

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Oran 2 Mohamed Ben Ahmed
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Anglo-Saxon Languages Department
Section of English



Portfolio Training for Autonomous Language Learning

The Case of First Year English Students at Abdelhamid Ibn
Badis University of Mostaganem

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Doctorat es-Science in Educational Psychology

Presented by: Ms. DJOUB Zineb

Supervised by: Prof. MILIANI Mohamed

Jury Members

Chairperson: Prof. MELLOUK Mohamed	Professor	University of Sidi-Bel-Abbes
Supervisor: Prof. MILIANI Mohamed	Professor	University of Oran 2
External Examiner: Prof. MERBOUH Zouaoui	Professor	University of Sidi -Bel-Abbes
External Examiner: Prof. DERRADJI Salah	Professor	University of Bejaia
Internal Examiner: Dr. BENHATTAB Lotfi	Assistant Professor	University of Oran 2

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-2017

A b s t r a c t

The last decade has witnessed an array of changes in language learning goals, requirement as well as perspectives. The prevailing tendency is to teach learners how to learn in order to enable them to cope with new technologies and learning environments. Indeed, assessment of learners needs to contribute to their learning instead of merely providing data on their accomplishment or learning outcomes. Therefore, a variety of assessment methods or what has been called alternative assessment has been advocated. Language portfolios are among these methods which are gaining more popularity and support since they can provide opportunities for learners' involvement, reflection over their learning and thus, promote their autonomous learning. Hence, to develop learners' autonomy, conscious awareness of portfolios' use is an important key for the achievement of this process since it involves reflection and decision making. Thus, implementing language portfolios requires training learners into its process. Yet, a question which can be raised here is: What kind of effect does such training have on students' learning autonomy? In attempt to answer this question, an investigation was carried out on a sample of first year students at the English Department of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem. Using control group design, the experimental group students were trained into using portfolios as assessment and learning tools within the course of the Written Expression course. In addition to the pre and post-tests, observation, focus groups and questionnaires were also used along with such training to gain insights into its effect. Since autonomy is a complex construct, this study focused on examining their motivation, perceptions and attitudes after receiving the treatment. The research findings revealed that the participants' motivation to learn increased and certain self-assessment attitudes were developed. But, their perceptions regarding their role and that of the teacher were still reflecting their dependence. Indeed, it was found that they could develop a lower degree of autonomy which did not allow them to gain complete detachment from their teacher. In light of such findings, this thesis put forward a set of suggestions and recommendations which intend to help students develop their autonomy in language learning. This is through clarifying the role of institutions, teachers and students.

Keywords: Autonomy, reflection, portfolio, learning, self-assessment, training.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank most sincerely Prof. M. Miliani for supervising this work. I am forever grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to pursue my interest in activity theory and for helping me so well to shape and express my thoughts.

I would also like to thank the members of the jury: Prof. Mellouk Mohamed; University of Sidi-Bel-Abbes, Prof. Merbouh Zouaoui; University of Sidi-Bel-Abbes, Prof. Derradji Salah; University of Bejaia and Dr. Benhattab Lotfi; University of Oran2 for their time, interest and insightful comments.

Many thanks to Dr. Rachedi Khadra from the department of Demography of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University (Mostaganem) who provided me with statistical advice at times of critical need. My research would not have been possible without her help.

Appreciation also goes to Prof. Nadjai Mohamed (University of Batna) for his fruitful suggestions regarding the methodological design of this work. I cannot forget Prof. Peter Grimes from the Faculty of Education of Canterbury Christ Church University (England) for his support and immense knowledge of teacher education and professional development.

I am also indebted to all the students who took part in this particular project. You all have been a great source of inspiration and I have learned so much from you.

Thank you very much, every one!

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables.....	x
List of Figures.....	xi
List of Acronyms.....	xiii
Glossary.....	xiv
General Introduction.....	1

Chapter One: The Learning Context

1.1 Introduction.....	6
1.2 Globalization and the European Higher Education: Current Trends and Perspectives.....	6
1.2.1 The Bologna Process: A Move towards a Higher Educational Reform....	10
1.2.2 The Bologna Process Strategies and Challenges.....	13
1.2.2.1 Mobility.....	13
1.2.2.2 Employability.....	15
1.2.2.3 Lifelong Learning.....	18
1.2.2.4 Structural Reform: The LMD System.....	20
1.3 Implementing the Bologna Reform in Africa: The Algerian Experience.....	34
1.3.1 The Algerian Higher Education before the Bologna Reform.....	36
1.3.2 Rationale for the LMD Reform in Algeria.....	40
1.3.2.1 Developing Employability Skills.....	41
1.3.2.2 Promoting Student Mobility Overseas.....	43
1.3.2.3 Teaching towards Developing Students Competences.....	45
1.3.2.4 Creating Assessment for Learning Opportunities.....	47
1.3.2.5 Supporting Students' Learning through Tutoring	51
1.3.2.6 Encouraging Reflective Teaching.....	53
1.3.2.7 Promoting Innovation through Knowledge Creation and Dissemination	56
1.4 The State Response to the New Reform: Interests and Achievements.....	60

1.5 Current Issues and National Realities of the Algerian Higher Education Systems	64
1.5.1 The Educational Setting and Teachers Training.....	64
1.5.2 The Algerian University and the Labour Market Demands.....	66
1.5.3 Mobility between Funding and Recognition Facilities	67
1.5.4 Lifelong Learning: the Need for Conducive Learning Environments	69
1.5.5 Research Development: Data as Reflected by Academic Rankings.....	70
1.6 The Department of English: An Overview.....	72
1.7 Written Expression Course: Teaching and Assessment Practices.....	75
1.7.1 Teaching.....	76
1.7.2 Assessment.....	77
1.7.2.1 Formative Purpose.....	78
1.7.2.2 Summative Purpose.....	80
1.8 Conclusion.....	81

Chapter Two: Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning: Principles and Theoretical Issues

2.1 Introduction.....	83
2.2 Historical Background.....	83
2.3 Towards a Working Definition of Learner Autonomy.....	87
2.4 Learner Autonomy and Other Related Concepts.....	91
2.4.1 Self-instruction.....	91
2.4.2 Self-Direction.....	92
2.4.3 Self-Access.....	93
2.4.4 Independent Learning.....	95
2.5 Assessing Learner Autonomy.....	97
2.6 Perspectives of Learner Autonomy.....	102
2.7 Institution's Role.....	105
2.8 Teacher's Role.....	108
2.9 Learners' Role.....	112
2.10 Approaches to Learner Autonomy in Language Learning.....	115
2.10.1 Curriculum-based Approaches.....	115
2.10.2 Technology-based Approaches.....	117

2.10.3 Teacher-based Approaches.....	119
2.10.3.1 Counselling.....	119
2.10.3.2 Reflective teaching.....	122
2.10.3.3 Teacher Autonomy.....	125
2.10.4 Learner-based Approaches.....	127
2.10.4.1 Language Learning Strategies.....	127
2.10.4.2 Strategy Training.....	130
2.10.4.3 Motivation, Self-efficacy and Learning Attitudes.....	133
2.10.5 Toward a Pedagogy for Autonomy in Language Learning and Assessment	138
2.11 Conclusion.....	141

Chapter Three: Language Assessment: Aspects and Theoretical underpinnings for Students' Portfolios

3.1 Introduction.....	143
3.2 Assessment and Testing in Language Teaching.....	143
3.2.1 Language Assessment: Definitions and objectives.....	144
3.2.2 Formative and Summative Assessment.....	148
3.2.3 Approaches to Language Testing.....	151
3.2.3.1 Translation Approach.....	152
3.2.3.2 Psychometric-structural Approach.....	152
3.2.3.3 The integrative-sociolinguistic approach.....	153
3.2.3.4 The Communicative Language Testing Approach.....	154
3.3 Principles of Language Assessment.....	157
3.3.1 Practicality.....	157
3.3.2 Reliability.....	159
3.3.3 Validity.....	161
3.3.3.1 Construct Validity.....	162
3.3.3.2 Content Validity.....	163
3.3.3.3 Criterion-based Validity.....	164
3.3.4 Authenticity.....	165
3.3.5 Washback.....	166
3.4 Designing Classroom Language Tests.....	170
3.4.1 Test Types.....	171

3.4.2 Test Construction: Some Practical Steps.....	172
3.4.2.1 Test Specification.....	173
3.4.2.2 Developing Test Tasks.....	174
3.4.2.3 Test Scoring.....	176
3.4.3 Teacher Feedback.....	178
3.4.3.1 A definition of Feedback.....	178
3.4.3.2 Teacher Feedback: Why and How to implement?	180
3.5 Assessing Writing.....	181
3.5.1 Defining Writing Process.....	181
3.5.2 Approaches to Assessing Second/Foreign Language Writing.....	184
3.6 Alternative Assessment: The Need for Learners' Involvement	187
3.7 The Relationship between Self-Assessment and Learner Autonomy.....	188
3.8 Portfolio as a Self-Assessment Tool.....	192
3.8.1 Components, Types and Uses.....	193
3.8.2 Benefits in the Language Classroom.....	196
3.8.2.1 Developing Students' Writing Ability.....	196
3.8.2.2 Promoting Learners' Motivation.....	198
3.8.2.3 Enhancing Reflection over Learning.....	199
3.8.2.4 Encouraging Interaction and Supportive Feedback.....	200
3.8.3 Critical Issues about Portfolios.....	201
3.8.4 Approaches to Portfolio Development.....	205
3.8.4.1 Deciding the Portfolio's Purpose and Content.....	207
3.8.4.2 Communicating Learning Evidence.....	208
3.8.4.3 Portfolio Assessment.....	209
3.8.4.4 Rational For Learners' Training into Language Portfolios.....	211
3.9 Conclusion.....	215

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction.....	216
4.2 Research Design.....	216
4.2.1 The Treatment: Content and Process.....	217
4.2.1.1 The content.....	218
4.2.1.2 The process: Training students into language portfolios.....	226
4.3 The Participants.....	238
4.4 Data Collection Tools.....	239
4.4.1 The Pre-and Post-Tests.....	239
4.4.2 Observations.....	240
4.4.3 Focus Groups.....	243
4.4.4 Questionnaires.....	244
4.5 The Pilot Phase.....	245
4.5.1 The Results.....	246
4.6 Data Analysis.....	249
4.6.1 The First Pre-and Post-Tests.....	249
4.6.2 The Second Pre and Post-Tests.....	252
4.6.2.1 The Experimental Group Second Pretest Results	252
4.6.2.2 The Control Group Second Pretest Results	255
4.6.2.3 The Experimental Group Second Posttest Results.....	257
4.6.2.4 The Control Group Second Posttest Results.....	260
4.6.3 Observations.....	262
4.6.3.1 Before Introducing the Portfolio.....	263
4.6.3.2 While Introducing the Portfolio Content and Process.....	263
4.6.3.3 Along the Portfolio Training Process during the First Semester.....	264
4.6.3.4 After Assessing the Students' Portfolios during the First Semester.....	265
4.6.3.5 Along the Portfolio Training Process during the Second Semester.....	268
4.6.3.6 After Assessing the Students' Portfolios during the Second Semester...	270
4.6.4 Focus Groups.....	272
4.6.5 Questionnaires.....	275
4.6.5.1 The First Questionnaire.....	275
4.6.5.2 The Second Questionnaire.....	281
4.7 Discussion.....	287

4.7.1 The Experimental and Control Groups Before Portfolio Training.....	287
4.7.2 The Experimental Group Process with Portfolios.....	288
4.7.3 Portfolios Effects on the Students’ Learning Motivation, Attitudes and Perceptions.....	290
4.7.3.1 Motivation.....	291
4.7.3.2 Perceptions.....	292
4.7.3.3 Attitudes.....	293
4.8 Conclusion.....	296

Chapter Five: Suggestions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction.....	297
5.2 Supporting Student Autonomy: Revising Institution culture and Practices.....	297
5.2.1 Conceptualization of student autonomy.....	298
5.2.2 Teachers’ Training; The need for changing roles.....	299
5.2.3 Rethinking Assessment in Higher Education	303
5.2.3.1 Assessment Literacy Training for Teachers.....	307
5.3 Teachers’ role to promote student autonomy.....	312
5.3.1 Teaching towards Student Autonomy.....	312
5.3.2 Making Assessment a Positive Learning Experience: Considering Formative Purposes.....	316
5.3.2.1 Sharing Learning Expectations.....	317
5.3.2.2 Questioning.....	319
5.3.2.3 Self-assessment.....	321
5.3.2.4 Peer-Assessment.....	330
5.3.2.5 Feedback in Formative Assessment.....	332
5.3.3 Improving Summative Assessment.....	342
5.3.3.1 Get Ready for Examinations: Some suggestions for Teachers.....	342
5.3.3.2 Preparing Students for the Final Examinations.....	345
5.3.4 Reflective Teaching: a Teaching Portfolio Sample format.....	348
5.3.4.1 Teaching Portfolio Contents.....	350
5.3.4.2 Teaching Portfolio Process.....	356
5.4 Students’ Role: Learning to Get Autonomous.....	357

5.4.1 Motivation.....	358
5.4.2 Reflection.....	359
5.4.3 Interaction.....	362
5.4.3.1 Participation.....	362
5.4.3.2 Collaboration.....	363
5.4.3.3 Peer-assessment.....	365
5.5 Conclusion.....	367
General Conclusion.....	368
Bibliography.....	374
Appendices:	
Appendix A: The student’s portfolio.....	430
Appendix B: The awareness raising stage of students’ portfolio training process..	462
Appendix C: Kashefian (2002) Learner Autonomy Questionnaire.....	464
Appendix D: The researcher’s questionnaire ‘second pre and post-tests’	466
Appendix E: Observations checklists.....	468
Appendix F: Focus groups questions.....	472
Appendix G: Evaluation questionnaires.....	474
Appendix H: The mean score of each item of the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire of the post-test of both groups	479

List of Tables

Table (1.1): Erasmus Mundus Participation for Students and Staff.....	61
Table (1.2): National Ranking of Algerian Universities By The Number of Articles.....	71
Table (3.1): Types of Resources.....	158
Table (4.1): Independent Samples <i>t</i> -Test for Autonomy before the treatment.....	249
Table (4.2): Independent Samples <i>t</i> Test for Autonomy in the Portfolio and Traditional Assessments.....	250
Table (4.3): Paired Sample <i>t</i> -test for the experimental Group Autonomy Before and After the Treatment.....	251
Table (4.4): The students strategies to overcome their writing difficulties.....	260
Table (4.5): The students' suggestions for their portfolios' content and/ process of use.....	281
Table (5.1): An example of a teacher's teaching philosophy and goals.....	351
Table (5.2): An example of a students' work plan or schedule for learning.....	362
Table (5.3): Peer-assessment worksheet.....	366

List of Figures

Figure (1.1): General Schema of The LMD Reform.....	42
Figure (1.2): Students progress within the bachelor and master cycles.....	48
Figure (2.1): Interaction between the learner and the self-access environment	94
Figure (2.2): The Practice Triangle	124
Figure (2.3): The Process of Reflective Teaching	125
Figure (2.4): Cyclical nature of the autonomous learning process.....	138
Figure (3.1): Assessment, evaluation, teaching and learning.....	147
Figure (3.2): A proposed holistic model of washback.....	167
Figure (3.3): Conceptual Alignment.....	193
Figure (4.1): The Research Methodological Design.....	217
Figure (4.2): The Content of the student’s portfolio.....	219
Figure (4.3): A Model Representing Students’ Process of Reflection on learning.....	231
Figure (4.4): Experimental research: Before-and-after with control design.....	239
Figure (4.5): The experimental group practice of English outside class (pre-test results)	253
Figure (4.6): The experimental group learning attitudes inside class (pre-test results)...	254
Figure (4.7): The experimental group effective way to study English (pre-test results)...	254
Figure (4.8): The control group practice of English outside class (pre-test results).....	256
Figure (4.9): The control group learning attitudes inside class (pre-test results).....	256
Figure (4.10): The control group effective way to study English (pre-test results).....	257
Figure (4.11): The experimental group practice of English outside class (post-test results).....	258
Figure (4.12): The experimental group learning attitudes inside class (post-test results).....	259
Figure (4.13): The experimental group effective way to study English (post-test results).....	259
Figure (4.14): The control group practice of English outside class(post-test results).....	260
Figure (4.15): The control group learning attitudes inside class (post-test results).....	261
Figure (4.16): The control group effective way to study English (post-test results).....	262

Figure (4.17): The results of evaluating the students' portfolios during the first academic semester.....	265
Figure (4.18): An example of students' description of the suggested exercises.....	267
Figure(4.19): The results of assessing the students' portfolios during the second semester.....	270
Figure(4.20): The students' views concerning their portfolios during the First semester.....	276
Figure (4.21): The beneficial effects of portfolio on the participants' learning during the first Semester.....	277
Figure (4.22): The students' feelings about their portfolios during the first semester.....	278
Figure (4.23): The students' difficulties in developing their portfolios during the first semester.....	279
Figure(4.24): The students' views concerning their portfolios during the second semester.....	282
Figure(4.25): The beneficial effects of portfolio on the participants' learning during the second semester.....	283
Figure (4.26): The students' feelings about their portfolios during the second semester.....	284
Figure (4.27): The students' difficulties in developing their portfolios during the second semester.....	285
Figure (5.1): Four-Step Process of Reflection.....	328
Figure (5.2): A worksheet for reflecting on teacher's feedback.....	339
Figure (5.3): Ground Rules for Peer Editing.....	340
Figure (5.4): Reflective Teaching Stages.....	349

List of Acronyms

BP: The Bologna Process.

DS: The Diploma Supplement.

ECTS: The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

EHEA: European Higher Education Area.

EU: European Union.

HEIs: Higher Education Institutions.

NQFs: National Qualification Frameworks.

QA: Quality Assurance.

SAC: Self-access Centre.

SDL: Self-directed Learning.

SCL: Student-centred Learning.

VET: Vocational Education and Training.

Glossary

Criterion Reference Tests: is a style of test which uses test scores to generate a statement about the behavior that can be expected of a person with that score. Most tests and quizzes that are written by school teachers can be considered criterion-referenced tests. In this case, the objective is simply to see whether the student has learned the material.

Digital Literacy: is the knowledge, skills, and behaviors used in a broad range of digital devices such as [smartphones](#), [tablets](#), [laptops](#) and [desktop PCs](#), all of which are seen as network rather than computing devices. Digital literacy initially focused on digital skills and stand-alone computers, but the focus has moved from stand-alone to network devices. Digital literacy is distinct from [computer literacy](#) and digital skills. Computer literacy preceded digital literacy, and refers to knowledge and skills in using traditional computers (such as [desktop PCs](#) and [laptops](#)) with a focus on practical skills in using software application packages. Digital skills is a more contemporary term but is limited to practical abilities in using digital devices (such as [laptops](#) and [smartphones](#)).

Evidence: is “the tangible proof that your beliefs and principles are being consistently practiced. It includes reflection on your learning and growth in relation to your practice. And it documents the connections you have made between the artifacts you collect and the criteria that you are trying to meet” (Jones & Shelton, 2011, p.96).

Knowledge-based Society: is the type of society needed to compete and succeed in the changing economic and political dynamics of the modern world. It refers to societies that are well-educated, and who therefore rely on the knowledge of their citizens to drive the innovation, entrepreneurship and dynamism of that society’s economy.

Metacognition: is "cognition about cognition", "thinking about thinking", or "knowing about knowing". It comes from the root word "meta", meaning beyond. It can take many forms; it includes knowledge about when and how to use particular strategies for learning or for problem solving. There are generally two components of metacognition: knowledge about cognition, and regulation of cognition.

Norm-Referenced Test (NRT): is a type of test which yields an estimate of the position of the tested individual in a predefined population, with respect to the trait being measured. The estimate is derived from the analysis of test scores and possibly other relevant data from a sample drawn from the population. That is, this type of test identifies whether the test taker performed better or worse than other test takers, not whether the test taker knows either more or less material than is necessary for a given purpose.

Professional Development (PD): is a means of supporting people in the workplace to understand more about the environment in which they work, the job they do and how to do it better. It is an ongoing process throughout our working lives.

Training: is teaching, or developing in oneself or others, any [skills](#) and [knowledge](#) that relate to specific [useful competencies](#). Training has specific goals of improving one's [capability](#), capacity, [productivity](#) and [performance](#).

General Introduction

General Introduction

Language learning is a dynamic process which involves not only the learner's mind, but also his/her feelings and attitudes towards this process. The latter, is also shaped by the social context where learners' interaction and negotiation in the classroom interplay. Thus, learning is based on cognitive, affective and social aspects which are holistically interrelated or connected. Teaching, thus, is not merely about handling effectively approaches, following designed techniques and assigned materials to transmit information, but it also concerns enhancing positive emotions and helping learners overcome psychological barriers (such as anxiety, fear, stress, etc.), in order to achieve their learning potential.

In fact, with the increasing interest in lifelong learning and the need to acquire and renew one's skills and knowledge, learners' autonomy is getting crucial along with their motivation and interest in learning. Indeed, to be effective citizens in the knowledge-based society of the 21st century, learners will be more and more forced to rely on their own resources to learn new things, apply their knowledge in new contexts and be capable of adapting themselves to the new demands of a rapidly changing world. In this sense, teaching cannot be exclusively focused upon transmitting concepts and principles, but needs to help learners develop capacities such as creativity, critical thinking, social responsibility, decision-making and problem-solving skills. To meet such expectations, the notion of learner autonomy is becoming a *'buzz-word'* within the context of language learning, and an educational objective which needs to be targeted (Little, 1991, p.02).

Therefore, different theoretical frameworks have been developed in the literature to encourage the development of learner autonomy in language education (for example, Benson, 2001; Little, 2007; Littlewood, 1997, 2002; Macaro, 1997; Nunan, 1997; Smith, 2003). In effect, this concern has gone beyond the classroom context to include self-access language centres where a variety of autonomous learning opportunities are provided for learners. Among these opportunities is implementing self-assessment approaches in language learning which have been regarded as an integral part of autonomous learning (Holec, 1981; Tudor, 1996; Thomson, 1996; Gardner & Miller, 1999).

In fact, language assessment as an educational practice plays an important role in shaping learners' future. Its washback may contribute to building up their beliefs and attitudes towards language learning thereby acting either as a driving engine that pushes learners towards success, or as a demotivating source which impedes their progress. Yet, within pedagogy for autonomy assessment is considered not only as a tool for measuring learners' achievement, but also improving

the quality of their learning. Within such culture, learners are active agents in the assessment process who make judgements about their own work and that of others, monitor their progress and make decisions to improve. To create such learning opportunities self-assessment is regarded as an important tool for those committed to such goals as learner autonomy (Boud, 1995).

In this respect, portfolio assessment has been widely acknowledged as a promising alternative to the traditional assessment approaches in English language teaching and learning contexts. Providing learners with opportunities to involve in their learning through boosting their reflection, decision making and taking is considered the building blocks of this approach. As a result, learner motivation, awareness of their learning strengths and weaknesses, and their self-confidence are likely to get enhanced. For this reason, portfolio assessment could be a valuable support for fostering learner autonomy. Besides, this assessment tool can be applied to link learning, teaching, and assessment, thereby helping teachers assess effectively the language skills (writing, listening, speaking, and reading).

Hence, though portfolios have been considered as a dynamic ongoing assessment that aids in stimulating thinking and promoting learner's independence, integrating them into the language classroom has been a debatable issue among language educators and scholars. Besides, the skeptical views which have been raised on their reliability and validity as an assessment tool and learners' ability to assess their language proficiency remain questioned. In effect, reviewing the literature has shown that the formative function of portfolio assessment is under-explored especially in the EFL context (Lam & Lee, 2010). As Sepasdar et al., (2014) claim more studies are needed to explore the nature of portfolio assessment in EFL context in general, and in writing in particular. Thus, more empirical evidence is needed to find out about its effect and gain insights into the way learner autonomy interacts with such an assessment approach.

For that reason, the present work is devoted to this concern. It aims to undertake a preliminary investigation which seeks to find out about the effects of portfolio training on the students' autonomy with respect to their writing. It needs to be noted here that in this training, language portfolios are not only used for assessing but also for enhancing learning and helping them improve in the Written Expression course. To answer this question, more detailed questions have to be investigated:

1. What effects portfolio training has on the students' motivation to study English?
2. What kinds of learning attitudes have emerged as a result of such training?

3. Have the students changed their perceptions of the teacher-student role in EFL context?

The author hypothesizes that this training will help the participants get autonomous in the course. She also suggested a number of hypotheses to account for the above sub-questions:

1. Portfolio training may raise the student's motivation to study English and the course.
2. It may help them adopt more reflective learning attitudes.
3. It may raise their awareness of the need to depend more on themselves.

To illustrate these hypotheses, an experimental research has been carried out where the treatment effect, i.e., portfolio training was measured through the use of control group design. Also, a mixed method approach was adopted here to gather both qualitative and quantitative data via observations, students' questionnaires and focus groups. The participants are first year LMD students who were studying English at the University of Mostaganem and attending the Written Expression course during the academic year 2013-2014. These students have been selected for the following reasons:

- Because the LMD system is a recently adopted reform at the Algerian higher education system and its assessment practices and objectives need to be examined and investigated to see to what extent they fit within this context.
- Because the present work is advocating a self-assessment training approach into the use of language portfolios and since training is an ongoing process students need to be introduced to from the first year at university.
- Since student autonomy with respect to writing is the focus of the present research this training was conducted along with taking the Written Expression tutorial classes.

By providing empirical evidence about the function of portfolios in language learning, the present research can help make theoretical perspectives explicit. Indeed, the research outcomes are likely to contribute to the knowledge base of ESL/EFL teachers and learners regarding autonomy and portfolio assessment. Moreover, the data gathered can be used to inform and improve assessment practices in order to enhance students' learning opportunities, in addition to directing attention to ways issues can be addressed in relation to that goal.

In fact, the data reported from a questionnaire survey which was conducted by the researcher within the present learning context has been a source of motivation and inspiration for one's involvement in the present inquiry. Indeed, this case study was set out to determine the effects of washback on first year students' learning autonomy through finding out about their views, feelings and attitudes towards its results. The findings showed washback negative effects which were reflected in their dependence on their teachers, difficulties with exams and discouraging beliefs regarding the educational system (the LMD), their teachers and their learning process (Djoub, 2013). In light of such findings, has emerged the need to seek for assessment approaches that can have positive washback on students' learning and autonomy.

The whole work is divided into five interrelated chapters. The introductory chapter provides some background on the Algerian higher education system. Since the latter's practices were brought in light of the educational reform of the Bologna Process, this chapter first introduces this reform, its origin, objectives, strategies and challenges within the European higher education system. Then, it describes the nature of assessment and teaching practices in the course under study at the department of English (Mostaganem University).

This thesis consists of two theoretical chapters. Chapter two reviews the literature related to learner's autonomy in language learning: its definition, importance and some suggested approaches to foster it. It also attempts to clarify the roles of learners, teachers and institutions in promoting pedagogy for autonomy in EFL context. Chapter three's main concern is to provide insight into the role of assessment practices and its relation to learner's autonomy. It first defines the process of language assessment through showing its distinction from other related concepts such as testing and evaluation, besides outlining some of its approaches as well as principles. Summative and formative assessment approaches are also discussed here as the main types of such a process.

Moreover, this chapter deals with the steps of test construction, defines feedback, its rational and the way to make it positive and constructive. Since portfolio training concerns writing classes, this process is introduced along with its assessment approaches in ESL/EFL context. Besides, since the use of language portfolios as a learning and self-assessment tool is advocated in this work, defining them, their contents, showing their benefits, limitations and approaches are also dealt in this chapter.

Chapter four describes first the research design including the treatment, the sample under study, the research tools for the data collection process and the pilot phase's process and result. In addition, it depicts the data analysis methods then analyses the data obtained from each data collection tool. The research findings gathered before and along portfolio training are discussed to

reveal how the participants cope with such training. Besides, to investigate its effects on their learning autonomy, discussion of the findings is done in relation to their motivation, perceptions and attitudes.

Finally, a set of suggestions and recommendation are put forward in chapter five in light of the obtained results. Indeed, the purpose of this chapter is to help students develop their autonomy in EFL context. This is though advocating a shift in teaching and assessment practices towards more student-centred learning. Since students' role in achieving that goal is of paramount importance, this chapter also addresses a set of learning tips and suggestions for students which aim to enhance their motivation, reflection and interaction in learning.

Chapter One

The Learning Context

Chapter One

The Learning Context

1.1 Introduction

European higher education has witnessed a set of changes embodied in the Bologna Process in 1999. It has been thus a decade of reform, planning, report taking of progress through continuous meetings of the European countries concerned with this reform. Indeed, educational goals and perspectives have been adopted according to the new demands of the 21st century. Before introducing the Bologna Process and clarify its aims and perspectives, this chapter first refers to what has led to its emergence, through depicting the effects of globalization changes on higher education. Then, the Bologna Process's conferences, objectives, strategies and challenges within the European context are dealt with to clarify the Bologna reforms which have been advocated and used beyond this context.

To acquaint the reader with the present research setting, the chapter also provides an insight into these reforms application in the Algerian university, through underlining their objectives, some reasons of their applications, challenges and the strategies adopted to make them effective. Besides, it gives an overview of the Department of English (The University of Mostaganem) and describes the Written Expression course, i.e., its teaching and assessment practices during the first and second semester of the bachelor degree cycle.

1.2 Globalization and the European Higher Education: Current Trends and Perspectives

During the last decade of the 20th century, changes in society such as globalization, demographic change and the rapid technological development are radically changing not only people's way of working, but also their aspirations and way of interacting with each other in the narrower and broader social community (Smith, 2002). To grapple with the implications of these changes, higher education needs to keep pace with global advances in developing both manpower and research. Within this context, innovations and reforms of education systems have become a core issue where reconsideration of the social and economic role of higher education has been addressed. Thus, a question which can be raised is: How does globalization affect European higher education sector?

Globalization has been defined as “*the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness*” (Held et al., 1999, p.02, cited in Marginson & Wende, 2006, p.04). It follows from this, that global flows do not only include economic activity, but also in tertiary education people, communications, knowledge, ideas, technologies, policies and organizational practices (Marginson, 2008). Indeed, higher education is mostly affected by globalization “*because of its immersion in knowledge, which never showed much respect for juridical boundaries*”(Marginson & Wende, 2006, p.04). This is also because of its link to economic activity since it contributes to preparing individual for the world of work.

Within globalization, the economy has become more dynamic, fast growing and market oriented. Consequently, high level competences and qualifications have become the main criteria for job’s requirement. Thus, to make a link between education and the workforce and “*to address the accountability issues raised by employers, federal agencies and parents, an institution must have the ability to demonstrate enhancement of student learning and development*” (Carnoy, 2005, p.02). This is through focusing on the relevance of studies and the extent to which they equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills in the preparation for the job market.

Nevertheless, providing such skills and knowledge remains insufficient since “*rising payoffs to higher education in a global, science based, knowledge intensive economy make university training more of ‘a necessity’ to get good jobs*” (Carnoy, 2005, p.04). Thus, learning needs to be participatory where learners’ experiences, perspectives are engaged and their learning choices are underlined. It also needs to enhance their autonomy and spirit of critical inquiry since these are vital to the advancement of knowledge and growth of economy.

Accordingly, to adapt to the changing demands of the world of work, reconstructing courses and assessment procedures is becoming crucial. Therefore, universities are beginning to put emphasis on courses which are located in the workplace and are more project-based, where assessment implies the successful completion of a project which works in practice, and learners are aware of why it works, rather than viewing assessment as revealing ‘correct knowledge’ (Peng, 2002). Indeed, since knowledge is practical and work-based, it tends to be multi-disciplinary (Peng, 2002). Thus, more focus has been put upon the quality of learning. Besides, learners’ academic achievement has become to be measured in terms of their learning outcomes, i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes achieved at the end of their degrees. To do so, multiple assessment measures need to be implemented.

Furthermore, upgrading learners' skills is significant in a changing world which demands more flexibility and adaptability of work. Therefore, lifelong learning has become an important element of higher education system.

“The demand for education throughout the life cycle is becoming apparent. Fed by rapid changes in technology and the creation of employment categories that did not exist 10 years ago, workers and employers must continually attend to the educational dimension. As the nature of work has evolved, so have the needs of those in the workforce to continually upgrade their capacities”.

(Altabach & Davis, 1999, p.07)

Indeed, access to information and communication technologies (ICT) has undermined the traditional assumption that learning best takes place within one institution, within a fixed period of time as defined by the academic staff. This has led to a variety of lifelong learning modes that have important applications for the accreditation of educational institutions and assurance of the quality of studies. Besides, these modes of learning have come to respond to the increasing demand for higher education with more flexibility and availability. Access to knowledge has become easy and not time consuming *“since the traditional library is being revolutionized by web-based information systems, as are the management systems of many universities”* (Carnoy,2005, p.08). Hence, the challenge remains for universities to undertake the necessary measures to promote lifelong learning and implement effectively relevant digital tools.

Thus, advancement of science and technology has changed not only the world economy, but also higher education perspectives. It has also led to a digital knowledge-based society¹ which calls for innovation, and emphasized learners' active participation in acquiring knowledge through the search for various information and sources, besides, valuing their interaction, creativity and collaboration (Chong Yang Kim, 2002). As a result, teachers' role has shifted from serving as the centre of knowledge, directing and controlling the learning process to a facilitator who directs learners to the useful sources of knowledge and shows them ways of processing and applying them to encounter everyday problems.

“This means that education is no longer about how to deliver information and knowledge to the learner but about how to help learners to search and discover information for themselves to create knowledge useful to their own context. Teachers are no longer responsible for which information and knowledge is stored in the minds of learners but for how learners acquire information and knowledge”.

(Chong Yang Kim, 2002, p.146)

¹A definition of knowledge-based society is provided in the glossary.

Globalization has also contributed in creating economic competitions among countries as well as competitions among institutions of higher education. These competitions do not only concern research to increase research capacity among professors and young researchers, but also teaching to make it more flexible and diversified in order to be attractive for students from all over the world who are no longer competing for a job on local or national labour markets but worldwide (Erichsen, 1999). As a matter of fact, at the beginning of the 21th century internationalization of higher education has become a major trend in European higher education. This has appeared as a means to move beyond national and institutional borders through setting global standards and policies (Darvas, 1999)².

In this respect, Marginson and van der Wende (2006) claim: *“In global knowledge economies, higher education institutions are more important than ever as mediums for a wide range of cross-border relationships and continuous global flows of people information, knowledge technologies, products and financial capital”*(p.04). So, communicating in one language on international level has fostered global perspectives of academic institutions. *“At the end of the 20th century, English has assumed a role as the primary international language of science and scholarship including the internet”*(Mitsuta, 1999, p.61).

However, crossing borders for the purpose of studying or working depends on the recognition of qualifications and degrees. Though recognition conventions were set by the council of Europe in 1950's and UNESCO since the 1970's, this issue is getting more prominent within global trends and challenges (Wachter,2008). Indeed, how to internationalize the curriculum, provide recognition facilities and ensure an international link between academic professions are among today's priorities for European higher education.

Furthermore, demands for higher education access come into conflict with funding. As a result, reducing public spending was considered as a necessary action to be undergone by the European Union and its member. This decision has also come to push state budget consolidation and meet unified standards for introducing a common currency (The Euro) in Europe in 1999 (Sporn,1999). As a matter of fact, European higher education institutions are getting more autonomous to respond to the needs of socioeconomic development as dictated by the labour market. Thus, the state's role is changing from exercising a direct control on universities to

² Internationalization refers to any relationship across borders between nations, or between single institutions situated within different national systems. This contrasts with globalization, the processes of world-wide engagement and convergence associated with the growing role of global systems that cross-cross many national borders. In higher education, internationalization has mainly concentrated on the cross-border mobility of individual student. Whereas globalization has mainly to do with the most globalised areas such as research ,science, policy and executive leadership.

financing, providing policy guidance, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating them (Weifang,1999). Moreover, privatization of higher education sector has emerged where “*colleges and universities should develop their own management structure and set up and revise programs independently serve society and students as ‘customers’, and attract additional resources*” (Weifang,1999, p.14).

To conclude, globalization challenges have affected higher education systems, imposing thus a set of demands and changes. Facing these challenges, higher education needs to be prepared to react in a flexible way to the changing demands of the labour market. This is through offering flexible and diversified study programmes, besides educating, training young researchers and forming highly educated labour through continuing academic education and training. Moreover, to increase enrollment and meet social demands, it is necessary to overcome funding constraints through, for example, decreasing state allocation , offering grant, etc.

To achieve these objectives, some European countries decided to establish a European Higher Education Area through developing The Bologna Process. The latter aims to assist universities in playing a more significant role in the development process of the 21st world economy. What is then the Bologna Process, how has it evolved and what are its main goals are among the questions which the next section attempts to answer.

1.2.1 The Bologna Process: A Move Towards a Higher Educational Reform

As mentioned above, globalization has affected European higher system, leading thus to the emergence of new trends of teaching, learning and assessment. According to Bodrič (2008) these trends cover the need to establish a uniform of European education policy which includes standards that can ensure easier international comparability of education systems, levels of achievement and mobility of educational and professional employment. There is also a tendency towards high quality and efficient education which has created standards for self-assessment and evaluation of all participants and segments in the process of education, besides the growing interest in preparing students for future challenges through enabling them to transfer their knowledge and skills beyond the boundaries of their own cultures (Bodrič, 2008).

Internationalization of higher education has been increasingly addressed by national governmental policies. Indeed, setting up a framework in higher educational context has been conceived as a tool to improve European cooperation and achieve greater consistency and portability across European higher education systems. To realize such an objective, the education ministers of Germany, France, Italy and the UK met during the celebration of the 800th anniversary

of Paris University (The Sorbonne) to announce their intention to undertake a series of reforms to remove barriers and establish this educational framework. Their objectives were:

1. Improving the international transparency of courses and the recognition of qualification by means of gradual convergence towards a common framework of qualification and cycles of study.
2. Facilitating the mobility of students and teachers in the European area and their integration into the European labour market.
3. Designing a common degree level system for undergraduates (bachelor's degree) and graduates (Master's and Doctoral degrees).

(Eurydice,2009)

The initiative of the signatories has shifted the other European focus towards this issue and encouraged them to collaborate in order to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In June 1999, ministers in charge of higher education came from 29 countries to sign the Bologna declaration in the Italian city of Bologna. There has been a general consensus that to improve the quality of study courses and enhance employability six objectives need to be carried out to establish the EHEA by 2010. These objectives are:

1. Increasing mobility through removing obstacles to students, teachers, researchers and administration staff within and outside Europe in order to provide them with career opportunities in the European employment market.
2. Adopting a degree system based on three cycles: Bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies- that are easily readable and comparable.
3. Developing a system of credits, such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), that can be used for the purpose of transfer and recognition, thus promoting widespread students mobility.
4. Promoting European cooperation in the field of quality assurance and evaluation.
5. Promoting the European dimension in higher education through closer international cooperation, net works, integrated studies plans.
6. Implementing a diploma supplement.

(The Bologna Declaration,1999)

This EHEA has two dimensions an internal and external one. The former refers to promoting European cooperation in higher education and a cohesive European system while the latter, implies cooperation and competition in this sector with other world regions (Zgaga, 1999-2010). Hence, bringing a change cannot be made overnight. Instead, it is an ongoing process which requires time

and considerable efforts. Therefore, it was agreed in the Bologna declaration that special conferences should be held every two years to establish whether the objectives have actually been achieved and to pave the way for further studies and discoveries.

This process has been called The Bologna Process. It consists of the so-called Bologna follow-up group (BFUG) that consists of all signatory countries and the European Commission as well as the Council of Europe, European University Association (EUA), the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB), European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), European Center for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES), European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), Educational International Pan-European Structure and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) as consultative members (Zgaga, 1999-2010)³. Many other initiatives were appreciated to take this process further through holding a series of conferences: The Prague conference (May,2001), The Berlin Conference (September,2003), The Bergin Conference (May, 2005), The London Conference (May, 2007), The Leuven/Louvain-La Neuve Conference (April,2009), Budapest-Vienna Conference (March 22,2010) and The Bucharest Conference (April 26/27, 2012).

However, a question which remains addressed concerns the nature of this process: Is it intending to create a uniform or standardize higher European systems? To explain how the Bologna Process operates, the House of Common Education and Skills Committee (2007) refers in their fourth report to the origin of this process, through pointing out to the voluntary of its signatory countries whose initiative is non-binding inter-governmental. That is, this process is neither a European community initiative project nor an official programme, but rather *“it is an unprecedented chance for reform towards student-centered learning and it requires a joint effort between all partners, an effort in which we, the students, are an equal partner able to shape our educational experience”* (Deca,2009-2010, p.14).

For that purpose, the active participation of higher education institutions and their representative organizations into the process has been deemed important in making its success. Yet, this success depends upon their independence and autonomy of their involvement. Indeed, Bologna declaration (1999) upholds that *“universities’ independence and autonomy ensure that higher education research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society’s demands and advances*

³ European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education has participated in many projects such as drafting the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and launching the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). It works in co-operation and consultation with its member agencies and the other members of the “E4 Group” (ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESU). For more information on ENQA, visit: <http://www.enqa.net>

in scientific knowledge”(p:02)⁴. Thus, the Bologna Process is not about standardization of higher education systems across European higher education area, but rather an intention and design pledged by 29 countries to “*reform the structures of their higher education systems in a convergent way*” (Randall, 2010, p.02).

1.2.2 The Bologna Process Strategies and Challenges

The Bologna Process which gathers hundreds of institutions of higher education from 46 countries is conceived as the most important reform of higher education in Europe (Nielson, 2009-2010). With the aim of achieving the EHEA which facilitates mobility, increases employability and enhances Europe’s attractiveness and competitiveness, continuous reports and evaluation of the progress are being conducted reflecting thus, the Bologna achievements and challenges. The following section attempts to explore what this process has achieved so far and what lies ahead in the targeted areas such as: Student mobility, lifelong learning, employability and the three degree cycles system.

1.2.2.1 Mobility

Promoting student mobility is one of the central aims of the Bologna Process which contributes to the establishment of the EHEA. It has been defined “*as crossing country borders for the purpose of or in the context of tertiary education*” through scholarship, international portability of grants and loans and conventions of recognition (Richters & Teichler,2006, p.04). But, despite providing such definition, assessing mobility remains unreliable. The UNESCO Global Education Digest indicates that six countries host 67% of mobile students worldwide. 23% studying in the USA, 12% studying in the UK, 11% in Germany, 10% in France, 7% in Australia and 5% in Japan.

However, it has been claimed that such data do not refer to genuine mobility, but rather to the number of foreign students and students abroad. This implies that a foreign student may not be a mobile one or vice versa. One may inquire therefore about the criterion which can better indicate mobility. One of the two major approaches of measuring international student mobility according to Richters and Teichler (2006) are:

⁴ Bologna Declaration document is retrieved from: http://www.bolognabergen2005.no/Docs/00Main_doc/990719BOLOGNA_DECLARATION.PDF

1. The prior or permanent domicile approach: Providing information about students' domicile prior to enrolment or about their permanent domicile. If the latter is different from the country of the current study this indicates that students are mobile.
2. The prior education approach: Through this approach students are asked to indicate the country where the secondary school leaving examination was obtained .They are considered as internationally mobile students in case they have obtained their entry qualification in a country different from that of study.

However, Lanzendorf (2006) claimed that international student mobility would be better indicated on the basis of prior education than on domicile. A view which was shared by Richters and Teichler (2006) who argued that the prior domicile might be related to the domicile of the parents, i.e., where they live, while the students could have lived in a different place or even in the country of current study. Besides prior education, they pointed out to other indicators of mobility such as the duration and frequency of mobility which can help reveal cases of multiple mobility, also the purpose of mobility, i.e., the proportion of students who have been abroad for studying and those who are doing other study-related activities in the course of study.

Research on mobility barriers has shown that financial constraints including funding as well as finding affordable and adequate accommodation remain the main challenge in planning a student related stay abroad (EUROSTAT, 2009)⁵. To overcome this problem, various EU programmes were created among them the Erasmus exchange programme which provides portable grants and loans for students who are participating in such a programme. Within such programme, the students are allowed to go to another country to exchange with for a relatively short duration without paying fees for tuition, registration, testing or library access at their foreign exchange (O'Donnell, 2009). In addition to financial support, raising students' awareness of the process of mobility and its importance to their studying experience, is significant for promoting mobility.

“It is likely that more funding for students is not enough and in the next decade we will also need to encourage and support our administrative staff and teachers to be mobile. Nothing is more effective in convincing students to go abroad than talking to a teacher who has already had the experience”.

(Harutyunyan & Bonete, 2007-2009, p.31)

⁵ EUROSTAT is among the statistical offices of the European Union which present data on the so-called EURODATA countries which are as indicated by Kelo, et al.,(2006,p.05) are 32 European countries including (a) the 25 EU member states Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, the United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia, and Slovakia; (b) the 4 EFTA members: Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway; and (c) Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey.

Hence, it is worth noting that student mobility is not always accessible, since getting a visa or residence permit poses a problem for students because of being expensive and time consuming. In fact, student mobility is now regarded by most countries as “*a form of hidden immigration*”(Murphy-Lejeune, 2008, p.19). In addition, after September 11 attacks, the Arab Muslim students’ mobility has been put into question since their presence in Western countries is considered as a threat by the host country. This mobility is increasingly determined by the students’ religion nor by the degree of their academic achievement. Due to this conception, The Arab Muslim students are unlikely to live their dream of studying abroad since their social security while staying there might have no guarantee. This reality contradicts Bergen’s words (the head department of Higher education and History Teaching, The Council of Europe): “*The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is an incarnation of the ideal that the Council of Europe embodies: a Europe for individuals; one characterized by democracy, human rights and the rule of law; and a Europe fluent in intercultural dialogue*” (Bergen, 1999-2010, p.13).

In addition to enhancing mobility, the role of higher education is also to equip students with the necessary skills, attitudes and behaviours which are required in the workplace. They also need to be maintained or renewed throughout individuals working lives. These objectives can be achieved through enhancing employability and lifelong learning skills as the next two sections display.

1.2.2.2 Employability

The importance of graduate employability is also a key issue for the Bologna Process (London Communiqué, 2007). It has been one of the main goals to be achieved to create The European Higher Education Area. But, what is employability in the context of the Bologna Process and why is it essential for The EHEA? In fact, several definitions have been attributed to this term. According to the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) employability is “*The ability to gain initial employment, to maintain employment, and to be able to move around within the labour market*” (Employability Working Group, 2009, p.01)⁶. This means getting benefit from education and the obtained qualification by securing a job and not being unemployed. Hence, participating currently in the world of work requires more flexibility and highly skilled employees to cope with the social

⁶ Working Group on Employability Report is can be accessed online at:
<http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/actionlines/employabilitysurvey.htm>

and economic challenges. Thus, employability can be seen as: *“A set of achievements-skills, understandings and personal attributes-that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy”* (The Official Bologna Seminar, 2004, p.01)

Accordingly, enhancing employability means *“developing competences from the individual’ point of view and enhancing attractiveness and competitiveness of a higher education institution”* (Kohler,2004, p.05). Indeed, Green and McVie (1999-2010) stressed the importance of employability in a more knowledge-based society where it becomes an essential ingredient enabling citizens to update their skills and knowledge and acquire new qualifications and improve their economic prosperity. This is likely to contribute to the economic growth and lead more to a better higher education quality. Thus, employability allows for setting a network between higher education systems and the world of work through which academic study programmes and learning goals are matched with the demands of the labour market. As a result, after graduating students are likely to earn a living, thereby, reducing the rate of unemployment and the social problems which this phenomenon may cause, in addition to developing a sense of personal value.

It follows from this, that employability aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills and competences which employers need in the workplace, and also to ensure that those skills are maintained and renewed through their careers (Employability Working Group, 2009). Hence, a question which might be addressed here is: What are the employability skills needed by today’s employees? For the Employability Working Group (2009) employability skills include *“the ability to engage in different disciplines to pursue flexible learning paths and also to ensure continued personal and professional development”* (p.06). To clarify more these skills, Robinson (2000) defined them as attitudes and actions which are necessary for workers to get, keep and do well on a job.

Robinson (2000) also added that these skills are generic, i.e. not job specific, teachable and can be categorized into three sets. First, basic academic skills include the ability to read and comprehend what has been read, the ability to respond appropriately orally and in writing, the ability to listen, understand instructions and carry them out, in addition to being able to do basic math computations accurately. Second, higher-order thinking skills imply the ability to think critically, evaluate, take decisions, solve problems and act logically, besides the use of technological tools with more creativity and efficiency. These skills can be acquired through training. Finally, personal qualities of employees include: being responsible over their work, feeling more confident in themselves, dealing with the others honestly and openly with respect,

integrating themselves and displaying interest in working within a group regardless of individual differences, being adaptable and flexible, i.e. they like learning new things to accomplish their job, besides, being self-motivated, well groomed, i.e. they set goals and manage well their job, punctual and efficient.

Therefore, to prepare students for the world of work, higher education institutions need to raise students' awareness of the importance of personal values which employers value. In addition, they need to teach them the necessary knowledge, attitudes and behaviours for their professional development and train them into their use to apply them effectively in the workplace. To achieve this objective, the Employability Working Group report (2009) suggested the need for raising awareness of the Bologna Process and the value of a first cycle/ bachelor degree to students and employers, besides promoting greater dialogue between higher education institutions and employers through setting partnerships to find out how to make higher education more responsive to labour market demands and inform employers of the skills which graduate can bring to employment. In addition, they pointed out to the importance of providing information, advice and guidance services within higher education institutions to make clear to students and alumni what is required for their professional development, while monitoring progress through responding to the Bologna Process stocktaking report questions on enhancing employability with the first cycle (Employability Working Group, 2009).

Nevertheless, more work needs to be done to improve employability skills to enhance dialogue between HE institutions and employers, provide careers information, advice and guidance to prospective and graduate students (Employability Working Group, 2009). Indeed, higher education institutions need to develop curricular that are relevant to the labour market to enable students to make a real choice. Moreover, setting a link between academic studies and professional activities is required through providing vocational education and training for employees (Employability Working Group, 2009). The value of bachelor programmes also needs to be clarified and communicated to employers, students, parents and higher education institutions themselves (Employability Working Group, 2009). Moreover, sustainable dialogue with employers, trade unions and professional associations is essential to help achieve higher quality education (The Official Bologna Seminar, 2004).

1.2.2.3 Lifelong Learning

Nowadays, the quality of education has become the main concern, with pertinent traits and the power to develop competences needed all lifelong (Pieck, 2002). This is because learning is an ongoing and lifelong process where individuals acquire skills and further them according to the

social and economic changes occurring in their lives. Access to information and communication technology (ICT) has helped in promoting lifelong learning, thereby responding to different learning needs and wants. Before dealing with lifelong learning as a key issue in the Bologna Process, one needs first to make an attempt to define this concept. *“Lifelong learning is a concept linked with permanent and continuing education”*(Pieck, 2002, p.144). It means acquiring the necessary skills which enable one not only to accumulate knowledge, but also to be trained to learn how to learn through the acquisition of cognitive, social and creative skills, in order to achieve personal development and professional enhancement and participate actively in society and economy (Doukas, 2002).

Yet, lifelong learning does not imply merely acquiring such skills and competences, but it also involves a continuous process of up-dating them throughout life. Furthermore, learning in this case is not confined to formal education⁷, i.e. schools and universities, but it can also take place in non-formal settings, i.e., at home, workplace, etc. Accordingly, within this process all individuals are concerned with learning in spite of their age, gender or social status. Thus, illiterate people, children or adults who might not have pursued their learning for a set of reasons (being poor, the inadequacy or non-existence of formal schools, etc.) can benefit from lifelong learning facilities and have access to schooling. Similarly, even those who are holding qualifications or degrees, they need lifelong learning to up-date their skills and contribute to their society economic growth. *“In a high technology knowledge society learners must become proactive and more autonomous, prepared to renew their knowledge continuously and to respond constructively to changing constellations of problems and contents* (Ronai,2002, p.94).

Therefore, the Bologna Process has stressed the importance of widening access into HE through providing opportunities for lifelong learning. In 2002, the Prague Communiqué signals that: *“in the future Europe, built upon a knowledge based society and economy, lifelong learning strategies are necessary to face the challenges of competitiveness and the use of new technologies and to improve social cohesion , equal opportunities and quality of life”*(p.02)⁸. Indeed, promoting

⁷ *Formal education* involves rigid curricula and it is usually classified into the primary or elementary, the secondary, high school and university levels. *Non-formal* education is a substitute to the formal system for out-of-school youth and adults. It is less formal in terms of its performance criteria and is more concerned with daily life problems. This includes adult school programs and other short-training courses. The last type of educational system is *informal education*, which is truly a lifelong process where every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience using various sources of knowledge such as attending shows or movies; reading books and newspapers; listening to the radio or watching television, etc. (Somtrakool,2002)

⁸ Communiqué of the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in Prague (2001), available online at: http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/010519PRAGUE_COMMUNIQUE.PDF

lifelong learning implies boosting employment and realizing economic growth, thus improving the standard of living as the European Union (2010) states “*If we want to maintain and improve our standard of living, we need to find ways to widen access to initial studies and learning at all ages*”(p.04). Through lifelong learning, personal aspirations can also be fulfilled as individuals feel more active and socially involved (Smith, 2002).

For that purpose, lifelong learning has been gaining more support through Bologna seminars and plans. Ministers agreed that improving recognition of prior learning, including formal and informal learning, creating more flexible, student-centred learning, national qualifications frameworks, are important tools in supporting lifelong learning⁹. European Union Member States have come to the benchmark that by 2010 at least 40% of 30-34 years old should have achieved higher education (European Union, 2010). In addition to recognizing prior learning, flexible learning paths are also among the tools which help widen access to lifelong learning. It has been found that 75% of the countries answered that they are establishing modular structures. Moreover, Open Universities and part-time, distance, e-learning and blended learning approaches can be found in a number of countries across the EHEA involving more flexible and interactive learning processes.

Furthermore, since the BP advocates institutions’ autonomy, higher education institutions possess discretion over their entry requirements. It has been reported that more than three-quarters of the countries provide flexible entry arrangements and flexible delivery to meet the needs of students, especially those who are older, refugees, veterans or with disabilities (Employability Working Group, 2009). Taking disabled students as an example, in Sweden HEIs have to spend a minimum proportion of government funding on these students (Michael, 2007-2009). Some countries offer special help for these students such as making special examination provisions, forbidding any discrimination towards them, etc. (Michael, 2007-2009)

To conclude, it is worth noting that lifelong learning does not only involve widening access to higher education, but also it requires diversification of the educational offer and the provision of enough funding to improve employability (Reichert & Tauch, 2005). But, institutions have to take into account the quality of their education and not focus only on widening access to higher education. Besides, they need to implement comprehensible tools and processes to recognize prior learning rather than “*overcomplicated, time-consuming, bureaucratic and expensive system which*

⁹ This is indicated in The Official Bologna Process Website 2007-2010 available online at: <http://www.ehea.info/http://www.bologna.process>Welcome to the official Bologna Process website!.mht>

deter academics as well as citizens seeking recognition of their skills and abilities”(Reichert & Tauch, 2005, p.69). For that purpose, a new degree structure has been adopted under the name of the LMD system.

1.2.2.4 Structural Reform: The LMD System

It is a new organizational framework for university courses which awards principally three types of qualifications: Bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees. The students obtain bachelor's (or the 'Licence' Degree) after three years of studying at university (Bac + three years). This allows them to embark on their careers at an earlier stage than under the previous system. It is worth noting that there are two types of bachelor's degree: Academic which allows students to continue into a master's degree and professional degree, the final qualification which enables them to get access to the world of work and continue also into a professional master. Thus, the obtained bachelor's degree varies among students in terms of the chosen major.

For master's degree, it requires at least two years after the licence (six years after the Baccalaureat). Admission to this cycle depends on the students' performance in the first cycle. The students study in depth the major which they have selected in the bachelor's degree. Whereas, the doctorate requires further three years after the completion of the master's. The students prepare a doctorate thesis under the supervision of a professor in a university research laboratory. It is worth noting, that this educational system has been adopted by European countries to fulfill the following objectives:

- a) To allow for the comparison and harmonization of European qualification, encouraging thus, intra-European academic mobility.
- b) To improve the transparency of qualifications on the job market.
- c) To strengthen the learning of transverse skills such as fluency in foreign languages and computer skills.

(Eurydice, 1999)

In doing so, the LMD system is likely to create a new spirit of international cooperation in European higher education and make from Europe the study destination for non-Europeans. In addition to that, in order to encourage students develop the necessary employability and lifelong learning skills, there is a need to develop first their autonomy in learning. This is so, since "*learner autonomy also involves the ability to adapt to change and to be able to evaluate different kinds of knowledge*" (Moir, 2011, p.03). For that purpose, the LMD reform aims at promoting students'

autonomy through enhancing student-centred learning within the three degree cycles. This implies a change in syllabus design, teacher's role and assessment practices.

i. Syllabus Development

Studies within this reform are grouped by domains which cover several disciplines. In each domain, the university proposes training programmes which are organized according to semesters. This means that teaching in this case is a semester-based programme. Each semester consists of teaching units (TU) which make up a programme studies that leads to the fulfillment of a given degree. These TU include: Fundamental teaching units, supplementary teaching units, discovering teaching units and independent teaching units. These teaching units consist of a specified number of compulsory and optional courses. Compulsory courses are either required in the student's main area of specialization or are taken by all the students of the university, whereas with the optional courses, the students have the choice. Thus, such teaching units offer a diversified programme choice and propose several programmes leading to the same degree. Yet, the question which can be addressed here concerns how the programmes are designed and organized through the three degrees.

Firstly, bachelor's degrees are divided into academic fields, i.e. domains (For example, bachelor's of English, Biology, Computer Science, etc). These field consist of groups of academic disciplines (For example, in the case of bachelor's of English, disciplines are Linguistics, Cultural Studies, Literature, Psychology, etc.) which have their programmes of study. These include professional programmes which prepare for entry into professional life and academic programmes which pave the way towards master studies. The choice between professional and research or academic orientation is usually made at the end of the fourth semester of the bachelor's course. So, the bachelor's curriculum for the first two years involves the students' responsibility and choice of his or her own programme based on a variety of modules.

Secondly, in case of the master's degree, the course features certain number of majors and offers different programmes of study. As in the bachelor's degree, there are professional programmes which geared to the labour market and research programmes leading to the doctorate studies. The student chooses his/her programmes of study at the end of the second semester of the master's course. As a matter of fact, within this reform student-centred approaches to curriculum design is fostered since students are given some choice within a programme of study, allowing them to set some of their own learning objectives. In making such a choice, students' autonomy and motivation are likely to be enhanced in learning. *“Placing learners at the heart of the learning*

process and meeting their needs is taken to a progressive step in which learner-centred approaches mean that persons are able to learn what is relevant for them in ways that are appropriate”(Edwards, 2001, p.37)

Finally, in the doctoral phase or so called the third cycle of the Bologna Process, participants are considered as both students and early stage researchers. Conducting research within this phase is considered as the core element of doctoral training through which knowledge advancement might be reached. In this respect, it has been argued that doctoral programmes should not be over-regulated but, they should “*promote interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills and improve supervision and assessment*” (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, p.04)¹⁰.

As far as professional and academic programmes are concerned, one may inquire about the difference between them. Professional programmes provide basic comprehension and professional training for students to enable them to get access to the labour market. Indeed, the pedagogical approach in this case, focuses on professional skills through offering lectures, work in small groups, project management and placement in companies. On the other hand, research or academic programmes put the stress on developing students’ research skills. This is through involving them in doing research and writing of dissertations, lectures and classes which train them for their research projects. However, not only do students have some choice over the programmes of study, but they also exert certain control over its content. Indeed, there should be decision making and negotiation shared between teachers and students concerning syllabus design. In this respect, the teacher has to mediate between the requirement of the syllabus and the students’ learning needs, preferences, styles of learning through creating a compromise between these aspects and the original pre-designed syllabus (Breen & littlejohn, 2000).

It is worth noting that, whether the programme is professional or academic, the main objective from curriculum and teaching is to develop students’ competencies needed to achieve a particular degree. These competencies “*consist of a description of the essential skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours required for effective performance of a real-world task or activity*” (Richards & Rodgers,2001, p.144). Indeed, this new reform focuses on competency based approaches to teaching and assessment where emphasis is put on what students can do and how they can do it, rather than on what they know. Thus, universities are required to describe their modules and study

¹⁰ Communiqué of the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in Bergen (2005) ,available online at: http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/does/00-Main_doc/050520Bergen_Communiqé.pdf

programmes in terms of teaching hours or text book, but also in terms of learning outcomes (European Union, 2010). These learning outcomes refer to:

“The specific intellectual and practical skills gained and tested by the successful completion of a unit, course or whole programme of study. These are expressed in terms of statements of what a successful student is expected to know, understand and is able to demonstrate after the completion of a process of learning”.

(European Unit, 2006, p.46)

Hence, one may inquire about the difference between competences and learning outcomes. In this respect, Adam (2004) states that *“a competence or a set of competences means that a person can demonstrate a certain capacity or skill and perform a task in a way that allows evaluation of the level of achievement”*(p.06). This means that a competence implies knowledge that is transferred into practice and displayed through a given task’s achievement. They may be *“divided in subject-area related competences (specific to a field of study) and generic competences (common to any degree course)”* (Kennedy, et al.,2009, p.03). Whereas, *“learning outcomes are commonly expressed in terms of competences or skills and competence”* (Adam, 2004, p.06).

Thus, it can be concluded that competences is a broad term referring to particular skills or abilities while the learning outcomes specify precisely what it is expected that the students will be able to do in order to demonstrate that they have acquired this particular competence (Kennedy, et al., 2009). Accordingly, this new reform puts the students’ needs and learning skills at the forefront. Therefore, it may make from them active students who contribute to making and taking decisions concerning their process of learning. Thus, students’ autonomy and motivation are also among the main prevailing targets of this system. Hence, if the student plays a major role in the classroom, what is then the role of the teacher in the LMD reform?

ii. Teacher’s Role

Within this reform, student-centred learning is advocated where students play a major role in their learning process. Therefore, this reform stresses the need for change in teacher’s conception and behaviours from the traditional role of knowledge transmitter to a facilitator. This is through providing students with learning opportunities using collaborative tasks, being flexible in using teaching resources and materials which can sustain their interest and motivation. Moreover, as it has been stated above, teachers need to adapt the programme according to students’ needs, thus providing them with the choice of what and how to study, in order to develop their autonomy. Meanwhile, it is also necessary to make such a programme relevant to the demands of the labour market. This role has been a major concern for this system as the European Union states:

“The three cycle system is an invitation to re-think the content of learning to make pedagogy more student-centred and to consider whether a given programme of

study adequately addresses the needs of graduates; and to consider whether graduates will acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to succeed in an ever changing labour market”.

(The European Union, 2010, p. 06)

Being a facilitator also entails following inductive teaching methods which involve students in problem solving tasks which may promote their critical thinking ability, creativity and responsibility over their learning. This role of the teacher has been explained by Bodrič (2008) as follow: *“Teachers need to grant language learners maximum access to learning and maximize the outcomes of the learning process. They can do this through providing a wide range of resources and encouraging learners to work at a variety of solution”*(p.26).

Accordingly, teaching needs to enhance students’ critical thinking and autonomy. This is through promoting the idea of learning how to learn knowledge creation by providing students with the experiences of processing information instead of taking a training which involves abstract conceptualization and logical reasoning (Chang Yang Kim, 2002). Thus, students’ autonomy and motivation in seeking for and reflecting on information has become a necessity in education since global changes call for more innovation and creativity. However, teachers’ control of the learning process remains necessary, but it needs to be exerted in a way that allows students’ learning to take place as Undehill (1999) explains: *“Control becomes more decentralized, democratic even autonomous, and what the facilitator saves on controlling is spent on fostering communication, curiosity, insight and relationship in the group”* (p.140).

Another requirement of the role of the teacher in this educational reform is the need to reflect continuously on their teaching and make changes on the basis of the feedback obtained from these observations, interviews, classroom interaction with their students and assessment’s results of their learning. In doing so, they are *“helping themselves reconstruct their experience and make a shift in pedagogic routines”*(Bodrič, 2008, p.26). Furthermore, teachers need to reflect upon their specialized areas, updating themselves regularly on new developments (Chang Yang Kim, 2006). This is to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond to the twenty first century demands. Moreover, as the high tech environment is getting more scope and *“the use of technology in teaching becomes as natural as the use of books or pens and paper”*, teachers need to be digitally literate in order to implement effectively digital resources in their classrooms and help their learners get benefit from their use (Dudeny & Hockly,2007, p.08). As a result, teachers’ training in using ICT is getting more importance.

In addition, part of the teacher’s role is their students’ assessment practices and grading process which also needs to show commitment to student’s centeredness. How is then this process

conducted in the LMD reform and what is the teacher's role in this respect? In attempt to answer these questions, the following part discusses the way students' assessment is conducted in this reform.

iii. Assessment in The LMD Reform: The ECTS and The Diploma Supplement

In the LMD reform, continuous assessment and personal work are more significantly taken into account. This is through including summative and formative assessment in learning. The former entails assessing students' learning process "*to establish how much progress a student is making during learning with a view to giving feedback to the student*" (Atkinson et al.,1993, p.07). It can revolve around quizzes, homework, portfolios, participation, etc. Whereas, the latter equates with the assessment of the product or outcomes of learning through a final examination, test assigned at the end of each semester. This method of assessment is designed "*to establish what a student has achieved at the end of a unit or a course*"(Atkinson et al.,1993, p.07).

In fact, assessment within the LMD reform is based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). According to the European Commission: "*ECTS is a student-centered system based on the student workload required to achieve the objective of a programme, objectives preferably specified in terms of the learning outcomes and competencies to be acquired*" (The European Commission, 2004, p.03). This means that institutions use units to measure the completion of courses that are required for academic degree. These units can include students' performance during lectures or lessons, individual works, memories, training, etc. Students need to complete all such planned learning activities within the time allotted to achieve the learning outcomes. This amount of time is called students' workload which has been defined as: "*The time required to complete all planned learning activities such as attending lectures, seminars, independent and private study, preparation of projects, seminars, examinations, and so forth.*" (The European Commission, 2004, p.04). This workload depends on the programme the student is taking and this lies within the responsibility of the faculty and university authorities.

However, teachers should be aware of the time required for each of the learning activities in a module and the competencies to be obtained from implementing them. They need, therefore, to reflect and select the more relevant teaching tasks and materials to reach the learning outcomes of a module or a course unit. Moreover, they should be aware of the need to link ECTS credits with the learning outcomes and the students' workload, otherwise credits remain meaningless as Adam says:

"...ECTS credits are not currently linked to levels and consequently they suffer from being rather crude instruments as they cannot delineate progression or indicate anything about the nature of learning. It is only when credits are linked

to level and learning outcomes (learning outcomes are used to define credits) do they reach their full potential”.

(Adam, 2004, p.06)

It is worth noting that, the student workload of a full time study programme in Europe amounts in most cases to around 1500-1800 hours per year. In this case, one credit stands for 30 hours of student’s workload, and two semesters make a year for 60 credits. Therefore, for the bachelor’s degree, students need to gain 180 credits after six semesters and display the following learning outcomes of this cycle:

- *Demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds on general secondary study; typically based on established knowledge but includes aspects informed by knowledge at the forefront of their field of study.*
- *Apply knowledge and understanding in a professional approach to their work; and can devise and sustain arguments and solve problems in their field of study.*
- *Gather and interpret relevant data to inform judgements and include reflection on social, scientific and ethical issues.*
- *Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to specialist and non-specialist audiences.*
- *Demonstrate learning skills that can sustain further study with a high degree of autonomy.*

(Denholm, 2007, p.02)

The master’s degree is awarded after four semesters in 120 credits, and it assumes a students can:

- *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding that extends that of the first cycle and provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/ or applying ideas, often in a research context.*
- *Apply knowledge and understanding and problem solving abilities in unfamiliar environment in multidisciplinary contexts related to the field of study.*
- *Integrate knowledge, handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information including reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements.*
- *Communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rational underpinning these to specialist and non- specialist audiences.*
- *Demonstrate learning skills that can sustain further study which is self-directed or autonomous.*

(Denholm, 2007, p.02)

On the other hand, the doctorate degree is not based on the credit system, but rather on the student's involvement in research under the supervision of a thesis director and writing and successful defense of this thesis. Yet, there are a set of learning outcomes which a student needs to accomplish at the end of this cycle:

- *Demonstrate a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research within this field.*
- *Demonstrate the ability to conceive, design implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity.*
- *Demonstrate a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge through a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication.*
- *Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas.*
- *Communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise.*
- *Promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.*

(Denholm, 2007, p.02)

It needs to be noted, that credits can be transferred from one course of study to another. This allows students to validate any period of study abroad, i.e. to use their qualifications in another education system (or country) without losing the real value of those qualifications. Thus, “*ECTS facilitates mobility and academic recognition*”(European Commission,2004, p.04). This allows the transferability of credits from one course of study to another and enables students to study abroad. Besides, credits can be capitalized. This means that all validated course units give rise to acquisition of the corresponding credits. They can also be compensated, i.e. obtained either by acquisition of each teaching units constituting the programme or by compensation of teaching units in the same semester. Also, credits can also be accumulated, i.e. students obtain a degree as soon as they achieved a given number of credits.

Furthermore, ECTS credits play an important role in designing curricula¹¹. This is so, since they define the time required to the completion of a programme and encourage effective planning of curricula content to achieve the desired results within time constraints. This also helps make clear

¹¹ But only if they are based on learning outcomes, and students' workload.

for teachers and students what is expected from them in a given course of study. Meanwhile, by adopting a common credit framework; competitiveness, flexibility and efficiency of European higher education can be enhanced. This is because it enables integration of new developing course units, programmes, modes of teaching and studying. Thus, it promotes more projects and collaborative research among educators and researchers as well. Indeed, cooperation and lifelong learning are likely to be fostered among diverse European higher education systems.

“The credit framework opens up higher education to become ‘a mass’ system additionally, the emphasis on individual choice undermines the traditional assumption that learning best takes place within one institution within a fixed period of time defined by the academic staff”.

(Trowler ,1998, p.08, cited in Karseth, 2006, p.262)

In addition to ECTS, the Diploma Supplement is also another tool which was developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO to facilitate the recognition of qualifications. It is a document designed in a standardized template and attached to a higher education diploma / qualification to describe the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies which were achieved by the student obtaining the diploma/ qualification (Eurydice,2009). The Diploma Supplement aims are:

- a) *Promoting transparency within and between higher education systems.*
- b) *Providing accurate and up-to-date information on an individual’s qualifications*
- c) *Aiding mobility and access to further study and employment abroad.*
- d) *Providing fair and informed information relating to qualifications.*
- e) *Facilitating academic and professional recognition and thus increasing the transparency of qualifications.*

(Europe Unit,2006,p.15)

Thus, the Diploma Supplement has been designed to respond to the non-recognition and poor evaluation of qualification which mobile citizens may encounter. Still, it needs to be noted that this document does not guarantee recognition of a qualification, but rather, it facilitates this process through providing an objective description of achievements and competences acquired during the study period for a particular qualification (Europe Unit,2006). However, one may inquire about the relation between the Diploma Supplement and the European Credit and Transfer and Accumulation System.

As stated before, the ECTS facilitates recognition of qualifications through transferring as well as accumulating the credits awarded to the student. But, this system is adopted by many countries as the common basis of their national, regional and local credit system (Europe

Unit,2006). Besides, it does not provide sufficient information on the qualification obtained. Whereas, the Diploma Supplement must adhere to the recommended rules and practices identified through the Bologna Process so that it provides explanations of qualifications that can be understood in another educational context. Therefore, including the ECTS credits in the Diploma Supplements is likely to provide enough information couched in terms of learning outcomes.

To conclude, the bachelor-master-doctoral structure or what has been known as the LMD system has been geared towards making European higher education systems more uniformly structured and their qualifications more understandable, thereby creating European Higher Education Area where students mobility can be accessible. Meanwhile, through focusing on students' centered learning in teaching and assessment, this reform aims to help students gain more autonomy and develop a set of employability skills which are recognized by employers and which enable them to engage successfully in the world of work. Besides, including the doctoral cycle in this system demonstrates the devoted concern to scientific research and the need to innovate, create and make from critical thinking a life-long process. Yet, how the three cycles have been implemented by European higher education systems and what are the remaining challenges facing them?

iv. LMD Applications and Challenges in European Higher Education

With the social changes and changes in students' expectations, it is no longer sufficient to think in terms of national criteria while setting up higher education policies. Indeed, adopting a common degree structure enables higher education institutions to become more internationally oriented, thus flexible to meet those changes. Therefore, in the Surbonne declaration, ministers affirmed their attention to design the bachelor and master degree. This reform has been strengthened furthermore through the Bologna declaration in 1999, where a system of credits was introduced. Moreover, in Berlin conference in 2003, the doctoral degree was included as a third cycle in European higher education. During the follow up Bologna conferences, emphasis was put upon the implementation of this structure to achieve the European Higher Education Area.

Hence, after the Bologna declaration, an ongoing debate was generated concerning the quality of higher education systems while shortening the first cycle. This occurred mostly on the part of countries, which had a long first cycle. In fact, some higher education institutions have started implementing and encouraging the structure towards its development, while others remain reluctant to engage with the reform process and others have been waiting to see whether this process would be sustained or not as the Trends III survey undertaken in 2002 /3 indicated (Crosier et al., 2007). But, such attitude has changed since the number of institutions across Europe that have

implemented this structure has increased from 53 % in 2003 to 95% in 2010 (Sursock & Smidt, 2010). It follows from this, that progress of this structured reform is taking place across the European continent as the need for a change has been conceived as necessary. “*The general attitude encountered in institutions toward reform was positive, with more students, academic and administrative staff and institutional leaders emphasizing the opportunities that they perceive through reform rather than highlighting obstacles and drawbacks*”(Crosier et al.,2007, p.19).

For that purpose, across Europe “*there is no longer any question of whether or not Bologna reform will be implemented, but rather a shift considering the conditions in which implementation is taking place*” (Crosier et al., 2007, p.19). However, a question which might be raised in this respect concerns the way this Bologna degree cycles are functioning. As Trends 2010 data reveal, in many countries, the three degree structures are being implemented while keeping some old degree structures due to pressures from different stakeholders groups, or are being gradually phased out (Sursock & Smidt, 2010). This approach to reform implies that there are still some skeptical attitudes which exist towards this reform. Consequently, a larger diversity of degrees are existing than before Bologna declaration.

Hence, implementing this structure has not posed much problems as Trends V survey in 2007 shows since only 2% of respondents to the questionnaire stated that Bologna degree cycles are not functioning very well, while 85% said that they either function extremely well (24%) or reasonably well (61%) (Crosier et al., 2007). Modifying the curricular to fit the new degree system is crucial to the implementation of this reform. This is through making it more flexible within student-centred learning. Indeed, progress has been noticed in reviewing curricular. The number of institutions which have undertaken this action has increased from 28% in Trends III and 55% in Trends 4 to 77% in Trends 2010 (Sursock & Smidt, 2010). Reviewing the curricular means for some countries redesigning it either through reducing the programme duration or compress it into a tighter timeframe (Sursock & Smidt, 2010). This has yielded to crammed programmes at the bachelor or the first degree as Trends IV questionnaire to students reports: “*The primary worries are that curricular are becoming more rigid and compressed with less space for creativity and innovation, and in this respect there were frequent complaints that too many former longer degrees are being crammed into first cycle programmes*” (Reichert & Tauch,2005, p.13).

Furthermore, as it has been explained before, one major aim of this reform degree is to enhance students’ employability. Thus, curricular have to be developed and reviewed so that it could be relevant to the demands of the labour market. Yet, a common argument has been reported among several institutions that the reform has not encouraged access to the labour market at the end

of the first cycle as little effort has been devoted to making first cycle qualifications accepted by the labour market (Reichert & Tauch, 2005). Trend V and Trends 2010 data show a small improvement in the number of universities that consider the Bachelor as proper preparation for employment, with 11% in the TrendsV to 15% in the Trends 2010 (Sursock & Smidt, 2010). In this case, students are likely to continue to a second cycle rather than enter the labour market.

In fact, the TrendsV researchers found that government funding policy is contributing to such a behavior because universities are financed to a larger extent on the basis of the numbers of students who are enrolled in the second and first cycles or the numbers of successful graduates in these cycles (Crosier et al., 2007). Besides, institutions, academics as well as students in some countries are not convinced of the value of the Bologna first cycle and of employers' acceptance of this degree (Sursock & Smidt, 2010). In this light, all countries face challenges in implementing the three cycles while taking into account the national specificities of the labour market, certain types of institutions, programmes, disciplines and qualifications (Euridyce, 2009).

Additionally, since absorbing bachelors is not common in most European labour markets the master degree is likely to be embraced by students. Besides, though doctoral programmes constitute the main link between the European higher education and research areas since they aim to the advancement of knowledge through involving in research. Providing, this degree cycle developments have, to a large extent, been left in the hands of universities without further regularization within this process (Eurydice, 2009). Indeed, many of the questions which have been asked about the first and second cycle are now being addressed increasingly to the third cycle such as: What are the purposes of the cycle?, how can mobility be improved?, should this cycle be made more relevant to the labour market, if so, how?, are credits necessary and helpful in the third cycle?, what should be the conditions to have access to the cycle? (Reichert & Tauch, 2005).

Nevertheless, Erasmus Mundus has supported 13 joint-doctoral programmes and 133 joint master courses involving 700 universities from all countries worldwide, providing more than 20000 students and academic staff with scholarships to the EU (EU, 2010). In addition, this programme has supported 54 projects providing studies, surveys, conferences, etc., to make from the European Higher Education Area more attractive (EU, 2010). It is worth noting that, joint-programmes play an important role in shaping the EHEA since they allow for more collaboration among higher education institutions and thus a space where they can learn from each other. In this respect, Trends V questionnaire found that several countries are involved in joining programmes¹². 60% replied that

¹² Among them there are certain countries that seem to have joint programme activity than others like Germany, Spain, France, Italy, UK and The Netherlands.

they have joined their programmes in one of the three cycles, while only 4% see no need for that (Crosier et al.,2007). Yet, joint-programmes require financial support which stands as an obstacle for EHEA with the increasing economic crisis.

Moreover, to achieve student-centred learning, institutions are required to “*change the organization of their study programmes from a system based on the academic year to one based on study units or modules*” (Sursock & Smidt, 2010, p.46). The Trends 2010 survey revealed that 46% of respondent have brought this change, 23% indicated that they did it in some programmes while only 17% said they have not done it as they see no need to do so. Moreover, the survey has asked the institutions which are implementing Modularisation whether it has led to flexibility of choice:70% of these institutions have reported that students’ choice is more flexible and learning paths are getting transparent within this process (Sursock & Smidt, 2010).

In addition to Modularization, implementing ECTS and DS are among the Bologna tools. Despite the increase use of ECTS, a majority of institutions still assess students’ knowledge through the traditional end-of-year examinations (Crosier et al.,2007). ECTS is applied very differently across countries, superficially in many cases or differently across faculties within an institution and between higher education institutions in the same country. The students’ workload was not properly or differently calculated as ECTS is calculated on the basis of contact hours rather than on the student workload (Crosier et al.,2007). This might hinder innovative teaching methods such as portfolios or project-based learning. Using ECTS at doctoral level is controversial to the Bologna action lines. The Trends 2010 display that the proportion of institutions who responded that the ECTS was not applicable at that level has decreased from 47% in Trend 3, 46% in Trend V to 42% in Trends 2010 (Sursock & Smidt, 2010).

As far as the Diploma Supplement is concerned, there is little evidence that this has a significant impact on graduates’ entry into the labour market as Trends 2010 show. The DS is considered as an administrative tool (not an academic one) which provides information only by using national terms or abbreviations which cannot be considered at international level. High costs and information technology development are required for the DS. “*This is leading some institutions and national systems to a pragmatic approach of delivering the DS only when they perceive a genuine need*” (Sursock & Smidt, 2010, p.43). In fact, the ECTS and the DS are still being implemented inconsistently according to the national or institutional approaches of many EHEIs as shown by all the trends surveys. This can be a challenge to institutions to facilitate recognition of learning outcomes and mobility.

For quality assurance, there is a general agreement that “*Convergence in quality assurance is an essential ingredient of an EHEA that wants to play a role in a global sphere* (Nielsen, 2009-2010). Therefore, ministers have put such an aim at the fore front in their Berlin, Bergen and London meetings. Hence, though external quality assurance is being developed, internal one at HEIs is slow in progress as some countries still consider the internal QA systems just for writing a self-assessment report for external review (The Bologna Process Stocktaking Report, 2009). Moreover, it has been noted that learning outcomes are often confused with the goals of the programme which are not measurable and cannot be used in students assessment so that designing assessment procedures to measure achievement and define the intended learning outcomes is still a difficult task to fulfill (The Bologna Process Stocktaking Report, 2009).

To conclude, in spite of the existing challenges, the Bologna reforms have been regarded as necessary steps to respond to globalization and technological changes. Such reforms “*have contributed to the enhancement of European competitiveness and attractiveness*”(Hiller,2010, p.04). This is so, since enhancing quality education, lifelong learning, mobility and employability are the core Bologna objectives. Besides, trends reports reveal that doctoral training had developed as Wilson (2009-2010) states: “*It is no exaggeration to say that Bologna has provoked quit revolution in doctoral education in Europe’s universities*”(p.26). Therefore, the Bologna process has gained momentum beyond the European continent “*to become the dominant global higher education model*” (Zgaga,1999-2010, p.09).

1.3 Implementing the Bologna Reform in Africa: The Algerian Experience

The Bologna Process has brought about a number of important and necessary changes into higher education systems. As globalization and internationalization grow in importance for all higher education institutions worldwide, this European model is increasingly gaining support beyond Europe.

“The Bologna Process is transforming Europe in more ways than were envisioned in 1999. It is influencing changes in work, migration, social policy and diplomacy as well as higher education , and will have an effect on school and vocational education as well . Globally, Bologna is improving European /Non-European cooperation and is inspiring reformers in other part of the world”.

(Hunt, 2009-2010, p.25)

The strategy “*The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting*” was adopted in 2007 by ministers of the Bologna Process to promote the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA, improve recognition, strengthen policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership (London

Communiqué, 2007). As a matter of fact, the process has become of a major interest. In most African countries, this reform has been introduced into their higher education systems.

“The Bologna Process and the creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have had two important effects on African Higher Education. First, the majority of universities in Francophone African countries have embarked on the process of adopting the LMD (Licence-Master-Doctorat) qualification structure, as advocated by the Bologna process. Second, efforts have started in creating an African Higher Education Area (AHEA), along lines very similar to the EHEA. Just as in Europe, these processes are meant to lead to harmonization of higher education in Africa, thus facilitating continental academic mobility and institutional collaboration”.

(Goolam.1999-2010, p.30)

African university rectors and presidents are regularly invited to conferences held in Europe and Africa. Indeed, in July 2007, a conference was held in the democratic Republic of Congo to discuss how the African universities adopt the Bologna Process (Obasi & Olutayo, 2009). This conference was preceded by other meetings in Daker, Senegal (July 2005) and El Jadida, Morocco (May 2006), where participants attempted to draw lessons from the European experience of implementing this reform. Hence, adopting processes of the Bologna reform within African higher education context needs to *“take into account the specificity of Africa and not be a mere imitation of what is happening in Europe”* (Goolam, 1999-2010, p.30). This is because, the political as well as the socio-economic factors differ from one continent to another, and even among countries within the same continent.

Thus, inspired by the Bologna reform, new forms of regionalism have emerged when restructuring higher education in Africa. The Catania Declaration in 2006 is an example of international cooperation between universities in Africa and Europe to structure them officially and sustainably. This declaration aims at developing a Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education and Research Area through grouping ministers from Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, from Europe: France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey , in addition to Jordan. These ministers decided to meet regularly to assess progress with regard to the following objectives¹³:

¹³ Catania Conference, January 29, 2006 : *The Catania Declaration* retrieved from: <http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/catania.pdf>

- *Developing human resources and promoting better understanding between cultures through setting a basic framework for a partnership in the fields of mutual interest.*
- *Enhancing a structured cooperation to promote the comparability and readability of HE systems this area.*
- *Facilitating mobility of students, researchers /staff and recognition through sharing criteria evaluation methods and quality assurance schemes.*
- *Promoting PhD research programs Sthrough enhancing collaboration and competitiveness in the region.*
- *Establishing well known centers for high quality education and research.*
- *Enhancing lifelong learning through strengthening a distance learning system.*
- *Developing vocational expertises and diplomas in HE through setting off initiatives in the field of VET.*

In fact, despite diverse reactions, many African countries are implementing the Bologna process as a systematic solution to their own HE crises. Algeria is among those North African countries who started thinking about this model since 2000. How are then the Bologna reforms implemented in the Algerian higher education systems and what are their impacts on teaching, learning and assessment? Before one tries to answer these questions, it is worth discussing the Algerian higher educational system before implementing the LMD reform in a little more detail.

1.3.1 The Algerian Higher Education before the Bologna Reform

The Algerian educational system has witnessed several changes over the last few centuries. Prior to the French colonization, public education for the indigenous population was very narrow in scope. Instead, it was reserved exclusively for children of French national. As a matter of fact, there were few elites of the total population who got access to higher education. Besides, these elite's mastery of Arabic language was shaky if not void of since French was the only medium of instruction. Accordingly, after independence the government undertook a number of measurements to make from the education system more responsive to the particular social and economic needs of the country.

The first reform in 1971 concerned the nationalization and Arabization of education. It was introduced for the sake of restoring the national identity and personality for the new state and population. It was thus a national goal decided by the government, promoted first in bureaucracy, in schools and media. However, this policy aroused controversy and opposition since many Algerians were not conversant in literary Arabic, while French was widely used in the state-run media, the working language of government and of urban society. Though literary Arabic is the language of

schools' instructions, French remains the language of instructions in universities and the labour market. Nationalization of education implies that the private sector had no impact on education and training in Algeria. In doing so, education is made free at all levels and is guaranteed for all by the government who has allocated funding for this sector since independence. This is to meet the different socioeconomic needs of the population and reduce the rate of illiteracy.

