-raters. Thirdly, the circumstances and test's administration conditions may positively or negatively affect reliability. Fourthly, the quality of the test itself also weakens the test's reliability. Problems with instructions, time and materials would result in the unreliability of the test. All these different factors present a real threat to tests' reliability, but when controlled they would help enhancing it (Henning, 1987, p. 75-80).

2.4.3. Authenticity

A test authenticity constitutes for Fulcher and Davidson "the relationship between test task characteristics, and the characteristics of tasks in the real world" (2007, p. 15). Saying that a given language test is authentic means that the language of its tasks matches actual language use patterns. In a similar fashion, Davies et al. (1999, p. 13) referred to an authentic test as the test that "mirrors as exactly as possible the content and skills under test". On their part, Bachman and Palmer (1996, p. 23) defined authenticity as "the degree of correspondence of

the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a target language task." The language in the test should mimic the real life target linguistic behaviors.

Brown provided a list of potential characteristics of an authentic test. The following is the list he provided:

- The language in the test is as natural as possible.

- Items are contextualized rather than isolated.

- Topics are meaningful (relevant, interesting) for the learner.

- Some thematic organization to items is provided, such as though a story line or episodes.

- Tasks represent, or closely approximate, real world tasks (2003, p. 28).

2.4.4. Validity

Many scholars provided similar definitions for the word validity. For instance, Brown defined validity as "the degree to which a test measures what it claims, or purports, to be measuring" (1996, p. 213). Kane went saying that test validity involves "an evaluation of the plausibility and appropriateness of the proposed interpretations and uses of test scores (2012, p. 34).While Hunning asserted that validity refers to "appropriateness of a given test or any of its component parts as a measure of what it is purposed to measure" (1987, p. 170).

What is common to all of these definitions is that a valid test is the one that its purposes parallel its outcomes. In this case, test scores are the basis of inferences and decisions made about and for learners.

There are several ways to estimate the validity of a test including content validity, criterion related validity, construct validity, consequential validity, and face validity (Brown, 2003, p. 22). Unless a language test demonstrates one of the following, it must not be called valid.

First, content validity refers to the degree to which the test content adequately represents the skill it intends to measure. It is about the extent to which the elements and activities in the test align with the instructional objectives of the language program (Chapelle, 1999, p. 260). Second, if a "person's performance on a criterion measure can be estimated from that person's performance on the assessment procedure being validated" (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2001, p. 152), then the test is criterion validated. Criterion validity represents how well a measure correlates to an established standard or criterion (Brown, 2003, p. 24).

Third, a language test is construct valid when the performance on that test could be taken as a meaningful measure for examinees' language proficiency. This is related to a test's ability to measure the underlying interrelated constructs of a given skill (Bachmen & Palmer, 1996, p. 21). Fourth, consequential validity describes the intended and unintended subsequent results of an assessment or a measure. The consequences could be observed in learners' performances and the social consequences of test use (Chapelle, 1999, p. 262). A final type of validity is face validity, it examines the judgments of test-takers towards the test (Brown, 2003, p. 26). Consequently, it is not investigated through formal procedures like the other types of validity, it involves viewing the relevance and consistency of the test in the eyes of its takers. The criteria a face valid test must have are:

- A well constructed, expected format with familiar tasks,

- A test that is clearly doable within the allotted time limit,

- Items that are clear and uncomplicated,

- Tasks that relate to their course work (content validity),

- A difficulty level that presents a reasonable challenge (p. 27).

2.4.5. Washback

In simple words, washback or backwash is "the influence of testing on teaching and learning" (Cheng & Curtis, 2004, p. 4). It describes "the effect that tests have on what goes on in the classroom" (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007, p. 74). Washback reflects the positive and/or negative changes test results could bring about for both learners and teachers (p. 221). Likewise, Messick (1996, p. 241) claimed that washback refers to "the extent to which the introduction and use of a test influences language teachers and learners to do things they would not otherwise do that promote or inhibit language learning"

However, test washback and test impact are not equivalents. As far as the scope of influence is concerned, Wall argued that impact is " … any of the effects that a test may have on individuals, policies or practices, within the classroom, the school, the educational system or society as a whole". However, the test washback is seen as "the effects of tests on teaching and learning" (as cited in Cheng & Curtis, 2004, p. 4).

2.5. Steps for Effective Test Construction

Constructing an effective language test that would accurately assess the learners' knowledge and the learning objectives is a challenge for every language teacher. According to Pellegrino et al. (2001, p.7), "assessment is a complex process that involves numerous components best characterized as iterative and interdependent, rather than linear and sequential". Dickins and Germaine also believe that the process of testing is very demanding. It requires decision about the type of the test, channel of testing as well as stages of testing (1992, p. 42). The comings are the main stages for test construction.

2.5.1. Setting Test's Objectives

Brown described the selection of the test objectives as an organized process that involves careful thinking and a lot of time. At the end of any course of instruction, teachers would have a clear idea about what students are supposed to "know" and what they are "able to do" in terms of language skills and knowledge. He also added that depending on the course objectives, teacher selects clear, defined, and measurable objectives for testing (2003, p. 49). Mileff maintained that "once language learning objectives have been identified and defined, the next task is to select those we[test makers] wish to test" (2013, p. 194) . For teachers to be more objective, the objectives of the tests must be selected before the test design starts.

Further, Mileff proposed two main approaches for objective selection which are random and stratified sampling. Random procedures can be used when "all objectives are equally important", here there is no chance of neglecting any important objective. Whereas the stratified one is used when there is difference in the degree of importance of course objectives. In this case, the objectives would be "identified and then organized according to some criterion of importance" (2013, p. 194).

2.5.2. Writing Test's Specifications

Brown defined test's specifications as the "blue print" for creating test items. Specs provide an official statement about what to evaluate and how to evaluate it as they encompasses the test's general outline, the selected skills to be tested, and the items' type and organization (2003, p. 50). Fulcher (2010, p. 127) considered test specifications as "the most detailed level of test architecture", it must reflect both the purposes and the objectives of the course. For Hughes, (2003, p. 59) test specifications should contain "information on content, test structure, timing, medium/channel, techniques to be used, criteria levels of performance and scoring procedures". Fulcher and Davidson (2007) described test specifications as:

[E]xplanatory documents for the creation of test tasks. Specs tell us the nuts and bolts of how to phrase the test items, how to structure the test layout, how to locate the passages, and how to make a host of difficult choices as we prepare test materials. More importantly they tell us the rationale behind the various choices that we make (p. 52).

Briefly, Test's specs refer to the sum of information from and about the test's content that the teacher selects and organizes prior to test construction. This step is crucial given that it represents a preliminary basis for the test, and allows for logical and consistent decisions about test's item design to be made.

2.5.3. Planning and Designing Test Tasks

Skehan asserted that the choice of language learning tasks should be designed to elicit different types of performances (as cited in Elder and Iwashita, 2005, p. 220). A language task is defined as a "device that allows the language tester to collect evidence. This evidence is a response from the test taker, whether this is a tick in a box or an extended contribution to a dialogue" (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007, p. 62). When devising test tasks, Welch (2006, p. 304) claimed that not all objectives chosen before would take part in the actual test. Some of the objectives could be eliminated by the test makers because of "content and cognitive demand coverage, economy, precision, response time, development and scoring costs, delivery constraints, and feasibility."

After designing test tasks, teachers must make a final revision to the content and test's instruction. They might even take the test themselves to check whether the test's duration is sufficient for their learners. This final test revision may result in changes and modifications to the test; some items could be added, omitted, or rewritten (Brown, 2003, p. 54-55).

2.5.4. Test's Scoring and Feedback

Test makers must specify "a clear description to the scoring criteria, to ensure that the intended purpose of the test is consistent with the appropriateness of the scoring". Teachers may follow different approaches to assess students' abilities; they could opt for either an analytic or holistic scorning criteria. The analytic scoring gives detailed information about the different features of the test then collects them together to identify areas of weakness. Whereas, the holistic scoring provides a general judgment in the form of a single scoring, teachers will not emphasize the specific abilities, but rather the general ones (Welch, 2006, p. 312-313).

According to Askew and Lodge, Feedback is "all dialogues to support learning in both formal and informal situation" (2000, p. 1). Brookhart (2008, p. 2) suggested that Feedback includes concert and useful information for students to help them in their learning, it addresses both "cognitive" and "motivational factors". The chief goal of the test is to identify learners' weaknesses and provide effective feedback to help them solve these learning problems. Yet, if tests were of "poor quality" and "the feedback' lacks immediate relevance", feedback would lose its effectiveness (Alderson, 2005, p. 4).

2.6. The Importance of Language Tests

Broadly said, any type of assessment used in the classroom must generate feedback that would help bettering the learning and teaching situation (Pellegrino et al., 2001, p. 29). In conformity with Pellegrino, Madsen (1983) asserted that the use of tests would improve both learning and teaching. He proposed that a language test could help learners in two ways. First, it would motivate learners and track down their progress offering them a sense of accomplishment. Learners would feel good about themselves and will develop a positive

attitude towards their language classes. Consequently, learning would become a more pleasant experience for them. Second, it would highlight the language elements to further work on and keep learners goal-oriented. With occasional testing and teacher's constructive feedback, learners would have more control over their learning and progress (p. 3-4).