Furthermore, the government put emphasis on educating a corps of indigenous teachers to replace the European body of educators. This is through training "*a maximum of executives immediately operational, at the lowest cost and responding to needs expressed by the user sector*" (Benghabrit Ramaoun & Rabahi Senouci, 2009). As a matter of fact, enrollment into higher education has increased with more need to respond to the demands of society. Meanwhile, participants in the tertiary sector was also promoted through adopting a policy which made higher education more accessible. Some higher education institutions required the students holding of the Baccalauréat degree while others admitted students who did not have this degree but could pass a competitive entrance examination (ex: faculty of arts and humanities).

However, providing open access to university can lead to dramatic results. By 1980s, the increasing number of students' enrollment into universities has resulted in overcrowding and bad conditions of living in university campuses. Besides, the lack of financial aid has led to an absolute and inadequate equipment, affecting thus the quality of teaching and research. Consequently, guaranteed employment upon graduation has become no longer real and the brain drain became a well-known phenomenon. Moreover, as in other African countries, during 1980s and 1990s the Algerian state was under pressure. On the one hand, international financial institutions were urging the state to reduce the recruitment of teachers and the funding of universities. On the other hand, there was the social demand for school enrollment which could not be ignored politically (Khelfaoui,2009). Besides, the political-religious conflict during the 1990's has led to a mass exodus of academics from the country while those who remained were living under pressure and threat.

Nevertheless, as globalization was emerging worldwide the quality of higher education in Algeria has become a debatable issue where the implemented approaches to teaching and learning need to be examined. In fact, the Algerian university "*has long been considered as factory for diploma which favours quantity, to the detriment of quality*"(Bouakba,2010, p.03). Moreover, its educational system has long been dominated by the traditional teacher-centered models, where the teacher is the center of knowledge who controls and directs the learning process while students have no engagement in or responsibility for their own learning. Indeed, teacher's flexibility to meet

students' needs and preferences in a particular course contradicts with the existing educational conceptions.

Thus, teachers' over reliance on implementing pre-designed syllabus could not be questioned. Promoting interaction and communication among teachers and students has not been part of the classroom culture, even in studying languages where emphasis was put more on grammar and achieving language accuracy than on promoting students' ability to communicate using that language. This teaching context also tended to ignore affective factors of students which help them *"go beyond mere language instruction to a concern with making learning experiences meaningful and relevant to the individual, with developing and growing as a whole person"* (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p.07).

Furthermore, enhancing students' critical thinking and creativity were not part of the teacher's pedagogy. Instead, students were mostly required to accumulate teachers' inputs, memorize and recite them when being asked. A good student then was the one possessing a good memory, rather than a thinking mind who can communicate effectively through the language, solve problems, innovate and make progress. The testing culture in Algerian universities was closely linked to teaching, with teachers setting their students examinations at the end of each semester. This was the sole form of assessing students' performance, leaving thus no choice or alternative for their learning achievement. In doing so, teachers were unable to track their students' progress over time and take decisions to contribute to their improvement since the feedback obtained from such an assessment might not be sufficient. Moreover, since too much emphasis was laid on doing well on examination and tests, enhancing language development was unlikely to be perceived as a main objective of a qualification or certification. *"The orientation towards certification has led to teaching and learning for the purpose of passing examinations with much attention devoted to the best way to answer questions rather than on language use"* (Christopher, 2009, p.12).

Not only were students deprived from contributing to their learning achievement, they were also provided with no choice over their major interests. This is so, since all the programmes taught were geared towards academic diploma. In case of the department of English, these programmes oriented students to language teaching career. Thus, most of graduated students have been either recruited by the ministry of education in middle and secondary schools or they have joined different science and technology institutes as part time teachers¹⁴. It follows from that, this higher education

¹⁴ There are also students who have joined other institutions or universities for post graduation, either in the country or abroad.

system seems to limit students' ambitions and interests, thereby preventing them from extending their language experience beyond language teaching, besides narrowing their opportunities for employment.

It is worth stating that, the Algerian higher education system has always been under the state control which assumes funding and educational reforms, while privatization of this sector is still a future plan. Hence, before the Bologna reform, developing employability of students in the course of their academic studies was not an objective assigned to higher education programmes. Therefore, there was no link between academic studies and professional activities through providing vocational education and training for students. As a result, graduates were not prepared for the world of work so that their obtained qualifications were unlikely to be adequate for employment. In addition to that, other deficiencies within this educational system have been noted such as:

- *Training is mono disciplinary in classical approach where concept of general culture is completely absent.*
- *A significant failure rate due primarily to uncertainty about the future among students.*
- *Lack of motivation among teachers and students.*
- *Centralized management of the university.*

(Megnounif, 2009, p.02)

With the emergence of globalization, a worldwide competition has been enhancing where improving the quality of education was unquestionably significant. Consequently, an urgent need for reforming the Algerian higher education system was highlighted. This is through adopting the LMD system. How can then this system enhance students' autonomy? What has been done to achieve its objectives and what are the remaining challenges?

1.3.2 Rationale for the LMD Reform in Algeria

As many other countries, Algeria has decided to modernize its higher education system through adopting the Bologna reform. This is so, since the economic paradigm that is brought by globalization and internationalization necessitates a shift in pedagogical practices, perspectives and plans. Besides, Algeria has taken this step in the attempt “*to find a solution to the HE stalemate after nearly two decades of half measures to keep the system afloat*” (Khelfaoui, 2009, p.26). The

need for this change is explicitly stated in the guidelines of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research where HE missions are stated as follows¹⁵:

- *Provide quality training.*
- *Making a real osmosis with the socio-economic environment through developing all possible interactions between the university and the outside world.*
- *Develop mechanisms for continuous adaptation to changing jobs.*
- *Promoting universal values expressing the university spirit, mainly being tolerant and showing respect for others.*
- *Be more open to global developments, especially those of science and technology.*
- *Encourage diversity and international cooperation by the most appropriate terms.*
- *To lay the foundations for good governance based on participation and consultation.*

The three degree cycles started in the academic year 2004-2005 in ten pilot universities since bringing about a change in higher education is a process which requires time, efforts and considerable plans¹⁶. Also, the National Committee of the Education Reform (NCER) recommended a reform plan which was adopted by the cabinet in April 20, 2002. To put into practice such a plan, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has adopted a ten-year strategy to develop the sector for the period 2004-2013. This strategy includes two elements:

1. *Updating, adaptation and upgrading of the various education programmes by means of:*
 - *Generalised introduction of interdisciplinary course elements, with modules in information technology, the history of science, modern languages, methodology*
 - *and international law.*
 - *Broadening of course content with the introduction of optional modules and cross-disciplinary diversification.*
 - *Adoption of a semester system.*
 - *Upgrading of practical work, of periods of practical training in businesses, of projects and of students' personal work.*
2. *Establishment of a new course architecture through the introduction of the bachelor, master and doctorate structure; this architecture is based primarily on:*

¹⁵ « assurer une formation de qualité; réaliser une véritable osmose avec l'environnement socio-économique en développant toutes les interactions possibles entre l'université et le monde qui l'entoure ; développer les mécanismes d'adaptation continue aux évolutions des métiers; consolider sa mission culturelle par la promotion des valeurs universelles qu'exprime l'esprit universitaire, notamment celles de la tolérance et du respect de l'autre; être plus ouverte sur l'évolution mondiale, particulièrement celles des sciences et des technologies; encourager et diversifier la coopération internationale selon les formes les plus appropriées ; asseoir les bases d'une bonne gouvernance fondée sur la participation et la concertation ». Note d'orientation de Monsieur le Ministre de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique portant « mise en oeuvre de la réforme des enseignements supérieurs », janvier 2004. <https://pufas.wordpress.com/2007/02/07/57/>

¹⁶ Among these universities, one can state: Abdelhamid IBN BADIS University (Mostaganem), Béjaia University, Constantine university, Anaba Univeristy, etc.

- *Standard degree courses in all subjects except medicine.*
- *A greater focus on professional specialisation in some courses (vocational bachelors' and masters' degrees).*
- *Semester-long modules for which transferable credits are awarded (ECTS).*

(Tempus,2010, p.02)

It is worth noting that the LMD reform has subsequently been adopted in all universities in Algeria. Its aims within this context are summed up as follows¹⁷:

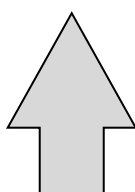
- *Improving the quality of higher education.*
- *Harmonizing the Algerian system of HE with the rest of the world.*
- *Offering training courses tailored and diversified.*
- *Facilitating the reception and orientation of students by the establishment of support systems for them.*
- *Fostering students' personal work.*
- *Opening up the Algerian university to the world of economy.*

It follows from this, that this reform aims at achieving better HE quality which means developing the competences targeted and responding to the demands of the world of work, besides harmonizing the diploma and qualifications obtained in order to facilitate student mobility overseas. Indeed, the reason for adopting this reform might be clarified through drawing a comparison between this system and the previous one (the 'classic' system). What are then such differences which make this reform advocated?

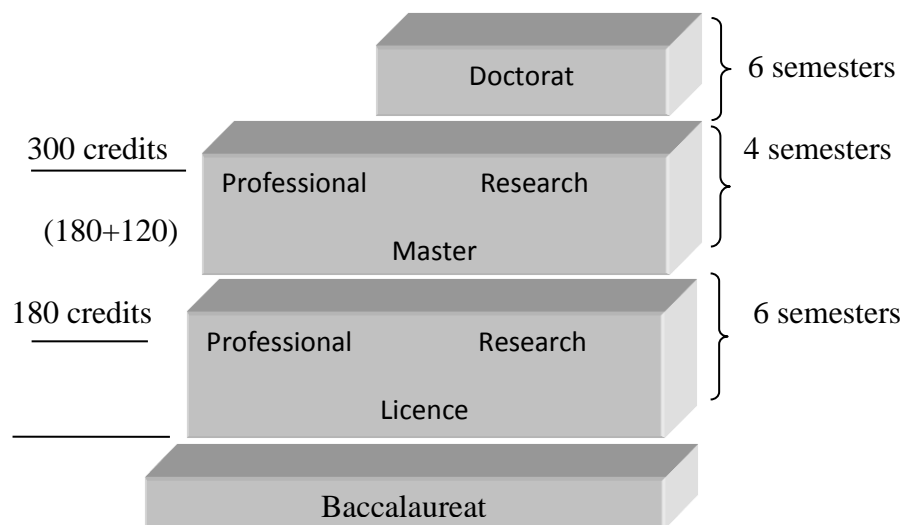
1.3.2.1 Developing Employability Skills

As aforesaid, the three degree cycles are organized into domains and disciplines which constitute four teaching units. The fundamental teaching unit which consists of the basic subjects which are necessary for studying a given discipline. For example in case of a first year Bachelor's degree in English, this teaching unit includes modules like Phonetics, Morphosyntax, Linguistics, Written and Oral Expression, etc. The methodological teaching unit grouped the subjects which aim at helping students acquire the necessary skills related to the methodology of research (ex: the Research Methodology module). In addition to that, there is also the discovery teaching unit which aims at widening students knowledge and helping them move from one discipline to another through introducing them to new subjects which concern other fields and disciplines (ex: Epistemology). The fourth teaching unit is supplementary teaching unit through which students are offered with the opportunity to make choices among a set of subjects in this unit like French, ICT, etc. These

¹⁷ Université Mentouri Constantine « *La Reforme LMD :Journée sur Le Tutorat* » (8 Janvier 2008).Available online at : www.umc.edu.dz/vf/pdf/0AEF2512d01.pdf



teaching units are based on semesters whose duration differs from one cycle to another as the diagram below shows.



Figure(1.1):General Schema of The LMD Reform¹⁸

Furthermore, each teaching unit corresponds to a number of credits that can be capitalized and transferred. As the diagram above displays, the total number of credits required for each semester is equal to 30 (180 in the licence, 120 in the master degree)¹⁹. Students are given the choice between academic programmes which geared towards master and doctorate cycles and the professional ones which prepare them for the world of work. Involving in such decision is likely to instill in students a feeling of responsibility and contribution in shaping their future career. As a matter of fact, they can feel a sense of ownership over their studies and gain more confidence in themselves. Thus, the LMD reform gives priority to student's voice and consider him/her as partners in the educational process, who draw its paths according to their needs, wants and future plans. As a result, focusing on interdisciplinarity and optional courses in a study programme is likely to lead to make education more relevant for the labour market, thus *“increasing the potential for innovative studies that can better address each students' interests and potentially enhance employment opportunities”* (Sursock & Smidt, 2010, p.58).

Hence, for the 'classic' system there has been no initiation to establish links and partnerships with the private sector through providing studies with professional programmes and training which are based on the needs of the industry. This is so, since all study programmes are academic so that no choice is left for students to make (Renghabrit-Remaoun & Rabahi-Senouci, 2009).

¹⁸ “Réformes des enseignements supérieurs”. Nouvelle architecture des formations basées sur le dispositif Licence/Master/MESRS. Décembre 2003 :[http:// www.mesrs.dz](http://www.mesrs.dz)

¹⁹ The European Credit and Transfer System (ECTS) is known in Algeria as 'STC' (système des crédits capitalisables et transférables).

Consequently, the diploma or the degree obtained remains alien to the demands of the world of work which might increase the rate of unemployment among graduate students.

For instance, students who have graduated in English with a Licence degree have no other job opportunities apart from teaching in middle, secondary schools or science and technology institutes (as part time teachers). This is because the four-year curriculum content is based on language skills, Phonetics, Grammar, Linguistics, Civilization and Literature, in addition to Didactics, Psycholinguistics and TEFL. Thus, the English being taught within this educational system is limited to academic use and no other alternative programmes are offered for students like Business English, Medicine English, English for Media and Communication, etc. In doing so, not only are job opportunities narrowed, but also an imbalance is created in the job market where teaching English is more demanded than other professions.

1.3.2.2 Promoting Student Mobility Overseas

Since the LMD system aims at enhancing students' employability skills, reviewing the curriculum is essential to make it responsive to the current socio-economic needs. Yet, these needs which are to be met are both local and international since students' mobility is also among the objectives of this educational reform. In this respect, Miliani (2004) points out to the role of the LMD in achieving internationalization, thus promoting cross-borders mobility among students. According to him:

“ ..the LMD allows for a better care of knowledge and develops as well its level of globalization within local application. One should state that it is not at all uncommon to find teaching which meets more local concerns (due to teachers' profiles and majors) far from official curriculum and thus from the globalization of knowledge”²⁰.

(Miliani,2004, p.21)

Hence, to achieve mobility students need recognition of what they have studied at their home institution. For that purpose, recognition of qualification has been among the action lines advocated within this reform. This is through using the credit framework or what has been known as The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). This system allows for transferring and accumulating the credits awarded to the student as previously indicated. How is it then considered within the Algerian HE context?

²⁰ « ...le LMD permet de mieux s'occuper des savoirs et de développer ainsi le niveau de leur mondialisation, dans l'application locale qui en est faite. Il faut dire qu'il n'est pas rare du tout de trouver des enseignements qui répondent plus à des préoccupations locales (dues aux profils et aux spécialités des enseignants) très loin des cursus officiels, et donc de la mondialisation des savoirs ».

According to Article 7 of the executive decree N°137 of June 20, 2009, a credit corresponds to the workload (lectures, personal work, training, memoires, etc.) required from the student to achieve the objectives of a teaching unit or subject. Within this decree, it has been also pointed out that a credit represents a total hour of 20 to 25 hours per a semester encompassing all teaching hours including lectures, personal work, lessons, etc. Still, one needs to state that a student has to accumulate 30 credits in each semester (the latter consists of 14 to 16 weeks). These 30 credits are dispatched along the different tasks a student is being involved in (i.e. personal work, memoire, project, etc.).

To facilitate recognition of qualification, the diploma supplement has been introduced gradually into the HE systems. This document which conforms more to the Bologna style has been standardized nationally during the academic year 2009/2010 (Tempus, April, 2010)²¹. It contains eight sections which provide information on²²:

1. *The holder of the certificate or diploma.*
2. *On the certificate.*
3. *The qualification level.*
4. *The contents of the result obtained.*
5. *The function of skills.*
6. *Certification of supplement.*
7. *On the national system of higher education.*

Thus, the LMD reform provides students with the opportunity for international mobility (as well as national) through the ECTS and the DS which facilitate and promote this process. Additionally, within this new system the government's attempt to support this goal is apparent in creating cooperation with other European universities (like the French Algerian High Council of University and Research) and other action plans which will be discussed in the coming section.

However, within the 'classic' system students are likely to encounter difficulties in case they intend to pursue their studies abroad, because there is no system of credits which can be transferred and capitalized from one teaching unit to another. Accordingly, the different quality of education in the host country is likely to be among the barriers to study abroad, in addition to a lack of financial support, visa and immigration, etc. Though it is generally conceived that the LMD reform's

²¹ Ruffio et al., (Avril,2010). Une Etude TEMPUS :Etat du Processus de Bologne dans les Pays Tempus du Sud de la Méditerranée (2009 - 2010). *Volume3* available online at : http://www.enpi-info.eu/library/sites/default/files/bologna_implementation_meda_countries_1005_fr.pdf

²² Guide pratique de mise en oeuvre et de suivi du LMD : Annexe descriptive au diplôme Enseigner et évaluer autrement– juin 2011. L'Annexe au diplôme, p58. Available online at : <https://www.academia.edu/8409283/guide-LMD>

implications are geared towards enhancing student mobility through using the tools discussed above, but in practice has this mobility across borders increased ever since among Algerian students?²³

1.3.2.3 Teaching towards Developing Students Competences

As mentioned in previous section, the LMD system supports student-centred approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. Therefore, developing a curriculum is a process which needs to include analyzing students' needs, preferences in learning, besides defining the learning goals targeted. Thus, considering the students' learning needs and styles in a given course is an empowering tool to help students develop their learning potential. This is so, since it is likely to make the teaching process more relevant and appropriate to the learning context. Moreover, since the LMD reform focuses on the learning outcomes or competences developed along a given course, such needs analysis should cater for what students “*know and can do*”, in order to gain knowledge about their learning strengths and weaknesses and make them aware of that, in addition to helping them set goals and plans in order to improve (Breen & Candlin, 2001, p.12). For that purpose, negotiation between teachers and students over the learning content and approach needs to be part of the classroom culture as advocated by the LMD reform. As a matter of fact, students are involved in learning how to learn process where connection can be made between new knowledge and previous knowledge.

“No knowledge becomes truly our own until it is filtered through our own prior knowledge and experience. Students are much more likely to make connection between new knowledge and previous knowledge when they have a say in deciding what and how they are going to learn”.

(Irujo, 2000,p.220)

Additionally in terms of teaching contents, it can be stated that the shift from a system based on the academic year to one based on study units and modules aims to allow for flexibility of choice for students and thus support the goal of creating flexible and transparent learning paths. Besides, the focus on introducing general culture and discovery units related to other majors or disciplines is intended to broaden the academic culture and facilitate the bridging of reorientation (Megnounif, 2009). Thus, students who are studying English are not only exposed to that language, they can also study other languages like French, Spanish, etc.

Moreover, student's personal work and involvement in research and collaborative tasks are required in teaching units and assessed along each semester. Thus to help them involve in these tasks and accomplish effectively further research the methodological teaching unit is introduced to

²³ One is attempting to answer this question on 67-68 pages of this work.

students as stated so far. It needs to be stated here that because this reform aims at developing students' research skills and sustain their curiosity and critical thinking, this unit is given a considerable importance in terms of credits (4 credits), and teaching duration (during the bachelor and master degree cycles) as it is the case of studying English.

Furthermore, driven by technological innovation and to support flexible learning modes, the LMD reform stresses the importance of introducing ICT into universities. Indeed, the European Commission maintained that the dissemination of new knowledge through information and communication technologies is among the parameters that contributes to the growth of the knowledge of society (Schneckenberg, 2006). Therefore, the module of ICT is introduced to English students in order to develop their competence in using digital tools and help them communicate and exchange information in this language through their use.

Within the 'classic' system, however, students remain passive and over-reliant on their teachers while their critical thinking and creativity are not invited in the educational setting. This is so, because studying is limited to teacher's talk and notes which need to be recited during the day of the exam. Besides, personal work, projects or collaborative tasks are not, in this case, characteristics of the learning process. The syllabus is pre-designed and may not match the different learning needs and styles. As a matter of fact, teaching may not be perceived as relevant, interesting and motivating by students. Within this context, students' autonomy is unlikely to develop, but they are rather expected to be more "*alunos*"²⁴ (Martins Bárbara, 2012, p.84). Moreover, though students are required to write a memoire as part of their requirement of an academic degree whether it is in graduation or post-graduation (BA/Master), they are not acquainted with the research methodology courses necessary for the conduct and draft of a research paper within their 'Licence' degree²⁵. As a result, they are more likely to find difficulties within this process.

1.3.2.4 Creating Assessment for Learning Opportunities

Within the LMD reform, even when it comes to examinations and tests where teachers are taught to be the only actors, allowing students to monitor their own progress is considered to be crucial for their personal and professional development. This is through including different types of assessment: summative (final exam or test) and formative assessment (portfolios, projects, journals, etc.). Including these assessment approaches is likely to assist students in their language learning

²⁴ From the Latin 'alumnus' which means students who are spoonfed on knowledge.

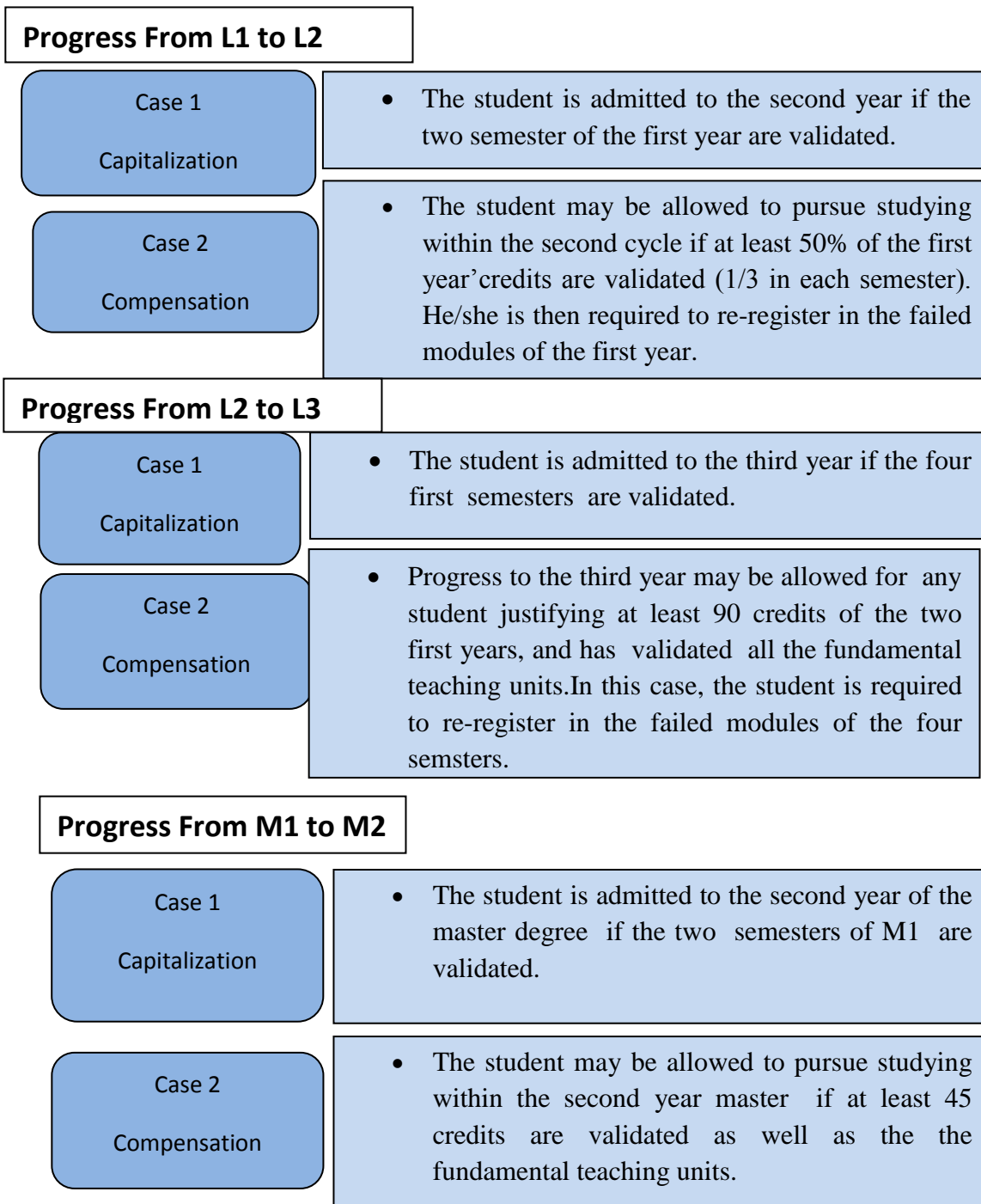
²⁵ And even if these courses are introduced during post-graduation studies, it may not be sufficient to accommodate students with the necessary methodological tools for conducting academic research since the time allocated for this type of studies is one year (theory) while the second year is devoted to the writing of the research paper.

process and show them where they are and what they need to reach their learning outcomes. Teachers need to clarify to students these learning outcomes since they characterize their obtained qualifications. Assessment thus, is not viewed merely for the sake of obtaining qualifications, but it is above all, a process of learning and a means for using and improving the language. For this reason, “.....recent approaches to language teaching incorporate self-assessment and peer assessment in formative language assessment, thereby creating more learners involvement in learning, and awareness of an individual's learning strategies and progress being made”(Christopher, 2009, p.13).

Each teaching unit contains these two modes of assessment. Summative assessment is realized through a final exam at the end of each semester. Its timing and duration are decided by the university or institution, whereas for formative assessment it is made up of assignments, personal work or exercises which are completed by students during the course. These are classified into two marks: the tutorial or what is known as ‘TP’ and directed work or ‘TD’. These two marks are counted towards an overall grade for the course. But, one should point out that assessment in this reform includes assessment of the subject/ module, of the teaching unit, of the semester and the academic year. Indeed, the module's mark consists of both the mark of the final exam and the other two marks as mentioned above. But, there are modules which have just a final exam mark of each semester and thus they are taught just in lectures (for instance, Linguistics, Origin of Language, History of Ideas, etc.).

The student fails in the exam if his/her exam mark is below the average (Article 24 of the order N°137 of June 20, 2009). Accordingly, he/she passes a teaching unit in case 10/20 or above is obtained in the modules which this unit is made of. Yet, assessment within this reform is based on compensation. Thus, a student can compensate between the modules of the same teaching unit. S/he can pass this teaching unit if the average of all grades of the modules are equal or above 10/20 (article 24 of the order N°137 of June 20, 2003). Similarly, a student's progress from one semester to another depends on the grades obtained in the teaching units included (article 25 of the order N°137 of June 20, 2003). It needs to be noted that compensation is possible at the level of teaching units (Ibid). Besides, progress from one year to another (L1, L2, L3) is conditioned upon the obtained grades along the two semesters or the average obtained from compensating these semesters. To achieve this progress 60 credits need to be obtained²⁶. The figure below attempts to explain more how students progress within the two degree cycles (bachelor and master degrees).

²⁶ Concerning the doctorat cycle visit Circular No. 1 of 17 May 2010 Specifying the Criteria for access to the third cycle LMD is available at www.univ-guelma.dz/.../Circulaire%20n1%20du%2017%20Mai%20



Figure(1.2): Students progress within the bachelor and master cycles²⁷

It follows from this, that through the system of compensating the LMD reform is offering students more opportunities to achieve academic success. Besides, it is encouraging them to work hard in fundamental teaching units since these are considered essential for their progress. In doing so, students are made aware of the modules which contribute to developing the intended learning outcomes related to their discipline. In fact, assessment of students within the LMD is both

²⁷ This figure is retrieved from : Guide pratique de mise en oeuvre et de suivi du LMD juin 2011 : Progression dans les études.page36.

qualitative (exams' marks) and quantitative (credits). As a matter of fact, the use of credits helps recognize and quantify the outcomes of learning, thereby clarifying the objectives of a programme of study. It is also likely to promote reflection on course curriculum structures as well as develop more effective and varied assessment (Adam, 2004) .This is also likely to link learning, teaching and assessment in HE context because of the existence of “*a cascade effect that links the learning outcomes, the selection of appropriate teaching strategies and the development of suitable assessment techniques*” (Adam, 2004, p.09). Moreover, the use of credits provides information not only about the learning outcomes to be achieved but also the time required to complete all planned learning activities such as attending lectures, examination, projects and so forth.

Furthermore, promoting student's personal work and involvement in learning is an important goal of continuous assessment. This is so, since different types of alternative assessment are to be integrated with this new educational system. In doing so, the assessment process is like to promote students' autonomy in learning, motivate them towards success and support them to learn more through their involvement. Indeed, according to a study realized by the University Agent of the Francophonie (UAF) this assessment needs to²⁸:

- *Value students' learning rather than for punishment or selection purposes.*
- *Promote a culture of success.*
- *Make the maximum effort to assist the student in difficulty.*
- *Defend the values of autonomy and responsibility*²⁹.

On the other hand, the 'classic' system has been considered as “*a heavy and penalizing system of assessment, with a multiplicity of examinations (EMD, synthesis, make up) and an exceeding spread of the periods of exam at the expense of the pedagogical time already reduced comparatively to international standard*”³⁰. In effect, focusing on summative assessment is unlikely to promote students' involvement in and reflection over their learning progress, thereby underpinning the development of their autonomy. Indeed, Hagstrom (2006) “*observes that summative assessment does not encourage self-assessment and learners' ability to set learning goals*” (Cited in Christopher, 2009, p.13). Moreover, summative assessment does not provide

²⁸ The University Agent of the Francophonie which is an international network of HE institutions and research of the francophone countries ,i.e where the French language is either a mother tongue language, the language used for administrative purposes, for teaching or other usages.

²⁹ Guide pratique de mise en oeuvre et de suivi du LMD juin 2011 :Enseigner et évaluer autrement (p.55).

³⁰ « Un système d'évaluation lourd et pénalisant, avec une multiplicité des examens (EMD, synthèse, rattrapage), et un étalement excessif des périodes d'examen au détriment du temps pédagogique déjà réduit comparativement aux standard internationaux ».Reforme des Enseignements Supérieurs.(Juin 2007 :09). Available at :www.mesrs.dz

students with opportunities to succeed and improve their performance since it is limited to a single sets of data on test scores. As a matter of fact, experiencing failure “*eventually kills test takers’ ambitions*” (Christopher,2009, p.13).

Additionally, assessment in the previous system tends to depend on memorization or learning by heart’s process where teachers’ notes constitute the elements of the exam’s answers while students’ ideas, creativity and critical thinking are stunt. For example, in English language teaching and learning examinations are not geared towards testing students’ communicative skills. Consequently, this type of assessment which is just intended to achieve admission or a given qualification is unlikely to pave the way for employment. “*The inadequacies of achievement come to the fore when holders of good results fail to perform up to par with their certificated achievement in proficiency tests during job or admission screening*” (Christopher,2009, p.13).

1.3.2.5 Supporting Students’ Learning through Tutoring

The concept of knowledge is now perceived differently. It is no longer a matter of transmitting contents. Rather, it is renewable and constructed as a result of reflection and cooperation with the others. Thus, teacher-students’ interaction is crucial to achieve this aim. Therefore, to create avenues for this interaction and provide continuous support and feedback along the teaching learning process, the LMD reform supports the use of tutoring. This refers to all actions intended to support students in their learning process³¹. In this respect, research has shown the benefits of tutoring over teachers and students. The advantages of being tutored have been reported, for example, by several studies which revealed academic achievement and positive learning attitudes towards the subjects being tutored (for example, Cobb,1998 ; Hedrick, 1999 ; cited in Shin,2006). Besides, according to Shin (2006) tutoring can benefit teachers since it: “*..can lead to an increased sense of accomplishment and self-esteem, better mastery of academic skills, increased ability to apply and integrate knowledge taught in different courses and a broader, more realistic outlook on the process of teaching and learning*” (p.327)

It needs to be noted that tutoring with the Algerian HE context concerns only first year students of the first degree cycle, i.e. L1 (Article 03 of the executive decree N°09-03 of January 09, 2009). Its aims are:

- 1) *Helping students to integrate into university’s life.*
- 2) *Supporting them to organize their personal work.*

³¹ Université Mentouri Constantine « La Reforme LMD :Journée sur Le Tutorat » (8 Janvier 2008).Available online at : www.umc.edu.dz/vf/pdf/0AEF2512d01.pdf

- 3) *Supporting them to use effectively specific methods of work.*
- 4) *A first approach to orientation.*
- 5) *A preset of a professional project*³².

Hence, the question which might be addressed is : Who is a tutor?. According to article 04 of the executive decree N°09-03 of January 03, 2009, a tutor can be a teacher within the same university or institution. But, if necessary, it may be appealed to a master or doctoral student within this university who is supposed to perform this task under the supervision of a teacher-researcher responsible for tutoring. The head of the field proposes the list of tutors to the head of the department who submits it to the dean or the institute's director for approval (Article 05 of the executive decree N°09-03 of January 1, 2009). Tutoring is provided through an individual commitment between the tutor and the president of the university (rector) up to a maximum of nine months per year and four hours per week (Article 06 of the executive decree N°09-03 of January 1, 2009). The tutor's role centers around four aspects:

1. **Orientation and Mediation Aspect:** Novice students are likely to meet difficulties, since it is their first time to enroll in university studies. Thus, the role of the tutor is to explain to them the LMD system, its teaching content, objectives and assessment criteria, besides orienting them to the university's library, classrooms, amphitheatres, etc.
2. **Pedagogical Aspect:** The tutor's role in this case is to help students organize their personal work through explaining to them how to take notes during lectures, prepare exercises, search for books, etc.
3. **Methodological and Technical Aspect:** To support students in organizing their learning, the tutor suggests work with students in small groups to see the lectures and help them achieve a bibliographic research through showing them how to use the available book and ICT resources to get the information needed.
4. **Psychological Aspect:** Part of the tutor's role is to provide psychological support for students through listening to them, providing support and pieces of advice and encouraging them to improve and develop positive learning attitudes³³.

³² 1.L'aide à l'intégration dans un nouvel environnement.
 2.L'aide à l'organisation du travail personnel.
 3.L'aide à la maîtrise de méthodes de travail spécifiques.
 4.Une première approche en matière d'orientation.
 5.Une prédéfinition d'un projet professionnel. (cited in Université Mentouri Constantine « La Reforme LMD :Journée sur Le Tutorat » (8 Janvier 2008). Le tutorat : pourquoi? (p.12).

³³ Université Djillali Liabèse.Guide du Tuteur available at :
<http://www.univ-sba.dz/fla/index.php/tutorat>

In addition to that, the role of the tutor is to facilitate dialogue not only among students themselves, but also between the students and their teachers through organizing meeting sessions as well as presentations at the beginning of each semester. Also, the tutor has to submit a report to the head of the department and the team of field training on all activities conducted within this process, so that they can evaluate his/her work and decide whether to maintain or cancel this commitment (Article 08 of the executive decree N°09-03 of January 1, 2009). Besides, to make from tutoring more effective, there is a tutoring committee chaired by the president of the university whose task is to provide an annual report to the ministry of HE. This report has to consist of an evaluation of the employed means to accomplish the process and the results obtained in order to establish and develop effective teaching practices (Article 09 of the executive decree N°09-03 of January 1, 2009).

Thus, tutoring students is part of the teacher's role in order to support students' learning and develop their autonomy within. This is so, because students owing control over their learning does not imply a complete absence of the teacher nor a lack of responsibility on his part as it will be shown in the next chapter of this work. It is rather his role of supporting and facilitating learning which is gaining ground. Such practices contradict with the previous higher education system context where there is a lack of communication between teachers and students since no opportunity is provided outside courses to provide further feedback, raise awareness of and clarify issues within the teaching and learning process.

1.3.2.6 Encouraging Reflective Teaching

Because teaching is a complex process which involves uncertainties and ambiguities, it necessitates an ongoing learning and reflection from the part of the teacher. Indeed, it is generally accepted that effective teaching requires engagement in both critical inquiry and thoughtful reflection (Larrivee, 2006). Therefore, the LMD reform aims at promoting teacher's reflection over their teaching. Yet, one may ask: Why does this reform target teacher's reflection and how is it promoted within? As stated before, this reform favours student-centred learning approach. This approach involves teachers in "*thinking about their thinking*", in order to improve their pedagogical practices and delineate how they teach (Diekmann et al., 2004, p.245). Moreover, within this approach considering students' learning needs is essential. Thus, reflective practice "*helps teachers recognize behaviours and practices which impede their potential for tolerance and acceptance—the*

vital elements for meeting the needs of all students in a diverse society moving toward a global community” (Larrivee, 2006, p.01). Also, since SCL is geared towards enhancing students’ active learning and autonomy, teachers need to be reflective themselves, to understand what this process entails and help their students reflect over their learning.

In fact, this reform aims at promoting teacher’s reflection over time management and teaching in the semester. Indeed, because teaching programmes in this context are semester-based, teachers need to finish the course programmes in 14 or 12 weeks. This is by:

- *Planning their teaching according to the schedule put forward by the administration before starting their job.*
- *Taking into account each specific objective and the amount of time devoted while considering slower students.*
- *Not seeking to give everything, bearing in mind that the LMD reform focuses on students’ personal work and dictating a lecture is not the only teaching technique³⁴.*

Furthermore, within this reform teacher’s collaboration and shared decisions remain the stimulus of teacher’s reflection. Indeed, this system “ *empowers teachers to work as a pedagogic team in the delegation of decisions related to what contents and skills to teach and for what purpose, how and when to do it, and what kind of assessment to administer for the evaluation of students’ progress and academic attainment* (Bouteldja, n.d. p.01)³⁵ . One should state that research has shown that reflection in teacher groups is a motivating factor (Midthassel & Bru, 2001), affects teaching practice and improves students’ learning (Vescio et al., 2008), besides contributing to teachers’ professional development (Meirink et al., 2007).

In addition to that, by involving students in formative assessment teachers are continuously reflecting on students’ current level of learning, so that to identify the next steps they need to take and how. As a matter of fact, this feedback guides teacher’s plans and practices towards achieving

³⁴ -Planifier son enseignement en fonction de l’emploi de temps arrêté par l’administration avant de commencer l’enseignement ;

· Prévoir pour chaque objectif spécifique (voir cahier des charges de la formation concernée) le volume horaire à y consacrer en tenant compte des étudiants les plus lents ;

· Ne pas vouloir tout donner soi-même;se rappeler qu’en LMD, on compte beaucoup sur le travail personnel de l’étudiant ; le cours magistral dicté n’est pas la seule technique à employer.

Guide pratique de mise en oeuvre et de suivi du LMD juin 2011 :Enseigner et évaluer autrement (p.54).

³⁵ Bouteldja,R. *Teaching Study Skills and Research Skills in the LMD System: The Missing Link*. Department of English Mouloud Mammeri University, Tizi-Ouzou. Available online at : www.ummo.dz/IMG/pdf/Article_Riche.pdf

the intended learning outcomes. Besides, implementing this form of authentic assessment “*entails developing ‘an eye’ for classroom processes and becoming sensitive to individual learners*”, thus promoting positive emotional factors in learning (Kohonen, 1999, p.291).

It can be stated as well that tutoring is a source of teacher’s reflection. Indeed, sharing and discussing experiences is a social model of reflection (Larrivee, 2006). In fact, the tutor’s role is not just to support students in their learning, but also to develop their critical thinking and curiosity. This is through engaging them in projects and promoting interaction between teachers and students and among students themselves. Thus, reflection is required to determine the tools to validate the research topics to be developed, foster in students the spirit of organization, direct them to the necessary resources and assess interim reports³⁶.

Finally, a reflective process which teachers can engage in within this reform is elaborating courses and programmes of the bachelor and master cycles. Within this process teachers need to:

- *Think about the profile of courses to be proposed and establish contacts with the socio-economic sector in case of professionalizing courses.*
- *Define the objectives and the expected results by determining the competences acquired by students at the end of their studies and the profile required to be admitted within the cycle (Output/Input profile).*
- *Define the programmes of study.*
- *Form a team of teachers who can respond to the demands of a study programme.*
- *Evaluate the available resources (human and material) and seek for possibilities of courses with other academic institutions in case local resources are not sufficient³⁷.*

Additionally, while designing study programmes teachers need to bear in mind that each teaching unit has its own principles and objectives. The fundamental teaching units are to be studied by all students. Teachers, then, need to determine the subjects to be taught as a coherent whole and the duration of each course, personal work (TD, TP), as well as the coefficient, the credit and assessment mode. For methodological teaching units, they need to foster students’ autonomy through fostering personal work, projects, memoire, whereas for discovering teaching units, teachers need to select lessons/ lectures which can help students succeed (these are optional for some students) and divide them into coherent sequences (subjects). Concerning transversal teaching units, the lessons/lectures are considered as tools which teachers need to select and divide into

³⁶ Guide pratique de mise en oeuvre et de suivi du LMD juin 2011:Enseigner et évaluer autrement (p.57).

³⁷ Guide pratique de mise en oeuvre et de suivi du LMD juin 2011:Enseigner et évaluer autrement (p.46)

subjects. Besides, they need to elaborate the semesters along these teaching unit and fill in the canevas related to the type of studies concerned (Ibid).

To conclude, reflective teaching remains the key factor to modernize HE institutions and update one's teaching to the current socio-economic needs— a main goal of the LMD reform. In doing so, teachers are likely as well to familiarize themselves with the latest teaching approaches and methods, thereby achieving their professional potential. Yet, not only can teacher's ongoing inquiry and mediation over their practices contribute to their professional development, but also their involvement in research is likely to get enhanced.

1.3.2.7 Promoting Innovation through Knowledge Creation and Dissemination

Reforming the core contents of the Algerian higher education system require as well a change in the teacher's role, conceptions, the goals and functions of the teaching profession and learning process. Since teachers are important actors who enable their students to reach their full human potential, they have thus an important role in fulfilling the promise agenda of educational institutions. Therefore, the LMD reform has brought about new missions to the HE teacher. These are prescribed in Article 5 of the executive decree N°08-129 of May 3, 2008 as follows:

- 1. Provide quality education updated and linked to the evolution of science and technology, to the teaching and learning methods which are in accordance with the ethical and professional standards.*
- 2. Conduct research and training activities to develop their professional skills and abilities necessary for this profession.*
- 3. Ensure the transmission of knowledge within initial and lifelong learning.*

It follows from this, that this educational system aims at opening up for teachers pathways to research and continuous learning, in order to contribute to the economic, cultural, social and intellectual development of the nation. Indeed, the emphasis on teachers' involvement in research is apparent in changing their status from being just a 'teacher' (as it is the case with the 'classic' system) to a 'teacher-researcher'. This is because of the growing consensus among education leaders, researchers and educators that "*institutions of Higher Education are responsible for nurturing the growth of knowledge, managing development, and for engineering social transformation*"(Varghese, 2009, p.08).

Besides, not only can research contribute "*to knowledge bases, but it is also essential for the individual researcher's profile, work satisfaction and career development*"(Rosana Ondigi &

Nyamanga Ondigi, 2011, p.13). In fact, involving in research helps lecturers question aspects of their teaching practices to better understand theory to conform to the practices required in the pedagogical field of teaching and learning (White, 2000). Thus, research can improve one's teaching practices, thereby contributing to our professional development.

Research activities within the Algerian higher education are organized around 30 National Research Programmes (NRP) which are operated by more than 600 research laboratories officially approved (537 in French language and 72 in Arabic)³⁸. Moreover, there are ten research centers, five research units and three research agencies. Teachers can join a research unit, a research laboratory or research team within universities, university centers, schools and other institutions providing Higher Education. Their role within this context is clarified by Article 40 of the executive decree N°08-131 of May 4, 2008³⁹:

1. *Participate in the development of research projects related to his/her field of research.*
2. *Participate in conducting research within the frame of a team or research division.*
3. *Ensure the conduct of scientific research and technological development within his/her field of research.*
4. *Participate in the development and dissemination of the data obtained from scientific research.*

These research activities fall within the frame of implementing national research programmes in accordance with a contract of three years (it can be renewable) proposed by the Head of the research entity between the teacher-researcher and the Head of the home institution (Article 2 of the executive decree N°10-232 of October 4, 2010). This contract is backed by specifications which define the project(s) of research, scientific objectives, the annual work programme and schedule thereto and the process of monitoring and implementing the projects (Article 4 of the executive decree N°10-232 of October 4, 2010).

³⁸ Hocine Khelfaoui. La recherche scientifique en Algérie Entre exigences locales et tendances internationales.page03. Available online at : <http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/files/53297/11797117335Khelfaoui.doc/Khelfaoui.doc>

³⁹ *ils sont tenus :*

- 1) *de dispenser un enseignement de qualité et actualisé lié aux évolutions de la science et des connaissances, de la technologie et des méthodes pédagogiques et didactiques en conformité avec les normes éthiques et professionnelles ;*
- 2) *de mener des activités de recherche-formation pour développer leurs aptitudes et leurs capacités à exercer la fonction d'enseignant chercheur hospitalo-universitaire;*
- 3) *d'assurer des activités de santé de qualité ; de contribuer à l'élaboration et à la mise en oeuvre de la politique nationale de santé ;*
- 4) *de participer à l'élaboration du savoir et à sa diffusion ;*
- 5) *d'assurer la transmission des connaissances au titre de la formation initiale et continue.*

To provide support and promote research, teachers who are participating in these activities are eligible of a monthly fee as it is indicated by Article 11 of the executive decree N°10-232 of October 2, 2010. The President of the Republic Abdelaziz Bouteflika points out to the need for this financial support through his speech delivered at the official opening of the academic year 2010-2011 in Kasdi Marbeh University of Ouargla. To display this concern a short extract of this speech is provided below:

“Create a socio-professional climate for teachers and researchers which enables them to perform their mission in good conditions, mainly through adopting a more attractive and incentive beneficiary plan so that to strengthen national scientific and technological capacity, attract the potentials and avoid brain drain”(2010,p.21)⁴⁰.

Furthermore, to promote doctoral research teachers (permanent) are promoted on the basis of their accomplishment of a doctoral thesis or project. Besides, this degree requires as well publication of conference papers, articles or books. Publication is important since research work is incomplete unless its results are disseminated to the wider community. Accordingly, the LMD system aims to make from HE teachers active producers of and disseminators of knowledge who are committed to scientific investigations and innovations related to their field of interest. Thus, within this conception research is an ongoing process which is connected to teaching, rather than a short term goal which is limited by a qualification or diploma’s achievement as it is the case with the previous system. It is worth noting that this connection between teaching and research has come to respond to the demands of the knowledge based society which depends on

“...the creation of knowledge, on its spreading via education and tuition and on its dissemination via communication and on its involvement in technological innovation. The outlook of the societies supporting knowledge-based economies is shaped by the human creative potential, which increases the importance of the innovative process and knowledge dissemination process in the modern economy”.

(Pârgaru et al.,2009, p.648)

In fact, institution’s aim has become not only limited to teaching and research but, it has extended its scope to include other tasks such as course designers, department manager, etc. Indeed, a multi-skilled teacher is regarded essential and a means to achieve multiple careers. In this regard,

⁴⁰ « Créer un climat socio- professionnel aux enseignants et chercheurs qui leur permette d’accomplir leur mission dans de bonnes conditions, notamment par l’adoption de régimes indemnitaires plus attractifs et plus incitatifs pour renforcer les capacités scientifiques et techniques nationales, attirer les potentialités et éviter la fuite des compétences » EL BAHTH Revue de La Direction Générale de la Recherche Scientifique et du Développement Technologique N°03 - 04ème Trimestre 2010. Available online at : www.unc.edu.dz/.../revue%20el%20bahth%20français%20n%203-1

Scott (2006) explains the reasons behind connecting teaching and research within universities and the demand of the 21st Century's academic careers, as follows :

“.....the connections between research and teaching in universities, once regarded as organic and axiomatic, have become much less straightforward..... The main reasons are that both research and teaching have become more professional (and managed) activities, which has tended to split them apart, and that academics in universities now have to pursue multiple careers. They are not only just researchers, but are also research managers and research entrepreneurs; they are not only teachers, but also course designers, quality managers and (even) sales and marketing people. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that traditional doctoral and post-doctoral programmes are sometimes regarded as inadequate preparation for the ‘portfolio’ academic careers of the 21st Century — even when the substantial changes in these programmes to include more generic and entrepreneurial skills is taken into account”.

(Scott, 2006,p.24)

To conclude, the LMD stresses the need for students' involvement in their learning process since teachers are required to provide a space for their decisions through allowing them to think for themselves, decide what to learn and how to learn, solve problems, involve in research instead of being passive and over-reliant on their teachers. Indeed, more flexibility should be offered in making choices of the programmes to be studied, i.e. professional or academic, thereby identifying the majors to be opted for. Teachers' flexibility can also be achieved as students' needs analysis is a prerequisite process to be achieved within LMD teaching. In addition to that, in order to broaden students' knowledge and ICT skills, interdisciplinary courses are introduced as well.

As a matter of fact, if implemented effectively, the LMD system can be beneficial for both teachers and students. It can help achieve quality education and students' personal and professional development. Its focus on students' centered approaches is likely to enhance autonomous learning and create a lively learning atmosphere where students' innovation, reflection and self-esteem can develop over time; unlike 'the classic 'system where teacher-centred approaches are dominating while students remain passive accumulators of knowledge. Moreover, this educational reform can help as well achieve teachers' professional development and reflection over their practices. This is because it aims at involving them in research, course design, tutoring projects and other thought provoking practices. Therefore, the Algerian government has devoted certain efforts in attempt to achieve the objectives of this reform.

1.4 The State Response to the New Reform: Interests and Achievements

To meet the requirements of this reform, the government has undertaken a set of measures through providing the necessary educational, scientific, human and material means. For the academic year 2010-2011, 1300 000 pedagogical places were provided, in addition to 5550 beds for students' accommodation. In terms of supervision, according to official statistics 40977 teachers were registered, at least 1 supervisor for 28 students (Amghark, October, 2010). The academic year 2009-2010 has witnessed 3.421 offers of studies within the three degree cycles, an opening of 14 national course options of necessary disciplines, 10 preparatory classes in sciences, techniques and in commercial economic sciences and management, 3 national superior schools in technologies, political sciences, journalism and sciences of communication⁴¹.

Moreover, a total of 85% of Algerian students receive grants and more than 50% are accommodated by the National University Student Services Office (ONOU) (Tempus, 2010, p.04). The government has also devoted funds for developing human resources through the upgrading of the status of teacher-researchers. Indeed, scientific research and technological development are among national priorities as reflected in the act of 4 April 1999 which was amended and extended by the act of 23 February 2008. The latter defines objectives and the means to be used to achieve them⁴². As a matter of fact, scientific research has been enhanced through opening doctoral schools, providing scholarships, creating research laboratories in universitie, etc.

According to the Tempus survey (2010), there are 782 research laboratories, 10 research centres and 5 research units, besides the number of teaching researchers is expected to reach 28000 in 2013. During the academic year 2009-2010, doctoral education has also been enriched by the establishment of 57 doctoral schools, 745 master and 82 doctorate training (bachelor, master, doctorat). As a result, the number of students holding a master or doctoral degree has reached 8000 students with an increase of 27% compared to 2008-2009.

Algeria has participated in the Tempus programme since 2002. The number of projects where institutions have been involved in, either as coordinator, contractor or partner are 39 projects during the period 2002-2010. Concerning Erasmus Mundus joint programmes which offer EU scholarship and fellowships to students and scholars for master courses and joint doctoral , 28 students and 14

⁴¹ The website reference :Université En Algérie: La Qualité en Question available online at: <http://www.algerie360.com/algérie/université-en-algérie-la-qualité-en-question/>

⁴² For more information on this act visit: http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Algeria/Algeria_loi_enseignement_superieur.pdf

scholars were registered from 2004-2010. Whereas, for Erasmus Mundus Partnership, participation was as follows:

Period of Grant Allocation	Participants	The Number of Participants in Erasmus Mundus Partnership
2007-2009	Undergraduate	59
	Master	67
	Doctorate	38
	Post-Doctorate	15
	Academic Staff	32
	Total	211

Table (1.1): Erasmus Mundus Participation for Students and Staff (Tempus,2010,p.16).

Quality Assurance and accreditation of programmes are necessary components of the LMD reform as they can help improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this respect, The National Accreditation Committee (CNH) and the Regional Evaluation Committees (CREs) are responsible for validating Bachelor and Master degree courses offered by university institutions, meanwhile they authorize them to award the corresponding degrees. Whereas for the Doctorate courses, the Directorate for Postgraduate Studies and Educational Research at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research set committees to validate these courses (Tempus, 2010).

Enhancing employability is also a priority of this reform to fight against unemployment and achieve the socio-economic development of the country. Therefore, in 2006 the government established an intermediate institution of regulation for the labour market called the National Agency of Employment (NAE) whose role is to organize, manage and regulate the labour market in relation to the government policies (Laourari,2010, p.13). Moreover, in attempt to lessen the impact of the international economic crisis, a set of new strategies have been adopted such as:

- *The strategies geared towards the socio-economic development which favours the sphere of productivity and investment which has been funded with 150 billion dollars for foreign investors.*
- *Involvement in an important public programme of investment for the period 2010-2014 with 286 Billion dollars.*

- *The establishment of funds for modernizing and developing agriculture.*
- *Encouraging the establishment of industrial clusters (13 champions).*
- *Developing National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT).*
- *Completion of the modernization of Algerian Banking Industry which has important liquidity in immediate mobilization (More than 2 billion DA).*

(Laourari,2010, p.14)

Furthermore, the European Commission in cooperation with the Algerian government has adopted the Annual Action Programme in 2009, through which Algeria has benefited from 35.6 millions Euros devoted to modernizing higher education systems through developing mechanisms for involving students in the world of work and supporting NAE mission (EU Commission, 2009). Vocational training has witnessed progress due to the contribution of both the public and the private sectors. As far as the public sector is concerned, *“it consists of educational institutions which are under the control of the minister of vocational training and some other institutions dependent on training departments of other ministers trainers (tourism, agriculture ,etc.)* (ETF,2003, p.12). They provide distance learning, learning through apprenticeship, residential learning and learning in evening classes. Whereas, the private sector has known recently a rapid increase with 643 institutions receiving 23 361 trainees, assuming mainly tertiary training in management, secretary and computer science (ETF, 2003).

The Algerian government has also shown his concern and devoted efforts to promote lifelong learning. This is apparently reflected in the different legislative texts where the executive decree N°90-11, N°82-298,N°98-363 and N°98-355 require and encourage companies to engage their employers in updating their skills to improve the operation of the employer organization or achieve its effectiveness (ETF, 2003). For that purpose, an open university called the National Centre of Distance Professional Teaching (NCDT) was set under the tutelage of the minister of vocational training. This public organization aims to provide retraining for the benefit of workers to enable them to have access to a higher level of qualification and professional development.

Furthermore, to enhance employability and lifelong learning programmes need to respond to the changing demands of the labour market. Therefore, The Study and Research Centre on Occupations and Qualifications⁴³ (SRCOQ) has devoted its concern to developing research and studies on :

⁴³ This is known as CERPEQ (Centre D'étude et de Recherche sur les Professions et les Qualifications).

- *The development of skills and qualifications.*
- *Organization of labour and management of human resources.*
- *Studying and monitoring of training employment policies.*
- *Inclusion and vocational pathways of young graduates⁴⁴.*

In addition to NCDT and SRCOQ, there are also the National Fund Development of Learning and Training⁴⁵ and the National Institute of Development and Promotion of Lifelong Learning⁴⁶, that are also in charge of lifelong learning in Algeria. The former “*provides financial support to promote this process*” while the latter “*provides assistance and advice to companies in developing and managing human resources*” (ETF, 2003, p.14). Moreover, to improve technological competences, the Minister of education has stressed the importance of integrating the use of ICT into the new curricular. In addition to that, The World Bank has promoted ICT through training teachers into its use, providing computer equipment, promoting school internet connectivity within the World Links Programme and providing short sources at the distance learning centres within the framework of its Global Development Learning Networks (GDLN) (Mami Abdelatif, 2007-2008).

Adult literacy is also an ongoing concern and an integrated part of an action plan to enhance lifelong learning. This is so, since: “*Lifelong learning is not only an educational approach aimed at democratization, but it is also an action program intended to promote equal opportunity in social life, citizenship and labour participation*”(Messina,2002, p.144). Therefore, in cooperation with the civil service, the government has provided human and financial sources, besides, raising people’s awareness of the need to fight against illiteracy via radio, TV, etc. As a matter of fact, the rate of literate people has increased. Indeed, according to the National Report on the Human Development the literacy rate in the population age between 15 and 24 has increased from 87% to 94,6% in 2005 while in rural areas the increase has been from 48,5% in 1998 to 72,6% in the same year (C.N.E.S, 2007).

So far, one has attempted to display some of the government’s contributions to enhance the LMD reform. This is through providing human and material supports, besides promoting doctoral studies, quality assurance, employability, lifelong learning and ICT competences. In spite of such

⁴⁴ l’évolution des métiers et des qualifications; l’organisation du travail et la gestion des ressources humaines ; l’étude et le suivi des politiques de formation/emploi; l’insertion et les cheminements professionnels des jeunes diplômés sortis des établissements de formation (ETF, 2003,p.15).

⁴⁵ or ENAC (Fonds National de Développement de L’apprentissage et de la Formation Continue)

⁴⁶ or INDEFOC (Institut National de Développement et de La Formation Continue)

efforts, a set of challenges are still hindering the effective implementation of this reform. Some of these challenges are dealt with in the next section.

1.5 Current Issues and National Realities of the Algerian Higher Education Systems

Within the Algerian higher education context, the new system has been introduced in parallel to the old, as students still continued to enroll in the old degree programme⁴⁷. The coexistence of the two systems had caused confusion among students and parents who found making that choice difficult in the presence of their uncertainty of the necessity of this reform. Moreover, this *“process of gradual reform gives both institutions and societies more time to adapt to change, thus becoming more evolutionary than revolutionary* (Crosier, et al., 2007, p.22). In fact, as a new introduced higher education system in Algeria, the LMD is faced with a number of challenges. Some of these challenges are discussed below.

1.5.1 The Educational Setting and Teachers Training:

The introduction of this reform has generated debate where skeptical views emerge regarding the Algerian university capacities to implement effectively this reform (Ramaoun & Senouci 2009). It has been claimed that as European universities have undertaken a preparatory stage for this reform which lasted 10 year (from 1998 to 2010), Algeria is not yet ready for this change. Additionally, the previous higher education system known as “la Licence Classique” is not as demanding as the LMD reform in terms of funding, human sources and pedagogical means.

In fact, students’ enrollments have been increasing while there is a lack of human resources, besides academic infrastructures, including libraries and laboratories have been starved of funds. This is likely to hinder research and the provision for developing academic innovations. Moreover, the conditions of study have deteriorated with overcrowded amphitheatres and classrooms which are not well equipped with modern technologies. Similarly, expansion in enrollments has also declined students’ living conditions in university campuses. Within these constraints, implementing effectively students centred learning approaches seems a difficult task to achieve. This is so, since teachers are required within this reform to undertake a range of student-centred activities: *“small group work, varied patterns of assessment, pedagogies such as problem-based learning, integrated research and work placement elements, not to mention the disposition of physical space and the availability of e-learning materials”*(Sursock & Smidt, 2010, p.42). Also, tutoring students cannot

⁴⁷ It was until the academic year 2011-2012 that this reform was introduced to all universities and the classic system was abolished, so all first year students were enrolled within the LMD.

be integrated effectively in conditions where teachers are still not possessing their own desk, computers with internet access, telephone, fax and documents, nor gaining their independence from the administration that dictates the pedagogical conceptions and scientific conducts which they should follow (Azzouz, October 2010).

In addition, using information and communication technology in teaching and learning are still limited due to financial shortage. As a matter of fact, teachers are likely to be digital illiterate since they are unfamiliar with integrating such resources into their classrooms⁴⁸. Furthermore, introducing the LMD reform into the Algerian higher education context has not been supported by training teachers into the pedagogic implications of this reform. Instead, teachers are required to realign their educational practices to the requirements of this reform with no or little guidance provided within their institutions.

Indeed, Ramous and Senouci (2009) questionnaire revealed that teachers who are well informed about this reform, have gained such knowledge from their readings of the press and on the net. Teachers thus receive no training where they can involve in conferences, seminars and workshops with European stakeholders who have gained an accurate insight into the application of the Bologna Process. As a result, teachers are more likely to perceive this reform as a challenge to their professional experience as they might not understand how they should conform to this change. In this case, reviewing the curriculum on the basis of learning outcomes cannot be achieved, while elements of the previous system are more likely to persist in the new one. *“Practices from the previous system which continue into the new often cause confusion about such basic matters as naming cycles and qualifications... ..the picture is rather one of greater similarity at a superficial level”*(Crosier et al., 2007, p.22).

Thus, how to achieve better quality through this educational system if teachers have not been trained into its application and made aware of the importance of implementing student-centred approaches into their teaching and assessment. In this case, enhancing students’ autonomy is unlikely to gain support among teachers who may stick to the long standing practices of teacher-centred approaches. Similarly, how to develop students’ autonomous learning if their teachers are not initiative of this process nor are their institutions assisting them towards this aim through incorporating autonomous approaches in teacher education and setting self-access centres. They are

⁴⁸ A definition of digital literacy is provided in the glossary.

rather likely to stay spoon fed and not realizing the drawback of being so, while their decision making over their learning, critical thinking and creativity remain unnecessary practices in this context. In doing so, the new reform is unlikely to take place .It is rather the duration of studies which has been compressed resulting crammed programmes and the name of the education system altered from the classical licence into the LMD reform. *“Rather thinking in terms of new educational paradigms and re-considering curricula on the basis of learning outcomes, the first reflex has been to make a cut in the old long cycle and thus immediately create two cycles where previously one existed”*(Crosier et al., 2007, p.24).

There is therefore, still considerable work to be undertaken to help implement effectively this reform. The initiation of training university teachers is much needed to clarify this reform and provide teachers with the necessary guidelines to attain its objectives. These objectives are to be communicated to students and parents prior to each academic year, through engaging in discussion on the nature of this reform. Collaboration among teachers is also required to adapt this reform according to the local labour demands. In this respect, a question which may be addressed is: Has this new reform assured the real connection between university and the world of work?

1.5.2 The Algerian University and the Labour Market Demands:

As mentioned before, the Algerian higher education system has witnessed a set of successive reforms for the sake of enhancing qualification and making university more responsive to the demands of the labour market. Although the function of education is not only to respond to the demands of work, it is yet acknowledged that the relation between education and work is a current concern, as it may have always been (Peng, 2002). Therefore, within this reform more emphasis has been placed on bridging the gap between university and the world of industry through promoting employability skills. In this respect, it was found that interviewing students has shown that most of them consider this reform as an opening door to their future career as they view its major aim typically to prepare them for the world of work, while ignoring the importance of the quality of their qualification and its response to the labour market demands (Remaoun & Senouci, 2009).

Hence, the rate of unemployment remains considerable in Algeria. It reached 30% in 2000 and concerned mostly the youth with 54% for those aged between 15 and 24 (ETF, 2003, p.09). As a matter of fact, accepting an employment below once skills level is getting widespread. Indeed, according to the National Office of Statistics (NOS) investigation in 2008, the rate of graduates who are employed below their skills level is 89.4% for men and 80.8% for women (Laourari, 2010). Thus, the Algerian university is still disconnected from the world of work. This is due to an

imbalance between the proportion of work placement opportunities and job applicants as a result of the industrialization of the national economy (Laourari, 2010).

Besides, there is a lack of collaboration between the university and employers. In fact, the kind of accords set with employers are just mere training of students after accomplishing their studies, rather than creating an efficient partnership geared towards supporting students in their career development (Boudjemaa,2010). It has been observed that the number of professional Bachelor's students is decreasing while the academic one is raising (Remaoun & Senouci, 2009). This is so, since during the academic year 2006-2007; 328 Bachelor' domains were offered: 266 academic and 62 professional (Remaoun & Senouci, 2009, p.204). Accordingly, the university is likely to provide just academic programmes, thus academic Bachelor's degrees which may not be enough for achieving the economic, social and cultural development of the nation.

Nevertheless, the labour market remains conservative towards accepting the bachelor qualification as the offered opportunities for employment are limited. In doing so, students are encouraged to move to the second cycle to get more access to employment. In this case, the bachelor qualification is likely to be perceived as *"a staging post than a real qualification in its own right"* (Crosier et al., 2007, p.25).

1.5.3 Mobility between Funding and Recognition Facilities

Enhancing national and international mobility is one of the main objective of the LMD system. Indeed, there is a general consensus that mobility is crucial for the development of scientific research since it can *" enhance the education and personal development goals of individuals, support the creation of a single market, and stimulate new approaches in research through enhanced critical mass* (Sursock & Smidt, 2010, p.75). Therefore, government has underlined the importance of national and international mobility where legislating laws concerning higher education research in article 26 and 30 law number 08-06 of 23/02/08. However, in actual fact, only students who are well financed from their parents can be mobile especially at international level, while this impossible for the majority due to the socioeconomic factors (Cherbal,2006). In addition to that, the economic crisis pressures on most European countries led to certain policy measures to lower government spending. Among them, increasing university fees which has rendered international mobility more difficult to achieve (The case of the UK). Indeed, according to

UNESCO data, the number of Algerian who are internationally mobile decreased from 3.73% out of 456 358 the whole number of students in 1999 to 3.09% out of 901 562 in 2007⁴⁹.

Furthermore, to facilitate recognition of qualification and of prior learning experience, the ECTS and DS are used for that purpose. Yet, the use of ECTS is not linked with learning outcomes. The latter are interpreted in terms of marks/grades achieved by students rather than his required competences, besides the workload for ECTS is not related to contact hours???.In doing so, the DS is likely to include just information concerning the credit accumulated and transferred. Therefore, it is not possible to identify the objectives and the content of the taught programmes and whether the student has achieved the necessary learning outcomes when obtaining his diploma (Cherbal, 2006). This makes it difficult to harmonize the diploma and promote mobility. Moreover, being autonomous, each institution is operating locally not in line with the rest of institutions. This means that institutions make decisions and manage its affairs in the best interest of its students and society, thereby producing different national diplomas (Ramaoun & Senouci, 2009).

To promote lifelong learning flexibility of programmes is required. However, there is a strong link between first and second cycle since the bachelor programmes are extended into the master degree. Thus, to achieve flexibility of learning paths these programmes need to be considered. Besides, the criteria for accepting students to the second and third cycles are still not clear. In article 12, law 08-06 of 23/02/08, the government maintained that students holding a bachelor degree or an equivalent recognized degree can have access to the master degree and this depends on the availability of pedagogic places. Similarly, in case of the third cycle, article 19, law 08-06 of 23/02/08 stated that access to this cycle is open to those holding a master degree or an equivalent recognized degree and that the process of admission is organized within a set of conditions which are defined annually by the minister of higher education. But, ‘what are these conditions’?, is among the questions which remain addressed by students, syndicate who are still claiming limpud rules to each admission cycle.

1.5.4 Lifelong Learning: the Need for Conducive Learning Environments

The use of information and communication technologies plays an important role in promoting lifelong learning. In fact, such technologies have contributed in the emergence of such a process. They are essential for researchers and teachers who wish to stay at the cutting edge or need to provide their students with the up-to-date knowledge. Students also need to undertake research or to keep up with the current ones, especially where traditional libraries have deteriorated. “*The*

⁴⁹ The UNESCO survey is available online at : http://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/etude_prospect/stats_pays/fr/algerie_fr.pdf

development of the information and communication technology (ICT) has already laid the basis for the creation of information Networks, giving users even of small local public libraries access to the world wide sources of information”(Häggsström,2004, p.03).

However, *“it is also a truism that this technology is expensive, subject to rapid obsolescence and requires high initial investment”* (Altbach & Davis,1999, p.08). In fact, universities in Algeria face serious constraints related to the cost of using computers as a means for information exchange. Indeed, according to the ITV Digital Access Index, access to ICT in Algeria is very low (International Telecommunication Union, 2003). As a matter of fact, the traditional library has not been revolutionized by web-based information systems since the latter are priced. So, access to ICT remains mostly available in cybercafés which are getting widespread in the Algerian society. This may raise questions concerning how to bring learning closer to home and how to enable learners to get easy access to good quality information and advice about learning opportunities.

Moreover, libraries are still ill equipped with recent, fascinating books which students need for their studies and prefer to read in their spare time. This is so since, book importation is still expensive and unaffordable. Besides, locally produced books are scarce and may not entice all readers’ interest. This lack of books is likely to hinder readership, research development and thus lifelong learning. Also, not only are libraries supposed to provide books, but also to create a supportive learning environment:*“Libraries should always be directed towards the empowerment of the users. A climate should be created in which even the shyest person feels able to ask for help without being judged inadequate”*(Häggsström, 2004, p.03).

In addition to the significant role which ICT and libraries play in promoting lifelong learning, guidance and counseling within this process need to be provided. However, *“they should not be theoretical, but should also provide opportunities for people of all ages to develop and practice the skills to respect human rights and citizenship through lifelong learning”*(Mami Abdelatif, 2007-2008, p.02). This is so, since lifelong learning offers learning opportunities which individuals should seize to acquire and update their qualifications and skills. Moreover, lifelong learning in Algeria needs to be linked to technical or vocational education so that its degree programmes have the potential to get graduates employed.

“Lifelong learning demands acknowledging and identifying the mechanisms that will guarantee an educational continuum that starting in basic education where the new codes and essential skills for employability are imparted and continuing on through the life of the individual, will be capable of effectively integrating school-acquired or professional knowledge, as well as the specific training associated with adult education”.

(Pieck,2002, p.117)

Moreover, within the Algerian setting lifelong learning needs to be viewed not as a mere continuing education but as a learning activity that takes more into account individual needs, interests and enables them to develop their knowledge and competences for a better career development. Thus, lifelong learning systems should be open and flexible since motivating individuals is at the core of lifelong learning. *“This could be achieved by several methods, such as giving learners more feeling of success and provision of tax and work-time allowances, part-time work opportunities, etc.”* (Istvan, 2002, p.58). Recognition of prior learning including not only formal but also non-formal or informal learning needs to be addressed. In fact, data on lifelong learning in Algeria are scarce. Therefore, research and surveys are required to reveal the drawbacks as well as the progress within this mode of learning.

1.5.5 Research Development: Data as Reflected by Academic Rankings

As far as scientific research is concerned, *“in spite of the efforts that have been made , the level of sourcing of research and its current state have not served to change the country’s role as an importer of goods, technology, services, know-how and scientific culture”*(Tempus,2010, p.05). Indeed, the survey conducted by the Statistical Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC) in Ankara aimed to provide academic rankings of universities in the OIC countries (Organization Islamic Conference). Establishing comparability among institutions where the number of articles published by each university during 2004-2006, research quality and articles cited were among the criteria of evaluation⁵⁰.

The survey report which was published in April 2007, revealed that the top 20 universities in terms of published articles are 14 universities from Turkey, 3 from Iran, 1 from Egypt, 1 from Kuwait and 1 from Malaysia. Turkey is ranked first with 43 630 published articles (623,3 articles per university). Whereas Algeria has 1682 published articles (93,4 per university). In terms of research quality, the volume of research production and the rate of growth for research quality, the top twenty universities are: 7 Iranian universities, 5 Turkish, 1 Egyptian, 2 Malaysian, 1 Lebanon, 1 from UAE, 1 from Kuwait and 1 from Pakistan.

At the North African level, the first ranked university is Moroccan: the Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech which stays at 62 rank from 84 universities involved in the survey followed by the University of Monastir from Tunisia which is ranked 75 from the whole number of universities. After that comes USTHB of Algeriers (University of Sciences and Technology Houari-Boumediene Bab Ezzouar) which is ranked 77 out of 84 universities. It needs to be noted that USTHB is ranked

⁵⁰ This document is available online at: <http://www.sesric.org/files/article/232.pdf>

the first from the eighteen Algerian universities involved in the survey out of the whole number of the existed Algerian universities 58. Yet, this university has published just 299 articles compared to 2899 articles by Hacettepe University (Turkey) (SESRTCIC, April 2007).

Country	University	Number of Articles	Rank by NoA
Algeria	USTHB	299	1
	Univ Mentouri Constantine	253	2
	Univ Annaba	165	3
	Univ Ferhat Abbas	150	4
	Univ Aboubaker Belkaid	138	5
	Univ Sidi Bel Abbes	129	6
	Univ Oran	144	7
	Univ Saad Dahiab Blida	72	8
	Univ Batna	64	9
	Univ Sci and Techno Oran	59	10
	Univ Amira Bejaia	53	11
	Univ Mostaganem	40	12
	Univ Jijel	36	13
	Univ Biskra	29	14
	Univ Mouloud Mammeri	26	15
	Univ Mohaned Boudiaf	23	16
	Univ Guelma	17	17
	Univ Mohamed Bougnena	15	18

Table (1.2): National Ranking of Algerian Universities By The Number of Articles (2004-2006)
(SESRTCIC, April 2007)

To conclude, much more work needs to be devoted to enhance scientific research and make it a lifelong practice in teachers and students' life. This can be achieved through the LMD system if more funding and continuous evaluation of the progress of scientific research are being conducted to make teaching and assessment more student-centred. Similarly, training teachers, providing the necessary pedagogical means, connecting the Algerian university with the labour market demands, promoting institutions' collaboration to implement the ECTS and the DS and facilitating students'

national mobility and offering more grants for international mobility are among the action lines which can help achieve quality within this educational system. The next section describes the research context, i.e., the department of English at the University of Mostaganem, and the way teaching and assessment are conducted within the Written Expression course during the first year of the Bachelor degree.

1.6 The Department of English: An Overview

Created in 1998 by the executive decree n°98-24 of 07/07/1998, the University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis of Mostaganem is situated in eight educational sites, six halls of residence, three farms, and one central library⁵¹. This university offers 25 000 educational places (Amphitheatres, rooms of tutorial classes, laboratories of analyses). In 2009, 19 research laboratories and 98 research projects were set. The university center library is found in I.T.A. It has internet space where 56 workstations are available for graduate and post-graduate students. This library also contains 38 265 titles, 118 051 volumes in national and foreign languages, 04 databases and online subscription for its users.

Regarding its faculties, the University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis has 7 faculties. These are: the Faculty of Science and Technology, Faculty of Exact Sciences and Sciences of Nature and Life, Faculty of Law and Commercial sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Physical and Sport Education, Faculty of Medicine, and Faculty of Languages and Arts. The latter includes 5 departments: the Department of Arabic Literature, the Department of French, the Department of Spanish, the Department of Arts, and the Department of English where the present research was conducted.

In fact, the department of English constitutes a major component of this faculty in terms of the number of enrolled students which is getting raised as compared to that in other departments. Indeed, in the academic year 2011-2012, 2238 students were registered in the licence and master degree cycles in the Department of English, 1603 in the Department of Arabic Literature, 1432 in the Department of French, 791 in the Department of Spanish and only 432 students in the Department of Arts. During the same academic year, there were 308 students who graduated from

⁵¹ The university pole of Kharrouba includes the Rectorate, the Faculty of Social Science and the Institute of Physical Sport Education. The site of the city center or what is known as ITA includes the Faculty of Exact Sciences and Sciences of Nature and Life, besides the Faculty of Languages and Arts. The site of “Belahcel” consists of the Faculty of Science and Technology while the Faculty of Law and Commercial sciences are found in “La Salamandre”. For Graduate studies and Doctoral schools, these are conducted in the site of “Chemins des crêtes”. The site of ‘Les Castors’ has been devoted for tutoring classes and workshops of drawings and the site of Technological Hall for those concerned with Mechanics.

the Department of English with a bachelor degree within the classical system and 215 within the LMD system, while 104 students achieved their master degree⁵².

It is worth noting, that students' enrollment within the department of English is based on their general average of the Baccalaureate exam. Besides, the mark of the English exam must be above or equal to 11/20. There are also other parameters which are taken into account regarding acceptance. Students belonging to the Foreign Language stream are considered a priority here. Likewise, those living in Mostaganem, Tiaret, Tissemsilt and Relizane are more privileged than others.

To respond to the diversity of students' needs and cope with the societal and economic challenges, the LMD reform has been launched within the Department of English since the academic year 2007-2008. As with the other higher education systems in Algeria, this reform was introduced in parallel with the classical system. Students' enrolment into the bachelor degree was first based on their choice of either the LMD reform or the previous system. But, during the third academic year of its implementation, i.e., 2009-2010 students had no choice apart from the three degree cycles.

The bachelor degree cycle in this department provides one study programme entitled Language, Literature and Anglo-Saxon Civilization which can be accomplished in six semesters. This programme aims to open up students to cultural and linguistic diversity of the world. It is intended for students who are inspired by teaching and research. It needs to be noted that this degree is awarded after gaining 180 credits and the writing of a project in the discipline selected by the student. At the end of this cycle, the students will be able to:

- Acquire in-depth knowledge about the English language, the literature and civilization of the Anglophone countries.
- Master the English language, both its oral and written forms.
- Provide education as a tool for communication and access to scientific and technological documentation⁵³.

For the master degree cycle, bachelor students at the Department of English have the choice to select one of these study programmes: Sociolinguistic and the Study of Genre, Didactics and

⁵² For more information visit the university website: <http://fla.univ-mosta.dz/>

⁵³ *Acquérir de connaissances approfondies de la langue anglaise, de la littérature et des civilisations des pays anglophones ; maîtrise la langue anglaise dans ses dimensions orales et écrites ; dispenser un enseignement en tant qu'outil de communication et d'accès à la documentation scientifique et technologique.*

Guide de la Faculté des Lettres et des Arts : *Année universitaire 2012 – 2013*. Retrieved from the university website : <http://fla.univ-mosta.dz/> (p.14) .

Applied Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, English Language and Linguistics, Literature and Anglo-Saxon Civilization, British Literature, and British Civilization. This degree is achieved after gaining 120 credits in four semesters and presenting their written memoir in relation to the studied discipline. The department of English has also offered opportunities for master students to enroll in the doctorate degree cycle in their selected major. This is after achieving a national exam which is held at the beginning of each academic year. There are doctorate students in Sociolinguistic and the Study of Genre, Didactics and Applied Linguistics, Literature and Anglo-Saxon Civilization.

Hence, students' achievement of this competition depends on their knowledge of the subject as well as their academic writing skill in English. In effect, this skill is decisive in determining their academic achievement in the three degree cycle and their professional career after graduating⁵⁴. To this end, to help students develop basic writing skills the bachelor degree programme in the present context offers courses that are geared towards achieving that goal. The Written Expression course is one of these courses which constitute a major component of the bachelor degree curriculum. More details about the status of this module in the first year of this degree are provided in the following section.

1.7 Written Expression Course: Teaching and Assessment Practices

As stated before, teaching within the three degree cycles is a semester-based programme which includes teaching units that lead to the fulfillment of a given degree. These teaching units consist of courses or modules which make up a study programme. The bachelor study programme consists of four teaching units: Fundamental teaching unit, supplementary teaching unit, discovery teaching unit, and independent teaching unit. The Written Expression course which is part of the fundamental teaching unit has a considerable status in this degree. This is due to its credit (6 points) and Coefficient (4 points) which remain higher than any other courses in all the teaching units⁵⁵. This could motivate students to work hard to succeed in this course. Moreover, the importance of this module is also apparent in its workload which is 4 h30 per week (1h30 for the lecture and 3h for tutorial classes). It needs to be noted that the Written Expression course is programmed for the four semesters of the bachelor degree cycle. Developing, thus, students' writing skill in English seemed to be a prerequisite for the achievement of this degree.

⁵⁴ This is since their recruitment as teachers in middle and secondary schools and their enrolment in post-graduation are based on the achievement of written competitions.

⁵⁵ It needs to be noted that this credit and coefficient do not change in all the four semester of the Bachelor degree.

Nevertheless, owing such status does not necessary guarantee the achievement of the course's learning outcomes. This is so, since writing is usually conceived as a difficult and challenging for second/ foreign language learners. The difficulty lies not only on generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable texts (Marashi & Jafari, 2012). Indeed, it is not only a means of recording ideas, information and knowledge, but also a means to develop and create new thought. Al-Hazmi (2006) states that writing is a necessary component for improving and developing critical thinking skill, because it causes reflecting, correcting, editing, and spending more time comparing to oral skill. With the emerging systems of communication, writing is not considered anymore as a skill to communicate formally, but it is the skill that learners need to be proficient at more than before (Marashi & Jafari, 2012).

Therefore, students especially at the tertiary level should be encouraged to be autonomous in learning to write as it can encourage them to have more writing practice outside of class time and they are able to do so at their own pace and time (Thang, 2003). Besides, students' practice of writing can also be stimulated through their ongoing reflection over their learning process and recording of their writing needs and difficulties. Still, not only teaching can provide such opportunities, but assessment can also help students improve their writing through self and peer assessment approaches. Thus, are teaching and assessment practices of the Written Expression course within the present learning context geared towards promoting students' autonomy in Writing?

1.7.1 Teaching:

Students' performance in a study course may be affected by the teacher's methodology and strategies for teaching since "*Learning what is meaningful and relevant depends partly on what is taught and depends partly on how it is taught*" (Brandus & Ginnis, 1986, p.12). To this end, one's concern here is to unveil the teaching content and approaches used in teaching the Written Expression course for first year students (i.e., semester one and two of the bachelor degree cycle) to help the reader understand the present research context. It is worth noting, that depiction of this context is based on the researcher's teaching experience of this module, reflection and observations of its teaching and assessment practices and how these impact students' learning.

With regard to the course syllabus, decision upon its content remains the responsibility of the teacher in charge of the lecture, while teachers of the tutorials have no word to say in this respect. In fact, though collaboration is viewed as essential to promote teacher learning (Rogers & Babinski, 2002) teachers of the Written Expression course are not working together to achieve common goals such as designing the syllabus, activities, discussing issues in relation to their teaching and how to

improve their students' writing, etc. Since this course is also designed for the third and fourth semester of the bachelor degree cycle, there is also a need for teachers' collaboration across the different levels to define how the syllabus needs to progress in relation to the intended course's objectives and students' needs.

Not only teachers' collaboration is a missing indicator of the Written Expression syllabus, but students' needs analysis is also not relied on in its design. The importance of such analysis lies in helping teachers *“to identify students' instruction needs; as certain weaknesses in students' achievements; provide information on in-service need; determine where deficits exist so that they can be addressed; and identify areas for expenditure and educational development”* (Cohen et al., 2000, p.90). Still, teachers' focus is more on what the students have to study, while taking little or no account of what they want. Thus, ignoring such a process when designing the syllabus may not help teachers match their teaching to the way their students need to learn, raise their motivation and make learning better and faster.

Pressured by time to finish the syllabus and achieve the exam results, teachers adhere to that syllabus, leaving thus no space for their students' choice on what and how they need to study the Written Expression course. Indeed, the teacher of the lecture provides students with some basic rules and principles of the lessons. Whereas, in tutorial classes teachers are concerned with helping students practise such rules through assigning tasks and exercises besides checking their accumulation of the teacher's input via formative assessment. However, due to time constraint or may be their unawareness of the need for students' involvement, both tutorial and lecturing teachers are likely to resort to spoon feeding students and drilling them for the examination.

In fact, teacher-centered approaches are still prevailing in the Written Expression course. This is so because students' participation in class does not go beyond answering teachers' questions and tasks or raising their questions in relation to the lessons. Opportunities are not provided for their initiation, creativity, collaboration with their peers and discussion of ideas and findings. Apart from the assigned homework, they are not encouraged to practise this skill outside classes and reflect on its progress over time. Learning, thus, remains limited to the classroom and dependent on teachers' input and instructions.

Furthermore, teachers' flexibility in the course may not be attained with the lack of internet access, labs and equipped classrooms with over-head projectors. Within such conditions, it seems difficult to teach writing in relation to the other language skills, thereby involving students in more interactive learning activities where they are more proactive and take the initiative. Being confined to the same traditional teaching materials (the whiteboard and the handouts) may not match the

different learning styles and stimulate students' interest in the course. In the same vein, this cannot help them practise their writing via different contexts and reflect on its use.

1.7.2 Assessment:

Since assessment has an impact on students' learning (Gibbs,2006), its underlying culture, approaches and practices are critical in determining the intended objectives of a course. Yet, to develop students' writing skill in English assessment should not just monitor their achievement, but it should also encourage them to be confident, creative and productive users of information, thereby promoting their critical reflection and action. Both formative and summative assessment can enable the educator to assess the process of learning as well as the product of that process and offer feedback to students for their self-assessment and reflection.

1.7.2.1 Formative Purpose

Within the Department of English of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University assessment practices in the Written Expression course are supposed to include both summative and formative approaches. Still, the latter consist only of tests rather than include other alternative assessment approaches such as self and peer assessment, projects which focus on the process of learning which contributes to test results. This might be attributed to teachers' unfamiliarity with such approaches and/ difficulties with managing ongoing assessment.

In fact, to ensure that the students have the correct body of knowledge to be secure in the examination, teachers usually administer short tests for less than one hour during their tutorial classes. Yet, the number of these tests varies among them as there are teachers who use two tests in one semester while others are satisfied with just one. Moreover, since they are required to supply two marks or what is known as the 'TD' and the 'TP' marks, understanding what constitutes them and how they can be calculated is also another common source of debate and disagreement among all teachers of tutorial classes. One can conclude, thus, that teachers' lack of collaboration concerns not only their teaching, but also their assessment practices. Consequently, students are found with different interpretations of what assessment consists of and aims at achieving. Their confusion may also lead to skeptical views regarding the assessment reliability.

Furthermore, reducing formative assessment to testing, means limiting students' learning to grades or marks and focusing on what is wrong with no thought given to how weaknesses can become strengths. This is likely to force students to concentrate too much on what was tested to the detriment of their learning, thereby dismissing the importance of diversity of experiences, and rendering meaning irrelevant and understanding unimportant. Indeed, as David, et al., (2001)

revealed this stressful pre-occupation with passing and failing, is probably the reason why students could not acknowledge the potential value of feedback as a learning opportunity. Besides, such an assessment approach can encourage superficial and rote learning, concentrating more on recall of isolated details, usually items of knowledge which students soon forget (Black,1993).

In addition to that, though formative assessment intends to provide multiple opportunities for students to improve their writing and achieve their academic success through actively constructing their own understanding of feedback, using tests can destruct such an objective because of the negative effects which they may exert on students' motivation to learn and improve. Indeed, Black and Wiliam (1998) provide evidence that with such practices the effect of feedback is to teach the weaker students that they lack ability, so they are de-motivated and lose confidence in their own capacity to learn. It is also worth noting that in the Written Expression course in the present context, teachers' feedback information about their students' writing is mostly transmitted through messages about its strengths and weaknesses while no opportunities are provided to construct actively an understanding of them (e.g. through discussion) before they can be used to regulate performance. Within such practices, assessment is likely to be perceived by students as threatening and stressful, thus prompting them towards a surface approach to learning, which inhibits the development of depth of understanding (Gibbs,1992).

An assessment for grading culture can also have other negative effects on students' affect and learning progress. Not integrating collaborative learning can deprive students from the joy of cooperating with their peers to do projects and the learning which can be gained from sharing ideas, negotiating meaning and presenting their work in class. It is through such kind of interactive learning that students can learn how to make choices, voice their ideas, assess their peers using evaluative comments, and reflect on their performance, thereby developing more autonomous learning attitudes. In the same vein, being alien to self-and peer assessment approaches, students are likely to be passive recipient of knowledge whose ultimate goal is just to pass rather than monitor and act on behalf of their own learning.

It can be concluded, thus, that in the present learning context continuous assessment is still focused on summative assessment goals which are designed to grade and label students. Within such practices feedback remains driven by the teacher, indicating just the students' weaknesses and strengths without communicating how much progress they are making towards the intended learning outcomes. In this case "*feedback may have little meaning to the learner and can be seen as a judgement on them rather than their work*" (Robinson & Udall, 2006, p.94). Besides, since no cooperative learning, self-and peer assessment are integrated here, the students are not actively

involved in the assessment process: practise more their writing, reflect on their performance, discuss criteria in relation to the learning outcomes, thereby understanding what is expected of them in the assessment system.

Furthermore, an assessment for grading culture does not encourage student-teacher interaction and help teachers create supportive learning environments that enable students to get things wrong and learn from their mistakes. It is likely, rather, to contribute to their preoccupation with passing and not learning, thus making them passive and teacher-dependent students who adopt a surface approach to learning and see failure as an indictment of their worth as individuals. Relying on tests as an ongoing assessment form can also affect summative assessment practices as the following section shows.

It needs to be noted also that involving students in formative assessment activities can help them prepare for their exams and improve their grades as King's (1992) research has demonstrated. Thus, relying just on tests is not likely to provide students with the necessary feedback of their writing progress and learning opportunities to practise this skill and improve their performance during exams. In fact, teachers' focus on measuring the writing product via such tests does not help them to detect how their students are progressing, the difficulties they are encountering and their needs within the course to improve their writing. This does not affect only teaching which may be irrelevant to students' needs, but summative assessment also can be conceived as hard and not valid for them.

1.7.2.2 Summative Purpose:

Summative assessment is one of the important teacher's tasks which can influence students' future learning, achievement and motivation to learn. However, in spite of its decisive role, first year bachelor students receive no training or any initiation to that process. Nor are they acquainted with the university regulation and policies of exam taking since there are no scheduled seminars or conferences which can clarify such issues and thus raise their awareness of its dos and don'ts. Also, the component of each teaching unit and the differences between them in each degree cycle remain a subject of inquiry among students, besides how compensation can be achieved and credits can be gained along the semesters.

With regard to the Written Expression course, the purpose of summative assessment remains unknown for students. Even the course learning outcomes are not made explicit for them. This makes it hard for students to understand the assessment criteria set for the exam, its grading scale

and how these relate to the reference level. Their attitudes towards assessment are likely to reflect their disapproval of their teacher's feedback and questioning of the reliability of its outcome.

Furthermore, as Black et al., (2003) state: "...*summative tests should be, and should be seen to be, a positive part of the learning process*" (p.56). However, besides students' lack of training in taking exams in general, teachers' pressure with time to finish the programme of the Written Expression course makes it difficult to prepare them to handle successfully this process. Indeed, students are often complaining about their difficulties with time management during the exams which prohibits them from producing good writing. Not providing revision guides for students can also raise their exam anxiety.

As a conclusion, teaching and assessment practices conducted in the Written Expression course at the department of English of Abdehamid Ibn Badis University would seem to support teacher-centered pedagogy where no choice, control and responsibility are offered for students. The latter, indeed, have no word to say regarding what to study and how within that course. Likewise, these students are not involved in the assessment processes which remain the responsibility of the teacher. In fact, within this context assessment processes are solely viewed as a testing mechanism designed for grading students. Teachers are not assessing formatively students, but rather completing ongoing summative assessment that they use primarily for reporting purposes. This is so, since they are relying just on using tests and not encouraging students to assess themselves (e.g., writing portfolios, journals, diaries, etc.) and their peers. Thus, teaching and assessment here are not likely to enhance students writing and support the development of their autonomy.

1.8 Conclusion:

To keep pace with global challenges and meet the societal and economic challenges, there is a need to rethink Higher education principles and underlying practices to bring about the necessary reform. The core concern is to enhance employability, mobility, and lifelong skills which are prerequisite in the 21st century. To this end, European Higher education systems conceived the need to move towards a process of continuous evaluation, piloting and result reporting under the name of the Bologna Process. The latter advocates a new organizational framework for university courses or what is known as the LMD system. This structural reform aims to help students govern and accomplish their studies in an autonomous manner through making a shift in language teaching and assessment practices from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered pedagogy.

The Algerian higher education system has also undertaken the pathway of the bachelor-master-doctoral structure to achieve reform and enhance quality education. However, in spite of the

government's strategies and plans to achieve its intended objectives there is still work to be done to overcome its challenges. Though student autonomy is an education goal of the LMD system, within the present research context actual practices are not geared towards achieving this goal. To illustrate, teaching and assessment in the Written Expression course during the first and second semester of the bachelor degree are still teacher-centered and not encouraging deeper approach to learning where student reflection and initiation plays a central role.

Therefore, a question which can be raised here is how to promote such a learning approach among first year students who are attending the Written Expression course at the Department of English and thus help them develop their autonomy. To provide empirical evidence for this issue, the effect of training students into language portfolios on their autonomy was investigated with respect to writing. Before describing the research design and analyzing its findings, there is a need to provide theoretical background to the subject matter of this thesis.

Chapter Two

Autonomy in Language
Teaching and Learning:
Principles and Theoretical
Issues

Chapter Two

Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning: Principles and Theoretical Issues

2.1 Introduction

Since learner's autonomy is the focus of the present investigation, there is a need to account for the definitions attributed to this notion. To clarify more its nature, a distinction has been made between learner autonomy and other related concepts such as self-instruction, self-Direction, self-Access, and independent Learning. This theoretical chapter also raises the scholars' debate regarding measuring learner autonomy and reviews some research endeavours tackling this issue. It is also concerned with showing the benefits of autonomous learning through reviewing the theories which support and advocate its principles in the language classroom. To help achieve such benefits, one has attempted to clarify the roles of learners, teachers and institutions in promoting this process.

Furthermore, some approaches which are geared towards developing learner autonomy are also outlined below. Hence, assessment practices play an important role in shaping learners' motivation, attitudes, beliefs, thus autonomy in learning. Therefore, the suggested approach advocates the use of self-assessment tools to enhance learners' autonomy. This is through promoting their reflection, motivation and interaction in language learning and their self-assessment of their progress.

2.2 Historical Background

The concept of autonomy has evoked within a context where individual freedom became the focal interest of the Western world. Indeed, in the 1960's attention was paid to raising people social awareness of the need to take part in decisions that concern their life. This is to make them aware of their rights and improve the quality of their life as well. In this respect, adult education was regarded as an empowering tool to instill this awareness.

“Adult education....becomes an instrument for arousing an increasing sense of awareness and liberation in man, and, in home cases an instrument for changing the environment itself from the idea of man is product of his society, one moves to the idea of man's producer of his society”.

(Jane, 1977; cited in Holec, 1981,p.03)

In fact, this tendency towards learners' autonomy has also been an educational objective in second / foreign language pedagogy. In the late 1960's , the idea of autonomy was first introduced into this field through the adult education movement in Europe and North America and it concerned adult learners who left formal education (Benson 2003). This is because lifelong learning was began to be considered as a prerequisite need to ensure one's educational progress and career. In this case, being an autonomous learner can be considered as a driving engine which could help in achieving this aim.

However, in spite of Holec (1981) and Little (1991) considerable work on the theory of autonomy in language learning, the latter was influenced by research from beyond the field of language education. Research in fields, such as psychology, cognitive psychology have provided new insights into the process of language learning, thereby raising language scholars and educators 'interest in finding suitable approaches to enhance their teaching and improve students' learning (Benson,2001). Indeed, the development of autonomy gained support a long time ago in cognitive psychology through philosophers' ideas such as Galileo, Rousseau and Dewy. Galileo, for instance, believed that "*you cannot teach a man anything you can only help him find it within himself*" (Benson,2001,p.22). Similarly, Dewy (1933) emphasized the importance of autonomy in learning stating: "*the starting points of activities must be the learner's own felt needs so that educational aims must be those of the learners rather than those of the teachers*" (cited in Benson,2001,p.22). Besides, the notion that knowing and thinking develop with experience appears also in Rousseau's (1966) book 'Emile'¹ .

In the same vein, the development of psychology started to focus more on the individual, claiming that the latter should be given a central place in his/her own development. Constructivism, a learning theory was dominating as a reaction against the 1950's and 1960's behaviorism that defines learning as a passive accumulation of information where teachers are the provider of knowledge and holder of power, whereas learners are seen as "*combiners to be filled with the knowledge held by teaching*" (Benson, 1997, cited in Benson & Voller, 1997, p.20). In contract to this view, constructivism advocates the shift from the transmission model of learning to the experiential model where learning is discovered rather than thought (Benson &

¹ One of the most important issues Rousseau raises in *Emile* is the proper setting for the education of a child. Rousseau contends that living in cities is bad for children and will indoctrinate them far too early to all of the vices and pretensions that are common in urban areas. o him, the best way for a child to begin to develop in a healthy manner is to live in a "state of nature" far from the corrupting influences of society. To Rousseau in *Emile*, children are like animals at a young age and must be allowed to explore, unhindered by the burdens of formal education and strict weighty moral instruction.

Voller, 1997). So, within such conception language learning needs to involve the learner's own experience, world knowledge which are related to the target language or task at hand. In Candy's (1991) terms, constructivism "*leads directly to the proposition that knowledge cannot be taught, but only learned (that is constructed)*" (p.270). This is so, since knowledge is something "*built up by the learner*" (Candy, 1991, p.290). Accordingly, this approach aims at encouraging and promoting active learning in which learners hold responsibility over their learning.

Furthermore, a general need has been recognized among researchers to shift their focus from the teacher to the language learner. Consequently, wide ranging series of investigations were carried out in 1970's and 1980's resulting in various sociolinguistic disciplines such as speech act theory, discourse analysis, ethnographic of communication, and so forth². These disciplines shared a pragmatic vision of language as a tool for communication that takes place in a social context, supporting the communicative approach to language learning and teaching which defined language as "*a system for the expression of meaning*" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p.71). Thus, it is not enough to learn the linguistic features of a language, but there is also a need to know about the social dimensions which govern its use in order to use it appropriately.

Nevertheless, constructivism and the communicative approach are not the only approaches which led to the growth of autonomy in learning humanism has also contributed in doing so, with its influential ideas. Atkinson (1993) defines humanism as "*the study personality focusing on the individual's subjective experience, his/her personal view of the world*"(p.544). Thus, it gives a central place to the unique individual. Such ideas embodied within humanistic psychology have received an appealing concern and application in language teaching methodology (Stevick, 1990). Indeed, humanistic approaches to language teaching have been advocated where the affective aspect of the learner: "*emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behavior*", is considered relevant to the process of learning (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p.01). Moskowitz (1999) explains the objective of this approach stating: "*Humanistic exercises deal with enhancing self-esteem, becoming aware of one's strengths, seeing the good in others, gaining insights into one's self, developing closer and more satisfying relationships*" (p.178).

² The theory of language teaching underlying the communicative approach is holistic rather than behavioristic. It starts from a theory of language as communication which implies knowledge of the grammatical system as well as performance. Thus, it aims at achieving communicative competence which includes both the usage and use of the language.

With the development of learner-centred approaches to language teaching, teachers and learners' roles were changing. Indeed, learners were no longer considered as a passive recipients of knowledge, but as active participants who are involved in the teaching learning process. In the 1980's and 1990's, a variety of approaches which fit beneath the umbrella of student-centered learning emerged; all of which include autonomous learning among them the learner centered curriculum, the negotiated syllabus, project based learning ,etc. These approaches aim to offer greater flexibility of timetable and syllabus, while making learning more centered, more motivating and more efficient (Dickinson, 1987).

Furthermore, *“the rapid development of technology highlighted the need for continuous training and honing of new skills”*, increasing thus the need for more autonomy to innovate and cope with such overwhelming amount of information (Medel-Añonuevo, 2002, p.xv). Similarly, using ICT in language teaching has been advocated to foster learner autonomy as it can promote learners active participation in searching for information: *“The integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in course offerings in institutions of higher learning (IHLs) is the catalyst towards empowering learners to become autonomous lifelong learners”*(Kaur & Sidhur, 2010, p.88). In fact, the development of the internet and the advancement of digital technology has stimulated individuals' interest to learn, discover and search information for themselves, thereby encouraging their creativity and personal decisions process. Such attitudes are required to respond to the globalization challenges which are imposing a new paradigm in education where ‘the self’ plays a significant role in the learning process.

“This digital-knowledge-based era calls for a new paradigm in education however, that emphasizes learners' active acquisition of knowledge through the search for various information and sources, useful for everyday or specific situations. This new paradigm in education thus focuses on learners' self-motivated and self-regulated learning activities to obtain knowledge that is practical in the individual contexts and circumstances that learners face. To acquire such knowledge is to actively participate in the progress of personal development both through interactive education and application, rather than passively absorbing knowledge developed by others.

(Chong Yang Kim, 2002,p.145)

As a matter of fact, in recent years there has been an increase in establishing self-access centers which are considered *“as a way of encouraging learners to move from teacher dependence towards autonomy”* (Gardner & Miller, 1999,p. 08). Moreover, the use of different types of language portfolios, including electronic portfolios are gaining ground in the language classroom (Davies & LeMahieu, 2003). Indeed, the Council of Europe's European Language

Portfolio (ELP) is a means of supporting teachers and students to develop their autonomy (Little, 2002). In effect, as learner and teacher autonomy are getting important the way to foster them is equally regarded as a necessary educational goal. How this can be achieved is dealt with in the coming sections.

2.3 Towards a Working Definition of Learner Autonomy

As defined by The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2004) autonomy is "*the right of a group of people to govern itself, or to organize its own activities*" (p.73). In the field of political philosophy, the notion of personal autonomy has always been regarded as a basic human rights since it refers to "*the freedom and ability to shape our lives*" (Young 1986,p.81). Hence, in learning and educational settings, autonomy has been equated with different meanings. This concept was first introduced into the language teaching in the late 1960's through the adult education movement in Europe and North America³.

Within this movement, Holec (1981) who piloted many autonomous language learning projects has provided the literature with the first definition of autonomy. In his terms, autonomy is "*the ability to take charge of one's own learning*" (Holec,1981,p. 03). Several researchers have displayed their consensus upon Holec's definition. For instance, Benson (2001) described autonomy as "*the capacity to control one's own learning*"(p.07). Similarly, Aoki (1999) has broadened this definition into "*a capacity to take control of one's own learning in the service of one's perceived needs and aspirations*"(p.04).

However, if this autonomy is considered as a capacity or ability, there is a need to account for what constitutes this ability, in order to figure out how taking charge of one's learning can be implemented. According to Little (1991) autonomy is a "*capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action*"(p.40). It follows from this, that an autonomous learner is able to reflect on his/her learning, take decision over his learning and depend on her/himself to improve it. Indeed, Holec (1980) made clear such a decision process which a learner may involve in. According to him being able to control one's learning means:

1. *Determining the objectives.*
2. *Defining the contents and progressions.*
3. *Selecting methods and techniques to be used.*

³ Autonomy comes from the Greek *autonomia*, from the term autocephaly (Britannica, 2007). After achieving their independence when the Ottoman Empire fell, the Orthodox churches were said to be autocephalous

4. *Monitoring the procedure of acquisition (rhythm, time, place) and evaluating what has been acquired.*

(Holec, 1980, p.04)

This view was shared with Dam (1990) who holds that an autonomous learner is the one who independently sets aims and goals for his / her learning, exercises a choice over the learning materials, tasks and methods and over the way these chosen tasks need to be organized and carried out. She also maintains that this autonomy entails the learner's choice over the criteria for hi/her evaluation as well (Dam,1990). Hence, for other views this capacity does not only imply a decision making process where learners are responsible of their learning but it can be extended to include “ *an attitude to learning where the learner is prepared to take or does take responsibility for his own learning*”(Dickinson, 1992, p.330).

To clarify this type of attitude, Dickinson (1993) identifies five characteristics of autonomous learners as follows:

1. They are able to identify what has been taught, i. e, what a teacher is doing and why he/she is doing that.
2. They set their own learning goals in collaboration with their teacher.
3. They have a rich repertoire of strategies and the confidence to select and implement those that are effective to their learning
4. They can monitor their own use of learning strategies.

Thus, autonomous learners' attitudes differ from the traditional mode of learning where learners depend entirely on their teacher, while their initiation, reflection and creativity in learning become stunted. Within this conception, learning is not a matter of memorization, “*it is a constructive process that involves actively seeking meaning from events*” (Candy, 1991, p.271).

Nevertheless, a question which may be raised is whether this capacity or attitude to control one's learning is natural or can be acquired. According to Holec (1981), Little (1999), and Littlewood (1996), autonomy is an ability which is not inborn, but has to be acquired mostly by formal learning where learners are provided with the necessary tools which may help develop their autonomy. This process is labeled ‘autonomization’ (Little, 2003). Wenden (1991) pointed out that during such a process: “*Learners have learned how to learn, they have acquired the learning strategies, the knowledge about learning, and the attitude that enable them to use these skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher*”(p.15).

On the other hand, Benson (2003) opposes this view and claimed that autonomy cannot be taught but fostered in the classroom. Therefore, the question which needs to be addressed is not how to produce autonomous learners but rather how to build upon the autonomy which they already have (Benson, 2003). To provide more support for this claim, Aoki (1999) states that “*the core of learner autonomy is a psychological construct*” between the learner’s feeling and his/her learning context (p.144). Indeed, the learner’s possession of knowledge and skills does not necessary pave the way to autonomous learning⁴ if they are not provided with a context which supports their feelings of autonomy. Thus, learners with regards to their possession of the necessary knowledge and skills, they need to feel motivated and self-efficacious to use such skills and knowledge effectively. As matter of fact, autonomy is not only a matter of skills and knowledge but it also depends on learners’ willingness and confidence to engage in its process as Littlewood notes:

“We can define an autonomous person as one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices which govern his/her actions. This capacity depends on two main components: ability and willingness.....ability depends on possessing both knowledge about the alternatives from which choices have to be made and the necessary skills for carrying out whatever choices seem most appropriate. Willingness depends on having both the motivation and the confidence to take responsibility for the choices required”
(Littlewood ,1996,p.97)

Thus, one accepts that autonomy can be fostered since it involves affective factors related to learning such as motivation, self-efficacy, etc. Meanwhile, possessing the necessary skills and knowledge to act independently in learning is deemed important to develop one’s autonomy since the latter requires learners to build up a skill set that allows them to control their own learning (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011). Accordingly, to train learners into such a process, affective factors need to be handled with care. Still, how about perceptions and cultural values? Can they influence learners’ autonomy?

As autonomous learning has become a popular focus of foreign language teaching, more debates have been generated over its application in the classroom. It has been claimed that autonomy is another Western concept that is not applicable to other contexts which do not share the same values such as those in Eastern Asia (Ho & Crookall, 1995; Palfreyman, 2004; Smith, 2001). Indeed, Smith (2001) argues that group-based approaches are more likely to be appropriate in Asian contexts than completely individualized learning. Also, Littlewood (1999) refers to two features which can hinder the development of learner autonomy in these contexts

⁴ Autonomous learning is commonly used to refer to the learning that takes place on an autonomous basis (Holec, 1981).

which are collectivism, and de facto acceptance of relationships based on power and authority⁵. Jones (1995) explains the consequence of such an act arguing that autonomy is laden with cultural values and to make autonomy an undiluted educational objective in a culture , where it has no traditional place is to guilty at least of cultural insensitivity.

However, limiting autonomy to the Western context has received a denial from theories in this field. They generally conclude that autonomy is not an “*all or nothing concept*” (e. g, Oxford 1990; Nunan, 1995) since it is “*a dynamic process with a future, not a stable condition, something which develops*” (Holec, 1985, p. 180). Thus, autonomy may come by degrees and may have different forms (Benson, 2003). In this respect, Dickinson (1987) talks about semi-autonomy, or the phase in which students are preparing themselves to achieve autonomy. A learner, for example, could be autonomous in one skill or language area or semi-autonomous in another. S/he may display this autonomy by doing extra homework/projects, using his/her own strategies to deal with an assigned task, suggesting further teaching activities to include in class, etc.

The degree of autonomy depends on the personality of learners, their goals, the philosophies of the institution and the cultural context (Nunan, 1996; Dickinson, 1987). Indeed, learners’ motivation, learning attitudes and beliefs, their language learning backgrounds and their language learning objectives are all factors related to the learner which can determine the degree of their autonomy. In addition to that, there are also social factors related to the learning context which can affect learners’ autonomy such as the institution’s policy, i.e., its educational objectives and the procedures implemented to achieve them (teachers, facilities, learning materials, etc.), besides the cultural context where learners have grown up and its views and attitudes towards the notion of autonomy.

Accordingly, learner autonomy is political since it depends on the context where learning is taking place. If this context restrains learners’ freedom of choice they may not develop their autonomy even if they are willing to do so. Thus, besides possessing the feeling of autonomy (being motivated to engage in this process), autonomous learning cannot be practiced without giving an authority to this feeling and recognizing students as legitimate members who can involve in making decisions over their learning process (Aoki,1999).

⁵ Individualism emphasizes personal freedom and achievement. Collectivism, in contrast emphasizes embeddedness of individuals in a larger group. It encourages conformity and discourages individuals from dissenting and standing out.

“Autonomy also includes a more political element, relating to the idea of individual freedom of choice. As applied to education, learners are unable to take control or make choices about their learning, unless they are free to do so.....education policies, school curriculum and the prescribed use of textbooks, are all examples of ways in which the development of autonomy may be hindered”.

(Reinders, 2010,p.41)

As a conclusion, to define learner autonomy, different meanings have been attributed to this term and misconceptions have characterized such an attempt. In this part one has tried to provide a definition of autonomy in language learning while bearing in mind that there exists no clear cut definition for this term. Therefore, one accepts that autonomy entails a capacity to take control over learning through making and taking decisions to render this process more effective. This capacity includes the possession of the skills and knowledge which enable learners to make appropriate choices, in addition to affective factors which encourage them to engage and involve actively in autonomous learning.

Autonomy also includes a political aspect which has to do with learners’ freedom to make their own choices. Thus, its development depends as well on the educational and social context of the learner. Yet, does learner’s autonomy imply learning alone without a teacher? Besides, is it a process which depends on given learning materials and resources?

2.4 Learner Autonomy and Other Related Concepts

Autonomy in language learning has been related to terms like self-instruction, self-direction, learner-centered education, self-access and independent learning. Yet, these are not synonyms to autonomy and autonomous learning since they describe various ways and degrees of learning by yourself, whereas autonomy refers to the ability or attitudes which enable learners to control their own learning as stated above (Benson, 2006).What is then the difference between learner autonomy and these terms?

2.4.1 Self-instruction:

According to Dickinson (1987) self-instruction refers to:

“...situations in which a learner, with others, or alone, is working without the direct control of a teacher... [either] for short periods within a lesson, for whole lessons, or in the extreme case of learner autonomy, where he undertakes the whole of his learning without the help of a teacher”.

(Dickinson,1987, p.05)

This means that in such situations the learner, with others or alone, is working without the direct control of a teacher. Dickinson (1987) talks about homework as an old example of a self-instruction activity. However, it has been observed that the teacher remains the one who makes decisions concerning what and how to learn, in addition to how it is assessed (Nunan, 1997). This is not autonomy since learners have to be involved in making such decisions. In this case, learners may not develop the skills and strategies necessary to develop their autonomy as Benson and Voller (1997) state: *“It appears that learners who are forced into self-instructional modes of learning without adequate support will tend to rely all the more on the directive elements in the materials that they use”*(p.09).

Moreover, learner autonomy does not imply working alone. Nor does it negate the teacher’s role. Students need to receive guidance to develop effective strategies, so that they do not *“waste a lot of time through use of ineffective strategies and eventually come to the conclusion that autonomous approaches simply do not work”* (Sheerin, 1997, pp.63-4). So, the teacher’s role is crucial as it will be shown later in this work.

2.4.2 Self-Direction:

According to Dickinson (1987) self-direction is *“a particular attitude to the learning task, where the learner accepts responsibility for all the decisions concerned with his learning but does not necessarily undertake the implementation of those decisions”*(p.11). This means that learners may lack the capacity to take responsibility, so that they may attend or participate in teacher-centered classes. Accordingly, SDL is not a technique but rather an attitude (Dickinson,1987). Students act independently in case they are told how to do that. They are, thus, in need of an expert’s instructions. In this regard, Dickinson (1987) maintains that *“learners might resist to these modes of learning, i.e., self-directed and self-instruction learning, because they are not familiar with them and prepared to involve within”*(p.02). Therefore, training learners and familiarizing them with these processes is important.

“...[i]t is not desirable to thrust self-instruction and self-directed learning on to learners who are resistant to it, and it is very important ... not [to] confuse the idea, or our enthusiasm to introduce it, with the learner’s ability or willingness to undertake it”.

(Dickinson, 1987, p.02)

Dickinson (1987) thus accepts that self-instruction is not synonym for autonomy and his view was shared by others like Little (1990) and Riley (1986). Moreover, Braman (1998) argues that unlike autonomous learning, SDL has been primary based on individualistic attitudes and

values. Indeed, this researcher found a significant relationship between readiness for self-directed learning and individualism since the goals of an individual and his/her cultural group may conflict, thus standing as an obstacle to self-direction's opportunity (Braman,1998).

Hence, there are other scholars who hold an opposing view. Tudor (1996), for instance, defines SDL as *“the strategic and attitudinal traits of a learner who is able, or who is in the process of developing the ability to make informed decisions relative to his language learning, and who accepts the responsibility in a free and willing manner”* (pp.26-7). According to this definition self-direction seems to be synonym to learner autonomy since it refers both to capacity and control. Similarly, Gibbons et al., (2002) accept that SDL involves initiating personally challenging activities, developing personal knowledge and skills which are necessary to achieve effective learning.

It follows from this, that there are still controversies and misconceptions about the definition and dimension of SDL. Yet, one accepts that this term though related to the concept of autonomy, it is not its synonym. In effect, self-direction is a mode of learning where learners take decisions over their learning process. However, learners can do so without being conscious of this process.

“It may be possible to be a superb technician of self-directed learning in terms of one's command of goal setting, instructional design or evaluative procedures, and yet to exercise no critical questioning of the validity or worth of one's intellectual pursuit as compared with competing ,alternative possibilities”.

(Brookfield, 1985,p.29)

On the other hand, autonomous learning involves conscious reflection and decision making, i.e., meta-cognitive processes. This is so, since autonomy is a capacity which entails making and taking decisions about what to learn and how to learn it. Being able to do so means that a learner is conscious of what needs to be selected and how it needs to be implemented to achieve their intended objective. So, the type of choices autonomous learners make are more likely to be efficient and used effectively more than those made by self-directed learners since the former are based on 'their conceptual understanding' of their way of learning, their knowledge and the different learning strategies (Reinders, 2000).

2.4.3 Self-Access:

Self-access has been defined as:

“Self-access' is a way of describing learning materials that are designed and organized in such a way that students can select and work on tasks on their

own (although this does not preclude the possibility of various kinds of support), and obtain feedback on their performance, for example by comparing their answers to a key which accompanies the material”

(Sheerin, 1991,p.143)

It refers, thus, to the materials which are made available for learners to learn without depending a lot on the teacher, or as in Sturtridge’ s (1992) words, it is “*the system which makes materials available to language learners so that they can choose to work as they wish, usually without a teacher or with very limited teacher support*”(p.04). Self-access centres’ predecessors are the language laboratories which characterize the behaviouristic approach to language learning.

From this definition self-access cannot be equated with learner autonomy since it refers to the materials which can help learners develop their autonomy. It can be incorporated into language program or take place in self-access centres (SAC). Still, using self-access materials does not necessary imply making learners autonomous since autonomy does not depend on learning a language in a particular way as pointed out by several scholars (Dickinson,1987; Little,1991; Sturtridge,1997). It depends rather on the freedom that learners have to take control of their learning and on devising a system which provides them with the choice of learning in their own way (Cook, 2001). Moreover, for Dickinson (1987) “*self-access learning refers to modes of learning rather than where the locus of control may lie*”(p.27). It is, thus, an approach to language learning not language teaching where a number of elements are integrated as the following diagram displays.

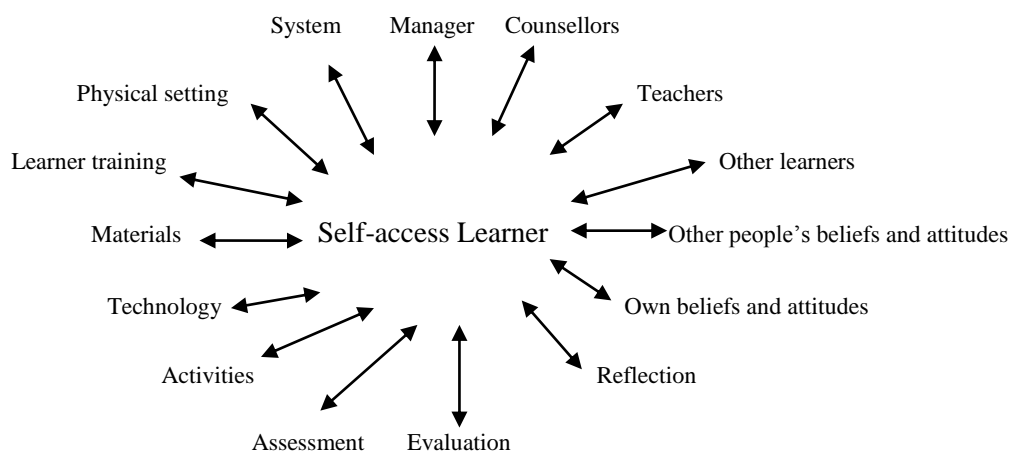


Figure (2.1) :Interaction between the learner and the self-access environment (Gardner & Miller1999,p.11)

Self-access includes teachers who can perform roles such as counselor, evaluator, assessor, manager, organizer, information provider while learners can act as planner, self-assessor, evaluator of SALL and organizer. Besides, this environment allows for individualization as well as collaboration among the participants. It takes into account learners' needs and wants, in order to identify the necessary resources and materials to be provided. Also, it aims to promote learners' reflection through encouraging them to set goals for and monitor their learning while making at their disposal different kinds of assessment. Meanwhile, it supports their learning through providing counseling and training along the process.

It is worth stating that, the way self-access centres is implemented depends on the ideologies underlying the use of this system, i.e., "*the beliefs about learning which are held by those who set up the system*" (Sturtridge, 1992, p.04). This is so, since its implementation is based upon learners' learning needs, difficulties, educational objectives, policies, and available resources which are typical to the context where this system is implemented. As a matter of fact, different description of systems is offered by Dickinson (1993), such as the CRAPEL system, the Cambridge system (called Open Access Sound and Video Library), the British Council system (designed by McCafferty) and the Moray House College, Edinburgh system.

It can be concluded then that self-access language learning is one among the context in which learners' autonomy can be enhanced. However, one may inquire about the difference between self-access and self-directed learning. Sheerin (1994) highlights this difference stating; "*A self-access centre could be used as a teacher-directed source of individualized homework activities, but this would in no way constitute self-directed learning*"(p.144). Thus, although learners may work on their own in a SAC, they still do things which their teachers had told them to do, whereas self-directed learning is based on the learners' initiation in taking decisions over their learning.

2.4.4 Independent Learning:

Does autonomy mean being independent in one's own learning? There has been a misconception that autonomy entails absolute independence from the teacher. Since autonomy requires a set of skills and strategies, besides conscious awareness of the learning process, teacher's support is needed to achieve that aim. In this respect, Sinclair (2000) highlights the importance of this support stating:

"Learners can be encouraged or left to work on their own without organized support, but there is no guarantee that they will benefit from this experience in

terms of developing a capacity for making informed decision about their learning or in terms of improving their competence”

(Sinclair, 2000,p.08)

Similarly, Voller (1997) argues that interdependence is crucial to the development of autonomy and Boud (1988) states that independence entails “*an unavoidable dependence at one level on authorities for information and guidance*”(p.29). Thus, autonomy does not mean learning alone without a teacher. Instead, it “*is a social construct that includes the ability to function effectively as a cooperative member in a group*” (Little, 1991, p.23). Within this context, learners have a role to assume which needs to be related to appropriate and environmental support, rather than with withdrawal or total detachment.

Hence, one needs to maintain that certain freedom or independence is necessary for learners to become autonomous while their teacher’s support is provided whenever it is required. This is so, since autonomy also has an individual dimension, where learners’ reflection over their learning, motivation, their personal needs, learning styles and self-assessment count. Several researchers have displayed the importance of taking into account this dimension and teacher’s support for the promotion of learner autonomy. For instance, Toogood and Pemberton (2002) reported that their three attempts to integrate self-directed learning into the curriculum were successful in meeting students’ needs for both free choice and support. Success was also reported in Gardner’s (2007) individualization as shown through their positive attitudes towards SALL, the diversity of choices and learning goals set and content adopted in SALL and their satisfaction of the achievement of their learning goals. Therefore, teachers need to be well-prepared and well-equipped to know what kind of support learners need to develop their autonomy, in addition to when and how this support should be provided in accordance with the learning context.

So far, a distinction has been made between learner autonomy and some other related concepts such as self-instruction, self-direction, self-access and independent learning. Indeed, defining these concepts has unveiled their relation to autonomy as they all aim at making learners autonomous. It has also shown their distinguishing features since these are different modes of learning. In self-instruction, learners may work on their own without their teacher’s help, while in autonomous learning teacher’s support remains needed. Likewise, in self-directed learning, individualistic attitudes are favoured and learners’ decisions may not be pondered over. Besides, self-access is a means intended to achieve learners’ autonomy through providing them with materials which offer more learning choices. Thus, it is a learning environment which supports learner’s autonomy. The latter does not mean independent learning as certain

interdependence is required. This is so, since being autonomous involves the possession of certain knowledge and skills which need to be developed with the teacher's help. Still, can this autonomy be assessed?

2.5 Assessing Learner Autonomy

Previously, one has attempted to define the concept of learner autonomy in order to clarify more how this process develops and help readers reflect over the way it might be fostered in language learning. But, to help achieve this aim a question has been raised concerning whether learner autonomy is a measurable construct, and in case it is so how it needs to be measured. In this respect, Benson (2001) claims that *“if we are able to define autonomy and describe it in terms of various aspects of control over learning, we should also in principle be able to measure the extent to which learners are autonomous”* (p.51, cited in Benson, 2010,p.77). But, if one accepts that students' autonomy can be measured on what basis can we differentiate less autonomous from more autonomous students?

According to Benson (2010) making this kind of judgment depends on observing certain behaviours which can be associated with the notion of autonomy. To illustrate this point he gave the example of students making a study plan, reading and judging its effectiveness, as components of autonomous learning. However, Benson (2010) also claims that though planning can be part of autonomous learning, it is not a necessary component of this process. Still one accepts that learners holding control of their own learning, is an important indication of being autonomous. Though this control can manifest itself in different ways (control over content of learning, revision timing and planning, etc.) and it can be shared by students and teachers, it remains a stimulus for students' participation, reflection and thus decision making and taking process.

In this respect, Benson (2010) claims that *“what we need to measure is not the degree to which students are independent of the influence of other-controlling agents, but the degree to which they are actually in control of their learning”*(p.81). This is so, since autonomy as stated before does not imply encouraging students to become totally independent of their teacher/institution and work by themselves. Instead, *“autonomous learning implies by definition, that the student is in control of the learning process to some degree”* (Benson,2010,p.80).This is because leaving all aspects of learning within students' control does not guarantee that they will assume this responsibility. Collaboration and social interactions remain, thus, essential for the development of learner autonomy (Little, 1996; William & Burden, 1997).

Hence, though this control is an observable behavior, its diversity may cause a problem for the measurement of autonomy (Benson, 2010). Besides, one needs to maintain that language learning process is constructed by observable and non-observable behaviours. Still, “*we have little evidence to suggest that autonomy consists of any particular combination of these behaviours*” (Benson, 2001, p.51). Additionally, a problem which can be associated with measuring learner autonomy is how to deal with such non-observable behaviours, mainly in case these are important components of autonomous learning (Benson, 2010).

Furthermore, it is also worth noting that as a psychological capacity to be exercised by the learner, different forms of autonomous behaviours can be adopted depending on age, prior learning experience, perceived learning needs as well as the learning context (Little, 1991; Benson, 2001). Indeed, as Holec (1985) argues, the development of autonomy often involves processes of psychological deconditioning where dependency habits which have been acquired through institutionalized learning are challenged and overcome. Thus, autonomy is not just a matter of observable behaviours, but it involves interplay of different factors: social, cognitive, psychological, metacognitive. In fact, a little is known about the stages through which autonomy develops as a process and the way it can be transferred from one situation to another (Benson, 2010).

Moreover, there are other constraints for measuring learner autonomy. For Benson (2010) another problem associated with autonomous behaviours is that when these behaviours are not genuinely indicator of the possession of autonomy as a capacity, but rather pretense to be autonomous in order to please the teacher. In this case, there is a need to count for stimulated autonomous behaviours and the meaning these derive from a capacity for autonomy as Benson (2010) states:

“If we are really to measure the degree to which students are autonomous, we will somehow have to capture both the meaning of behaviours and their authenticity as behaviours deriving from a capacity for autonomy. And presumably, students would be especially inclined to wear the ‘mask of autonomous behaviour’ in situations where they were actually tested on their autonomy”.

(Benson, 2010, p.85)

Therefore, Benson (2001) argues that autonomous behaviour is essentially self-initiated rather than “*generated in response to a task which requires either explicitly or implicitly required*”(p.52). Similarly, Breen and Mann (1997) warn against tasks which require a display of

autonomous behaviour since the students are likely to behave in a way which is perceived as autonomous by their teacher.

Nevertheless, despite the difficulty in measuring learner autonomy, there is a need to attempt it, in order to judge the success of interventions relating to its promotion (Benson, 2001). Indeed, if autonomy is not brought to assessment programme, the majority of students are not likely to perceive its importance (Boud, 1995; Ramsden, 2003). Besides, assessing learner autonomy may be essential for its development because assessment influences students' decisions making process concerning how and what to learn, thereby improving their approach to learning (Boud, 1995; Ramsden, 2003).

For that purpose, a number of studies have been engaged in practical attempts to measure the degree of autonomy using different tools and approaches. Rowsell and Libben's (1994) study, for instance, was conducted in the context of a second language acquisition course at a Canadian University, where the students were asked to write diaries over the period of study. The aim was to determine high and low achievers in terms of what they do in the course through using self-ratings of proficiency and the extent to which initial goals had been achieved (Rowsell & Libben, 1994). The diaries were, thus, examined by these researchers for reports of ACTs⁶ which were divided into pedagogical ACTs, "*actions that took control of the pedagogical activities associated with language learning*" (Rowsell & Libben, 1994, p.673), and functional ACTs which entail using the language for functional or communicative purposes while learning individually. The result obtained revealed that the high and low achievers' use of pedagogical ACTs did differ, whereas the high achievers used more functional ACTs.

Another investigation concerned with measuring autonomy was conducted by Lai (2001) who reports two rating scales aiming at facilitating objectively the measurement of the development of learner autonomy in language learning within a listening course. The first rating scale relating to process control, at task level and the other one to self-direction at the overall process or macro level (Lai,2001). The process control scale refers to "*the learner's ability to self-monitor and self-evaluate her learning tasks and for learning strategies employed for each learning activity*" (Lai, 2001, p.35). According to Lai (2001) this process focused on:

- Task aim: the extent to which the aim was relevant to the programme and conducive to training aspects of listening skills/ strategies

⁶ Autonomously Controlled Tasks.

- Self-assessment: the extent to which the self-assessment was relevant to the aims and learners' listening process or performance.

Whereas, for her the self-direction scale focused on:

- The learner's ability to set long/short term goals.
- The learner's ability to identify relevant materials and skills or strategies for practice purpose.
- The learner's ability to engage in relevant activities.
- The learner's ability to adopt a personal learning approach and conducting self-assessment along.

Thus, students using self-access listening resources were asked to evaluate their learning at the end of each session through using printed forms to guide their reflection. They were also asked to design "*a personal course for self-directed language learning*" at the beginning and end of the course, using also 17 statements to assess their design (Lai, 2001,p.39)⁷.

Holding similar concern, Sinclair (1999) "*finds observable behavior to be a poor indicator of autonomy and the method that she reports addresses this problem by assessing metacognitive awareness*"(p.102). Additionally, she proposes a provisional assessment scale with three levels: largely unaware, becoming aware and largely aware, and suggests that the way students talk about their learning process may refer to different levels of metacognitive awareness (Sinclair,1999). Thus, Sinclair's (1999) concern is not just in students' ability to make decisions, but also in their awareness of their choices and reasons for making decisions. To develop assessment criteria in the context of an independent language learning programme, Sinclair (1999) puts forward the following questions:

Can the student:

- *Provide a rationale for his/her choice of learning activities and materials?*
- *Describe the strategies he/she used?*
- *Provide an evaluation of the strategies used?*
- *Identify his/her strengths and weaknesses?*
- *Describe his/her plans for learning?*
- *Describe alternative strategies that he/she could have used?*

(Sinclair,1999,p.103)

⁷ "Unfortunately, Lai did not report the results of these assessments" (Benson, 2010,p.90).

To foster learner autonomy within self-access centers, there are programmes oriented toward achieving this aim. Among them, one can state the Certificate of Independent Language Learning (CILL) which includes modules that are taught for over three years and structured in a way which allows each module to enable learners to show more their abilities to take responsibility over their learning process (Ravindram, 2000). Within CILL, students take a credit-bearing language course where credits are awarded basically on the development of their autonomy while language proficiency constitutes a minor role in the assessment process (Benson, 2010). The assessment criteria include twenty items adopted from Knowles's (1975) key skills of self-directed learning (Benson,2010). A variety of assessment tools were included in the course. These are:

- *profile of strengths and weaknesses, observations made and outlined in the consultation records drawn up by CILL helpers;*
- *quality of reflection on learning and task as gleaned from learners' learning logs, learning reviews and contracts;*
- *the quality of language work submitted;*
- *learners' ratings of their self-directed learning skills at the end compared to ratings at the end of each module, and;*
- *a team decision on the allocation of possible credits for the learner.*

(Ravindram, 2000,p.66)

Hence, according to Benson (2010) using a variety of assessment's modes within this programme has caused a problem of ensuring consistency among teachers. In this light, Morrison (2005) argues that within self-access centers "*the variety of types and scope of learning makes any attempt at its definition, analysis and measurement problematic*"(p.270). Moreover, the assessment procedures implemented within these programmes may reward language proficiency more than learner autonomy. Therefore, there is a need for balancing accountability requirements with programme goals through using assessment procedures that reward both learner autonomy and languages proficiency, besides including self-and negotiated assessment (Benson, 2010).

Focusing on self-assessment procedures was the approach adopted by researchers like Champagne et al.'s (2001) and O'Leary (2006) to assess students' autonomy. Indeed, Champagne et al.'s (2001) action research study focused on assessing students' performance through measuring attainment in language proficiency while assessing their learning process through using qualitative analysis of portfolio entries/observations and interviews. This study

stresses the importance of self-assessment and intends “*to maintain an integrity around the compatibility of testing with an educational approach that aims to be pro-autonomy*” (Champagne et al., 2001,p.54). Similarly, O’Leary (2006) used in her research Benson’s (2001) three key psychological concepts namely: “*attention, metacognitive knowledge and reflection*” (p.86), to analyse students' self-evaluation reports from portfolio-based assessment between 1999 and 2002, for evidence of autonomous learning behaviour. She also examined students’ diaries in order to identify the common approach adopted by these students. Both studies concluded that the development of students’ autonomy depends on the nature of the implemented assessment activity (O’Leary, 2007).

To conclude, measuring learner autonomy is a complex issue since there are certain difficulties encountered within this process, “*among which assessing the meaning and authenticity of learning behaviours seem to be the most intractable*” (Benson, 2010, p.95). Therefore, one agrees with Dam and Legenhausen (2010) when they claim that in autonomous language learning, there are areas which lend themselves to testing like students’ essays writing within their portfolios. But, since students’ reflection and awareness of the learning process “*constitutes some of the prerequisite*” for their involvement in making and taking decisions, there a need to consider their self-evaluation as well as peer evaluation to capture their autonomous learning (Dam & Legenhausen, 2010, p.123). Accordingly, there are variables with autonomous learning which teachers can test and obtain quantitative data (e. g, acquisition of vocabulary and use of strategies within this process), while there are others that cannot be tested but rather self-evaluated or peer evaluated by students themselves, and in this case qualitative data can be gained on students’ autonomy (e. g, students’ study plans and revision process). Thus, teachers need to obtain various data on how students proceed with autonomous learning, in order to help them develop their autonomy and get its benefits.

2.6 Perspectives of Learner Autonomy

Promoting learner’s autonomy in language learning is gaining momentum with several research projects either already underway or in preliminary or preparatory stages (Benson, 2000). Books, articles and reviews have been published on this issue and conferences are held worldwide to debate its latest innovations⁸. Indeed, a general claim has been made that a fundamental purpose

⁸ There are different research networks on learner autonomy which are holding conferences and seminars on this issue such as: AILA – Association Internationale De Linguistique Appliquée., TESOL ARABIA GROUP SIG, ALTE: The Association of Language Testers in Europe, etc.

of education “*is helping individuals to develop the attitude that learning is a lifelong process and to acquire the skills of self-directed learning*” (Knowles, 2001, cited in William & Burden, 1997, p.147). This increasing concern may provoke questioning around the importance of promoting learner autonomy in language learning.

The research literature contains a great deal of arguments in favour of fostering autonomous learning. Heron (1993), for example, argues that learning by its nature is autonomous since it remains the task of the learner that is, nobody can make a person learn and no one can memorize facts, understand ideas or practice skills for another learner. He also maintains that interest and commitment are self-generated and any attempts to impose or negate them interfere with learning. Thus, learning should involve the whole person who has the right to make and take decisions that concern his/her learning (Heron, 1993).

In fact, “*feeling free and volitional in one’s actions is a basic human need that is relevant not only to learning but also to other aspects of life*”(Deci,1995, p.02). Autonomy can make a learner perceives himself/herself “*as a producer of his or her society*” (1997, cited in Holec, 1981, p.01). That is, learners’ feeling of autonomy can develop beyond learners’ context to include other aspects of their life inducing, thus, in them a sense of responsibility where their views and acts are reflected in their society as Little (1991) explains: “*Without such barriers, learners should have little difficulty in transferring their capacity for autonomous behavior to all other areas of their lives and this should make them more useful members of society and more effective participants in the democratic process*”(p.08).

Furthermore, research on the effectiveness of autonomous learning projects reveal that learners who reflectively engaged in their learning are more likely to be more efficient and effective (Benson, 2003). This is because learning in this case is more focused, personal and free of barriers which can hinder learners’ thinking and contribution. Accordingly, autonomous learners are more likely to take risk and make full use of English in class. Also, by holding control over what, how and when they learn, these learners are more likely to set goals, plans for their learning, evaluate it as well as develop strategies to cope with new situations and thus learn how to learn from their success and failure (McCarry, 1995)

Moreover, being autonomous in learning can also yield to enhancing positive emotions towards this learning (see for example Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dörnyei , 2001). In this light, Ushioda (1996) asserts that “*autonomous learners are by definition motivated learners*”(p.02).

Thus, if learners are proactively committed to learning, their motivation might be promoted. Indeed, catering for learners' learning needs and providing them with the choice to take part in their learning process while handling such contribution with care and attention can instill in a feeling of enthusiasm and "*a sense of effectiveness within themselves*" (Oxford & Shearia, 1994, p.21, cited in Arnold & Brown, 1999, p.17). This will help them become more initiative and creative in learning and encourage them to pursue their lifelong learning independently.

"The degree of autonomy is also essential to successful language learning. No matter how much students learn through lessons, there is always plenty more. They will need to learn by practice, on their own. Also the changing needs of learners will require them to go back to learning several times in their lives. Then again, they will need to be able to study on their own. The best way to prepare them for this task is to help them to become more autonomous".

(Scharle & Szabo, 2000, p.04)

It is worth noting, however, that learner autonomy does not only have benefits over the learner himself, but also over the teacher. Indeed, unlike the traditional classroom, teachers do not only obtain feedback from assessment procedures of learners' performance, they can gain it continuously from learners' involvement as Little (2000) explains : "*Developing learner autonomy reveals profound truths about the ways in which human beings learn, and these ways of learning reveal profound truths about how human beings are*"(p.25). In this way, teachers can involve themselves in curriculum reviews to make from their teaching more flexible and relevant to such learning needs and preferences.

Furthermore, being autonomous, learners are helping their teachers by making and taking decisions for themselves according to their learning needs and wants. In doing so, they are not only involved in the learning, but also in the teaching process. This is likely to facilitate the task of teaching and make it more interesting and beneficial since all partners are involved in this process. In this case, interaction and cooperation are also likely to be part of the classroom culture where the main goal is to bring and exchange information, create and communicate effectively through the target language.

However, in spite of such benefits the desirability of autonomy has been questioned in the literature. Laurillard (2002), for example, expresses her opposition to learner's autonomy stating that "*.....beneath the rhetoric of giving students control over their learning is a dereliction of duty*"(p.196). Similarly, Hand (2006) criticizes autonomy as an educational goal and presents two arguments to support his position. Firstly, he argues that being able to make choices is desirable, but this is a product of circumstances rather than education as people are able and willing to feel free to take actions unless they are under control or constraints. Secondly, he

questions the role of education in case it seeks to help learners rely on their own judgments rather than that of experts or oppose legitimate authority (Hand, 2006). Additionally, leaving some control in the classroom to the learners may make teachers feel uncomfortable and disgraced since he/she used to be the central figure in the traditional classroom as it has been claimed by Dörnyei (2001):

“Of course, the raising of learner autonomy is not always pure joy and fun. It involves risks. . . . It is at times like that we teachers may panic, believe everything was a mistake, blame ourselves for our „leniency“ , feel angry and resentful towards the students for not understanding the wonderful opportunity they have been offered, and thus resort to traditional authoritarian methods and procedures ‘ to get order’ ”.

(Dörnyei, 2001,pp.107-108)

Nevertheless, one maintains *“that learner autonomy should be the goal of every learner and every teacher”* as it has been expressed by Brookes and Grundy (1988, p.01). Besides, its promotion *“ requires a change in beliefs about language learning on the part of both learner and teacher, as well as a corresponding change in roles, and learners and teachers may need preparation (if not explicit training) to undertake self-instruction”* (Dickinson,1987, p.121). Moreover, there is also the need to be aware of the social, cultural and political context where one is working, in order to design appropriate pedagogies for its enhancement (Pennycook,1997), while bearing in mind that this approach is independent of pedagogic styles, organisational models, student age, or learning environment, and it goes beyond subject disciplines, being a defining characteristic of education (Little,1996). For this reason, clarifying the roles of the institution, the teacher, and the learner within this process is essential for grasping its requirements.

2.7 Institution’s Role

In autonomous learning, learners have to have the opportunity to take responsibility for their learning through having certain freedom of choice which allows them to learn as they see fit. Still, this opportunity depends on the educational expectations and attitudes of society and more particularly of institutional settings. In fact, teacher’s roles are partly defined by the university’s regulations and laws. They may feel then resentment if they are adopting roles that they do not agree with, or if their choices and practices are restrained by such laws and regulations.

Thus, constraints on the exercise of learner autonomy may come from the teacher’s role as a result of national policies. In this respect, Breen and Mann (1997) argue that in certain contexts: *“Teachers sense that the course of control over the work is shifting away from*

themselves and their immediate institutions to centralized bureaucracies”(p.40). Indeed, in her discussion of the impact of national policies on autonomous language learning in Portuguese schools, Vieira (2003) finds that though such policies support autonomous language learning, still in reality there is a tendency to adhere to conventional teaching, while attempting to innovate and introduce learners’ autonomy from institutions remain isolated and unnoticed. It follows from this, that even if there exist university’s documents which claim enhancing learner autonomy, the reality may be different on the ground when it comes to the practiced teaching approaches. In addition to national policies on education which are defined by the state, Benson (2000) claims that there are other three constraints to learner autonomy. These are:

- *Institutional Constraints: These are rules and regulations, certifications, examinations, curriculum, the physical and social organization of the school and classroom practices.*
- *Conceptions of Language: Dominant conceptions of what the target language is, and the ways in which it is organized and correct usage.*
- *Language Teaching Methodologies: Assumptions about how languages are learned, and relevant learning resources and activities.*

(Benson, 2000,p.116)

Within such constraints how can teachers enable learners to make independent pedagogical choices if they are themselves unable to do so? This question is germane to the notion of teacher autonomy which has been emphasized along with learner autonomy. Vieira (2007) maintains the need to make teachers free to make pedagogical choices that favour learner autonomy.

“The notion of autonomy should refer both to the learner and the teacher, not just to the learner as is often the case. We have perhaps spent too much time thinking about learners and learning processes, and too little time thinking about teachers and teaching processes. Moreover, in the history of the autonomy field, teachers have systematically been kept backstage, that is, they have not taken a central role in research and pedagogical developments. No wonder then that their interests have been overlooked.”

(Vieira, 2007,p.20)

Similarly, Little (1995) believes that *“teacher autonomy to be prerequisite to learner autonomy”*(p.78). He also stresses this relationship adding that it is unrealistic to expect teachers to develop their learner autonomy if they themselves do not know what is to be autonomous learners. Besides, in taking the initiations in their classrooms, teachers must have the ability to apply self-managing and reflection processes which they apply to their learning (Little, 1995). Stevens (2007) also supports teacher autonomy since he accepts that *“teachers who practice autonomy in their own professional development increase the likelihood of producing potentially autonomous and lifelong learners”*(p.28). Moreover, Tort-Moloney (1997), McCrath (2000), Smith and Erdogan (2007), Burkert and Schwienhorst (2008) provide evidence that teachers who

themselves are not autonomous language learners may have a negative influence on the development of autonomy in their students.

Hence, it needs to be accepted that total teacher autonomy is not expected. Instead, certain space of freedom needs to be provided for teachers, so that they can decide what fits their learners to enhance their autonomy. Furthermore, learner autonomy cannot be promoted if teachers are unaware of this process. For that purpose, teacher's training or education has been advocated as Little (1995) says: "*We must provide the trainee teachers with skills to develop autonomy in the learners who will be given into their charge but we must also give them the first-hand experience of learner autonomy*"(p. 179).

This training enables teachers to experience learner autonomy for themselves, so that they gain insights into this process and thus get enthusiastic, prepared for and able to promote autonomous learning with their learners. Also, teachers are likely to reflect continuously over their teaching to monitor and adjust their teaching practices to develop learner autonomy. "*Teachers also need to constantly reflect on their own role in the classroom, monitoring the extent to which they constrain or scaffold students' thinking and behavior, so as to engage students in autonomous and effective learning*"(Smith, 2001, pp.43-4).

In addition to that, institutions need to be prepared to be flexible if they aim at developing learner autonomy (Aoki, 1999). This is through providing a variety of teaching and learning resources and involving students in decision making which go beyond "*the freedom to learn within a framework the teacher has set*"(Aoki,1999, p.149). Indeed, self-access centers are an institutional manifestation to support autonomous learning through providing "*a systematic combination of materials, technical and human resources that allow each learner to interact with the environment in a unique way*" (Gardner & Miller, 1991, p.11)⁹. Indeed, there is a general consensus upon the relationship between self-access and learner autonomy. Autonomy provides learning with making choices and being responsible for their learning, while self-access makes manifold ways of learning available to learners (Littlewood, 1997; Sturtridge, 1997).

It needs to be maintained, however, that being autonomous is not related to a particular learning way as it has been previously stated. Autonomy can be enhanced inside the classroom (Dam,1995), through communicating with native speakers (Lewis et al., 1996) or working with other learners (Carpenter, 1996; Marshall, 1996). What is crucial to this process is taking active

⁹ Though the teacher still has the authority to achieve institutional and societal goals.

responsibility over one's learning as it has been pointed out by scholars and mentioned before in this work (Dickenson, 1987; Little, 1991; Sturtridge, 1997). Thus, self-access resources may not allow learners to take such responsibility in case they are used within teachers-centered classroom. Therefore, *"it is the way teachers and learners use self-access facilities which determines whether independent learning takes place"* (Sheerin, 1997, p.54). What is then the teacher's role to help learners develop their autonomy?

2.8 Teacher's Role

There was a misconception that autonomous learners learn by themselves without their teacher's help. Hence, as Holec (1981) notes that learning alone or individualization is not autonomy as a distinction needs to be made between a mode of learning without a teacher and an orientation towards learning where taking responsibility and being conscious of the process exist. Thus, in autonomous learning, as Little (1995), Kenny (1993) and Boud (1988) observe, giving independence to learners does not mean abandoning one's responsibility as a teacher and having no role to play in the language classroom. Indeed, autonomy is not total independence or autism as Little (1991) says: *"Because we are social beings our independence is always balanced by dependence, our essential condition is one of interdependence. Total detachment is a principle determining feature not of autonomy but of autism....."*(p.05).

In fact, in autonomous learning negotiation and cooperation between teachers and learners are required. *"Learner autonomy does not arise spontaneously from within the learner but develops out of learner's dialogue with the world to which he or she belongs"* (Little, 1994, p.431). Moreover, researchers like Boud (1988) and Voller (1997) accept that teachers' guidance is necessary since learners cannot automatically accept responsibility for their learning in a traditional formal educational context loaded with teacher-centered approaches to learning. This is also because *"learners would have any clear awareness of what they need or want to learn"* (Kenny, 1993a, p.440).

So, it can be concluded that being autonomous does not mean working entirely on one's own without getting the teacher's support. This support is required because developing autonomy is a process involving awareness raising, strategies acquiring in short, a training provided by the teacher. The latter is an ongoing interplay of changes which take place through different stages. A description of teacher's role can be done at the level of these stages. In this regard, Boud (1988) suggests four stages as follows:

1-Entry Stage: This is the starting point of the process where learners enter a situation which is unfamiliar or has a degree of uncertainty for them. The teacher's role here is to create a reliable environment which supports learners through providing them with the necessary directions in learning.

2-Reactive Stage: A learner enters into this stage when he/ she has developed a sense of being able to act independently within a given situation or when he/she sees the environment as unrealistic and unsupportive to his/her learning needs and objectives. Teaching needs to encourage expressions of individual feelings and opinions.

3-Proactive Stage: In this stage, the learner feels confident about himself as a member of the group s/he moves on to discover and accept the individuality of others involved. S/he is more likely to display willingness and active involvement in group activities and dialogues. Therefore, the role of the teacher is to accept and encourage cooperative and collaborative behaviours while providing descriptive and immediate feedback according to established objectives.

4-Integrative Stage: Teachers encourage learners to share information, feelings and values and act as co-learners through developing internal standards to guide personal behavior.

Accordingly, teacher's role changes along the process of developing learner's autonomy from creating a secure learning environment where guidance and support are provided and enhancing learners' feeling of autonomy to accepting, encouraging their cooperation and collaboration as well as integration within the group. Hence, Voller (1997) claims that in autonomous learning teachers' role is generally considered to be that of a facilitator, counselor or resource. He also holds that both roles provide psychological support and technical support (cited in Aoki, 1999). The psychological support entails motivating and raising learners' awareness and the technical support involves helping them to acquire the skills and knowledge to plan for their learning, evaluate themselves (Aoaki, 1999).

Moreover, Voller (1997) maintains that the role of facilitator works with groups, while counselor or resource concerns one-to-one situation and that this role does not imply teacher's ultimate control, leaving thus no space for learners' involvement. It is rather a source to provide them with the strategies and techniques to be applied in this process within "*a psychologically secure environment*" where learners are made aware of autonomous learning process, motivated and encouraged towards this process (Voller, 1997, p.149). Besides, developing confidence in their capacities to deal with autonomous learning is necessary as Burkert (2008) notes: "*In my view, a necessary task for initial teacher education would be to show student teachers that*

learners are able to take charge of their own learning and that this capacity in addition will enhance learners' and teachers' motivation"(p.25).

It needs to be noted, however, that teachers need to be aware of the different degrees of autonomous learning. This is so, since there are learners who need more guidance than others and there are tasks where learners are dependent on their teacher (Burkert, 2008). Therefore, teachers need to know their learners' needs and interests as well as beliefs in language learning¹⁰. Moreover, they need to be flexible and prepared to adapt their teaching to foster learner's autonomy as Aoki (1999) states: "...*teachers need to be flexible in determining what exactly they should or could do in fulfilling this role, because it all depends on where each learner is along the path of becoming autonomous*"(p.151).

Additionally, Burkert (2008) states that teachers need to explore their attitudes towards and beliefs about teaching in general and a learner-centered pedagogy in particular. They need to understand what it means to promote learners' autonomy and accept the new teacher-learner relationship where responsibility for what is going on in the classroom is shared between the teacher and his/her learners (Burkert, 2008). In doing so, teachers are changing their conception of teaching where "*support for learning need not inhibit the development of autonomy*" (Farmer, 2006, p.105). It needs rather to support learners' involvement in learning through providing them with "*the chance to have a say in decisions as to what or how to learn-basic principles in the development of learner autonomy*" (Burkert, 2008, p.24).

Meanwhile, this does not imply that teachers have no responsibility and all decisions are taken by learners. Instead, the decision making rights is shared between teachers and learners in the learning process and teachers do not control this process as with traditional teaching methods but acts as directors or advisors (Zhuang, 2010). Therefore, "*the teacher's task is to bring learners to the point where they accept the equal responsibility*" (Little, 1995, p.178).

"The introduction of autonomy leads to very definite changes in teacher/learner roles. The most important change is that the focus is moved from teaching to learning [...]. It is no longer the teacher who has all responsibility for evaluation of unsatisfactory work [...]. In the autonomous class teacher and learners are on the same side, exploring the FL world together".

(Lacey, 2007, p.08)

¹⁰ This is through conducting a needs analysis where the students are interviewed or given a questionnaire (or checklist) in which they provide information concerning their learning needs, preferences and difficulties. An example of this needs analysis is suggested in the last chapter of this thesis.

However, the question which remains addressed is how the teacher can help learners accept this responsibility with the constraints to learner autonomy which have been discussed in the previous part. As far as policy constraints are concerned, teachers have no control over such policies compared to the other categories of constraints. However, as Benson (2000) argues within the various constraints on autonomy the teacher's role is to act as a mediator between the learners' rights to autonomy and the broader constraints to these rights through "*explaining and justifying these constraints to his or her learners*"(p.116). In doing so, the teacher is transforming learning constraints into learning possibilities, thereby avoiding being seen as a bridge between the learners' right to autonomy and the socio-institutional constraints on autonomy (Benson, 2000).

Boud (1988) and Voller (1997) view the teacher's role in autonomous language learning as one of a negotiator of syllabus with learners and external authorities, i.e. representatives of the educational institution and professionals from the discourse communities to which learners are trying to gain admittance. Similarly, Little (1995) argues that even in a context where learning objectives are prescribed and materials are structured by a government department; still there is a room for developing learner autonomy through the negotiation process. Besides, Voller (1997) maintains that negotiation should go beyond the syllabus, including both "*syllabus and meaning*"(p.109).

It is worth stating that in the literature on autonomy, negotiation of meaning is broadly understood as negotiation of learner goals or teacher-learner agendas, classroom methodologies, teacher-learner role relationships and learning outcomes (Hall & Kenny 1988; Haughton & Dickinson,1989; Crabbe,1993; Kenny,1993a, 1993b, 1996; Little, 1995; Cotterall,1998; Aoki,1999; Breen & Littlejohn 2000; Amaro 2002; Huang, 2005a, 2005b, 2006a). Indeed, within this process students are involved in dialogue with their teachers, in critique of teaching and the institutional implications of such teaching, changing thus the balance of power in the classroom (Wolfe-Quintero, 2000). Negotiation between learners and teachers and learners themselves can help, thus, empowering autonomous learning since it "*promotes a learner's power of learning and interdependency in learning when appropriate*" (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000, p.21).

However, this freedom is undertaken within discipline since it requires the constant balancing of an individual agenda, his personal purposes, preferences, with others', besides the evaluation of outcomes from undertaken activities (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). Indeed, decision-making is shared in the classroom so that the curriculum is adapted according to

learners' needs, difficulties and preferences. In doing so, autonomy is likely to be equally exercised within a group and more promoted for the sake of achieving better learning.

“Autonomous action is typified by thinking and acting according to one's own principles rather than habitually conforming to someone else's. It can, thereby, express the relationship to oneself as a learner. In the context of a transmissive classroom, the learner is most often obliged to 'exercise' this autonomy by conforming to the ways knowledge, teaching and learning have been defined previously by others. Autonomy becomes enacted as overtly passive and individualist. A classroom based upon negotiated knowledge and procedures allows the learner to exercise autonomy on an equal footing with others in the group and as a contribution to the good of the learning community”.

(Breen & Littlejohn, 2000,p.22)

To conclude, promoting learner autonomy within various constraints entails what Aoki (2002) terms teachers' mediation of the learning context, teacher-learner negotiation of learner goals, learning content, classroom methodologies and a process of genuine pedagogical dialogue. In short, teachers need to create conditions for learners where they can work on their own while their reflection over their learning and self-evaluation of their progress are enhanced. Teachers' feedback, support and scaffolding are also required. This implies that fostering learner autonomy does not free teachers from their responsibility rather it brings a change in their roles from authoritative to facilitator, counselor, and prompter. As stated previously, teachers also need to experience autonomous learning to understand what this process entails and how they should promote it. Since learning depends on social interaction, learners also have a role to play to contribute to their own autonomy as the next section displays.

2.9 Learners' Role

Identifying learners' role in autonomous learning has been attracting increasing attention in language education since there has been a general assumption that many characteristics of autonomous learners agree with successful language learners' characteristics (Hedge,2000). In this respect, Little (1993) claims that autonomy is a universal human capacity, so that all learners are autonomous unless there are restrictions to its achievement. Hence, accepting that autonomy is an innate human nature has received a denial in the research literature (see for instance, Gardner & Miller, 1999; Sheerin, 1997). In fact, learners' actions have an effect on their autonomy since they are required to take an active role in the learning process as Rathbone (1971) explains:

“...a self-activated maker of meaning, an active agent in his own learning process. He is not one to whom things merely happen; he is the one who, by his

own volition, causes things to happen. Learning is seen as the result of his own self-initiated interaction with the world”.

(Rathbone, 1971, p.104; cited in Candy, 1991, p.271)

Indeed, from Dickinson’s (1987) definition of autonomy :*“the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for the decisions concerned with his/her learning and the implementation of these decisions”*(p.11), it can be understood that autonomous learners are responsible for taking decisions in their own learning and acting thus independently of their teacher. In fact, several characteristics have been attributed to autonomous learners. Among them Omaggio’s (1978) list of seven characteristics which depicts autonomous learners as those who:

- have insights into their learning styles and strategies;
- take an active approach to the learning task at hand;
- are willing to take risks, i.e., to communicate in the target language at all costs;
- are good guessers;
- attend to form as well as to content;
- develop the target language into a separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply.
- have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language.

In view of this, one accepts that autonomy is a process. To become autonomous one needs to work towards autonomy since there are things to be achieved and ways of achieving them by the learner. Within this conception, studies of learners’ role have been carried out. Taxonomies of learning strategies have been proposed by O’Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990), Rubin (1975), and Wenden (1995). These strategies *“serve as tools to improve one’s language competence and learners can really only be held responsible for their competence if they are aware of these tools”*(Scharle & Szabo, 2000, p.08). Indeed, this competence is necessary since being autonomous requires the possession of the skills and knowledge as it has been mentioned previously, in addition to being motivated to accept responsibility over one’s learning as *“the learner will make use of his ability to (self-direct his learning)only if he so wishes* (Holec, 1988, p.08). Also, learners’self-efficacy has been shown to be related to their engagement in autonomous learning and motivation in their studies as it will be shown in the coming sections. Thus, autonomous learners are motivated, self-confident about their abilities to take charge of their learning and display initiation to engage in this process.

Furthermore, not only are learners’ actions responsible for their learning, but also what lies beneath them from views and perceptions. Indeed, Benson’s (2000) framework to describe restrictions on autonomy that come from the learners, points out to language’s conceptions (i.e.,

learners' views of what language and language learning are like and what embodies its correct use). Similarly, Benn (1976) describes an autonomous learner as the one “*whose life has a consistency that derives from a coherent set of beliefs, values and principles and who engages in a still-continuing process of criticism and re-evaluation*” (cited in Candy, 1991, p.102). Accordingly, learners' role to achieve autonomy is governed by a set of actions which involve cognitive factors and which are driven by their beliefs, principles and views about language learning.

Therefore, learners not only need to be motivated and make sense of language and how they should learn it through developing learning strategies, but also seek to understand themselves (i.e. their needs, preferences, difficulties, etc.), what is expected of them in this process, as well as the other actors involved in it. This is so, because within this process a learner is expected to make choices which are not randomly made, but “*which are based on awareness of (his)....organism needs and a flexible interpretation of external events*” (Deci & Ryan,1985, p.38). Therefore, Ridley (1997) describes autonomous learners as “*those who find a style of learning which suits them and which is appropriate to the context in which they are learning*”(p.03).

Nevertheless, the learning context needs to help learners to “*speak as themselves*” to develop their autonomy (Legenbansen, 1999, p.81), that is to understand their identities, aspirations and be able to relate themselves to the social world outside and inside the classroom (Norton, 2000). This is so since, the idea of autonomy is “*both originating in oneself and being conditioned and shaped by one's social context*” (Nedelsky, 1989, p.11, cited in Aoki, 1999, p.193). The role of socially constructed meaning and the value of collaborating and interacting with others are acknowledged. Therefore, learners need to communicate their ideas and make and take decisions with their teachers and peers. They need, thus, to share roles in the classroom, to collaborate and change their learning to the better.

To conclude, to develop their autonomy learners need to be involved in cognitive, affective and social processes. Since there are degrees of autonomy, these processes differ from one learner to another. Indeed, autonomous learners need to be motivated and ready to take charge of their learning while recognizing the benefits of doing so over their learning process. Besides, autonomous learning requires as well learners' active involvement through working independently and in cooperation with others. This involvement also includes their planning,

monitoring and evaluating their learning. Thus, autonomous learners need to reflect continuously over their learning and make and take the necessary decisions to improve it.

2.10 Approaches to Learner Autonomy in Language Learning

Promoting learner autonomy in language learning has been at the forefront of researchers' concern (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011). This focus has grown in importance with the increasing interest in learner-centered teaching. As matter of fact, different approaches have been suggested in attempt to achieve this aim. The curriculum-based approaches, the technology-based approaches, the teacher-based approaches and the learner-based approaches are among these approaches which are reviewed in this section.

2.10.1 Curriculum-based Approaches:

These approaches “*extend the idea of learner control over the planning and evaluation of learning to the curriculum as a whole*” (Benson, 2001, p.111). They aim thus at promoting learners autonomy through involving them in decision-making processes at the level of the curriculum: negotiating the curriculum. In fact, the increasing interest in socio-cultural theory over the past decade has yielded into acknowledging both the individual and social interaction in developing learner autonomy. Distinction has been made between individual and social autonomy¹¹. In Vygotskian terms social autonomy emphasizes that developing a capacity for reflection and analysis which is crucial to learner autonomy “*depends on the development and internalization of a capacity to participate fully and critically in social interactions*” (cited in Little, 1996, p.211).

According to Vygotsky (1978) learning is a socially mediated process where social interaction with others more competent leads to the internalization of higher-order cognitive functions. Vygotsky (1987) also maintained that engaging in a volitional process is essential for independent action and self-regulation, in addition to the importance of interaction with others, guidance and supervision are also required for the growth of this autonomy. In this regard, Vygotsky (1978) stressed the need for independent problem solving activities through interactive support and scaffolding provided by teachers and peers.

¹¹ As stated before the individual dimension of autonomy involves individual learning styles over collaborative learning whereas, social autonomy involves awareness raising and learning generated by learner's interaction, collaboration, reflection and experimentation.

To explain how the environment might be arranged to help individuals progress, Vygotsky (1978) developed his theory of “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD) which has been defined as: “*The distance between actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers*” (p.86) Within this view, learners are given the choice over the learning content as well as the way or method they need to learn at the level of the institutional curriculum. Providing learners with such a choice leads them to their decision-making, flexibility, adaptability and modifiability (Lee, 1998; Cotterall, 2000). McDevitt (2004), among the advocates of curriculum-based approaches, views learning as a process of decision-making where learners make choices, ask questions, take decisions and display their desire to know more. She also maintains that the curriculum should encourage this desire to help students achieve a level of independence which takes them beyond curriculum’s demands and assignments requirements (McDevitt, 2004).

Furthermore, negotiating the curriculum may help unit teachers and learners within a common purpose. Indeed, Smith (1993) confirms that this negotiation means “*custom-building classes every day to fit the individuals who attend*”(p.01). Similarly, Boomer (1992) explains that this process is important for teachers “*to talk openly about how new information may be learned and about constraints such as obligatory curriculum*”(p.04). Dam’s (1995) work in a Danish secondary school is an example of teachers’ and peer’s scaffolds that support learners in the decision-making process. Dam (1995) tried to involve her students in decisions concerning the choice of classroom activities and learning materials. As a result of sharing responsibility for planning and doing teaching-learning activities, these students became actively involved in their learning process and more capable of evaluating this process as Dam (1995) realized.

These results seem to demonstrate that allowing learner choices through a negotiated curriculum can lead to the development of independent thoughts and actions in learning. In this case, effective learning is likely to take place since it starts from the learners themselves. Yet, Curriculum developers and instructors’ role is to assist learners to make choices over what and how they will learn. Besides, the curriculum’s traits need to prompt their involvement in such a task. In this respect, Cotterall (2000) refers to the principles which the curriculum should follow to promote learner autonomy as follows:

1. *The course reflects learners’ goal in its language, tasks, and strategies.*
2. *Course tasks are explicitly linked to simplified model of the language learning process.*

3. *Course either replicates the real world communicative tasks or provides rehearsal for such tasks.*
4. *The course incorporates discussion and practice with strategies known to facilitate task performance.*
5. *The course promotes reflection on learning (learners being aware of their own learning).*

(Cotterall, 2000, pp.111-112)

Hence, learners need to get motivated to involve in process syllabus as they may not see the relevance of doing so or attribute this task to others' roles. Besides, teachers need to take part in this process to help learners make the right decisions that contribute to their learning achievement and language progress. Also, it needs to be noted that in formal educational contexts, learners' negotiation of the curriculum remains limited as there are goals and contents set beforehand by curriculum designers. Even when teachers support their learners in such a process, changing the course content may not get the school or university's approval. Nevertheless, despite such constraints, enhancing learners' autonomy over their learning may remain possible in case interesting learning resources are available; which offers varied contents, choices and opportunities for interaction in the classroom. This has been advocated by the next approaches.

2.10.2 Technology-based Approaches:

The intensification of worldwide social relations and the interconnectedness of nation states, their economies and cultures have called for the development of skills and capacities to enable people for lifelong learning, thereby moving from formal to informal learning context while maintaining the momentum of motivation and autonomy. Computers' applications have acted as a tool to achieve that potential. Indeed, different software packages are designed for language teaching. Besides, the use of the internet has provided virtual learning environments which allow a platform for communication among teachers and students and a mass of information for inquiries and projects.

The use of technology-based approaches have been promising to foster learner autonomy because of their potential to facilitate learner control and the opportunity for collaborative learning. In effect, research has indicated that implementing such approaches is recognized as a tool which can provide learners with opportunities to become autonomous since they support different learning styles with a wealth of resources (Carney et al., 1997; Ding, 1997; Dingwall, 1997; Nikolova, 2002). Moreover, Benson (2001) states that these approaches "*emphasize independent interaction with educational technologies*"(p.111). Similarly, Schwienhorst (2002)

also refers to the role of virtual environment (VE) in enhancing learner autonomy as follows: *“They provide tools for awareness-raising and critical reflection, they enhance conversation management and collaboration and encourage learners to actively participate in the creation and organization of their learning environment”*(p.205).

As a matter of fact, an increasing interest in introducing new technologies in teaching and learning has been noticed with more expectations to enhance learning and teaching practices. Indeed, computers have become *“a popular feature of high tech SACs”* (Gardner & Miller, 1999, p.151). Word-processing and the internet are being increasingly used to help learners develop their language, in addition to the other types of technology such as videotapes and Laserdisc players, satellite TV, camcorders, etc. (Gardner & Miller, 1999)

Hence, in spite of their association with fostering learner autonomy, technology-based approaches have certain constraints related to their use. In this respect, Johnes (2001) proposes four constraints which can inhibit enhancing learner autonomy. These are: the lack of technical support which makes using computers impossible, learners’ lack of ICT skills can also contribute in doing so their lack of interest which can render them unwilling to engage in learning tasks. Finally, poor interaction among learners can also lead to the failure of a project. Johnes (2001) concludes that teachers’ preparation and training are essential for supporting learners to become autonomous by assessing their needs and providing solutions to their problems.

In the same vein, Toyoda’s (2001) investigation of the effect of a 12-week large-scale web-based project on the autonomy of 250 students studying 11 different languages at various levels revealed that autonomy can be enhanced if students have sufficient computer literacy. His research findings also pointed out to the need for accessible and reliable technology, good communication and peers’ support, in addition to learners’ perceptions of technology as a useful tool (Toyoda, 2001). These perceptions were shown to influence technology integration and shape how learning technologies are used (Parr, 1999). They can, thus, promote or hinder learners’ involvement in learning through such tools.

Furthermore, providing learners with the opportunities to make choices and taking into account their learning needs and styles while using technological or digital resources are deemed important to the process. Indeed, Barnett (1993) argues that such resources may actually be an impediment to the development of autonomy unless students have the ability to make useful choices. Also, Loveless et al.,(2000) maintain the necessity to provide learners with learning opportunities according to their learning needs and pace of working.

Hence, even in cases where the selection of the technological tools has been successfully done learners' use of them may not enhance their autonomy. In fact, previous studies (See for instance, Jones, 1993; Reinders & Lewis, 2006) demonstrate that self-study materials frequently lack the necessary support structure such as clear instructions or answer keys and they do not explicitly encourage learners to reflect on their learning process. Likewise, Reinders (2007) found that when students were given access to an on-line self-access system which includes needs analysis, leaning plans, guided instructions, automated prompts and reminders, their use of this system was limited to a small selection of materials without adequate planning, monitoring and revision.

To conclude, learner autonomy depends on the way technology-based approaches are implemented in the language classroom or as Benson (2001) says "*a great deal depends on the ways in which technologies are made available to the learners and the kinds of interaction that take place around them*"(p.140). Thus, these approaches need to be properly used by teachers and learners as well; with suitable activities which meet learners' needs and styles and encourage them to make decision about their learning objectives, to reflect and communicate their ideas through their use.

Therefore, technical preparation into their use is required for all participants, so that learners can get benefit from the technical potential these tools provide. Moreover, continuous teacher's support needs also to be available to help learners use digital resources effectively and sustain their interest and motivation into their use, thereby creating a learning environment which is likely to induce positive perceptions towards using technologies in language learning. It follows from this, that teacher's role cannot be denied in autonomous language learning. For this reason, teacher-based approaches have been advocated.

2.10.3 Teacher-based Approaches:

These approaches "*emphasize the role of the teacher and teacher education in the practice of fostering autonomy among learners*" (Benson, 2001, p.111). In effect, within these approaches, learners have control over their learning while the teachers' role changes into counselors. Being autonomous teachers who are reflecting continuously on their practices are also required within these approaches to develop students' autonomy.

2.10.3.1 Counselling:

As Johnson et al., (1998) explain:

“... When students are compelled to assume greater responsibility for directions their learning will take, they will gradually learn to see themselves as the controllers of their own learning. Learning is seen as self-initiated and not other-initiated. Therefore, the role of the teacher changes. They are not presenters of language elements as lesson planners; autonomy shifts the teacher more into the role of counselors...”

(Johnson et al., 1998, p.80)

What is then the role of a counselor? According to Gremmo and Riley (1995), a teacher can take the role of counseling in two ways. Firstly, he or she raises learners' awareness of the language learning process through providing them with metacognitive and meta-linguistic notions¹². Secondly, the counselor's role is also to provide learners with information and answers about the available materials in the self-access center. It follows from this, that counselors should be involved in selecting, processing and producing materials. They need, therefore, to have a broad knowledge of the materials available as well as recognition of learners' needs in learning in order to direct them to the right materials which match their needs. Furthermore, in addition to raising learners' awareness of their own responsibility and helping them develop the strategies and use tasks and materials which they need for their autonomy, Sturtridge (1992) refers to assessing learners' progress and supporting their monitoring which is among the counseling tasks he puts forward as follows:

- *Helping learners to recognize their own responsibility for their own learning*
- *Helping learners to know their individual language level on entry*
- *Helping learners to decide upon their own individual objectives*
- *Helping learners to recognize their own individual strategies and to make suggestions*
- *Directing learners to particular materials or activities*
- *helping learners to become aware of what particular exercises are really teaching them*
- *Making suggestions about more efficient ways of practice or monitoring*
- *Making ratings of progress and comparing them with the learners' own ratings.*

(Sturtridge, 1992, p.11)

Hence, since autonomy is a matter of learners' psychological relation to the process and content of learning (Little 1999), providing psychological support needs to be part of the counselor's role. In this regard, Littlewood (1997) argues that the role of counselors is to help

¹² Teachers need to develop learners' metacognitive awareness through encouraging them to reflect critically on what they are doing and why, in order to plan and direct their own learning. In doing so, they get involved in their learning process and become more aware about it. Meanwhile, to develop their metalinguistic awareness learners need to be provided with tasks which enhance their reflection over the nature and properties of the language.

learners develop their motivation, knowledge and skills which they need to communicate and get more independent in learning and more independent as individuals. So, a counselor needs to prepare learners psychologically, support them to get more autonomous in their learning through developing the necessary skills and knowledge which they may need as individuals to carry out their lifelong learning process.

However, a question which might be raised is: Does the role of the counselor differ from that of a teacher? Research has indicated that the difference between teaching and counseling exists at the level of discourse (Riley, 1985, 1994 and Kelly, 1996). Indeed, to distinguish between teaching and counseling, Kelly (1996) examines the nature of the interaction between counselors and learners and extends this notion of learning conversation to consider it as “*a form of therapeutic dialogue that enables an individual to manage a problem*”(p.94). Moreover, Kelly (1996) describes the transformation which individuals can undergo in self-directed learning and which challenges their beliefs and perceptions of their roles as learners or teachers. She maintains that though training may lead directly or indirectly to this transformation, counseling provides ways of interacting with learners. Kelly (1996) also distinguishes between two sets of skills-macro and micro-the former may be used by teachers. It includes guiding, modeling, giving feedback, supporting, evaluating, etc., while the latter is associated with counseling and it includes attending, restating, paraphrasing, questioning, confronting, reflecting feelings and emphasizing (Kelly, 1996).

One may conclude, therefore, that counseling is a form of teacher support which provides a setting for engaging in a dialogue where learners’ emotions, motivation, learning difficulties, self-evaluation of their learning can be brought. Counseling thus moves away from just encouraging transferring information to negotiating, interacting and providing support to promoting learners’ interest reflection and autonomy. Thus, it involves transferring responsibility from the teacher to the learner and helping learners exercise their autonomy effectively in a variety of learning environments. Still, Cook (2001) points out that to achieve this aim, “*there is a need for a well-trained and confident teachers who can handle this constant process of negotiation*”(p.232). This is so, since it may be difficult for teachers to change their role to counselors as they may not be familiar with autonomous learning approaches. Counseling in this case, may be seen as a new role whose practices are vague and challenging teacher’s conception.

Therefore, teacher education and training have been advocated within this approach. Indeed, Esch et al., (2000) support the claim that future teachers need to be prepared practically and academically in teacher training, in order to deal with the influences which autonomous learning can have on teaching methodology and language teachers and learners' role. Then, how can teachers be trained to move towards a pedagogy for autonomy? To help teachers achieve this aim, some in-service teacher training models have been proposed. For instance, Dam (2003) develops a model for in-service teacher training which aims at changing teachers' traditional teaching practice "*by guiding them through the four steps towards responsibility for one's own learning: experience, awareness, influence on and participation in decision making and responsibility*"(p.143).

2.10.3.2 Reflective teaching

Another approach which was geared towards the same aim has been proposed and experimented by Vieira (1997) who sees reflective teaching and action research as an empowering tool for pedagogy for autonomy. Indeed, the proposed framework for in-service teacher development program focuses on designing curricular and educational practices on the basis of individuals' needs, besides enhancing critical and introspective reflection, inquiry and practice through promoting experience-derived knowledge (Vieira, 1997).