Language tests could bring benefits for teachers too; Madsen asserted that tests help teachers check how effective their teaching is, and make needed modifications (p. 5). Well-constructed language tests play three important roles; Valette (1977, p. 3) maintained that tests "define course objectives, they stimulate student progress, and they evaluate class achievement". On his side, Fulcher had a more professional orientation. He discussed the transitional role language tests play in education and employment; calling tests "gatekeeping tools" which promote fairness and grant equal opportunities for all individuals (2010, p. 1).

2.7. The Diagnostic Test

Bachman (1990, p. 60) insisted that "virtually any language test has some potential for providing diagnostic information"; all language tests could offer diagnostic feedback. However, very little work was done on real diagnostic tests (Alderson, 2005, p. 13). The Diagnostic test generally focuses on both the main and sub skills of the language. As a result, designing a test that exactly pinpoints students' strengths and weaknesses is a major challenge to every language teacher (p. 7).

2.7.1. The Characteristics of the Diagnostic Test

The absence of a clear cut between what constitutes a diagnostic test and the other test types led test developers to disregard it and show little interest in its development. What makes a test a diagnostic one is not also clearly defined. In this regard, Alderson avowed, "the definitions of 'diagnostic test' frequently overlap with definitions of other types of test, and

there is a degree of confusion in the literature about what exactly diagnostic tests are and how they should be constructed" (2005, p. 13).

In a parallel view, Brown (1996. p.17) stated that for a test to be diagnostic, it should adhere to certain qualifications. It must be criterion-referenced emphasizing feasible objectives. It could be administered either at the beginning to decide areas of weakness requiring further attention and work, or at the middle of the course to check students' progress. Of course, those decisions should be based upon the objectives of the program. The diagnostic test should also provide individualized information about each and every student. Alderson too proposed a set of characteristics that distinguish diagnostic tests from other types of tests. He mentioned that:

1. Diagnostic tests are designed to identify strengths and weaknesses in a learner's knowledge and use of language.

2. Diagnostic tests are more likely to focus on weaknesses than on strengths.

3. Diagnostic tests should lead to remediation in further instruction.

4. Diagnostic tests should enable a detailed analysis and report of responses to items or tasks.

5. Diagnostic tests thus give detailed feedback which can be acted upon.

6. Diagnostic tests provide immediate results, or results as little delayed as possible after test-taking.

7. Diagnostic tests are typically low-stakes or no-stakes.

8. Because diagnostic tests are not high-stakes, they can be expected to involve little anxiety or other affective barriers to optimum performance.

9. Diagnostic tests are based on content which has been covered in instruction, or which will be covered shortly (2005, p. 11).

2.7.2. The Implementation of Diagnostic Test in Language Classrooms

As a matter of fact, there are very few instructions and information on "how diagnosis should be appropriately conducted, what content diagnostic tests should have, what theoretical basis they should rest on, and how their use should be validated" (Alderson, 2005, p. 10). The diagnostic test has always been characterized by "the scarcity and brevity of its treatment, the lack of exemplification and advice on the construction" (p.13). This made it relatively hard if not impossible for teachers to properly implement diagnostic tests in the language classroom, and benefit the most from their use.

Brown asserted that while conducting needs analysis, two major challenges should be taken into consideration. First, the focus of analysis should be divided between students and other possible sources of information including teachers, context, and administration. This entails that many parts have a saying in determining and dictating the syllabus' content, which would necessarily affect learning objectives and testing respectively. Second, linguistic needs and the nonlinguistic factors including fatigue, stress, motivation, and learning styles should be both taken into consideration while conducting a needs analysis using a diagnostic test. Taking linguistic and psychological factors into account is necessary, since they would create accurate learners' diagnostic profiles. Otherwise a good deal of information would be lost risking the quality of diagnosis (1996, p. 270-271). Test makers and teachers generally can overcome these problems throughout using tests' results to achieve the objectives of the course. In this sense, Brown suggested that:

The tests can then help teachers to investigate the degree to which the objectives are appropriate for the students in question before investing the time and energy needed to adopt, develop, or adapt the materials needed to teach those objectives (1996, p. 273).

In addition to enabling teachers to check on learners' progress and current proficiency level, language tests could be used as a tool for examining the degree of fit between the course's objectives and learners' needs. The diagnostic test would help teachers validate the objectives and make adjustment accordingly. Woodward (2001, p.16) emphasized the role of diagnostic test in language teaching classes. She also declared that following a certain syllabus would not prevent teachers from using the valuable diagnostic information they have collected from their learners. Teachers would rely on this diagnostic information to adjust teaching methods and select suitable types of assessments and testing. Woodward considered diagnostic feedback as "the most natural sequence of all in teaching". It could influence initial course planning as well as subsequent courses preparation in the future.

2.7.3. The Importance of the Diagnostic Test

The very basic and well-known purpose of diagnostic testing is "to make diagnostic inferences about learners' strengths and weaknesses in skills of interest, and to utilize them for positive change in learning" (Jang, 2012, p. 121). The diagnostic test as a type of assessment for learning helps determine learners' level, learning ends, and the best ways to reach these ends. Consequently, diagnostic tests have the potentials to offer significant information that teachers use to plan or modify instructional content (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 28). By doing so, Diagnostic tests promote and facilitate the language learning and teaching task (Nikolov, 2017, p. 251). When administered at earlier sessions of instruction, Alderson (2005, p. 5) assumed that diagnostic tests would be useful "for placement purposes (assigning students to appropriate classes), for selection (deciding which students to admit to a particular course), for planning of courses of instruction or for identifying areas where remedial instruction is necessary".

According to Black and Wiliam (1998, p. 17) the diagnostic test feedback is very important in ameliorating the language learning outcomes. Zhao (2013) suggested that diagnostic test results would draw learners' attention towards what needs improvement and raise their autonomy. Because spotting learners weaknesses would help them direct their efforts more effectively towards improving their language proficiency level, it would be a type of self-correcting ability building test. In addition, it would inspire lessons and objectives' planning. Administrators could also make use of diagnostic test feedback in making decisions about language programs in their institutions; especially in relation to planning and objectives' setting (p. 43).

2.7.4. The Role of Diagnostic Test's Results on Syllabus Content Adaptation

Because of their tremendous effect on the instructional, educational, and even social level; diagnostic testing is more required to accurately assess learners' level and guarantee the success of instruction (Jang & Wagner, 2013, p. 706-707). Long (2005, p. 45) claimed that diagnostic tests administered at the onset of language programs would reveal valuable information about learners to teachers.

Students with "different socio-linguistic and cultural backgrounds are most likely to approach task differently, which makes it difficult for assessors to anticipate all pathways" (Jang, 2012, p. 130). Yet, teachers could trace most of these pathways to existing similar language learning patterns (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 27). Brown accented that with similar accurate data from the students; "adopting, developing, or adapting materials" would be facilitated. With the careful analysis of the collected diagnostic data from the students, the syllabus would be tailored to better fit the learning and learners' situation. The quantity and quality of information gathered from the diagnosis give teachers a clear idea about how much adjustments must be done. They would know whether "adaptation would be

a minor undertaking or a major project" requiring either slight modifications or creation of suitable materials. Decision about how much to adapt, what to adapt, where to introduce new materials if any were adopted, and were exactly to insert them in the adapted syllabus is determined by the diagnostic test's results (1996, p. 275-276).

Conclusion

This chapter has uncovered the key aspects and processes underlying the domain of testing and assessment. This step is of paramount importance in order to eliminate prevailing confusions in teaching/learning setting. Then the chapter has committed itself to the least explored type of tests, the diagnostic test. It has closely examined this test and revealed its distinctive features, which differentiate it from other language tests. Since the former has received minimal attention from researchers, it has been of crucial significance to go through its importance and role in language classrooms. It was found that the diagnostic test plays a vital role in the teaching and learning process. Although it is most of the times overlooked and under developed unlike other kinds of tests, it is a powerful tool for both teachers and learners when appropriately used.

Besides, the chapter has sought to investigate the relationship between the use of diagnostic test's results and subsequent adaptations and modifications of syllabus's content. Theoretically speaking, the effective use of its results would lead to major changes and improvements to the quality of learning. Diagnostic test administration offers valuable data that affects the instructional content and empowers adjustments necessary for a given teaching and learning situation.

Chapter Three

Field Investigation

Introduction

As the theoretical examination of both variables has been already dealt with in the two first chapters, this chapter addresses the practical side of the research. It endeavors to explore the relationship between the diagnostic test feedback and syllabus content adaptation. Additionally, the third chapter deals with the methodology and tools of the research. It starts with defining the methodological framework and the sample group. Then, it describes the questionnaire administered to secondary school teachers of English and discusses the process of administration. Moreover, it provides an analysis and examination of the results and sums up the findings of the current study. Finally, the chapter affords some pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and some suggestions for further research.

3.1. The Research Method

This research seeks to find out the role the diagnostic test results play in syllabus adaptation by means of teachers' questionnaire; the research follows the descriptive quantitative method. First, the descriptive method was chosen to explore the "conditions or relationships that exist; practices that prevail; beliefs, points of views, or attitudes that are held; processes that are going on; effects that are being felt; or trends that are developing" (Best, 1970, as cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 205). Besides, the choice of the questionnaire itself permits to generate numerical data that could be easily interpreted and analyzed in order to reach a full understanding of the phenomenon (Mujis, 2004, p. 1).Hence, The descriptive quantitative method best matches the research aims and orientations.