The concept of reflective teaching stems from Dewey (1933) who provides a distinction between 'routine action'- which is guided by factors such as tradition, habit and authority, institutional definitions and expectations and 'reflective action- which implies engagement in constant self-appraisal and development. It follows from this, that routine action is not adaptable to changing circumstances, whereas reflection action is flexible, thereby involving social awareness and analysis. Indeed, according to Zeichner and Liston (1996) teachers who are unreflective about their teaching tend to accept the everyday reality in their schools and "*concentrate their efforts on finding the most effective and efficient means to solve problems that have largely been defined for them by (some) collective code*"(p.09). This implies that unreflective teachers think about finding solutions to the problems they are facing, but since they are not reflecting systematically over their teaching they can frame problems in more than one way. Indeed, reflection '*...enables us to direct our actions with foresight..it enables us to know what we are about when we act*' (Dewey,1933, p.17). According to Jones and Shelton (2011) reflection helps achieve the following purposes:

1. *Bring experience and knowledge together to produce new learning that is personally meaningful.*
2. *Connect theory to practice.*
3. *Strengthen a critical reflection disposition.*
4. *Gain insight into your learning and personal/professional development.*
5. *Manage your emotions throughout the learning process.*

(Jones & Shelton, 2011,p.80)

Hence, reflection is not just a matter of thinking over actions, but it requires rather interest in the profession, awareness of the learning outcomes and educational policies to reflect systematically and make relevant decisions and plans to achieve them. Therefore, certain skills are needed, so that teachers can evaluate, plan effectively and revise regularly their practices. Indeed, besides his/her awareness of the learning needs and educational objectives within a given context; the teacher needs as well to be familiar with the current educational trends and the teacher's changing role within in order to frame his/her reflection accordingly. To clarify more the meaning of reflective teaching, Pollard et al., (2008) have identified other characteristics which are as follows:

1. *Reflective teaching implies an active concern with aims and consequences, as well as means and technical efficiency.*
2. *Reflective teaching is applied in a cyclical or spiralling process, in which teachers monitor, evaluate and revise their own practice continuously.*
3. *Reflective teaching requires competence in methods of evidence -based classroom enquiry, to support the progressive development of higher standards of teaching.*
4. *Reflective teaching requires attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and whole heartedness.*
5. *Reflective teaching is based on teacher judgement, informed by evidence-based enquiry and insights from other research.*
6. *Reflective teaching, professional learning and personal fulfillment are enhanced through collaboration and dialogue with colleagues.*
7. *Reflective teaching enables teachers to creatively mediate externally developed frameworks for teaching and learning.*

(Pollard et al.,2008, p.30)

It follows from this, that a reflective teacher is an active teacher who holds responsibility over the planned decisions and observes continuously and seeks for evidence from the teaching context and his reading of other research. He needs to evaluate himself, collaborate and learn from other experiences. He needs, thus, to be open minded, accept other's constructive feedback and willing to adapt his teaching according to his learners' needs and preferences.

In this regard, two levels of reflection have been identified. At the first level the focus is on “*an interpretive understanding both of the nature and quality of educational experience and of making practical choices*”, while at the second level, “*ethical and moral questions are concerned as the worthwhileness of actions is considered*” (van Manen, 1977, pp.226-7). Moreover, a moral dimension to reflective teaching has been highlighted by other researchers. For instance, Zeichner and Liston (1987) consider reflective teachers as “*the moral craftsman*”(p.27). Fullan (1993) states that moral purposes keeps teachers aware of their learning needs. Within this conception, Handal and Lauvas (1987) suggest ‘the practice triangle’ which involves the three levels of practice.

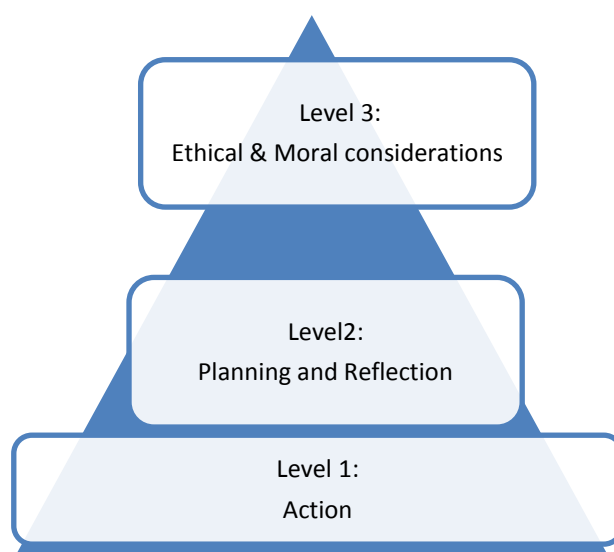


Figure.(2.2):The Practice Triangle [adapted from Handal and Lauvas, 1987]

According to Pollard et al., (2008) reflective teaching is “*applied in a cyclical or spirally process, in which teachers monitor, evaluate and revise their own practice continuously*”(p.17). It is thus a dynamic process which includes stages. These key stages of this process are illustrated in figure(2.3) below. But, engaging in these stages depends on teachers' observations

of classroom behaviours, attitudes and interaction. Besides, to make effective use of such data and gain insight into students' learning needs and styles within the course there is a need for continuous analyses and reflection upon them as well as decision making and planning. Indeed, teaching practices also need teachers' evaluation and revision, then the adaption of their teaching contents and materials according to their students' learning needs and preferences; in addition to adopting, creating and bringing more innovation to their teaching.



Figure.(2.3):The Process of Reflective Teaching from Pollard et al., (2008,p.17)

In so far, one has attempted to clarify the concept of reflective teaching. This process requires cognitive skills which allow teachers to evaluate, revise, plan and manage ambiguities and constraints within the teaching and learning context. Still, the affective aspect is also part of this process since teachers' interest, motivation, willingness and tolerance of ambiguity are necessary for reflection to take place.

Nevertheless, reflecting over one's teaching is essential to gain personal, professional development. Indeed, this process is likely to help teachers learn more about their profession, read about other research and seek to find out the latest innovations in the field of teaching. In the research literature different tools have been suggested to promote teachers' reflection among them teachers' portfolios.

2.10.3.3 Teacher Autonomy:

Lai (2011) points out to the need of introducing teachers to the concept of autonomous learning through clarifying the process, its rationale, the resources available, the difficulties teachers may encounter and the support provided through workshops. Burkert (2008) also proposes teacher portfolio as a tool for reflection and self-assessment in initial teacher education for learner autonomy. In addition, models of workshops have been suggested (for instance see Dam, 2008) and teacher development projects were launched as well (see Hafner & Young, 2007).

Nevertheless, focusing on teacher's role within teacher-based approach has put into question the role of teacher's autonomy within this process. As stated before, along with teacher's education or training, their autonomy has been generally considered essential since *"teachers who practice autonomy in their own professional development increase the likelihood of producing potentially autonomous and lifelong learners"* (Steven, 2007, p.28). Moreover, Tort-Moloney (1997), McCrath (2000), Burkert and Schwienhorst (2008) provide evidence that teachers who themselves are not autonomous language learners may have a negative influence on the development of autonomy in their students. McGrath (2000) illustrates the characteristics of teacher autonomy from two dimensions: teacher autonomy as self-directed action or development and as freedom from control by others. However, as Carey (2008) emphasizes, teacher autonomy is wrongly *"coupled with Uniformity"*(p.17). That is though teachers may have certain freedom, they still adjust their teaching practices to meet the existing standard of their evaluation. In this case, teacher's autonomy is linked to the same pattern of teaching.

Therefore, this autonomy needs to be seen as both *"teachers' freedom to redirect their teaching towards self-directed learning and on how their own experiences as autonomous language learners can give character to the teaching that they themselves carry out"* (Tholin, 2009, p.63). Indeed, being autonomous teachers need to reflect on their teaching, to be more innovative, creative, thus autonomous learners who seek to develop their *"self-directed professional action"* (Smith,2001). In doing so, they are likely to get control over their professional development and get more awareness of the skills and necessary tools needed to promote learner autonomy.

It needs to be noted, however, that teachers-learners autonomy is not easy to achieve since there are political constraints on teaching practices which may limit their autonomy. Thus, teachers need to be aware of these constraints and how to deal with them in their own work. Furthermore, to achieve autonomy-supporting teaching, the teacher's role has to change, but also

learner involvement needs to increase (Dörnyei, 2001). The latter depends on their motivation to take an active role in learning. In this regard, Benson (2001) explains that autonomy in second language learning is concerned with the development of the capacity for taking control over the cognitive processes, learning management and learning content. In addition to that, attitudes towards learner autonomy, learner responsibility, choice, decision making, critical reflection and detachment are also important (Dickinson, 1993; Holec, 1985; Little, 1991).

Thus, autonomy is not a matter of shifting responsibility from the teacher to the learner. The teacher still plays an important role in provoking effective motivational thinking and shaping learning attitudes through the process of giving feedback. Considering, therefore, the direct production of behavioural and psychological change in the learner are to be taken into account as it is advocated by the next approaches.

2.10.4 Learner-based Approaches:

These approaches which are also called learner development, aim at observing the production of behavioural and psychological changes that will enable learners to take greater control over their learning (Benson, 2001). They have come from educational trends of self-directed language learning (SDLL) and learner strategies in language learning (LSLL) in Europe and North America (Wenden, 2002). Within these approaches emphasis has been put on teaching language learning strategies and training learners into their use. Besides, considering affective factors related to learning has been seen as a goal to achieve learner development towards autonomy.

2.10.4.1 Language Learning Strategies:

To promote learner autonomy, research studies into the characteristics of the good language learner have revealed the importance of learner strategies in achieving that aim (Rubin, 1975). These learning strategies have been defined as “*behaviours or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable*” (Oxford, 1989, cited in Ellis, 2008, p.704). Indeed, Oxford (2001) indicates that the effective use of these strategies can facilitate learning and help learners become autonomous since they are related to features of control, goal-oriented, autonomy and self-efficacy. Likewise, Boekaerts (1997) considers them

as crucial not only to guide the learner's own learning during the formal education, but also to educate the learner in order to update his or her knowledge after leaving the school¹³.

To find out about learner's strategies one can inquire about what learners do to control their learning and enhance it. Indeed, since such strategies are crucial to the learning as well as the teaching process, considerable effort has gone into identifying and classifying them. The two most cited taxonomies are those of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990). The first taxonomy makes a distinction between:

- **Cognitive Strategies:** These strategies involve thought processes which learners use to deal with tasks and materials such as memorization, guessing the meaning of words, etc.
- **Meta-cognitive Strategies:** in which learners attempt to regulate their learning through planning, self-monitoring, evaluating and thinking about how to make this process effective.
- **The Socio-affective Strategies:** help learners to interact with other speakers of the target language, to collaborate on tasks and ask for correction. These strategies aim to enhance self-confidence, motivation and lowering anxiety.

Oxford's (1990) taxonomy is hierarchical, categorizing strategies into direct and indirect. The former "*require mental processing of the language*", whereas the latter "*provide indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy and other means*" (Oxford, 1990, p.151, cited in Ellis, 2008, p.705).

There have been other taxonomies of learning strategies, but what needs to be maintained is that autonomous learning requires the implementation of strategies which can help learners plan, control and monitor their own learning. Indeed, Cole and Chan (1994) argue that, whatever the term is used, all these concepts are related to teaching students how to think, how to learn and to take control over their learning. For example, Zimmerman (1989) describes autonomous learners stating that they are meta-cognitively active participants in their own learning process who initiate and direct their own efforts to acquire knowledge and skills instead of relying on teachers or others (cited in Cole & Chan, 1994). Similarly, Dickinson (1987) mentions three decisions for which autonomous learners should take responsibility, all of these are entailed in

¹³ Strategy is a term that comes from the Greek *strategia*, meaning "generalship." In the military, strategy often refers to maneuvering troops into position before the enemy is actually engaged. In this sense, strategy refers to the deployment of troops.

the planning of learning: (1) define the contents and progression of their learning; (2) decide pace and place of learning; (3) assess the time it will take to achieve stated goals and sub-goals.

Thus, learners need to reflect on their learning process, identify their goals and plan for achieving them. Conscious reflection on the learning process is a feature of autonomous learning as Little (1997) maintains. This is because understanding one's own learning process leads to more responsibility for learning to help achieve its effectiveness as it is revealed by research (Paris & Winograd, 1990). Moreover, reflection through interaction allows learners to interact and use the language to communicate, thereby enhancing their self-regulation and capacity for independent learning. As a result, with this increased autonomy comes the responsibility for the learning of those with whom one interacts (Richards, 2006). In doing so, learners are also likely to be aware of their weaknesses and strengths in learning as Dam and Legenhausen (1999) say: "*.....one of the primary concerns of an autonomous language classroom is to raise the students' awareness of the learning process itself, which also implies having them reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and progress in various linguistic skills*"(p.93).

Furthermore, studies have found that less able learners used strategies in a random, unconnected and uncontrolled manner (Abraham & Vann, 1987; Chamot et al., 1996), whereas effective learners displayed careful use of strategies, targeted in a relevant, systematic way at specific L2 tasks. Moreover, Green and Oxford (1995) research has also demonstrated that more successful students employed strategies for active involvement more frequently than did less successful learners. Still, one may inquire about what entails an effective or appropriate learning strategy? According to Ehrman et al., (2003) strategy is positive and helpful for a given learner if the following conditions are present:

- *The strategy relates well to the L2 task at hand.*
 - *The strategy fits the particular student's learning style preferences to one degree or another.*
 - *The student employs the strategy effectively and links it with, other relevant strategies.*
- (Ehrman et al., 2003,p.315)

Furthermore, research has indicated that task difficulty and the level of language proficiency have an effect on learner use of strategies (Green & Oxford, 1995; Halbach, 2000). Indeed, as they gain knowledge and language proficiency, learners develop new strategies to cope with more challenging language tasks. But, learners need to understand the task at hand to select and use an appropriate strategy for its completion. Otherwise, "*they seem to fall back on a*

largely implicit approach to learning in which they use habitual or preferred strategies without analyzing the requirements of the particular task.”(Chamot, et al., 1999,p. 02)

Moreover, strategy use has been often related to learning styles. The latter refers to learning preferences of approaching the learning task and processing information (Ellis, 2008). Learning styles, therefore, are different from learning strategies since they are determined by the learner personality, so they may not always be related to language achievement. On the contrary, learning strategies are considered as an active approach to learning based on specific actions or techniques which can help in solving problems and making learning a language more successful (Ellis,2008).

In this respect, research has revealed that learners use learning strategies that reflect their basic learning styles¹⁴ (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford, 1989, 1996a, 1996b). Thus, the more teachers know about their learners’ learning styles, the more effectively they can conduct their strategy instruction in their classes through matching them to those references. This can also happen through trying out some strategies which are outside their learning styles. Studies have shown that different kinds of strategies may develop different aspects of L2 proficiency, i.e., linguistic competence may develop through strategies that involve formal practice while communicative competence may develop through using strategies of functional practice (Ellis, 2008).

Thus, to employ them flexibly, learners need to be aware of the different learning strategies and select which one is relevant to their own objectives and the type of task handled. Indeed, learning strategies are effective if they are intentionally used and consciously controlled by the learner (Pressley & McCormick, 1995). This is so, since strategies are by definition conscious movement towards a language goal (Bialystok, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1996a). So, learners’ awareness of their own learning process and the strategies they need to enhance their autonomous learning has been considered important to achieve positive learning outcomes. To do so, strategy training has been recommended.

2.10.4.2 Strategy Training:

Research on learning strategies and training learners into their use have been topical since the 1970s. Yet, defining learner training has generated controversy and criticism among scholars.

¹⁴ For example, closure-oriented learners may use more strategies to complete tasks than open/perceiving ones and extraverted ones are likely to use social strategies more than introverted learners.

Indeed, the use of learner training has been opposed and replaced by other terms such as “learner development”, “learning to learn” and promoting autonomy” (Sinclair, 2006). Some researchers expressed doubts concerning the effectiveness of strategy training and claimed that learners rarely recognize the benefit of what they are doing (Benson, 1995; Carroll, 1973; Carton, 1971; Politzandand Weiss, 1969; Rees Miller, 1993; Smith, 1985).

However, learner training has been used widely and considered as an important factor in the development of learner autonomy. Indeed, Benson (2001) claims that to perform effectively self-directed learning, learners need to improve skills such as self-management, self-monitoring and self-assessment. Besides, they need to be psychologically prepared for more learner-centered learning mainly if they were used to teacher-centered education. Indeed, in strategy training studies have revealed the effect of such training on increasing EFL learning motivation (Nunan, 1997) and greater strategy use and self-efficacy among native-English-speaking learners of foreign languages (Chamot et al., 1996).

In fact, as stated in previous sections of this work, learners’ autonomy involves different factors: psychological, cognitive, in addition to learners’ social, cultural and political contexts.

“Learner training aims to help learners consider the factors that affect their learning and discover the learning strategies that suit them best and which are appropriate to their learning context, so that they may become more effective learners and take on more responsibility for their own learning.”

(Sinclair, 2000, p. 66)

Therefore, there is a need for instructional intervention to assist learners find out and use the learning strategies that can help them cope with these factors. Thus, learner training involves instructing learners in the use of language learning and language use strategies, thereby developing their awareness of themselves as language learners, of the process of language learning and use, and of the nature of the target language (Dickinson, 1988, 1992; Holec, 1987). In this respect, McCarthy (1998) points out the relationship between autonomy and learner training by stating that this training aims to enhance the effectiveness of learning and effective learning is part of autonomy. Similarly, Chan (2001) argues that guidance is important for learners to raise their motivation levels and to re-adjust their learning strategies, which are essential to learn autonomously.

Hence, the critical issue here is how this training needs to be conducted. There have been attempts to provide instruction that can help learners use more relevant learning strategies. For example, Oxford (1989) has proposed language learning strategy training guidelines for teachers

or strategy trainer known as “Awareness Training”. It includes one-time-strategy training where the participants are made aware of and familiar with the general idea of learning strategies through providing learning tasks while clarifying the value of the strategy, how they can be used, evaluated and transferred to new situations and tasks (Oxford,1989). Long-term strategy training is also a component of this model where a prolonged number of strategies is provided and made explicit for learners along the learning tasks (Oxford, 1989). Besides, learning activities such as games, simulation and other exercises are advocated as a means to convey the different learning strategies (Crookall & Oxford, 1990).

Furthermore, Benson (1999) with his students in Hong Kong has developed learner training which focuses on raising these students’ awareness of social contexts and constraints through collective discussion and decision-making. In the same vein, Sinclair (2006), one of the promoters of strategy training views learner training as a kind of technical approach which develops along a continuum ranging from highly teacher-directed, teacher-guided/learner-decided to learner-directed. This is because this training changes according to a number of context-related factors such as learners and teachers’ beliefs about language and language learning, the cultural, social and political environment, the nature of the educational system, the constraints imposed by it, teachers’ level of expertise while engaging in learner training and perceptions about learner autonomy in that context (Sinclair,2006).

According to Sinclair (2006), within teacher-directed approaches, training programmes are pre-determined by the teacher and students are trained in the same set of strategies or skills with the aim of improving the product by enhancing the process. At the opposite extreme of the continuum, there is the learner-directed approach to learner training. Within this approach, the teacher acts as a facilitator who provides scaffolding to help learners make decisions about their learning. Between the two extremes in the continuum, there is a compromise position called “teacher guided”/“learner-decided” where the teacher acts as a guide, informant, counselor and facilitator who makes learners aware of language learning processes, promoting their personal discovery towards suitable learning strategies (Sinclair, 2006). In this case, no strategy is imposed on learners, they are rather allowed to discover for themselves how to learn a language effectively and this choice is respected by their teacher. The degree of learner negotiation depends on its appropriateness to the context.

There have been also other strategy instruction schemes proposed by Chamot et al., (1999), Greenfell and Harris (1999), Macaro (2001), Cohen (2002) and Harris (2003). Nevertheless, it needs to be maintained that whatever the approach to be adopted the core element of learner training is to help learners reflect on the processes of learning through employing appropriate learning strategies which enable them to become autonomous and lifelong learners. The teacher's approach to achieve this aim may vary according to the learning context, learners' needs, aims and engagement in this process.

Hence, within the context of learner training; learners' motivation, learning attitudes and perceptions need to be considered by teachers. In this respect, Hedge (2000) raises this point, stating that learners, who are naturally motivated and display active involvement with their teacher and peers, can respond well to strategy training and may be keen to use the available self-access resources. The role of teachers is likely to change accordingly. Indeed, Hedge (2000) maintains that with the presence of motivation and positive attitudes, teacher's role is to find out first the effective strategies which learners already have, then build on these strategies, providing further new ideas and tasks to help them learn more strategies from each other. On the other hand, when dealing with passive learners, the main goal of teacher is to help them see the relevance of this training through discussion and appropriate guidance (Hedge,2000). Affective factors are thus important in promoting learner autonomy. More details on this issue are provided in the following part.

2.10.4.3 Motivation, Self-efficacy and Learning Attitudes:

Affect includes emotion (feelings such as happiness, anger, etc.) and attitudes which cover individual's opinions of the world as a result of predisposition, experience and ideology (Elliott, 2010). It is generally acknowledged that considering the affective side of language learners in teaching can lead to affective learning because it helps overcome problems generated by negative emotions as well as create and use positive emotions conducive to learning (Arnold & Brown, 1999). Indeed, as mentioned in the previous section of this work, autonomous learning involves affective factors since learners need to be psychologically prepared to take responsibility for their learning. Thus, willingness to take an active part in making decision is necessary for the development of learner autonomy as Scharle and Szabo (2000) state:

“The saying goes: you can bring the horse to water but you cannot make him drink. In language teaching, teachers can provide all the necessary circumstances and input, but learning can only happen if learners are willing to contribute. Their passive presence will not suffice, just as the horse would remain thirsty if he stood still by the river waiting patiently for his thirst to go away. And, in order for learners to be actively involved in the learning process, they first need to realize and accept that success in learning depends as a great deal on the student as on the teacher”.

(Scharle & Szabo, 2000, p.04)

Also, this point has been emphasized by Littlewood (1996) who argues that *“students’ willingness to act independently depends on the level of their motivation and confidence; student’s ability to act independently depends on the level of their knowledge and skills”*(p.98). Thus, in addition to possessing the necessary knowledge and skills for autonomous learning, being motivated and confident to engage in this process are also required. What are then the roles of motivation, confidence and attitudes in learner autonomy?

(i) Learner Motivation:

Motivation or as Ellis (2008) defined *“the effort that learners put into learning an L2 as a result of their need or desire to learn it”*(p.972), has been receiving much more attention in the research literature. Several studies display a high correlation between motivation and successful learning, thereby making it a targeted objective among teachers (Hedge, 2000). Two kinds of motivation were distinguished by Gardner and Lambert (1972): integrative and instrumental motivation. The former implies *“a desire to learn the language in order to relate to and even become part of the target language culture”*, while the latter refers *“to practical reasons for language learning, such as getting a promotion”* (Arnold & Brown, 1999,p.13).

Other types of motivation have also been identified such as extrinsic motivation which refers to *“those actions carried out to achieve some instrumental end”* and intrinsic motivation or *“motivation to engage in an activity because it is enjoyable and satisfying to do so”* (Noels et al.,2000: 61, cited in Ellis, 2008, p.687). However, Scharle and Szabo (2000) maintain that though motivation is a prerequisite for learning and autonomous development, not any motivation will serve this aim. According to them, what needs to be encouraged is intrinsic motivation since *“intrinsically motivated learners are more able to identify with the goals of learning and that makes them more willing to take responsibility for the outcome”* (Scharle & Szabo, 2000,p. 07).

In fact, research has shown that in teacher-directed classrooms where extrinsic motivation is enhanced, students do not go beyond pleasing their teachers or authorities to include

“developing a love of knowledge in independent minds” (Arnold & Brown, 1999,p.14). This is because, in such cases learning achievement is driven by extrinsic goals, thereby increasing learners’ dependence. This does not, however, negate the importance of extrinsic motivation in learning, but rather highlights the importance of experiencing success for one’s own personal needs to develop autonomy far from rewards and punishments. In the same vein, Deci and Ryan’s (1985) self-determination theory displays that intrinsic orientation, extrinsic orientation and amotivation lie on a continuum from self-determined to non-determined. Thus, an individual with high level of self-determination is likely to be autonomous in his/her learning and lead to better achievement (Deci & Ryan,1985).

It needs to be maintained that *“motivation and responsibility can mutually reinforce each other”* (Szabo & Scharle, 2000, p.07). Bachman’s (1964) study indicates that involving learners in decision-making tended to raise their motivation and thus their productivity (cited in Ellis, 1998, p.686). This means that when learners are exercising responsibility for their own learning, they are likely to become more motivated rather than teacher-dependent. This is so, since providing them with the opportunity to play a considerable role in setting goals for their learning, planning and monitoring their progress, makes learning more effective, allowing them to experience success.

Furthermore, being autonomous learners’ self-esteem i.e., *“the inevitable evaluation one makes about one’s own worth”* is also likely to be enhanced (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p.12). For this reason, this concept has been related to motivation and autonomy as well (Ryan & Grolnik, 1986). Indeed, a lack of self-esteem can lead to negative attitudes towards learner’s capability in regard to learning the target language and to deterioration in cognitive performance (Wenden, 1991). In this respect, Wenden (1991) identifies two attitudes in language learning which are: the attitudes learners hold about their role in this process and their capabilities as learners. The latter refers to self-efficacy.

(ii) Self-efficacy and Learner Attitudes:

Self-efficacy or self-confidence refers *“the degree to which the student thinks he or she has the capacity to cope with the learning challenge”*, is also a crucial factor in developing learner autonomy (Ehrman, 1996, p.137, cited in Arnold & Brown, 1999, pp.16-17). Indeed, learners need to believe that they can manage their own learning and rely on themselves not just on the teacher and this in turn can enhance their feeling of independence and raise their well-being and

confidence as well (Scharle & Szabo, 2000). Such beliefs are then important for their motivation and autonomy.

In Deci and Ryan's (1985) theory of self-determination, the internalization of regulation could be possible in case the orientations are compatible with the individuals' value and beliefs system. The latter refers to " a *more or less organized collection of internalized perceptions, beliefs and feelings related to one's position in the social world, developed during the past as a reaction to past experiences*"(Benson,2001,p.124). Indeed, this system can influence the outcome of the learning process by determining learners' approaches to learning, motivation to achieve language learning tasks as McDonough (1995,p.09) maintains:

"...what we believe we are doing, what we pay attention to, what we think is important, how we choose to behave, how we prefer to solve problems, form the basis of our personal decisions as to how to proceed. An important fact about this argument is that it is not necessary for these kinds of evidence to be true for them to have important consequences for our further development."

(cited in Cotterall ,1999,p.496)

Moreover, Ushioda (1996) argues that learners' motivation is likely to be affected and shaped by differing beliefs. Besides, the way in which learners view their learning experiences itself is a crucial motivational dimension. She also maintains that learners' intrinsic, self-regulatory learning behaviours are motivated by his/her own thinking (Ushioda,1996). It is, therefore, important to develop learners' positive language-related beliefs and values to help them get motivated and self-regulated. Furthermore, in investigating what contributes to learners' readiness for autonomy, Cotterall (1995) found that learners' beliefs are likely to reflect their readiness for autonomy, thereby supporting or impeding autonomous learning. She identifies six factors that underlie learners' readiness for autonomy including learners' beliefs about the role of the teacher, role of the feedback, learners independence, learners confidence in study ability experiences of language learning and approach to studying.

In addition to these findings, Fazez and Fazez (2001) identify three psychological characteristics which can affect learners' autonomy: perception of competence or self-efficacy, perceived internal locus of control and intrinsic motivation. Self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation have already been discussed, what is then meant by the second psychological trait? If students perceive that the locus of control regarding academic success or failure lie beyond their reach, they may not get autonomous. That is students may take more responsibility for learning if they believe themselves to be in control of the outcome (Dickinson, 1995). Holding such

responsibility is likely to boost learners' self-esteem and help them in constructing positive conceptions and expectations about their language learning.

It follows from this, that learners' beliefs about the learning context also contribute to fostering or hindering the development of learner autonomy. This autonomy is unlikely to exist within a context where learners believe that their success is achieved through teacher's control, instructions and management of the learning activity as depicted within the traditional classroom context. The result would be also the same if the autonomous learning approaches which are implemented in the classroom, are regarded by learners as difficult to accomplish. Thus, the type of beliefs learners hold about their language learning process will determine their learning attitudes, thus their motivation and autonomy within this process.

In fact, learners' attitudes towards learning are closely related to their motivation and beliefs. This is so, since as Wenden (1991) defines attitudes: "*learned motivations, valued beliefs, evaluations, what one believes is acceptable, or responses oriented towards approaching or avoiding*"(p.52). Also, Gardner and Lambert (1972) explain that learner's motivation in language learning is affected by his attitudes towards learning the language: "*His [the learner] motivation to learn is thought to be determined by his attitudes towards the other group in particular and by his orientation towards the learning task itself*"(p.03).

Therefore, learners' attitudes may play a very crucial role in language learning as they may influence their success or failure in their learning. Indeed, Chamber (1999) asserts that learning occurs more easily, when the learner has a positive attitude towards the language and learning. In fact, individual's life experience can contribute to shaping their attitudes towards learning. In this respect, Kitano's (2001) research revealed that unfavourable experiences contribute to negative attitudes and anxiety. Indeed, he found that in a college Japanese language classroom, the student's anxiety is higher as his or her fear of negative evaluation is stronger (Kitano, 2001). So, to develop learners' autonomy teachers need to enhance their motivation and positive attitudes towards language learning and being autonomous through creating stimulating learning atmosphere.

So far, one has attempted to outline some of the prominent approaches which have been advocated in the literature to achieve learner autonomy in language learning. Though the target remains the same, the theory motivating these approaches differs and teachers and learners are thus required to take different roles accordingly. Indeed, learners' negotiation and decision over the learning content is essential for enhancing learner autonomy as put forward by the

curriculum-based approaches. Whereas, supporters of the technology-based approaches share the assumption that providing stimulating learner resources through implementing learning technologies can motivate learners and offer more choices over the learning content.

Furthermore, within the teacher-based approaches, the teachers' role as counselors is emphasized, besides their reflection and autonomy are required as well. But, for the learner-based approaches the learner became the focus and thus considerable attention needs to be devoted to his/her use of learning strategies, and affective state in learning, i.e., motivation, self-efficacy, attitudes, etc. It follows from this, that each of these approaches aim to achieve a necessary component of autonomous learning process. For that purpose, Benson (2001) asserts that "*autonomy can be fostered most effectively through a combination of approaches*"(p.177).

Hence, it needs to be maintained that learner assessment is an important part of the educational process which can contribute either to enhancing or impeding the development of learner autonomy. This is so, since learners' beliefs, attitudes and motivation can be shaped by their assessment results. In fact, it has been claimed that "*one of the effective ways of enhancing learning within higher education is through the improvement of assessment procedures*" (Coombe et al., 2009, p.14). Therefore, an approach to learner autonomy needs to consider not only the way teaching and learning is carried out, but also assessment or testing practices within the educational context. In this regard, the approach to learner autonomy proposed here is based upon the claim that to promote their autonomy, students need to be involved in the teaching learning process as well as in assessing their own learning progress. Moreover, this involvement entails their continued reflection and interaction which enable them to make and take decisions about their learning process. Besides, since developing autonomy requires a process of change, students' motivation is crucial to maintain their interest and involvement along this process.

2.10.5 Toward a Pedagogy for Autonomy in Language Learning and Assessment:

Although different approaches to learner autonomy have been advocated, it needs to be maintained that an approach to learner autonomy should enhance learner motivation, reflection and interaction. Indeed, Reinders (2010) claims that these provide the cognitive, affective and social backbone. Learner motivation and reflection have been already dealt with in previous sections of this thesis. Still, their importance to the promotion of learner autonomy requires one to devote further space to highlight their roles within this process. Meanwhile, within this concern a questions to be addressed is how to achieve learners' motivation, reflection and

interaction effectively along the process of promoting their autonomy. According to Reinders (2010), these can be enhanced through the learning stages which are: identifying needs, planning learning, setting goals, selecting resources, selecting learning strategies, monitoring progress, assessment and revision, practice, as the following framework displays.

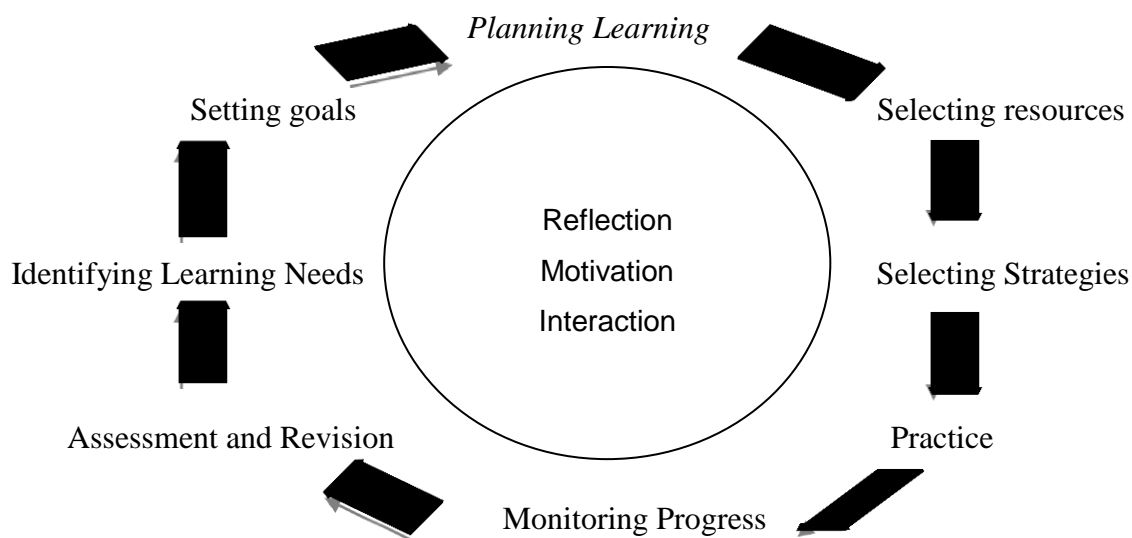


Figure (2.4): Cyclical nature of the autonomous learning process (Reinders, 2010,p.51)

Motivation remains the engine that drives learners towards learning. It is more crucial in case learner autonomy is targeted as more involvement, initiation and collaboration on the part of learners are required. It is in fact, a primary condition which determines learners' readiness to engage in autonomous learning. Thus, learners cannot negotiate the curriculum nor interact with learning technologies and resources unless they are willing to do so. Besides, the teacher's role to achieve learner autonomy remains ineffective if learners' motivation is not among its concern.

Therefore, learners' motivation needs to be taken into account not only in the teaching learning process, but also when assessing learners' progress and outcome. This is so since, assessment results can engender positive as well as negative learning attitudes which affect learner motivation: *"Positive results will encourage learners, bad results the opposite"* (Hedge, 2000, p.397). As a matter of fact, some scholars have recommended including information about affective factors in profiling a learner's general performance (See Heaton, 1990; Harris & McCann, 1994). Moreover, to provide learners with reassurance and reduce their anxiety, while maintaining their interest in learning it would be worth to involve them in different forms of assessment which yield more feedback (Hedge, 2000).

Similarly to motivation is the notion of reflection on the learning process which has been defined by Boud et al., (1985) as “*a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations*”(p.19). Schön (1983) makes a distinction between reflection in action and reflection on action. The former is immediate which occurs during an activity and interaction and involves analyzing the situation, paying attention to behaviours, reshaping responses to bring about change and improvement (Boud, 1994). However, the latter is an analysis that happens before or after a given action or event for the sake of planning or evaluating the process (O’Connor & Diggins, 2002).

Whether it is in action or on action, reflection remains an important condition for developing learners’ autonomy as Reinders (2010) describes it “*the glue that holds autonomous learning together*”(p.50). In fact, it has been acknowledged that the more learners think about the way they learn, the more they will be able to take charge of their learning (McClure, 2001; Cotterall, 2000; Harmer, 2007). Indeed, reflection allows learners to involve in their learning process since they are likely to select their learning resources, prepare them and thus share the task of producing materials with their teacher (For example, Dam, 1995). Moreover, this involvement in learning helps learners develop more awareness about how they should improve it. This is through asking themselves questions such as “*what are we doing? Why are we doing? How are we doing it? With what results? What are we going to do next?*” (Dam, 1995,p.31).

Consequently, learners are also involved in decision making process which provides them with a feeling of responsibility over their learning process and outcome. Furthermore, through reflecting over their learning, they are likely to recognize and record their problems and difficulties. For instance, they can think about how to improve their writing in English and avoid their recurrent grammatical and spelling mistakes and errors. For that purpose, “*learners should be encouraged to think about what went well in their learning, what did not go well, why this was so, what alternatives there are and how these affect their objectives*” (Reinders,2010, p.11).

However, reflection underpins all the stages of learning, including assessment practices. Thus, learners need to assess their own progress and reflect on the reasons which led to such assessment results. This in turn, helps them to plan for their learning through setting effective strategies to achieve their success. Therefore, to help learners make the right use of strategies, they can provide regular feedback and awards of credits on the basis of the progress made (Reinders,2010).

In addition to motivation and reflection, learners' interaction is also crucial to the development of learner autonomy. Indeed, as mentioned before, autonomy has both an individual as well as social dimension. This means that, there is also a need for collaboration and interaction between learners and teachers and among learners themselves. This allows learners to express their views concerning their learning and this helps teachers in identifying their needs.

“It is important to connect the work students do by themselves with what happens in the rest of the class. You can make this connection by asking students to talk about their experiences, either in public or by sharing their learning diary with you. Encourage students to talk about what worked for them and what did not, and help them to identify reasons for this. Share success stories with the other students. In other words, implementing autonomy should never be a case of sink or swim, but a gradual testing of the waters with a lifeguard on hand, before actually diving in”.

(Reinders, 2010,p.52)

In this case, learners can recognize their learning needs and “*become aware of the importance of aligning their work with their needs on an ongoing basis*” (Reinders,2010, p.467). In addition, through interaction learners are likely to develop more a feeling of responsibility over their learning since their ideas and decisions are exposed to others and this in turn is likely to make them more confident about their abilities in managing their learning without depending on their teachers. Interaction along with teacher's support allows learners to practice what they have learned on their own, implement their new knowledge and take risk (Reinders,2010). It is worth noting in this respect that experimenting with the language and taking risk are important for developing learner autonomy (Schwienhorst, 2008, cited in Reinders, 2010).

Furthermore, teachers and learners interaction is necessary because it assists learners in monitoring their own progress and in identifying specific language areas to develop further through revealing their strengths and weaknesses and guiding them towards better performance. “*Continuing interaction provides a basis for increasing reliable internal cognitive feedback, which helps the learner to plan and self-correct the message bearing features of utterances*” (Stevick,1999, p.53). In effect, learners need to communicate their views and learners attitudes towards assessment's results and procedures. This is likely to provide teachers with “*a wealth of information to guide classroom practice, and to manage learning and learners*” (Hedge, 2000, p.397).

To conclude, learners' motivation, reflection and interaction are interrelated so that they cannot be separated. This is so since learners can neither interact nor reflect unless they are motivated. Likewise, interaction helps learners reflect on their learning perceptions and attitudes to change them when necessary to serve better learning. Moreover, since interacting with others

may help in gaining insight into oneself and in understanding one's learning views and attitudes, motivation is likely to get flourished in this case.

"...discovering what you are really like and being that self are two highly motivating forces. Indeed, the most fascinating subject we can learn about and talk about is ourselves. And we learn about ourselves through others .So communication which satisfies these deep innate needs develops from sharing about ourselves while others actively listen to us, showing understanding and accepting us as we are".

(Moskowitz, 1999,p.178)

Reflection can also lead to interaction as learners may feel the need to expose and share their thoughts, views and future learning plans with others. Since reflection may enhance autonomy, it is likely then to make them motivated. Thus, reflection, motivation and interaction build the framework on which autonomous learning is based.

2.11 Conclusion

This theoretical chapter has attempted to clarify some principles and issues related to learner autonomy in language learning contexts. The increasing demands for lifelong learning and the emerging use of technology in language teaching and learning have raised the need for learner autonomy, calling thus for more research findings on this issue. In fact, reviewing the literature has revealed the complexity of this process and the ongoing debate around its definition, nature, conditions as well as approaches for its promotion. Yet, there is a common consensus that learner autonomy means taking control over one's learning by making and taking decisions concerning what and how to learn and improve. It involves, thus, the possession of the necessary skills which can help maintain this control such as reflecting over, planning for, monitoring and evaluating continuously learning progress and outcome. This requires as well learners' motivation and readiness to involve within this process.

For this reason, developing learner autonomy is a process which requires time, teacher's considerable efforts as well as institutional support. It does not require learners' complete detachment from the teacher since his/her support and guidance remain required for the achievement of this process. Besides, because autonomy involves having the freedom to take educational decisions, institutions play an important role for its promotion. Indeed, assessment practices as dictated by institutional policies can also affect its development. If the assessment practices are supporting learning by rote memorization while excluding learners' involvement in assessing themselves, reflection, and monitoring of their progress; learners in this case may not

perceive the need for being autonomous, but they are rather likely to view their involvement in learning as a waste of time and energy.

Therefore, teachers need to rethink their assessment practices if they intend to develop their learners' autonomy. They need to bear in mind that their assessment process should stimulate their learners' interest and motivation in learning, encourage them to reflect, interact with their teachers and peers through collaborating and negotiating meaning concerning what and how to learn. Thus, the question which may raise in the reader's mind after reading this theoretical chapter is: How should learner assessment be conducted to support the implementation of the suggested framework (i.e., enhancing students' motivation, reflection and interaction) and create opportunities for autonomous language learning? A tentative answer to this question is provided in the next chapter. The latter also attempts to clarify the relationship between learner autonomy and the assessment of their learning process and outcome through supporting the use of self-assessment tools such as language portfolios.

Chapter Three

Language Assessment:
Aspects and Theoretical
Underpinnings for Students'
Portfolios

Chapter Three

Language Assessment: Aspects and Theoretical Underpinnings for Students' Portfolios

3.1 Introduction

Assessment of language learning has been the focal concern of several researchers, teachers, test developers, syllabus designers, etc. Indeed, their aim is to make from this process a tool to support students' learning and help teachers achieve the intended learning outcomes. Achieving this objective has increasingly been targeted with the current trend emphasizing the relationship between students' learning and their assessment. This has put into question the way which can help set a link between students' autonomy and the way they are being assessed. That is how to help students develop their autonomy through their assessment.

This issue is the concern of this chapter which first defines the process of language assessment, its relation to teaching, and distinction from other related concepts such as testing and evaluation. Then, it introduces summative and formative assessment as the main types of language assessment. To help clarify what is required within this process principles of language assessment are outlined here and some steps of language test designed are included as well. Because the present research concerns the students' writing in English, this chapter attempts to explain what this process involves and review approaches to its assessment. Then, emphasis is also drawn upon self-assessment, its relation to autonomous learning and the possibility of promoting positive washback through its use. Finally, language portfolios are described as a reflective and self-assessment tool, in addition to reviewing their benefits and some critical issues about their use.

3.2 Assessment and Testing in Language Teaching

Part of the educational process is the process of assessing learners' progress to find out whether teacher's objectives and expectations have been met. Indeed, it has been acknowledged that assessment is an integral part of the teaching-learning process (James et al., 2002). It is thus a vital component of the educational process which serves a variety of purposes like diagnostic, achievement, progress, etc. Therefore, reviewing and revising assessment procedures has been the starting point towards assessment reform. Yet, a set of questions may come into the reader's

mind such as: What is meant by language assessment? What makes it different from testing and evaluating? What are its objectives and types?

3.2.1 Language Assessment: Definitions and objectives

Language assessment refers to “*the act of collecting information and making judgments on a language learner’s understanding of a language and his ability to use it*” (Chapelle & Brindley, 2002, p.267). It is, thus, an interpretation of the test taker’s ability to use some aspects of this language (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). It is worth noting that being able to use a given language entails interacting with others, including the setting, to create or interpret intended meanings within a particular discourse (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Yet, collecting such type of information can be achieved through other means like observations. What makes then assessment different from other data collection tools?

According to Bachman and Palmer (2010), “*systematicity and substantive grounding*” are the distinguishing features of assessment processes (p.20). The former means that assessment is “*designed and carried out according to clearly defined procedures that are methodical and open to scrutiny by other test developers and researchers, as well as by stakeholders in the assessment*” (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p.20). Whereas, the latter implies that it is “*based on a recognized and verifiable area of content, such as a course syllabus, a widely accepted theory about the nature of language ability, prior research, including a needs analysis, or the currently accepted practice in the field*” (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p.20). It follows from this, that the information collected through assessment is likely to be meaningful since this process needs to be systematically conducted and its procedures are subject to revision, evaluation and change in case this is required. Besides, assessment content needs to target the intended learning outcomes, thus assessing what needs to be assessed in a given course.

Hence, one may confuse assessment with other related concepts such as testing and evaluation which can similarly be systematic and substantively grounded. It needs to be stated that assessment is the process through which learners’ progress is monitored overtime, while testing is one kind of assessment which measures students’ achievement typically at the end of a stage instruction (Hedge, 2000). Testing, indeed, is “*a systematic method of eliciting performance which is intended to be the basis for some sort of decision making*” (Skehan, 1998, p.153). It is, thus, part of the assessment process which includes different modes or assessment tools (for example: self, peer, computer assessment) for different purposes.

On the other hand, evaluation entails making judgments about the teaching and learning process, in order to confirm whether the existing practice is appropriate or not and bring about changes where necessary (Rea-Dickins & Germaine,1992). Thus, it focuses on the quality and value of a process or outcome and aims at making decisions on the basis of the feedback obtained. Unlike assessment which seeks to determine the degree of knowledge and skills developed by learners and how they have gone through achieving them. So, assessment is one component of evaluation since it provides grades or the outcome to be evaluated.

Nevertheless, though assessment is undertaken for a variety of purposes (formative or summative assessment is concerned), the primary purpose remains to support learning which occurs when learners are:

“thinking, problem-solving, constructing, transforming, investigating, creating, analyzing, making choices, organizing, deciding, explaining, talking and communicating, sharing, representing, predicting, interpreting, assessing, reflecting, taking responsibility, exploring, asking, answering, recording, gaining new knowledge, and applying that knowledge to new situations.”

(Cameron et al.,1998, p. 06)

In fact, research reveals that there is a strong connection between assessment practice and learner’s success (Trevisan, 2002; Forbes and Spence, 1991; Gibbs and Simpson, 2004). In this regard, Cowan (1998) calls assessment the engine that drives learning. Indeed, assessment intends to improve learning since *“assessors have a responsibility to take account of the broad range of abilities, knowledge, skills and competencies which are required of graduates; and to balance the requirements of the discipline with students’ needs to be prepared for the future* (Brew, 1999, p.169). Thus, the assessor plays a crucial role in motivating and helping learners achieve their learning potential.

In addition to being an engine for learning, without which students would not do efforts and work, assessment also aims at helping teachers keep track of their learners’ progress and get feedback on their teaching as Sercu (2010) states:

“Assessment is important for all parties concerned. Learners want to know whether they are making adequate progress and in which areas improvement is needed. Teachers want to find out whether their learners are actually learning what they are teaching. They also expect to get feedback from assessment results regarding the way in which their teaching might be adjusted”.

(Sercu, 2010, p.19)

Indeed, assessment of learning is connected to teaching as *“teachers tend to teach what will be tested”* (McNamara, 2000; cited in Sercu, 2010, p.20). Thus, if students’ knowledge of

vocabulary would be tested, the teacher is supposed to focus on teaching the necessary strategies for acquiring more vocabulary during his/her lessons. Besides, teaching methods, techniques, and decisions are also shaped by assessment results. The latter can have an impact (washback effect) on teaching contents, materials as well as institutions and programmes as Bachman and Palmer's (2010) words about language assessment imply:

“Language assessmentcan provide evidence of the results of learning and instruction, and hence feedback on the effectiveness of the teaching program itself. They can also provide information that is relevant to making decisions about individuals, such as determining what specific kinds of learning materials and activities should be provided to students, based on a diagnosis of their strengths and weaknesses, deciding whether individual students or an entire class are ready to move on to another unit of instruction, and assigning grades on the basis of students' achievement. Finally, assessment can also be used as a tool for clarifying instructional objectives and, in some cases, for evaluating the relevance of these objectives and the instructional materials and activities based on them to the language use needs of students following the program of instruction”

(Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p.12)

It follows from this that, making decisions is the primary purpose behind assessment. Thus, *“whenever a teacher needs to make a decision, there is a potential need to assess”* (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p.26). In this respect, Bachman (2004) summarizes the kinds of decisions made on the basis of assessments as follows:

1. *Decisions about individuals (micro-evaluation), such as:*

- *Selection for admission or employment.*
- *Placement into a course study.*
- *Making changes in instruction, or in teaching and learning activities.*
- *Passing or failing students on a course on the basis of the progress or achievement of test takers.*
- *Certification for professional employment.*
- *Prediction of future performance.*

2. *Decisions about programs (macro-evaluation), such as:*

- *Formative, relating to making changes to improve an existing program.*
- *Summative, relating to continuing an existing program or implementing a new program.*

3. *Decisions about research, such as:*

- *Deciding on new research questions or methodology for future research.*
- *Changing our view of a particular language phenomenon.*
- *Modifying our understanding of or explanation of a particular language phenomenon.*

(Bachman, 2004, p.10)

Accordingly, despite the variety of information which might be obtained from assessment, the main objective of this process remains to make decisions and bring about beneficial consequences for educational systems and society. These decisions may concern individual learning, to help students learn more effectively; programmes to evaluate, adapt or innovate them; as well as research to keep from inquiring and questioning current practices and theoretical implications, thereby responding to educational issues and concern, besides updating one's conception of language teaching and learning according to the changing demands of society. Figure 3.3 below illustrates the relationship between language assessment, language teaching and learning

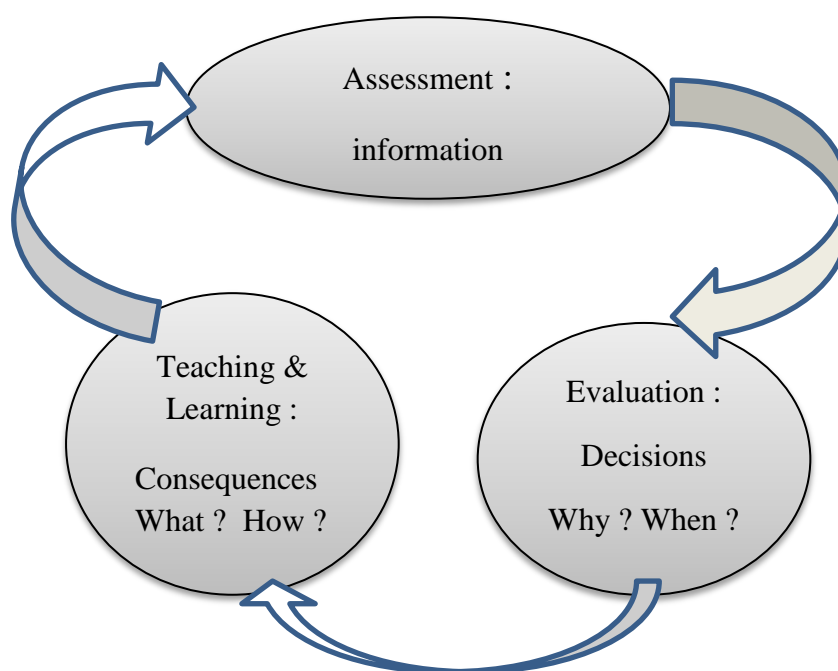


Figure (3.1): Assessment, Evaluation, Teaching and Learning (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p.27).

However, one needs to clarify that “assessment has the potential to make or break good educational learning opportunities” (Murphy, 2006, p.39). Thus, its consequences may not be beneficial since there is “always the possibility that using the assessment will not lead to the intended consequences, or that the assessment use will lead to unintended consequences that may be detrimental to stakeholders” (Bachman & Palmer, 2000, p.87). In this respect, Hedge (2000) claims that assessment can also engender frustration, inhibition and lack of self-esteem as he depicts it:

“....there will be very few of us who have never had any moments of dread caused by one or more testing experiences at times in our learning careers when learning is associated with jumping hurdles that seem too high. Very often these experiences are associated with feelings of failure and lack of self-esteem which may last well beyond school-days”.

(Hedge, 2000, p.376)

Furthermore, as Clegg and Bryan (2006) state: *“Being assessed is undoubtedly an emotional business”* which is likely to be remembered by students (p.218). Indeed, failure can result in lack of confidence and thus student drop-out. For that purpose, assessment is considered *“for many educators one of the hardest things to resolve satisfactorily and in many settings leads to some of the fiercest debates”* (Murphy, 2006, p.38). Yet, improving assessment practice remains the concern of several researchers which are attempting to find out how to make this process supporting learning. To do so, there has been a need to account for what constitutes good language assessment. Before dealing with language assessment principles one needs to discuss some of its types then review briefly approaches to language testing.

3.2.2 Formative and Summative Assessment

Both formative and summative assessments are integral parts of information gathering. Yet, their objectives and implementations differ. For Brown (2003), formative assessment entails *“evaluating students in the process of their competences and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process”*, while *“Summative assessment aims to measure, or summarize, what a student has grasped, and typically occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction”* (p.06). Accordingly, summative assessment is concerned with measuring learner’ learning outcomes or progress at the end of a unit or a study period of a particular course. This is by *“using tests, examinations and end-of-year marks with the aim of deciding learners’ promotion, certification, or admission to higher levels of education”* (Looney, 2011, p.07).

By contrast, formative assessment focuses on the ongoing development of the learner’s language and thus its feedback needs to improve his/her ability of this language (Brown, 2003). This is through using self- and peer assessment (Sadler, 1989). Moreover, its concern with the learning process aims at adjusting teaching and learning to meet learners’ needs and raise their level of achievement (Looney, 2011). So, its feedback should indicate the gap between the assessed work level and the required standard, while clarifying how this work needs to improve (Taras, 2005). Besides, formative assessment requires learners understanding of the intended objectives of their assessment, its criteria and the steps needed to achieve them with the teacher’s help (Kohonen, 1999). This type of assessment is now regarded as an integrated part of the teaching and learning process, rather than as a separate activity occurring after a phase of teaching (Audibert, 1980; Perrenoud, 1998).

Ellis (2003) identifies two general types of formative assessment: planned and incidental. The former involves direct testing of learners and measuring their current state of knowledge or abilities during a course of study, while the latter occurs during the instructional conversations between teachers and learners in a given classroom activity (Ellis, 2003). This type of assessment (i.e. incidental) may be internal ,i.e., it involves teachers' questioning, probing and providing feedback on their performance, thus helping them accomplish a given task, understand what is expected from them through comparing their performance with the task's requirement (Ellis, 2003). It may be also external where both teachers and learners reflect on learner performance either during or after completing an activity (Ellis, 2003).

On the importance of formative assessment, Vandergrift and Bélanger (1998) state that this type of assessment *“has added feature of motivating learners by providing them with feedback about what they can do already and what needs to be improved”*(p.572). Similarly, Rea-Dickins and Gardner (2000) maintain that formative assessment serves teachers in four different ways:

1. It supports them in planning and managing their teaching.
2. It provides them with evidence of learning.
3. It provides them with information on the extent to which they and their students have achieved what has been prescribed in the curriculum.
4. It provides them with evidence for evaluating their own teaching.

In fact, a number of research on assessment have proved the achievement which students can gain from using formative assessment (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998; OECD¹, 2005). Hayward and Hedge (2005) report the research findings from implementing the formative assessment initiative in Scotland *“suggests that teachers not only find their involvement energizing but that they report positive changes in the quality of pupils' work and commitment to learning”*(p.69). Therefore, it has been advocated that formative assessment needs to be incorporated into daily teaching activities, in order to allow both teachers and learners to adapt regularly their teaching and learning (Audibert, 1980).

However, despite these benefits, Rea-Dickins and Gardner (2000) put forward that FA may not be valid and appropriate since it is unsystematic and it involves informal procedures. Therefore, it has been suggested that a dynamic approach (DA) to formative assessment may help in countering this criticism (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005). Lantolf and Thorne (2006) define this approach as *“a future-in-the-making model where assessment and instruction are*

¹ The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

dialectically integrated as the means to move toward an always emergent (i.e. dynamic) future rather than a fixed end-point”(p.330).

This means that unlike traditional forms of assessment where the focus is on the outcome or the developed language abilities at a given time, DA highlights future development through providing support not only in completing the test or task but also in dealing with future tests or tasks at hand. This mediated assistance within the assessment process occurs through the test’s reflective questions, examples and demonstrations. As a result of this interaction, learners are allowed to involve in their assessment process and get constructive feedback and teachers as well are likely to get feedback on their teaching².

Hence, since formative assessment is beneficial for teaching and learning process, would it possible for assessment to be uniquely formative? It is worth stating, in this respect, that emphasizing the use of formative assessment does not preclude the use of summative assessment. Indeed, it is not possible to rely just on formative assessment without the summative judgment having preceded it as SA can be implicit and FA explicit or both of them can be explicit (Black & William, 1998).

Furthermore, according to Black and William (2003), there is a need “*to align formative and summative work in new overall systems, so that teachers’ formative work would not be undermined by summative pressures, and indeed, so that summative requirements might be better served by taking full advantage of improvements in teachers’ assessment work*”(pp.623-4). So, the importance of making an alignment of formative and summative lies in facilitating the process of monitoring learners’ progress and thus improving assessment practice. This also implies that there is relationship between these two forms of assessment. To justify this relationship, Black et al., (2003) accept that formative and summative assessment can be used to support each other in the classroom context, because firstly, teachers refuse to separate the two and secondly, because of evidence collected from teachers, who found the usefulness of using summative assessment for formative purposes. Similarly, as Briggs (1998) states “*Sensible*

² Vygotsky’s theory basically suggests that if we want to understand learning and development, we have to focus on process instead of product. Dynamic assessment according to Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory suggests that instruction and assessment should be inseparable from one another. In other words, if teachers want to see how their students really progress in their classes, their assessment should not focus on testing the students’ performance with a final achievement test per se. The real focus should be on what students can achieve with the help of the teacher or peers during the class activities because what is achieved with the help of others shows the potential progress for achievement without any help.

educational models make effective use of both FA [formative assessment] and SA [summative assessment]” (p.105).

One can conclude, thus, that teachers need to implement different methods to gather information about learners’ progress, language area difficulty, learning preferences, etc. Therefore, both summative and formative assessment are needed to complete “the learning loop” (Dewey, 1933). In fact, there a prerequisite need to evaluate teaching programmes, goals, and obtain information on students’ achievement, in order to adjust teaching and learning accordingly. This calls for teacher’s summative assessment. Meanwhile, “*students should view assessment as an opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate their effort, progress and improvement, as well as their progresses and products*” (Tierney et al., 1991, p.21). This reflective awareness which is a pre-requisite to develop learner autonomy, involves self-assessment and peer-assessment (Kohonen, 1999). These types of assessment are among the principles of formative assessment. It needs to be noted here that the focus of the present research is on self-assessment as a tool to enhance learner autonomy through implementing language learning portfolios.

3.2.3 Approaches to Language Testing

When talking about language testing, four major approaches emerged (translation approach, psychometric-structural approach, integrative and communicative approach) as a result of the undergoing development in the field of linguistics and psychology. Thus, these approaches are based on views of what language is and how it is learned. They can be broadly traced to a certain period in ELT history. In this respect, Spolsky (1975) distinguishes three chronological periods in the history of testing: pre-scientific, psychometric-structuralist and psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic, besides the communicative period which highlights the importance of communicative testing. Though these approaches are listed here in chronological order, the chronological limit is not clear cut. Moreover, they are not always mutually exclusive since there seem to be features belonging to more than one approach, so that an eclectic approach would be advocated.

3.2.3.1 Translation Approach:

Prior to the early 1950’s, testing was characterized by “*the use of essays, open-ended examinations, or oral examining, with the results determined intuitively by an authorized and authoritarian examiner*” (Spolsky, 1995, p.353). Tests were, thus, intuitively produced without any specific rules and procedures, but they were generally written and designed following the

general principles of humanities and social sciences. Indeed, the exercises included in these tests were grammar-translation or reading-oriented, such as translation, essay writing, testing knowledge of grammar-with incomplete sentences to be completed. So, testing was mostly concerned with grammatical accuracy of the language learned. This is the reason why Heaton (1988) calls it ‘the essay-translation approach’.

Hence, within this approach, the scoring of the tests is subjectively done by the scorer and the process remains dependent on the personal impressions of teachers (Madsen, 1983). As a matter of fact, tests designed during this period were described as intuitive, subjective, impressionistic yet impressionistically evaluated tests and unspecific (Madsen, 1983; McNamara, 2000). Besides, having tests intuitively designed and subjectively conducted, this approach was categorized under the pre-scientific era (Madsen, 1983; McNamara, 2000).

Consequently, the problem of test subjectivity led to the need for more objective means to measure language ability and thus help both language teachers and learners get benefit from the implemented tests. Indeed, with the rise of sciences and the increasing development and innovations brought to psychology and structural linguistics a new era of language testing has emerged under the name of ‘the scientific era’. So, the 1950’s has come with a new approach to language testing led by both structural linguistics (Lado and his theory of Contrastive Analysis) and psychologists (Madsen, 1983; McNamara, 2000).

3.2.3.2 Psychometric-structural Approach:

This approach can be dated in the 50’s and 60’s, where structuralism and ‘behaviourism’ s views of language teaching and learning were dominating. As a matter of fact, testing was based on statistical procedures rather than on intuition or subjectivity. This is so, since the aim was to produce objective, reliable, precise, thus scientific tests. To that matter, it was advocated that each language skill (receptive or productive) and each language sub-skill or component (sound system, grammar structures and vocabulary), must be tested separately, so that each skill or sub-skill can be evaluated properly (Madsen, 1983; McNamara, 2000). Therefore, each test focused on specific language elements or discrete points (phonemic contrasts, words, structures, etc.).

Furthermore, to achieve reliable and objective testing statistics were used in interpreting test results, besides scoring techniques, test criteria, etc. Yet, this approach has been criticized for its inability to achieve communication which is a major aim of learning any language (Madsen, 1983; McNamara, 2000). This is because the discrete point tests measure one’s language ability out of situational context. In this regard, Oller (1979) maintains that properties of language are

lost when it is broken down into discrete points. Similarly, Morrow (1979) argues that instead of testing knowledge of the elements alone, it would be more valuable to test for knowledge of and an ability to apply the rules and processes by which these discrete elements are synthesized into an infinite number of grammatical sentences and selected as being appropriate for a particular context. As a result, by the 1970s discrete point testing was no longer felt to provide a sufficient measure of language ability, and testing moved into the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic era, with the advent of global integrative testing.

3.2.3.3 The Integrative-sociolinguistic Approach:

The growing dissatisfaction with structuralism and behaviourism raised the need to test the whole of the communicative event. This concern has come as a result of the development of linguistics (transformational linguistics), psychology (cognitive psychology) and sociolinguistics where language is viewed as a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning and the realization of social transactions between individuals (Richard, 1986). In this sense, integrative tests, such as cloze, dictation, composition, oral interview and translation were used. Indeed, Oller (1979) argues that integrative tests went beyond the measurement of a limited part of language competence achieved by discrete point tests toward measuring the ability to integrate separate language skills in ways which more closely approximate actual language use.

“The concept of an integrative test was born in contrast with the definition of a discrete point test. If discrete items take language skill apart, integrative tests put it back together. Whereas discrete items attempt to test knowledge of language one bit at a time, integrative tests attempt to assess learner’s capacity to use many bits all the same time, and possibly while exercising several presumed components of a grammatical system , and perhaps more than one of the traditionally recognized skills or aspects of skills”.

(Oller, 1979, p.37)

This means that global integrative testing (e. g, cloze tests, dictation, etc.), provide a closer measure of the ability to combine language skills in the way they are used for actual language use than discrete point testing. This is so, since as in Oller’s (1979) words *“the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”*(p.212). For this approach, thus, the best exams are those which require the student to use more than one skill and one or more linguistic components (tested together) in relation to extra linguistic contexts. Thus, more emphasis is put here on the sociolinguistic competence than on linguistic competence.

Hence, the opponents of this approach have criticized it for a number of reasons. For instance, Alderson (1978) talks about the invalidity of the integrative measures as testing devices. According to him, 'the cloze test' does not exist since results are affected by changing the point where the deletions are started from or by using a different rate deletion (Alderson, 1978). Carroll (1980) supports such claim stating that: "...this (cloze test) is still essentially usage based. The task does not present genuine interactive communication and is, therefore, only an indirect index of potential efficiency in coping with day to day communicative tasks" (p.09). Kelly (1978) also argues that integrative tests can provide information about the student's linguistic competence, but cannot tell about what he/she can or cannot do in terms of the various language tasks s/he may encounter in real life situations. It can be concluded, then that the integrative-sociolinguistic approach is like the previous discussed approaches which tested knowledge of how the language worked rather than an ability to use it (Morrow, 1979). This has brought the need for communicative language testing which is the objective of the next approach.

3.2.3.4 The Communicative Language Testing Approach:

"By the mid-1980s, the language testing field had begun to focus on designing communicative language-testing tasks" within a new approach named the communicative language testing approach (Brown, 2003, p.10). The latter considers "language to be interactive, purposive, authentic, contextualized and based and assessed in terms of behavioural outcomes" (Derradji, 2010, p.91). In this respect, Moller (1981) defines communicative language testing as follows:

"An assessment of the ability to use one or more of the phonological, syntactic and semantic systems of the language 1) so to communicate ideas and information to another speaker/reader in such a way that the intended meaning of the message communicated is received and understood and 2) so as to receive and understand the meaning of a message communicated by another speaker/writer that the speaker/writer intended to convey"

(Moller, 1981,p.39)

It follows from this, that the communicative language testing approach intends to test the user's communicative language ability which consists of both knowledge or competence of the language, and the capacity for implementing that knowledge to communicate the intended meaning (Bachman, 1990) and understand and interact with other speakers' messages. To clarify the meaning of communicative language ability, Bachman (1990) defines this ability as consisting of language competence or language knowledge and strategic competence. Language knowledge, which includes the information possessed by the language user to create and interpret discourse in situationally appropriate ways, can be categorized into organizational and

pragmatic knowledge; while strategic competence includes a set of metacognitive strategies which help the language users manage the use of different attributes (knowledge of genre, cohesion, dialects, etc.) and can involve goal setting, appraising and planning (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

Nevertheless, a question which might be addressed here is: What are the characteristics of a communicative language test? According to Brown (2005) there are five requirements for setting up a communicative test. These include “*meaningful communication, authentic situation, unpredictable language input, creative language output, and integrated language skills*” (Brown, 2005, p.21). This means that such tests which cover the four language skills should be designed on the basis of communicative competence. The test has, then, to involve learners in meaningful and purposeful tasks that meet their personal needs. Carroll (1983) highlights the importance of constructing the tests on the basis of such needs by stating that “*the language tasks our learners are expected to perform in their future jobs will guide us with the tasks we will set them in our tests*”(p.37).

Moreover, to achieve meaningful communication authentic situations need to be used since “*language cannot be meaningful if it is devoid of context* “(Weir, 1990, p.11). Besides being direct (reflect real life situations), the test has to involve learners in encountering and using the language receptively and productively to display their language ability. In this regard, Madson (1983) describes communicative tests as those which combine the various sub-skills necessary for the purpose of exchanging oral and written ideas. Also, within a communicative test the language input is unpredictable, as Brown (2005) claims, since in reality it is usually impossible to predict what speakers will say or as Morrow (1981) states: “*the processing of unpredictable data in real time is a vital aspect of using language*” (p.16). The test should also encourage the candidate or test taker’s initiation and creativity, besides eliciting their use of combined language skills as it is the case in real life communication.

In addition to Brown (1987) characteristics of communicative language tests, other principles in designing such tests were provided in the literature. For instance, Katsumasa (1997) and Wesche (1983) point out to the need to specify the test’s objectives through clarifying what test takers are expected to do with the task. Also, to obtain positive washback Wesche (1983) refers to the importance of clarifying a) the purpose of interaction regarding the task’s topic and the language function to be used, b) the context of language use, etc) appropriate types of discourse and the degree of skill at test takers’ levels.

Hence, there are some problems which are associated with the communicative language approach to testing. It was claimed, for instance, that since communicative language tests are assessed qualitatively than quantitatively, they are likely to involve subjective judgments as Weir (1990) points out “*the holistic and qualitative assessment of productive skills, and the implications of this for test reliability, need to be taken on board*”(p.13). Moreover, because real life communication is characterized by its unpredictability, studies have proved that test designers have tried to make real-world tasks, but encountered difficulties from the varied or diverse nature of contexts (Katsumasa, 1997; Brown, 2003).

To conclude, there are four approaches to language testing: translation approach, psychometric-structural approach, integrative and communicative approach. Within the first approach, testing was based on using essays, open-ended examinations and oral examining. Because it is not based on a linguistic theory, it has been criticized for being unreliable. With the coming of the psychometric-structural approach, the discrete point approach was emphasized where language is broken down, using structural contrastive analysis, into small testable segments. The main advantage of this was that it provided easily-quantifiable data. Hence, it was criticized for its atomistic view of language (isolated segments) which does not involve language use. To achieve this purpose, global integrative testing was advocated through the psychometric-structural approach. Still, it was language competence which was tested rather than performance. This results in the emergence of the communicative approach which aims at realizing this aim. But, the question which remains posed is: How can one know that if a test is appropriate, effective, and useful for testing a candidate’s ability to use his/her knowledge of language in a communicative situation? The following section attempts to answer this question through discussing principles of language assessment.

3.3 Principles of Language Assessment

An effective language assessment has been coined with the concept “sound assessment” whose characteristics as put forward by Stiggins (2007) are:

- *They arise from and serve clear purposes.*
- *They arise from and reflect clear and appropriate achievement targets.*
- *They rely on a proper assessment method (given the purpose and the target).*
- *They sample student achievement appropriately.*
- *They control for all relevant sources of bias and distortion.*

(cited in Coombe et al.,2009, p.16)

As a matter of fact, effective or sound assessment is purposive and targets clear and relevant objectives which can contribute to both inferring and developing learners' language ability. Besides, it uses appropriate assessment methods according to the objectives set before and communicates assessment results to all stakeholders who are involved in the process. Sound assessment also needs to develop valid and reliable grading through holding control over the variables that may distort its results.

To understand more what kind of assessment is useful and required in language learning, Bachman and Palmer (1995) state that test's usefulness can be described in terms of reliability, validity, authenticity, interactiveness, practicality and impact (cited in Daalen,1999). Therefore, one tries to explain in this section the "*five cardinal criteria for 'testing a test': practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity and washback*", in order to understand what makes assessment valuable, and more particularly what makes a good test (Brown, 2004, p.25).

3.3.1 Practicality

Assessment practices need to be meaningful and fit the testing conditions available. Therefore, test practicality has been considered as an important quality of good assessment. This refers to "*feasibility or usability of a test in a situation for which it is intended* (Daalen, 1999, p.03). According to Brown (2003), a test is practical if it "*is not excessively expensive, stays within appropriate time constraints, is relatively easy to administer, and has a scoring/ evaluation procedure that is specific and time-efficient*"(p.19). It follows from this, that to make a test practical there is a need to consider its cost (it has its budgetary limits), the amount of time required for its completion by the test takers (it should be appropriate), the way it is administered (it needs to be accessed easily and does not take much time to administer), and its scoring procedures (are to be clear and fit into the time constraints).

Practicality, thus involves the human and physical resources needed for assessment. In this respect, Bachman and Palmer (1996) define test practicality as "*the relationship between the resources that will be required in design, development, and use of the test and the resources that will be available for these activities*"(p.36). According to them, this quality is unlike the others because it focuses on how the test is conducted (Bachman & Palmer,1996). Moreover, Bachman and Palmer (1996) classified the addressed resources into three types: human resources, material resources and time as table 3.1 shows.

-
1. **Human Resources:** (e.g., assessment task creators, scorers or raters, test administrators, and clerical support)
 2. **Material Resources:**
 - Space (e.g., rooms for assessment development and assessment administration)
 - Equipment (e.g., tape, video, DVD recorders, computers)
 - Materials (e.g., paper, pictures, library resources, computer software)
 3. **Time:**
 - Development time (time from the beginning of the assessment development process to the recording of scores from the first operational administration)
 - Time for specific tasks (e.g., designing, creating, administering, scoring, analyzing)
-

Table (3.1): Types of Resources (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p.265)

In fact, the candidates' performance can be affected by the way the test is conducted, i. e., time duration, the way the test is administered, scored and interpreted. For example if the time constraints do not fit into the content and requirement of the test, the candidates are likely to feel anxious and not able to complete the task. Similarly, the test's results are likely to be unreliable and invalid in case the necessary exam conditions are not provided. If the rooms where candidates can sit and take their exams are not available, this can result in crowded, noisy atmosphere which facilitates cheating. Human resources are also necessary for a test to be practical. The staff invigilating plays an important role in maintaining discipline and the well-being of tests. Teachers/scorers are, likewise, responsible for making clear their marking as well as their interpretation of the test' results.

It can be concluded that, practicality is related to the test context. Besides, it can be measured by the availability of the resources required to develop and conduct the test within this context. Therefore, teachers and faculty members need to evaluate whether the language test is practical or impractical through considering such resources. In this regard, Haggstrom (1994) states, regarding oral classroom testing, that teachers' concern is not only to measure students' progress and mastery of course contents through using tests which can be scored with accuracy , but they should also use tests that are feasible in terms of the amount of time they take to administer and grade. Thus, teachers need to keep in mind the reality of the classroom including the conditions as well as who is being assessed. In doing so, not only test practicality is attained but also its reliability and validity as well.

3.3.2 Reliability

Reliability “provides information on the extent to which the data collection procedure elicits accurate data” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.184). Thus, the assessment tool needs to reflect exactly learners’ performance or ability to use the language. Moreover, for Brown (2003) “a reliable test is consistent and dependable. If you give the same test to the same student or matched students on two different occasions, the test should yield similar results”(p.20). That is, test reliability determines how far one can depend on the tests’ results, i.e., are the results produced consistently or not? If test scores are inconsistent, they provide no information about the ability being measured (Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

It is worth noting, however, that there are factors which affect test reliability. These are: the test itself, the testing environment (conditions and testers), and the people taking the test (Bachman, 1990). In fact, the test itself can cause unreliability. Its content, i. e, what the test is about, may cause confusion among test takers and thus result in their incorrect answers. In this regard, Heaton (1988) gives the examples of the confusion which may result from multiple choice exercises in case the items are numbered vertically on the question papers and horizontal numbering is adopted for the corresponding answer sheet. Moreover, Brown (2003) claims that poorly written test items which require more than one answer may cause ambiguity among test takers and thus test unreliability. He also adds that a test which includes more items than those required is likely to make the test-takers feel tired by the time they reach the later items and thus respond incorrectly (Brown, 2003). Thus, the test content needs to reflect what has been taught, thereby focusing on a set of skills or knowledge.

“The quality of classroom tests, like all tests, therefore, depends on whether the content of the test is a good sample of the relevant subject matter. If the content of a test is a poor reflection of what has been taught or what is supposed to be learned, then performance on the test will not provide a good indication of achievement in that subject area.....The significance of test content is this: An individual’s performance on a test is a reflection of subject matter, knowledge, and skills because the content of the test is a sample of subject matter”.

(Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.142)

In addition to that, the conditions under which the test is administered may be another source of test unreliability (Brown, 2003). These include “*the time of day, temperature of the testing room, lighting conditions, noise level, and so on*” (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.245). To illustrate how the conditions of administering a test can affect its result, Brown (2003) gives the example of an aural comprehension test where students listened to a tape recorder items for

comprehension, but those who were sitting next to the windows could not hear the tape accurately because of street noise. There are also other factors related to the testing environment such as the quality of the equipment or materials used for testing³, the attitudes of people who invigilate during the test, etc.

Hence, even in strict testing conditions conducted at different times the same test conducted twice within the same conditions may yield to conflicting results. This is because human subjectivity and errors may interfere into the scoring process and may thus lead to disagreement (McNamara, 1996). Having inconsistent scores of the same test implies that inter-rater reliability⁴ is not achieved (Brown, 2003). Moreover, there is also another source of unreliability relating to “*object related or person-related reliability*” which concerns how the test takers feel at the time of the test (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p. 58). According to Brown (2003) illness, fatigue, a ‘bad day’, anxiety besides other physical or psychological factors are the most common learner-related issue that cause unreliability. Thus, human changeability regarding the physical and psychological state of both test takers and scorers may contribute to lowering test reliability.

It is worth stating that, test anxiety is one of the sources of unreliability which any or all the above sources of error may cause. On the basis of these sources four types of reliability have been identified. Test-retest reliability refers to “*the degree of consistency of scores for the same test given to the same individuals on different occasions*” (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.245). In doing so, it demonstrates the extent to which a test is able to produce stable, consistent scores across time. Time and conditions of test takers and of testing are the criteria upon which this reliability is assessed (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). The second type of reliability is alternate-forms reliability, i.e., “*the consistency of scores for the same individuals on different occasions on different but comparable forms of the test*” (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.245). That is, alternate test forms are used by administering both forms of the test to the same group of examinees, while maintaining a short time interval between the two test administrations, so that the examinees’ scores are not affected by fatigue. These scores on the two test forms are correlated, in order to determine how similarly the two test forms function.

Additionally, other methods estimating reliability include internal consistency and scorer reliability. The former means “*the degree of consistency of test scores with regard to the content of a single test*” (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.246). This method estimates, then, how well the set

³ This is called “*instrument-related reliability*”(Genesee & Upshur,1996, p.58)

⁴ A definition of this type of reliability is provided in the following page.

of items on a test correlate with one another. This is through giving the test to the same individuals on one occasion then dividing it into two halves, besides calculating a score for each half of the test and for each individual and comparing the consistency of the two halves (Genesee & Upshur, 1996), whereas the latter, i.e., scorer reliability or what has been known as ‘inter-rater reliability’ “occurs when two or more scorers yield consistent scores of the same test” (Brown, 2003, p.28). So, this reliability method attempts to find out if multiple raters scored a single examinee's performance, would they provide the same score or not.

As a conclusion, different forms of reliability pertain to different sources of error. Yet, reliability is an important issue which needs to be reassured mainly in cases where assessment results are considered seriously or what has been called ‘high-stakes assessment’ upon which crucial decisions depend (Murphy,2006). It is worth stating also that test reliability is related to its validity as it is shown below.

3.3.3 Validity

“Validity provides information on the extent to which the procedure really measures what it is supposed to measure” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.184). Thus, the assessment tool needs to reflect exactly learners’ performance or ability to use the language and at the same time it should support curriculum objectives and meet learners and teachers’ needs. It follows from this, that there is an important relation between reliability and validity. As Hughes (2003) claims “if a test is not reliable, it cannot be valid”(p.34). This is because unreliable or inconsistent results do not reflect what the assessor wants actually to assess. To illustrate this relation, Genesee and Upshur (1996) give the example of asking ESL students about their prior exposure to the second language by addressing the question: How long have you been in the United States? Some inaccurate responses and thus less valid can emerge as they explain:

“Perhaps one of the students did not include visits to the United States prior to moving there permanently because he did not consider this experience important. And perhaps another student misunderstood the question and thought you had asked how many ESL courses she had taken in the United States. These nonsystematic effects on the answers reduce the validity of the information. If only 90 percent of your students answer your question the way you intended, then you can know the amount of time spent in the United States for only 90 percent of them”.

(Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p. 63)

There are different approaches to estimate the validity of the data obtained and collected procedures used. This can be done through examining the extent to which a test measures the skills or what has been taught within the course or unit of study or through finding out how well

a test determines students' level of competence or achievement of the preset goals (Brown, 2003). There are also cases where it is appropriate to use statistical correlation with other related but independent measures, or focus on the test's consequences or perception of validity among test-takers (Brown, 2003). In fact, validation studies of language performance assessment are mainly concerned with three types⁵ of validity: construct validity, content validity, and criterion-based validity (Genesee & Upshur, 1996).

3.3.3.1 Construct Validity:

According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), the term construct validity refers to the extent to which people can interpret a given test score as an indicator of the abilities or constructs⁶ that people want to measure. Indeed, this type of validity asks the question: "*Does this test actually tap into the theoretical construct as it has been defined*" (Brown, 2003, p.25). Thus, it refers to the level of accuracy of a construct within a test as it has been theoretically defined. For instance, in a test of oral expression, if the objective of teaching is to enhance learners' communicative language use, so the scoring procedure should reflect this theoretical assumption through weighing fluency, vocabulary use, and sociolinguistic appropriateness. So, the test should be consistent with the construct or theory underlying the acquisition of skills and abilities.

On the importance of construct validity, Kelly (1978) stresses the need to design tests on some theoretical principles: "*... the systematic development of tests requires some theory, even an informal, inexplicit one, to guide the initial selection of item content and the division of the domain of interest into appropriate Sub-areas*"(p.08). Indeed, construct validity is useful in case the content to be assessed is not clear or there is no well-defined or generally accepted criterion of the assessment procedure (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). According to Brown (2003) this type of validity is important in validating standardized tests of proficiency (e.g., TOEFL) since these tests, for economic reasons, must be practical and focus on a particular field or skill.

3.3.3.2 Content Validity:

Content validity refers "*to the fact that the selection of tasks one observes in a test-taking situation is representative of the larger set (universe) of tasks of which the test is assumed to be a*

⁵ There are also other types of validity which have been identified such as face validity (the test looks reasonable to the test taker), concurrent-validity (the test and the criterion are administered at the same time. Davies, 1990), and educational validity (the relationship between positive test effects and students study habits. Thrasher, 1984),

⁶ Construct refers to "*an ability that provides the basis for a given assessment or assessment task and for interpreting scores derived from this task*" (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p.43)

sample” (Bachman & Palmer, 1981, p.136). From this definition it follows that the content of a test, in order to be valid, should appropriately represent the language skills, structures, etc. which are the objective of a given teaching programme. Content validity involves content relevance and content coverage (Bachman, 1990). The former refers to the extent to which the aspects of ability to be assessed are actually tested by the task, indicating the requirement to specify the ability domain and the test method facets (Bachman, 1990). The latter concerns the extent to which the test tasks adequately demonstrate the performance in the target context, which may be achieved by randomly selecting representative samples (Bachman, 1990).

To establish content validity, Anastasi (1982) provides a set of guidelines as follows:

- *The behavior domain to be tested must be systematically analyzed to make certain that all major aspects are covered by the test items, and in the correct proportions.*
- *The domain under consideration should be fully described in advance, rather than being defined after the test been prepared.*

(Anastasi, 1982, p.131)

It follows from this, that to make sure that the test represents adequately the language domain it intends to test, there is a need to describe first this language domain and the ability that the test is designed to measure through conducting needs analysis in the learning contexts. After this stage, a panel of experts within that field judges to what extent the test tasks match such ability (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). However, there are some problems in estimating content validity as identified by language testers. According to Bachman (2002) difficulties may arise in defining the target language domain where test-takers come from different backgrounds with ranging learning needs. But, even when this domain is well defined sampling representative language skills is difficult due to inadequate needs analyses and the lack of comprehensive and complete descriptions of language use (Hughes, 1981).

Nevertheless, according to Genesee and Upshur (1996) content validity is important for classroom-based assessment because teachers need to judge students’ performance in different types of situations then generalize the findings to other situations since direct assessment within a given situation is not possible. Besides, with standardized tests this type of validity is useful since it helps teachers assess the language skills they teach and want to measure as well as take decisions on the basis of such result as Genesee and Upshur (1996) put forward:

“If the content of the placement test does not accurately reflect the content of the classes that are offered, student performance on the test will not accurately predict their performance in those classes. Another way of saying this is that if there is little or no correspondence between the language skills required on the placement test and those needed to succeed in the available classes, we cannot accurately judge students’ readiness for those classes”.

(Genesee & Upshur, 1996, pp.65-66)

3.3.3.3 Criterion-based Validity:

Bachman (1990) defines criterion-based validity as *“an indication of the relationship between test scores and some criterion which we believe is also an indicator of the ability tested”*(p.288). Thus, in this case, the test’s results are compared to other measures of the same criterion which are considered valid. To explain more this type of validity, Genesee and Upshur (1996) give the example of a publisher who introduces a new form of an established test and compare its results with the older one, i.e., the criterion measure to find out about the new test measures or its validity. They also maintain that this type of validity can be used for the sake of judging the test’s effectiveness in making decisions and so the criteria measure an ability which is different from the one the test claims to measure (Genesee & Upshur,1996).

Criterion-based validity contains two primary forms, these being concurrent and predictive validity. A concurrent valid test is a test whose *“results are supported by other concurrent performance beyond the assessment itself”* (Brown,2003, p.24). That is, validation here requires scores on two different tests which measure the same aspects, whereas a predictive one is used *“to assess (and predict) a test-taker’s likelihood of future success”* (Brown, 2003,p.25). Thus, it concerns the degree to which a test can predict the test-taker future performance. Predictive validity *“becomes important in the case of placement tests, admissions assessment batteries, language aptitude tests”* (Brown, 2003,p.25). For instance, after placing students in second language classes (beginning, intermediate, or advanced) on the basis of their performance in a placement test, it was found that there is a group of students who do not fit well into the assigned class, which means that the test lacks criterion-based validity since it failed to predict the students’ ability suitable for such classes (Genesee & Upshur ,1996).

It has been claimed, however, that constructing a communicative test seems problematic as Jakobovits (1970) states: *“...the question of what is to know a language is not well understood and consequently, the language proficiency tests now available and universally used are inadequate because the attempt to measure something that has not been well defined”*(p.75). Accordingly, one cannot assure that a test has criterion-based validity because it correlates with

another test if the latter does not measure the language ability or skills in question. Moreover, a test may not always predict students' ability or reflect their actual performance since there are different factors which may interfere with assessment process (e.g., test anxiety), and affect its result thereby providing inaccurate information about the quality being assessed.

Finally, one can conclude that insuring test's validity remains crucial in spite of its difficulty. To do so, there are three main procedures which are: construct validity, content validity, and criterion-based validity. This is because, like reliability, validity cannot be tested directly. But rather, through these procedures one can estimate the validity of the information collected about human assessment (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). If this information helps to do so, this means that the procedure used for obtaining it has validity (Genesee & Upshur, 1996).

3.3.4 Authenticity

In addition to reliability and validity, Messick (1996) stresses the importance of including authentic and direct samples of communicative behaviours of listening, speaking, reading and writing of the language in assessment. Indeed, for Bachman and Palmer (1996), authenticity is "*a critical quality of language tests, and the one that "most language test developers implicitly consider in designing language tests"* (pp.23-4). It refers to "*the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a TLU task*" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p.23). For Clegg and Bryan (2006) "*If assessment tasks are representative of the context being studied and both relevant and meaningful to those involved then it may be described as authentic*"(p.217). This means that authenticity implies relating the assessment tasks to the context in which it is set.

Thus, besides the need to represent authentically tasks in the target situation, assessment "*must be interactive in a way that allows testing language proficiency as a communicative competence, not as knowledge of the language*" (Driessen et al., 2007, p.21). In this respect, the concept of authentic assessment has emerged in language learning. It has been defined as "*the procedures for evaluating learner progress using activities and tasks that integrate classroom goals, curricular and instruction and real- life performance*" (Kohonen,1999, p.284). Thus, authentic assessment includes assessing communicative performance in real-life contexts, thereby reflecting learners' communicative competence, cognitive abilities and affective learning (Kohonen, 1999).

Furthermore, authentic assessment includes using self and peer assessment, in order to develop learners reflective awareness, i.e., learning "*how to manage learning, rather than just*

managing to learn" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p.291). "*Teachers' oral interviews of learners, learners' projects and exhibitions, teachers' observation of learners in class, and learners' portfolios are among the types of authentic assessment in language learning*" (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p.12). It is based on student-centred approaches to learning since it aims at enhancing learners' competence and assessing continuously their learning process and outcome, thereby providing evaluative information for both teachers and learners (Kohonen, 1999).

Authentic assessment is, indeed, a learning tool which helps learners reflect over their learning, collaborate and learn from others. This approach also favours individual learning styles and preferences (Bickley, 1989), the process syllabus (Breen, 1984) and direct involvement in learning (Kohonen, 1999). In doing so, it encourages learner autonomy and aims at making from him/her active and socially responsible agent, fully capable of needs analysis, goal setting, and assessment of achievement. By involving learners in assessing themselves, authentic assessment may help achieve positive washback.

3.3.5 Washback

Washback or backwash is a common notion in educational and applied linguistics which has long been discussed in the literature (Kirkland, 1971; Popham, 1987), but it was not until the early 1990s that attracted attention from writers and researchers in the field of language testing. This term has been defined by Shohamy et al., (1996) as "*the connections between testing and learning*"(p.298). To clarify more this type of connections, Messick (1996) refers to washback⁷ as "*...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*"(p.141). Yet, since the teaching learning process is related not only to the educational context, but also to the social one. Tests can affect teachers, students, parents, administrators, policy-makers, material writers, publishers' perceptions, curriculum designers, researchers, etc.

"Tests and test results have a significant impact on the career or life chances of individual test takers (e.g. access to educational/employment opportunities). They also impact on educational systems, and on society more widely: for example, test results are used to make decisions about school curriculum planning, immigration policy, or professional registration for doctors; and the

⁷ What is the difference between washback and impact? According to Taylor (2005), washback concerns the effect of testing on the teaching and learning process, whereas impact refers to test effect beyond such a context which can include test preparation materials, curriculum planning, access to education/employment opportunities, immigration policy, etc.

growth of a test may lead publishers and institutions to produce test preparation materials and run test preparation courses.”

(Taylor, 2005, p.154)

Therefore, Hughes (2003) defines washback as the effects of testing not only on learners and teachers in a given educational context, but also on society at large. Washback, therefore, can operate at two levels. The micro-level is the test’s impact on the individual students and teachers, whereas the macro-level is the impact which the test may have on society and the educational system (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). As the model in figure (3.2) displays, washback consists of participants (students, teachers, material developers, publishers.), process (action by participants to achieve learning) and products (the learning outcome and its quality).

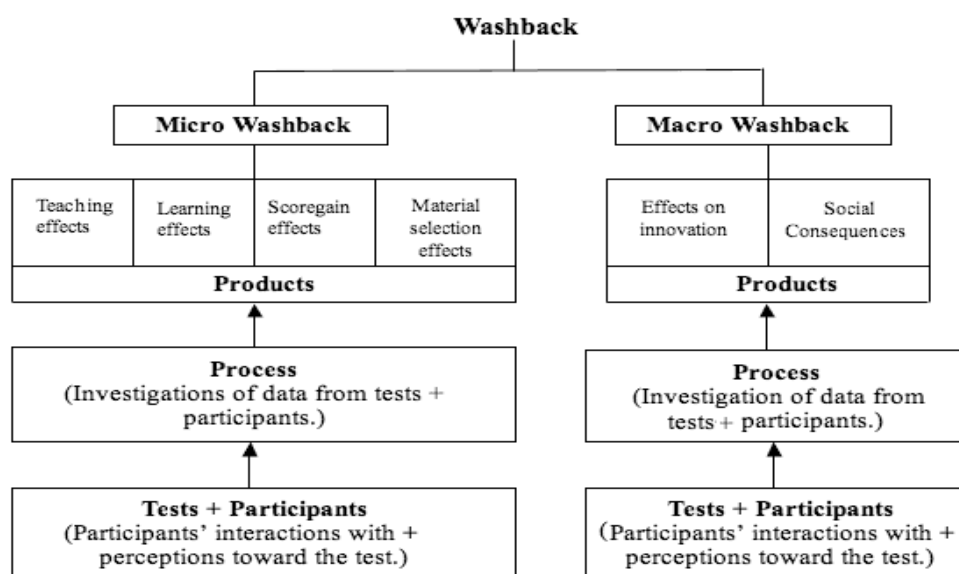


Figure (3.2): A proposed holistic model of washback (Bachman & Palmer, 1996)

In this respect, Baily (1996) states that “*washback can either be positive or negative to the extent that it either promotes or impedes the accomplishment of educational goals held by learners and /or programme personnel*”(p.269). Therefore, research has been attempting to explain how washback operates in order to design assessment that will help improve learning. The aim thus, has been to enhance positive washback in assessment. According to Bachman (1990) positive washback occurs when the assessment used reflects the skills and content taught in the classroom.

In fact, the concept of washback has been associated with validity by scholars like Mesick (1996) who accepts that washback is part of construct validity and this positive washback is associated only with valid tests in which construct inter-representation and construct irrelevancies are minimized. However, research studies revealed that washback is a complex

phenomenon (Alderson, 2004). Its complex nature is “*due to the fact that it is an interactive multi-directional process involving a constant interplay of different degrees of complexity among the different washback components*” (El-Ebyary, 2009, p.02). This is so, since as stated above there are many variables beside the test or exam such as teachers, students’ feelings, attitudes, the context where the test is taking place, the learning conditions, etc. Indeed, Alderson and Wall (1991) who conducted several research into the area of washback argue that there is not an automatic relationship between tests and their impact as there are specific areas such as teaching content and methodology, teacher competence, assessment methods and resources available need to be considered.

Accordingly, there are factors which affect washback. Teacher’s educational background, past learning experience, beliefs about effective teaching and learning and their attribution orientation affect the washback (Watanabe, 2004). Moreover, the type of textbooks available (Cheng, 1997) and the availability of exam support materials (Shohamy et al., 1996) are all factors which can contribute either to positive or negative washback. In addition to that, research has also shown other factors such as the test or exam itself, its stakes, format, purpose, proximity (Shohamy et al., 1996), the weighting of individual papers (Lam,1994), its time and familiarity to teachers (Andrew et al.,2002).

In addition, washback effects on teaching are also worth considering. A number of studies have been conducted to find out about how washback affect the curriculum. For instance, Alderson and Wall’s (1993) study showed that the examination has had an effect on the curriculum since the latter has been narrowed to those areas most likely to be tested. Andrews et al., (2002) find that the revised exam has resulted in teachers’ use of explanation of techniques for engaging in certain exam tasks. Similarly, research conducted by Read and Hayes (2003) points out to the heavier use of practice tasks, homework and explanation of test-taking strategies in the IELTS⁸ preparation course than on the more general course.

Washback effect on learning outcome has been investigated in Green’s (2007) research. The latter attempted to find out whether test preparation classes could help students improve their IELTS writing scores. After the pre and post-tests questionnaires were administered to participants, it was found that test-driven instruction does not necessary lead to high scores, but integrating material covered on the test with regular teaching and making clear the test’s intentions to teachers and students may help improve such scores (Green, 2007).

⁸ International English Language Testing System.

Nevertheless, as stated above, research on washback effects on students' learning is scarce. Indeed, Wall (2000) has observed that a little is known about students' perceptions of tests (as opposed to their teacher's impressions of their perceptions), and how new tests influence what students know and can do. Moreover, Baily (1999) argues that "*much more research is needed.....to see whether and how these washback effects play out in the attitudes and behavior of language learners*"(p.13). He also maintains that little has been written about the impact of an autonomous learning philosophy on assessment and that some areas like self-assessment and autonomous learning are worth investigating in washback studies (Baily, 1999).

It is worth noting, however, that the type of assessment implemented, the way it is approached and the objectives behind its implementation can determine the effects of washback on all participants in the process. Indeed, if the objective of teaching and assessment practices is to promote learners' autonomy and help them improve their language, the way they would be assessed need to require their involvement in this process and assist their engagement through continuous feedback. Assessment in which decisions are shared between teachers and learners and dialogue is promoted in the classroom is likely to minimize negative washback and reduce positive one. Therefore, a considerable attention has been devoted to self-assessment tools, among them language portfolios.

Thus, it needs to be retained in mind that in addition to washback, test's reliability, validity, practicality are criteria which help test a test or determine how 'good' it is. Besides, test developers need, while designing a test, to improve or enhance these criteria. For instance, this can be achieved "*by using a variety of methods of information collection*", which can be attained through peer and self-assessment so that "*the bias or inaccuracy resulting from the use of one method will be offset by other methods*" (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.59). Before discussing some steps for designing a classroom language test, the following section attempts to account for what is meant by a language test. Then, it will outline some of its types.

3.4 Designing Classroom Language Tests

Language assessment entails collecting information about students' achievement upon which educational decisions can be established. Tests are among the methods used to collect such information. Yet, what makes this method different from other data collection tools? According to Genesee and Upshur (1996), in educational contexts tests have their subject matter or content and second or foreign language tests' content is about the language skills and knowledge being assessed. But, as stated previously, these tests are just a sample of these skills and knowledge

since they are not intending to examine all of the aspects of the foreign or second language proficiency. Moreover, tests have several methods of eliciting performance through including different tasks depending on the objective or what needs to be assessed. They have also their own scores which describe the qualities measured. For instance, how appropriately do students speak the language? (Genesee & Upshur, 1996).

Nevertheless, as one has mentioned previously in this thesis, certain principles need to be taken into account when designing language tests (practicality, reliability, etc.). This is in order to achieve what Rea-Dickins (2000) calls ‘good tests’ those which reflect appropriately students’ knowledge about the language and their actual use of this language to convey meanings along its different skills.

“Good tests provide the opportunity for learners to show how much they know about language structure and vocabulary, as well as how they are able to use these formal linguistic features to convey meanings in classroom language activities through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Tests of this type may be used as part of an integrated assessment system”.

(Rea-Dickins, 2000, p.378)

It needs to be stated, however, that there are specific objectives of tests according to learners’ learning needs, what has been taught, the educational goals, and the learning outcomes intended. As a matter of fact, different types of test’s tasks have been identified in language assessment. For this reason, understanding the objective of a test is an important step for its construction and achievement of the intended objectives of assessment. Therefore, after outlining some tests’ types, the coming part will deal with the steps of test construction.

3.4.1 Test Types

According to Brown (2003), language aptitude tests, language proficiency tests, placement tests, diagnostic tests and achievement tests are the types of tests which teachers can choose depending on their purpose of testing. Language aptitude tests like the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) and the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (LAB) consist of four components: auditory ability, grammatical sensitivity, inductive language learning ability, besides memory upon which students are tested to predict whether they can succeed or not in learning a foreign language (Rea-Dickins, 2000). Language proficiency tests “*yield information about student ability to use language in certain ways*” (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.135). An example of standardized proficiency test is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

However, this definition may lead one to inquire about the difference between these tests and achievement tests. A language proficiency test is not limited to a given skill or course but

rather it tests global competence in a language by using multiple-choice items on grammar, vocabulary, reading and aural comprehension, oral production performance and sometimes a sample of writing (Brown, 2003). On the other hand, achievement tests “*provide information about student attainment in relation to instructional objectives or a defined domain of language*” (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.153). Thus, achievement tests, unlike language proficiency tests, are limited to a given lesson, teaching materials and objectives within a particular programme. Though they are summative, they still have a formative function because they provide washback concerning the student’s performance in a given course (Brown, 2003).

Moreover, there are tests which are used mainly for taking decisions which concern students’ level to place them in a particular study programme or course. These are known as placement tests⁹ which come in different forms such as assessing comprehension and production, using open-ended and limited responses, selection (e.g., multiple-choice) and gap-filling, etc., this depends on the programme’s nature and needs (Brown, 2003). For instance, The English Placement Test (EPT) used to assess English ability of newly admitted international students at UIUC (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign-USA). Diagnostic (foreign) language tests are concerned with identifying a test-taker’s specific linguistic strengths and weaknesses (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). An example of a diagnostic language test would be DELNA¹⁰ test which is in place at The University of Auckland (USA) to assess students’ readiness for study at an English-medium university and to identify any language needs they might have.

Still, what makes these tests different from each other? Both proficiency and placement tests provide meaningful feedback to the test-taker or test-giver about particular aspects of language that need further improvement, while this provision of meaningful feedback is the most important and useful aspect of diagnostic testing (Yin & Sims, 2006). Besides, though diagnostic language tests and achievement tests deal with specific linguistic strengths and weaknesses, yet an achievement test usually occurs during or at the end of a course, and often deals only with aspects of language ability that are covered in the course. A diagnostic test, on the other hand, may serve as a useful complement to a course but can occur independently of a course and is not limited by its covered content (Yin & Sim,2006).

It is worth noting that, the above test’s types are classified according to the test purpose. There are other classifications and thus other test’s types such as those classified according to the test timing which are limited time tests and unlimited time tests, according to test’s

⁹ Some proficiency tests can have the role of placement tests.

¹⁰ Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment.

quality—standardized and non-standardized tests. Besides, there are norm-referenced tests and criterion-referenced tests¹¹ which are classified according to the evaluation method. There are other test's types such as individual and group tests (according to test's administration), written, performance and computer tests (the answer's type), etc.

3.4.2 Test Construction: Some Practical Steps

Constructing a test is a process which requires tentative attention, reflection over the targeted objectives, and the means to achieve them. It involves as well considering assessment's purposes, learners' learning needs and difficulties, assessment resources, what was taught, and other elements which can interfere within the assessment process like learners' motivation and attitudes, learning conditions, exam's timing, etc. Different steps of constructing classroom tests have been suggested in the literature (e.g., Bachman & Palmer 2010; Brown, 2003; Genesee & Upshur, 1996). But, this section attempts to cover some of them through considering questions such as: What needs to be assessed? For what purpose? What kind of test's tasks to include? How should they be scored?

3.4.2.1 Test Specification:

Before developing a language test, there is a need to specify the purpose of assessment and clarify its intended use to test-takers. Indeed, as mentioned previously assessment can serve different functions such as making decisions about individuals, educational programmes and institutions. Specifying, therefore, the assessment purpose is likely to determine the kind of test to be used, the instructions to include as well as the content to be assessed. Besides, test-takers need to understand why they are being assessed, in order to recognize the importance of the process and its impact on their learning progress and academic achievement. In this respect, Bachman and Palmer (2010) argue that there are two reasons for clarifying assessment purposes. First, this helps justify an assessment use and clarify the legitimate use for its result. Second, because it is fair to inform test-takers how their assessment scores will be used, in order to motivate them to involve actively in the process and do efforts to perform well (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

In addition to that, *“providing a statement of the abilities to be assessed gives test-takers the means for assessing the relevance of these abilities”* (Bachman & Palmer, 2010,p.388). That is, it shows them the skills and knowledge which they need to develop within the course and how

¹¹ Definitions of these tests are provided in the glossary of this thesis.

they should assess their progress accordingly. This definition of the construct is also useful for test developers, because it helps “*to guide test development efforts*” and “*provide justification for the intended assessment-based interpretations*”, thereby increasing the possibility for achieving test reliability and validity (Bachman & Palmer,2010, p.212).

Hence, on what basis should this construct be defined? The construct or abilities to be assessed are related to the instructional objectives that the language teachers want to achieve in the course. According to Genesee and Upshur (1996) these objectives can be general and include the skills and abilities, or knowledge a course intends to teach to students and develop, i.e., curriculum objectives. There are also specific instructional objectives which specify more the general instructional objectives and they can include lessons, unit, or syllabus objectives¹² (Genesee & Upshur , 1996).

Bachman and Palmer (2010) refer to needs analysis and a theory of language ability which can define the construct. Indeed, by needs analysis they refer to “ *the systematic gathering of specific information about the language use needs of learners and the analysis of this information for purposes of language syllabus design*” (Bachman & Palmer,2010, p.214). One can give the example of teaching ESP where identifying the language of the target situation or what is known as TLU is crucial. In this case, if this needs analysis has revealed that writing business reports, or involving in business negotiation is what constitutes the TLU the construct definition will be based on this result. Yet, with proficiency tests like TOEFL, IELTS which are taken by learners from all over the world, neither needs analysis nor a course syllabus will help serve this aim. Rather, the construct to be tested is based on a given theory of language ability (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). This is since, in this case, the test takers knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, rhetorical organization, and so forth guide the assessment process and the way it is interpreted.

3.4.2.2 Developing Test Tasks:

This stage entails item writing or deciding which task(s) will elicit the kind(s) of qualities which are to be assessed (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). Therefore, it is crucial to consider here the kind of responses expected or demands of the task (s), in order to ensure the test validity (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). According to Bachman and Palmer (2010) there are three situations for developing assessment tasks which can be summarized as follows:

¹² An example of these objectives is provided in the first chapter of this thesis. These concern the Written Expression module for first year undergraduate students at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University, Mostaganem.

1. A TLU task needs to be modified according to the TLU domain and task specification.
2. TLU task is the assessment task.
3. No specific TLU domain.

It follows from this, that there are situations where test developers need to modify a ready-made test, so that it can fit into the TLU domain and meet learners' learning needs within the TLU domain. For example, if the test developer is interested in testing medical students' use of oral interaction with patients in English, he will observe in real contexts how this process occurs then he might change the test on the basis of this observation. Similarly, there are also cases where time constraints, testing conditions or test instruction do not match with the actual context where learners are being assessed. For example, if the TLU task (already developed) requires much more time than the one scheduled for a given examination, modification can be made here by selecting the most relevant tasks which can assess efficiently the constraint.

On the other hand, there are situations where there is no need for modifying TLU task as it fits into the assessment requirements. While for some task developers it is their task to design the test tasks because there is no specific TLU domain, i. e., TLU needs not specified. In this case, they need to define the constraint and suggest a TLU domain that would be appropriate to test takers (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

Nevertheless, before designing a test task (s) it is also important to consider the amount of time students need to take to complete this test, the number of items included in each task and whether students will be told about their scores or not, the type of responses required, the way the test is administered, etc. In this regard, Bachman and Palmer (2001) point out to the process of developing task specifications. This process includes:

- a) *The definition of the construct to be assessed.*
- b) *The characteristics of the setting in which the tasks will be administered.*
- c) *The characteristics of the input, expected response, and relationship between input and response.*
- d) *Recording method.*
- e) *Instructions for responding to the assessment task.*

(Bachman & Palmer, 2001, p.373)

Accordingly, task specifications involves defining the construct to be assessed, describing the characteristics of the setting including the physical setting (testing resources) participants (test-takers, test administrators) as well as time-frame for the test. In addition to that, test

developers need to consider the test input, i.e., “*the material contained in the task which the test takers or language users are expected to process*” (Bachman & Palmer, 2001, p.74), its format¹³ as well as the format of the expected response and its relationship to the input. Finally, it is also necessary to define the criteria for correctness, the scoring procedures to be used (e.g., computer, human raters) and the test instructions or “*the means by which the test takers are informed about the procedures for taking the assessment*” (Bachman & Palmer, 2001, p.70).

Hence, considering the language input of the test task (s) requires taking into account the test-takers level of language proficiency. Indeed, for Genesee and Upshur (1996) besides giving attention to the instructional objectives and available testing resources in selecting test tasks, the students’ level of proficiency is also worth considering. This is because “*this information will be useful in helping us tailor the assessment tasks to the test takers’ specific levels of ability and types of language use tasks, thus maximizing the usefulness of the assessment*” (Bachman & Palmer, 2001, p.274).

Genesee and Upshur (1996) also maintain that deciding whether a given test task is suitable for a particular proficiency level depends on the content of the item not the expected response. Within this process, they emphasize the importance of considering the kinds of instructional activities students have been exposed to: “*...test tasks should always be chosen that are well understood by students, either by virtue of their classroom experiences with similar tasks during instruction or by virtue of clear instructions in the test* (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.179). Moreover, to help students know what to do with the test tasks included test instructions should be clear and meaningful (Genesee & Upshur, 1996).

3.4.2.3 Test Scoring:

After designing a classroom test, the next step is to consider how this test will be scored. The scoring plan reflects the relative weight that test-developers place on each section and item in each section (Brown, 2003). As Fulcher and Davidson (2007) say: “*scoring is concerned with how much or how good of language testing.... How we score is the link between the evidence we elicit from the task on the one hand, and the construct and domain on the other*”(p.91). Because scoring is a crucial part of the assessment process upon which decisions can be made, it is necessary to ensure the accuracy of the testing scores through using the correct scoring key and checking the correspondence of the scoring rules with the test’s objectives.

¹³ The format of the input concerns the way this input is presented and it includes “*channel, form, language, length, vehicle, degree of speediness, and type*” (Bachman & Palmer,2010,p.74).

For Bachman and Palmer (2006) a scoring method involves two steps: “*specifying the criteria for correctness, or the criteria by which the quality of the response is to be judged, and determining the procedures that will be used to arrive at a score*”(p.195). Indeed, specifying the criteria for correctness depends on the language knowledge or skills to be assessed. For instance, if the aim is to test students’ grammatical knowledge, the criteria for correctness will be based on grammatical accuracy, i.e., writing correct tenses, word formation, etc. Likewise, in case the test developer’s objective is to test a given language skill, e.g., listening, so the criteria for correctness are likely to be based here on the test-takers comprehension of the content or topic of the listening material. It follows from this, that defining this type of criteria depends on the construct to be assessed.

It is worth noting, however, that the criteria for correctness can be based on language knowledge, language use and content of the subject matter. This is common, for example, with modules like Linguistics, Literature and Civilization (British and American), where students’ ability to use the language properly to express their ideas in writing and their understanding of the content under question are both required for the provision of the answer(s). In this case, test’s scores involve weighting¹⁴ which depends on the test developer’s objective.

Furthermore, determining procedures for scoring the responses depends on the construct as well. Indeed, two types of scoring procedures have been identified by Bachman and Palmer (2010): Right/Wrong Scoring and Partial Credit Scoring. The former is based on a single criterion for correctness so that a test taker receives ‘0’ if it is wrong and ‘1’ if it is correct. The latter is used, on the other hand, in case there are multiple criteria for correctness so that a response that satisfies all criteria of correctness receives full credit, some of these criteria receive partial credit and no credit for responses that satisfy none of the criteria (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

As a matter of fact, the scoring procedure also depends on the type of task responses. In this respect, the response characteristics of test tasks can be described as 1) selected 2) limited 3) extended (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Selected responses require the test takers to select their answer(s) from a set of alternatives (e.g., multiple choice questions). Scoring, in this case, is based on selecting the right answer. Limited response tasks require the test takers to complete (repeat) sentences using a word or phrase as it is the case of cloze tests, imitation tests, etc. On

¹⁴ This refers to “*a process of assigning a numeric value called a "weight" to a score, or other variable of interest, to indicate its relative importance to a score distribution or contribution to the calculation of another score or variable*”(Joint Committee on Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing of the AERA, APA, and NCME,1999, p.40)

the other hand, the extended response tasks, the test taker is free to express him/herself in writing or speaking without being limited (essay writing, oral interviews, etc.).

According to Genesee and Upshur (1996), scoring differs from one type response to another. They maintain that selected response tasks are objective since there is no space for the examiner's subjective judgment or opinion. On the contrary, in limited response formats there is no clear cut answer, but there is an acceptable or appropriate one as students use the grammatical rules, their vocabulary, etc. for its production, thereby calling for the scorer's judgment (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). The latter is called for in extended response tasks as students' responses are not predictable (Genesee & Upshur, 1996).

Consequently, this put into question score consistency which is essential for test's reliability and validity. Still, it needs to be noted that inconsistency of scores does not lie only in examiners' subjectivity in scoring, but can also be generated by other factors such as test takers' anxiety, motivation, concentration, the exam's conditions, etc. For this reason, it is not possible to eliminate inconsistencies entirely, but rather "*we can try to minimize the effects of those potential sources of inconsistency that are to some extent under our control. We do this by the way we develop and administer the assessment*" (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p. 125).

So far, one has attempted to outline some steps in constructing a classroom test. It can be concluded that, before starting this process a test specification is required. This is through specifying test's purposes, and defining the construct to be assessed. In fact, test specification involves developing what is known as 'test blueprint'. The latter clarifies the appropriateness of the task(s) in regard to the test's purpose, the construct to be assessed, the test takers level of proficiency, the assessment environment, and the TLU domain. Besides, within tests scoring, defining criteria of correctness depends on the construct to be assessed. This also determines the scoring procedure which depends in turn on the expected response. After administering and grading the test, an important component of the assessment as well as the teaching and learning process is the act of providing feedback to students. What does the word feedback refer to? Why do teachers need to provide it? How to achieve positive feedback?

3.4.3 Teacher Feedback

Feedback is an essential part of language assessment since "*the important part of assessment does not end when the work has been marked; rather; that is when it begins*" (Brown & Knight, 1994, p.108). Therefore, over the past decades a considerable body of studies have been seeking for what kind of feedback support students' learning and how it can be used to achieve this aim

(Brown & Glover, 2006). Before, outlining some of these research findings, one needs first to clarify the concept of feedback, its importance and types.

3.4.3.1 A definition of Feedback

In fact, feedback can be defined from various perspectives. For Hattie and Timperley (2007), it refers to “*information provided by an agent with respect to one’s performance or understanding*”(p.81). However, feedback can include the consequences of performance since “*a teacher or parent can provide corrective information, a peer can provide an alternative strategy, a book can provide information to clarify ideas, a parent can provide encouragement, and a learner can look up the answer to evaluate the correctness of a response* (Hattie & Timperley,2007, p.81).

Moreover, feedback needs to serve other purposes as Philpott (2009) explains:

“Feedback is the information communicated to a student in regard to their understanding of shared learning objectives of a given task against an agreed set of criteria. This information will include guidance on how to improve. Feedback is the information that is relayed to the student about their progress and can be based upon a variety of forms of evidence including: marked work, un-graded teacher checked worked, oral contribution, practical displays, draft work and re-drafted work”.

(Philpott, 2009, pp.73-4)

It follows from this definition that, providing feedback does not mean only telling students about their learning performance, thereby revealing their progress on the basis of collected evidence, but it also includes communicating and clarifying assessment criteria and learning objectives of a given task. In this respect, Brown and Knight (1994) claim that “*worthwhile feedback is related to the clarity of assessment criteria*”(p.114). Besides, feedback needs to show to students what is required from them to improve their actual performance as Ramaprasad (1983) definition of feedback indicates: “*Feedback is information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter to alter the gap in some way*”(p.04).

It is worth noting, however, that feedback does not only concern students’ performance. Teachers as well need to obtain feedback from their colleagues and students about their teaching, in order to improve it and enhance students’ learning. This is through engaging in what Stanley (1999) labels ‘reflective dialogue’ as he states: “*a reflective and investigative dialogue with another person who listened well and asked important questions helped teachers to re-shape the quality of their own inner dialogue*”(p.119). In addition to that, feedback can concern

teachers/test-developers in order to evaluate their assessment practices as Bachman and Palmer (2010) put forward:

“Feedback is information from administering the assessment that the test developer can use to confirm or revise the original Design Statement and Blueprint and to make changes in the assessment tasks themselves. Some of this information will be about how the assessment achieves the purpose for which it was intended, and some will be about real world considerations, especially in the use of resources”.

(Bachman & Palmer, 2010,p.394)

Thus, feedback in this case is likely to reveal the problems with the assessment environment, assessment procedures, the clarity of the instruction and language input of the test’s task(s), besides test-takers beliefs and attitudes towards assessment (i.e., washback). This kind of feedback can be obtained through observations, self-reporting of test-takers, interviews with test administrators, etc. (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

It can be concluded that, feedback’s objective determines its content, the persons concerned as well as the means through which it can be obtained. Therefore, there is no clear cut definition for this concept. Still, one accept that feedback refers to collected information on the basis of certain evidence (exams, observations, interviews, etc.) about the actual state of learning progress and rate of achievement; teaching and assessment practices, their effectiveness and impact on students’ learning process and outcome. This is through referring to internal goals or standards, reference level; norms of teaching as well as assessment practices. Yet, the kind of feedback that is of more interest for the present research is the one communicated to students in regard to their learning process, outcome within a given course, or what is referred here as teacher feedback.

3.4.3.2 Teacher Feedback: Why and How to implement?

Teacher feedback has been regarded as a vital concept in language teaching and learning and a source of learners’ motivation within (Weiner, 1990). Indeed, there has been a common consensus upon its benefit on learners (Bitchener, 2008; Leki, 1991). In this respect, Falchikov (1995) suggests that *“positive feedback reinforces positive action while negative feedback can cause self-devaluative responses and interfere the information of feedback”*(p.158). She also added that negative feedback may also cause anxiety in students. It follows from this, that receiving feedback is related to the affective aspect of learning or as Higgins (2000) states: *“receiving feedback is also an emotional business”*(p.04).

Moreover, teacher's feedback helps students "*check their internal construction of goals, criteria and standards*" (Milligan & Nicol, 2006, p.68). In doing so, it can guide their self-regulation and assessment of learning. Hence, an effective feedback does not only entail providing information to students about their learning and encouraging them to reflect over it and improve, but it also guides teacher's practices and helps them to understand how students proceed along this process. Indeed, teachers need to obtain regular feedback about students' learning through using different assessment tools, e.g., diagnostic tests, portfolios, etc. "*The act of assessing has an effect on the assessor as well as the student. Assessors learn about the extent to which they [students] have developed expertise and can tailor their teaching accordingly*" (Yorke, 2003, p.482).

Therefore, providing positive or effective feedback remains a crucial concern for teachers as well as researchers. For instance, Gibbs (2006) argues that to help them learn from their mistakes and become better processors of information, students need clear, structured feedback according to the assignment's goals, criteria and standards. It has been also claimed that students need to receive feedback at the beginning of their studies because delaying its provision might be detrimental as Mauranen's (1994) study shows.

Furthermore, since "*the purpose of feedback is to help a person to improve what he or she is doing*" (Brown et al., 1997, p.04), it has to be useful and acceptable to the receiver. To meet these criteria, "*feedback has to be timely, clear, focused upon the attainable and expressed in a way which will encourage a person to think and, if he or she thinks that is necessary to change*" (Brown et al., 1997, p.04). Thus, it needs to prompt students' reflection over their learning process and results in decision making and taking for the sake of improving it. In short, it needs to lead to actions as Boud (2000) notes: "*Unless students are able to use the feedback to produce improved work through for example, re-doing the same assignment, neither they nor those giving the feedback will know that it has been effective*"(p.158).

As a conclusion, teacher feedback plays an important role in shaping students' learning beliefs, attitudes about their assessment, thereby enhancing or impeding their motivation in learning. As a matter of fact, providing positive feedback which can enhance learning and improvement, is among the primary goal of teachers as well as researchers in the field of ELT. For this reason, the author intends to provide in the last chapter more practical suggestions concerning what kind of feedback needs to be provided and how it should be done to make it positive and constructive to students' learning. It is worth noting, that these suggestions will deal mainly with teacher feedback in assessing students' writing since the present research focuses on

assessing this skill with students at first year undergraduate level. Thus, this theoretical chapter also needs to account for the process of writing and the way it is assessed in language learning.

3.5 Assessing Writing

Writing is a complex process which calls upon different language abilities. Research by Rijlaarsdam and van den Bergh (1996) showed that individual differences can be identified in the way students construct their writing process. Consequently, it has been found that assessing students' writing ability is not a simple task (Brown, 2003). Before dealing with approaches to assessing writing, there is a need to account for what constitutes the writing process.

3.5.1 Defining Writing Process

Chenoweth and Hayes (2001) distinguish three levels in their description of the writing process: a resource level, a process level and a control level. The resource level consists of linguistic knowledge and general knowledge and is called upon at the process level, where such knowledge is used for a given purpose. The control level includes a task schema consisting of the task goal and a set of productions that control such process, other kinds of knowledge resources might be called upon, such as knowledge of writing strategies (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001).

It follows from this, that writers need to have some vocabulary knowledge of the language, in order to express their ideas to readers. Indeed, it has been shown that vocabulary size, use of words of different frequency bands (Lexical Frequency Profile) and composition rating are highly inter-correlated (Laufer & Nation, 1995). Yet, writers' ideas are not expressed in single words, but they need to follow certain grammatical structures which indicate the relationships between the constituents in the clause. Writers need, therefore, to possess grammatical knowledge of the language, so that they can connect words properly into clauses and sentences (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

Moreover, there is also other language-related knowledge which is required for this process. Knowledge of the language's orthography is important for spelling correctly words within sentences (Abbott & Berninger, 1993). It enables, thus, writers to convey and make clear their ideas. Besides, communicating ideas through writing process requires awareness of how texts are organized at discourse level or what has been known as genre. In this respect, Fine (1988) points out that part of one's cultural knowledge is an awareness of how genres of discourse are organized. This is so, since members of a speech community develop a set of

rhetorical patterns of written genre, i. e., schemata. “*Such knowledge of rhetorical conventions facilitates cognitive processing, in that as the readers read and listen, they are able to locate key elements and predict what the structure will be*”(Fine, 1988, p. 13).

Therefore, writers need to have knowledge of the addressed readership and of ways texts function in their community, in order to be able to write effective texts (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Indeed, this metacognitive knowledge becomes important in second/foreign language writing since it enables writers to identify what constitutes a good text within this language. This is because rhetorical patterns are not necessarily the same cross-culturally (Kaplan, 1966). Consequently, attention has been devoted to the comparison of culturally based conventions of discourse, i.e., the field of contrastive rhetoric, in order to help second/foreign language writers to use effectively genres of discourse in context (Connor, 1996; Leki, 1991).

Hence, the possession of linguistic and metacognitive knowledge is not enough for writing since writers must also be able to apply this knowledge efficiently and fluently. In this light, Kellogg (1988) pointed out that proper writing strategies can enhance writing performance and reduce attentional overload. Different writing strategies have been identified such as planning, revising, strategy and producing reader-based prose¹⁵ (Strachey, 2000). But, teachers should find out how to guide young students into independent writing and help them discover their own abilities by providing opportunities for choice, peer response and further scaffolding (Oczkus, 2007). So, involving students in writing and giving them the chance to explore their own abilities and creativity through helping them take decisions over the topic to write, interact with their peers and teacher, and discuss their own ideas and views while providing them with support and guidance along the drafting process.

Furthermore, writing has to do with appropriate thinking and reasoning skills. This is apparently required at the university level, where it “*is seen not just as a standardized system of communication but also as an essential tool for learning*” (Weigle, 2002, p. 05). In this respect, research has shown that this skill can aid in thinking and problem solving (Krashen, 2003). As a result, “*a perceived lack of writing expertise is frequently seen as a sign that students do not possess the appropriate thinking and reasoning skills that they need to succeed*” (Weigle, 2002, p.05). Thus, in addition to possessing the linguistic knowledge of the language, its rhetorical

¹⁵ Planning involves thinking about the purpose of the writing and how it needs to be organized, whereas revising entails re-reading the sentences on the page or looking back at how ideas have been expressed and organized. Producing reader-based prose involves thinking about “*what the reader needs to know, how to make information clear and accessible, and what is an appropriate style (formal, friendly, etc.)*” (Strachey, 2000, p.307).

patterns and using appropriately given writing strategies, writing requires as well a critical mind who can bring out arguments, provide evidence to support personal views, evaluate available information, review what has been read, reach conclusions and raise further inquiries.

To achieve this purpose, writers need to have confidence in their second language writing ability, a sense of purpose, an awareness of audience, and a commitment to the writing task (Hirose & Sasaki, 1994; Victori, 1999). Thus, psychological or affective factors play a major role in the writing process as research has shown. It was found, for instance, that students with high writing anxiety considered writing unrewarding or punishing and approached it with negative attitudes (Daly & Shamo, 1978). Similarly, Lipstein and Renninger (2007) highlight the importance of motivation in writing, claiming that students who are interested in writing are more likely to develop a better understanding of this activity, set writing goals, make use of various strategies, and seek feedback on their writing. For this reason, assessing students' writing needs to enhance their motivation to write and encourage them to think about how to improve their performance and overcome their difficulties within this process (cognitive, psychological, etc.).

3.5.2 Approaches to Assessing Second/Foreign Language Writing

The history of writing assessment has witnessed a tendency emerging from indirect multiple choice test to direct timed impromptu essay test to alternative assessment approaches such as portfolios (Hamp-Lyons, 2001, 2002). Prior to the 1920s, it was assumed that testing writing ability must require the examinees to write (Cooper, 1984), or as Hughes (1989) claims: “*the best way to test people’s writing ability is to get them to write*”(p.75). Within this view, tests’ reliability and validity were questioned because essay scorers tend to be inconsistent or unreliable in their ratings (Cooper, 1984). As a result, a new approach to assessing writing ability emerged under the name of indirect assessment. The latter “*measures correct usage in sentence level constructions and focuses on spelling and punctuation via objective formats like MCQs¹⁶ and cloze tests*” (Coombe, 2010, p.91). In doing so, it aims at measuring the test takers knowledge of writing such as grammar, vocabulary, sentence construction, etc. Indirect assessment was supported because it could help achieve high statistical reliabilities as well as economical administration and scoring, thereby minimizing the cost of testing a great number of test takers (Cooper, 1984).

¹⁶ Multiple Choice Questions.

Hence, critics of such approach have argued that multiple-choice tests, for instance, fail to address the cognitive and reflective processes involved in actually producing a text (Camp, 1993). These processes include making plans for writing, generating and developing ideas, arguing and providing evidence, organizing, establishing connections within the text, finding a tone and rhetorical stance appropriate to the audience and the topic, evaluating generated text, and revising, which require higher order skills. Besides, it was claimed that indirect measures lack face validity and credibility among English teachers (Cooper, 1984). This is because they are concerned just with language accuracy rather than communication, which may discourage students to write, generating thus a negative perception on the importance of this skill in language learning among both teachers and students (Cooper, 1984).

Therefore, Godshalk et al., (1966) demonstrated that “*under special circumstances, scores on brief essays could be reliable and also valid in making a unique contribution to the prediction of performance on a stable criterion measure of writing ability*” (cited in Cooper, 1984, p.02). Indeed, measuring a student’s ability to communicate through the written mode based on the production of written texts or what has been known as direct assessment has rapidly gained adherents (Coombe, 2010). Unlike indirect assessment where students spend their time reading items, evaluating options, and selecting responses; direct assessment requires their higher order skills such as planning, writing, revising (Cooper, 1984). It integrates then all elements of writing.

As a matter of fact, Eley (1955) has argued that “*an adequate essay test of writing is valid by definition...since it requires the candidate to perform the actual behavior which is being measured*” (p.11; cited in Cooper, 1984, p.03). Likewise, scholars like White (1995) advocates this approach through highlighting the importance for students to learn composition skills and for teachers to teach them. It is also worth noting, that this approach may motivate students to write since it provides them with the opportunity to voice their ideas, views and creativity through this activity.

However, in spite of such claim direct forms of assessment such as essay writing were challenged because they can be unreliable (Breland & Jones, 1982). This is so, since in these forms of assessment “*...different topics often require different skills or make different conceptual demands on the candidates. In such cases, comparability of scores across topics and*

administrations is hard to achieve” (Coombe, 2010, p.53). Thus, variability of students writing from one topic to another may raise the problem of reliability. Besides, it was claimed that besides the essay’s topic, the type of discourse may have an effect on the quality of writing as White (1982) says: “*We know that assigned mode of discourse affects test score distribution in important ways. We do not know how to develop writing tests that will be fair to students who are more skilled in the modes not usually tested*” (p.17, cited in Cooper, 1984, p.05).

As a matter of fact, invalid interpretations of students’ performance may result in taking decisions which are not based on students’ writing ability. In addition, because in this assessment approach time is limited it was argued that this may not help students plan for their ideas, organize and make them clear (Cooper, 1984). Other identified variables which can contribute to problems of reliability and validity with direct assessment are poor handwriting, examination situation including the health and mood of examinees, and rater inconsistencies from one essay to another (Cooper,1984).

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that each assessment approach has its shortcomings, implications as well as advantages. Though multiple choice tests were shown to have discouraging effect on students’ writing process, “*much evidence suggests the usefulness of a well-crafted multiple-choice test for placement and prediction of performance*” (Cooper, 1984, p.03). On the other hand, essays writing or direct assessment forms may help enhance students’ writing skills in spite of the possibility of getting unreliable measurement out of their use. Therefore, the choice of one approach over the other remains the result of teachers’ decisions who can judge which approach fits within their teaching and assessment objectives, their learners’ needs and educational policies¹⁷.

Hence, relying exclusively on one assessment approach is likely to result in undesirable effects on all participants in the educational process (teachers, students, and other stakeholders). This is because evidence from research shows that time and instructional support for writing give students a better chance to do their best (Hillocks, 2002; Herman et al., 1993). So, students should be provided with opportunities to experience different writing modes, to search for

¹⁷ It needs to be noted here that research has shown that test formats influence not only what types of writing are taught but also how. Thus, teachers’ choice of the assessment approach can influence the curriculum and teaching practices as well.

information and have time for revising their writing through interacting with their teacher and peers.

Furthermore, research has stressed the need for the active participation of students in their assessments and the value of dialogue between students and tutors in this process (Rust 2007). This is so, since the relationship between language learning and assessment is widely acknowledged, so that emphasis is put on ‘assessment for learning’ rather than simply ‘assessment as measurement’ (Juwah et al., 2004). Therefore, approaches to assessing students’ writing should enhance students’ participation in assessing their progress, making choices setting goals to improve this skill, collaboration and interaction with their teachers and peers to discuss their needs and difficulties in writing and make plans to enhance this ability, thereby promoting their autonomy in learning.

As a matter of fact, there is a need to use different instruments, procedures, and practices available for testing this skill which go beyond traditional forms of assessment such as multiple choice, matching, true-false, and fill-in-the-blank tests; cloze and essay exams; to portfolios, self-and peer-assessment, conferencing, diaries and learning logs, and teacher checklists and observations, besides including computer-based and computer-adaptive tests. These forms of assessment have been known as alternative assessment. The following section deals with the concept of alternative assessment, its principles, modes and implementation in language teaching.

3.6 Alternative Assessment: The Need for Learners’ Involvement

As stated previously, assessment is an important component of the educational process through which teaching and learning goals can be realized. Therefore, an increasing interest in improving assessment procedures has been gaining ground, generating a plethora of research studies on ESL/EFL teacher’s assessment practices (e. g, Cheng et al., 2008). The emerging educational trends have emphasized learner involvement in the assessment process to support them to move towards greater autonomy. Indeed, the literature has witnessed an array of negative criticism with regard to traditional testing techniques such as multiple-choice, fill-in-the-gaps, matching, etc. (See for example; Herman & Winters, 1994). It has been claimed that these techniques though they provide information about the product, still the learning process remains unveil as Genesee and Hamayan (1994) stress “... tests can be useful for collecting information about student achievement under certain restricted conditions, but they are not particularly useful for

collecting information about students' attitudes, motivation, interests, and learning strategies"(p.229).

In light of these findings has emerged the need to introduce wider variety of assessment methods or what has been called alternative assessment. The latter has been defined by Alderson and Banerjee (2001) as follows:

"Alternative assessment' is usually taken to mean assessment procedures which are less formal than traditional testing, which are gathered over a period of time rather than being taken at one point in time, which are usually formative rather than summative in function, are often low-stakes in terms of consequences, and are claimed to have beneficial washback effects".

(Alderson & Banerjee, 2001, p.228)

It follows from this that through alternative assessment it is possible to gather information about the process of learning including the factors which can affect its achievement such as learners' affective and personality styles, their learning strategies, work habits, social behaviours and reactions to the course (Genesee & Upshur,1996). As a result, teachers are provided with *"data on their students and their classroom for educational decision-making...."* and administrators as well *"can benefit from the clear information about student and teacher attainment over time"* (Hamayan, 1995, p.215).

Besides, there is a common consensus that alternative assessment can foster intrinsic learning motivation and learner involvement (e. g: Gardner, 1993; Gottlieb, 1995). So, this mode of assessment is likely to allow them to *"see their own accomplishments in terms that they can understand and, consequently, it allows them to assume responsibility for their learning"* (Hamayan, 1995, p.215). Indeed, being part of the assessment process, learners are prompted to reflect over learning, to learn how to learn (LHTL) as well as how to self-awareness and thus get more autonomy in taking decisions out of assessment information to adjust learning behaviours and improve performance. Assessment, thus, has become not only the teacher's responsibility but also the learners. In fact, it has been recognized that being informed of why they are being assessed, what the results of the assessment mean and how those results are going to be used (Brindley, 2003).

Accordingly, alternative assessment is based on assessment for learning (AFL) where assessment needs to *"serve the purpose of promoting students' learning....an assessment activity (is formative) if it provides information to be used as feedback by teachers and their students"*(Black et al.,2003, p.10). The term assessment for learning has been often used for

formative assessment as opposed to assessment of learning or summative assessment which focuses on measuring learning achievement, in order to check quality and compare results from schools and institutions at national or regional level to set standards (Hedge, 2000). So, alternative assessment focuses more on the process of learning, so that it is mostly formative. Self-assessment, as a type of alternative assessment, is the concern of the present study. Therefore, in the coming section one is trying to account for the relationship between self-assessment and learner autonomy in order to clarify more the importance of involving students in assessing their own learning.

3.7 The Relationship between Self-Assessment and Learner Autonomy

As defined in the first chapter of this thesis, autonomy entails taking charge of one's learning through deciding what to learn, when and how to learn. Since assessment is part of this process, "*autonomous learners take responsibility for their learning and this includes taking responsibility for monitoring their progress*" since by "*deciding what to assess, when to assess it and how to assess it*" (Gardner, 1999, p.51). In this regard, self-assessment has been connected with learner training and learner autonomy as a means to encourage learners to monitor and check their own progress (Hedge, 2000). Indeed, it is "*as a form of alternative assessment which supports authentic assessment and causes learners to be autonomous in terms of being a self-learner and a self-assessor*" (Tavakoli, 2010, cited in Naeini, 2011, p.1226). Within this process "*students make judgments about their own achievement and learning processes, and decisions about action they need to take to make further progress in learning*"(Deakin-Crick et al.,2005, p.03).

Furthermore, Von Elek (1985) has referred to the direct relationship of self-assessment, autonomous learning as well as positive washback through describing the benefits of this assessment:

- *It enables learners to assume greater responsibility for the assessment of their proficiency and their progress;*
- *It enables them to diagnose their weak areas and to get a realistic view of their overall ability and their skills profile;*
- *It enables them to see their present proficiency in relation to the level they wish to attain*

- *It helps them to become more motivated and goal oriented.*

(Von Elek, 1985,p. 60)

In the same vein, different authors supporting self-assessment stress that this form of assessment makes students sensitive to their own needs instead of relying entirely on their teacher's opinions (Blanche & Merino, 1989; Oskarsson, 1989, Smolen et al., 1995). This in turn enables students to set reasonable goals and make decisions about further focus and improvement (Smolen et al.,1995). Furthermore, involving in assessing one's learning induced not only a feeling of responsibility, but also stirs once motivation and self-confidence in learning. This is so since, these affective factors are related to learner autonomy as it was discussed earlier (See for example Schunk, 1996; Spark, 1991).

“Self-assessments help learners monitor their level of success in specific learning tasks. A series of self-assessments will contribute to monitoring progress towards specific learning objectives. They can also have a motivational effect. Success breeds confidence. Self-assessment does not always demonstrate success but where it does, even on a small scale, learners' motivation will be enhanced”.

(Gardner, 1999, p.52)

Additionally, since it focuses on learners' development overtime, testers, teachers and students themselves are provided with valuable information about students' language learning abilities and progress. In this respect, Gardner (1999) claims that this mode of assessment provides learners with personalized feedback concerning the extent of effectiveness of their learning strategies and the specific learning methods and materials. Feedback can be implemented to evaluate their approach to language learning, thereby, providing them with *“milestones in the ongoing process of reflection that all autonomous learners are engaged in”* (Gardner, 1999, p.52).

Research has also pointed to the importance of providing such feedback along the self-monitoring process. Sawyer et al., 's (1992) research has revealed that students who received feedback through self-monitoring performed better than those who did not, while McCurdy and Shapiro (1992) showed that students with self-monitoring performed better than those with feedback only from the teacher. Indeed, self-assessment contributed to positive achievement effects as it was shown, for instance, in studies conducted by McDonald and Boud (2003), Schunk (1996) and Sparks (1991). This is mainly if learners are provided with training or direct instruction in how to self-assess (Ross et al.,1999).

Moreover, there is also evidence that self-assessment leads to changing students perceptions about the value of their assessment. Ross et al., (1999) data shows the reasons

behind students' preferences of self-assessment instead of being assessed by the teacher alone. These students expressed that involving them in setting assessment criteria allowed them to understand what was expected from them, enabled them to communicate information about their performance and got information which could be used to improve their work. Besides, its fairness as it provided a space for important performance dimensions such as efforts which were not included in their grade (Ross et al., 1999).

Recognizing the value of self-assessment is likely to gear to learner autonomy since it can make students motivated to engage in this process and more self-confident of their abilities to perform the actions required within. Indeed, as Ross et al., (1999) argue self-assessment opens up opportunities for communication which value students' voice and invite teachers to share control of assessment with students. Listening to students' views, choices as well as decisions in learning while discussing and evaluating their effectiveness and value in groups is likely to boost students' self-esteem and encourage them to do their best to improve.

Hence, some authors like Blanche and Murino (1989) consider self-assessment to be a subjective estimate due to factors such as lack of training in self-study and self-management, peer, group or parental expectations, students' level of proficiency level, etc. This has brought the issue of reliability into question. For instance, Pierce et al., (1993) after conducting self-assessment with school aged learners and comparing the results with the result of proficiency tests of the four skills, they found that self-assessment is not a reliable indicator of proficiency.

Despite such claim, other studies demonstrate self-assessment reliability. Bachman and Palmer (1989) found that there was a reliable self-rate of adult learners' communicative abilities in English. Similarly, Blanche (1990) after studying the speaking ability of adult learners of French in the US that "*the overall occurring of the self-evaluation...is impressive*" (1990, p.226). Nevertheless, one maintains that the extent to which reliability needs to be ensured depends on the assessment's objectives. As Gardner (1999) says: "*Where assessments are to be used for accreditation, reliability is obviously important. It is essential to ensure accurate measurement of standards and hence fairness*" (p.54). Thus, when monitoring progress, certain amount of unreliability can be tolerated to avoid this ambiguity, an ongoing self-assessment needs to be conducted where a teacher randomly check some of the results to encourage learners to be honest and objective in their self-marking (Gardner,1999). It needs to be noted also that, along with students training, teacher training is a requirement for effective, implementation of students' self-assessment techniques (Oskarson, 1989).

It needs to be stated that, in relation to self -assessment peer assessment was also advocated by research. This includes processes which require students to “*provide either feedback or grades (or both) to their peers on a product, process, or performance, based on the criteria of excellence for that product or event which students may have been involved in determining*” (Falchikov,2007, p.132). According to Patri (2002), in a situation where learners are able to assess their own quality and level of performance and those of their peers, it is very likely that they will be capable of understanding the assessment criteria. Therefore, peer and self and assessment are often combined or considered together, since by judging the work of others, students gain insight into their own performance (Brown & Knight, 1999).

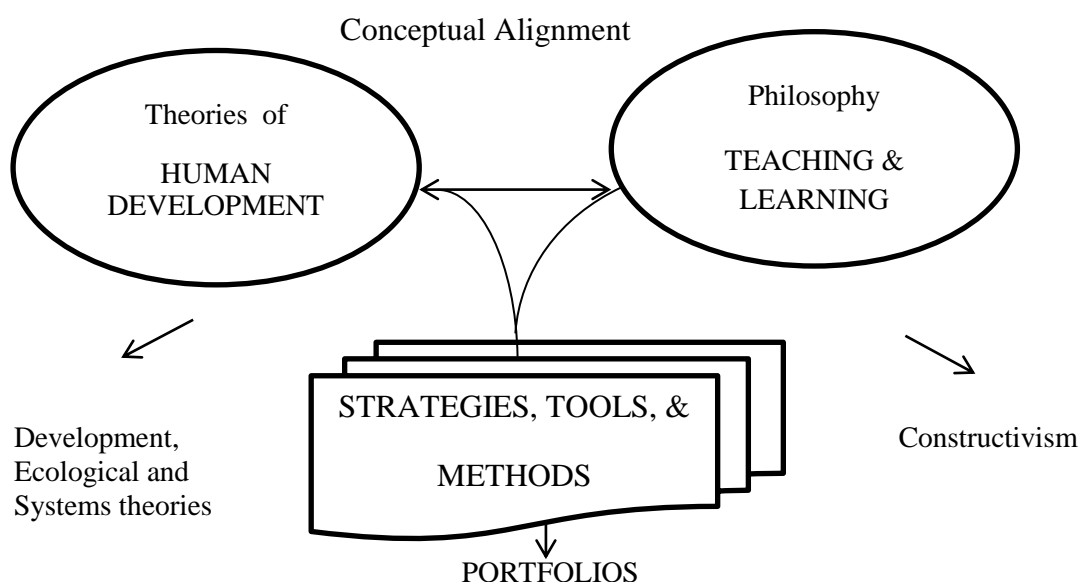
In so far, reviewing the literature has revealed research evidence that self-assessment contributes to students autonomy, motivation, self-efficacy, positive perceptions and learning attitudes towards assessment as well as achievement in learning. Despite some scholars’ claim concerning its unreliability, when properly implemented, this assessment can provide valid and reliable information about students’ achievement. Thus, enabling teachers, testers, current designers and all those concerned with assessment results to understand how students’ learning is taking place and what should be done to improve it. This helps in turn achieve positive washback and fulfill the intended educational goals. Among the self-assessment tool, one has focused on language portfolios which are advocated in the present thesis.

3.8 Portfolio as a Self-Assessment Tool

Since the 1980s, portfolios have gained increasing popularity with the growing dissatisfaction with timed impromptu essay test. They reflect Constructivism or as Jones and Shelton (2011) describe them: “*an expression of Constructivism, a theoretical perspective that embodies a certain way of thinking about human learning and development*”(p.05). How are, then, portfolios connected to Constructivism? As stated in the first chapter of this work, a constructivist stance toward teaching and learning emphasizes students’ active involvement in learning, their own construction and reconstruction of knowledge, thus their continuous reflection, questioning and experimentation along their learning process. Indeed, this teaching/learning approach “*describes knowledge as temporary, developmental, nonobjective, internally constructed and socially and culturally mediated*” (Fosnot, 1996, p.ix). Thus, within this conception learning occurs through interacting, cooperating and negotiating meaning with others.

Therefore, Constructivism as “*a teaching/ learning approach that takes into account the cognitive, social, and affective dimensions of the learner necessitates the use of tools, methods,*

and strategies that go well beyond the standard paper-and-pencil tests and the traditional emphasis on ‘producing the right answer’ (Jones & Shelton, 2011, p.19). In this respect, portfolios emerged as a pedagogical tool with which to engage students. Indeed, to reframe one’s pedagogy (the way we teach), there is a need for bringing one’s theories (the way people learn and develop) and philosophy (beliefs and values about how we should teach) into alignment (Jones & Shelton, 2011). According to Jones and Shelton (2011) the portfolio process has realized the alignments between theory and practice which help achieve congruence and consistency in teaching as figure 3.3 illustrates, besides it “has set up the dynamic, whereby students are called to question their theories, beliefs, and practices” (Jones & Shelton, 2011, p.20).



Figure(3.3): Conceptual Alignment (Jones & Shelton, 2011, p.20)

In fact, using portfolios in language assessment is gaining more popularity and support among teachers, teacher-trainers, learners, stakeholders, material designers, educational boards and researchers (Mitchell,1992). It has been shown that these tools provide excellent opportunities for learner self-assessment (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). For that purpose, considerable body of research has been devoted to find out how to use them interactively to promote learners’ self-reflection and thus autonomy along their process of learning. Before outlining these research findings and stressing the need for learners’ training into their use, one attempts to deal first with defining portfolios, their contents, types and use, then discussing some

of their benefits and the challenges which teachers may encounter while implementing them. To clarify more these learning tools and provide an example of language portfolios the European Language Portfolio is presented as well.

3.8.1 Components, Types and Uses

In their attempt to define portfolio, Gillespie et al., (1996) accept that it *“is a purposeful, multidimensional process of collecting evidence that illustrates a student’s accomplishments, efforts, and progress (utilizing a variety of authentic evidence) overtime”*(p.487). Indeed, portfolio is a collection of students’ work (e. g, notes, writing projects, audio-video recording, etc.) which reflects their development, achievement, interest and motivation in a form of notebooks, box files, loose-leaf binders, scrapbooks (Read-Dickins,2000). Moreover, Collins (1992) describes portfolio as *“a container of collected evidence with a purpose. Evidence is documentations that can be used one person or group of persons to infer another person’s knowledge, skill, and/or disposition”*(p.452).

It follows from this, that portfolios are not mere collection of students’ work, i.e. product. Rather, they are considered as a means through which learners can reveal their learning process and attitudes and communicate their views. This is through demonstrating how their work has been collected, what are their current learning needs, strengths and weaknesses as well. Besides, portfolios are not just organized documentation which demonstrates learning achievement over time, but they are rather reflective tools which clarify learning beliefs, attitudes, evidence and criteria as Jones and Shelton (2011) state:

“Portfolios are rich, contextual, highly personalized documentaries of one’s learning journey. They contain purposefully organized documentation that clearly demonstrates specific knowledge, skills, dispositions and accomplishments achieved over time. Portfolios represent connections made between actions and beliefs, thinking and doing, and evidence and criteria. They are a medium for reflection through which the builder constructs meaning, makes the learning process transparent and learning visible, crystallizes insights, and anticipates future direction”.

(Jones & Shelton, 2011, pp.21-22)

It is worth noting, however, that portfolios can serve different purposes and defining them depends on their purpose and contents. Indeed, they can be used to show growth over time (e. g, Politano et al.,1997; Tierney et al.,1991), to provide assessment of information that guides instructional decision-making (e. g, Gillespie et al., 1996), to show progress towards curriculum standards (Biggs, 1995; Gipps,1994) and to gather quantitative information for the purposes of assessment outside the classroom (Fritz, 2001; Willis, 2000). In fact, it is the type of portfolios

which determines its content and purpose. Researchers have identified different types. For example, According to Haladyna (1997), there are five types of portfolios which are:

- 1) The ideal portfolio: It contains students' all works while there is no assessment or grade for them.
- 2) The showcase portfolio: It includes just the students' best works. It is important for students to select their own work and reflect on them, but this type of portfolio is not assessed.
- 3) The documentation portfolio: It involves a collection of work over time and students' reflection over their learning process. This type provides quality and quantity data since it displays how much improvement has been made and what kind of outcomes are achieved.
- 4) The evaluation portfolio: This type of portfolio includes a standardized collection of students' work and could be determined by the teacher or, in some cases, by the student. This portfolio is suitable for grading students.
- 5) The class portfolio contains student's grade, teacher's view and knowledge about students in the classroom. This portfolio can be defined a classroom portfolio.

For Slater (1996), there are three types of portfolios. The first type is named showcase portfolio in which the student is required to present a few pieces of evidence that show their mastery of learning objectives, while in the second type: the open-format portfolio students are free to submit any evidence of their achieved learning objectives. Finally, a checklist portfolio is the third type which consists of a predetermined number of items for students to complete. There are also other types of portfolios which have been suggested with more detailed descriptions (See for example; Melograno, 2000)

Nevertheless, there are numerous examples of portfolios which show evidence of learning in different areas. Portfolios have been used in early childhood classes (e. g, Smith, 2000; Potter, 1999), with students who have special needs (e. g, Law and Eckes, 1995; Richter, 1997), for writing (Howard & LeMahieu, 1995) and mathematics (Kuhs, 1994). In high schools, portfolios were used in disciplines such as science education (e. g, Reese, 1999), chemistry classes (e. g, Weaver, 1998), English classes (e. g, Gillespie, 1996) and music education (e. g, Durth, 2000). Besides, they are being used in teacher-education and more broadly in higher education (e. g, Klenowski, 2000; Kinchin, 2001). There are also electronic portfolios which have been of increasing interest for researchers (e. g, Carney, 2001; Yancey & Weiser, 1997).

On the components of portfolios, some educators suggest that students have the choice to keep anything they wish in the portfolio but this makes them difficult to review and assess (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). Therefore, Burt and Keenan (1995) state that: “*Portfolios can include such items as reports on books read, notes from learner/teacher interviews, learners’ reflections on their progress, writing samples, data from performance-based assessments, and scores on commercially available tests*”(p.03). Tannenbaum (1996) has also suggested a set of materials to be put in a portfolio which are summarized as follows:

- Audio- and videotaped recordings of readings or oral presentations.
- Writing samples such as dialogue journal entries, book reports, writing assignments (drafts of final copies), reading log entries, or other writing projects).
- Art work such as pictures or drawings, and graphs and charts.
- Conference or interview notes and anecdotal records.
- Checklists (by teacher, peers, or student).
- Tests and quizzes.

Furthermore, Genesee and Upshur (1996) propose that students may choose to keep a portfolio of current work which contains up-to date work and one of completed which reflects previous accomplishments and the progress achieved. They also add that it is necessary to update the portfolio periodically and the inclusion and exclusion of the number of pieces remain a shared decision by both teachers and students (Genesee & Upshur,1996). Yet, though the content may vary, one need to maintain that it should not be arbitrary collected nor haphazardly filled in. Instead, every included piece of work needs to be purposive and meaningful since the portfolios’ main characteristics as De Fina (1992) emphasizes are “*systematic, purposeful, and meaningful collections of students’ work in one or more subject areas*” (p.13). As a matter of fact, the portfolios’ contents need to be organized, besides the way they are assessed and used by teachers and students needs to receive considerable attention as it will be shown in coming sections. This is to get maximum benefits from using this tool in language learning.

3.8.2 Benefits in the Language Classroom

Students’ portfolios have been used as a powerful instrument for formative assessment or for assessment for learning and advocated by many researchers (see for example; Birgin, 2003; De Fina, 1992; Gussie, 1998; Micklo, 1997). Research examining the impact of their use on learning has revealed their potential to allow learners of all ages and kinds to show the breadth and depth

of their learning (Davies, 2000; Berryman & Russell, 2001). What are then their effects on learners' writing ability, motivation, reflection, interaction and thus autonomy in learning?

3.8.2.1 Developing Students' Writing Ability:

In the domain of teaching and learning ESL/EFL writing, research on portfolio assessment have attempted to unveil their effects on learners' writing performance and achievement within this process. Among those holding such concern, one can refer to Elahinia (2004) who investigated the effect of portfolio assessment on Iranian EFL learners' writing achievement. Her research findings revealed that this form of alternative assessment had a significant positive effect on writing performance of the participants (i.e. portfolio assessment group), who displayed as well a positive attitude toward their writing experience (Elahinia,2004). Likewise, Howard and LeMahieu (1995) report that when students in a classroom environment kept a writing portfolio during the school year and shared that portfolio with parents, the students' commitment to writing increased and their writing improved.

Hence, one question that might be raised is the reason why a portfolio assessment can improve learners or students' writing ability in language learning contexts. Since this form of assessment involves reflection and can prompt the use of metacognitive strategies in writing and completing the portfolio, learners can adjust their writing accordingly to varying tasks demands and contexts, developing thus their selection, allocation of techniques, and strategies for successful task completion (English, 1998). In the same vein, research conducted by Thome (2001) found that students' awareness of the criteria of success as indicated for the portfolio assessment contributed to improving their writing. This is so, since such awareness is likely to help learners understand what is expected from them within this process, i.e., it clarifies the objective of the writing task, thereby encouraging them to plan and make efforts to achieve better performance. Besides, involving students in writing portfolios has shown to involve them in the writing process, help them understand their grammar and writing problems, and further address them (Wang & Liao, 2008).

Furthermore, Tanner (2000) says that while there was some direct student learning from portfolio assessment, perhaps the "*greater learning came from post-assessment teachers who created a better climate for writing and learning*", since "*the process learners experience in developing portfolios, and the products that result, allow them, and invite them, to give voice to their cognitive, social, and affective selves*" (p.63). Portfolio assessment is likely then to provide teachers with a more comprehensive portrait of their students' writing ability than any

other summative assessment forms under restricted circumstances (Jones & Shelton,2011). In doing so, teachers can reflect over their teaching, make and take decision to improve it and maximize learning opportunities among their students¹⁸.

However, quantitative research as to the impact of portfolio assessment on EFL students' writing ability remains scarce since most of the literature on the use of portfolios comes from first language writing and there is little literature on it for L2 learners either in teaching and learning or assessment domains (Hamp-Lyons, 2006). Furthermore, the existing literature on portfolio assessment is generally anecdotal in nature (Gottlieb, 2000) and has not been much augmented by quantitative research (Song and August, 2002). Therefore, more empirical research is needed on portfolio assessment effects on ESL/EFL students' writing ability.

3.8.2.2 Promoting Learners' Motivation:

Studies on portfolio's washback have revealed their positive effects on learning in terms of increased learners' motivation, ownership and responsibility (Howard & LeMahieu, 1995). For example, Gearhardt and Wolf (1995) research on a portfolio assessment programme has revealed that students' choices influenced the focus of personal study, ongoing discussions and classroom's work since they become more active in their learning process. Indeed, involving students in self-assessment can help them work with other students, exchange ideas, get assistance when needed, and be more involved in cooperative and collaborative language-learning activities.

It is worth noting that, learners are supposed to present or show their portfolios to someone whose opinions are valuable. This can lead to "*accountability and a sense of responsibility for what was in the portfolio*" (Julius, 2000, p.132). Moreover; researchers investigating the role of motivation and confidence in learning and assessment agree that providing learners with opportunities to make choices is a key to ensuring high levels of motivation (Stiggins, 2006). While, in case these opportunities are absent motivation and achievement decrease (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Furthermore, other research on portfolios has also revealed that having the choice over work samples enables students to understand the content, clarify the focus, understand well the quality product and develop ownership over the work which create effort which are not present in other learning processes (Gearhardt & Wolf, 1995). In doing so, learners can speak out their

¹⁸ For more details on the positive effect of portfolio assessment on teaching read, for instance, Aschbacher's (1993) action research.

voices, practice the target language and pave the way to their own creativity in learning. Additionally, as Genesee and Upshur (1996) state: “*portfolios promote opportunities for collaborative assessment and goal setting with students*”(p.100). Consequently, as Bossert (1988) notes, peer encouragement may improve task engagement, and engaging in collaborative learning tasks causes students to shift intentional resources and get more motivated. Thus, using portfolios can be a motivating engine for learners as well a stimulus for their reflection in learning.

3.8.2.3 Enhancing Reflection over Learning:

Learners use portfolios to monitor their progress and make judgments about their own learning process as Julius’s (2000) research has shown. Thus, portfolios can contribute to their ability to reflect upon their work, i.e., develop meta-cognitive skills. Indeed, Jones and Shelton (2011) claim that portfolio development “*provides not only a means for internalizing learning at deeper level, but also a means for developing and/or refining higher order thinking skills*”(p.25). This is so since, portfolios construction involves skills such as awareness of audience, awareness of personal learning needs, understanding of criteria of quality, the way in which quality is revealed and the development of the skills necessary for the task completion (Yancey et al.,1997).

Thus, when selecting evidence, students are likely to be aware of their choice according to the portfolio’s purpose. The criteria of their selection are explained to the audience and the manner in which they are selected and in which the task is completed become more detailed. As a matter of fact, this personal reflection required in writing portfolios helps students understand the processes as well as the products of learning (Bintz & Harste, 1991). In addition to that, Brown’s (2001) research has shown that this reflection through language portfolios allows learners to realize their learning abilities and discover their personal empowerment. It is, thus, a self-discovery which is likely to enhance their self-confidence as one of Brown’s (1999) interviewee has reported: “*It was a discovery of myself that gave me satisfaction that I have accomplished so many things and I have acquired so much knowledge*” (p.104; cited in Brown, 2001, p.05). Accordingly, reflection is likely to bring about a change in learners’ perspectives and behaviours (Usher, 1985).

Besides, the process of learning by reflecting through implementing portfolios may have a long life standing to include learners’ professional life and thus help them unveil their professional weaknesses and strengths. “*A degree with a portfolio makes you assess your professional life; without a portfolio you just know your academic strengths, but you do not know your professional [abilities] and strengths*” (Brown, 1999, p.103; cited in Brown,

2001,p.05). Using portfolios in language learning can, then, result in meaningful learning which is related to students' professional life.

“We have heard so often from students over the years that they have felt that their college classes were irrelevant and had no connection to ‘real-life’.On the contrary, students who have experienced the portfolio process report a high degree of connectedness between what they do in in the college classroom with what they experience beyond the classroom door. The real-world nature of portfolio work bridges the theory-to-practice gap in ways that result in meaningful learning and change....It comes to be owned by the learner, and therefore it becomes part of the fabric of one’s professional life and development”.

(Jones & Shelton, 2011, p.23)

3.8.2.4 Encouraging Interaction and Supportive Feedback:

The flexibility of portfolios, the in-depth involvement of students and choices offered make them more likely to develop ownership and autonomy over their learning. Also, it has been shown that classroom where portfolios assessment plays an important role are more student-centered, collaborative and holistic than classrooms which rely only on tests or more conventional forms of assessment (Genesee & Upshur,1996). Indeed, Gearhardt and Wolf (1995) research has demonstrated that this engagement has changed the student/ instructor relationship making it more focused, less judgmental and more productive .

In fact, when using portfolios an on-going feedback is provided where students are accompanied by criteria that describe their growth overtime and indicate what is required from them to achieve success. In this regard, Joslin’s (2002) study shows that when students use criteria in the form of a rubric in which they describe their progress towards achievement, they are more able to assess and monitor their own learning and thus identify strengths and areas which need improvement. On the other hand, when using scores alone, students who did not perform well remain unable to find how to improve their performance in the future (Joslin, 2002). In fact, using rubrics and assessing continuously one’s learning involves students’ talk about what needs to be improved, what was done well and how they need to perform a given assignment.

Thus, using portfolios as a self-assessment tool supports learning since it is not limiting feedback but rather increasing descriptive feedback and making it available to learners. In doing so, it is also supporting teaching since it provides teachers with information on their learners process of learning (i.e., their difficulties, needs, learning views and styles) as well as their teaching process (i.e., to what extent is it effective or not?). In this respect, Mullin (1998)

stresses that portfolio provides teachers to have new perspective in education since it can answer questions like: what kind of troubles do students have? Which activities are more effective or ineffective? What subjects are understood and not understood? How efficient is the teaching process?

However, as De Fina (1992) states portfolio's feedback is not just limited to the teacher and the learners involved in its process, but rather it goes beyond the classroom to include school/university administrators and parents as well. Indeed, because portfolio is continuously conducted, involving learners' participation and recording of their progress over time; parents are provided with the chance to reflect upon their children's learning process and the way they are proceeding along, thereby identifying their strengths, weaknesses and the kind of support to be given. Similarly, administrators can in this case cater for learners and teachers' needs and wants since they can be informed about learners' process of learning, the teaching tasks and materials included, the way assessment is carried out and the type of washback effect which it may have on teaching, learning and the institution /school philosophy. Meanwhile, the availability of these data enables them to maintain those conditions necessary for successful change and personnel development related to the use of portfolios (Blackbourn et al., 2000).

In sum, portfolios provide more alternatives and opportunities for assessing learners' performance over time. *"They have been shown to be great means of assessing the learners' achievement, effort, improvement, and self-evaluation"* (Van Daalen, 1999, p.06). Moreover, this form of authentic assessment helps learners reflect over their learning process, interact and get more motivated and involved within. Meanwhile, it allows parents, teacher, administrators, students, and other stakeholders to get an idea about what students should know and expected to do out of the coursework (Gómez, 1999). In so doing, *"they facilitate articulation between teachers and individual students, other teachers, parents and administrators"* (Gottlieb, 1995, p.12). In addition to that, there are also other benefits which are not stated above such as encouraging students to express their learning abilities in personal and creative ways, besides validating their knowledge and skills and acknowledging different learning styles (Jones & Shelton, 2011).

Hence, in spite of the numerous claims about the potential benefits of portfolios to ESL/EFL learners, little evidence is available to confirm whether and how far these claims appear to be upheld (Qinghua, 2010). There is far too little research on the practice and consequences of portfolio assessment with ESL/EFL learners (Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Hedgcock, 2005). Therefore, more empirical studies on the impact of portfolio assessment on ESL/EFL

learners are called for. Conducting these studies can help as well reveal the difficulties and problems associated with their use which constitute critical issues about portfolios.

3.8.3 Critical Issues about Portfolios

Though the use of portfolios can have instructional and assessment advantages as stated above, this does not mean that it will lead automatically to such effects. There are potential problems when using them as assessment devices. Therefore, to make effective use of these devices, research has attempted to reveal these problems and seek for avenues to overcome them. Some of these problems are discussed here. Reliability is among the issues related to the use of portfolio assessment. It has been claimed that scoring a portfolio may be seen as less reliable or fair than multiple choices test scores (Cicmanec & Viecknicki, 1994). Indeed, the assumption that portfolio scores may not reflect the learners' real performance has been supported by research' findings (Herman & Winters, 1994; Geathart & Herman, 1995; Koretz et al., 1994).

According to Gottlieb (1995), when a portfolio is used as an assessment tool, reliability and validity of the contents needs to be established and maintained. Therefore, reliability and validity are worthwhile discussing. As mentioned previously, reliability concerns the extent to which the test scores are dependable and reflect really the learner's performance. It determines, thus, the quality of the test. In case of portfolio, there must be "inter-rater agreement or reliability" which refers to "*the consistency with which two or more judges using shared standards rate the same performance*" (Shapley & Bush, 1999, p. 113). This means that portfolio reliability refers to an agreement on or consistency of the portfolio assessment scores across different occasions or tasks. Yet, despite refined rubrics and teachers' training, it was a challenge to obtain reliability between scorers as it was reported by researchers like Willis (2000) and Fritz (2001). Thus, ensuring portfolio reliability remains questionable.

"The evaluation and classification of results is not simply a matter of right and wrong answers, but of inter-rater reliability, of levels of skill and ability in a myriad of areas as evidenced by text quality and scored by different people, a difficult task at best"

(Fritz, 2001, p.32)

In fact, assessing portfolios reliability may seem a difficult task to achieve because of their nature since they are composed of a broad and varied collection of students' work from oral, written tasks, reading comprehension checks, lessons' reviews, and teachers' observation and notes to formal tests of the students' achievement or proficiency. This view has been supported by Novak et al.,'s (1996) research who note that the difficulties stem from "*variations among the project portfolios models, models that differ in their specifications for contents, for rubrics, and*

for methods for applying the rubrics”(p.06). According to Herman (1996), what contributes to such difficulties is the complexity of portfolio collections.

Hence, Herman (1996) demonstrates through her research that it is possible to achieve high levels of agreement with highly trained professional raters and tightly controlled scoring conditions. Similarly, the importance of extensive rater training was also highlighted in LeMahieu et al.,’s (1995) research where it has contributed to higher inter-rater agreement (.75 to .87) of the Pittsburgh portfolio assessment scores in writing. Moreover, Meisels (1997) using a Work Sampling System reported that summary report, a checklist including portfolio ratings had moderately high inter-rater reliability (cited in Shapley & Bush,1999). Thus, defining assessment criteria is important for achieving high inter-rater reliability.

In addition to the need to define the scoring rubrics and train well raters into the process of portfolio assessment, the portfolio’s tasks or contents should be clearly specified and standardized (Shapley & Bush, 1999). Likewise, Benoit and Yang (1996) recommend clear uniform content selection and judgment guidelines to achieve inter-rater reliability of portfolio assessment. But, teachers should bear in mind that setting criteria of assessment and defining the content need to be “*based on meeting the objectives set forth by the state-mandated curriculum and district mission, vision, and goals*” (Thomas et al.,2005, p.05). This is so since, ensuring scorer reliability is necessary but test developers’ role is also to provide evidence of validity. It is worth stating that validity is “*needed to support inferences that people make about student performance and to determine whether scores represent some enduring or meaningful capability or a generalizable skill*” (Shapley & Bush, 1999, p.113).

In case of alternative assessment since the focus is on the communicative use of the foreign language, it is essential to relate learner’s performance to relevant contexts where real-life tasks of language use are dominating (Kohonen, 1999). As a form of alternative assessment, the portfolio has been found to “*has high face validity because of its ability to assess real-life performance using a variety of quantitative (e.g., ratings) and qualitative (e.g., comments and written reports) assessment tools in several settings (e.g., ward, small group learning, theater, and clinic)*”(Davis & Ponnamparuma, 2005, p.281). Hence, some research findings show weak or no correlation between portfolio scores and other writing assessments (see for example; Shapley and Pinto, 1995). Therefore, there is a need for further research as Hamp-Lyons (1997) says:

“We must conduct studies of the impact of alternative assessment, on the same basis that we apply to traditional forms of assessment. We cannot assume that because alternative assessments start from humanistic concerns they produce outcome that do only good and no harm...”

(Hamp-Lyons, 1997, p.300)

Another problem of using portfolio is very time consuming for teachers to score students' works and to assess students' performance over time in the crowded classroom (Birgin & Baki, 2007). In this regard, Thomas et al., 's (2005) research reveals after observing and interviewing teachers who implement portfolio assessment that time factor was a common voiced problem among these teachers. It was agreed that this type of assessment would require a great investment of time, and that “*any teacher who really knows their students spends many hours after and before school doing record keeping and other non-instructional tasks*”(Thomas et al.,2005, p.05). This is so, since learners need guidance in order to be familiar with this mode of assessment as Kohonen explains (1999):

“.....to become more skillful in taking charge of their own learning, learners need clear guidelines and a great deal of personal supervision. In addition, learners may also resist the new practices, being accustomed to traditional language tests. They certainly need time and encouragement to learn the new skills of self-assessment”.

(Kohonen ,1999, pp.292-293)

As a matter of fact, portfolio assessment imposes new requirements for teachers' professional development or training since teachers need to undertake a set of actions within the portfolio assessment process. They are required to identify the content of the portfolio then maintain control over its use while making sure that each produced portfolio contains the learner own work with respect to the criteria put forward. Also, teachers' support and feedback for each learner are to be available along this process. Thus, time became a critical issue mainly in case of large classes. Within such conditions, teachers are likely to see portfolios as a worthwhile burden with tangible results in instruction and student motivation as some researchers have shown (Koretz et al., 1994; Stecher, 1998).

Furthermore, learners' lack of awareness of the process of developing portfolios and using them effectively in language learning may lead to their reluctance to engage in this process or difficulties in producing and using them. In this respect, Rao's (2006) research shows that students faced problems with information management since they were unable to select and organize well their work because of their lack of awareness. This is because as Nunan (1988) states portfolio assessment supports the twin goals of learner-centred language curricula which are learning communication and developing a critical awareness of language learning. Thus, this assessment form requires learners' active interaction and use of the language, besides their

awareness of the learning process and ongoing reflection over it. So, learners need to be aware of the necessary skills which can help them identify their learning goals, design and modify their action plans, monitor the processes and assess the outcomes by themselves through the use of these portfolios.

Implementing this type of assessment also requires administrative support since experiences have shown that language teachers should not be left alone with the portfolio assessment (Kohonen, 1999). Indeed, Gullo (1994) states that administrators need be convinced of the importance of including portfolio-based assessment in order to be committed to and initiative within this process. According to Batzle (1992), administrators' support implies helping teachers make this change by trusting them and by providing the kind of environment in which they can develop professionally. Their support can also include networking between teachers and parents. Within this view, Thomas et al., (2005) describes the consequences which may be generated out of lacking this kind of support:

“A mandated program lacking faculty support will fail despite extensive training of the highest quality. Administrative mandate lacking faculty support will result in a perception of ‘heavy handedness’, a lack of administrative concern, and a leadership style that focuses on incidental, popular concepts rather than fundamental issues”.

(Thomas et al., 2005, p.06)

Finally, parents are also part of this process, so their support is required as well because they play a major role in this type of assessment and their feedback can help bring successful change to the process (Thomas et al., 2005). As partners within the process, they can cooperate with teachers in its achievement. Hence, they may display resistance towards this change as they are accustomed to their child receiving a letter grade on a report card at the end of a designated grading period (Thomas et al., 2005). Therefore, parents should be made aware of the nature of portfolio assessment from the start through meeting with teachers and discussing its content, purpose and criteria of its assessment.

To conclude, portfolios' assessment remains a challenge for teachers to cope with because of some limitations associated with their use. However, this does not imply denying nor underestimating their benefits in language learning since *“the autonomy students feel, the uniqueness of each student's experience, and the true sense of ownership and accomplishment that comes with the portfolio territory makes it all worth in the end”* (Jones & Shelton, 2011, p.27). As a matter of fact, teachers' attention, planning and ongoing reflection over these tools are required. How should, then, teachers plan and implement effectively portfolios in language assessment?

3.8.4 Approaches to Portfolio Development

Though portfolios have been considered as a dynamic ongoing assessment that aids in stimulating thinking and promoting learner independence (Thomas et al., 2005), yet integrating them into the language classroom has been a debatable issue among language educators and scholars. Besides the skeptical views which have been raised on their reliability and validity as an assessment tool, learners' ability to assess their language proficiency remains questioned as Little (1999) says: *"How, after all, can learners assess themselves with any degree of accuracy unless they already possess the same degree of linguistic knowledge as the person who set the examination paper or devised the assessment task?"*(p.03).

Therefore, to make from portfolios a viable assessment tool and integrate them systematically with instructions, a set of characteristics to their development need to be present. Indeed, there are requirements for this process so, not any collection of learner's work is considered a portfolio nor is any process labeled a portfolio-based assessment. In this respect, Barton and Collins (1997) state that portfolios should be multi-sourced, authentic forms of dynamic assessment, explicit of purpose, establish a correspondence between program activities and life experiences, based on student's ownership, and multi-purposed. This description underlines the purposeful and systematic features of portfolios. In the same vein, Moya and O'Malley (1994) give five features which typify model portfolios. These are:

- 1) **Comprehensiveness:** It provides comprehensive data collection and analysis through using both formal and informal assessment techniques, focusing on both the processes and products of learning, trying to understand learners language development in different domains (linguistics, cognitive, meta-cognitive and affective), including teacher, learner and objective input and emphasizing language development (academic and informal).
- 2) **Predetermined and Systematic:** Each portfolio item has a purpose which is clearly understood by all portfolio stakeholders. Thus, it needs to be planned before its implementation through identifying the content and purpose of the portfolio, data collection schedule and learner performance criteria.
- 3) **Informative:** The portfolio needs to provide meaningful information to teachers, learners, staff and parents to adapt instruction and curriculum to learners' needs.
- 4) **Tailored:** Portfolio procedure needs to be tailored to the purpose it targets, to the classroom goals as well as learner assessment needs. In ESL context, this procedure is designed to reveal learner performance in all curriculum areas.

- 5) **Authentic:** An exemplary portfolio procedure assesses authentic classroom-based language tasks which the learner may encounter naturally as part of instruction, thereby focusing on the communicative and functional language abilities.

In fact, to make effective use of portfolios different approaches have been suggested (Gottlieb, 1995; Moya & O'Malley, 1994) Gottlieb (1995), for instance, describes a "CRADLE" approach to portfolio development .CRADLE stands for:

- Developing collections.
- Encouraging reflective practices.
- Assessing the portfolio.
- Documenting achievement.
- Ensuring linkages.
- Evaluating portfolios.

Hence, as stated before portfolios can be implemented for a variety of purposes. Therefore, researchers like Barton and Collins (1997) refer to the importance of deciding first the portfolio's purpose, then evidence consisting of portfolio and assessment criteria.

3.8.4.1 Deciding the Portfolio's Purpose and Content:

Why is it then important to define from the start the portfolio's purpose? The purpose of the portfolio determined the content as well as the process by which the portfolio is created as Birgin and Baki (2007) state:

"The first and most significant acts of portfolio preparation are to determine the purposes for the portfolio. The purpose of the portfolio directly affects the process by which the portfolio is created. Also, the purposes of portfolio determine what kinds of items should be in it. Explicit purposes prevent the portfolio from becoming busy-work".

(Birgin & Baki, 2007,p.78)

This purpose is shaped by teachers/institutions' demands behind its implementation, so that "learning outcomes can be linked to the institutional (and national) curriculum goals (Gottlieb, 1995; cited in Kohonen, 1999, p.289). To do so, Moya and O'Malley (1994) stress the need for establishing a portfolio development committee which consists of teachers, specialists ESL curriculum, instruction and assessment to determine the purpose for which information in the portfolio will be used, then identify the instructional goals that are relevant to the established purposes. However, according to Gomez et al, (1991), the portfolio content needs to be negotiated by teachers and students rather than set by committee board or building administrators. It must meet educational goals and standards but also learners' interest and individual learning styles (Gomez et al.,1991).

Concerning the portfolio's content or the evidence which needs to be collected, as stated before, portfolio is not mere collection of learners' work, but rather it is systematic and organized evidence which is used by the teacher and learners to measure growth of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Varvus, 1990). Indeed, the selected item needs to serve a particular purpose, i.e., reflect learners' performance, their cognitive, effective and social skills properly. To this end, Barton and Collins (1997) suggest the use of a caption, i.e., a statement attached to each piece of portfolio evidence which describes what it is, why it is evidence and of what it is evidence in order to help them get more awareness of their learning as well as reflection over it.

Furthermore, De Fina (1997) maintains that while deciding the contents of a portfolio, two compelling factors should be considered which are: The students' desires and the purpose for collecting each item. This is so since, motivating learners into the use of portfolios is crucial to maintain their interest and involvement in developing them. Therefore, the portfolio needs to be student-centered where their learning and styles are to be met, while teacher's guidance and choices are offered along. Yet, learners need to interact and communicate their learning evidence through these portfolios.