3.2. The Secondary School Teachers' Questionnaire

3. 2. 1. Population of the Study

Secondary school English language teachers from all over Algeria constituted the sample for this research. With no preliminary conditions or specific requirements, 206 Algerian secondary school English teachers took part in the study. The only common thing to all participants is knowledge about second year English syllabus and more or less familiarity with teaching, students, and the instructional materials in quest. They are assumed to be conscious about students' needs, the use of diagnostic test, and syllabus adaptation. So, they could help provide larger information and broader vision about the role of diagnostic test results in syllabus content adaptation.

3.2.2. Description of Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was prompted by the data gathered from the theoretical part of the study. Being exclusively the only tool for investigation, the online questionnaire was hoped to help either validate or reject the research hypothesis. It is composed of three basic sections with a total of twenty questions, the questions are mostly of a close-ended nature since multiple choice and yes/no format dominated, which would facilitate both the answering and analysis. Nevertheless, there are few questions that allow for short responses, merely justifications. This would minimize ambiguities and generate accurate clear responses.

The first part of the questionnaire functions as teachers' profile builder and an eliminator, it aims at gathering background knowledge information about the teachers like the teaching period, and excluding responses by teachers with no experience with second year teaching respectively. The second part of the questionnaire starts from Q 4 to Q 12, it is intended to explore teachers' views about second year teaching syllabus and the process of syllabus adaptation. It deals mainly with questions concerning the evaluation of the second year

syllabus, inadequacies, reasons and techniques of adaptation. The third division of the questionnaire comprises the questions from Q 13 to Q 20. This last section deals with teachers' use of diagnostic test and its different application purposes. It also addresses the relationship between the diagnostic test and syllabus content adaptation.

3.2.3. The Administration of the Questionnaire

Due to corona virus pandemic and the lockdown procedures, the questionnaire was only administered in its online format. Firstly, because the study covers all Algerian secondary schools, which made it impossible to use and distribute the hard copy. Secondly, with the forced vacation and the closing of schools at the end of March, the use of online format became a necessity. The questionnaire was distributed and posted on Facebook Algerian English teaching and secondary school related groups from July 9th, 2020 to August 10th, 2020. Unfortunately, the number of the respondents did not reach the expectations held nor the required number for the research validity. Though many people were very helpful by suggesting names of teachers or sharing the questionnaire with teachers they know, only 206 teachers were kind enough to answer the questions.

Section One: General Information

Question One: From which Wilaya are you?

Table 3.1

Teacher Geographical Placement

The Wilaya	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Adrar	3	1.45%
Chelf	6	2.91%
Laghouat	2	0.97 %
Oum El Bouaghi	7	3.39 %

Batna	5	2.42 %
Bejaia	7	3.39 %
Biskra	9	4.36 %
Bechar	0	0 %
Blida	6	2.91 %
Bouira	1	0.48 %
Tamanrasset	0	0 %
Tebessa	5	2.42 %
Tlemcen	0	0 %
Tiaret	2	0.94 %
Tizi Ouzou	3	1.45 %
Algeirs	4	1,94 %
Djelfa	0	0 %
Jijel	1	0.48 %
Setif	9	4.36 %
Saida	0	0 %
Skikda	11	5.33%
Sidi Bel Abbes	1	0.48 %
Annaba	2	0.91 %
Guelma	22	10.67 %
Constantine	7	3.39 %
Medea	0	0 %
Mostaganem	2	0.91 %
M'sila	0	0 %
Mascara	0	0 %

Ouargla	8	3.88 %
Oran	2	0.91 %
El Bayadh	1	0.48 %
Illizi	0	0 %
Bordj Bou Arreridj	7	3.39 %
Boumerdes	1	0.48 %
El Taref	4	1.94 %
Tindouf	2	0.97 %
Tissemsilt	0	0 %
El Oued	5	2.42 %
Khanchela	9	4.36 %
Souk Ahras	15	7.28 %
Tipaza	1	0.48 %
Mila	9	4.36 %
Ain Delfa	0	0 %
Naama	1	0.48 %
Ain Timouchent	3	1.45 %
Ghardaia	13	6.31 %
Relizane	10	4.85 %
Total	206	100 %

According to the findings presented in table 3.1, 206 teachers from 37 Algerian wilayas participated in this study. The majority of teachers are from Guelma (10.67 %), Souk ahras (7.28%), Ghardaia (6.31%), and Skikda (5.33%). In total, no responses were collected from 11 wilayas, which are Bechar, Tamanrasset, Tlemcen, Djelfa, Saida, Medea, M'sila, Mascara,

Illizi, Tissemsilt, and Ain Defla. The rate of participation of the rest of the wilayas ranges from 0.48% to 4.85%. Having this kind of regions diversity would help collecting a variety of views and perspectives.

Question Two: How long have you been teaching English?

Table 3.2

Teachers' Teaching Experience

Years of Teaching	Number of Teachers	Percentage
1-5 years	72	34.95 %
6 - 10 years	49	23.78 %
11- 20 years	68	33 %
More than 20 years	17	8.25 %
Total	206	100 %

According to the results displayed in table 3.1, Nearly two thirds of teachers (34.95 %) stated that they have been teaching English for less than 5 years. 33 % of teachers claimed that they have been teaching English for 11 to 20 years. Whereas 23.78 % of the informants declared that they taught English form 6 to 10 years, and only 17 teachers (8.25 %) said that they have more than 20 years teaching experience. The obtained results imply that the sample of the study could be divided into novice, experienced, and very experienced teachers. In all cases, their points of view would be of high importance and of a great value to the research due to their academic differences and their various teaching serving times.

Question Three: Which levels have you taught?

Table 3.3

Levels' Taught by Teachers

Level	Number of Teachers	Percentage
First Year	129	62.62 %
Second Year	206	100 %
Third Year	144	69.9 %

The table indicates that the whole sample (100 %) used to teach second year classes. Chiefly because responses from teachers who had never taught second year classes were eliminated, which would help perfectly examine our variables and keep the second year secondary schools context teachers under the light. 62.62 % and 69.9 % of our informants teach first-year and third year pupils respectively. This entails that the sample has knowledge of Algerian secondary school different teaching syllabuses, and they can accurately evaluate the second year syllabus by reflecting on the syllabus itself and the other levels' syllabuses.

Section Two: Syllabus Content Adaptation

Question Four: How could you evaluate your teaching syllabus?

Table 3.4

Teachers' Evaluation of Second Year Syllabus

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentage (%)
Very good.	12	5.82 %
Good.	64	31.06 %
Average	105	50.97 %
Not good at all	22	10.67 %

Total	206	100 %

As it is shown in table 3.4, More than half of the teachers (50.97%) claimed that the second year syllabus is average. According to 31.06% of the sample declared that it is good,. However, some believe it needs to be improved as while 10.67 % of the population said that the syllabus is not good at all. Only 5.82% of the teachers opted for very good. Subsequently, the current syllabus seems to have some positive aspects. Yet, the majority of teachers seem to face serious difficulties when it comes to implementing the syllabus in their classrooms.

Question Five: Do you think that the syllabus reflects your pupils' needs and fits your learning situation?

Table 3.5

The Syllabus's Reflection of Learning Needs

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Yes	60	29.13 %
No	146	70.87 %
Total	206	100 %

As it is shown in table 3.5, 29.13% of teachers agreed that the syllabus reflects the pupil's' needs and fits the learning situation. They justified their answer by saying that the syllabus includes interrelated topics and promotes experiments and voluntary work. It encompasses all the parameters pupils need to improve their language proficiency and communicative skills. Moreover, it reflects and addresses the pupils' individual differences. Some went further saying that the quality of being detached and independent from other levels syllabuses made it easier to present content to second year pupils. Nevertheless, the vastest majority (70.87%) think that the syllabus does not reflect the pupils' needs. The justifications for their answers could be summarized as follows:

- It is grammar based and lacks the interactive tasks, thus it neglects communicative and cultural competence.

- It is rigid, unauthentic, and does not account for pupils' level of proficiency and preferences.

- Teachers are constantly in need to improvise and introduce tasks and texts that mirror the syllabus objectives and fit the learning needs and situation.

- Its topics are unrelated and there is no relevance between the themes of the three years or even at the level of the same year itself.

- It is not updated and lacks motivational elements that the 21st century digital generation would be attracted to.

- It neglects the teaching and the learning situation (the tradition, the region and the climate).

Question Six: What do you think are the main inadequacies with the current syllabus?

Table 3.6

The Main Inadequacies of Second Year Syllabus

Options	Number	Percentage
The syllabus is too general	55	26.69 %
It offers little guidance about how to deal with different target pupils	70	33.98 %
The learning content is not always updated and authentic.	144	69.9 %
Little or much time allocated to given teaching units.	78	37.86 %
Other	24	11.65 %

As it is shown in table 3.6, the main problem the majority of teachers (69.9%) encounter with second year secondary school syllabus is the lack of authenticity and updated content. The inadequate time distribution ranked second with 37.86 % of teachers' votes. Whereas 33.98% of the respondents believe that the syllabus gives no information about the way of dealing with the teaching classes' heterogeneity. Fifty five teachers (26.9%) think that the generality of the syllabus is problematic. Other teachers (11.65%) suggested other problems like the absence of motivational and interesting elements to the pupils, no clear objectives, long content, and few interactive tasks. Though a considerable number of teachers asserted that the syllabus is good or very good (table 3.4), no one seems to disagree that the syllabus has problems. The analysis of this part indicates that teachers accord a considerable amount of attention to their pupils' needs and preferences as they have mostly chosen the problems that are related directly to pupils themselves and affect them.