3.8.4.2 Communicating Learning Evidence:

Not only learners need to be provided with certain choice over the portfolio content but also over the process of using them as Kohonen (1999) maintains: "*For self-assessment to be meaningful, it is essential that there is an element of learner choice regarding the learning process. This entails the idea of at least a partially open, negotiated curriculum, e. g .through learner-initiated and monitored project work*"(pp.286-7). This is because to develop their autonomy, learners need to become actively involved in using portfolios. In this respect, Genesee and Upshur (1996) state that promoting learners' autonomy and interest in learning depends on their use of portfolios interactively, their ownership of them and controlling of the review process. Thus, portfolios "*must be used actively and interactively, and they must be an integral part of instruction and instructional planning*", so that to maximize benefits out their use (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.99).

To achieve this goal, different ways of communicating evidence of learning have been proposed. For example, formal conference settings or exhibitions can be used in this case in which learners present such evidence and answer questions addressed by community members or peers (Stiggins & Davies, 1996; Stiggins, 1996, 2001). This task can be done also at school/at home where learners and parents review the portfolio evidence to display growth or learning

over time (Davies et al.,1992), or it can occur just between teacher and learners in a form of conversation in relation to the course goals (Elbow,1986). What needs to be retained in mind is that this kind of interaction may help learners, teachers as well as parents understand the evidence, the process of learning, the criteria and evidence of quality, besides the assessment criteria opted for.

3.8.4.3 Portfolio Assessment:

A further stage in portfolio development is the process of assessing them. In fact, different approaches to grade portfolios have been proposed. For example, Kuhs (1994) states that three basic approaches can be used. The first is to evaluate each piece of work in the portfolio and average those grades to determine the portfolio grade, whereas the second is based on reviewing several pieces of work in the portfolio thus giving a separate grade for each performance. For the third approach, the teacher gives a single grade for all pieces included in the portfolio thus focusing on different dimensions of performance (Kuhs,1994).

It needs to be noted, on the other hand, that it is important to determine the criteria or standards of assessment before involving in such a process as portfolio is considered “*criterion-referenced assessment*” (Gomez,1999, p.03). These criteria refer to performance standards that determine the degree to which a learner has achieved the objectives each task/instrument which is designed to assess the portfolio (Pierce & O’Malley, 1992). This can help in setting educational decisions (such as pass/fail) as well as instructional decisions (such as selecting appropriate materials, teaching contents) (Pierce & O’Malley, 1992). Besides, teacher’s use of rubrics, checklists and rating scales help them clarify their goals for their classes, evaluate their teaching methods and move towards a more learner-centered teaching model (Gomez, 1999).

It is worth noting that, as a self-assessment tool portfolios involve not only learners’ documenting of learning evidence, but also their assessment and reflection over them. Therefore, teachers need to explain and clarify the assessment criteria of portfolios to their learners. This is to guide them in their selection of quality evidence and help them understand what kind of performance is required from them, thus, improve their learning (See for example, Joslin, 2002; Thome, 2001 for the impact of learners’ awareness of assessment criteria on learning).

However, the question which has been raised is how to set these assessment criteria or standards for the portfolio while insuring that they are valid and reliable for all learners. To cope with this issue “*it was suggested that each individual teacher should set their own criteria based on meeting the objectives set forth by the state-mandated curriculum and district mission, vision,*

and goals (Thomas et al., 2005, p.05). Also, to enhance learner autonomy, the criteria need to emphasize “*learner effort, responsibility, involvement and the ability to communicate meanings, regardless of language errors*” thereby, reflecting both learners’ progress over time and the quality of the learning outcome (Kohonen, 1999, p.288). Since as stated before, assessing portfolio is time consuming, Thomas et al., (2005) propose forming and placing some kind of checklist in the front of each portfolio at each grading period so that materials are condensed within the portfolio into manageable list according to the defined objectives.

Moreover, to reflect learners’ language ability level, combining traditional and performance assessment measures has been advocated so that teachers can get more information and multiple indicators of this ability (Pierce & O’Malley, 1992). Indeed, Moya and O’Malley (1994) call for balancing formal techniques such as standardized and achievement tests and informal techniques which are considered subjective such as dialogue journal, learners’ self-rating, work sample, etc. In doing so, a balance is created between demonstrating learners’ progress over time (i. e, learning process) and their ability to perform a particular task at a given time (i. e., learning product).

In addition to that, Moya and O’Malley (1994) also suggest establishing a system to check reliability and validity of portfolio information. For portfolio’s reliability, they point to the inconsistency in interpretation and scoring since the portfolio may contain both standardized tests and teacher’s checklists and observations. For this reason, they suggest that the portfolio committee needs to determine the criteria to get judgments concerning students’ progress, to discuss in depth and in advance areas where there are varied interpretations of the same information and to perform intermittent checks on the accuracy of teacher ratings (Moya & O’Malley, 1994). Concerning portfolio validity, Moya and O’Malley (1994) proposed three methods:

1. Studying the relationship between conclusions derived using portfolio information and conclusions derived using objective data (e.g., standardized test scores)
2. Studying the relationship between conclusions derived using portfolio information and teacher judgment.
3. Conducting a longitudinal study of the relationship of decisions made using the portfolio information with subsequent student performance.

Hence, according to Gómez (1999) professional development is important to enable teachers score learner’s portfolio more effectively:

“Teachers should be instructed in developing scoring criteria that accurately reflect their course content and trained to use those criteria to score student work equitably. Finally, the professional development plan should provide teachers with enough scoring opportunities to enable them to score portfolio samples reliably and to choose samples of student work that are representative of a specific level of process”.

(Gómez,1999, p.20)

This view has been shared with Gottlieb (1995) who maintains that portfolio’s level of reliability depends on teacher’s training. It follows from this, that teachers need to be prepared to use and score portfolio equitably. Still, effective use of portfolios as an assessment tool depends not only on teacher’s expertise and training but also on administrators and parents’ support as stated before. Besides, learners’ training into using these tools needs to be an integral part of developing them. More support for this training is provided in the following section.

3.8.4.4 Rational for Learners’ Training into Language Portfolios

The last decade has witnessed an array of changes in language learning goals, requirement as well as perspectives. The prevailing tendency is to teach learners how to learn, in order to enable them to cope with new technologies and learning environments. To do so, raising learners’ awareness of the processes involved in learning a language has been considered crucial to make informed decisions about their own learning (Sinclair et al., 1999). Accordingly, to develop learners’ autonomy, this conscious awareness is an important key for the achievement of this process since it involves decision making and taking (Kohonen, 1991).

In attempt to clarify what constitutes this awareness in language learning, Kohonen (2002) argues that language learning awareness covers three interrelated areas which are to be considered for empowering learners to get more autonomous in learning. These are:

- 1) Personal Awareness and Self-Direction: These cover learner’s awareness of his/her learning capacities (strengths and weaknesses), his/her self-esteem and feeling of self-confidence in learning.
- 2) Awareness of the Learning Process: In addition to being aware of themselves as learners, there is also the need to be conscious of the learning process by understanding what it involves, and how it needs to be accomplished. Thus, this awareness involves knowledge about learning strategies which can help them in planning and monitoring their learning process.
- 3) Awareness of Language and Communication: Task awareness is also necessary to help learners communicate effectively through the language. Therefore, teachers need to

provide a powerful learning environment which provides opportunities for learners to understand, use and construct communication skills in context.

From Kohonen (2002) model of awareness in foreign language education, it can be concluded that conscious learning involves active reflection over the self, the language being learnt (its linguistic system and use) as well as the whole learning process (learning strategies). Thus, a relationship can be drawn here between reflection and awareness in language learning. Indeed, learners' awareness can help them develop critical minds which evaluate continuously the learning process through identifying the learning needs and setting objectives and plans to meet them. Likewise, continuous reflection is likely to encourage learners to be more self-aware and self-critical (Stefani et al., 2007). This kind of relationship between reflection and awareness in learning has been labeled by Kohonen (1999) as '*Reflective Awareness*' which is "*a significant key to develop learners' autonomy*" (p.291). According to Kohonen (1999) reflective awareness involves self-assessment as well as peer-assessment.

It follows from this, that introducing language portfolios requires learners' awareness of their use and objectives targeted, so that they can reflect over their learning through these tools. In fact, using them as an assessment and learning tool entails involving in an organized and systematic process where learners' involvement is required along with teachers' clear guidelines and feedback. As mentioned previously, portfolios are not mere collection of learners' work, but they need rather to reflect their language development, efforts and achievement in a given language area (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). Besides, their contents need to be set clearly according to the instructions put forward by teachers. It needs as well to be reviewed and organized continuously, in order to be shared and understood by their teachers, peers, parents and other stakeholders. Also, learners need to communicate their learning progress, give evidence, describe their current strengths and weaknesses and collaborate with their teachers and peers in planning and monitoring their own learning. The criteria adopted for assessment need to be explicitly communicated and negotiated by teachers.

Accordingly, learners need to be aware of what is involved in each step of the process and get prepared to take part in it. Besides, since self-assessment "*needs explicit learner guidance and support, and time for acquiring the new attitudes and skills of self-management*" (Kohonen, 1999, p.289), there has been a need for training learners in using this form of assessment (Allwright, 1981; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Indeed, Riedinger (2006), amongst others, has

stressed the importance of learner training in self-assessment which includes providing learners with practical, explicit explanation and examples. Moreover, for Derradji (2010) learners' training is one among the main aspects of self-assessment. According to him this training is related to three areas which are:

1. Familiarizing learners with the concept of self-assessment through clarifying its nature, objectives and process.
2. Developing learners' skills in relation to a particular language area.
3. Providing learners with the criteria being used for assessment and training them into their use.

Hence, learners' training needs to be sensitive to their various needs, perceptions as well as emotions in learning, instead of loading them with instructions. It is worth stating in this regard, that self-assessment's objective is not to impose reflection and involvement in learning on learners, but rather to encourage and motivate them towards this process (Derradji, 2010). This is so, since these tasks cannot/should not be imposed because they involve learners' willing participation (Cambra- Fierro & Cambra-Berdun, 2007). Indeed, affective aspects are part of the educational process. As Aoki (1999) research has shown students often reveal their feelings and beliefs while evaluating their learning. These differ among students as she states:

"...a sense of self-value arising out of the perception that one is an indispensable member of a group, frustration with a project that came to a halt, confidence about future academic work, satisfaction with and pride in one's achievement, fun.....The need to give emotions a legitimate place in education is increasingly clear."

(Aoki, 1999, p.153)

Therefore, learners' training into language portfolios should not be solely concerned with raising their awareness of this process and developing the effective strategies within, but it should first prepare them psychologically through:

- Providing them with a learning environment where they want to engage, not have to engage (Tosh et al., 2006) and where they can voice their feelings, expectations and opinions via the experience of assessing themselves in learning.
- Showing interest and commitment in it.
- Clarifying what language learning involves so that to change their expectations that language learning cannot occur without teacher's control (Gibran, 2000).
- Encouraging them to engage in the process through showing its benefits over their learning achievement.

- Raising their self-confidence and promoting their involvement through providing them with the chance to set assessment criteria and helping them “*to clarify what they feel are appropriate criteria for evaluating their own learning*” (Aoki, 1999, p.153).
- Providing continuous support and guidelines while listening to their enquiries and difficulties with this form of assessment, besides, showing interest and commitment in this process.

It follows from this that, portfolio training requires time and teacher’s guidelines and feedback along implementing them as Derradji (2010) says: “*We need to remember that unfamiliar ways of teaching and assessment are potentially threatening and confusing to students. It is important to present the portfolio guidelines clearly, and go over the guidelines periodically*” (p.162). Therefore, teacher-students meeting needs to be organized regularly, in order to clarify for them the portfolio content, purpose and assessment criteria. Also, to train learners to use portfolios and reflect over their learning, dialogue and interaction should characterize such meeting since they can improve reflection as Dysthe and Engelsen’s (2004) research has proved. Moreover, being friendly while interacting with learners can encourage social and personal development in them and respect their whole person (Lefrancois, 1997).

However, teachers need to bear in mind that there are differences among learners in terms of willingness and readiness to engage in training and portfolio writing. Besides, not all learners feel comfortable talking about their learning, even learners who are said to be autonomous (Cotterall, 1995). Thus, one needs to state that training learners into using portfolios is not an easy task as teachers are faced with challenges: “*the amount of challenge in the material to be learned, the degree of match of their learning styles with the curriculum and school norms, and the students’ own emotional states*” (Ehrman, 1998, p.104), in addition to time constraint, class size, pressure to follow the curriculum and the demands of external assessment (Cotterall, 1998). Nevertheless, despite such challenges training learners into portfolios writing remains crucial for achieving their objective, mainly with learners who have never used them before. Since as Little (1999) points out, students do not become autonomous learners simply by being told that they are now in charge of their learning. Rather, they need to be trained into this process through using language portfolios continuously along with their learning.

3.9 Conclusion

This theoretical chapter has attempted to shed light on the role of language assessment and its relationship with learners' autonomy. In doing so, it is highlighting the importance of understanding learners' psychology in relation to assessment practices in order to help learners or test takers “*to overcome psychological barrier and make the best use of assessment as a chance for learning*” (Watanabe, 2011, p.29). In this respect, language assessment needs to be used as an effective tool geared towards learning the language, rather than a mere educational goal which is intended to measure learners' knowledge and skills about the language.

Therefore, this chapter has emphasized the importance of involving learners in their assessment process through the use of self-assessment tools such as language portfolios. It is worth noting, however, that these portfolios are not just used for the sake of assessment purposes. They are also used as a stimulus for learners' reflection, interaction and motivation, thus learning through active involvement. The underlying assumption behind their use is that employing them as a reflective tool over learning can help students gain more autonomy, self-confidence and motivation in learning.

Hence, although there is comprehensive literature on the knowledge of portfolio and its development and evaluation but there is constrained information on instructional issue (Meadows & Dyal, 1999; Wyatt & Looper, 1999). Indeed, more empirical evidence needs to be collected on (the possible) effect of portfolios assessment on L2 learner autonomy with respect to writing (Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Hashemian & Fadaei, 2013; Hirvela & Sweetland, 2005; Weigle, 2002). Therefore, the present study aims at exploring this effect on first year English students at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem in the course of Written Expression through providing both qualitative and quantitative data.

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

Chapter Four

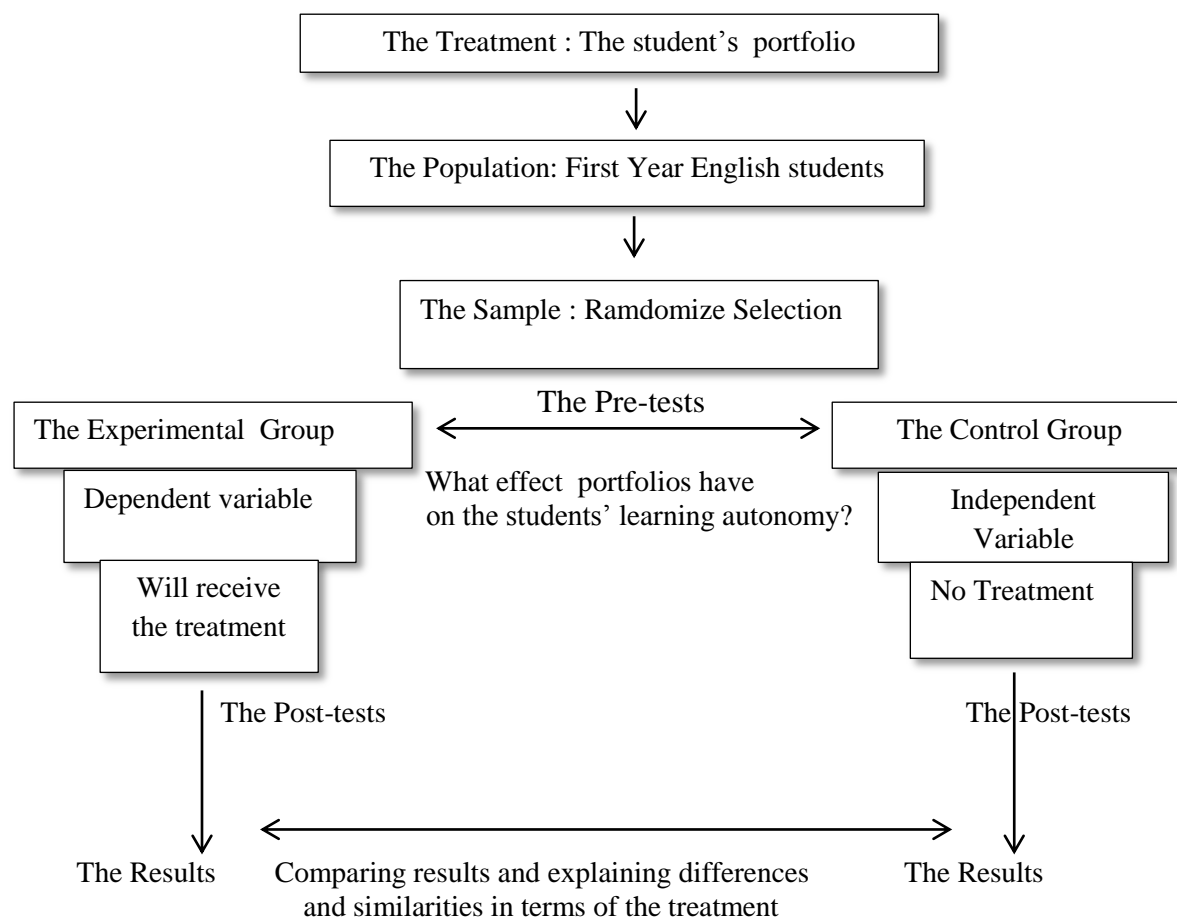
Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the empirical data for this study, which set out to explore the effect of portfolio training on the students' learning autonomy in studying English. The research objective is to investigate such effect on their learning motivation, perceptions and attitudes which are considered here the building blocks of their autonomy. In doing so, one is attempting to confirm or refute the research hypothesis which claims that portfolio training leads to enhancing the participants' autonomy with respect to writing. Yet, before analyzing and discussing the research findings, this chapter begins with a description of the research design, including the content of the suggested student portfolio and process of using and integrating it in the Written Expression course. Next, it provides a description of the students involved in the study, the instrumentation procedures and data analysis methods.

4.2 Research Design

In the attempt to find out about the effect of portfolio development on students' learning autonomy, there is a need to conduct an experimental research so that variables can be controlled and manipulated. This is since experimental research "*is concerned with studying the effects of specified and controlled treatments given to the subjects usually found into groups*" (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.136). The treatment, thus, refers to the controlled and intentional experience which the groups are going to be involved in order to measure its effect (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). In this study, portfolio development is the treatment (the independent variable) which the researcher tries to measure its effect on their learning autonomy (the dependent variable) through the use of control group design where one group receives a treatment, i.e., portfolio training while the other who represents the same population (the experimental subjects) does not receive such training. It follows that, the research method within this investigation is descriptive and analytic since it involves hypothesis testing, thereby describing and analysing a single factor which constitutes one component of a foreign language phenomenon.



Figure(4.1): The Research Methodological Design

The research presented here can be characterized as a mixed study with exploratory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This approach was chosen so that both qualitative and quantitative data could be used to analyse and interpret the effect of portfolios training on the participants' learning autonomy. But, this factor, i.e., learning autonomy is a process which involves changes in performance, learning attitudes, beliefs, interaction, etc., on the part of students. For this reason, the researcher has focused on the students' motivation, perceptions and attitudes to investigate such effect. She has also adopted a longitudinal rather than cross-sectional approach which may help provide a clear description of that factor and explore the changes which may interplay as a result of implementing portfolios in the process of language learning.

4.2.1 The Treatment: Content and Process

As stated previously, the students' portfolio training process constitutes the treatment in the present research which the participants were receiving in Written Expression course during the academic year 2013-2014 from 10th November to 19th May. Before describing the language

portfolio's content and process, there is a need to clarify first the portfolio type, purpose and expected audience. The language portfolio suggested within this context is a learning portfolio which intends to help students 'learn how to learn' through involving them in making and taking decisions over their learning process, assess this process and reflect continuously over their progress as well as their learning needs and goals. It covers both functions: reporting (a form of alternative assessment) and pedagogical functions (a reflective tool to foster student autonomy and learning to learn in foreign language education).

It is, thus, a learning as well as a reflective tool which aims at developing students' autonomy in studying English. The developed students' portfolios were assessed by the teacher/researcher who was the main audience. They could also be viewed by other students, teachers within the same university and their parents. The content of the proposed portfolio was adapted from the European Language Portfolio which includes three sections: The Language Biography, the Language Dossier and the Language Passport¹. More details on these sections are provided in the following part.

4.2.1.1 The content:

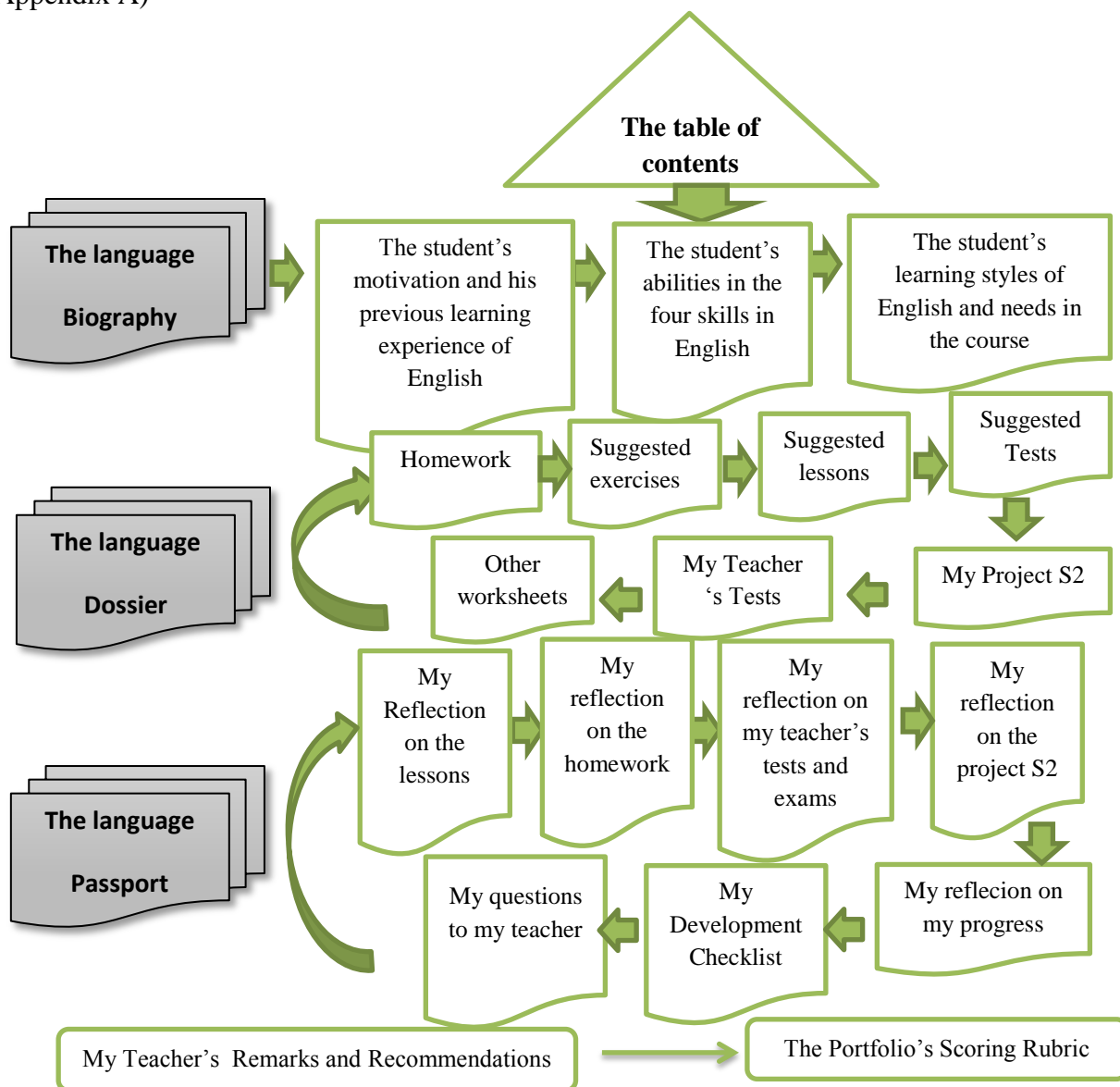
It is worth noting that the portfolio's sections were adapted from the European Language Portfolio by the researcher according to the following parameters:

- 1) The research objective which determines in turn the portfolio's purpose and type within this context.
- 2) The course objective in which the portfolio training process was integrated (the Written Expression module).
- 3) The participants' language proficiency level and learning needs.
- 4) The participants' access to the learning resources required for the development of their portfolios (books, internet resources, etc.).
- 5) The time allocated for teaching the Written Expression course.

Revision and review of such content were conducted on the basis of the collected data of the pilot phase which took place during the academic year 2012-2013 on a sample of first year

¹ More details about the European Language Portfolio can be accessed online at http://deniscousineau.pbworks.com/f/teachersguide_revised.pdf

undergraduate students within the same university department². Moreover, the content of the student portfolio was updated continuously according to the participants' changing learning needs and interests which were gathered via their portfolios, the observations checklists, interviews and questionnaires conducted by the researcher along the portfolio training process. Therefore, during the second semester there were some modifications brought to the portfolio' sections, more particularly the Language Dossier and the Language Passport. The following figure represents the components of the proposed student portfolio within this research.(See Appendix A)



Figure(4.2): The Content of the student's portfolio³.

² More details on the process and the data obtained from this piloting will be discussed later.

³ S2 refers to the second study semester where the students were asked to do the project.

i. The Language Biography:

Its objective is to provide some personal information about the students, their language abilities, their learning styles and needs to improve in this course. This section also attempts to reveal their motivation and their learning experience of the English language, in addition to their current abilities in English with regard to the four language skills. So, the Language Biography is likely to help the teacher to enhance the learning opportunities which they need to achieve their academic success. This section consists of three parts which the students were invited to complete at the beginning of the first study semester⁴.

The first part contains information about the students, i.e., name, age, nationality, qualification obtained, mother tongue language and hobbies. The students were also asked to indicate the language they know and use in their daily life, in addition to those they want to improve to provide a picture of their language abilities. Reasons for deciding to study English were also sought for within this section so that their motivation can be captured. To attain this aim, a space was devoted in this section for the students' depiction of their previous learning experience of English, i.e., how did they find learning this language easy/interesting or boring? Was it a good experience? How was their relationship with their English teachers? How about the marks they obtained in English? etc.

The second part attempts to describe their current abilities in using English in the four skills and tell what abilities they would like to develop in future. Whereas, the third one provides a description about how the students prefer to learn English outside classes to improve it, and also how they prefer to study it with their teacher in class. Additionally, the students could tell their teacher what they want and need to study in the written expression course, i.e., what kind of lessons and activities or tasks they need to study and engage in to improve their writing skill in English.

ii. The Language Dossier:

It contains the student's selected artifacts which depicts their achieved work or involvement in the learning process. It aims to provide them with the space to make their voices heard within the teaching learning process. This is by encouraging them to suggest teaching ideas, lessons, exercises, etc. to their teacher and peers. This is likely to help them understand and practice the

⁴ This means that the Language Biography was completed just once by these students.

lesson. In making such selection, the students are provided with opportunities to reflect, make choices and decide upon the evidence which match the portfolio's objective and the criteria of selection. The Language Dossier section contains the following parts:

1. *The homework*: The participants were asked to include all the assigned homework (whether they are provided in handouts form, or dictated in class) since the latter covered a range of exercises concerning each lesson included in the Written Expression syllabus⁵. They were also given a period of one week to do each homework and submit it for the teacher to correct them and provide her feedback. The latter depicts the student's performance using adjectives rather than marks (Very Good, Good, Ok, Poor, Very Poor), besides the teacher's remarks which clarify more where difficulties lie in case they exist and what should be done to overcome them or praise and encourage the student in case s/he performs well. Concerning the exercises done in class or what is called classwork, the students were provided with the choice to include them in their dossier section.

Besides its objective to encourage the students to revise each lesson regularly, practise its exercises and gain more feedback about their performance to improve and prepare better for their exams, this part also aims at making them more organized students who are aware of the notion of time and its value in their learning process. This is through asking them to write the week, the date and time of their accomplishment of their homework. The latter (most of them were in handouts form) describes as well the tasks' objective, in order to help the students understand what is expected from them in terms of answers. This is also meant to familiarize them with the way objective's statements should be drafted since they were required to do so for their suggested exercises, lessons and tests within this section.

2. *Suggested Exercises*: The students were required to suggest their own exercises for each lesson taught in class. The number of these exercises ranges from two to four exercises for each lesson during the first semester. Whereas for the second semester this number was raised from three to five exercises because it was found that during the first semester all students suggested two exercises (the minimum required number). So, the researcher decided to encourage them to practise more as they got more familiar with this process.

⁵ This syllabus covers in the first semester parts of speech, punctuation and capitalization while in the second semester it includes sentence patterns, sentence classifications and phrases.

The suggested exercises can be taken from books or internet resources. Still, the researcher has recognized the importance of providing them with a sample to follow during the first semester, in order to make clear the criteria of selection and presentation. These are as follows:

- a) The exercises suggested should be related to the lesson.
- b) The lesson' title needs to be stated from the outset.
- c) The exercises' sources must be stated after the lesson's title.
- d) The reason for inclusion or selection must be explicitly justified.
- e) The students' answers must be clear. In case there are key answers, these must be provided after answering while pointing to the mistakes, correcting and evaluating their performance and what is needed for its improvement. The researcher needs to see the actual performance (with their mistakes).

3. *Suggested Lessons*: Within the dossier, the student should suggest lessons for their teacher and classmates. The criteria for their selection are:

- a) Two lessons should be suggested during the first semester and three for the second one.
- b) The lessons should not be part of the syllabus, but they should have the objective of improving students' writing in English.
- c) The title of each suggested lesson, its source and reason for inclusion should be stated clearly.

4. *Suggested Tests*: At the end of each semester, the student should suggest a test of Written Expression for the rest of his/her class following these criteria:

- a) The test should cover the lessons taught during the semester.
- b) The lessons this test covers, its source and objective of inclusion ought to be clear from the outset.
- c) The grading scale needs to be included.
- d) The key answers should be clear.

5. *My Teacher's Tests*: The students were supposed to put all the tests they took in the Written Expression course within this section of the portfolio. This includes as well their correction, the obtained mark and the teacher's remark for their performance. It needs to

be noted here that, during each study semester, the students were tested twice, except in the second semester with the experimental groups where the second test was replaced by the project. These tests covered the lessons taught in the course and were intended to help teachers track the students' understanding of them. The objective of including these tests in the students' portfolios was for the purpose of helping them save those corrected tests and go back to them whenever they revised their lessons, besides reflecting on their performance, thereby prompting them to learn from their mistakes and improve.

6. *My project:* During the second study semester, the students were asked to collaborate in pairs to prepare and write a project. To give a space to their creativity the teacher asked them to imagine situations and write about them. This could be an interview with a famous footballer, movie star, etc., or a story they had created out of their imagination, etc. They could also write a review of a movie they had watched or a book they had read before or report a study they conducted for a given purpose. Indeed, the students had the choice to select the topic they liked to work on. Still, a deadline was set to their presentation and submission to their teacher for correction in order to help them learn how to respect time and plan effectively for their actions. This was fixed for the twentieth study week when they acted in class to present their work using the whiteboard.

The students were encouraged to interact with their classmates, ask questions, answer and debate the topic or issue tackled by each pair. Their reflection on their project and other's was also intended here besides encouraging them to interact and engage in such debate. In the attempt to achieve this objective, the students own selection of the projects' topics was promoted as stated before. Yet, the teacher clarified the objective of such projects which is learning more vocabulary and practising their writing in English. Her support and guidelines were provided as well along their projects' writing process.

7. *Other Suggested Worksheets:* To enhance the students' creativity, they were also asked to add other materials to their portfolios such as proverbs, poems, jokes, riddles, stories in English, etc. Besides, they had the choice to design the portfolio's cover, draw or add pictures in relation to the portfolio content. The students were also handed 'My Personal Dictionary' worksheets which aims to enrich their vocabulary through writing the new words, phrases and expressions which they have learned, then stating whether they were using them in speaking or/ and writing.

iii. The Language Passport:

This section contains the students' reflection over what has been studied and practiced inside and outside the classroom. It also covers their learning needs, goals, their plan and revision schedule. Reflection over their progress and estimation of their feelings in learning are also intended through this section. Also, the students have a space to reflect over their classmate's performance, state their comments and put forward recommendations. In doing so this section aims to:

- Involve the students in assessing their process of learning, so that they become more aware of the progress they are making
- Encourage them to reflect on their learning process and outcome, thus encouraging them to make the necessary plan to achieve their learning objectives.
- Reflect over other's performances, interact and speak up their ideas.
- Encourage them to write and express their ideas and thoughts in English.
- Help their teacher get an idea about their learning process (including their needs and preferences) and progress in the course.

The language passport section consists of the following parts:

1. *Reflection on the lessons:* The students were asked to reflect over the lessons. This is by summarizing what they have learned, describing how they find its content while backing up their answers with justification. Classwork or exercises done in class are to be reflected over within this part. The students should describe how they found them and the reason why they have attributed such quality to them. Hence, the students' learning needs may not be met in spite of the teacher's explanation and the exercises practiced in class since confusion and misunderstanding can emerge. Therefore, after completing both reflections, the students should express such needs in relation to that lesson. They are also expected to reflect over what should be done and how to meet these needs and achieve their learning goals. This is through making a plan, i.e., following a particular schedule for revision.
2. *Reflection on the homework:* This process entails describing each assigned homework and the strategies used while completing its tasks. The researcher has maintained the need to do so immediately after finishing the homework, so that the students could remember the strategies implemented to provide their answers. After receiving the

teacher's feedback and attending the correction of the homework in class, the student can reflect on his/her performance stating whether it was very good, good, ok, poor or very poor, while justifying why s/he performed in such a way.

3. *Reflection on the tests and exams:* The students were asked to fill in reflection worksheets concerning their performance of the tests and exams of the Written Expression module which were suggested by their teacher during each semester. This worksheet shares the same content with that of reflection over the homework. i.e., it requires the students to describe the exam or test which they have already taken, justify their description, then describe their performance and explain the reason why they did so. Yet, within this part they should also state their needs in order to improve such performance.
4. *Reflection on the project:* As stated before, during the second semester one decided to assign a written project for the students to encourage them to collaborate, interact with each other and reflect on their project's performance and others' projects. So, within this part they were supposed to reflect on:
 - The experience of collaborating with their peers through indicating how they found this experience (difficult/easy, they like it or not, etc.), how collaborative each partner was and why they selected such topics.
 - The experience of presenting their projects in class through depicting how they found their classmates' and teacher's questions and comments and their feelings after such presentations.
 - Other's projects, stating how they found them and what remarks, advice or recommendations they would put forward for their classmates.
5. *Reflection on My progress:* By the end of each semester, the participants were given a progress checklist which contains can-do statements (nineteen for the first progress checklist and twenty-nine for the second one) which are related to the course and the portfolio's objectives. The students were asked to use this checklist to record what they think they can do on their own, the things which they feel they cannot do yet (these are their objectives) and those they can do with their teacher's help (or with someone's help). It is worth noting here that there were statements which were changed and others were added to the progress checklist during the second semester since the course content differs. To reflect their feelings and understand how these can contribute to their learning

progress, the researcher gave the participants 'Feeling Good' worksheet. They can write here what makes them feel proud, surprised, great, etc., within their learning process.

6. *The Development checklist*: To help the students keep track of the completion of the required components, a development checklist was designed for them to achieve this purpose. This checklist consists of a set of items where they can check what has been done or what remains to be done within this process. Yet, they needed to set a timeline for their portfolio development process so that they could review the final work by a given time.
7. *My Questions to my teacher*: The students could ask questions to their teacher in relation to the lessons taught or the course content. Questions could be addressed as well about the LMD reform, e.g., what is the difference between each teaching unit or how to compensate between modules. As first year undergraduate students, they are also likely to wonder about what should be done and how to improve their English, more particularly their writing skill.

Finally, after assessing the student's portfolio the teacher indicated her remarks and recommendations in the last part of the portfolio, called '*Teacher's Remarks and Recommendations*'. Indeed, a scoring rubric was used to assess the students' portfolios during both semesters. This was handed to the students from the beginning of the year while the portfolio's content was introduced. More details about the portfolio scoring rubric, their criteria of assessment and the way assessment was carried out are explained in the following section.

4.2.1.2 The process: Training students into language portfolios

As mentioned previously, this language portfolio is integrated into the Written Expression course and it concerns first year undergraduate students at the department of English of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem. To help these students make effective use of their portfolios and thus move from total dependence on the teacher to certain learning autonomy training them into constructing and using this learning tool has been conducted by the researcher⁶. This means that this training was carried out along with studying this module. Thus, the portfolio' content relate to this module's syllabus.

⁶ Since the researcher who conducted this experiment was also the teacher of this module, these two words (the researcher and teacher) have been used alternatively in this thesis.

It is worth noting, in this respect, that training within this research implies providing the students with both knowledge about the process of developing their portfolios including awareness raising (e.g., explaining the objective of each section and its content) and the related practical skills (e.g., what strategies to select to complete regularly their portfolios, how to select artifacts that meet the intended criteria, how to organize the different sections and parts, etc.). To achieve its objective, this training process is based upon the following principles.

- *Motivating the Students:* The researcher attempted to raise the students' interest in developing their autonomy and motivation in using their portfolios. This is in order to help them identify with the process, consider its value to their learning and develop a sense of commitment and ownership towards its achievement. One's concern was also devoted to making from them lifelong learners who can use such tools on their own to learn and develop more professional skills in their future career. This is through
 - Raising their awareness of the importance of being autonomous and the need to develop their portfolios to achieve this purpose.
 - Providing them with the choice to take some decisions concerning the portfolio content and process of use.
 - Relating the portfolio to the course's content while taking into account their learning needs and styles in its design and use so that they can see its relevance to their learning.
 - Raising their self-confidence and self-esteem through providing them with opportunities to voice their opinions, listening to them and showing interest in their ideas, suggestions and taking them into consideration.
 - Checking regularly their portfolios and showing interest in them.
 - Creating competition among the students informing them that the best student portfolio will be rewarded with extra points, in addition to reminding them of the portfolio's mark which can help them to succeed.
 - Involving them in Learning: The students' involvement in learning is not likely to be achieved unless they understand what is required in such a new context. To this end, raising their awareness of how their portfolios need to be developed and used in the course has been considered the basis for this training. The latter has also involved providing them with the necessary guidelines, feedback and support regarding this process such as how to select relevant artifacts, how to plan, identify their needs, reflect, organize the three sections, etc. After this awareness raising step, the students were encouraged to make choices not only concerning

what to include and how in their portfolios, but also what and how to learn in the Written Expression course⁷. In addition, they were invited to initiate new ideas and tasks for their portfolios during the second semester.

- *Enhancing their reflection*: Within this training one emphasized the need to keep from their reflection an ongoing process that mirrors their learning needs and wants. This is by clarifying first what reflection means, how it needs to be achieved and why it constitutes the main element of their portfolios, then encouraging them to engage in such process both inside the classroom through asking them to reflect on the lessons which they attended. Outside this context, reflection was also promoted by inviting them to reflect on the practiced exercises in class, homework, exams, tests, learning progress and projects.
- *Promoting their interaction*: Promoting the subjects' interaction was also intended in this training since student autonomy is not just an individual but also a social construct growing out of interaction with others. Therefore, peer-assessment and collaborative learning tasks were integrated where the student acted as a teacher and researcher who involved in sharing information, negotiating meaning and taking decisions. Playing the role of the teacher, the students were also invited to step on the board to explain lessons to their classmates who evaluated in turn their explanation and provided feedback to their questions.

The process of training these students into portfolio development involves the following stages:

1. Identifying the subjects' readiness for autonomous learning.
2. Raising their awareness of autonomous learning.
3. Introducing the portfolio content and process.
4. Checking how the subjects are proceeding with their use and providing continuous feedback.
5. Assessing their portfolios.
6. Evaluating the process.

⁷The subjects were provided with the choice to select artifacts for their portfolios, to use visual supports and decide how to include them depending on their objective (e. g., to separate between sections/parts, to refer to their feelings vis-a-vis a given process, etc.) besides deciding how their portfolios should appeal (the cover, the title, etc.) Concerning their decisions regarding the Written Expression course, I decided to include some lessons which were not part of the syllabus but the students expressed verbally their needs for them to improve their writing such as verbs/nouns/adjectives/+prepositions, adjectives+ed/ adjectives+ ing, state verbs and action verbs and how to write paragraphs. Besides, they asked for more exercises, revision before exams and working in groups.

i. Identifying the subjects' readiness for autonomous learning:

Readiness for autonomy consists of learners' positive beliefs, attitudes that enhance their willingness to learn autonomously, besides their possession of the sufficient knowledge of and skills in the process of learning which enable them to actually perform autonomous learning (Holec, 1981). It consists thus of psychological and metacognitive dimensions. Therefore, within the present research the aim behind undertaking this stage is to find out about the students' learning motivation to engage in this process, their beliefs, attitudes as well as their knowledge and skills about it in order to create a "*deconditioning process*" needed to prepare them for autonomy (Holec, 1981, p.22). Indeed, these participants were asked about their learning beliefs concerning the teacher's and students' roles at university, their learning motivation, their learning styles in learning English, their awareness of their writing difficulties and knowledge about the strategies which can help them improve this skill. This is through administering two pre-tests to them during the second week of studying: The Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Kashefian, 2002), and the researcher's questionnaire.

In addition to these instruments, structured observations were also used in order to reveal the students' motivation, attitudes and reactions towards the portfolio training and development process, besides the quality of their produced portfolios. These observations have been conducted not only along this process of portfolio training, but also before this process had started. Indeed, the two first weeks (from the 10th to 24th November) were devoted to these observations before the portfolios' implementation. When holding the first conference with them on the 26th of November, the students were asked about their beliefs concerning the role of the university teacher and their role as students. Thus, besides the two questionnaires, observing and interviewing the subjects have supported the aim of finding out about their autonomy and readiness to engage in its process.

ii. Raising their awareness of autonomous learning:

As stated in the first theoretical chapter of this work, empowering learners to get more autonomous in learning requires raising their awareness of their own learning and gaining an understanding of the processes involved (Kohonen,1991). In fact, before introducing the idea of portfolios one should bear in mind that since the students have never been introduced to these learning tools, nor have they been acquainted with autonomous learning approaches before, their resistance to the process is expected. For this reason, raising their awareness of the importance of

being autonomous in learning and the role of portfolios in achieving this aim is crucial within this process.

The awareness raising stage within this study started during the third week of studying, i.e., on the 26th of November. On this day, a conference was held with the experimental group and lasted for one hour and thirty minutes. Holding discussion with students, the researcher started first asking them questions about their feelings, opinions and beliefs concerning studying at university. Then, she moved to asking them about what constitutes teachers' and students' roles within this context. Raising such questions created a debate in class where the researcher attempted to listen to their opinions, questions, and meanwhile understand how these students perceive things. In the light of the obtained feedback, the researcher explained both the teacher's and students' roles, the importance of being autonomous and the need for developing their language portfolios (See Appendix B)

It is worth noting, that this awareness raising stage was taking place along the portfolio development. The researcher was always reminding the students of the importance of developing their portfolios, and showing commitment to their use, so that they get more autonomous in studying English. Observations were also conducted along this stage, in order to reveal the subjects' reactions to and attitudes towards this process. The latter are described in details while discussing the data collection tools.

iii. Introducing the portfolio content and process:

Before introducing the portfolio content, the researcher asked the subjects whether they have used this tool during their previous learning experience. They all answered that they have neither used it nor heard about it before. Therefore, there is a need to familiarize them with the process of constructing or developing their portfolios since their ignorance of its mode may render it a complex and demotivating process. The three sections of the student portfolio were introduced to them during the first conference. The objectives, content, and use of each section were explained. The first section 'the Language Biography' was sent to the students via emails, in order to facilitate its access and encourage the students to use the internet for learning purposes. For the other sections 'the Language Dossier and Passport', they were given handouts which contain their objectives and instructions about their use. It is worth noting, that the portfolio's content was re-explained further during the lessons of the Written Expression course because it was still unclear for some of them.

Moreover, along such lessons the students were also handed samples for suggested exercises, lessons and tests⁸. Besides, they were shown the criteria for selection and the need to justify the reason of their selected artifacts. To stimulate their interest in the process and clarify more what is expected from them within, they were shown samples of the best produced portfolios of students belonging to the previous year (2012-2013). The contents of such portfolios were discussed in groups and questions were raised concerning what needs to be done to achieve similar grades. Meanwhile, the students were told that their reflection on their learning is the core of their portfolios which can help them develop their autonomy.

It is worth noting, however, that the participants might not understand what reflection entails. Besides, reflection needs to be structured to enable students improve the process (Bringle & Hatcher,1996). For this reason, the researcher explained this process making clear its objective and components. Indeed, within this study, one accepts that reflection entails thinking about one’s learning through involving in self-questioning, planning and acting as the following figure shows.

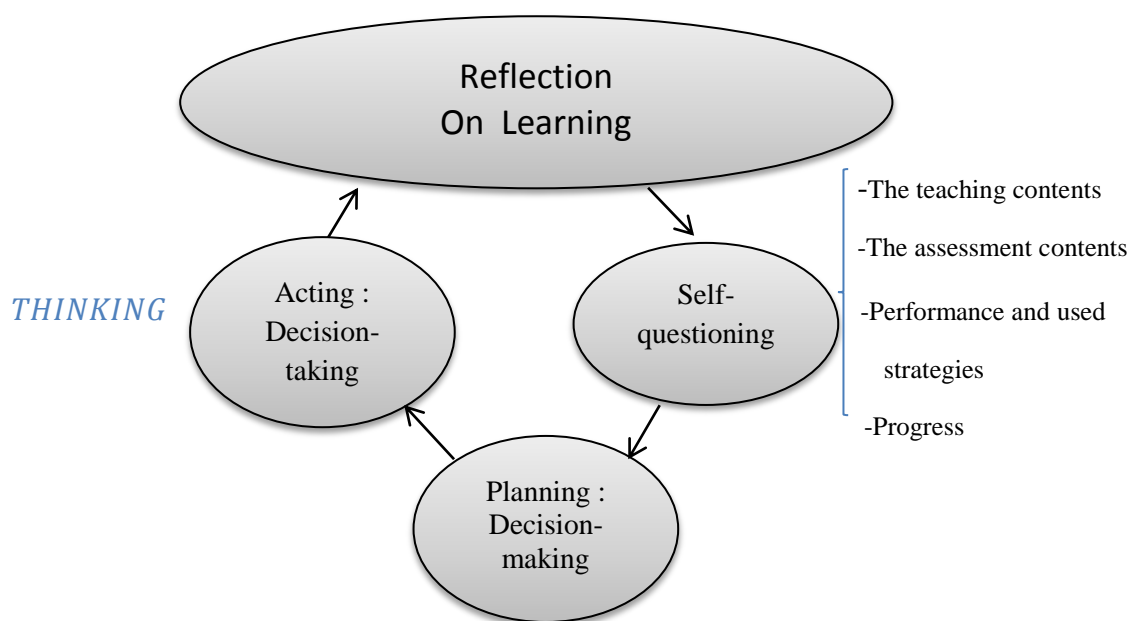


Figure (4.3): A Model Representing Students’ Process of Reflection on learning⁹

Accordingly, one tried to clarify for the subjects that reflection includes an inner dialogue with the self where the learner questions the teaching contents in relation to a particular course, i.e., the lessons, exercises and homework. This is through addressing questions such as: How do I find the lesson, exercises and homework? What do I need to understand it better? Which

⁸ See Appendix A where these samples are included.

⁹ This model is suggested by the author.

exercises do I need to practise more? How to revise regularly for my lessons? etc. Moreover, since assessment relates to teaching and learning self-questioning needs to concern as well the assessment contents including description of the teacher's exams and tests, thereby indicating their needs and concern within a given course. Still, to identify their learning needs, students were told about the importance of reflecting on their performance of exercises, homework, exams and tests as well as their strategies used in completing them so that they can decide which strategies work better. Also, their learning progress can be part of this self-questioning process through determining how much progress they are making, in which language area and what kind of improvement is required.

Furthermore, reflection is not just a matter of questioning the learning process and outcome but it is also concerned with planning and taking actions for its achievement. The former involves making decisions regarding this process in attempt to solve problems associated with it, thus improving its quality. This requires first identification of their learning needs and goals then setting plans to achieve them. In this respect, the students were informed about the need of being organized (do their learning tasks regularly and complete them with respect to time) and the importance of planning for their learning to attain such an aim.

Hence, decision making remains an idle process without actual practice in its intended context. Thus, one attempted to encourage the students to act and take the initiative to put into practise their decisions and plans. This is through selecting and suggesting artifacts to include in their portfolios, writing down regularly their reflection on them, assessing their performance and providing feedback on other's work, collaborating with their peers and assessing this experience. In the same concern, to help them overcome some of their fear and anxiety of talking in front of their teacher and peers, the students were provided with the chance to present whatever work they preferred to share in class in relation to the Written Expression course, i.e., a lesson, a story, etc. in addition to asking them to present their projects during the second semester.

In addition, the researcher tried to clarify more what should be done and how to make the right selection of artifacts, organize and present them well, maintaining meanwhile the need to suggest a variety of exercises for each lesson, a relevant lesson that can help improve their writing skill and a test that covers all the lessons taught during the semester while clarifying the source(s) and the reason for their selection. Besides, to reflect properly on such artifacts one's concern was devoted to making clear the criteria for reflection which are:

- Reflection needs to be kept up to date (regularly done), stating the week, time and date of their writing.
- Reflection needs to be expressed clearly. Thus, the student's use of his/her dictionary is recommended.
- Honest description of the teaching and assessment contents is required. This is through summarizing the main points covered by each lesson, how they found its exercises and homework, in addition to their description of the tests and exams they took and assessment of their performance and indication of their progress after each study semester stating what they could do on their own, with help or what was not yet achieved.
- Each description of lesson, homework, test or exam needs to be justified clearly.
- The students' needs should be clear, indicating thus where the gap lies in relation to the lessons taught or exercises practiced in class. Those needs are likely to get more transparent after taking a test/ and an exam.
- To achieve their needs, the students are required to set a plan to achieve them, indicating what should be done and how along with their schedule for revision of the Written Expression course.
- During the second semester, reflection also concerned their project and others' where they were asked to evaluate such experience honestly and clearly through answering a set of questions as indicated by the researcher.
- For 'Feeling Good', clear and updated description of the different learning situations (with all modules) was required along with their feelings and indication of the date when these occurred.

iv. Checking how the subjects are proceeding with their use and providing continuous feedback:

The researcher has attempted to provide continuous feedback to the participants through scheduled conferences where focus groups were administered to the students as well as along the taught lessons. Indeed, the first thirty minutes of each lesson was devoted to checking the students' portfolios by asking them questions such as: How are you doing with your portfolios? Are there any questions, problems or difficulties encountered with their development? The researcher used to go along the rows to see their portfolios and listen to their inquiries. Along this stage, one maintained the importance of keeping the portfolio up-to-date by completing its

parts regularly, mentioning the date, time and week of doing so. Emphasis was also put upon organization through separating each section, and making clear each part of it. Besides, to reinforce their reflection and decision making in writing their portfolios the researcher was stressing the importance of including pieces that meet the criteria of inclusion and reflecting on them.

Furthermore, she was aiming at helping the students develop a liking for their portfolios, in order to devote their commitment and concern to their accomplishment. Therefore, they were often reminded of its benefits over their learning which could not be attained unless they like this process. Along this stage, one have also attempted to motivate and encourage them to engage more in writing portfolios through praising them for their creativity, use of a particular strategy or good selection of artifacts, besides pointing out to the mark which they would have for their assessment.

As stated above, conferences were also used for the provision of this feedback:

- 1) The first conference on the 26th of November 2013 aimed at raising their awareness of the teachers' role and the importance of being autonomous in learning, besides introducing them to the content as well as the process of portfolio's development.
- 2) The second one took place on the 7th of January 2014 in which the researcher sought to find out about how the students were dealing with their portfolios. She also provided them with the portfolio development checklists, checked each student's portfolio and provided the necessary feedback, besides explaining more the portfolio's content, construction process, and its assessment criteria and informing them of the deadline for their submission for assessment.
- 3) The third conference on the 20th of February 2014 attempted to find out about the students' reaction towards their marks of portfolios, their awareness of their difficulties and reason of shortcoming and their motivation to make further efforts to improve their portfolios. In this conference, one was also seeking for clarifying more what should be done and how to produce the intended portfolios. Besides, new worksheets were handed to the students such as 'Feeling Good', and 'My Progress Checklist'.
- 4) The fourth conference on the 15th of April 2014 concerned checking how the students were getting along their portfolios, especially for the new integrated parts (i.e., feeling good worksheet and progress checklists).

- 5) The fifth conference was scheduled for the 8th of May 2014 and it was devoted for checking the students' portfolios and listening to their difficulties, questions or inquiries in relation to its process. During this conference, the researcher informed the students about the deadline for submitting their portfolios for assessment during the second semester.

In addition to promoting the students' self-assessment through the use of their portfolios, the present research attempted as well to invite them to assess their peers through the process of peer-assessment. This is because, as stated in the theoretical part of this work, peer-assessment can support students in assessing themselves through helping them to practice making reasonable judgements about the extent to which their peers have achieved expected outcomes (Falchikov, 2007), thereby learning how to judge the quality of their work as well. Indeed, within this process the participants were encouraged to assess their classmate's homework and provide their feedback on the basis of the criteria of excellence which were explained while correcting the homework in class.

It follows from this, that this peer-assessment form counts towards providing a qualitative feedback rather than grading the students' performance. Still, the teacher checked the process by examining what each pair decided, listening meanwhile to their arguments for their judgements. Besides, the students were also involved in assessing their peers' projects. This is through reflecting on their performance and writing their comments and recommendations in their portfolios. Their opinions regarding this form of assessment and attitudes towards its process were unveiled during the fourth conference.

v. Assessing their portfolios:

As stated before, to assess the students' portfolios the researcher had developed a scoring rubric. Rubrics "*present a continuum of scoring criteria with descriptions that identify the levels of quality*" (Jones & Shelton, 2011, p.138). Thus, since one's concern here is to assess the quality of the produced students' portfolios a scoring rubric has been developed for this sake. Moreover, providing the students with these assessment criteria and clarifying them from the outset is likely to guide them while developing their portfolios. Using rubrics can also "*provide the assessor with a tool that helps ensure a greater measure of consistency and standardization across multiple portfolios*" (Jones & Shelton, 2011, p.138)

The present scoring rubric is organized using three levels: Excellent, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. Excellent indicates effective selection, communication of and reflection over the evidence, besides thoroughness, high level of organization and appropriate use of the language. Satisfactory reflects a level of accomplishment beyond the basics, indicating accomplishment of most of the requirements. Unsatisfactory illustrates poor selection of artifacts with inadequate or no justification of inclusion, missing or unclear honest reflections, lack of organization and frequently occurring errors in the language.

The criteria upon which the portfolio is being assessed range from content to organization and presentation criteria. These include:

- Artifacts selection: Their support to the portfolio purpose, their organization, variety, clarity and relevance. i.e., they can help students learn, understand the lessons and improve their English.
- Reflections: Their clarity, honesty and completion of the assessment of the teaching contents and learning process and progress.
- The Portfolio: Completion of all sections respecting timelines, their organization and creativity.
- Language Form: The use of grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization rules.

These assessment criteria were provided during the introduction of the portfolio content (during the first conference, i.e., the third week: 24th of November). Explanation of these criteria in relation to the portfolio content was given to the participants. To facilitate the process of portfolio construction, samples of previous students' portfolios were shown. Besides, the researcher tried to encourage them to involve in this process through maintaining its importance to their learning progress and academic success, while referring to their capacities and possibility to produce a good work.

The assessment process took place at the end of each semester after collecting the students' portfolios (one week before the final exam). The participants were informed about the deadline of their submission and they were allotted time to revise them following the teacher's guidelines and feedback. The latter was provided during each last conference preceding their submission where their portfolios were checked. It took one week to assess the students' portfolios in both semesters and carry out as well their evaluation process.

After considering the content of the students' portfolios, following the criteria's weight, a total score was attributed to each and a set of remarks and recommendations were provided on the basis of the achieved work. These remarks aimed at raising the students' awareness of what was missing in their portfolios in terms of content and mode of use, thereby clarifying why they received such grades. Whereas, recommendations address what should be done and how to produce and implement effectively their language portfolios within the present course. Evaluation of these portfolios was also part of this process, so that revision and improvement might be brought to meet the intended outcome.

vi. Evaluating the Students' Portfolios:

Evaluation within education concerns "*the collection, analysis and interpretation about any aspects of a programme of education and training as part of a recognized process of judging its effectiveness*" (Desheng & Varghese, 2013, p.33). It is thus an attempt to gain insight into what is going on in order to judge its worth and make decisions for refinement. Within this investigation, the process of evaluating the students' portfolios included both product and process evaluation. That is, the researcher attempted to evaluate the product, i.e., the student portfolio through finding out which section(s) of the portfolio most of them did not accomplish and those which were completed successfully. In doing so, one was trying to reveal to what extent their portfolios meet the pre-set criteria for their development. Meanwhile, evaluation also concerned the process, i.e., how the students proceed with developing these learning tools. Evaluation (of both process and product) took place along two stages. The first one was done after assessing their portfolios for the sake of revealing:

- Whether the students showed commitment to the process or not.
- What kinds of difficulties were apparent within it.
- To what extent they understood the researcher's feedback and instructions.

Concerning the second stage, it was completed by the end of the first and second semesters (two weeks after giving them back their assessed portfolios) through administering a questionnaire to the participants to fill in. Its objective was not only to look for the difficulties they were facing in developing and using their portfolios, but also to get an idea about their views and feelings concerning this process, including the teacher's explanation and guidance within. The objective and the content of this research instrument are described in next sections.

4.3 The Participants:

The participants selected for the present experiment were four pre-existing groups (=48) of first year undergraduate students who were attending the Written Expression course at the department of English (Abdelhamid Ibn Badis university of Mostaganem) during the academic year 2013-2014¹⁰. As stated in the general introduction, these students have been selected for this experiment because the researcher aims at making portfolios' development a long life experience which starts during their first year and may persist along their studies at university, and can be extended as well to their future profession. In addition to the intention of achieving such a long term goal, the portfolio process requires students' motivation and involvement in the process. Being enrolled in the first year, students are more likely to be motivated to study the English language. Their beliefs and attitudes towards learning are more likely to be shaped by the teacher since they know a little or nothing about the university learning environment. Indeed, this first year is considered important in instilling what graduate attribute means in students' minds.

“..... there is a concern with the relationship between knowledge acquisition and its role in personal and public life. Nowhere is this more apparent than at the point of transition into the first year, for it is in this year that students become acquainted with the 'higher' nature of higher education. This is not just a step-change in intellectual content but also in the expectations associated with being an autonomous learner”.

(Moir,2011, p.02)

To manipulate the independent variable and measure its effects by some dependent variable, there is a need for the control (those who receive no treatment) and the experimental groups design (those who receive the treatment), so that the researcher can compare between each group's performance with and without the treatment. Therefore, these groups were randomly assigned. This is in order *“to reduce the amount of systematic error that might result from biases in the assignment of subjects to groups. It also provides better control of variables that could affect internal validity”*(Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.143). Three groups of students received the portfolio training process (=33) while the other group (=15) was considered the control group who received no training. Still, both experimental and control groups were taught by the same teacher (the researcher) and received the same lessons of the concerned course¹¹.

¹⁰ The three experimental groups were group 1,3, and group7 while the control group was group 2.

¹¹ But this was not the case for some assigned exercises and the project. With the experimental group, the teacher was kept informed about the students' needs, so with some lessons she assigned further exercises for practise and postponed the test. Likewise, the project was used just with this group since they said that they preferred working in groups while filling in the evaluative questionnaires during the first study semester.

4.4 Data Collection Tools:

The effects of the treatment were measured by means of pre-and post- tests, structured observations, questionnaires and interviews. Triangulation, collecting data using different sources (Long,1983) is adopted here in order to confirm the research findings and control the variables within the study, thereby providing more sources of validity. To achieve this aim, these data tools have been piloted before, and so they were revised and modified according to the information obtained from this pilot phase. Before, discussing these findings there is a need first to describe each data collection tool and clarify its objective and rationality behind its use.

4.4.1 The Pre-and Post-Tests

The control group and the treatment group are compared at the beginning of the experiment by means of pretests, and are later compared at the end of the experiment by means of post-tests which are the same (or very similar) to the pre-test. It is worth noting that, “*the control group represents the same population as the experimental group: it is as if we are comparing the same individuals with and without treatment*” so that “*claims for difference in the performance on the dependent variables have both internal and external validity*” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, pp.142-43). Accordingly, the treatment is introduced in the test area and its effect is determined by detecting the change in the dependent variable, i.e., student autonomy in the test area as compared to that in the control area as the following figure illustrates.

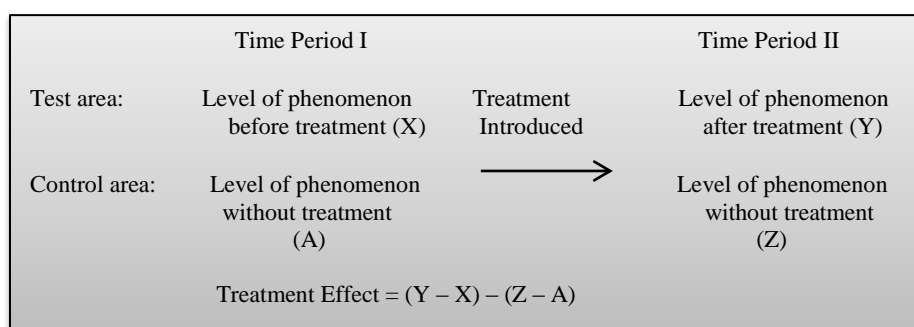


Figure (4.4): Experimental research: Before-and-after with control design (Kothari,2004, p.41).

The pre-test aims to establish “*what the situation is before the intervention or treatment is administered*” while the post-tests is concerned with the effects of such treatment (Griffiee, 2012, p.91). Within this experimental research the pre- and post-tests consist of two questionnaires as stated before: The first one was the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Kashefian, 2002) while the second was the researcher’s own design. Concerning Kashefian’s (2002) questionnaire, it

includes 40 items on a 5- point Likert scale about the role of autonomy in L2 learning (See Appendix C). The choices range from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). The questions ask for the learner's perceptions about the roles of the teacher/the learner, self-evaluation, the learner's goal, planning, ability, progression, and mistakes in the course of learning, all of which contribute to the development of learner autonomy.

It is worth noting that, Kashefian (2002) confirmed the presence of five factors of learner autonomy in this questionnaire: learner independence, dependence on the teacher, learner confidence, attitudes toward language learning, and self-assessment. As far as the reliability and validity of this questionnaire is concerned, the former was measured through applying Cronbach's alpha. The internal consistency reliability coefficient turned out to be .78, showing that the questionnaire functioned well in terms of consistency. Regarding the latter, two experts in the field inspected the questionnaire and confirmed its validity (Hashemian & Fadaei,2013).

Hence, Kashefian's (2002) questionnaire does not cover learner motivation, practices of English outside class, their awareness of their difficulties within a given course, the need to improve and the way to do so which can determine the development of their autonomy. For this reason, the researcher designed a questionnaire to be used as a second pre-and post-post of this experiment which aimed to reveal the above mentioned factors (See Appendix D). This data collection tool consists of twelve questions (seven structured questions, three semi-structured and two open questions) which can be grouped under four sections. The first section aims at obtaining some background information on the subjects concerned to make the reader familiar with their gender, age, nationality and branch of learning at secondary school. The second section attempts to cover their learning motivation in studying English. This is through asking them to describe their motivation level and the reason(s) behind making this language a choice for their graduation. Students' learning styles of this language inside and outside classes and their opinions with regard to the effective way of studying it were also sought for in the third section of this questionnaire. Finally, the last section was concerned with revealing their difficulties in writing (since the present concern is with a writing portfolio), their awareness of the need to improve this skill and of the means and approaches to achieve this.

4.4.2 Observations

In experimental research, observation can support researchers to collect data on non-verbal behaviour, discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs while taking down notes, besides getting

closer to those being observed and reducing the effect of bias in collecting data because of being less reactive than other types of data-gathering methods (Bailey,1994). Indeed, as Robson (2002) says: “*What people do may differ from what they say they do*”(p.310), and observation’s potential is to provide researchers with naturally occurring behaviour. It can be used to gather data on:

- *The physical setting (e.g. the physical environment and its organization)*
- *The human setting (e.g. the organization of people, the characteristics and make up of the groups or individuals being observed, for instance, gender, class)*
- *The interactional setting (e.g. the interactions that are taking place, formal, informal, planned, unplanned, verbal, non-verbal etc.)*
- *The programme setting (e.g. the resources and their organization, pedagogic styles, curricula and their organization).*

(Morrison,1993, p.80)

This research instrument has been opted for as data collection tool within this investigation for the sake of describing the participants’ learning attitudes and beliefs towards developing their portfolios and the training stages they were going through. In doing so, one was looking for their learning autonomy, i.e., were they getting more autonomous or not? In doing so, it was meant to find out about their achievement of the product, i.e., the portfolios and the effectiveness of the training process. To gather more specific and explicit data, structured observations were used in which “*the researcher has determined in advance what to look for in the observed context*” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.163). Thus, as an observational procedure the researcher decided to use observations checklists¹² which is “*a form with predetermined or closed categories, usually listed down one side of the page*” (Griffiee, 2012, p.183). The observer is supposed “*to check a yes/no category, or it can be to check or tick a box on a continuum*” (Day, 1990, p.47). The selected categories for the present observation vary along the four stages of portfolio training according to the researcher’s intended objective within each stage. These stages along with the observed items are described as follows:

- I. Before using the treatment, i.e., introducing the portfolio development and training process: Observations lasted for two weeks (from the 10th to the 26th of November). The observed items include the students’ motivation to study English, their attendance and participation in class, besides their accomplishment of the assigned homework and their reactions towards the teacher’s role and their roles at university as indicated by the

¹² See Appendix E for more details about these checklists.

researcher. These observations were meant to confirm or support some of the data obtained from the pre-tests (the questionnaires) which cover as well these items.

- II. While introducing the portfolio content and process: This took place during the third and fourth week (from the 24th to the 1st December). The researcher observed the students' reaction towards the idea of the language portfolio, i.e., their interest and enthusiasm to engage in this process when first being introduced to it and when shown other samples of students' portfolios, i.e., those who were involved in the pilot study.
- III. Along the portfolio implementation process during both the first and second semester: This started from the 5th week to 20th week (8th of December to the 10th of May). These observations were conducted continuously during the Written Expression course and the conferences held with the participants. They attempted to cover:
 - The participants' completion of the portfolio's sections.
 - Their difficulties along this process.
 - Their interest in their portfolios, i.e., did it persist or not?
 - Their reaction towards their assessed portfolios.
 - Their reaction towards the new added worksheets to their portfolios during the second semester, their attitudes concerning peer-assessment, in addition to their involvement and interest in conducting and presenting in class their projects.
 - Their learning autonomy, i.e., their efforts and involvement in developing their portfolios, their initiation in suggesting ideas for the portfolio's content and process of use, besides their concern with it, inquiry and expressed need for their teacher's support.
- IV. After assessing their portfolios during both the first and second semester: During the first semester, these observations took place during the 10th week of studying Written Expression while in the second semester they were conducted during the 21st week. Here the researcher was looking for evaluating the final product, i.e., the students' portfolios.

It is worth noting that these observation checklists were part of the teacher diary which was also used by the researcher as a detailed report to record continuously the students' learning attitudes towards the training process, in general and their language portfolios, in particular during each class. This was kept in a form of a reflective journal in the researcher's teaching portfolio. It is thus not only a source for descriptive data, but also a source for teacher reflective data (Griffie, 2012).

4.4.3 Focus Groups

Focus groups are a form of ‘group interview’ (Puchta & Potter, 2004), where the conversations generated can be considered as ‘research conversations’. The purpose of focus groups is to promote a comfortable atmosphere of disclosure in which people can share their ideas, experiences, and attitudes about a topic (Kruger & Casey,2000). In this investigation, the researcher used a set of focus group discussions with the participants involved in the portfolio training and development process. This is in order to know about their opinions, feelings about and attitudes towards this process, besides their difficulties and needs within. These discussions took place during each conference where the researcher addressed each of the embodied questions to students and listened to each one’s opinion. Indeed, involving with the students in discussion and debate constituted a major component of such conferences. The data elicited here were taken down in a form of notes by the researcher during these conferences.

It is worth noting, however, that the questions addressed varied from one conference to another depending on the objective of each portfolio training stage upon which such conference was set (See Appendix F). Indeed, during the first conference, the aim was to find out about the students’ beliefs and views concerning the teacher’s role at university, their roles as English language students and expectations from this new educational setting. This is in order to get an idea about how much awareness’ raising is needed to promote autonomous learning. The second conference’s discussion concerned the participants’ difficulties, needs and interest in developing their portfolios so that one can get an idea about how the students were getting along it. Since the third conference was held after assessing the produced portfolios and giving them back during the first semester, the administered focus groups in this case attempted to investigate the students’ beliefs about their performance, their awareness of their major difficulties with portfolios development and what should be done to improve them to meet the intended criteria, besides their interest in and motivation to do so.

Finally, the researcher’s objective from using this data collection tool during the fourth conference was to track their progress with portfolio development while revealing their persistent and emerging difficulties within this process and the kind of teacher’s support needed in this training. Also, questions were addressed here regarding the participants’ views concerning peer-assessment and their written projects, their evaluation of such projects’ progress, feeling and attitudes towards collaborating. It is worth noting that, the fifth conference did not include

any discussion since it was devoted to checking the students' portfolios before submitting them for assessment and evaluation.

4.4.4 Questionnaires:

As Seliger and Shohamy (1989) defined them, questionnaires “*are printed forms for data collection, which include questions or statements to which the subject is expected to respond, often anonymously*”(p.172). This anonymity might help reduce the teacher influence which is present, for instance, in an interview, where the respondent would be known. Indeed, having such attribute questionnaires can help probe data about sensitive issues, thereby enabling respondents to express themselves. For this reason, the researcher has selected these research instruments in attempt to elicit sincere responses concerning what the students think and feel about the portfolio training process including their construction of these learning tools within the Written Expression course. In this research, thus, questionnaires were used as a tool for evaluating this process and obtaining such students' feedback in order to guide the researcher's decisions, plans and practices in this training.

To achieve this objective, the students were handed a questionnaire to fill in at home at the end of each semester. This means that two questionnaires were implemented within the present research context (See Appendix G). Both of them have a common objective as stated previously and share most sections. These attempt to cover the sample's beliefs and feelings concerning their portfolios, through asking them whether using these tools was helpful in studying the Written Expression module and what kind of feelings were engendered out of such use; in addition to the difficulties they were encountering along the portfolio development process — at the level of constructing the three sections— and their evaluation of the teacher's support and feedback during each semester's training, i.e. whether the teacher's explanations and guidance were helpful or not.

However, it needs to be noted that there is a slight difference between these questionnaires since there were some questions which were altered, extended and others were added to the second one. This is due to the evolution of the portfolio training stages and development process which is based upon the research objective. Indeed, the first questionnaire includes seven questions (two structured questions, three semi-structured and two open) while the second contains eight questions (three structured questions, four semi-structured and one open question).

In addition to that, since in the second semester other tasks and assessment methods were integrated within the portfolio training process such as the students' involvement in peer-assessment, collaborative projects and their oral presentation in class; their beliefs and opinions concerning such involvement should be also investigated. To do so, another section was added to the second questionnaire where the respondents were given a series of statements reflecting those beliefs and opinions and they were asked to indicate whether they strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree (the Likert scale). Involving the students in other new tasks in the second semester may imply expecting them to face also other difficulties within the process. For this reason, further choices were provided in the second questionnaire when inquiring about such difficulties.

Besides, in the last question of the first questionnaire the researcher was looking for the subjects' feedback regarding their suggestions for the required teacher's support for a better integration of these tools within the Written Expression course, so that she could bring about the necessary changes to improve both the portfolio's content and process during the second semester. By the end of this semester (being the last semester in the academic year), one's attention was focused on knowing about the students' interest in keeping future use of their portfolios, i.e., are they going to use them again in their studies?

4.5 The Pilot Phase

A pilot study is "*a small scale version or trial run in preparation for a major study*" (Polit et al.,2001, p.467) which attempts to gain additional information by which the major study can be improved through, for example, refining the tested instrument (Wiersma,1991). Before conducting the actual research the portfolio training and development process was piloted on a sample of 30 first year undergraduate students who were attending the Written Expression course at the department of English during the academic year 2012-2013. During this phase, a number of data collection tools were used such as observations, pre-and post- tests, questionnaires and interviews to collect information on the effects of portfolio training and implementation on the subjects' learning autonomy. The aim of this pilot phase is to attempt to assure the quality of the suggested student portfolio, to make it more responsive to the intended objective, i.e., promoting the students' autonomy. This is through assessing the quality of the portfolio's content which has been designed beforehand by the researcher, as well as the training process including the provided instructions, feedback and support for the sample, besides the time devoted to its accomplishment, the way it was integrated into the course and the criteria set for its assessment.

This pilot phase's objective is also to revise the data collection procedure implemented for the sake of getting more reliable and valid data.

4.5.1 The Results

During the pilot phase, the subjects' attitudes towards the portfolio during their training helped the researcher gain insight into how the portfolio content and process needs to be modified. As far as the portfolios' content is concerned, it was found that the majority completed the first section of the portfolio 'the Language Biography' successfully. Their portfolios were also attractive in terms of appearance and their creativity was visual through their drawings, poems and songs' writing, etc. However, though most of them were interested in this process and devoted their efforts for producing and organizing their portfolios, yet their lack of reflection and organization over their contents and learning process were appealing. Indeed, for the Language Dossier section, most of the sample did not justify the reason of including the selected evidence or artifacts. Besides, most of the suggested exercises were taken from the internet and the way they were presented did not prove that the students did actually perform them. It was also noticed that a few suggested tests were provided in most of their portfolios.

Concerning the Language Passport section, the subjects displayed lack of commitment to completing this section because they said they found this process hard to accomplish. Along this section, neither the time, date nor the week of completing an included task was stated which proved their problem with organization and continuous reflection. The subjects were also asked to indicate their study plan which consists of the lessons' objectives, their learning needs and plan to achieve them. The majority did not understand this part and so they either ignored it or complete it inappropriately. Also, when being asked about the strategies they used to answer a given task, they selected them without specifying the type of task and whether such strategies were helpful or not. This may put into question their understanding of these strategies and thus their genuine selection. Similarly, they described their performance of classwork and homework without mentioning the task type and number.

It follows from this that, the portfolio's suggested content mainly the passport needs to be revised. Likewise, since they found difficulties in completing this section this means that the provided feedback and guidelines were not that effective. Therefore, the researcher decided to rethink such content and process of implementation and integration into the course. A set of decisions were put forward for the actual research as follows:

I. The Portfolio's Content:

1. The suggested artifacts need to be more limited, i.e., the researcher should specify to the students the number of selected exercises, lessons, tests in the dossier section.
2. To avoid random selection and presentation of artifacts, there is a need to provide them with a model of suggested exercises, lessons and tests to follow which includes the objective of inclusion and the source of the materials.
3. To avoid copying down ready-made answered exercises from the internet, the students' answers should be apparent with their mistakes. The researcher needs to perceive their process of responding to tasks.
4. The passport parts should be reduced to make this section more concise, simple and thought provoking. This is by:
 - Providing them with simple reflective sheets concerning the lesson, its classwork and homework. Reflections over the lessons are to be completed in class.
 - Limiting strategies' selection just to the homework (not also the classwork as it was before).
 - Limiting describing performance to the homework, tests and exams (not also classwork).
 - Mentioning the resources used to complete and select evidence at the outset of any selection in the dossier, instead of doing it at the end of the portfolio.
 - Assessing their progress using checklists instead of leaving them the space to say anything.

II. The Portfolio Training: Feedback and Guidelines:

There is a need for much more guidance concerning the portfolio's objective, content and development process in the actual research. This is through:

1. Showing the students samples of produced portfolios.
2. Checking regularly the process through scheduled conferences along with the tutorials of the Written Expression course.
3. Providing guidelines through eliciting debate, asking them questions and discussing issues in groups.

4. Providing them with checklists for portfolio development which can help keep track of its progress.
5. Helping them reflect over the lessons and exercises by giving them the opportunity to do this in class then listening to them, sharing this experience with them and assisting them within.
6. Clarifying from the outset the objective of each organized conference for the students to stimulate their interest.

III. For a better integration of the portfolio:

1. Reminding them of the importance of the portfolio and its relationship with the course.
2. Relating the course content to the portfolio's content and process of development.
3. Encouraging the students to express their needs in studying Written Expression in their portfolios and taking them into account in teaching and testing¹³.
4. Including more writing tasks in the portfolio.
5. Integrating peer-assessment in Written Expression course since it is related to the portfolio.
6. Encouraging and rewarding them for making good selection of artifacts, by for instance asking the student to present it in class and providing them with extra points for that.
7. The scheduled conferences need to be in a form of extra sessions and not part of the Written Expression tutorials. Their schedule and objectives are based on the subjects' needs which can be attained from the researcher's observations and interviews with them.

In addition to the portfolio's content and process, the pilot phase has also revealed the quality of the pre-and post- tests implemented. The latter consisted of two questionnaires which were designed by the researcher for the purpose of identifying the subjects' readiness for autonomous learning through finding out their beliefs, attitudes and motivation in studying English. After administering them and collecting the students' answers, it was found that there were redundant questions in one of these questionnaires. So, it was decided to modify and omit those questions to make one questionnaire which can serve one's objective. However, this questionnaire alone may not help control the dependent variable interfering within this study. Thus, there should be another questionnaire of more validity. For this purpose, Kashefian 's (2002) Learner Autonomy Questionnaire was adopted.

¹³ That is in case the students need to practise more exercises on a given lesson they should mention this in their portfolios, I will assign further homework on this lesson. For instance, during the second semester, I planned to test the students but after checking their portfolios I found the majority expressed their needs for more exercises on the lesson which I was supposed to test them on that day, so I decided to post-pone the test and provide them with more practice instead.

4.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves “*sifting, organizing, summarizing, and synthesizing the data so as to arrive at the results and conclusions of the research*” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.201). As stated previously, a mixed methods approach was chosen to gain more in-depth analysis of the treatment effect. This approach “*allowed the validity of the research to be improved, as it facilitated analysis of the issue on a number of different levels, and triangulation of data could be employed*” (Dornyei, 2007, p.45). In doing so, it allows collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. The latter were analysed using statistics which were performed with the Statistical Package for Social Science or what is known as SPSS (version 20), besides frequencies. Whereas, the former analysis was based on categorizing and describing data.

4.6.1 The First Pre-and Post-Tests:

To find out about the portfolio training effect on the participants’ learning autonomy, an independent sample *t*-test was used. This is so, since this *t*-test evaluates the difference between the means of the experimental and control groups (Park, 2009). Before introducing the portfolio training process (the treatment) and after administering the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Kashefian, 2002) to both groups, a *t*-test analysis was conducted on the data obtained from this questionnaire in attempt to find out whether there is a difference or not between these two groups in terms of autonomy. These results are presented in table (4.1).

Independent Samples Test										
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Autonomy	Equal variances assumed	,270	,606	,730	46	,469	,063	,086	-,110	,236
	Equal variances not assumed			,697	24,437	,492	,063	,090	-,123	,249

Table(4.1): Independent Samples *t*-Test for Autonomy before the treatment

As shown above, the significance level (Sig.) of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances is ,606 which is greater than .05, then one can assume that group variances are equal. By referring to the column labeled *Sig.* (2-tailed), the *p*-value of the test is ,469. Because it is greater than the level of significance .05, it can be concluded that there is not any significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups with respect to their autonomy. Thus, using the pretest indicates the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups. Yet, after being trained in using language portfolios, is there a significant difference between the experimental and control groups? In attempt to answer this question, the post-test was administered to both groups and an independent sample t-test was performed.

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Autonomy	Equal variances assumed	3,349	,074	-2,082	46	,043	-,219	,105	-,431	-,007
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,409	39,086	,021	-,219	,091	-,403	-,035

Table(4.2): Independent Samples t Test for Autonomy in the Portfolio and Traditional Assessments

Looking at the output box giving the results of the t-test, the *p*-value is ,043 which is smaller than the alpha level “.05”. This implies that there is a slight difference in the autonomy of the groups experiencing the portfolio and traditional assessments in writing. That is, this kind of training has helped the participants develop certain degree of autonomy. To confirm these findings, the experimental group's data of the pretest were compared with those obtained from the post-test. This was achieved through paired sample t-test as the following table shows. The *Sig.* (2-tailed) for equal variances is ,044. Thus, one can conclude that the treatment group developed some increase in learner autonomy.

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Autonomy - Autonomy	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
				,179	,491	,085	,005	,353	2,092

Table(4.3): Paired Sample t-test for the experimental Group Autonomy Before and After the Treatment.

Hence, there is a need to account for this degree of autonomy which the students have developed. As stated previously, within the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Kashefian, 2002), there are five factors of learner autonomy: learner independence, dependence on the teacher, learner confidence, attitudes toward language learning, and self-assessment. So, the question which remains to be answered is what factors have developed out of portfolio assessment. To answer this question, the researcher has compared the means score of each item of the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire, i.e., the post-test of the control and experimental groups (See Appendix H).

It was found that, no significant difference exists between the experimental and control groups regarding their views of the teacher's role. Indeed, in spite of the awareness-raising process the experiment group's views of this role were still reflecting their dependence on their teacher. Indeed, these students seemed to agree with the control group that the teacher should help them, tell them their difficulties, how long they should spend on an activity, how to learn effectively, how they are progressing besides giving them regular tests and considering him/her the one who knows best how well they are. Similarly, beliefs were also shared regarding their role as students. Both groups limited their learning success to the classroom context. Yet, they recognized that mistakes are part of their learning process and saw the value of peer-evaluation. Besides, their ability to write accurately was denied thereby reflecting the need to improve. Their self-confidence was apparent when they agreed that they had the ability to learn the language successfully and get the targeted score.

On the other hand, a significant difference was captured between these two groups when it comes to self-assessment. The t-test results showed that the value for equal variances is .000. for the following items: I have the ability to check my work for mistakes, I know how to plan for my learning, I know how to find an effective way to learn English, and I have my own ways of

testing how much I have learned. Other attitudes were not also shared between the control and experimental groups since their p-value was smaller than ,005. These are: I know how to set my learning goals (,005), I know how my language learning progresses (,008), I know how to study languages well (,001), and I know best how well I learn (,005).

It follows from this, that there are some learning attitudes which have been developed by the experimental group as a result of portfolio assessment. These relate to their self-assessment of the learning process. Yet, their beliefs regarding the teacher and student's roles were still reflecting teacher-centered pedagogy. To know more about these attitudes and other effects which might not have revealed through the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Kashefian, 2002), other data tools were used among them the second pre and post-tests.

4.6.2 The Second Pre- and Post-Tests:

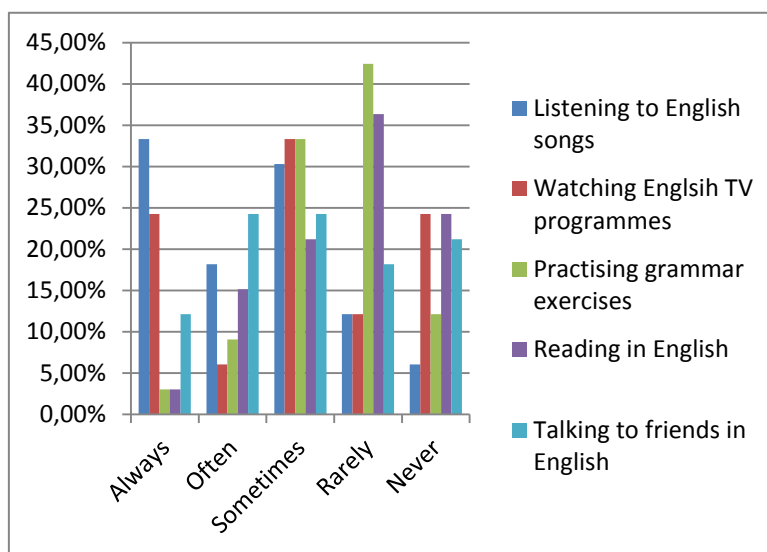
This questionnaire which was designed by the researcher intended to obtain more background information about the students in both the experimental and control groups through revealing their age, nationality, gender, and branch of secondary school. Also, these data collection tools addressed questions in relation to their learning motivation, practices of English outside class, their learning attitudes inside class and perceptions regarding their role, the teacher's role and the effective way to study English. This is in order to detect the changes which can affect these factors as a result of portfolio training and use within the course. The data gathered from the experimental and control group are presented respectively in order to compare them and detect the treatment effect.

4.6.2.1 The Experimental Group Second Pretest Results:

As for the descriptive statistics of the experimental group, 66.66% of the respondents were female and 33.33% male. Their ages were ranging from 19 to 21 years old. Most of them were Algerian, except 4 Malien, 2 Ivorien and 2 Congolian. The majority belong to the Foreign Language study stream. Since motivation is a necessary condition for the development of their autonomy, the subjects were asked whether they were highly motivated, motivated, or not motivated at all to study the English language. 51.51% stated that they were motivated, 39.39% highly motivated, and only 09.09% were not at all motivated. To seek for the sources that could lie behind their motivation, question six was addressed regarding the motives behind their choice of studying English. The results show that teaching English was the intention of 36.36% of the respondents, 24.24% planned to go abroad to carry on their studies and 21.21% were thinking about working for companies. There were also 18.18% who expressed their interest in knowing

the British or/ the American culture. But, for some other students (27.27%) the objective of selecting English was not yet clear for them.