Question Seven: How important do you consider syllabus adaptation?

Table 3.7

The Importance of Syllabus Content Adaptation

Options	Number	Percentage
Very important	150	72.82%
Important	45	21.84%
Little important	8	3.88%
Not important at all	3	1.46%
Total	206	100%

The analysis of teachers' views on adaptation has shown that the vastest majority values the process and knows its significance. 72.82% of teachers went for very important, while 21.84% believe it is important. Not surprisingly, some teachers considered adaptation to be

from little important to not important at all with 3.88% and 1.46% respectively because they believe the syllabus is flawless; this goes in consistency with the results of (table 3.4). Table 3.8 then accents the fact that second year syllabus contains some problems, and that teachers try to work on these problems using adaptation.

Question Eight: How often do you adapt your syllabus content?

Table 3.8

The Frequency of syllabus Adaptation

Options	Number	Percentage
Always	59	28.64%
Often	100	48.54%
Sometimes	40	19.42%
Rarely	4	1.94%
Never	3	1.46%
Total	206	100%

For more elaboration about adaptation, teachers where asked about the frequency they adapt. 48.54% of the respondents said they use adaptation frequently, while 28.64% of the teachers reported that they use it continuously. Additionally, 19.42% of the sample adapt occasionally. The majority of respondents then opt for adaptation with different rates to handle instructional content inadequacies as very few have answered rarely or never, 1.94% and 1.46% of teachers respectively, which presupposes teachers' awareness of the importance

of adaptation. This also suggests that the more problems are in the syllabus the more teachers opt for adaptation and vice versa, there is a kind of proportionality between the two.

Question Nine: For which reasons do you adapt?

Table 3.9

The Reasons for Syllabus Content Adaptation

Options	Number	Percentage
Satisfy pupils ' needs and interests.	168	81.55%
Adhere to administrative and institutional recommendations.	26	12.62%
Achieve teaching objectives.	140	67.96%
Create or develop authentic materials.	96	46.6%
Enhance learning.	119	57.76%
Others	20	9.7%

According to the data displayed above,   81.55% of teachers agreed that the main aim of syllabus adaptation is the production of suitable learning content that meets pupils ' needs, which conforms with the previous conclusions (table 3.5). With 67.96%, the second major reason for adaptation is attainment of teaching objectives. In third position comes enhancing learning with 57.76%. The creation of authentic updated content with 46.6% stands in the fourth place. More than tenth of the population (12.62%) claimed they adapt merely to follow administrative and ministerial recommendations. Other teachers, 9.7% of the population precisely, added further reasons such as matching up and following new trends and improvements in the field of teaching and learning languages, and making

learning an interesting activity. Hence, the results imply that teachers adapt for a bunch of important reasons.

Question Ten: When adapting syllabus content, what techniques do you usually apply?

Table 3. 10

The Adaptation Techniques Used by Teachers

Options	Number	Percentage
Addition.	51	24.75%
Deletion.	40	19.41%
Modification.	75	36.4%
Simplification.	79	38.34%
Reordering.	34	16.5%
All of the above.	125	60.67%

Table 3.10 demonstrates that teachers are familiar with adaptation techniques and use these techniques for a variety of purposes. As shown in the table, the greatest majority of teachers (60.67%) use all existing adaptation techniques when adapting, while the remaining 39.33% teachers have different preferences. Sometimes, teachers find themselves obliged to either modify or simplify content to pupils, which is the case of some of these participants as 36.4% and 38.34% of teachers opt for these techniques respectively. Amongst participants, 51 (24.75%) teachers go for inserting new elements in the syllabus. Only 19.41% of teachers said they may remove elements from the syllabus if needed. It is worth mentioning that the majority of teachers that opt for deletion are experienced ones based on one on one analysis of individual's answers. Compared to other adaptation techniques, reordering is the least popular

(16.5%) due to the fact that the syllabus is organized into units with consistent and smooth transactions from one lesson to the other.

Question Eleven: What are the difficulties you face while adapting syllabus content?

Table 3. 11

The Difficulties Faced with Syllabus Adaptation.

Options	Number	Percentage
Lack of experience and training with using and modifying syllabus	66	32.03%
Restrictions by the Ministry of Education.	120	58.25%
Unfamiliarity with the pupils and learning situation.	37	17.96%
Other.	35	16.99%

The analysis of the table 3.11 shows that more than half of the participants (58.25%) believe that the constraints by the Ministry make adaptation difficult. This implies that the ministry of Education severely controls the syllabus implementation process which in turn urges teachers to use the instructional elements as they are provided. Additionally, 66 teachers argued that their lack of experience with syllabus use and adaptation stands as an obstacle for content modification. So, they acknowledge the value of training and experiences for the improvement of their capacity of implementing and modifying the teaching aspects within the syllabus. Another difficulty 17.96% of the population avowed to encounter is the lack of situational knowledge and information about pupils. This suggests that teaching experience plays an important role in making adaptation.

Amongst the 17.96% of teachers who chose other, 12 said they have absolutely no problem with syllabus adaptation, they do whatever they feel would work. Here are some other difficulties proposed by other teachers:

- Keeping up with modern pupils is getting harder and harder.

- Teachers could not unleash their creativity and modify content effectively because of the shortage if not the complete absence of materials in schools (data show, printers …)

- Lack of authentic materials that suit pupils' age, level, and culture.

Question Twelve: In order to adapt syllabus content, you rely on:

Table 3. 12

The Sources of Decisions on Syllabus Content Adaptation

Options	Number	Percentage
Previous teaching experiences	137	66.5%
Pupils ' diagnostic test results	133	64.56%
Intuition	109	52.91%
Others	10	4.85%

Concerning the tools used to identify the content that needs to be adapted (table 3.12), more than half of the teachers (66.5%) opted for the first choice, which is previous teaching experiences. This indicates that the information teachers already have in mind about pupils from their serving time as teachers affect their adaptations. Equally, 64.56% of the respondents contended they rely on pupils' diagnostic test results; which suggests that pupils are at the center of interest for content adaptation. For the record, both novice and experienced teachers went for this option. In other words, even when having experience, teachers like to preserve the singularity and uniqueness of every learning situation. Likewise, 52.91 % of teachers picked out intuition, which implies that the estimated degree of difficulty of certain teaching elements affects planning content. Only ten (4.85%) teachers offered other

propositions. they adapt in the way that best fits teaching and learning outcomes achievement, help them innovate and create a comfortable learning atmosphere, and attract pupils and foster their motivation.

Section Three: The Role of Diagnostic Test in Syllabus Adaptation

Question Thirteen: Do you make a diagnostic test to your pupils?

Table 3.13

The Administration of Diagnostic Tests.

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Yes	204	99.03%
No	2	0.97%
Total	206	100%

As it is shown in table 3.13, a vast majority of teachers (99.03%) administer diagnostic tests in their classrooms. This indicates that a great number of teachers do adhere to ministerial recommendations and obligations on the one hand. On the other hand, these teachers recognize the importance of administering a diagnostic test. Only 0.97% of the teachers said that they do not make use of diagnostic tests to evaluate their pupils.

Question Fourteen: How often do you use the diagnostic test?

Table 3.14

The Frequency of Diagnostic Test Use.

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Always	82	39.8%

Often	67	32.52%
Sometimes	41	19.9%
Rarely	16	7.76%
Never	0	0%
Total	206	100%

According to the results displayed in table 3.14, a significant percentage of teachers (39.8%) chose always. They seem to consider diagnosing pupils' needs as one of the main pillars for their teaching. 32.52% of teachers pointed out that they often make use of diagnostic tests, while 19.9% of them picked sometimes. This might indicate that teachers are conscious about the significant role the diagnostic test plays in the teaching process. A low percentage of teachers (7.76%) agreed that they rarely administer this type of test. So, the use of diagnosis depends on teachers' circumstances and preferences. Surprisingly, none of the teachers (0 %) said never although in the previous question some teachers (0.97%) said that they do not perform diagnostic testing (table 3.13).

Question Fifteen: When do you use the diagnostic test?

Table 3.15

The Time of Conducting Diagnostic Assessments

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentage
At the onset of instruction	120	58.25%
At the end of each teaching unit.	120	58.25%
At the middle of the teaching unit	53	25.72%

As indicated in the previous table, most of teachers (58.25%) answered they administer diagnostic tests both at the onset and the end of each teaching unit. This shows that teachers use diagnostic tests as evaluative tools to determine pupils' level at the onset of instruction, and check their improvements in learning and the effectiveness of teaching at the end of the unit. More than a quarter of participants (25.72%) contended that they use the diagnostic test at the middle of the course. This denotes that some teachers are aware of the fact that the diagnostic test could be used at different times during the course of instruction, and not merely at the beginning. These participants also seem to pay a great deal of attention to their teaching effectiveness, and like to permanently make sure they are on the good path.

Question Sixteen When planning to administer a diagnostic test, do you:

Table 3.16

The Diagnostic Test Construction

Options	Number	Percentage
Design your own diagnostic test.	159	77.18%
Adopt other teachers' diagnostic tests.	10	4.85%
Choose random activities each time you perform a diagnosis.	37	17.96%
Total	206	100%

The previous table demonstrates that 77.18% of teachers design their own diagnostic tests, while 17.96% select random tasks whenever they feel like doing a diagnosis. Only 4.85% said they use other teachers' tests instead of designing their own. The results show that most teachers pay high attention to the design of diagnostic tests; they believe they know what will

best suit their objectives of making the test in the first place and then choose items accordingly. Besides, they asserted that every teaching/learning situation is unique, and this feature must be reflected in the items put in the test. The matter of which indicates these teachers' enthusiasm to put together tasks that suit their teaching and learning condition. In contrast, those who depend on ready-made tests and arbitrary selection of activities claimed that they would not waste their time and effort in designing a test that most students will not take seriously. Generally speaking, pupils get back to school from vacations brainwashed as they forget everything they have learned in classes; the information they would provide while being diagnosed will not be completely reliable. So, these teachers find it useless to design a diagnostic test that would generate nothing of real value. This shows that some teachers have a little sense of responsibility and seriousness towards diagnosing pupils' needs. For one reason, not all teachers believe in diagnostic tests and they think they are a waste of time, they only do it because the Ministry urges them to do so.

Question Seventeen : What is your purpose behind using the diagnostic test?

Table 3.17

The Purposes of Using a Diagnostic Test

Options	Number	Percentage
Identify pupils' weaknesses and strengths.	189	91.74%
Have a general idea about what you will be dealing with.	118	57.28%
Check the appropriateness of the course for pupils.	58	28.15%
Other	8	3.88%

Concerning the purposes of using diagnostic tests, the greatest majority (91.74%) of respondents use this kind of test to determine pupils' level. Whereas 57.28% asserted that the

test helps them know what they are up to in terms of pupils' profiles and preferences. Additionally, 28.15% said they use the diagnostic test to know whether the implementation of content would fit pupils' needs. Eight teachers added they use the test to check the quality of their teaching and plan instruction. The analysis indicates that teachers use the diagnostic test for a variety of reasons that all serve the enhancement and improvement of learning and teaching.

Question Eighteen: The diagnostic test results help you in:

Table 3.18

The Diagnostic Test Feedback

Options	Number	Percentage
Facilitating content modification.	144	69.9%
Affecting materials selection.	85	41.2%
Affecting the choice of teaching methods	122	59.22%
Placing more/ less emphasis on given elements in the course.	122	59.22%
Redistributing instructional time to better fit the pupils' needs and the professional obligations.	83	40.29%
Other.	0	0%

As indicated in the table above, 69.9% of the participants make use of diagnostic test results in tailoring instructional content. Whilst 122 (59.22%) teachers said the diagnostic feedback helps them decide what teaching methods and techniques to adopt. A similar number of teachers asserted that the results of diagnosis are beneficial for assigning relative weight to given instructional elements or vice versa. According to 41.2% of the population, the feedback from diagnostic tests help with materials' selection, while 40.29 % others

admitted its role in rearranging time the way that suits their conditions. Overall, the analysis of this question illustrates the different outcomes of using diagnostic tests by secondary school teachers. They interpret and use results in deciding about relevant modifications to instructional content and teaching procedures.

Question Nineteen: Do you make use of the diagnostic test results while adapting syllabus content?

Table 3. 19

The Use of Diagnostic Test Results in Syllabus Adaptation

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Yes	187	90.78%
No	19	9.22%
Total	206	100%

As indicated in the results (table 3.19) most of the respondents (90.77%) answered yes, they rely on diagnostic feedback in syllabus content adaptation. Yet, 9.22% of the teachers opted for no. This implies that the vastest majority of teachers are aware of the value of diagnostic tests and the benefit of their subsequent use in syllabus adaptation. For the second part of this question, those who responded with yes were asked to determine the degree to which their adaptations are influenced by the diagnostic test (table 3.20).

Table 3.20

The Influence of Diagnostic Test Results on Syllabus Adaptation

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentage
To a great extent	115	61.5%

To a significant extent	49	26.2%
To a small extent	23	12.3%
Total	187	100%

Most teachers asserted that diagnostic test results greatly affect their adaptations, whereas 26.2% of teachers think that it has a considerable effect on their content modification projects. Only 12.3% of teachers indicated that diagnostic feedback has a minor influence on their adaptations. What the table (3.20) demonstrates is that although all of these teachers make use of diagnostic test results, the degree of use and frequency differ.

Question Twenty: Does the use of the diagnostic test results make syllabus adaptation effective?

Table 3.21

The Effectiveness of Adaptation when Using Diagnostic Test Results

Options	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Yes	194	94.18%
No	12	5.82%
Total	206	100%

When asked about the effectiveness of syllabus adaptation while using diagnostic feedback, 94.18% of teachers asserted the success and efficiency of the process. They contended that the use of the diagnostic test reveals valuable information about the pupils that could be transformed by the teacher into relevant adjustment to the content. Notably, It facilitates the extraction and identification of pupils' weaknesses, strengths, and some individual differences; the kind of information that could be later used in planning lessons, deciding about teaching methods and procedures, placing emphasis, selecting materials, and

achieving teaching objectives. Then, the use of diagnostic tests outcomes in syllabus adaptation results in the desired outcomes for these teachers. However, very few participants (5.82%) maintained that even with the use of diagnostic test results, adaptation could still be not effective since controlling the syllabus does not mean controlling other elements that might influence teaching and learning. Adaptation may fail simply because other factors like uncooperative pupils, uncooperative administration, and time may interfere leaving teachers unable to tell the degree of effectiveness of their adaptation.

Question twenty-one: Feel free to add any further comments or suggestions concerning the current research.

   Half of the sample (50%) replied to this section of the questionnaire. In addition to good luck wishes and compliments on the originality and the value of information this research would unveil, teachers provided some comments that are summarized in the following points:

- Teachers must receive training workshops on the correct use of diagnostic tests to be fully exploited in the teaching and learning enhancement, and to improve their assessment and evaluation skills for their professional development. Teachers also must be freed from the top down restrictions; so that they can bring positive change to their classrooms according to their pupils' interests and needs.

- Though pupils do not give much importance to diagnostic tests and most of them never take them seriously, teachers should not neglect performing and making use of their results because they constitute a vital part in the teaching /learning process.

- The failure of diagnostic assessment does not necessarily mean that diagnostic tests are not good, maybe the way teachers design and administer them is what makes a problem.

- Teaching English in Algeria is problematic due to the lack of rich and interesting subjects. Grammar is given the lion's share of focus rather than vocabulary and communicative skills, which contradicts with the Competency Based Approach principles and modern theories of teaching languages.

3.3. Summary of Results and Findings from Teachers' Questionnaire

Based on the data analyzed in the first section of the questionnaire, the participants have been serving for different years as teachers; accordingly, they could be classified into novice, experienced, and very experienced. Moreover, these teachers belong to distinct Algerian geographical regions and have distinctive teaching experiences (37 wilayas) .This variety of serving times and individual expertise allowed for the collection of a multitude of views and perspectives, and a better understanding of the role of diagnostic test in content adaptation. Advantageously, the overwhelming majority of the participants have taught different levels in addition to second year, which means they have dealt with other years' syllabuses (first and third year), hence, they provided more constructive and valid comments.

Section two entitled "Syllabus Content Adaptation" demonstrated that most teachers think that the syllabus is from average to not good at all, and does not echo the needs of their pupils. According to these teachers, the current syllabus is dissatisfactory and has many weaknesses, but its main problem is the lack of materials' authenticity and modernization. Luckily, the greatest majority of teachers (94.66%) believe in adaptation and is well aware of its importance. They use it regularly and predominantly to first satisfy their pupils' needs and secondly to achieve learning objectives. It has been proved that second year secondary school teachers are familiar with adaptation techniques and seem to use them interchangeably. Yet, it is found that most novice teachers opt less for deletion than the other experienced teachers do. This implies that the more proficient the teacher is the more he/she is comfortable with using

adaptation techniques. A large number of teachers (58.25%) contended that constraints set by the Ministry of Education and lack of experience make adaptation less easy, especially for novice teachers. Still, some teachers claimed they do not have problems at all with adaptation, when they feel like adapting they adapt. Again, the more experienced the more teachers will feel freer while adapting. The analysis also showed that many teachers mainly experienced ones rely on their previous teaching experiences, diagnostic test, and intuition while adapting, whereas novice teachers mainly use diagnostic tests as an adaptation guide.

Concerning the third section, findings indicated that the vastest majority of teachers (99.3%) use diagnostic tests on several occasions because the Ministry of Education obliges them to do so. Responses revealed that most teachers design their own diagnostic assessment. This entails that teachers are keen on their pupils' needs and interests. Answers to Q 17 confirmed the previous claim, as 91.74% of the participants use diagnostic tests mainly to identify pupils' weaknesses and strengths. However, a considerable number of teachers tend to adopt other teachers' diagnostic tests or select random activities. This implies that some do not accord the required attention to designing and performing diagnosis, thus subsequent processes like adaptation would be less effective. In addition to affecting materials choice and lessons timings, the utmost goal of using diagnostic test is facilitating adaptation, which added more credibility and consistency to prior inferences. Finally, when inquiring about how effective is syllabus adaptation using diagnostic test results, the overwhelming majority of the participants (94.18%) agreed on the effectiveness of the process and its outcomes. After all, it is from pupils for the pupils themselves.