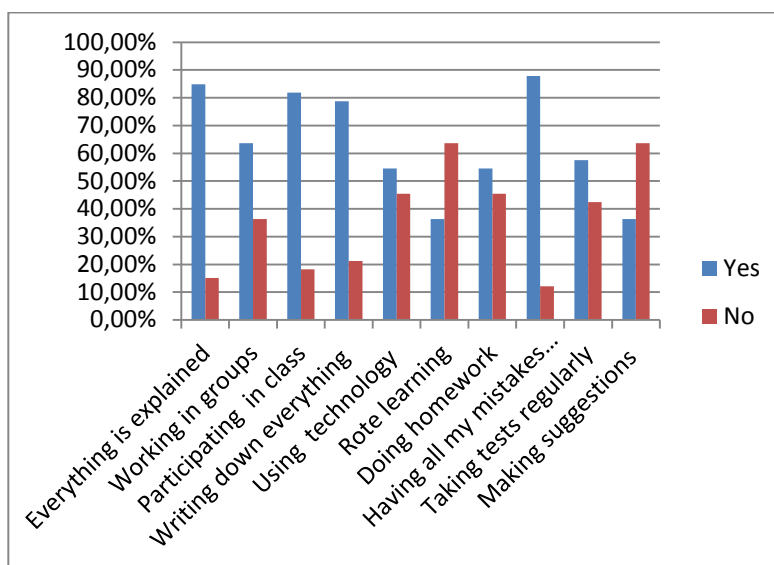
In addition to student motivation, their practices of English outside class and their learning attitudes within were also a major concern of the present questionnaire. In effect, the researcher was attempting to find out whether the students had any contact with the English language outside class, i.e., do they listen to English songs, watch TV programmes in English, practise grammar exercises, read books and talk to their friends in English, or practise this language using other tasks and how often were these integrated in their daily practices? As the graph below reveals, listening to English songs was the highest practised activity among the participants (33.33%, always; 18.18%, often; 30.30%, sometimes). The second rate was watching TV programmes in English (24.24% always), then talking to their friends in English (12.12%, always; 24.24%, often). However, reading books and practising grammar exercises were not frequently practiced.



Figure(4.5):The experimental group practice of English outside class

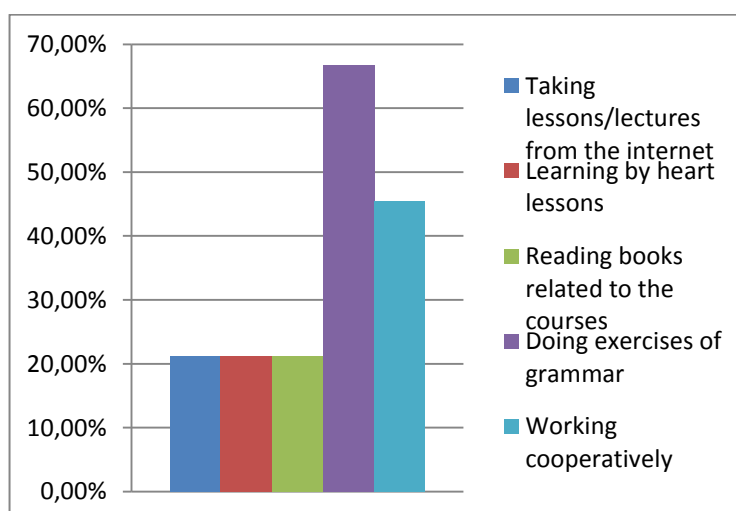
Inside the language classroom, most of the participants (84.84%) preferred the teacher to explain everything to them, while their attention is focused on writing down every word s/he said about the lesson as pointed out by 78.78%. Likewise, the majority wanted their teacher to correct all their mistakes (by 87.87%) and involve them in collaborative tasks (by 63.63%). On the other hand, 45.45% of them opposed teacher’s use of technology in class and preferred tasks that require reciting information and no thinking. Nevertheless, assigning homework was favoured by 54.54% while taking regularly tests was disapproved by 57.57% of the students.

Besides, though a large number (81.81%) liked to participate and ask questions in class, only 36.36% preferred making suggestions to their teacher, i.e., bringing other exercises, ideas or lessons to their class.



Figure(4.6):The experimental group Learning attitudes inside class

Furthermore, to investigate the students' opinions concerning how to study English more effectively, question eight was asked where a set of choices were provided. The data collected revealed that 66.66% of them consider doing grammar exercises as the most effective way to study this language, while 45.45% selected working cooperatively with friends and only 21.21% recognized the value of reading books within this process. Yet, taking lectures or lessons from the internet and learning them by heart were relatively selected by a minority (21.21%).



Figure(4.7):The experimental group effective way to study English

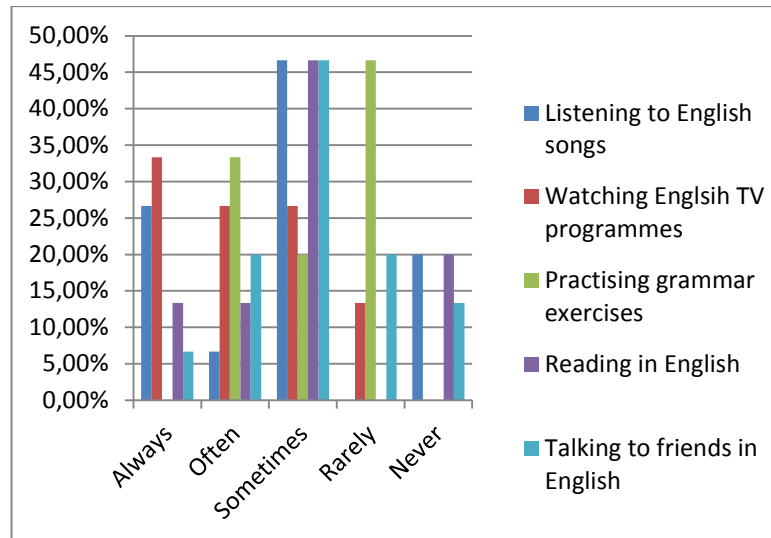
With regard to the students' awareness of their writing difficulties in English, 96.96% admitted that they need to improve this language skill. 48.48% referred to having a limited repertoire of vocabulary. Difficulties with grammar mostly with using the right tenses was also reported by 39.39% of the respondents while only 18.18% pointed out to difficulties in expressing their ideas in English and just 09.09% attributed it to spelling. Other difficulties were also provided here such as understanding questions as indicated by one student, pronunciation problems which contribute to misspelling of words as written by another one and having all difficulties as claimed by another respondent. The collected data has also shown that there was just one student who reported that he did not know about his difficulties.

In turn, when they were asked about what they were doing to overcome such difficulties few answers were given here. 36.36% of them read books and magazines, 15.15% used dictionaries and practiced grammar exercises. Other solutions were suggested by some others such as listening to music by 12.12%, watching TV programmes in English and writing by 09.09%, besides working collaboratively was reported by 06.06%. It is worth noting that 30.30% of the students confessed that they are doing nothing vis-à-vis their difficulties since they did not know what should be done in such case.

4.6.2.2 The Control Group Second Pretest Results:

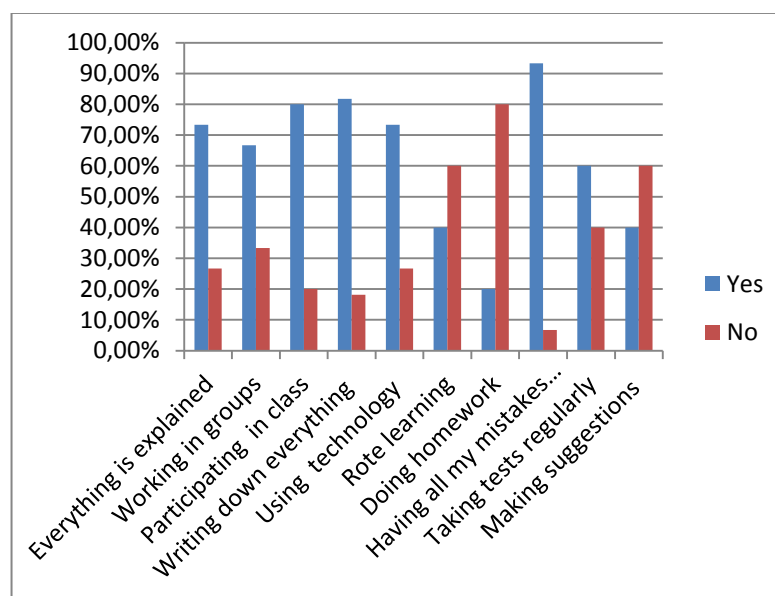
This group of students consists of 60% female and 40% male who were between 19 to 23 years old. They are all Algerian except one student from Burkina Faso. Like the experimental group, the majority were from the Foreign language study stream. Concerning their motivation, 60% described it as high, 33.33% stated that they were motivated and only 6.66% said they were not motivated at all. Teaching English and working for companies were equally common reasons for studying English among the students of the control group as pointed out by 40% of them. Their interest in the British/and American culture was shared by 20% while going abroad was the choice of only one student. There were also 20% of the respondents who claimed that they did not know the reason of selecting this discipline.

Additionally, collecting answers to question seven showed a lack of occurrence of the suggested tasks. Indeed, only 26.66% indicated they always listened to English songs and 46.66% said they sometimes did so. Moreover, 33.33% watched always TV programmes in English and practise often grammar exercises. Whereas, just 13.33% read often books in English and 20% talked to their friends in this language.



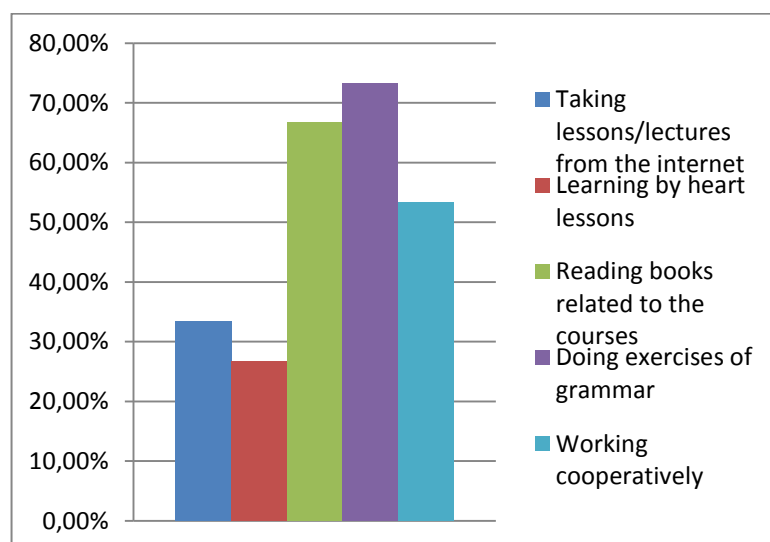
Figure(4.8):The control group practice of English outside class

As far as their learning attitudes inside class are concerned, it was found that most of the participants (73.33%) preferred the kind of teacher who explains everything. Similarly, 93.33% liked him/her to correct all their mistakes and 66.66% approved being involved in collaborative tasks. Unlike the experimental group answers, these students displayed their liking for technology based learning as declared by 73.33%. Also, 60% of their replies support being given regular tests. Hence, assigning homework was opposed by the majority (80%). Besides, though a large number of students (80%) liked participating in class, making initiative was agreed by 40% while 60% were against it. Still, these students seemed to dislike rote learning and memorization because 60% of them mentioned they liked to be engaged in tasks that require their reflection.



Figure(4.9):The control group learning attitudes inside class

In question eight, the participants were asked about the better way to study English, 73.33% referred to the need to practise grammar exercises, 53.33% considered working collaboratively with their friends and 46.66% saw the need for reading books related to the courses. Yet, only 33.33% selected taking lessons/lectures from the internet and 26.66% opted for learning by heart lessons. In the same vein, the majority (86.66%) voiced that their writing in English needs to improve. For the kind of difficulties they were encountering within this skill, the subjects referred to grammar, pronunciation and difficulties to express their ideas in this language. Indeed, 26.66% opted for grammar, 20% for spelling, 13.33% for expressing their ideas and only 06.66% attributed them to pronunciation. Still, 40% of them wrote that they did not know about what difficulties they had in this language area. As for the group's strategies to overcome their writing difficulties, 40% chose reading books and 20% stated they practiced writing paragraphs about given topics. Whereas, 40% wrote they were doing nothing in this respect.



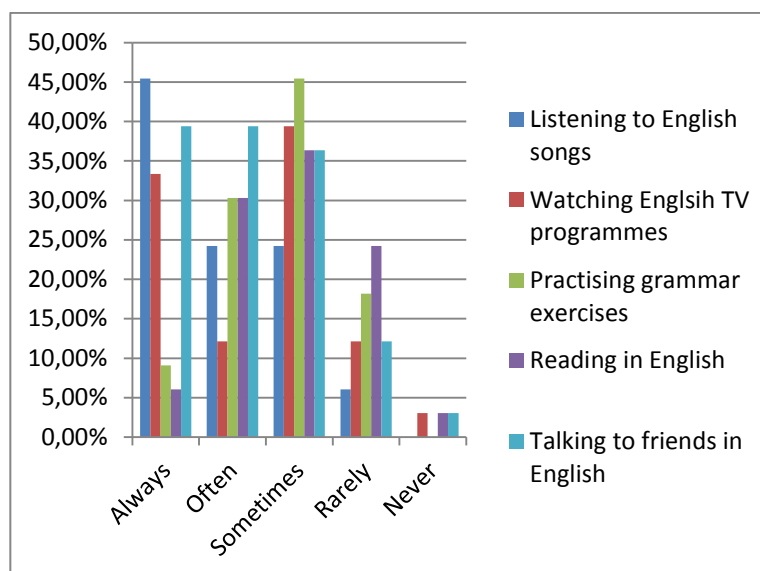
Figure(4.10):The control group effective way to study English

4.6.2.3 The Experimental Group Second Post-test Results

Since this post-test was administered to the same population in both the experimental and control groups, background information about them did not differ from those already gathered through the pretest questionnaire. Yet, their motivation might have changed from the pretest. In this respect, their answers show that 66.66% of them were motivated to study English, while just 33.33% were highly motivated. No answer was collected for the choice 'not motivated at all'. When asked about the reasons of studying English, the majority (63.63%) of the students selected teaching English. The other alternatives' rates were: working for a company (24.24%),

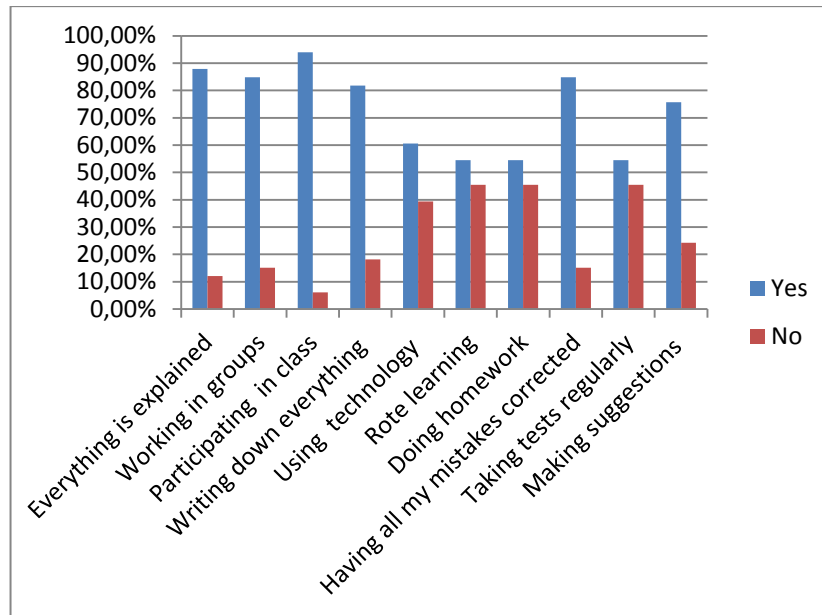
going abroad (27.27%) and 21.21% for those interested in the British culture. But, no student indicated that s/he did not know the reason.

In the area of practice of English, listening to English songs outside class was the most frequently practiced activity (45.45% , always; 24.24%, often). Watching TV programmes in English is in the second position as pointed out by 45.45% of the respondents (33.33, always; 12.12%, often). Whereas, some students preferred doing grammar exercises (9.09%, always; 30.30%, often), reading books (6.06%, always; 30.30%, often), and chatting to friends in English (39.39%, often). Inside class, a large group of respondents (87.87%) wanted their teacher to explain everything to them. Likewise, 84.84% wanted all their mistakes to be corrected, 81.81% of them stated that they preferred writing everything that teacher said about the lesson and 84.84% approved working in groups with their peers in class.

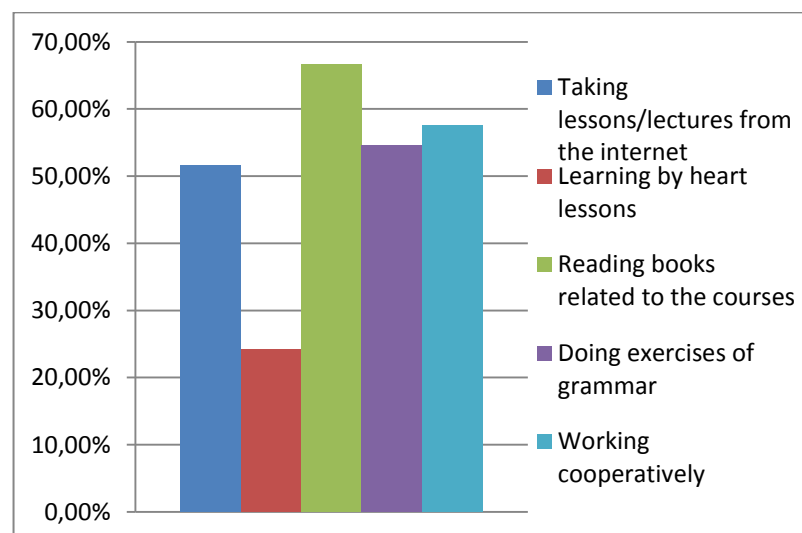


Figure(4.11):The experimental group practice of English outside class

Responses to the same question, on the other hand, demonstrate that 60.60% of the subjects seemed to favour the teacher’s use of technology in class and 54.54% preferred being involved in thought provoking learning tasks rather than rote learning and memorizing. Their willingness to involve in active learning is also apparent when 93.93% stated they liked participating and asking questions and 75.75% of them approved making suggestions to their teacher. Still, giving them homework was opposed by 54.54% while taking tests was approved by the same number of respondents.



Figure(4.12):The experimental group learning attitudes inside class



Figure(4.13):The experimental group effective way to study English

As figure 4.12 shows, reading books was regarded by most students (66.66%) as the most effective way to study English, working cooperatively was also selected by the majority (57.57%) and doing exercises of grammar was rated the third with 54.54% of the answers. Nearly half of the sample (51.51%) saw taking lectures/lessons from the internet as a helpful tool to achieve that aim. Conversely, learning by heart lessons was not agreed on since only 24.24% opted for. All respondents agreed that their writing in English needs to improve. When they were asked to identify their writing difficulties, different answers were provided. Those attributed to grammar were selected by 39.39%, limited vocabulary by 30.30%, in addition to difficulties in

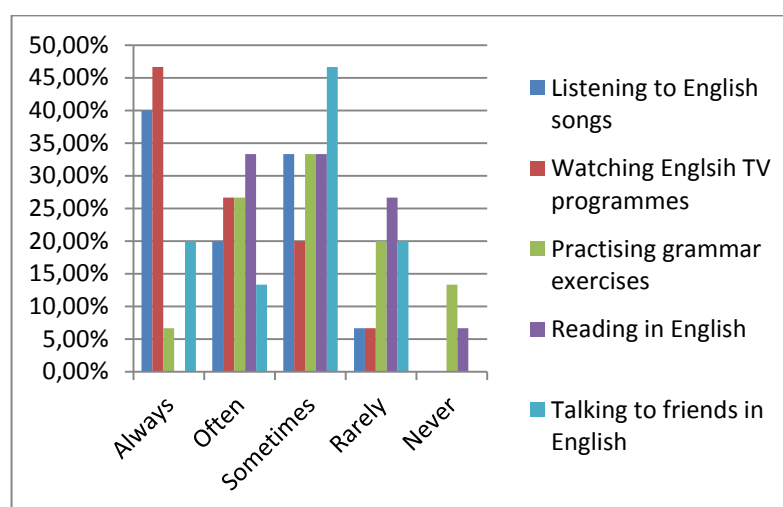
expressing their ideas and writing coherently by 27.27% and spelling as indicated by a minority of 06.06%. To overcome such difficulties the students expressed their involvement in the following tasks:

Suggested Tasks	Number of Students%
Reading	42.42%
Practising grammar exercises	39.39%
Practising writing	30.30%
Collaborating with their peers	24.24%
Using a dictionary	24.24%
Watching TV programmes and listening to songs in English	18.18%
Reflecting on their mistakes in writing	09.09%

Table(4.4):The students strategies to overcome their writing difficulties

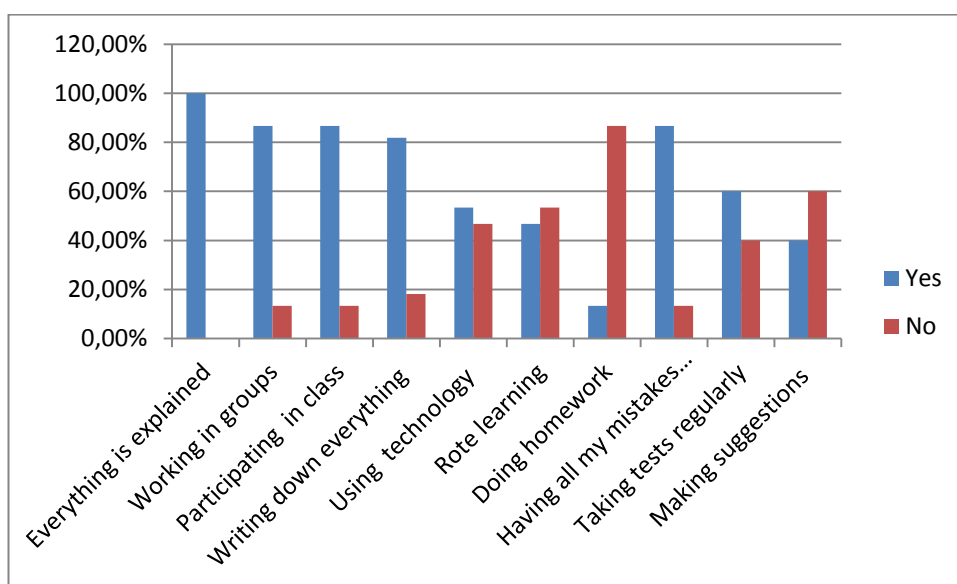
4.6.2.4 The Control Group Second Post-test Results:

Within the control group, 40% of the students stated that they were highly motivated, 53.33% motivated and only 06.66% not motivated at all. Reasons for studying English were mostly attributed to working for companies. The results of question seven show that the majority (73.32%) liked watching TV programmes in English outside class (46.66%, always; 26.66%, often). Listening to English songs was also practiced by 60% of them (20%, always; 40%, often). Yet, some respondents (33.33%) often read books, practiced grammar exercises and talked to their friends using the English language.



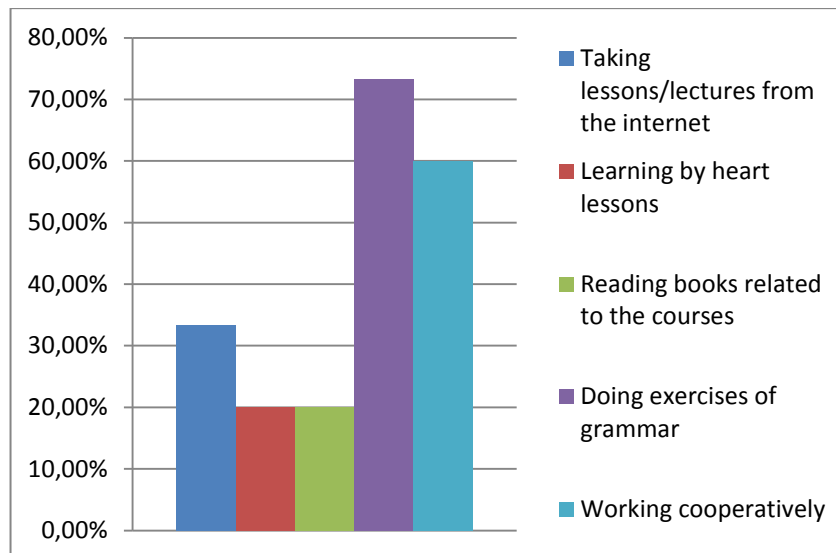
Figure(4.14):The control group practice of English outside class

Inside class, all of them wanted their teacher to explain everything. Moreover, 86.66% liked him/her to correct all their mistakes while only 13.33% preferred being assigned homework. Though the majority (86.66%) liked to participate in class, 40% had a positive reaction to making suggestions for their teacher and peers while 60% disproved such initiative. Still, most of them (60%) agreed with taking tests regularly and 53.33% showed preference to reflective mode of learning. Working in groups was also part of the respondents' learning styles as pointed out by 86.66% and teacher's use of technology was supported by 53.33% of their answers.



Figure(4.15): The control group learning attitudes inside class.

Their views regarding the most effective way to study English show a great consensus upon practising grammar exercises (by 73.33%). Working collaboratively was also regarded as effective by 60% of them. Taking lessons/lectures from the internet came in the third position with 33.33% of selection while 20% opted for learning by hear such lessons/lectures. But, only 20% recognized the value of reading books related to the course within their studying.



Figure(4.16): The control group effective way to study English

In addition to acknowledging the need to improve their writing, the participants also identified the main obstacles within this process. Indeed, 53.33% of them stated that their difficulties are mainly with grammar, while 20% attributed them to punctuation and the use of coherent devices. Only, 13.33% referred to vocabulary. It is worth noting, however, that there were 26.66% who were still unaware of their difficulties. Indeed, their answers to the last question showed that 26.66% were doing nothing to improve their writing. Whereas, 40% practiced grammar exercises, 20% read books, 13.33 used their dictionary, and only 06.66% watched and listened to English. There were also those who saw the need for teacher's help as pointed by 06.66%.

4.6.3 Observations

These observations which were undertaken along the portfolio training process were mainly focusing on the participants learning attitudes. To this end, they took place along a set of stages to reveal the participants' process with their portfolios and their achievement of the final product. It is worth noting that, these observations also intended to capture whether they were adopting autonomous learning attitudes as result of using those tools. Thus, the question that was addressed: Were these students getting more initiative, reflecting on their learning, making and sharing decisions with their teacher and peers, and practising a variety of tasks to improve their writing outside class?

4.6.3.1 Before Introducing the Portfolio:

The structured observation conducted at the first stage of the portfolio training process, i.e., before introducing the subjects to this learning tool, revealed that most of them were motivated to study the English language. This was apparent in their attendance of classes, participation in class which covered their answers to the teacher's questions besides their inquiries to understand the Written Expression lessons. Yet, when assigning homework during the first week, it was observed that few of them did this homework while the rest they did not either do all its exercises or complete some of them. This is because they did not have enough time to accomplish this task as most of them claimed.

It is worth reminding that, the objective of these observation was also to find out about their reaction towards the students' and teacher's role within autonomous learning. While holding the first conference with these students and discussing the importance of being autonomous in language learning, the role of students within this context and teacher's as well, it was found that most of groups were not familiar with autonomous learning. Their surprise and skeptical regards were clear regarding such roles, besides their statements that at university the teacher is expected to give them everything they need. Indeed, with group one all students held such view except one student who said that students should depend on themselves and do not expect teachers to explain everything, an opinion which was opposed by her classmates. For the students who belong to the other experimental groups, it is unfair if the teacher's role is limited to facilitating their learning, his/her role needs to go beyond this. The researcher also noticed that they were not really convinced that their autonomy can help improve their learning of English.

4.6.3.2 While Introducing the Portfolio Content and Process:

The second stage of the structured observation attempted to cover the students' reaction towards the idea of the language portfolio. In doing so, the researcher sought to find out their first impression. That is, whether they would show interest in or reluctance to engage in developing their portfolios.

At first, most of them seemed worried as the idea of portfolio was new for them. Nevertheless, when showing them other samples of portfolios which were produced by other students of the previous year, the majority got more enthusiastic about the process because they were asking for more clarification concerning its use, and they asked for much more time to see

and read those portfolios and discuss their contents in groups. The students also asked about the reason of using them in the Written Expression course.

4.6.3.3 Along the Portfolio Training Process during the First Semester:

During the third stage, the researcher was observing how the students were getting on with their portfolios during both semesters. These observations cover the students' portfolios, i.e., their completion of their parts and sections as well as their interest in the process. From the 8th to 12th December, most students have completed the Language Biography section. Yet, all of them were still collecting artifacts and asking for the criteria for their selection within the Dossier section. Besides, most of them have not completed their reflections over the lessons, exercises and homework. When observing them from the 15th to 19th December, it was found that they started collecting exercises. Yet, only a few of them collected lessons and tests as they said they would do that during the winter holiday¹⁴. Concerning their reflections over the lessons and homework, most of the students completed them.

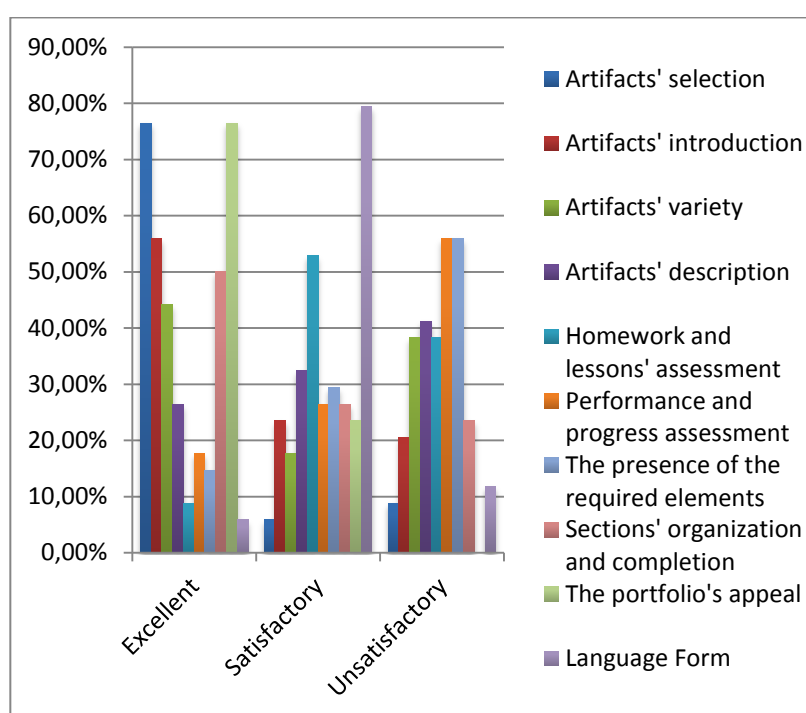
During the second conference (from the 5th to 14th January) observation of the achieved work was carried out where each student portfolio was checked and evaluated by the researcher. Each student was called to the teacher's desk where she examined his/her portfolio using evaluative worksheets. It is worth noting, that this evaluation was not for the sake of marking their portfolios, but rather for making each student aware of what was achieved and what remained missing or unaccomplished in his/her developed portfolio, thereby directing him/her towards revising them before their submission for assessment. It was thus a process of checking students' portfolio and tracking their progress while providing immediate feedback¹⁵. The latter was both oral as well as written as indicated by the researcher in their portfolios so that the students could refer to while reviewing them. In doing so, the researcher was trying to encourage them to think about their portfolios and commit themselves to their review. Meanwhile, her intention includes as well finding about such commitment and how much refinement was brought to those tools while assessing their portfolios and grading them; through going back to her noted remarks and examining whether these were taken into account seriously by each student.

¹⁴ It took place from 22nd December to 5th of January 2014.

¹⁵ Only feedback without grades because the objective was not to mark their portfolios, but to inform them of what needs to be done to improve them.

4.6.3.4 After Assessing the Students' Portfolios during the First Semester:

After checking their portfolios and providing them with the corresponding feedback, the students were given an allotted time (one week) for the revision of their portfolios before submitting them for assessment. The latter took place by the end of the first semester from the 22nd to 29th of January. Evaluating these assessed portfolios was done as well during this period of time by the researcher in which she observed those portfolios to determine whether they match the pre-set assessment criteria, find out about the major difficulties most students encountered along constructing their portfolios and their strengths in accomplishing its tasks. The data obtained from this process are summed up in the graph below.



Figure(4.17): The results of evaluating the students' portfolios during the first academic semester.

All the students completed the Language Biography section. For the Language Dossier section, it was observed that most of them (76.47%) made good selection of artifacts. This means that their suggested exercises and tests were related to the lessons taught during that semester and their suggested lessons aim at enhancing their writing skill in English. Besides, for other worksheets part the majority suggested proverbs, idioms, poems in English while for some of them stories, writing letter in English, riddles, jokes, expressions in English (requesting, apologizing, etc.), and irregular verbs were favoured within this part. The inclusion of these worksheets was considered relevant since these can help them learn more vocabulary, sentence

structures, grammar, etc. Likewise, their artifacts were clearly introduced, well organized and creatively displayed as shown by 55.88% of them. The subjects followed the teacher's guidelines and provided samples regarding the presentation of the suggested artifacts. So, they separated between the Language Dossier's parts (homework, suggested exercises, suggested lessons, suggested test and other worksheets), made clear their contents and used visual aids to reflect their objective.¹⁶

Variety of artifacts was also required within their portfolios in terms of suggesting different types of exercises from different resources. This is in order to encourage them to go to the library, use the internet to look for more sources for their suggested artifacts, read more and think about what could fit in their portfolios. Moreover, advocating different types of exercises was meant to help them implement a variety of strategies to solve them. Thus, the student was invited to suggest and practise not only filling in the gaps or sentence completion exercises, but also to think about writing sentences about a given topic, or responding to given situations, correcting mistakes, etc. In this respect, it was found that some of these artifacts (44.11%) were varied and rich in terms of content whereas 38.23% of the assessed portfolios' artifacts were mostly taken from the same source (either a book or a website and included the same type of exercises. For instance, one student suggested exercises for three lessons from the same book: Longman Advanced Learners' Grammar. Meanwhile, the same type of exercises was prevailing which is rewriting sentences putting words between brackets in the required form (putting adverbs in the right position, writing the correct form of the verbs and forming adjectives). For some students, the exercises' length was the source of defect since they included few sentences within the same exercise.

In addition, proposing such artifacts should be backed up with justification to avoid the students' random selection and maintain their reflection which is the core element of their portfolios. Indeed, as stated previously the students were asked to describe each suggested artifact by indicating its title or the lesson it covers (whether it is a test or an exercise), its source, i.e., from which book or website it was taken and the reason why it was included in the student's portfolio. It was found that only 26.47% of the suggested artifacts were all described completely with clear reasons for their selection (For example; Student A), while describing in details mainly the objective of including them was not included in 41.17% of their portfolios.

¹⁶ Most students' portfolios were typed up by the student, pictures were drawn and some were stuck.

Some of them did not mention the sources and some others wrote sources which were not clear (For example; Student B).

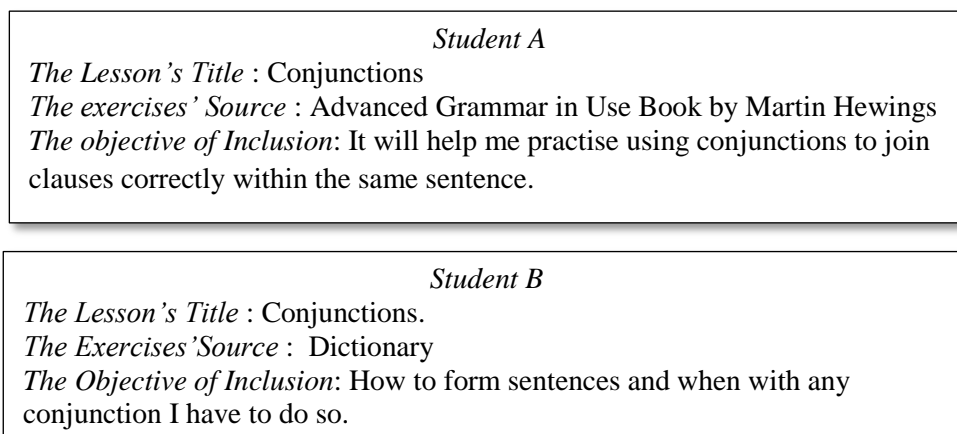


Figure (4.18): An example of students' description of the suggested exercises

Concerning the Language Passport section, observation reveal that reflection on the lessons, homework, teacher's tests and exams constitute a major difficulty among the subjects since only 08.82% provided clear, honest and detailed assessment of all them. It was found that reflection on the lessons was not detailed, mainly over the classwork. In fact, when they were asked to describe each lesson taught in class, their description and their justification of answer were brief. Similarly, after doing exercises in class they were asked about their feeling, that is whether they understood better the concerned lesson or they were still confused. Few words were provided here. For instance, a student wrote concerning the practiced exercises on conjunctions: "After doing the exercises in class I feel I have understood more some points of this lesson because I found them good". Moreover, some homework was not reflected upon and some others lack justification of its description. Also, the date and time within this part was not indicated by most students. Similarly, a few of them (17.64%) assessed clearly, honestly and in detail all their learning performance of the assigned homework, classwork and their suggested exercises and progress. More particularly, reflection on their homework performance was missing in most portfolios.

As far as organization and appearance of the portfolio are concerned, observation showed that most of the students' portfolios (76.47%) were creatively and visually appealing in terms of covers, the graphics, etc. Indeed, It was apparent that each student wanted to give his/her personal touch to the portfolio by drawing and/sticking pictures which varied from flowers to famous places (Big Ben London, Cambridge University, etc.), besides deciding the cover's

colour. Also, to separate between the three sections and their different parts most of them used pictures indicating their aim¹⁷.

However, most of them were missing the required elements which involve in the making of the student portfolio mainly the table of contents, data, time and week and the suggested test. This is so, since only 14.70% of the subjects included all the required elements in their portfolios. Moreover, 50% of the assessed portfolios had the three sections organized and completed within timelines. Still, this criterion applied to two sections among 26.47% of those assessed portfolios while 23.52% of them were either having two or three sections not possessing such quality.

Observation of the students' portfolios was not only concerned with their language contents, but it also focused on the language form these students used to express their ideas in English. This is because the intended portfolio within this research is of a written type that aims to enhance the students' learning autonomy by encouraging them to reflect regularly on their learning and write down such reflection in their portfolios, i.e., evaluate the lessons, homework and classwork, express their needs within the course, their plans and decisions, besides monitoring their progress and assessing their performance and others', thereby prompting them to write and improve their English. In this respect, the data demonstrated that the majority of the participants (79.41%) did some misspelling and grammatical errors in writing which do not interfere with reading such as using the indefinite article with plural nouns, writing 'wich' instead of which and 'the deffrence' instead of the difference, etc. On the other hand, only 11.76% did frequent errors which interfere with reading (For example, a students wrote while summarizing the lesson: "the subject is the door of the action in an active sentence". To indicate her needs another one wrote: "I like to study in the Written Expression course the covers of grammar") while just 5.88% used appropriately grammar, spelling and punctuation.

4.6.3.5 Along the Portfolio Training Process during the Second Semester:

After assessing the students' portfolios, the researcher was wondering about the kind of reactions most students would have towards the obtained marks. Therefore, when giving them their portfolios, including their marks and her remarks and recommendations, on the 4th of February, she attempted to observe them more attentively. The findings reveal that most of them were not satisfied with this result as they were expecting a better one. Yet, after holding the third

¹⁷ There was one student who put his photo carrying a baby of one of his relatives.

conference on the 20th of this month and explaining the reasons why they had such performance and showing them their mistakes one noticed that they understood better the provided feedback and realized what should had been done to improve their portfolios. The subjects also showed their willingness to and interest in improving them since they suggested providing them with more space for reflection over the lessons and homework and giving them reflective worksheets over the assigned tests of the Written Expression course.

However, the students' dissatisfaction with increasing the number of suggested exercises and lessons and the new added worksheets such as reflection on their projects and others', 'Feeling Good' was apparent when the researcher first introduced them on 23rd of February. This was not, however, their reaction when the idea of doing projects was articulated. Indeed, most of the students were excited to collaborate with their peers to do projects and present them in class mainly because they were told that this would replace the mark of the second test for the second semester so they were happy to hear that.

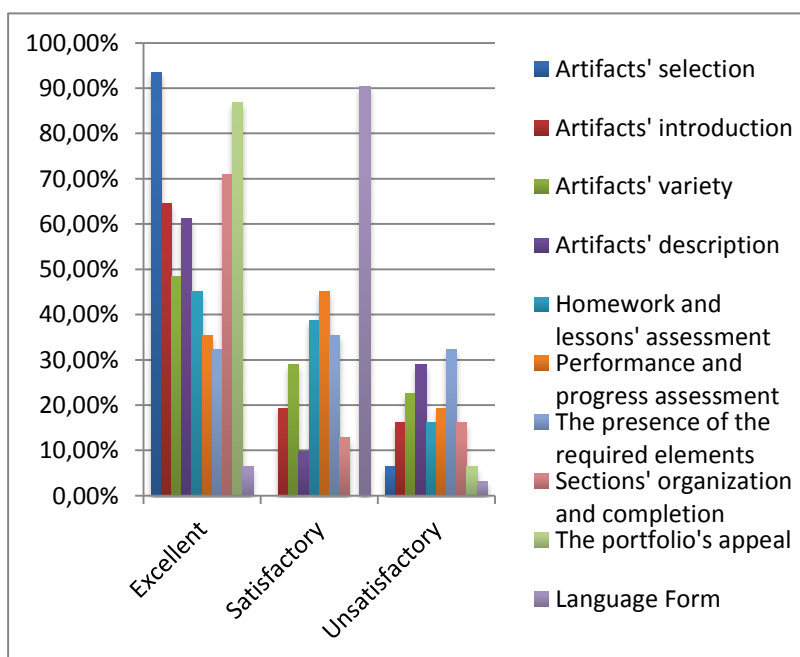
To track how the students were getting along their portfolios in the second semester, structured observations were conducted from the 2nd March to the 10th of May. Their focus was to find out about their interest in and commitment to the process and their attitudes towards peer-assessment tasks. The result showed that most of them were still interested in completing their portfolios since they were asking questions about what to include and how in these tools. The latter were completed regularly by the majority because as the students got used of their portfolios, they might devote much time for completing them and plan for that better than they did in the first semester. In fact, most of them completed the portfolio's parts which they were introduced in the first semester since as they said they got familiar with them. Still, this was not the case with the new integrated worksheets mainly 'Feeling Good'.

Concerning peer-assessment, the former was an enjoyable experience for all students. They liked correcting their classmate's homework, giving them their feedback. They wanted to seem severe in attributing them and they were laughing from their peer's reaction. Moreover, enthusiasm and motivation to achieve an interesting project was the aim of most students because they were raising questions concerning the criteria of a good project. While presenting them in class, all students tried to show their creativity and do their best to perform better in class. Consequently, they did a good job. There were interesting projects, good performance and collaboration which resulted in interactive funny classroom atmosphere.

The projects' topics varied among the students. Yet, most of them opted for role plays or dialogues. These included interviews with famous footballers like Maradona, and Ronaldo their ideas and future plans, famous TV stars like Bipasha discussing her Sunday's episodes of Fear Files. In addition, there were also dialogues between a mother and the headmaster concerning her son's learning ambitions, a man and a woman who debated the issue of working women, a mother and her daughter depicting the conflict between parents' orders and their teenagers' whim for freedom and a student who asked a witch for her help to succeed in her studies. Some other students wanted to show more their creativity like the pair who presented a TV programme concerning the main dishes in Algeria with their photos and recipes. Still, few students preferred to work individually. Two students from Maly talked about their traditions in terms of dressing, eating, etc., besides there was a student who shared her dream of becoming a Minister of Education while another one narrated his invented story of a young family.

4.6.3.6 After Assessing the Students' Portfolios during the Second Semester:

To allow the students to reflect on their classmates' projects and revise more their portfolios, the deadline for submitting them for assessment was extended to the 27th of May. After collecting their portfolios and assessing them, their evaluation was carried out to find out about their prevailing difficulties within this process and how much improvement has been achieved in comparison with the achieved work, i.e., portfolios during the first study semester. The results obtained from evaluating their portfolios are illustrated in the following graph.



Figure(4.19): The results of assessing the students' portfolios during the second semester

As the above figure shows, most students (93.54%) made a good selection of all the artifacts included in their portfolios. That is all suggested exercises, lessons and tests relate to the lessons covered in the Written Expression course. Only 06.45% of them displayed little or no effort in selecting their artifacts since few of them match the portfolio's objective. Moreover, most of the assessed portfolios (64.51%) contained artifacts which are clearly introduced, well organized and creatively displayed. Artifacts' variety in terms of content was registered among 48.38% of the subjects' portfolios which had this trait for all artifacts while 29.03% for most of them and only 22.58% include a few rich and varied ones. Within the same language dossier section, 61.29% of the assessed portfolios include complete description of artifacts (the title of the lesson(s) covered by the suggested exercises and tests and their sources) with clear reason for selection, whereas only 29.03% had no or incomplete description of most artifacts with no or unclear reasons for their selection.

With regard to their reflection on their learning process, the data gathered showed that the majority of the subjects succeeded in accomplishing this task. This is so, since 45.16% of them assessed clearly, honestly and in detail all the lessons, homework, tests, their own projects and others' while 38.70% did so with most of them. Likewise, most of their learning performance and progress was assessed clearly, honestly and with detail by 45.16% whereas just 19.35% did not achieve that.

Furthermore, most of the students' portfolios (86.80%) were creatively and visually appealing while just 06.45% were missing this criterion. Besides, organization of their sections and their completion within the timeline were also common features of 70.96% of the assessed portfolios¹⁸. Yet, 32.25% of these portfolios contain all the required elements. In other portfolios (35.48%), there were still one or two missing elements mainly the table of content and the suggested test. It is worth noting, however, that there were 32.25% of the portfolios which missed out more than two elements.

Concerning the language form the students used in writing their reflections on the lessons, homework, performance and progress, their questions to their teacher, their needs within the course, and their learning plans, it was observed that most of their portfolios (90.32%) contain some misspelling errors which do not interfere with reading whereas only 06.45% used

¹⁸ It needs to be noted here that during the second semester, the students were asked to separate between the portfolio's content of the first semester and that of the second semester.

appropriately grammar, spelling and punctuation. Just one portfolio had frequent errors which interfere with reading.

4.6.4 Focus Groups:

As previously stated, focus groups were used within this research to probe as much data as possible concerning how the students were proceeding with their portfolios. In the first discussion, the researcher was trying to help the students voice their opinions since they were still alien to this new learning environment (Abdelhamid Ibn Badis university of Mostaganem) and afraid to take risk and speak in front of their teacher and classmates. Yet, this risk taking ability differs from one group to another. Most students in group one dared answering and expressing their ideas and they went even beyond the addressed questions to add or justify their statements. Unlike most students in group seven and mainly group three where one was obliged to call upon those who were salient to seek as well for their opinions.

When addressing the first question to all groups regarding their motivation to study the English language, all of them said that they like to study this language as it was their own choice and not their parents'. So, they stated they were happy to study this language and were looking forward to make true their dreams. But, after asking them about what they know about studying at university or what others might have told them about it, no answer was provided here. The students said they had no idea about how studies are being organized within this context and how exams are scheduled and sat for. Some of them added that everything seemed strange for them: the lectures, the way teachers were doing them, the modules, etc.

Moreover, all the students agreed that there is no difference between the teacher's role at university and that at secondary school level, except for one student from group one 'Ahlem' who maintained that such difference exists stating that at university students are adult who can assume responsibility over their learning which is not the case at schools where pupils need teachers' assistance all the time. Indeed, to help the subjects understand such differences in roles, the researcher asked them about what they noticed concerning their teachers' attitudes during those first weeks of studying, i. e., were they giving them everything they needed? All the students answered that all teachers mainly those giving lectures were not providing them with all the required information related to those lectures and even when it comes to their explanation there were still points which remained unclear.

Meanwhile, the students were complaining that they could not ask questions for their teachers to understand better owing to the great number of attendances of lectures and their anxiety of making mistakes. They also expressed their dissatisfaction concerning such state and fear in case it persisted in this way along the whole academic year. However, if the teacher is expected to give everything the student needs what is then the role of this student in this case? When this question was posed, the majority of them were all silent, just a few of them referred to reading books and collaborating in groups with classmates. The subjects were thus having no idea about what studying at university means including their role and that of the teachers as well.

Concerning the second focus groups, this was conducted during the second conference which took place forty-six days after introducing the portfolio's content and explaining to the subjects its objective and constructive process. During this conference, the researcher asked them about how they found completing their portfolios. All of them agreed that it was a challenging and time consuming task because as they said it took all of their time during the winter holiday to arrange and complete the three sections. They added that as they were interested in producing good portfolios they tried to do their best to get the best marks.

Hence, suggesting relevant exercises was conceived by the majority as a difficult task since there were some lessons covered in the Written Expression syllabus which they did not find exercise books for, but some of these were found on the internet. Yet, completing the Language Biography was easy and deciding the portfolio's cover and suggesting other worksheets including games, proverbs, riddles, etc., was interesting for them. Besides, the students expressed their needs for their teacher's guidance regarding the organization of the portfolio mainly how to order the different parts within the same section (The language Dossier and Passport).

Furthermore, to get an idea about the students' opinions concerning their assessed portfolios the researcher addressed a set of questions during the third conference. Most of them expressed their dissatisfaction and disappointment about their portfolios' marks. They said that they did a hard work and devoted much time and efforts to that process. Still, when they were asked about the reasons behind such performance, they seemed to have difficulties in understanding the assessment criteria of their portfolios and the teacher's remarks provided. Nevertheless, to clarify more the process, the researcher went through each student's portfolio, showing him/her what was missing and what needs to be done to improve it.

Regarding their interest in completing or using their portfolios, the majority showed their willingness to make much more effort to produce good portfolios. So, they put forward a number of suggestions such as providing much more space for reflection over the lessons since there were long lessons (containing several rules, e.g., kinds of sentences) which required much space to be summed up. In addition to that, for reflection on the homework they also proposed omitting the adjective 'engaging' for its description and adding much more space for justifying such description. The students also expressed their needs for the teacher's support in providing them with reflective worksheets on the tests and exams, much more time to complete them and re-explanation of some parts of the portfolio. For some students, there was a need to make the portfolio more concise through reducing the required number of the suggested artifacts.

Finally, the last focus groups was conducted during the fourth conference to gauge the students' attitudes towards the new integrated parts and tasks within the portfolio training process. Indeed, after asking them about the difficulties they might encounter within this process, the majority referred to their need for further explanation regarding reflection over their projects and others', 'Feeling Good' besides the organization of the different parts of the Language Dossier and Passport sections. Similarly, selecting the project's topic was a major concern among them since they were asking about the kind of topics which might be much favoured in this context and were seeking for their teacher's opinions concerning some tentative selected ones.

Additionally, all of them seemed to be excited about doing their projects. They said that collaborating together was fun and encourage them to work and share information together. It needs to be noted here, that the students were asked to work in pairs to do such project but they were free to decide their partners. This is to help them collaborate with mutual interest and understanding. Indeed, on their selected projects' topics, they said that these constituted a major interest for both students working in pairs. These ranged from sport and art to social issues. Yet, the students were anxious about the presentations in class since as they said it was the first time they stood and talked in English in front of their teacher and classmates.

Peer-assessment was also a debated issue on which questions were addressed in these discussions. Most of the students said that they found such experience interesting and useful as they were correcting other's work they were learning from others what mistakes to avoid and how. It is worth noting here, that each assigned homework included both exercises on language mechanism (e.g., punctuation and capitalization) and exercises that required them to write and

express their ideas (e.g., sentence production or completion). To conclude, the administered focus groups within this research were a means to reflect some of the students' opinions, difficulties and needs in developing their portfolios. However, being face-to-face those discussions might help probe true answers regarding their feelings and opinions. For that purpose, questionnaires were opted for as the following part explains.

4.6.5 Questionnaires

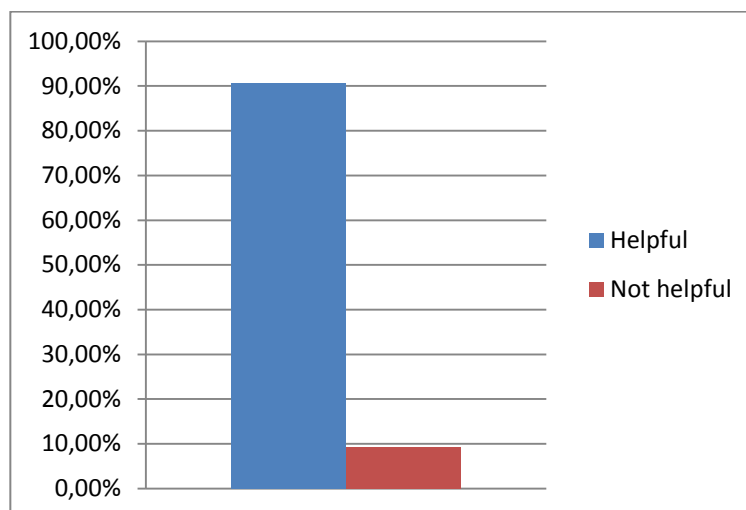
Evaluation can be a means to find out about the generated effects of a given process and test its effectiveness, thereby determining whether its intended objective was achieved or not. For this reason, two students' questionnaires were used in this research during both semesters for the sake of evaluating: 1) the efficacy and efficiency of language portfolios to students' learning, 2) their process of developing them as they were proceeding along the three sections, including their difficulties, views and feeling towards it, 3) the training process in terms of the teacher's feedback and guidelines provided along the portfolio development process. Accordingly, the obtained data from these questionnaires enabled the researcher gain more insight into how the students accumulated feedback and used it to develop their portfolios, besides how they implemented such tools to prepare and revise for the Written Expression course.

In fact, administering the first questionnaire helped the researcher revise and review the portfolio's content and training process, thereby making and taking decisions that may help refine their use in the second semester. For the second questionnaire, this supported data gathering regarding the students' opinions regarding the new introduced portfolio's parts, related tasks and the quality of the teacher's feedback during the second semester, in addition to their final impression concerning using it again in their studies.

4.6.5.1 The First Questionnaire:

This research instrument was administered to the students during the third conference which was held at the end of the first semester, i.e., on the 20th of February. They were given this questionnaire to answer it outside class to feel free to express themselves, then they submitted it during the next week, i.e., on the 23rd and 25th of February. That is, the students filled in such questionnaire after having their portfolios assessed by their teacher. The focus of the first section of this questionnaire was to ascertain the students' views and feelings concerning their portfolios. There was greater agreement among the respondents about the potential support

portfolios had on their studying of the Written Expression course, with 90.62% considering its use helpful as the following figures illustrates.



Figure(4.20): The students' views concerning their portfolios during the First Semester.

As a matter of fact, the kind of support these tools provided mostly embodied involving them in practising a lot of exercises and helping them organize their studies through planning for their learning and revising regularly their lessons as pointed by 78.12% of them. Contributing to their feeling of responsibility over their learning was also a generated portfolios' effect in this case study as pointed out by 65.62% of the students. Another higher rate was also registered among the respondents which concerns the provision of achievement opportunities via their portfolios. 62.50% of them stated that using such tools helped them get a good mark for their formative assessment of the Written Expression module. Besides, 56.25% of the answers referred to portfolios' contribution to understanding this course. The same rate was also recorded for other alternative choices such as helping them think about how their English needs to improve and show their creativity, their ideas and opinions in English. Concerning the students' interest in studying this module, 53.12% of them mentioned that they got more interested in it due to their portfolios' use. The latter, however, did not help them get more awareness about their learning needs and difficulties in writing since only 34.37% selected this answer.

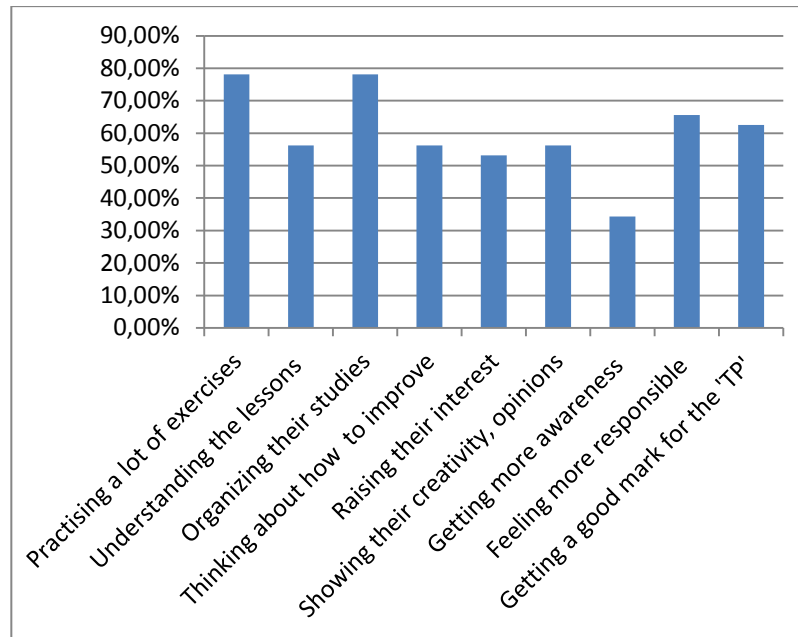


Figure (4.21): The beneficial effects of portfolio on the participants' learning during the First Semester

In addition, there were other kinds of portfolio's support suggested by some students such as improving their writing skill (one student), motivating them to work hard (one student), expressing themselves (two students), organizing their time and working in groups with their friends (one student), besides organizing and doing many things in a short time (one student). It is worth noting, however, that there were three students (09.37%) who mentioned that their portfolios were not helpful in studying this module. To understand the reasons behind this confession, the students were asked to justify their answers. These were given as follows:

- *“Because there is a lot of work and it provokes pressure on me”.*
- *“Because it is a hard work and also it takes time, the importance is to get the lesson and practise”.*
- *“Because I am alone and I have no friend to discuss with them the lessons and the exercises, I find myself all the time lost in all things, and I am doing my best to get a good mark”.*

Furthermore, considering students' views about their portfolios remains insufficient to understand their attitudes towards these tools unless their emotions are catered for. This is so, since *“emotions....are the very center of human mental life... (They) link what is important for us to the world of people, things, and happenings”* (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996, p.122). Therefore, the students' feelings about their portfolios were sought for in this questionnaire. They were asked to

indicate whether they enjoyed filling their portfolios, they got confused or they felt tired from doing so. The students could mention as well other feelings associated with this process. The data collected for this answer showed that most of them (67.74%) experienced the feeling of enjoying their completion besides their interest in the process was getting enhanced over time as this figure illustrates.

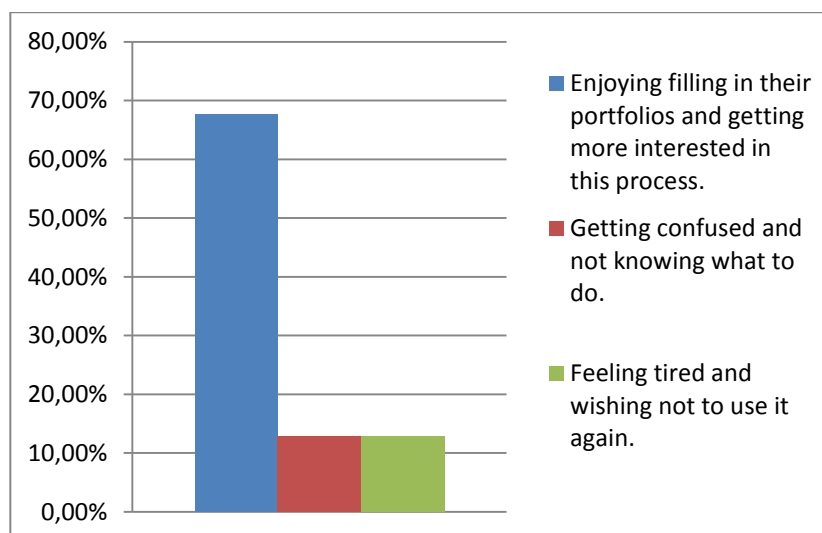


Figure (4.22): The students’ feelings about their portfolios during the First Semester

On the other hand, 12.90% of the subjects expressed their confusion. Similarly, 12.90% of them described it as a hard work where they felt tired and thus wished not to use it again. For instance, a student claimed that using portfolios is time consuming and laden with much content: *“It takes much time and work to complete”*, another one added the pressure this use yielded to: *“Many exercises in few time, pressure all the time”*. Hence, in spite of struggling with time to complete them portfolios’ benefits over their learning cannot be negated as some students emphasized:

- *“Even though it consumes a lot of time, I like filling my portfolio, it’s fun for me”*.
- *“It’s a very hard work, but it is also one of the best way to improve my learning skills”*.
- *“Sometimes, I feel tired with it. However, I like it I want to work and get the best mark”*.
- *“The portfolio is very helpful because it makes us understand the lesson without difficulties and even organize our studies”*.
- *“It is a good experience in my life I wish I will use it again because I found it very helpful to study English”*.
- *“My portfolio is the only interesting mean or tool to improve my skills in Written Expression”*.

In addition to investigating the students' feelings and views regarding their portfolios, one's concern was also devoted to finding out about their difficulties along this process and their evaluation of the teacher's role. Eight choices were provided for selection referring to some difficulties which they might encounter in suggesting and/ selecting exercises and lessons, reflecting over them, indicating their learning needs, in addition to organizing and completing their portfolios with respect to time.

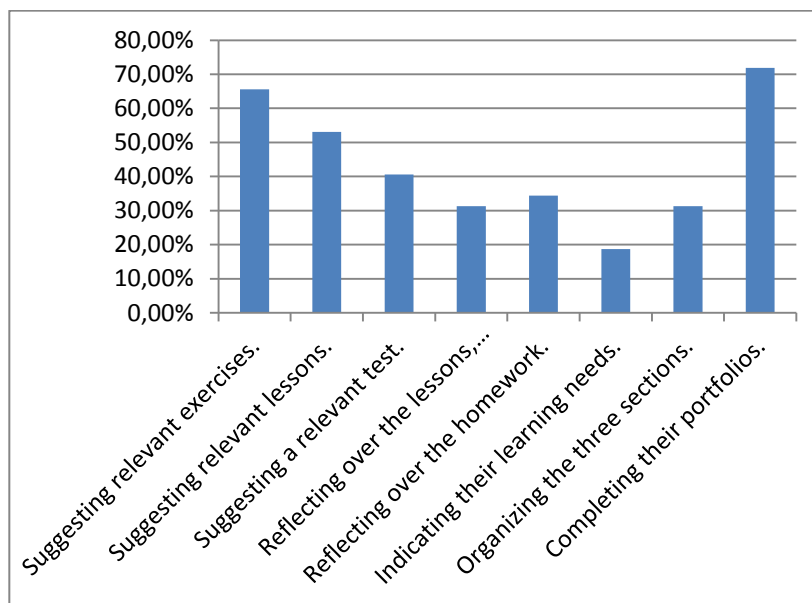


Figure (4.23): The students' difficulties in developing their portfolios during the First Semester

As the above figure shows, completing their portfolios within time constraint was a major difficulty among most of the questioned subjects (71.87%). Suggesting relevant exercises for each lesson ranked the second by 65.62% of the respondents who selected this choice while having difficulty in suggesting relevant lessons was highlighted by 53.12% of them. Concerning suggesting a relevant test for each semester, this was perceived difficult by some students (40.62%). Unlike selection of artifacts, reflection over them was not considered a tough task since reflecting regularly over the homework was mentioned by 34.37% and reflecting over the lessons and classwork by 31.25%. Likewise, most of the students did not encounter difficulties in organizing the three sections of the portfolio since only 31.25% said they experienced this. Still, indicating their learning needs was the least mentioned difficulty in constructing their portfolios as stated by 18.75%. It needs to be noted, that apart from the alternative choices provided no other difficulties were added by these students.

Through question six of this questionnaire, the researcher was attempting to get an idea about how the students found the teacher's explanation and guidance within the portfolio training process. The data analysis showed a common consensus upon evaluating this teacher's role as very helpful among 87.5% of the participants whereas only 21.87% stated that it was helpful, but not enough to help them accomplish the task. But, no student attributed the quality of 'not helpful at all' to this role.

Finally, to provide more chance for students' voices and pave the way for their creativity and decision sharing ability, question seven was addressed where they were prompted to propose for their teacher ideas intended to enhance the use of their portfolios in the Written Expression course. The data obtained can be grouped under a set of categories as the following chart shows. There were 25% of the students who called for more assignments by the teacher to practise in class and include them in their portfolios. Very few (06.25%) saw the need to include more artifacts in their portfolios while reducing them was advocated by 09.37% of the respondent. Devoting much more time for their portfolios' completion and explanation was also put forward by other students while for the majority there was no need for any change or addition to portfolio's content. Yet, only one student opposed the portfolio's use in the second semester claiming that h/she had not only Written Expression module in studying since this portfolio takes a lot of time, though it is helpful.

The students' suggestions	Some Examples	Rate%
Assigning more classwork and homework to students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I suggest to my teacher to give us a lot of exercises like classwork and homework in order to practise more. - I suggest to give us some writing exercises and some activities to discover how well we write in English. 	25%
Including more suggested artifacts in students' portfolios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To suggest more than one test. - To write plays in our portfolios and practise them. - I want to give us work in groups. 	06.25%
Providing more explanation about the portfolio development process and much time to complete it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I suggest to my teacher to give us more time to prepare our portfolios. - I need more explanation about the different portfolio's parts. 	28.12%

<p>Decreasing the number of suggested artifacts in students' portfolios or omitting some of them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To give less than three exercises and less than three lessons and to omit project and questions to my teacher. - The suggested exercises, lessons and test will not be considered obligatory 	<p>09.37%</p>
<p>Keeping the portfolios as they are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep it like this because we have not time to do more, the portfolio is a good idea. - Firstly, I want to thank you about your hard work, this portfolio is very helpful to improve the language and get more interested in studying this module, it is perfect and very interesting, this is my idea! - I think the portfolio is complete. - I think that everything is good we hope it will continue like that. - I like doing my portfolio, especially the creative part. I am not creative enough to suggest things but I want to thank you for your efforts you are the best. - For this time, I don't have suggestions, I find the portfolio important and it helps me to be organized in different ways, to revise, to work, to improve my writing in English. 	<p>34.37%</p>

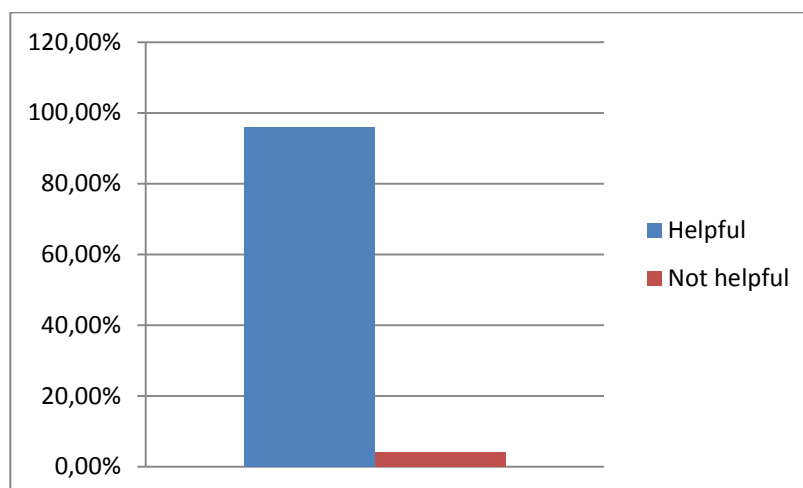
Table(4.5): The students' suggestions for their portfolios' content and/ process of use during the first semester

4.6.5.2 The Second Questionnaire:

By the end of the second semester and after six months of training the subjects in portfolio training and development process a set of questions were raised such as: What effects did portfolios have on students' feelings, views, attitudes and thus their learning autonomy? How were they getting with such a process during the second semester? What difficulties did they succeed to overcome and those they were still facing? Were they getting more interested in their portfolios? In attempt to answer these questions, a questionnaire was distributed to the students during the last held conference and it was answered outside class as they did with the first questionnaire.

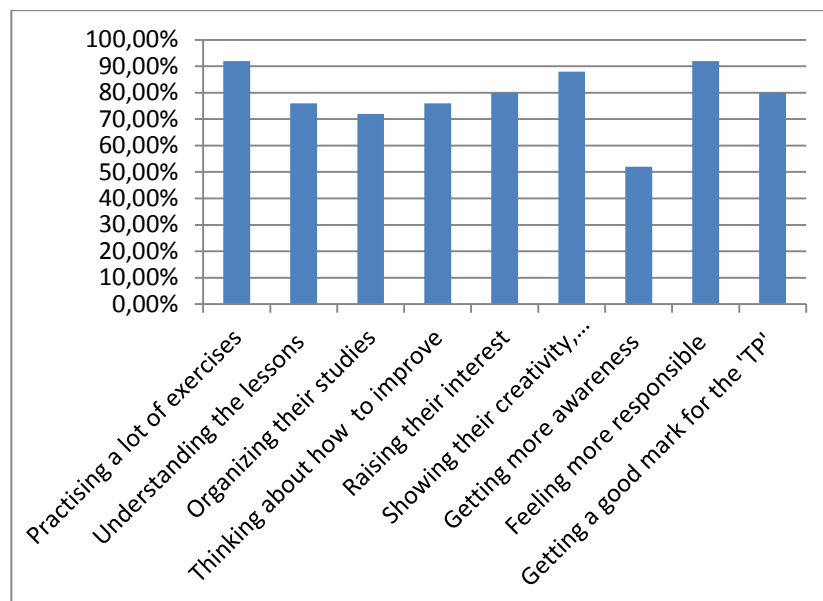
In fact, the objective of this questionnaire was to compare the effects of portfolios on their feelings, views, learning autonomy and teacher's support regarding this process with those which

were already collected in the first semester. In doing so, the researcher wanted to find out to what extent her decisions taken to refine the portfolio's content and training process were effective or not. Also, the researcher was eager to know about the effect of integrating other alternative assessments approaches along with the students' portfolios such as peer assessment and collaborative learning on their feelings and views. Her curiosity also includes finding whether the subjects had developed a liking for their portfolios, so that they had the intention of using them in their future studies.



Figure(4.24): The students' views concerning their portfolios during the Second Semester

As far as the first question is concerned, most of the respondents (96%) agreed that using their portfolios in the Written Expression course is helpful while only 4% negated such effect claiming that it is a hard work which takes time. On the kind of support these tools provide the students opted for practising a lot of exercises and feeling responsible for their learning which received the same rate of selection (92%). Encouraging them to share their creativity, ideas and opinions was also a common support among most participants (88%) during this semester. Moreover, it was found that using their portfolios helped them get more interested in studying this module as indicated by 80% of the students.



Figure(4.25): The beneficial effects of portfolio on the participants' learning during the Second Semester.

The collected answers for this question also demonstrated that these learning tools helped 76% of them understand the lessons of this module and get a good mark for their formative assessment as indicated by the majority (80%). Promoting their reflection was also a major effect of this assessment approach. Indeed, 72% of the respondents reported that their portfolios helped them organize their studies through planning for their learning and revising regularly. In the same concern, 76% claimed that such use supported them to think about how their English needs to improve and 52% referred to getting more awareness about their learning needs and difficulties in writing.

Concerning their feelings about their portfolios, the majority (56%) maintained that they enjoyed completing them and they got interested in this process while only (16%) stated that they got confused and they did not know what to do to accomplish this process. Besides, a few of them (12%) described their portfolios' construction as a hard task which made them tired and so wishing not to involve again in such an experience. In addition to that, there were 12% who stated that though they enjoyed using their portfolios, yet they sometimes got confused with that process while one student expressed his interest in portfolio's use, but confessed that it made him tired. These results are illustrated in the following graph.

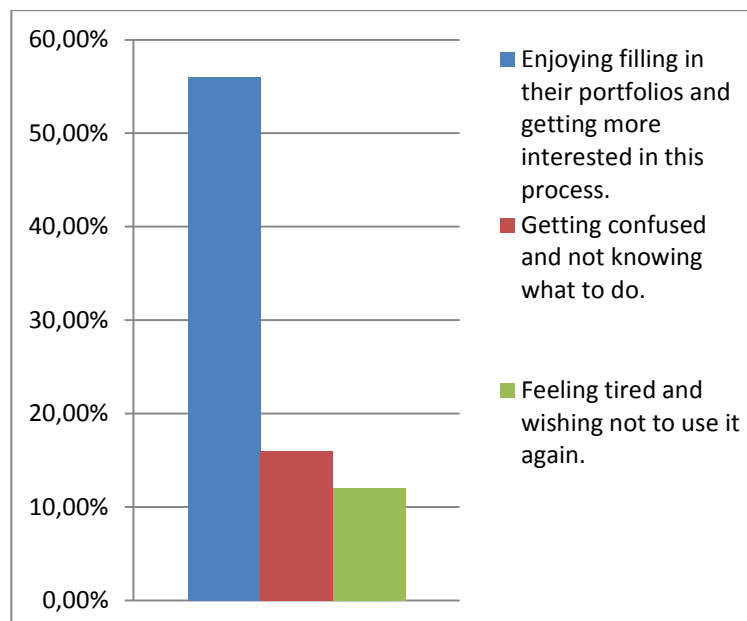
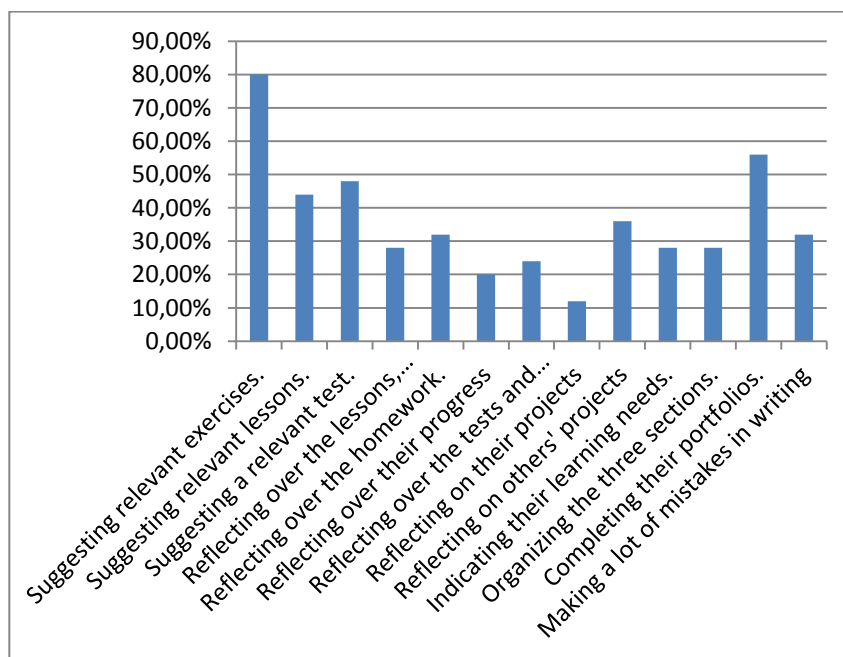


Figure (4.26): The students' feelings about their portfolios during the Second Semester

To investigate the effect of peer-and group assessment approaches on the subjects' feelings and views question five was addressed. The findings show that most of the subjects found peer-assessment an interesting and beneficial experience as mentioned by 96 % (20%, strongly agree; 76% agree). Additionally, 56% agreed that doing a project instead of a test had made them feel more comfortable. Yet, a question which may be posed here is: How did these students find the experience of collaborating, presenting their projects and listening to other projects? In this respect, their answers demonstrated that only 16% disagreed with the statement implying that collaborating with their classmates to do their projects helped them feel more responsible. Whereas, 40% opted for strongly agree and 44% for agree. Moreover, the majority (92%) stated that presenting their projects in class made them feel more confident about their learning abilities (48%, strongly agree; 44%, agree). Likewise, assessing their classmate's projects had made most of them (88%) happy and proud of themselves (24%, strongly agree; 64%, agree). Also, the experience of listening to other projects was described as interesting by 92% of them (44%, strongly agree; 48%, agree).

Furthermore, the difficulties which were still prevailing with the construction of students' portfolios in the second semester are mostly related to suggesting relevant exercises for each lesson as pointed out by 80 %, and completing their portfolios with respect to time by 56%. Besides, suggesting a relevant test was selected by 48% of the respondents and relevant lessons was indicated by 44%. There were also 36% of the respondents who found difficulties in

reflecting over their classmate’s project. Whereas only 12 % mentioned that they had difficulties with reflecting over their own. In addition, some students (32%) considered making a lot of mistakes in writing a hindrance in constructing their portfolios while the same rate of respondents attributed this to reflecting regularly on their homework. Besides, reflecting regularly on the lessons and classwork, indicating their learning needs, and organizing the three sections were selected by a minority of 28%. Reflection remains the least selected answer among the participants since 24% of the respondents found difficulties in reflecting regularly on the tests and exam while only 20% pointed out to reflecting on their progress.



Figure(4.27): The students’ difficulties in developing their portfolios during the Second Semester

When the students were asked about how they found the teacher’s explanation and guidance within portfolio training in the second semester, the majority 84% stated that it was very helpful, while only 16% said that it was helpful, but it was not enough. But, no student described them as ‘not helpful at all’. Finally, most of the students expressed their intention of using their portfolios in the future whether in the Written Expression module or in other modules as highlighted by 68% of them. The first reason for keeping them was to organize their studies in Written Expression module as these students said:

- *“I find it helpful, it helps me organize my studies and plan for what I have to do, I find it good”.*
- *“Because it is very good for a student, it permits him to organize his work every time”.*
- *“I like it. Also, because when I see it I feel myself that I am organized”.*
- *“I would love to keep it because the portfolio makes my studies very well organized”.*

Besides, other respondents pointed out that their English, i.e., writing has improved thanks to these tools as illustrated below:

- *“Because it helps me to improve my English and avoid my mistakes in writing”.*
- *“I noticed during this year a big improvement in my learning and writing with the portfolio”.*
- *“It helps me learn many things and improve my English”.*

Understanding lessons thanks to their portfolios was also considered a motive for their future use. In addition to being organized, one student referred to the importance of facilitating lessons’ revision and understanding thanks to reflecting on them in the portfolio’s Language Passport section: *“Because it was very helpful and it organized me, I did not find difficulties in revising my lessons because I summarize them in reflection over the lessons”.*

Similarly, understanding these lessons was highlighted as well by another student who attributed it to practising exercises as prompted by their portfolios’ use: *“Because it helped me organize myself, practise more exercises and understand my lessons more”.* Being organized and doing research were also reasons behind keeping portfolio’ use as this student stated: *“I will keep it because it helps me to be organized to time. Also, to make some research”.* In addition to that, there were other subjects who added other reasons of keeping their portfolios’ implementation such as recognizing their learning progress, needs and difficulties through them as they wrote:

- *“I would love to keep it because the portfolio makes my studies very well organized and it makes me know if I am progressing or not”.*
- *“It is a good idea to get more awareness about my learning needs and it makes me organized, I am sure that I use it in other modules including the Written Expression because my favourite teacher made efforts on it, I will not disappoint her”.*

Being responsible for one’s learning was also mentioned by two students as follows: *“Using portfolios allows students to study alone without worrying about anything”.* *“The idea of the portfolio is a genius idea. It makes me responsible more for my learning”.* Sustaining their

interest in studying the module was also added here: *“The portfolio helps me to improve my English, it makes me interested in the Written Expression module”*. Also, sharing their ideas was put forward by one student who wrote: *“It allows me to share my opinion and my hobbies with others”*.

Hence, for those who stated that they would not use their portfolios again, all of them justified that this is a hard work which takes much time as these students’ statements imply:

- *“I find doing the portfolio very hard and it takes time to do it”*.
- *“Because it takes time”. “It is a hard work, I wish that I don’t use it again”*.
- *“Because the portfolio is very difficult and makes us tired all the time, it takes a lot of time”*.

Moreover, another student put forward the same claim, though she acknowledged the benefit she gained from using her portfolio stating: *“The portfolio helps me a lot, but I cannot keep it in the future because it takes much time, it takes all the time to prepare it”*. The inability to carry on this process with other modules was also reflected in one student’s statement who indicated that he cannot plan for his learning, reflect and construct a portfolio with other modules.

4.7 Discussion:

Triangulation in the present research has allowed the researcher to gather both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the portfolios’ effect on the students’ learning autonomy. In addition to analyzing these data, there is a need to involve in a process of interpreting and comparing the research findings thus discussing them for the sake of understanding and confirming or refuting one’s research hypotheses. Indeed, to understand such effect one attempted to compare the data obtained before receiving the treatment (from both groups: experimental and control), along its process (the experimental group) and after its accomplishment (both groups). Since autonomy is a complex construct, discussion focuses here on the students’ motivation, perception and attitudes in learning.

4.7.1 The Experimental and Control Groups Before Portfolio Training

Prior to introducing language portfolios, the first pretest confirmed the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups regarding their autonomy in language learning. It was found that their learning views regarding the role of the teacher/learner were reflecting their dependence on the teacher. The latter was also apparent through their lack of self-assessment attitudes and their inability to set their learning goals, plan, and assess their progress. These

findings were also confirmed through the second pretest where teacher-centered classroom was supported by the majority of students in both groups.

In effect, though they liked participating in class, i.e., asking questions and being involved in collaborative and thought provoking tasks, making initiative through suggesting lessons and ideas was not part of their learning styles. This could imply that these students are not familiar with this type of initiatives where they are involved in making choices and sharing them. This put into question the need to redefine students' participation in class which is still limited to asking questions to the teacher or answering her/his questions, thereby depriving students from developing and exercising their autonomy.

It was also noticed that listening to English songs and watching TV programmes in English were common practices outside class in both groups while reading books remained the least practiced one. Besides, within both groups no further practices were suggested by any student such as writing stories, diaries, or listening to radio programmes in English, etc. This could imply that the students' practices of English outside class was limited which may not help them improve this language over time. This lack of exposure to the English language could be explained by their reliance on their teacher, thus confining their learning to the classroom.

Furthermore, though most of the students recognized the need to improve, they were neither aware of their writing difficulties in English nor able to set learning strategies to overcome them. This also confirmed their lack of reflection on their learning process. These students were also unaware of how to study English more effectively. When they were asked about their views concerning this process, most of them opted for practising grammar exercises and working cooperatively while reading books in English was not considered important. Besides, no other suggestions were provided by these students, reflecting any autonomous learning attitudes. In fact, focus groups discussions showed their lack of awareness of this concept since it had never been introduced before. Yet, their motivation to study English and preferences for collaborative learning and thought provoking tasks could support the promotion of their autonomy.

4.7.2 The Experimental Group Process with Portfolios

Introducing an innovation can be frightening for students mainly within contexts where they are familiar with a given teaching and learning mode. When the idea of portfolios was first introduced, anxiety, confusion and uncertainty were mingled feelings experienced by most

students within the experimental group. Since portfolios represent a shift from teacher-directed to student-directed learning, the students were likely to experience what Jones and Shelton(2006) labeled a psychological disequilibrium, i.e., “*a quake in one’s quiet theories about teachers’ and students’ roles in the learning environment and what learning is*”(p.26).

Hence, after telling them that the portfolios were used previously, showing them some samples and informing them that there were students who got good marks for them, the participants’ enthusiasm to involve in was apparent through their questions and interest in knowing every detail about this process. Clarifying their benefits on their learning and the process of developing them also supported their involvement within. Thus, one can conclude that introducing any innovation requires first dialogue through which clarification and sensitising can be maintained. Within such dialogic culture, students need to be psychologically supported to commit themselves to change through enhancing their motivation and self-confidence, besides providing evidence of success which has proved its effectiveness in provoking such effect.

It was also found that clarifying the process of portfolio development needs to be gradually introduced along with feedback and reinforcement, since these tools “*demand a high degree of stick-to-itiveness, self-pacing, follow-through, and attention to detail*” (Jones & Shelton, 2006, p.26). To this end, this dialogue needs to be an ongoing process along with the use of that innovation since as it was observed within the present research the participants’ need for guidance was always expressed in the course and scheduled conferences. In fact, developing portfolios was a challenge for the students during the first semester. Apart from completing the Language Biography section, the majority found difficulties in selecting artifacts since not any evidence would serve the portfolio’s objective. Also, the main issue here was how to organize their time and keep on completing regularly their portfolios and at the mean time studying and preparing for other modules.

As a result, assessment of their portfolios reflected their challenge with time to complete them. Besides, their selected evidence was taken from the same source while a few of them were justified as found with most of their portfolios. This could also imply that the students were not familiar with searching for information via the different learning resources (web, books, etc.), nor were they acquainted with thought provoking tasks which require reasonable thinking where their own choices are backed up with justifications. These data were confirmed through the first evaluative questionnaire where the majority claimed that their difficulties with portfolios lied in completing them with respect to time and suggesting relevant artifacts.

Furthermore, in spite of the use of reflective worksheets that could render their reflection more structured and clear to complete, the majority did not complete it successfully by the end of the first semester. Hence, the data of the first evaluative questionnaire showed that they considered the process of reflection an easy task to achieve. This could imply that they did not understand what was expected from them within this process, thus being unaware of what good performance entails. Owing to its higher coefficient in the assessment rubric, reflection has affected their marks. Indeed, their reaction towards their assessed portfolios confirms the above assumption because they were expecting to get better marks

Nevertheless, gaining more familiarity with their portfolios in the course of time has helped the students overcome those difficulties and improve their use. Assessing them by the end of the second semester reflected their interest and efforts in improving the quality of their suggested evidence to meet the criteria of selection. Their reflection was also completed regularly as they got used of filling in its worksheets. It needs to be noted that, those portfolios have been a source of inspiration and creativity for most participants. Indeed, they were considered as identities which mirrored their personalities so that their teacher could understand them as individuals. Maintaining their nice appeal was the participants' major concern, besides devoting a space for the masterpieces that reflect their vision of the world. Thus, it can be concluded that students' creativity needs a stimulus and support on the part of the teacher.

Finally, with regard to the teacher's descriptive feedback which was provided in the teacher's remarks and recommendations section of their portfolios, this was not enough for most students to understand the reasons behind their performances. Thus, during the scheduled conferences the researcher provided oral feedback as well. So, within portfolios providing both written and oral feedback are required to make explicit the required performance and help students close the learning gap. This means that much time for the provision of such feedback is needed in order to keep them interested in and motivated to engage in portfolio development.