Conclusion

The third chapter is concerned with the practical framework of the research; it has put under examination the research hypothesis via using teachers' questionnaire. The analysis of

the findings from the questionnaire administration has shown that the majority of the participants   are conscious about the predominant role of diagnostic tests in the process of syllabus adaptation. The research has uncovered that secondary school teachers make use of diagnostic tests for a variety of purposes, mainly for gathering data about pupils to later use in introducing pertinent adjustments to the syllabus content. Though, there are some slight differences in the conception and use of the diagnostic test among teachers due to their teaching proficiency and practical experience, second year secondary school teachers were found to depend on diagnostic feedback in syllabus adaptation to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

General Conclusion

1. Concluding Remarks

This research has aimed to spot light teachers' use of diagnostic test in syllabus adaptation throughout the Algerian secondary school. It has attempted to examine the topic roughly theoretically and practically speaking; so as to provide answers for the research questions and put its hypothesis under test. Each of the two first chapters have directed attention to one of the research variables and provided a lengthy detailed description of concepts and notions in relation. The last one; however, was more pragmatic. It has dealt with the research data gathering and analysis. The results have uncovered teachers' awareness of the value of pupils' diagnosis and its noteworthy role in effective syllabus adaptation. Moreover, answers to the research questions have been reached. First, teachers see diagnostic tests as very useful educational tools that shorten the distance between teachers and their pupils, and help create relevance between teaching materials and teaching contexts. Second, diagnostic test results greatly affect the syllabus adaptation process; they show what to be adapted, how to adapt, and could help teachers tell the degree of adaptation needed. Finally, as for the process of adaptation using diagnostic tests, teachers rely on the information from the latter to decide whether to delete, add, reorder, simplify, or modify the instructional content. Accordingly, it is obvious that the research hypothesis is proved; when teachers' rely on language diagnostic test results, syllabus adaptation becomes more effective.

2. Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

It is essential for foreign language teachers to realize the vital role the diagnostic tests play in the teaching/learning process .Teachers should have a clear and overall idea about their students' needs as well as the importance of designing and administering a diagnostic test that could effectively reveal and reflect these needs. Hence, teachers could decide which

aspects of their syllabus should be adapted through using suitable adaptation techniques; so that to facilitate learning. Although teachers appear to recognize pupils' diagnosis importance in subsequent syllabus modifications, the primary aim of this research was to emphasize the importance of diagnostic test and its data gathering role that would enable teachers to make productive decisions concerning instructional materials. The followings are some pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research projects:

- Diagnostic tests are very beneficial if well designed and used. Thus, teachers need to display more effort in test construction and choose activities carefully in order to make best use of these tests.

  - Diagnostic tests are not limited to one form, there are dozens of forms that range from oral to written tests amongst which teachers could choose and use in whatever way they believe would work for them and their pupils. If one form does not seem to work with pupils or offers little amount of required data, teachers could use another one in order to overcome those gaps. Another important key teachers must keep in mind for the success of their pupils' diagnosis is setting measurable clear objectives for testing.

- The Ministry of Education should provide teachers with effective training; so that teachers would be able to design a diagnostic test that reflects students real level. Further, teachers should be given all the necessary tools to administer a diagnosis.

- Teachers must not be enslaved by the instructional content, they always need to look critically at these materials and see the implementational potential in them.

- Syllabus adaptation is a very important process that requires careful attention especially for novice teachers. New recruits to the field of teaching must undergo some sort of training in

the way of dealing with syllabus and adjust it to fit their pupils and learning context demands.

- Students' lack of motivation and interest in courses is problematic, hence teachers and students should work together to come up with attractive content for learning. Creativity in adaptation must be prioritized and restrictions on teachers must be loosened. This would considerably motivate teachers to adapt productively and increase the outcomes of learning on the one hand. On the other hand, students' motivation would be boosted and their level would improve.

- When administering a diagnostic test or making content modifications, teachers tend to focus primarily on the majority needs and exclude individual infrequent ones. It is true that teachers' hands are tied somehow in this matter, simply because this is the way things go and teachers could by no mean account for all the needs in their classrooms. Other factors get involved in the process like time, length and complexity of content, number of pupils …, still teachers could and should afford some time to work on individual cases from time to time and make room for similar relevant instructions.

- Due to the current situation and its constraints, the only point of view explored in this study was that of teachers' via using a questionnaire. Substantially, the use of other tools and checking other opinions like pupils', inspectors', and administrators' may be of significant value, it may help drawing a fuller and clearer image about the topic for future similar interests.

- The two variables were examined theoretically and conclusions were built merely upon teachers' answers. The use of tests, experiments, or observations may open new horizons and reveal lots of credible information about adaptation and the use of diagnostic tests.

3. Limitations of the Study

Similar to other research projects, this study had its share of obstacles. The comings are the most remarkable limitations the researchers encountered.

- The availability of authentic and valid resources was a major issue. Since the topic of the research is an original one, little was done in the area of diagnostic language testing and syllabus adaptation; so finding related documents was tough and very difficult as several attempts to find legitimate sources failed epically.

- The corona virus pandemic and the drastic lockdown measures the government took made the use of the questionnaire's hard format and the use of other research tools out of questions.

- When comparing the number of posts and English secondary school teachers the questionnaire was sent to with the final number of teachers who have actually answered, the results are disappointing. Many people just ignored the posts, others promised to answer but never did, while some opened the link out of curiosity and answered just for the sake of moving to the next step and not for the sake of answering and providing realistic views.

- Even though the participants were ensured anonymity and confidentiality, bias may have been present; especially that a small introduction to the research aims and purposes was provided. In other words, one cannot tell for sure whether answers were honest and truthful or in favor of research hypothesis and orientations.

- Owing to the fact that the representativeness of the sample has not been achieved, generalization of the results could not be made.

References

Alderson, C. J., Clapham, C., & Wall, D. (1995). *Language Test Construction and Evaluation*. Cambridge University Press.

Alderson, J. C. (2005). *Diagnosing Foreign Language Proficiency: The Interface Between Learning and Assessment*. London: Continuum.

Allen, G. P. J., (1984). General-Purpose Language Teaching: a Variable Focus Approach. In C. J. Brumfit (Ed), *General English British Council* (pp.61-74). UK: British Council.

Allison, D. (1999). *Language Testing and Evaluation: An Introductory Course*. Singapore University Press.

Ameringer, V., Green, L., Leisser, D., Turker, S. Introduction: Towards an Interdisciplinary Undrstanding of Lnaguage Aptitude. (2018). In S. M. Reiterer (Ed.), *Exploring Language Aptitude: Views from Psychology, the Language Sciences, and Cognitive Neuroscience* (pp. 1-15). Springer International Publishing AG.

Askew, S., & Lodge, C. (2000). Gifts, Ping-pong and Loops – Linking Feedback and Learning. In S. Askew (Ed.), *Feedback For Learning* (pp. 1-18). Routledge Flamer.

Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bachmen, F. L., & Palmer, S. A. (1996). *Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Bazyar, Z., Dastpak, M., & Taghinezhad, A. (2015). Syllabus Design and Needs Analysis of Students in Educational System. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *6*(4), 162-165.

Berardo, S. A. (2007). *Designing a Language Learning Syllabus*. Roma: Aracne.

Berwick, R. (1989). Needs assessment in language programming: From theory to practice. *The second Language Curriculum*, 48–62. doi:10.1017/cbo9781139524520.006

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and Classroom Learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, *5*(1), 7-47. doi:10.1080/0969595980050102

Breen, M. P. (1984). Process Syllabuses for the Language Classroom. In C. J. Brumfit (Ed), *General English British Council* (pp. 47-60). UK: British Council.

Breen, M. P. (1987). Contemporary Paradigms in Syllabus Design. Part I. *Language Teaching*, 20(2), 83-89.

Breen, M. P. (2001). Syllabus Design. In Carter, R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of the Other Languages* (pp. 151-159). Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Brindley, G. (1989). The Role of Needs Analysis in Adult ESL Programme Design. In R. K. Johnson (Ed), *The Second Language Curriculum* (pp. 63-78). Cambridge University Press.

Brookhart, M. S. (2008). *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students.* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Brown, D. H. (2003). *Language Assessment : Principles and Classroom Practices*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.

Brown, J. D. (1995). *The elements of language curriculum : A Systematic Approach to Program Development*. Heinle & Heinle.

Brown, J. D. (1996). *Testing in Language Programs*. Prestice-Hull, Inc.

Brown, J. D. (2016). *Introducing Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purposes*. Routledge.

Brumfit, J. C. (1984). Function and Structure of a State School Syllabus for Learners of Second or Foreign Languages with Heterogeneous Needs. In C. J. Brumfit (Ed), *General English British Council* (pp. 75-82). UK: British Council.

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing. *Applied Linguistics*, *1*(1), 1-47.

Candlin, C. N. (1984). Syllabus Design as a Critical Process. In C. J. Brumfit (Ed), *General English British Council* (pp. 29-46). UK: British Council.

Carroll, B. (1982). Is There another Way? In J. B. Heaton (ed.), *Language Testing* (pp. 1-10). London: Modern English Pubs Ltd.

Chapelle, C. A. (1999). Validity in Language Assessment. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *19*, 254-272.

Cheng, L., & Curtis, A. (2004). Washback or Backwash: A Review of the Impact of Testing on Teaching and Learning. In L. Cheng , Y. J. Watanabe, & A. Curtis (Eds.), *Washback in Language Testing : Research Contexts and Methods* (pp. 3-18). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Clapham, C. (2000). Assessment and Testing. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *20*, 147-161. doi:10.1017/s0267190500200093

Clark, D. L. J. (1975). Theoretical and Technical Considerations in Oral Proficiency Testing. In R. L. Jones & B. Spolsky (Eds.), *Testing Language Proficiency* (pp. 10-24). Virginia: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education.* (6th ed.). London: Routledge.

Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing Your Coursebook*. Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann English Language Teaching.

Davies, A., Brown, A., Elder, C., Hill, K., Lumley, T., & McNamara, T. (1999). *Dictionary of Language Testing*. Cambridge: CUP.

Dickins, P. R., & Germaine, K. (1992). *Evaluation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Douglas, D. (2014). *Understanding Language Testing*. London: Routledge.

Dubin, F., & Olshtain, E. (1986). *Course Design : Developing Programs and Materials for Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Elder, C., & Iwashita, N. (2005) Planning for Test Performance: Does it Make a Difference? In R.Ellis (Ed.), *Planning and Task Performance in a Second Language* (pp. 219-238). John Benjamins Publishing.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. New York: Oxford.

Fulcher, G. (2010). *Practical Language Testing*. London: Hodder Education.

Fulcher, G. (n.d). *Language Testing*. Retrieved from http://languagetesting.info/whatis/lt.html

Fulcher, G. and Davidson, F. (2007). *Language Testing and Assessment: An Advanced Resource Book*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Gonzalez-LIoret, M. (2013). Technologies for Performance-Based Assessment. In M. L. P. Cañado (Ed.), *Competency-based Language Teaching in Higher Education* (pp. 169-183). Springer Science & Business Media.

Graves, K. (1996). A Framework of Course Development Processes. In K, Graves (Ed), *Teachers as Course Developers* (pp. 4-36). Cambridge: CUP.

Graves, K. (2000). *Designing Language Courses: A Guide for Teachers*. Boston: Heinly and Heinly.

Green, A. (2004). *Exploring Language Assessment and Testing: Language in Action*. Routldge.

Halim, S., & Halim, T. (2016). Adapting Materials: Revisiting the Needs of Learners. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, *2*(4), 633-642.

Heaton, J. B. (1975). *Writing English Language Tests: A Practical Guide for Teachers of English As a Second or Foreign Language*. London: Longman.

Henning, G. (1987). *A Guide to Language Testing : Development, Evaluation, Research*. Cambridge: Newberry House Publishers.

Holster, T., & Lake, J. (2012). Developing an Academic English Program Placement test: A Pilot Study. *The Bulletin of Fukuoka Women's University International College of Arts and Sciences*, *76*, 23-46.

Hughes, A. (2003). *Testing for Language Teachers* (2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hutchison, T. & Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A learner-centred Approach.* England: Cambridge University Press.

Jang, E. E. (2012). Diagnostic Assessment in Language Classrooms. In G. Fulcher, & F. Davidson (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language Testing* (pp. 120-133). Routledge.

Jang, E. E., & Wagner, M. (2013). Diagnostic Feedback in Language Classroom. In A. Kunnan (Ed.), *Companion to Language Assessment* (pp. 693-711). Wiley-Blackwell.

Jin, Y. (2018). Practicality. *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*, 1-6.doi:10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0348

Kane, M. (2012). Articulating a Validity Argument. In G. Fulcher, & F. Davidson (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language Testing* (pp. 34-46). Routledge.

Kara, S. (2001). The Foreign Language Syllabus: Design, Evaluation and Renewal. *Revue. Sciences Humaines*, 67-84. Retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar. org/87a1/1fd80e3145f42a0c7eba0d44fed5b0f1762b.pdf

Kaur, A. (1990). Considerations in Language Syllabus Design. *The English Teacher*, *19*, 4-12.

Kitao, K. S., & kitao, K. (1996). Testing Communicative Competence. *The Internet TESL Journal*, *2*(5). Retrieved from http://iteslj.org/Articles/KitaoTesting.*html*#:~:text=The%20Communicative%20Approach%20to%20Testing&text=Communicative%20language%20tests%20are%20intended,to%20form%20grammatically%20correct%20sentences.

Krahnke, K. (1987). *Approaches to Syllabus Design for Foreign Language Teaching*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice- Hall.

Long, M. H. (2005). Methodological issues in learner needs analysis. In a M. H. Long (Ed.), *Second Language Needs Analysis* (pp. 19-76). Cambridge University Press.

Macayan, J. V. (2017). Implementing Outcome-Based Education (OBE) Framework: Implications for Assessment of Students' Performance. *Educational Measurement and Evaluation Review*, *8*(1), 1-10. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321797050

Madsen, H. S. (1983). *Techniques in Testing*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Matejka, K., & Kurke, L. B. (1994). Designing a Great Syllabus. *College Teaching*, *42*(3), 115-117.

Mcdonough, J., Shaw, C., & Masuhara, H. (2013). *Materials and methods in ELT : A Teacher's Guide* (3rd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

McNamara, T. F. (2000). *Language Testing*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Messick, S. (1996). *Validity and Washback in Langauge Testing*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Mileff, M. (2013). Instructional Objectives: Selecting and Devising Tasks. In N. Popov, C. Wolhuter, P. A. Almeida, G. Hilton, J. Ogunleye, & O. Chigisheva (Eds.), *Education in One World Perspectives from Different Nations* (pp. 192-196). Bulgarian Comparative Education Society. Retrieved from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED567118.pdf

Miller, D. M., Linn, R., & Gronlund, N. E. (2009). *Measurement and Assessment in Teaching* (10th Ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Mohan, B. A. (1986). *Language and Content*. Addison-Wesley.

Morrow, C. K. (2018). Communicative Language Testing. *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*, 1-7.

Muijs, D. (2004). *Doing Quantitative Research in Education with SPSS*. London: Sage.

Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative Syllabus Design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Murphy, R. S. (2018). The Concept of Syllabus Design and Curriculum Development: A Look at Five Major Syllabus Designs. In A. Faravani, M. Zeraatpishe, M. Azamoosh, & H. R. Kargozari (Eds.), *Issues in Syllabus Design* (pp.1-24). Sense Publishers.

Naeim, Y. M. (2014). Performance Based Assessment: What We Should Know About it. *ROSHD FLT Journal*, *29*(2), 39-46.

Nikolov, M. (2017). Students' and Teachers' Feedback on Diagnostic Tests for Young EFL Learners: Implications for Classrooms. In M. P. García Mayo (Ed.), *Learning Foreign Languages in Primary school: Research Insights* (pp. 249-266). Bristol: Multilingual Matters. http://www.multilingual-matters.com/display.asp?k=9781783098095

Nodoushan, M. A. S. (2008). Performance Assessment in Language Testing. *i-manager's Journal on School Educational Technology*, *3*(4), 1-7.

Nunan, D. (1988). *Syllabus Design*. Oxford University Press.

Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based Language Teaching*. Cambridge: CUP.

Nunan, D. (2013). *Learner-centered English language education : The selected works of David Nunan*. Routledge.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2013). *Learning for All*. Toronto: Author.

Pandia, H. (2017). Syllabus Design– An Overview. *International Journal in Commerce, IT & Social Sciences*, *4*(7), 8-23.

Pellegrino, J. W., Chudowsky, N., Glaser, R., & National Research Council (U.S.).Committee On The Foundations Of Assessment. (2001). *Knowing what Students Know : The Science and Design of Educational Assessment*. National Academy Press.

Pushpanathan, T. (2013). A Need for Needs Analysis. *International Journal of Applied Research & Studies*, *2*(1), 1-7.

Rahimpour, M. (2010). Current Trends on Syllabus Design in Foreign Language Instruction. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *2*(2), 1660-1664. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro2010.03.254

Rahman, M. S. (2016). The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches and Methods in Language "Testing and Assessment" Research: A Literature Review. *Journal of Education and Learning*, *6*(1), 102-112. https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v6nlp102

Rajaee, N. M., Abbaspour, E., & Zare, J. (2013). A Critical Review of Recent Trends in Second Language Syllabus Design and Curriculum Development. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, *2*(2), 63-83.https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrsll.2012.152

Richards, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Robinson, P. (2011). Syllabus Design. In M. H. Long, & C. Doughty (Eds.), *The Handbook of Language Teaching* (pp. 294-310). Wiley-Blackwell.

Sabbah, S. S. (2018). English Language Syllabuses: Definition, Types, Design, and Selection. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, *9*(2), 127-142.

Salvia, J., & Ysseldyke, J. (2001). *Assessment*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Şanal, F. (2016). Syllabus Design. *Littera Turca Journal of Turkish Language and Literature*, *2*(3), 187-192. https://doi.org/10.20322/lt.57312

Saraceni, C. (2003). Adapting Courses: A Critical View. In B. Tomlinson (Ed), *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* (pp. 72-85). London: Gromwell Press.

Sekhar, C. V. G., & Swathi, C. (2019). A Brief Study of Curriculum and Syllabus for

    ESP/EST Courses. *Journal for Research Scholars and Professionals of Language*

    Teaching, *3*(13), 1-8.

Singireddy, V. (2014). Innovative Curriculum in ELT: A Pathway for Holistic Learners.

    International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities, *1*(5), 142-148.

Slattery, J. M., & Carlson, J. F. (2005). Preparing an Effective Syllabus: Current best

    Practices. *College Teaching*, *53*(4), 159- 164. DOI: 10.3200/CTCH.53.4.159-164

Stern, H. H. (1983). *Fundamental Concepts of Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stern, H. H. (1984). Review and Discussion. In C. J. Brumfit (Ed), *General English British*

    Council (pp. 5-12). UK: British Council.

Sujana, I. M. (2000). Movement in Language Testing: From Grammar-Based to Communica-

    tive Language Testing. *Journal Ilmu Pendidikan FKIP UNRAM*, *13*(48), 1-8.

Tabari, G. A. (2013). Challenges of Language Syllabus Design in EFL/ESL Contexts. *Journal*

    of Language Teaching and Research, *4*(4), 869-873.

Test. (2020). In Collins Online Dictionary. Retrieved from https://www.collinsdictionary.com

    /dictionary/english/test

Thayniath, S. (2017). An Introduction to Syllabus Design. *Language in India*, *17*(1), 268-277.

Tomlinson, B. (1998). *Materials Development in language Teaching*. Cambridge University

    Press.

Tomlinson, B., & Masuhara, H. (2018). *The Complete Guide to the Theory and Practice of*

    Materials Development for Language Learning. Wiley- Blackwell.

Toney, T. (1984). *Curriculum and Syllabus Design in ELT : Report on the Dunford House*

    Seminar. British Council.

Valette, R. M. (1977). *Modern Language Testing* (2nd ed.). New York: Harcourt Brace

    Jovanovich, Inc.

Welch, C. (2006). Item and Prompt Development in Performance Testing. In S. M. Downing & T. M. Haladyna (Eds.), *Handbook of Test Development* (p. 303–327). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Wen, Z., Biedroń, A., & Skehan, P. (2017). Foreign Language Aptitude Theory: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. *Language Teaching*, *50*(1), 1-31. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444 816000276

Widdowson, G. H. (1984). Educational and Pedagogic Factors in Syllabus Design. In C. J. Brumfit (Ed), *General English British Council* (pp. 23-28). UK: British Council.

Wilkins, D. A. (1972). Grammatical, Situational and Notional Syllabuses. *Paper Presented at the International Congress of Applied Linguistics (3rd, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 1972).*

Wilkins, D. A. (1976). *Notional Syllabuses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Woodward, T. (2001). *Planning Lessons and Courses Designing Sequences of Work for the Language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yalden, J. (1984). Syllabus Design in General Education: Options for ELT. In C. J. Brumfit (Ed), *General English British Council* (pp. 13-22). UK: British Council.

Yalden, J. (1987a). *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yalden, J. (1987b). Syllabus Design: An Overview of Theoretical Issues and Practical Implications. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *8*, 30-47. doi:10.1017/s0267190500001008

Yassi, A. H., & Kaharuddin, S. (2018). *Syllabus Design for English Language Teaching* (2nd ed.). Trust Media Publishing.

Zhao, Z. (2013). An Overview of Studies on Diagnostic Testing and its Implications for the Development of Diagnostic Speaking Test. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *3*(1). 41-45.

Appendicies

Appendix A

Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of a research work carried out in the department of English at the University of Guelma for a Master's degree in Language Sciences. It aims at investigating the role of language diagnostic test in syllabus's content adaptation in second year secondary schools contexts.

We shall be very grateful if you could answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate answer or providing justifications and comments whenever necessary. You could tick more than one option in multiple-choice questions. Thank you for your valuable time and contribution as it is very crucial for strengthening the validity of this research.

<div align="right">

BENOUARET Mabrouka

KHELIFATI Souha

Department of English

University of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma

</div>

Section One: General Information

1. From which wilaya are you?

…………………………………………………………………………....

2. How long have you been teaching English?

……………………………………………………………………………

3. Which levels have you taught?

a. First year.	
b. Second year.	
c. Third year	

Section Two: Syllabus Content Adaptation

4. How could you evaluate your teaching syllabus?

a. Very good	
b. Good	
c. Average	
d. Not good at all.	

5. Do you think that the syllabus reflects your learners' needs and fits your learning situation?

a. Yes	
b. No	

- Please justify your answer,

…………………………………………………………………………………

6. What do you think are the main inadequacies with the current syllabus?

a. The syllabus is too general	
b. It offers little guidance about how to deal with different target learners.	
c. The learning content is not always updated and authentic.	
d. Little or much time allocated to given teaching units.	
e. Other	

- If others please specify,

....

7. How important do you consider syllabus adaptation?

a. Very important	
b. Important	
c. Little important	
d. Not important at all	

8. How often do you adapt your syllabus content?

a. Always	
b. Often	
c. Sometimes	
d. Rarely	
e. Never	

9. For which reasons do you adapt?

a. Satisfy learners' needs and interests.	
b. Adhere to administrative and institutional recommendations.	
c. Achieve teaching objectives.	
d. Create or develop authentic materials	
e. Enhance learning.	
f. Other	

    - If others, please specify

……………………………………………………………………………………

10. When adapting syllabus content, what techniques do you usually apply?

a. Addition.	
b. Deletion.	

c. Modification.	
d. Simplification.	
e. Reordering.	
f. All of the above.	

11. What are the difficulties you face while adapting syllabus content?

a. Lack of experience and training with using and modifying syllabus.	
b. Restrictions by the ministry of Education.	
c. Unfamiliarity with the learners and learning situation.	
d. Other.	

- If others, please specify

……………………………………………………………………………………

12. In order to adapt syllabus content, do you rely on:

a. Previous teaching experiences	
b. Learners' diagnostic test results	
c. Intuition (about the difficulty of given content items, time allocated to different units,…)	
d. Other	

- If others, please specify

………………………………………………………………………………..

Section Three: The role of diagnostic test in syllabus adaptation

13. Do you make a diagnosis to your learners?

a. Yes	
b. No	

14. How often do you use the diagnostic test?

a. Always	
b. Often	
c. Sometimes	
d. Rarely	
e. Never	

15. When do you use the diagnostic test?

a. At the onset of instruction.	
b. At the end of each teaching unit.	
c. At the middle of the course.	

16. When planning to administer a diagnostic test, do you:

a. Design your own diagnostic test.	
b. Adopt other teachers' diagnostic tests.	
c. Choose random activities each time you perform a diagnosis.	

-Please justify your answer

……………………………………………………………………………………

17. What is your purpose behind using the diagnostic test?

a. Identify students' weaknesses and strengths.	
b. Have a general idea about what you will be dealing with.	
c. Check the appropriateness of the course for students.	
d. Other.	

- If others please specify,

……………………….…………………………………………………………

18. The diagnostic test results help you in:

a. Facilitating content modification.	
b. Affecting materials selection.	
c. Affecting the choice of teaching methods	
d. placing more/ less emphasis on given elements in the course.	

e. Redistributing instructional time to better fit the learners' needs and the professional obligations.	
f. Other.	

- If others, please specify

……………………………………………………………………………………

19. Do you make use of the diagnostic test results while adapting syllabus content?

a. Yes.	
b. No.	

- If yes, to what extent do diagnostic test results influence your syllabus adaptation?

a. To a great extent.	
b. To a significant extent.	
c. To a small extent.	

20. Does the use of the diagnostic test results make syllabus adaptation effective?

a. yes	
b. No	

- Whatever your answer is, please justify,…

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

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

…………………………………………………………………………………...

21. Feel free to add any further comments or suggestions concerning the current research.

……

……

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

Thank you for your time and collaboration

الملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى تقصي الدور الذي تلعبه نتائج الاختبارات التشخيصية في تكييف محتوى المنهج الدراسي. حيث يسعى هذا التحقيق إلى معرفة تصورات الأساتذة ووجهات نظرهم ومواقفهم تجاه استخدام الاختبار التشخيصي في تعديل المنهج الدراسي. كما و تحاول هذه الدراسة فهم الأسباب التي من أجلها يعتمد أساتذة الطور الثانوي هذا النوع من الاختبارات ونتائج استخدامه. أيضًا ، يحاول هذا البحث إلقاء نظرة فاحصة على عملية تكييف المحتوى التعليمي والوظيفة التي يشغلها الاختبار التشخيصي في هاته الاخيرة. وعليه ، تفترض الدراسة أنه إذا استخدم الأساتذة نتائج الاختبار التشخيصي للتلاميذ في تعديل محتوى المنهج الدراسي, فإن العملية ستكون أكثر فعالية. بغرض التحقق من صحة الفرضية المذكورة أعلاه والإجابة عن التساؤلات النظرية للبحث تم اعتماد المنهج الكمي الوصفي. يتجلى هذا الأخير في استعمال استبيان والذي تم من خلاله جمع البيانات العددية النوعية لتحليلها لاحقا. وشكلت عينة البحث ما مجموعه مئتان و ستة (206) أستاذ من أساتذة الصف الثاني الثانوي من جميع أنحاء ثانويات الجزائر. كشفت النتائج المتحصل عليها عن علاقة إيجابية بين المتغيرين الرئيسيين للدراسة، مما يؤكد الفرضية الموضوعة في بداية البحث. وفقًا للبيانات التي تم الحصول عليها ، يبدو أن الأساتذة المشاركين يدركون قيمة وتأثير الاختبار التشخيصي على تدريسهم بشكل عام وعلى تكييف المنهج بشكل خاص. إلى جانب ذلك، أظهرت النتائج آثار خبرات التدريس والمعتقدات الفردية على العملية ككل. لذلك ، وجب رد الاعتبار للاختبارات اللغوية التشخيصية والتشجيع على اجراء تعديلات في المنهج التعليمي, و جعلها من الأولويات التي يجب على صانعي القرار أخذها في المستقبل.