4.7.3 Portfolios Effect on the Students' Learning Motivation, Attitudes and Perceptions

The data gathered in the present research study would appear to indicate that using language portfolios in the Written Expression course supported the majority of the participants gain a variety of benefits over their learning. Indeed, most of them considered such use as helpful. The number of students holding such view has increased by the end of the year. The research findings also revealed that certain learning attitudes and feelings were developed by the participants as a

result of developing their portfolios. Thus, what kind of learning attitudes, feelings and perceptions were generated from such a process?

4.7.3.1 Motivation:

The experimental group's motivation to study English in general and Written Expression module in particular had increased along the course as compared to that of the control group. This result confirms previous research findings which insert that portfolios enhance learners' motivation (Hosseini & Ghabanchi, 2014; Lam & Lee, 2010) Indeed, their motivation is likely to develop since their feeling of responsibility was enhanced as they highlighted (Fazey & Fazey, 2001; Dickinson, 1995). This is because such portfolios allowed them to have certain control over their learning process by searching for exercises and practising them, assessing their performance of exams/tests/homework, planning for their learning and thinking about what they had studied in class. Their opinions were also voiced regarding what to study and how, besides their evaluation of their teacher's support within the portfolio training process and making suggestions to improve it.

In fact, though such process was challenging and time consuming for most of them their use was gaining support along the course. The fact that their portfolios will be assessed motivated them to improve their performance to the utmost. Yet, an assumption which can be made here is that their motivation to engage in portfolios was also born out of their consciousness and recognition of their benefits over their learning process which was developing along with their use. Indeed, helping them succeed, understand the lessons, show their creativity and ideas in English, besides organizing their learning were among those benefits which stimulated their interest in using them. The other integrated tasks such as peer assessment and projects also contributed in generating such effect.

Furthermore, using portfolios, peer-assessment and projects in the present research context allowed for more interactive kind of learning classroom where more opportunities were available for the students' discussion, debate, suggestions, and fun. Thus, the teacher's flexibility was achieved and the students could get rid of the same mode of learning. One can conclude that though introducing an innovation to the language classroom might be challenging for both teachers and students, yet this can support teacher's flexibility thereby acting as a motivating source for students' interaction and learning. So, there is a need to move towards change that can help enhance learning and render teacher's flexibility more attained.

4.7.3.2 Perceptions:

The awareness raising stage conducted within this experiment in a form of dialogue did not change most of the participants' views and thus convince them of the need to depend on themselves rather than on their teacher. This is so, since their responses indicated that they still perceived their role in the learning process as that of the "consumer of language courses" (Holec,1987) and the teacher as a dominant figure. This could imply that holding discussion may not suffice to raise an individual awareness of a given process or idea mainly in context where his beliefs and practices contradict with its principles. Introducing change within such conservative and defensive culture is likely to be conceived as queer and so unacceptable.

Hence, as the first posttest data revealed, the students were still at the first stages of developing their autonomy since they could attain a lower degree of it by the end of the experiment (the p-value ,043 was not very smaller than the alpha level ,05). For this reason, their dependence on their teacher and views referring to his dominating role are common mainly at those stages. Still, this dependence should not be regarded as an obstacle for the development of their autonomy, but it needs rather to be exploited by the teacher to enhance their interdependence. This interdependence is demonstrated in the process of negotiations of meaning and scaffolding between teacher and learners and among learners themselves (Trinh, 2005).

Holding such views would imply that these students were not convinced of the importance of being autonomous. Thus, their interest in using their portfolios is likely to be driven by a desire to get a good mark rather than the need to develop their autonomy. Being extrinsically motivated, however, helped them realize the potential of such tools over time. As the findings of the second questionnaire show, most of the participants recognized the benefit of language portfolios over their learning process and had the intention of using them again in the future. This may lead one to conclude that using these tools over time can enhance students' intrinsic motivation which is as Scharle and Szabó (2000) claim a pre-requisite to learning and responsibility development as it leads to and reinforces learner autonomy.

It can be concluded that, awareness raising is a process which requires practice and interaction with the innovation and reflection upon, thus time. It flows over experience through which the participants can change their views and practices. Thus, to get convinced of the

importance of being autonomous, the students need to conceive its benefits over their learning process. To do so, they need to get involved in autonomous learning approaches where their autonomy can develop. Using language portfolios can have the potential to achieve that goal. Still, this requires practice and time as this experiment shows.

4.7.3.3 Attitudes:

As Thanasoulas (2000) argues autonomous learners have insights into their learning styles and strategies; take an active approach to learning the task at hand and are willing to take risks. Thus, did the participants develop such attitudes as a result of using their portfolios? As the data gathered showed, practising a lot of exercises in the Written Expression course was the main stimulus generated from such tools since these constitute a major component of the selected evidence in their portfolios. This in turn helped them understand the lessons of that course as claimed by 76% during the second semester. Those practices increased from 78.12% to 92% among the students. It follows from this, that portfolios can be used to encourage students practise further exercises instead of relying just on assigning homework within a given course.

The findings also confirmed Stein's (2001) statement that the portfolio product provides the student with organized evidence of his/her work overtime. Indeed, most of the participants reported that their portfolios contributed in helping them organize their learning through revising regularly their lessons (i.e. reflecting on them and practising exercises) to get prepared for the final exam. This is might be due to the fact that they were asked to complete them on a daily basis and keep on mentioning the date and time of doing so. Indeed, reflecting on the lessons was valued by most of the participants. It was conceived as the most helpful part of the Language Passport section because it helped them understand those lessons through summarizing them, revising their contents and expressing their needs regularly as they claimed. Thus, as Eyler and Giles (1999) maintain reflection should occur regularly and be connected to the course, providing context for the reflection, and include feedback from the instructor, particularly to aid students in improving their reflective practice.

In addition to supporting them organize their learning and understand the lessons, reflecting and planning for their learning also helped most of the participants think about how their English needs to improve, a rate which raised to 76% during the second semester. Yet, their reflection for a whole semester did not suffice to make them aware of their learning needs and difficulties in writing. Only, by the end of the second semester such awareness was getting raised

as reported by 52% of the participants. This data was confirmed through the second post-test where they cited more writing difficulties and put forward more strategies to overcome them as compared with those provided in the second pre-test and also those expressed by the students of the control group.

It follows from this, that the participants developed more self-assessment attitudes over time through their reflection on learning. These attitudes led to raising their awareness of some of their learning needs, difficulties and strategies to overcome them. Besides, their views regarding the effective way to study English changed from those expressed in the second pre-test. They got more awareness of the value of reading books and working cooperatively with their peers. They also seemed to have a clear idea of their future plans. Unlike the pretest data where 27% of them claimed that they did not know the reason for studying English.

Besides, some of the participants' attitudes inside class had changed as compared with those mentioned before introducing their portfolios. The number of students who preferred working in groups increased from 65.63% in the second pretest to 84.84% in the second posttest. As their answers to the questionnaire and focus groups show, most of them liked collaborating with their peers to do their projects. Yet, this may not be attributed entirely to engaging in such experience since the control group's support to working in groups increased as well.

Nevertheless, engaging in portfolios changed their attitudes regarding the teacher's use of technology since most of them supported their use in class. It is worth noting here, that no kind of ICT was integrated in the Written Expression course, but the students within the experimental group were asked to use it outside class to select evidence for their portfolios. This might have stimulated their interest in experiencing this mode of learning within the classroom.

Furthermore, as the findings of the second post-test showed, the number of students who liked participating in class within both the experimental and control groups increased by the end of the second semester. But, unlike the control group, the experimental group's favour for making suggestions increased because of their portfolios. Indeed, these students preferred to have opportunities to make choices, voice their opinions and share their suggestions, thus contributing to their learning. So, before engaging in their portfolios they were against such initiative because it was a new, bewildering or threatening experience which they were not used to. But, after engaging in such process, they developed their liking towards it since they owned certain control over their learning process which made them feel more responsible as they reported.

Hence, with regard to their practice of English outside class, the data shows that these did not change along the year in terms of the kind of practiced activities but rather in their frequency of occurrence. Indeed, the suggested activities received the same ranking but with more increasing rates than those received from the second pretest. Listening to English songs was the most practiced and so preferred activity, then comes chatting to their friends and watching TV programmes in English. Though most of them recognized the importance of practising grammar exercises and reading books in English, these were not favoured by most students. No other tasks such as writing diaries/journals, stories, etc, were added here. These results do not differ from those obtained from the control group.

These findings confirm the post-test's results which show that though the participants developed some increase in their autonomy, its degree remains low. Being at their first stage of this process, they could not undertake further initiative tasks apart from those assigned by the teacher within the portfolio training process. Indeed, most of them were still dependent on their teacher for explanation, correction, guidance and feedback, besides the social environment to give them opportunities for interaction. This was indicated in their views which were still supporting teacher-centred classroom. This is consistent with the studies conducted by Sambell et al.,'s (2006) which found that "*Sophisticated views of autonomy take time and experience to develop gradually*"(p.166). These research findings also confirmed that autonomy develops by degrees and students became autonomous within a subject when they develop a higher degree of autonomy as Nunan (1997) stated. To this end, a gradual move is required from teacher-centered teaching to learner-centered to enhance students' autonomy in the language classroom (Dam,1995).

To conclude, introducing language portfolios as learning and assessment tools within this research experiment was a challenge for both the teacher and the students mainly at the beginning of the training. This is so, since these tools "*require considerable planning, collection and development of evidence, organization, and assembly— all of which take time*" (Jones & Shelton, 2006, p.26). Nevertheless, one has learned from this experience that careful planning and the provision of a supportive learning atmosphere for their use can help lessen the emerging difficulties. Indeed, interacting with students has proved its effectiveness through maintaining dialogue where the teacher's guidance, support and feedback can be provided regarding that process. Scheduled conferences have provided the teacher and the students with such opportunities as the Written Expression course alone did not suffice to achieve that aim. Through

such interaction, the teacher could also gain more feedback about how they were proceeding with them, thus plan and take the necessary decisions to refine its implementation.

Regarding portfolios' effect, these contributed in raising the participants' motivation in studying English and the Written Expression course. This is so, since "*by taking control over their learning, learners develop motivational patterns that lead to more effective learning*" (Benson, 2001, p.69). Owing such control, their feeling of responsibility and sense of creativity were enhanced, their learning got more organized and enhanced, besides developing some self-assessment attitudes where their reflection on their learning, planning and goal setting were involved. So, this helped them gain more awareness of their learning needs and difficulties in writing. Yet, affective training into portfolios requires time and practice which are the ingredients for making the process more familiar to both the students and the teacher, thus developing students' autonomy in language learning.

4.8 Conclusion:

The research findings within the present research indicated that training first year students into language portfolios, and using the latter as assessment and learning tools in the Written Expression course led to raising their motivation, their feeling of responsibility, besides making them more organized students, encouraging them to share their creativity and ideas, and helping them understand the lessons and succeed. Involving in such experience also supported them develop some self-assessment attitudes such as reflecting on their learning and planning how they need to improve, thus raising their awareness of their learning needs and difficulties in writing in English. Yet, such training period was not sufficient to help these students develop a degree of autonomy that enables them to act independently, thereby developing more autonomous learning attitudes.

Therefore, for autonomous learning to occur students need to develop the capacity to take control of their learning which requires time and practice and goes beyond teachers' instructions and so the classroom setting. Such capacity grows by degrees out of interaction and dependence, as a consequence of the social interactive roots of learning (Little, 1991). Thus, teachers' major concern is to reach that stage and develop this capacity in their students. Portfolios can be effective tools to reach that goal because of their potential to involve students in their learning and sustain their interest within. Yet, this requires time to make that change, besides the need for institutional support, effective plan and teachers' cooperation as the next chapter shows.

Chapter Five

Suggestions and Recommendations

Chapter Five

Suggestions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

Developing students' autonomy is a complex construct mainly within contexts where students' capacity for exercising control contradicts with their prior experiences of learning and assessment. Indeed, the present research has provided evidence that self-assessment can support promoting such a process, but this requires a gradual shift of control from teacher to student, thus time and practice within a study programme. Still, to achieve this worthwhile goal, collaboration is required not just from teachers and students, but also from institutions. As Benson and Voller (1997) explain: "*Autonomous modes of learning imply a re-evaluation of the roles of both learner and teacher, the relationship between them, and the relationship of both to institutions of learning. These roles and relationships can be complex and are not reducible to simple expectations of behaviour or distribution of power*"(p.93). Thus, one's concern within this chapter is to provide some recommendations to render the LMD system more effective, i.e., helping students develop their autonomy, thereby learning how to learn by themselves.

5.2 Supporting Student Autonomy: Revising institution culture and practices

Higher education's role is changing to meet the requirements of a modern-based society where learning entails knowledge construction and reconstruction through active involvement and interaction which go beyond the classroom setting. To make from such role more effective, there is a need to move from the traditional instructional paradigm with its focus on teaching and instruction to a learning paradigm that enables students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Indeed, as Birenbaum and Dochy (1994) state: "*Successful functioning in this era demands an adaptable, thinking, autonomous person, who is a self-regulated learner capable of communicating and co-operating with others*"(p.04). Likewise, Benson (2001) brings social, economic factors and ideological perspectives into the debate in support of encouraging autonomous learning stating that "*Socio-economic and ideological changes are rapidly bringing the notion of the autonomous learner into harmony with dominant ideologies of what it means to be a fully functioning member of a modern society*"(p.19). Teachers are thus expected to create learning environments in which students are empowered to

take responsibility for what they learn through developing their ability to think and involve in learning, taking decisions, making choices and processing knowledge.

To cope with this shifting educational paradigm in higher education, a culture of innovation, questioning, openness to change and improvement are prerequisite. Therefore, the Algerian Higher education system has adopted the Bologna reform or what has been known as the LMD system which supports learner-centred approaches to language learning, teaching and assessment. Indeed, promoting student autonomy within this context is one of the main targets of this educational reform and thus the intended learning outcome of teachers' actions and plans. Hence, as shown in the first chapter of this work in spite of the government's support to enhance this reform the development of student autonomy is still theoretical and detached from institutional programmes. The weight of a transmissive and individualistic pedagogical tradition is still prevailing along with an 'assessment for grading culture' and the lack of appropriate teacher development programmes. This may lead to the assumption that there are still gaps between the theoretical principles held by this reform and the actual practices as reflected in context.

In fact, a focus on student autonomy emphasizes a change in institution's culture, policies and practices. But, one should admit that fostering an autonomous learning discourse appear to be a challenging task within Algerian Higher Education institutions where teachers are seen and acting as the only source for knowledge provision and power wielders. Whereas, students are familiar with spoon-feeding, rote-learning and memorization of facts. Under these conditions, introducing this discourse may lead to perceptions of insecurity and risk among those involved in the educational process (Beck, 1992). For this reason, shifting responsibility from teacher to learner in this context requires a gradual change in which institutional support is deemed crucial. The latter involves sensitizing and educating language teachers of their roles, rethinking assessment practices and training teachers in quality assessment. Still, prior to those initiatives HE institutions need to understand what autonomous learning entails and how it should be promoted in language learning context.

5.2.1 Conceptualization of student autonomy:

Adopting student autonomy as an educational goal is not just a matter of changing teachers' and students' roles. Student autonomy is considered a multidimensional construct¹ which encompasses cognitive, affective, metacognitive, and social factor. An understanding of such a process requires reflection on and reconceptualization of what language learning, teaching and assessment mean within. This can help clarify what knowledge entails and how it needs to be constructed by language students at higher educational level. Indeed, student autonomy has been associated with self-regulated learning, where students are holding control over their learning, reflecting and monitoring their progress, thus constructing meanings out of interaction with and practice of the target language. However, in the light of the rapidly changing demands of a knowledge-based society this process *“also involves the ability to adapt to change and to be able to evaluate different kinds of knowledge”* (Moir,2011, p.03).

Therefore, to promote the process of student autonomy Algerian Higher Education institutions need to understand first its underpinning theoretical meanings, objectives and applications, thereby identifying its requirements and expected outcomes in English language learning context. They need to be aware of the importance of developing social and personal responsibility of students through considering it as *“something that needs to be developed for and beyond the knowledge society in an effort to preserve the standing of higher education as a public good”* and so develop *“citizens who are able to advance the general democratic quality of their society and workplace”* (Moir, 2011, p.03).

However, it is worth noting that *“Proposed changes need to be feasible and grounded in a clear understanding of the context in which they are to occur”* (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012, p.22). Thus, there should be a match between reform principles and the demands of the system. Indeed, there is a need to cater for students' language needs here as well as the economic and societal demands of the nation. Institutions should examine how to develop such process and adapt it accordingly taking into account the peculiarities of the educational system, the conditions including the available materials and the existing funding possibilities. In doing so, they can decide upon the type of autonomy needed and the necessary strategies and procedures to put such pedagogy into practice, then set plans to achieve them.

¹ The first theoretical chapter of this work provides more details about the nature of this process.

5.2.2 Teachers' Training: the need for changing roles

To meet the intended expectations of an educational reform where the nature of learning is the focal concern, there is a need as well to revitalize the teaching profession within that context. Teaching should be adaptive to the emerging societal demands since as Day (2001) states "*teachers are potentially the most important asset in the notion of a learning society*"(p.495). Indeed, teacher's role is preeminent in promoting learner autonomy since "*the ability to behave autonomously for students is dependent upon their teacher creating a classroom culture where autonomy is accepted*" (Barfield et al.,2001, p.03). To achieve this objective, teachers need preparation and support to meet such challenging task.

Hence, though the LMD reform intends to foster the development of student autonomy as stated previously, there is no teacher training, workshops or professional development programmes geared to such an objective. In this case, it is unrealistic to expect English language teachers to develop students' autonomy within this context. This is so, because without any autonomy-oriented training or teacher development programmes, they are likely to be unaware of the importance, the means and the skills needed for creating such a classroom culture. Rather, their resistance to change their traditional teaching practices is expected resulting from uncertainty and a feeling of being "*de-skilled*" (Hafner & Young, 2007, p.104).

For this reason, the researcher is emphasizing the need for educating English language teachers about autonomous language learning. This is through involving them in professional development programmes (e.g., workshops.) which provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills that can facilitate this process. These programmes also need to help teachers "*become aware of their new role as facilitators*" and thus train them "*to stop teaching students*"(Sturtridge,1997, p.71). But, a pressing practical concern is how to prepare teachers for engagement in 'pedagogy for autonomy in language learning' within Higher Education?

It is worth noting, that to refine teaching practices it is necessary first to reflect on and examine one's theoretical beliefs and views concerning what constitutes language teaching and learning and adjust them in accordance with the current educational trends. This is so, since it is generally acknowledged that teachers possess theoretical beliefs about language learning and teaching and that such beliefs and theories tend to shape the nature of their instructional practices (Davis & Wilson, 1999; Johnson, 1992; Woods, 1996). Indeed, as Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) maintain "*the extent to and manner in which learner autonomy is promoted in language learning*

classrooms will be influenced by teachers' beliefs about what autonomy actually is, its desirability and feasibility"(p.06). In fact, these beliefs were found to be among the significant constraints to enhancing student autonomy in the language classroom, in addition to teaching methods, curriculum, course books and the organization side including rules and regulations, time factors, exams, management and expectations (Smith,2003).

Therefore, teachers' development towards the promotion of students' autonomy in language learning needs to consider first their beliefs about learner autonomy. This is through asking them, for example, about their definition of this concept, importance to language students, feasibility, their roles to enhance it via questionnaires or interviews, then discussing and sharing their ideas with one another². *"Understanding such beliefs is central to the process of understanding and promoting changes in the extent to which teachers' promote learner autonomy in their work"* since it is likely to unveil what needs to be covered in professional development activities to achieve such an objective (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012, p.07). Moreover, investigating teachers' beliefs and views regarding this process not only reflect their conceptions of autonomy, but also their attitudes and classroom practices and whether these are supporting its development or not. In doing so, the extent of their awareness of the process can be detected.

In fact, in fostering autonomous language learning, the locus of control remains the source of the issue since the notion that *"learners have the power and right to learn for themselves"* (Smith, 2008, p.02) as an essential aspect for learner autonomy can be threatening for teacher's existence or power. Such perceptions appear to be dominating in contexts where teachers' unfamiliarity with student autonomy is common. It is necessary, therefore, to raise teachers' awareness of the importance, objective and principles of student autonomy in language learning within professional development activities. This entails attempting to clarify the terminological and conceptual uncertainties regarding the nature of the process. Such an attempt may include highlighting the following issues:

- Developing learner autonomy has become a matter of necessity since as Moir (2011) states *"The primary task of higher education is to make it possible for students to develop a sense of learner autonomy and to connect with sociopolitical processes"*(p.03)
- This process is neither a method or approach, but rather an attribute or an educational philosophy to increase learner involvement in learning (Benson,2001).

² An example of these questionnaires and interviews is provided in Borg,S & Al-Busaidi,S. (2011). Learner Autonomy: English Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices.

- It entails learner's capacity—attitudes and abilities—to take control over his/her learning which involves reflecting on their learning process and outcome and making decisions concerning what needs to be learned and how, setting goals and plans to achieve them, monitoring their progress and assessing themselves.
- It is not just a matter of implementing skills and techniques to manage one's learning, but it also requires learners' readiness and willingness to engage in the process.
- Learner autonomy does not mean learning without a teacher. Nor does it entail absolute freedom of learners. Teacher's support is required and their initiative and freedom is limited by educators depending on educational policies and learners' learning needs and motivation.
- It is not an individualized form of learning; it involves not only the individual's mental states and processes, but also the social dimension since "*Control is a question of collective decision-making rather than individual choice*" (Benson, 1996, p.33, cited in Benson, 2001, p.49).
- It is not absolute, but it has some degrees and encouraging learners to move towards autonomy can be best done inside the language classroom as Nunan (1997) stated.
- There is no "*one size fits all' approach to learner autonomy*" (Smith 2003a, p. 256) since learners are different in their opinions and beliefs about the process of learning as well as their readiness for, and interpretations of learner autonomy.

It is worth stating, however, that though clarifying the nature of the process is essential to convince teachers of its importance and encourage them to integrate it in the language classroom, its value and meaning can differ from culture to culture due to differences in cultural beliefs (Oxford, 2003). Thus, defining this process depends on the teaching and learning context where it is considered a goal. For this reason, teacher professional development needs to promote English language teachers' dialogue through examining its definition and exploring classroom approaches and practices suitable and relevant to their educational setting as Palfreyman (2003) points out: "*...an educational organization which attempts to promote learner autonomy without facilitating discussion about what this means to different participants may well run into practical difficulties, which are all the more baffling if those concerned appear to share a common goal*" (p.185).

Being involved in such a process of negotiating meaning, teachers are prompted to reflect on their teaching beliefs and practices to find ways to change and adapt them to promote autonomous learning. In doing so, they are more responsible for their teaching and in control of its process, thus autonomous. As stated previously in the second chapter of this thesis, learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy. This is since teacher autonomy involves “*a continual process of inquiry into how teaching can best promote autonomous learning for learners*” (Barfield, et al., 2002, p.220). Thus, “*convincing teachers of the value of learner autonomy in the abstract seems to be insufficient. Just as, if not more importantly, it is necessary to focus on the development of teachers’ own autonomy*” (Smith, 2003, p.06).

Accordingly, teacher development should not only teach teachers about the idea of learner autonomy, but also orient them towards teacher autonomy as a goal. To achieve this objective, there is a need to explain for teachers this process, i.e., its features and requirements within language learning context. Indeed, teachers should perceive the need to engage in reflective teaching, which is the core approach to teacher development, that offers the possibility of enhancing teacher and learner autonomy as interrelated phenomena (See Vieira et al., 2002, 2004).

Nevertheless, awareness of the assumptions and values that underlie this process is essential but does not suffice to trigger and facilitate change. Teacher development programmes need to engage teachers in reflective practice and develop their ability “*to navigate their professional worlds in ways that enable them to create educationally sound, contextually appropriate, and socially equitable learning opportunities for the students they teach*” (Johnson, 2006, p.235). This is through providing them with the tools and approaches that help them engage systematically in this process. How can this be achieved in practice is dealt with in details in the coming sections of this chapter.

5.2.3 Rethinking Assessment in Higher Education

As Gibbs (2006) states: “*Assessment frames learning, creates learning activity and orients all aspects of learning behaviours*”(p.23). To this end, changing assessment to amplify “the want to learn” is essential to promote student autonomy in the Algerian Higher Education. This requires “*a move away from outcome-based assessment and towards more holistic, process-based assessment, such as portfolios and personal development planning*” (Clegg & Bryan, 2006,

pp.218-19). Thus, as Dochy et al., (2004) argue, a new assessment culture needs to be adopted where:

1. *students construct knowledge (rather than reproduce it);*
2. *assessment focuses on the application of knowledge to actual cases which is the core of the so-called innovative assessment practices;*
3. *assessment instruments ask for multiple perspectives and context sensitivity— students are required to demonstrate insight into underlying causal mechanisms not just statements;*
4. *students are actively involved in the assessment process— they discuss criteria and engage in self-and/or peer-assessment;*
5. *assessments are integrated within the learning process and congruent with the teaching method and learning environment.*

(Cited in Clegg & Bryan, 2006, p.217)

Accordingly, relying entirely on summative assessment is not likely to reflect students competence and enhance their reflection on their learning and ability to plan and take decisions to improve it since “*many examinations make considerable demands on learners’ factual knowledge, which can have the unfortunate side-effect of encouraging cramming and shallow learning at the expense of that ‘deep’ learning which is HE’s avowed goal*” (Brown & Knight,1994, p. 67). Besides, the amount of feedback provided out of this assessment form may not help students make sense of their performance, thereby identifying their learning needs and strengths.

Hence, this does not negate the importance of summative assessment as it was stated in the second chapter of this thesis. This assessment approach may enhance students’ extrinsic motivation “*a stimulus for understanding to be developed through deep learning*” (Brown & Knight,1994, p.68). One is calling, therefore, for both summative and formative assessment approaches to be part of the assessment activity within the LMD system. So, institutions need to encourage teachers to use, in addition to exams, different forms of formative assessment such as portfolios, reflective logs, teamwork projects, etc. to assess their students’ process of learning. Yet, understanding the principles and implications of these assessment approaches is crucial for their proper use. HE institutions need to go beyond viewing assessment as a process of grading students’ work but also as a source of learning for them, thus keeping students learning as the objective of assessment. Indeed, their use should be geared to involve students in the assessment process and help them track their own progress and reflect on their learning needs and wants

instead of implementing them merely for obtaining grades over a period of time as it is the case with the present learning context.

Furthermore, teachers need to be provided with the necessary training, sufficient resources and time to support the implementation of formative assessment approaches. They also need to have the choice to select the appropriate method matching their intended outcomes and students' needs. This is so, since the assessment tasks should be representative of the context being studied besides being relevant and meaningful to those involved in this process (Clegg & Bryan, 2006). Still, to achieve this objective HE institutions need to identify the skills and processes in each subject which students are intended to become able to do, clarify them for teachers through criteria or rubric and feedback, besides making them at their disposal. In addition, it is necessary to encourage teachers to identify their students' needs in order to build around the assessment strategies which are appropriate and relevant to such needs and educational expectations.

To make from assessment an authentic experience, there is a need to provide the necessary conditions that support students' needs. This is by establishing self-access centers where the necessary materials are provided along with the staff³. Enough time is also required for teachers in order to give feedback to students and go through it with them. This provision of feedback can be supported through tutoring students where the assessment objectives of each course, its process, criteria and the kind of provided feedback can be clarified. Tutoring needs as well to provide them with the guidance regarding modules' credits, coefficients with each study unit, besides when and how compensation can be achieved.

Collaboration among teachers themselves and others faculty members is required to review their actual assessment practices, whether they are summative or formative in nature, and refine them to maximize learning opportunities. This is through organizing meetings, workshops and conferences where teachers are invited to interact, raise issues regarding their assessment practices, share their experiences with other teachers and faculty members and put forward their suggestions and remarks to reach fruitful decisions. Indeed, to sustain and foster quality assessment in exams it is crucial for teachers to act as moderators to insure consistency in their judgments and help their students interpret properly standards. This means involving themselves

³ These can include computers with Internet services, TVs, headphones, audio tape-recorders, video-players, besides books, newspapers, magazines, letters, etc. The needed staff includes teachers, librarian, technician, tutors and manager.

in processes of consultation, negotiation and application of standards to achieve consensus or agreement (Klenowski & Adie, 2009, cited in Connolly, 2012, p.597). Moderation helps teachers form new understandings and develop shared meanings through negotiation of standards with other teachers (Adie, 2012).

To support this aim, there is also a need for an exam review committee (Wallach, 2006). The prime responsibility of this committee is to review exams by checking them against the stipulated learning outcomes stated in all the course descriptions. Its role can cover as well “*correcting typing errors in exams, checking the clarity of the exam instructions and formatting, changing items deemed ambiguous, flawed and irrelevant and giving suggestions for improvement and deletions to the course teacher or coordinator who wrote the questions*”(Holi & Al Ajmi, 2013, p.137). Decisions regarding the committee’s suggestions and feedback can be reviewed by the faculty members.

As Clegg and Bryan (2006) state: “*Without assessment there would be no need to plagiarise*”(p.219). Therefore, to ensure their academic integrity institutions should make from their assessment practices a stimulus for students to demonstrate thinking and engagement with the task instead of being an opportunity to engage in such a form of academic misconduct. This requires setting a framework, including a policy and guidelines documents, for deterring, detecting and dealing with plagiarism consistently. This covers:

- 1) A definition of plagiarism.
- 2) Awareness-raising about the forms of plagiarism and how to be avoided through a compulsory module for all first-year students as part of the assessment literacy course.
- 3) Ensuring that in the research methodology courses students are taught the necessary skills for academic writing, citation and attribution starting from the first year.
- 4) Warnings to avoid plagiarism should be part of the study guides when enrolling into the university system.
- 5) Warnings in respect of plagiarism should be posted and included in every assignment along with the penalty.
- 6) The student’s submitted research or assignment must be accompanied with the declaration of originality where he/she declares the property of the work.
- 7) There is a need for plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin.
- 8) Training teachers on how to prevent and deal fairly with plagiarism, in addition to sensitizing them to contribute to fight against rather than closing their eyes.

- 9) Detected plagiarism must be penalized in accordance with the guidelines and students need to conceive that this can affect their academic progress.

Finally, to understand the reasons behind plagiarism and gain more empirical evidence about the assessment effects on the teaching learning process HE institutions need to promote research or case studies relevant to their context by launching projects and encouraging teachers to take part in through providing them with the necessary financial support and rewarding those of valuable contributions. By doing so, teachers can obtain relevant and informative feedback about how students are progressing and what needs to be done to help them close the learning gap. Still, to achieve this objective teacher training into assessment literacy is prerequisite.

5.2.3.1 Assessment Literacy Training for Teachers

It has been widely recognized that language assessment literacy is an important aspects of teachers' professional knowledge (Coombe et al., 2009). Being literate in assessment means *“having the capacity to ask and answer critical questions about the purpose for assessment, about the fitness of the tool being used, about testing conditions, and about what is going to happen on the basis of the results”* (Inbar-Lourie,2008, p.389; cited in Watanabe, 2011, p.29). Accordingly, assessment literacy provides teachers with the knowledge and necessary tools that help them understand what they are assessing, how they need to assess it according to specific purposes and what decisions and instructions they need to take to assess their learners effectively and maximize learning. According to Coombe et al., (2009) assessment literacy can be achieved through:

1. Understanding what a good assessment means while recognizing the different views about the nature of education which may lead to dissimilar approaches to assessment.
2. Providing professional development through both online training of teachers and through assessment workshops at all levels.
3. Being committed to significant change in educational practices.
4. Making assessment resources (especially online) available to language teachers to achieve successful professional development.

However, it needs to be maintained that assessment literacy does not only concern teachers, but also those involved in test development such as: policy makers, test developers, test administration, etc. Test takers or learners are also concerned with it *“because they are the most*

important stakeholders and the greatest recipients of the benefits derived from the process and the product of language assessment” (Watanabe, 2011, p.29). Still, this section is concerned with teacher assessment literacy since the objective here is to help teachers improve their assessment practices to promote students’ autonomy.

The kind of teacher training suggested here is intended to promote teachers’ assessment literacy within universities. This is by supporting them in developing “*multi-dimensional awareness*” and “*the ability to apply this awareness to their actual contexts of teaching*” (Tomlinson, 2003, p.02). Indeed, the assumption underlying this training is that assessment literacy operates at two levels: the conceptual level involving knowledge about assessment principles and the operational level involving skills and techniques about it. Accordingly, teacher trainees into assessment literacy need to be aware of some major assessment principles in EFL/ESL context and get involved in practicing such knowledge within, thereby developing practical skills and techniques in educational assessment.

Training teachers into assessment literacy needs first to sensitize them to the importance of being literate in assessment and the benefits derived from such process over both learning and teaching. Indeed, teacher trainers should clarify the role of language assessment and its relation to teaching and learning within the current educational trends. This is through explaining to them how assessment results can affect their teaching approach and outcome, thus their plans as well as institutional decisions and goals. Besides, as Gibbs (2006) claims “*assessment has more impact on learning than on teaching*” (p.23). Therefore, these trainees need to assimilate that assessment and learning should contribute to each other.

To do so, assessment impact on learners’ psychological state, their beliefs, learning attitudes, and performance should be clarified from the start by teacher trainers. This is through explaining with illustrations and case studies how this effect can be generated and teacher’s support needed to lessen or overcome negative washback effect. Also, it is necessary to raise teacher trainees’ awareness of the benefit of identifying learners’ learning styles, needs, and what they know and are able to do in a given course in order to align learning and instruction with assessment.

Hence, this would not suffice without showing them what effective role assessment should play within a knowledge-based society where the purpose of education is to produce critical reflective learners who are able to construct their knowledge and cope with the rapidly changing

world. It is critical, therefore, to consider and use assessment not merely for establishing levels of achievement at the end of a course, but also for creating opportunities for learners to learn through engaging them in reflecting and assessing their own abilities and other's; in a secure learning atmosphere that supports negotiation and collaboration among learners and teachers to work out the provided feedback and make decisions and plans for improvement. Clarifying such role is likely to help teachers identify this process and feel a sense of commitment towards its achievement.

Thus, assessment is no more the sole responsibility of teachers, but learners should contribute as well to this activity. For this reason, teachers' training into assessment literacy should make them aware of the need to integrate alternative assessment approaches. Even in cases where final examinations are much favored by institutions/schools, there are still avenues for implementing them, depending on teachers' interest and engagement within this process. Thus, this stage of training needs to clarify the importance and objectives of this assessment and sustain teacher trainees' interest in its use. It should also familiarize them with its different approaches and tools (portfolios, peer-assessment, role-play, etc.) which can be used to foster learning along with their purposes and the data they generate.

However, before selecting any assessment tool and setting the assessment tasks, teacher trainees need to be aware of the need to identify first the assessment objectives of a given course. Relating these objectives to the assessment process is decisive in defining the assessment criteria and deciding the assessment content, the kind of assessment tool that can fit such objective, the way it needs to be integrated more effectively and the assessment conditions required. In case the assessment objectives already exist, they need to understand them and their relation with the intended learning outcomes of the course before undertaking any step within the assessment process.

To help teachers make effective use of assessment, this training stage also needs to cover raising their awareness of what constitutes language assessment principles, i.e., reliability, validity, authenticity, etc., in order to develop appropriate assessment procedures that match the intended assessment objective. Yet, there is a need to acknowledge that assessment is not only a matter of designing assessment tasks (whether summative and/ formative), assessing learners' knowledge and skills about the language and giving marks or grades; but it involves as well providing learners with feedback. Indeed, within this process learners should make sense of and use feedback to learn and improve future performance. It is important, therefore, to clarify for

teacher trainees the purpose of feedback, features of constructive feedback and the different learners' reactions which can be generated. Further, the importance of evaluating continuously the quality of this feedback and all decisions included in the assessment process should be highlighted within this training stage.

With regard to the practical stage, this aims to equip teacher trainees with the necessary strategies and techniques of language assessment which are related to particular contexts. In case teachers are test-makers, there is a need to learn first how to set assessment tasks that can fit in with the intended assessment objective, thereby aligning classroom assessment with curriculum and instruction. This is through identifying what needs to be assessed, i.e., language form, content or both, and what weighting should be for each. For this reason, teachers need to get trained into how to design assessment tasks for different objectives and how to weight them accordingly. Moreover, in attempt to make assessment fair they need to learn how to improve its reliability, validity, reduce bias, set clear assessment criteria and marking schemes in accordance with the required level of achievement. Since learners need to understand how such criteria relate to the assessment objective, the assessed work and the mark; teachers should possess the techniques that can help them involve learners in taking part in their formulation.

To enhance assessment for learning culture, the formative function of assessment needs to be pre-eminent. To do so, different alternative approaches are to be introduced in teacher training along with their use. Yet, as Djoub's (2013) research findings revealed using these assessment forms does not necessary lead to their promising results over learning "*unless genuine attempts are made to use such processes as the basis for feeding back constructive information to students in a way that can influence their future learning*" (Murphy, 2006, p.43). Teacher trainees need, therefore, to be provided with the guidelines concerning:

- How to select, develop and use alternative approaches to enhance the learning objectives.
- How to train learners into their use and raise their awareness about and interest in their development.
- How to provide continuous feedback and guidance along the process.
- How to assess them reliably and evaluate such process more effectively.

Since "*good assessments center on the process of learning and examine the extent to which an individual has increased skills and understanding*" continuous evaluation is crucial to keep track of such processes and bring about the necessary changes to improve them, thereby guiding

teachers' decisions and practices as well as enhancing learning opportunities (Clegg & Bryan, 2006, p.219). This training needs to encourage teachers' self-evaluation over their assessment practices and provide guidance into the process. This is by showing them its procedures (such as observations, checklists, questionnaires, etc.), how to use them continuously and effectively to gain more insights into these practices, thus linking theoretical concepts with experience.

Whether it is summative or formative, assessment should act as an engine for learning rather than a frightening experience where learners may see themselves as victims. Indeed, to help them overcome such psychological barrier and make best use of assessment to learn teachers need to learn about the kind of psychological support learners need along the assessment process, besides how and when this should be provided. Thus, teacher trainers' concern is:

- To train teachers to communicate effectively assessment objective, criteria and clarify how these relate to what was taught to make assessment objective and fair, thereby instilling in learners confidence and satisfaction of its process and outcomes.
- To indicate how to develop supportive, authentic learning environments where learners make and learn from their mistakes.
- To show them how to involve learners in the assessment process since this is likely to raise their learning motivation, by teaching them the necessary techniques of helping them assess their peers, do the marking process, share assessment criteria, etc.
- To provide them with the tools and techniques that can help boost learners' motivation and self-esteem, for instance demonstrating how to praise, encourage and reward best performance, create competition among learners while being tolerant to certain mistakes.
- To clarify how and when thorough and motivating feedback needs to be provided.

In addition, learners or test-takers are also in need of technical support involving exams' taking strategies. For this reason, training teachers into assessment literacy should equip them with the techniques necessary to:

- Familiarize learners with the test's format.
- Help them plan for their learning and revise regularly for their exams/tests.
- Make them able to monitor their progress and reflect continuously over their learning.
- Use effectively summative assessment forms to learn and prepare well for final exams.
- Teach them exam strategies, for instance, how to manage time during exam, how to plan for the answer, etc.

- Show them how to work out their teacher's feedback and set plans to improve their future performance.

Finally, it is worth stating that providing ongoing professional development beyond such training is essential to cope with the changing conceptions of learning and societal requirements, which call for “*an adaptable, thinking, autonomous person, who is self-regulated learner, capable of communicating and co-operating with others*”(Birenbaum & Dochy,1996, p.04). Indeed, teachers' theoretical conceptualization and practical experience concerning language assessment needs to be updated with the new assessment culture which focuses more on assessing learners' skills, abilities, and capabilities (Clegg & Bryan, 2006). Professional development can be sustained as well through ongoing reflection over assessment practices. This is so since engaging in this inner dialogue is a process of meditation over one's actual practices, an exploration of the self, i.e., one's knowledge and skills about assessment and how these are reflected in practice, of the learner, i.e., his/her learning process, outcomes, beliefs and attitudes; besides being a source of awareness and evaluation of the effectiveness of our choices, thereby acting as a stimulus for change and improvements. Yet, the latter cannot be achieved without sharing assessment literacy with learners who need to perceive assessment as a learning opportunity where they should take part in rather than just a process for grading that indicates passing or failing. Also, schools' and institutions' role is deemed significant in supporting teachers and learners' assessment literacy and refining the process to make it consistent with the emerging educational expectations.

5.3 Teacher Role to Promote Student Autonomy

With the rapid developments and changes with digital technologies, teachers are challenged to develop their thinking and practice to instill critical minds able to participate actively in the knowledge society. They are, indeed, faced with the need to move beyond the traditional assumptions of learning as an individual process towards dynamic learning mindsets that is social, collaborative and self-directed. Fostering student autonomy requires changing the teacher's role “*from that of an authority who distributes knowledge to that of a subject who creates and directs complex environments of learning, involving the students in activities allowing them to build their own understanding of the subject matter, and working with them as colleagues in the learning process*”(Marcelo,2005, p.06).

5.3.1 Teaching towards Student Autonomy

As stated previously in the first theoretical chapter of this work, student autonomy is just an individual construct but it involves as well social interactions with teachers and peers and readiness for its development. Following the constructivist view on learning, autonomy is not only a desirable additional skill in the sense of self-management, but it is an integral part of all meaningful learning as students become increasingly capable to fulfill tasks and social functions independently (Little, 2004). It is, thus, a continuous process where students extend their autonomy by building on what they are already able to do (Little, 2004). Teachers' role within this process is that of facilitators who provide effective support to which is commonly referred as 'scaffolding' (McLoughlin, 2002, p.149). The core areas of scaffolding the development of student autonomy includes: facilitating students' involvement, promoting their reflection and scaffolding their immersion in an authentic learning environment and community of practice (Little, 2004).

Teachers need to involve students in taking decisions concerning the teaching content (what to learn) as well as the approach (how to learn). Indeed, certain choice needs to be provided for students in terms of the syllabus content. They can negotiate with their teachers what lessons they need in the course to improve, the depth of practice they need to understand and the kind of tasks required. This dialogue is necessary as it is likely to help teachers get aware of their students' needs and difficulties, what should be done and how to help them learn and improve. Teachers can also invite them to create their own tasks, teach a lesson or share something with other students and exchange ideas in groups. In doing so, students are more likely to gain more confidence and interest in their learning process, thereby having more ownership over the process.

However, students' involvement in their learning process may not be attained unless the instructional goals and objectives are made clear to them (Nunan, 1995). This is because "*Having a clear understanding, as a learner, of where one is going and what one is expected to be able to do affects students' desire to learn*" (Farmer & Eastcott, 1995, p.89). Indeed, whether teachers are relatively free to decide what to teach and how to teach it or not they need to raise their students' awareness of "*ways of identifying goals, specifying objectives, identifying resources and strategies needed to achieve goals, and measuring progress*" to help them make relevant decisions concerning how they learn (Cotterall, 2000, p.111). To this end, students need to be

provided with a model of language learning, where they can question the role of input texts and tasks, to trial alternative strategies, and to seek feedback on their performance (Cotterall, 2000).

Furthermore, offering opportunities for making choices requires the use of different learning resources. For instance, *“if we are using a particular textbook, we will need to think about how the activity can be modified or re-ordered according to the students’ preferences”* (Benson, 2003, p.294). Also, to help them make choices and voice their decisions in class a supportive learning atmosphere is required where students’ can take risk, make mistakes and learn from their teachers’ feedback. This requires as well teacher’s sensitivity regarding what students consider significant and what they see as trivial (Benson, 2003).

Since reflection is the defining feature of autonomous learning, teaching needs to be thought provoking. Indeed, courses designed to promote students’ autonomy must encourage them *“to set personal goals, monitor and reflect on their performance, and modify their learning behaviour accordingly”* (Cotterall, 2000, p.116). It also important to involve students in communicative and problem solving tasks, questioning, research-based inquiry where they can think and make use of the English language, instead of spoon-feeding or teaching them for exam. This is through leaving a space where they can explore on their own the course content. To encourage students’ engagement in such a process, teachers can give assignments or address questions that students can work on and support them with references and guidance. Students need to perceive that their achievement is acknowledged by their teacher through rewarding and praising them.

In addition to that, to help students develop appropriate target language use there is a need to immerse them in authentic learning environments, i.e., *“realistic situations resembling the contexts where the knowledge they are acquiring will eventually be applied”* (Herrington et al., 2006, p.235). This means that the tasks designed for practice and feedback should be those in which students will participate in the future. Therefore, from the very beginning, students should be surrounded by the target language in everyday class activities such as selecting goals, discussing tasks and evaluating results (Little, 2004). Students’ future needs can be addressed.

Students also need to be encouraged to work outside the classroom and use their English through assigning homework, projects, etc. and deciding the time allocated for their completion. Yet, setting the task and its required time lies at the teachers’ hands, but time management and

the means by which the task is completed is determined by the students (Philpott, 2009). In doing so, students are likely to develop an ownership over their study and thus develop a capacity to manage their learning. To help students make improved use of their self-directed study outside the classroom, Philpott (2009) put forward the following suggestions:

- a) *Set tasks for study time together for the first few weeks of a course.*
- b) *Set tasks a student must complete on their own to develop autonomy.*
- c) *Set tasks a student must complete within a small group to develop self-direction.*
- d) *Vary the tasks set within a given time frame to maintain motivation.*
- e) *Make sure of tasks set within lessons to ensure each task has purpose.*
- f) *Ask the student to keep a time-log to develop time management skills.*
- g) *Return to similar tasks to ensure progression in these areas.*
- h) *Acknowledge work completed to maintain motivation.*
- i) *Discuss method of working and levels of independence within each task with each student or as a class.*
- j) *Make time for reflection of study time in and out of the classroom.*

(Philpott, 2009, pp.46-7)

Team working is also likely to instill in students a sense of responsibility and create competition among students towards better achievement. This is through assigning research projects and encouraging students' presentations in class. Yet, involving students in research may not be a fruitful experience in case they undertake the risk of plagiarism. Teachers, therefore, need to clarify for students the objective of doing research, its relation to the course at hand and the criteria used in assessing them. It is also critical to equip students with the necessary research skills that can help them plan effectively their research and provide them with continuous guidance along their conduct. A set of strategies can be proposed here as follows:

- *Introduce students to a range of research resources and data in class to raise their awareness of possible research avenues.*
- *Ask students to contribute to whole class research on a regular basis to establish a culture of shared learning.*
- *Create a class research board or use the virtual learning environment (VLE) to share research findings.*
- *Insist all individually produced work has a minimum of one piece of information that cannot be derived from whole class work or texts.*
- *Use the reading techniques with a range of research data and resources.*
- *Encourage field research whenever possible.*
- *Visit libraries (even the college library) and research facilities together and make use of resident experts.*
- *Use video conferencing for online research at nationally based sites (e.g. National Archive).*
- *Show an interest in the students' individual discoveries.*
- *Invite a local researcher (Media, University, Council) to visit your school or college and inform students how they work.*

(Philpott, 2009, p. 45)

5.3.2 Making Assessment a Positive Learning Experience: Considering Formative Purposes

To support students' autonomy within the Algerian higher education system, assessment needs be directed towards achieving this goal. Teachers are therefore required to rethink their assessment decisions and practices, connecting them to the learning and teaching process. Still, this may not be attained with the prevailing teacher's perceptions that view assessment exclusively as an act of measurement at the end of a course and a bolt on activity which they are bound to. Assessment needs to be considered by teachers and students alike as an educational learning experience by which teaching and learning get enhanced.

Teachers are thus faced with the need to make assessment for learning part of the classroom assessment culture. To do so, understanding how formative uses of assessment need to be implemented is essential to realize their potential. Indeed, assessment for learning is not only about assessing continuously students, but it also involves engaging them actively in assessing themselves and others and working out their teachers' and peer feedback.

“The traditional way to think of formative uses of assessment is teachers assessing frequently and using the results to plan the next steps in instruction. Assessment for learning goes beyond that. It involves teachers providing descriptive rather than evaluative feedback to students. It also includes students — from clarifying targets to self-assessing to communicating with others about their own progress”.

(Stiggins et al.,2007, p.36)

Assessment for learning revolves around one big idea that is “*students and teachers using evidence to adapt teaching and learning to meet immediate learning needs minute-by-minute and day-by-day*” (ETS 2010, cited in Bennett,2011, p.08). This implies that it is to be used on a regular basis to capture students' needs and provide them with useful and timely feedback to act upon it to improve their learning. This in turn can help teachers better understand students' skills and competences in a specific course. According to Zangl (2000) teachers' role within this approach is assessing different learning outcomes, capturing both learners' profile and the performance level of the whole class and track their progress towards achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Within assessment for learning, students are active thinking about three questions: (1) “*Where am I going*”? ; (2) “*Where am I now*”? ; and (3) “*How can I close the gap*”? (Stiggins et

al.,2007, p.41). Questioning, self and peer assessment can be used to direct the instructional processes of establishing where learners are, sharing learning expectations can help decide where they are going and feedback can support them identify how to close the learning gap (William & Thompson,2008). These five strategies are discussed in details in the following parts.

5.3.2.1 Sharing Learning Expectations:

Assessment for learning is most effective when it enables students understand their language learning process and how they need to make progress, supporting meanwhile teachers get a clear grasp of where they are heading. As stated previously, communicating high expectations to students is crucial since they need to understand what is expected from them to make use of the assessment criteria and feedback and engage in peer and self-assessment, thereby developing their autonomy (Philpott,2009). This process *“is partly about articulating explicit goals that students understand and can orient themselves towards, and partly about the level of perceived challenge”*(Gibbs, 2006, p.29). There is, therefore, a need to share with our students the learning targets and criteria of success prior to starting the lesson, the task or giving an assignment. But, what strategies can be used to articulate them more effectively?

Stiggins et al., (2007) recommend the use of two strategies to communicate learning targets or goals of a given activity. The first requires the use of a simple language to explain them, besides checking students’ understanding through asking them about the reason of using that activity and what they are learning from it. Stiggins et al., (2007) also suggest asking students to define quality performance then demonstrating how their thoughts match with the rubric used to define quality in addition to providing them with guidance to understand this rubric and inviting them to establish appropriate criteria.

Hence, as Price and O’Donovan (2006) state: *“...the continued emphasis on explicit articulation of assessment criteria and standards is not sufficient to develop a shared understanding of ‘useful knowledge’ between staff and students”*(p.108). This is so, since *“students come to understand criteria through experience, through trying themselves out against a criterion and getting feedback”*(Brown & Knight,1994, p.114). For this reason, Stiggins et al.,(2007) propose within the second strategy using examples and models of strong and weak work related to problems which most concern students. Using anonymous work, students can analyse these models and then justify their judgments. In doing so, *“they will be developing a*

vision of what the product or performance looks like when it's well done" (Stiggins et al., 2007, p.43).

In fact, Price and O'Donovan (2006) action research has shown that students who were actively engaged in understanding assessment criteria and standards achieved significant improvements in performance. Their approach consists of a pre-assessment intervention which was designed within the business module in which students were voluntary participating in a workshop prior to the submission of a self-assessment sheet with their coursework⁴. A week before that workshop, students were provided with two sample assignments and marksheets including assessment criteria and grade definitions then they were asked to complete the marksheets individually and provide a grade and their feedback for each assignment. The workshops (ninety minutes long) were offered to these students in groups of forty and were structured as follows:

- i. students discussion in small groups of their initial individual marking of the two sample assignments;*
- ii. feedback of small groups' agreed grades and rationale to plenary;*
- iii. tutor-led comparison of provided rationales with criteria; looking at inconsistencies and reliance on visible criteria (e. g, presentation; structure);*
- iv. tutor explanation of each criterion;*
- v. small groups' review of assessment and grade in light of tutor explanation;*
- vi. final report from small groups to plenary grade for each piece of work;*
- vii. tutor provided annotated and marked versions of samples and discussed tutor assessment and mark.*

(Price & O'Donovan, 2006, p.104)

Within this approach, then, discussion and dialogue need to be maintained so that students can justify their assessment of the work and compare it with others. After three weeks, the students submitted their coursework with the completed self-assessment sheet. It needs to be noted, that the marksheets which the students used for the sample assignments and for their self-assessment are the same (Price & O'Donovan,2006).

Engaging in such workshops may require time and teachers' efforts. Therefore, teachers need to think and plan effectively for such an approach. The ultimate goal is to go beyond

⁴ This was handed three weeks after that workshop

conveying explicit description of standards and criteria to more social active learning processes where students engage in working out their meaning and develop shared understanding. It is, indeed, through discussion and questioning of one's thought and judgments that meaning and understanding can emerge.

5.3.2.2 Questioning:

Encouraging reflective learning has become a necessity to prepare students for the rapidly changing technology-driven future of work. So, education's aim is to create a rational being who does not merely possess an effective memory, but he/she must be able to react to data, think and be active in searching for an understanding to problems. Research suggests that students are more likely to develop as engaged, self-directed learners in inquiry-based classrooms (Jang et al., 2010). To this end, questioning, i.e., "*engineering effective classroom discussions, questions and learning tasks that elicit evidence of learning*" (Bennett, 2011, p.08) is "*a means of developing and extending student dialogue and is an essential tool for both teaching and learning*" (Philpott, 2009, p.65).

In effect, questioning is a sort of dialogue which acts as a gateway to ideas exploration, explanation, meaning negotiation and interaction between teachers, students and among students themselves. Within this process, teachers are not the only ones asking questions and generating debate, but students are also invited to ask and share their ideas and goals in the language course. Questioning can center around the course content, its approach, tasks as well as the assessment activity and student performance. Effective questioning skills are required to generate such a learning atmosphere as they can:

- *allow teachers to gather information about the level of students' knowledge,*
- *actively involve all students in learning,*
- *develop the communication skills and confidence of students,*
- *encourage students to become self-directed learners, and*
- *provide recognition and reward for achievement.*

(James, n.d. p.01)

Teachers, therefore, need to plan their questions carefully by thinking through possible questions which would encourage students towards further investigation and a deeper understanding of the concepts being focused on. Thus, in addition to the importance of matching the instructional objectives, teachers' questions need to promote students' thinking. To this end, the type of questions should go beyond providing short factual answers that require memory to

inviting students to explain, justify, compare, contrast, express their opinions (agree or disagree), evaluate, summarize and conclude.

Hence, to help students develop their critical skills through questioning questions should be phrased clearly according to the class' language level and made specific to the point. Besides, the way of addressing them should prompt students' answers and discussion. To do so, wait time needs to be provided for students to think about and formulate their answers. They can be allotted a given time to write them down then read them in class. Students also need to be aware of the kind of thinking required by the question thus making, for example, the difference between explaining and discussing an issue.

Asking questions about the course content is important for students to understand. Indeed, questions can be raised regarding ways of learning more about the topic such as: What do we want to understand more deeply? What big questions will we explore? What is important to know about this? Still, this process needs to go beyond this scope to cover how students need to plan and organize their learning, how to identify their learning difficulties, assess their learning and improve it. Teachers, therefore, need to ask questions that provoke such thinking. The suggested student portfolio in the present research can illustrate these types of questions which were addressed in the Language Passport section. To assess their performance, for instance, students were asked questions such as: How was your performance? Why did you perform in such a way? What are your needs to improve this performance? Students can write down their answers and discuss them in class with their teacher and peers.

Handling answers is also an important part of the questioning process. While answering, students should not be interrupted by their teacher nor belittled after giving wrong or incomplete answers. *"Teachers should seek to understand those answers more completely by gently guiding student thinking with appropriate probes"*(Walsh & Sattes, 2005, p.15). All students should be provided with opportunities to elicit their responses. For this reason, teachers need to seek for other students' alternative answers or comments on those already provided (e, g., what do you think of that answer?). Questions thus need not lead just to answers but to debate among students, thereby raising further related inquiries and issues.

In fact, teachers should not be the only ones asking questions in class. Students should also involve in this process. For this reason, inviting them to raise questions within a relaxing learning atmosphere is considered essential. To encourage students asking productive questions, i. e., relevant questions that help them understand the course, think about their learning and how to improve, one is suggesting the following tips for teachers:

- Clarify to students the importance of questioning to their learning achievement.
- Before asking them to formulate their questions, make explicit the framework which support such process.
- At the end of each course, invite them in groups to ask questions concerning what they have already dealt with in the course.
- Prompt their questioning through, for example, writing on the board incomplete questions such as: what do you think about..., what is the difference between..., what would you do to.....etc.
- Involve them in writing and presenting their projects in class while encouraging them to ask questions to each other, discuss ideas and reach conclusions with your support.
- Invite them to step at the board and play the teacher's role: answering and asking questions.
- Ask them to write their personal questions which they prefer not to ask in front of their peers in their portfolios, their journals or simply put them in an envelope to hand them over to their teacher to answer them⁵.

5.3.2.3 Self-assessment:

In traditional teaching and learning decisions concerning what counts as knowledge and what needs to be learned and assessed lies at the teacher's hands. Being passive recipients of teacher's judgments "*learners can find themselves in a client role and this may breed distrust and a feeling of us and them*" (Brown et al.,1995, pp.80-81). Yet, this authority is now questioned (Brew, 1999). With the presence of the internet, knowledge can be accessed and students can decide on their own what is needed to be retrieved. "*Knowledge is becoming fluid, viewed as a product of communication and interpretation*" (Brew, 1999, p.162). Teachers, therefore, should not be the only assessors, but plenty of opportunities need to be provided for learners to assess themselves through integrating self-assessment in the language classes. As discussed in the theoretical chapter of this work, this assessment approach can be a powerful tool for fostering

⁵ These are sensitive questions.

students' autonomy and improving their language learning. Nevertheless, when it comes to incorporating it into practice teachers may not be able to make the right choices all the time regarding the method and its appropriate use.

In effect, prior to integrating self-assessment teachers need to understand the objective and nature of this process. When self-assessment's purpose is formative students learning is targeted. It is not simply a self-grading process where learners assess their performance against a set of criteria, but it involves making judgments on how learning needs to improve as Brown and Knight (1994) states: "*Self-assessment involves the use of evaluative processes in which judgement is involved, whereas self-grading is the marking of one's own work against a set of criteria and potential outcomes provided by a third person, usually the tutor*"(p.52). The defining characteristics of self-assessment include students' involvement in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work, making judgments about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards and setting decisions to improve (Boud,1994).

It follows from this, that to learn from self-assessment students not only have to gather evidence of their learning (as it is the case with students' portfolios), but also analyse their work in terms of the goal/standard; make decisions about what they need to do to improve; know what to do to close the gap; and monitor their progress towards achieving this. Reflection is, thus, the core element of self-assessment since it underpins all these stages. As shown in the present case study, portfolios can be used by students to reflect on the teaching and assessment content, their performance as well as their learning needs and goals. Still, reflection is not only about questioning one's abilities vis-a-vis such content but it is also the gateway towards negotiating plans, criteria and making decisions towards achievement.

In addition to the need to understand the nature and objective of self-assessment, "*what is crucially important is attention to the context of the assessment and to relating what is being assessed and how it is to be assessed to that context*" (Brew,1999, p.162). To identify the assessment goals, there is a need to get an idea of the intended learning outcomes of a course or module, in order to select the self-assessment method and tasks that serve the intended purposes. But, students' interest and involvement in assessing themselves is unlikely to be sustained in case their attention is focused on performance and outcomes where the teacher remains the only indicator of grades and marks. For this reason, it is important for teachers to collect information

about the students' needs, their learning styles, their abilities, beliefs and attitudes to identify the learning goals and focus on them while assessing them.

Nevertheless, students' reluctance to assessing themselves is expected mainly in context where they are not familiar with this process as Gibbs (2006) says "*Students' unfamiliarity with new assessment methods may also make it harder for the teacher to make the innovations work well*"(p.20). To this end, teachers need to consider students' perceptions prior to introducing any self-assessment procedure then raise their awareness of the importance of involving in this process to their learning progress and autonomy. Also, it is necessary to clarify the objective of using a given self-assessment procedure in relation to the subject being taught and the assessment goals on which students' assignments or performance will be judged. This is so, since "...*Without careful briefing, students can become disoriented and confused by assessments which demand displays of mastery and excellence together with expectations of high pass rates*" (Farmer & Eastcott,1995, p.89). To understand such criteria, students can be provided with examples of self-assessment work which have been marked and commented on. Besides, teachers can invite them to decide which criteria should be used to assess a particular task which is "*an excellent exercise in developing their understanding of the whole assessment process, and should produce better work as a result*" (Brown et al., 1995, p.79).

Furthermore, students' training into assessing properly their own work is of paramount importance. Indeed, encouraging students to take responsibility for what and how to learn is useless unless students are equipped with the skills to monitor, make judgment and critically reflect on their performance in relation to the intended outcomes. It is, thus, important to make the cycle of recording, self-assessment and reflection a routine part of the learning experience along which coaching, repetition and reinforcement are provided (Robinson & Udall, 2006). Moreover, teacher's provision of detailed feedback on students' work and supporting them with guidance through interaction and dialogues are essential components of the process.

In effect, communication needs to be maintained within a climate of openness and trust. Herein students' needs, interests and learning expectations are voiced and their involvement in making sense of teacher's feedback is enhanced. Still, the latter does not entail negotiating the obtained mark and questioning the assessment reliability, but rather comparing their actual

performance with the required performance, seeking teacher's guidance, identifying the learning gap and reflecting on how to close that gap.

It follows from this, that students need to recognize the value of self-assessment and that is contributing to their learning and improvement in a specific course. So, it needs to be the means through which students learn and engage in the course and thus prepare well for its exams. Therefore, it is important for teachers to align self-assessment practices with exams in a way that improves students understanding and reinforces their learning. Besides, the extent of their engagement and the level of attainment need to be explicit to both the student and the teacher (Robinson & Udall, 2006). Selecting the right self-assessment procedures is also a crucial decision which contributes in the achievement of the process. Teachers are thus required to learn about each procedure: its traits, objectives, and mode of use then decide which one is appropriate according to the subject discipline, the intended learning outcomes, students' needs in addition to the teaching and learning conditions. Teachers can use, for instance, portfolios, journals or diaries in teaching writing which allow students to reflect, assess their work and monitor their progress in relation to this skill.

i. Portfolios:

When assessment's objective goes beyond monitoring students' performance towards supporting their learning and reflection, assessment procedures need to be carefully selected to achieve more authentic and performance-based assessment. Portfolios are among the assessment strategies which have the potential to achieve this objective. Yet, examining the learning context revealed that no teacher used these tools for any targeted purpose. Besides, the research sample stated that they have never used portfolios or even heard about them during their schooling. This may be due to teachers' lack of awareness of them or reluctance to use them in their classes. Reasons for such reluctance can be attributed to their feeling that they do not have enough time and knowledge on how to fairly assess a student's performance (Airasian,1991) or because of previous experiences, when the execution was unsuccessful or the results inconclusive (Stiggins,1994). In fact, portfolios can be time consuming for students to complete and teachers to mark. To this end, one attempts to provide more practical guidelines to help teachers and students use portfolios and develop their autonomy.

To implement effectively portfolio assessment, teachers need to believe in constructivism where “*students must themselves be active agents in their own learning, transforming what is to be learned through the screen of their own experience and existing understandings.....to be successful learners must construct and reconstruct, for themselves, what is to be learned*” (Hillocks,1999, p.93). Indeed, this assessment tool is unlikely to contribute to students’ autonomy in case cultural transmission approach to learning is still dominating the language classroom. As Farmer and Eastcott (1995) state: “*Some tutors reported that, if assignments are not carefully designed, students can be just as instrumental in their approach to the preparation of portfolios as they are to any other learning task*”(p.92). Thus, the way teachers approach portfolio assessment needs to reflect their interest in and commitment to enhancing such a learning model. Portfolios should be considered “*a critical account of the contents-more than an annotated contents list-which provides an opportunity for the student to contextualize the work and demonstrate the learning achieved*” (Brown & Knight 1994, p.83).

Not only teachers’ conception of language learning which needs to change, but also their role and attitudes when using portfolio assessment. To facilitate this process, students’ differing needs, learning styles, beliefs and opinions are to be embraced. Teachers also need “*to learn to stand back, and to hand over the responsibility of the learning to the students....to trust that the students will learn, and that the reflection writing and discussions are part of the students’ motivation*” (Bryant & Timmins,2002, p.25). Indeed, the entire process of portfolio is based on collecting, selecting and reflecting on work. Teachers, therefore, need first to define and clarify for students what evidence to select to demonstrate their competence. To do so, it is necessary to think about the purpose of the portfolio and how it fits the objective of the course. To align curriculum, instruction and assessment, teachers need to answer questions such as:

- What concept, skills or knowledge is being assessed?
- What should students know?
- At what level should students be performing?
- What type of knowledge is being assessed: reasoning, memory, or process?
- How can students prove and demonstrate what they have learned?
- How will one know how to assess a range of successful performances?

In addition to defining clearly the purpose of the portfolio, decision needs to be made regarding the kinds of evidence which will best show student progress toward the identified learning goals. The physical size of the portfolio is to be limited. Indeed, one has concluded from the present investigation that making the portfolio’s content more concised is likely to help

students accomplish the process and feel more comfortable with it. Therefore, the suggested portfolio evidence needs to be reduced (i.e., instead of asking them to suggest three exercises for each lesson they can select one or two) and students' reflection can concern just lessons and exams. Yet, asking them to decide the portfolio's cover and include proverbs, songs, poems, etc. need not be ignored since it can help students get more motivated and feel more ownership of these tools.

Regarding portfolio's process, teachers need to take into account the time devoted to its understanding and development, in addition to how to train students into its use. It is also necessary to have clear and explicit criteria for both teachers and students to guide assessment. In fact, important features of the portfolio assessment process are "*careful planning of the contents required, the guidelines for students and staff, realistic estimates of students and staff time, the stated usefulness of the portfolio to students and the kind of feedback that will be provided to students and when*" (Brown et al., 1997, p.187). Also, decisions need to be set regarding what assessment criteria to opt for, when to submit them for assessment, where to keep them for that process and how to evaluate the whole process. Indeed, keeping the portfolios with students in the present research was helpful because it enabled them to bring about the necessary change and complete them regularly. Informing them of the deadline for their submission for assessment also guided their accomplishment, supported them get more organized. Evaluating the process through observations, interaction with students and questionnaires was a source of feeding forward for the researcher towards change and improvement. Therefore, one is emphasizing that teachers need to work as a team to plan for the implementation of the portfolio assessment, discuss issues related to its process and take decisions to improve it.

Nevertheless, introducing this assessment approach requires raising students' awareness of these tools through:

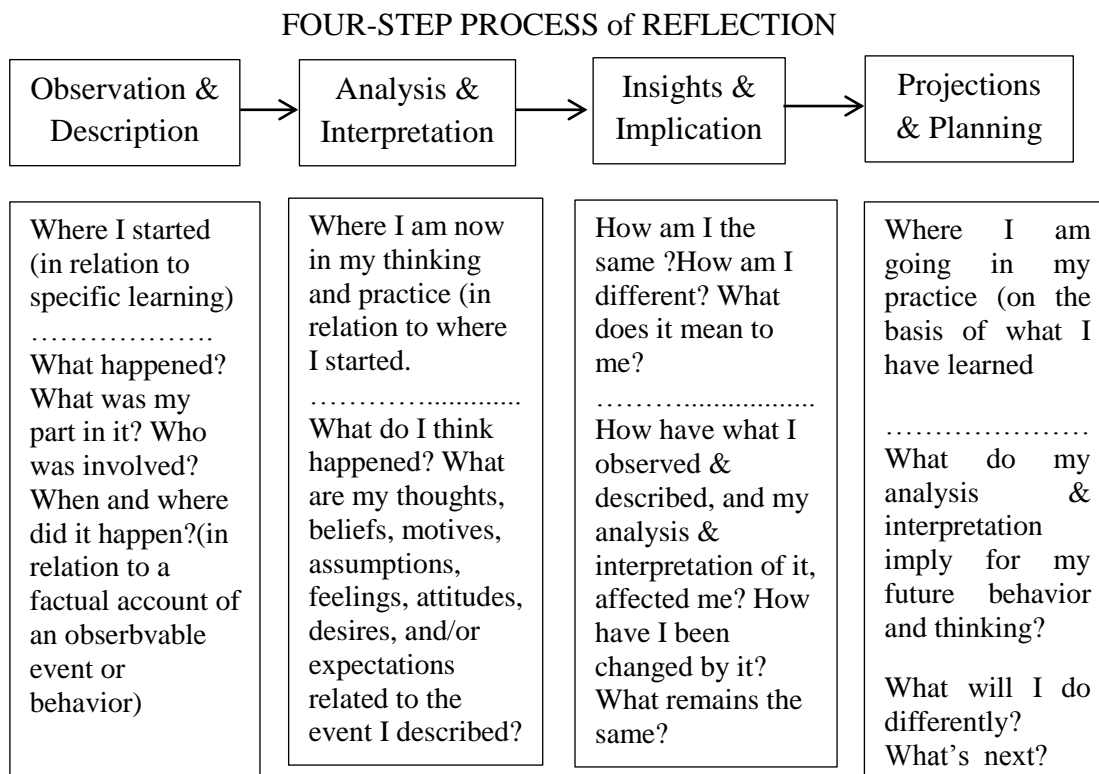
- Using teaching aids such as videos and PowerPoint presentation to explain the process besides providing students with sample portfolios.
- Providing students with guidelines regarding the format of the portfolio and the nature of the evidence that they should collect.
- Discussing the assessment criteria to be used and clarifying the intended performance through sharing exemplars with students, besides giving formative feedback along the development stages.

- Facilitate students' video recording of the important stages of portfolio and give their time for reflection and self-assessment.
- Encourage their self-assessment after completing their portfolios through asking them.

(Bryant & Timmins, 2002)

Moreover, students need to understand that quality not quantity counts within portfolio development. For this reason, teachers can provide interim assessment opportunities, telling them whether the evidence they are assembling is appropriate or not (Race et al., 2005). In fact, one has learnt from the present study that portfolio assessment requires teachers' time and efforts to clarify both its content and process, keep checking regularly their accomplishment. Conferences can serve this objective through supporting teachers interact with their students beyond the lesson's scope.

It is also required that students recognize the importance of reflection in constructing their portfolios and receive the necessary guidelines on how this process can be achieved. Indeed, teacher's concern in portfolio assessment is to encourage their written reflection. Jones and Shelton (2011) maintain that students' written reflection can be enhanced through engaging them in the following steps: observation and description, analysis and interpreting, insights and implications, projections and planning. The students first observe and describe all what goes inside their learning including their state of knowledge and skills and how these change. Then, they analyse and interpret their motivations, thoughts, beliefs, questions, feelings, attitudes, desires and expectations through examining the motives behind their actions and how these relate to what was observed in order to make sense of their experiences. After such an analysis, the students think about what they learned from their own experiences and others', thereby considering the outcomes and implications of their actions and observations. The last step involves reflecting on how to plan and improve their future learning on the basis of the data gained from the previous steps (see figure 5.1 below).



Figure(5.1): Four-Step Process of Reflection (Jones & Shelton, 2011, p.85)

Furthermore, it is important to involve students in assessing their portfolios through for instance addressing questions like “*what do you consider you did especially well and what would you now do differently*”? (Race et al., 2005, p.74). The present research has proved that sharing decision with the participants regarding the content of their portfolios in the second semester was motivating and important for the researcher to learn from them. It is also suggested that materials which are included to be dated and include an explanation for their inclusion. Time should be devoted to discussion, collaboration, peer-feedback on the achieved work where students can voice their ideas and reflect on their practices, besides giving them opportunities for their creativity and involvement. Feedback within portfolio assessment is supposed to be descriptive rather than just involving marks. For this reason, teachers need to structure their feedback through using an assessment pro forma so that their comments and notes are directed to students (Race et al., 2005).

ii. The Reflective Log/Journal:

As Seeler *et al.* (1994) states: “*educational strategies which take students out of the passive role and place them in an active, thinking mode should be used*”(p.08). To help students engage in

their learning process, think critically and develop their ideas, reflective journals have been advocated as a self-assessment tool (Morrison,1996). According to Hedlund et al., (1989) “*As a literary form, the journal falls roughly between the diary and the log: it consists of regular, though not necessarily daily, entries by which the writer focuses and reflects upon a given theme, or a series of events and experiences*”(p.108). It is, thus, a personal recording of students’ learning experiences and a means to reflect on them. Different authors use different terms to describe this tool. It is referred to as a learning journal (Morrison, 1996), personal journal (Stanesco, 1991; Dart et al., 1998), a student journal (Hyers, 2001), a learning log (Stanesco, 1991), a topical autobiography (Hedlund et al., 1989), or just simply a journal (Cantrell et al., 2000; Connor-Greene, 2000).

Journals or learning logs are based on the assumption that they engage actively students in their learning (Connor-Greene, 2000), improve their learning (Cantrell *et al.*, 2000),develop reflective practice (Morrison, 1996) and promote lifelong learning skills (Walden, 1988). Indeed, writing a learning journal makes students more aware not only of *what* they learn, but also *how* they learn (Voss, 1988). It also helps teachers to get an idea about how students think and learn, in addition to serving as a dialogical tool which establishes and maintains a relationship with the students (Spaulding & Wilson,2002). For Brown et al., (1997) the purpose of learning journals are to provide students with opportunities to:

- *Record their learning experiences.*
- *Reflect upon the progress and problem of learning.*
- *Integrate theories and practice and different aspects of a subject.*
- *Express feelings and mood states about their learning.*

(Brown et al., 1997, p.177)

Hence, learners need to be trained into how to use such journals. Besides, both the journal’s audience and purpose must be made clear from the outset. To help students make effective use of journals as a self-assessment tool, Brown et al., (1997) suggest that:

- Students need first to submit an edited sample of their journals for feedback purposes and assessment.
- Continuous and useful feedback needs to be provided to help students overcome problems with these journals.

- Both students and staff should be provided with explicit guidelines on journal writing. This is through clarifying the content, style and the topics of the journal, how much to write, the duration of each journal task, confidentiality and examples of different types of reflective writing.

It follows from this, that students need to be provided with practice and continuous discussion of the achieved work. Yet, the focus is on the process of learning rather than the product of learning. Besides, according to Trejos (2008) to implement effectively learning journals, teachers need to allot time for students to reflect, self-assess their performance, and share their reflections with their classmates to develop a sense of solidarity for learning. Trejos (2008) also pointed out to the need to provide feedback based on students' reflections and teachers' observations of their performance in the learning journals so that they know that their reflections are taken into account.

5.3.2.4 Peer-Assessment:

Like self-assessment, peer-assessment provides students with a greater ownership of their learning process since it is not a process done to them, but a participative process in which they are themselves involved. Exchanging ideas, *“students will become more experienced at learning and will become more autonomous learners, able to stand on their own feet without the kind of passive dependence on the tutor for information and assessment that has been traditionally the case in much of Higher Education”*(Brown & Knight, 1994, p.52). Indeed, this assessment allows students to gain a great deal of useful feedback from each other (Brown et al., 1995), besides developing skills in group work, leadership, teamwork, creative thinking, and problem solving (Brown & Knight, 1994).

Hence, within peer-assessment (as well as self-assessment) the question which might be raised is: who can assess better than the expert? Because of loyalty or friendship students can over-mark each other's achievements (Brown & Knight, 1994). In addition to that, Brown and Knight (1994) identified other problems related to reliability which are summarized as follows:

- In peer-assessment, students can give higher marks for those showy, extrovert members of the group and lower marks to the quieter member, who may have contributed to the group's achievement.
- There may be some lazy students who may claim for credits for work which they have not achieved but others did in the same group.

Teachers can assess better than students, but this does not imply that students when provided with the criteria and necessary guidance they would not do the task (Brown & Knight,1994). Rather, they are likely to learn through peer-assessment and develop the necessary skills through practice. As Brown and Knight (1994) maintain: “*Self-evaluation and evaluation of the contribution of one’s peers are not skills which are lightly undertaken, and are not skills that can be undertaken without a certain amount of training*”(p.52).

Accordingly, students need a great deal of preparation to achieve the process. Besides, understanding the criteria and devoting time for their negotiation are also essential. Students can be involved first in giving feedback based on the criteria which had been negotiated before, and can thus identify strengths and weaknesses prior to the submission of the piece of work (Brown & Knight,1994). For instance, students can be invited to exchange lecture notes in the final segment of a class and to discuss perceived gaps and differences in understanding (Spiller, 2012). To ensure that each evidence and criteria are taken into account, peer-assessment sheet which has been negotiated at the briefing can also be used by students to analyse each other’s work then discussion of the suggested outcome will follow (Spiller, 2012). To promote peer involvement in assessment, there are particular characteristics which need to be present as put forward by Boud and Falchikov (2007):

- designed Peer-assessment tasks to enhance learning;
- require learners to take responsibility for their actions;
- encourage a reflective approach to learning;
- require students to identify and apply standards and criteria;
- provide some degree of modelling and/or scaffolding;
- involve learners in judging their performance or that of their peers.
- allow learners to practise peer and self-assessment skills in a variety of contexts;
- allow fading of support so that learners may move nearer toward developing their autonomy.

Having power over each other, however, is reported to be unpopular by students (Falchikov,1995). Therefore, there is a need to consider the context where peer-assessment is integrated since as Brew (1999) says: “*Introducing peer-assessment in learning contexts where there is negotiation of meaning outcomes and processed, or where students have practice at self-assessment is quite a different matter from introducing peer-assessment in a traditionally taught or assessed course*”(p.162). It follows from this, that care has to be exercised in the way peer-assessment is introduced. Moreover, examining the context prior to such introduction is a prerequisite step to undertake. Students’ beliefs and views regarding assessing their peers are to

be considered so that decisions can be made concerning how to raise their awareness of the importance of the process and motivate them to engage in.

Involving students in self-assessment can support peer-assessment. As Brown and Knight (1994) put forward, when students develop the skills of peer-assessment of other students in other groups, they can try assessing peers within their own group: “*Having worked through inter-peer and intra-peer assessment, they will then have the skills necessary to evaluate better their own performances. Hence, peer and self-assessment reinforce each other*”(p.57). Providing students with early feedback on relatively straightforward tasks can help them undertake peer-assessment. Teachers also need to instill students confidence to give one another feedback and learn from it, besides making effort to enable and support peer support groups among students within a safe 'no fail' situation (Race,1995).

5.3.2.5 Feedback in Formative Assessment:

Feedback is an important component of the assessment process upon which students learning can be enhanced. It reflects how much learning has been achieved thus indicating the effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching process. Nevertheless, within traditional assessment contexts where the focus is on testing knowledge and comprehension at the end of a given course, feedback remains limited to marks or grades which might not mirror students’ process and progress in learning. Yet, within formative assessment feedback’s goals and processes need to go beyond grading practices to support the development of student autonomy. In such contexts, both self-assessment (internal feedback) and teacher feedback (external feedback) should help achieve this objective. Thus, quality feedback matters.

i. Quality Feedback:

According to Sadler (1998) formative assessment “*is intended to provide feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning*”(p.77). It follows from this, that this assessment form is not used for allocating grades but rather for supporting students learning through the provision of feedback. So, in contexts where student autonomy is a pertinent goal quality feedback needs to be questioned. In this respect, Nicol and Mcfarlane-Dick (2004; in press) identified seven principles of good feedback practice that might help support this educational goal. Good feedback practice:

- *helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, expected standards);*

- *facilitates the development of reflection and self-assessment in learning;*
- *delivers high-quality information to students about their learning;*
- *encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem;*
- *encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning;*
- *provides opportunities to close the gap between the current and desired performance;*
- *provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape the teaching.*

As stated in the theoretical part of this work, good quality feedback needs to communicate explicitly to students the goals, criteria and expected standards of a given task. This can include information about errors, the missing information, neatness or format of that task (Brookhart,2008). Indeed, students cannot reflect on their learning progress, identify the learning gap and take decisions to improve unless they understand what the required performance entails. As Gipps (1994) suggests in order for students to improve, they must have a notion of the desired standards and compare actual performance with the desired performance.

However, misconception can raise among students regarding the goals and criteria as Hounsell (1997) and Norton (1990) studies have shown. In such cases, the feedback information students receive is unlikely to ‘connect’ (Hounsell, 1997). So, herein lies the question concerning how to make explicit assessment criteria and standards. Achieving this objective through verbal description in class or written documentation was difficult as found by research (Yorke, 2003). However, providing students with exemplars of performance with attached feedback has proved to be a powerful approach since it involves students in comparing their performance with the task standards and goals (Orsmond et al.,2002). In addition to these exemplars, other strategies were also put forward by Juwah et al., (2004) as follows:

1. *Providing better definitions of requirements using carefully constructed criteria sheets and performance level definitions;*
2. *increasing discussion and reflection about criteria and standards in class;*
3. *involving students in assessment exercises where they mark or comment on other students’ work in relation to defined criteria and standards;*
4. *involving them in workshops where students in collaboration with their teacher devise their own assessment criteria for a piece of work;*
5. *combinations of the above have proved particularly effective.*

(Juwah et al., 2004, p.09)

Understanding the tasks goals, criteria and standards is a prerequisite for engaging in reflection and self-assessment. Yet, feedback does not only concern the task, but also the processing of the task and self-regulation (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Using portfolios, for instance, requires students’ reflection on their learning and collection of work that meets the defined standards. To accomplish such a process teachers need to provide feedback that clarifies

such standards and show clearly the process of completing them, thereby allowing students to hold control on what materials to select, how to present them and reflect regularly on them. Meanwhile, giving students information regarding how they monitor and control their learning (self-regulation) is likely to encourage them to engage in this process and develop their self-confidence, thus getting more willing to expend efforts to deal with feedback (Brookhart, 2008).

Furthermore, good quality feedback contributes to students' learning, rather than dampening it down. To this end, it needs to be both directive, telling the student what needs to be fixed or revised as well as facilitative, providing comments and suggestions to help guide them in their own revision and conceptualization (Shut, 2007). It should be the teacher's source for providing guidance and support along with students' learning. This is through raising their awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, indicating meanwhile their progress and the deficiencies in their own learning. Good quality feedback is thus "*information that helps students trouble-shoot their own performance and self-correct; that is, it helps the students take action to reduce the discrepancy between their intentions and the resulting effects*"(Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, in press). This implies that feedback needs to help scaffold the development of students' autonomy (Nicol & Milligan, 2006).

Hence, supporting students' autonomy also entails considering affective factors. Therefore, good quality feedback needs to have a positive effect on students' motivational beliefs and self-esteem. A positive feedback, however, does not entail describing the work as good when it is not. It is rather describing how the strengths in a student's work match the criteria for good work and how those strengths show what h/she is learning, besides pointing out where improvement is needed and suggesting what could be done about it (Brookhart, 2008). It follows from this, that feedback needs to focus on the process of learning including efforts and strategic behaviours instead of being concerned with the person's ability or intelligence as Black and Wiliam (1998) maintain: "*feedback which draws attention away from the task and towards self-esteem can have a negative effect on attitudes and performance* (p.23). This is because providing feedback about the person (e., g, you are an intelligent student) can lead the student to think that intelligence is fixed and so achievement is beyond his/her control while giving information about the process is likely to instill beliefs that achievement depends on specific efforts and strategies which lie under the student's control (Brookhart, 2008).

Additionally, to generate a motivational effect from feedback its language should be handled with care by teachers. Even in case of good performance, if the student is expecting a positive word like ‘excellent’ and h/she receives ‘very good’ this may lead to questioning. So, quality feedback needs to be descriptive rather than evaluative which means showing the gap between the student actual performance and the goals, criteria and standards which define the academic competence (Wiggins, 2001). This is through providing more details in feedback rather than limiting it to adjectives. Still, feedback needs to be focused and reflect the learning intentions or objectives for a particular piece of work.

In fact, there is now a common consensus that “*feedback without marks leads to better learning than marks only, or even than marks with feedback*” (Gibbs,2006, p.27). Indeed, research has shown that grading student performance has less effect than feedback comments because it leads students to compare themselves against others (ego involvement) rather than to focus on the difficulties in the task and on making efforts to improve (task-involvement (Butler,1987). Feedback given as grades has also been shown to have especially negative effects on the self-esteem of low ability students (Craven, et al., 1991). Thus, since the focus of formative assessment is on the learning process rather than the outcome, teachers’ use of feedback comments is advocated. Students can be invited to guess the scores or grades out of those comments.

Nevertheless, an effective feedback must be understood and internalised by the student before it can be used productively. Thus, in addition to making their hand writings clear and so legible teachers need to ensure that students can construct meaning from the provided feedback. To this end, feedback needs to involve students in dialogue with their teacher about that feedback so that they can get an immediate response about their difficulties, develop their understanding and expectations to standards and so decide what to do to close the learning gap. When providing one-to-one feedback, it is necessary that students have the opportunity to ask, inquire and seek for more clarification. Also, teachers can sometimes give feedback to groups of students and discuss it so that each student can learn from the other’s mistakes and realize that s/he is not the only one who makes mistakes.

In effect, encouraging peer feedback is prerequisite to promote students autonomy since the teacher here is not the ‘all-knowing ideal type of a teacher’ (Aviram, 2000), but rather s/he is the facilitator who promotes students’ discussion, exchange of opinions, construction of new

meaning and shows them how to make use of such interaction to improve their learning. There is a need to provide opportunities for students to review their peer's work and provide feedback in a form of dialogue. This is because the process of reviewing someone else's work can help learners reflect on and articulate their own views and ideas, ultimately improving their own work (Dunlap & Grabinger, 2003)

This implies that good feedback practice is a stimulus for dialogue interaction and reflection on the process of learning, generating thus a response on the part of students to close the learning gap and improve their performance as Boud (2000) notes:

“The only way to tell if learning results from feedback is for students to make some kind of response to complete the feedback loop (Sadler,1989). This is one of the most forgotten aspects of formative assessment. Unless students are able to use the feedback to produce improved work, through for example, re-doing the same assignment, neither they nor those giving the feedback will know that it has been effective”.

(Boud,2000, p.158)

Accordingly, feedback needs to help students understand their mistakes, reflect on their needs, make plans and decisions to improve, thus preparing them for the next assignment. Hill and Hawk (2000) identify this as ‘feed forward’ and argue that it should be “*directly related to and should build on the feedback that has been given*”(p.07). To help students make effective use of feedback, there is a need for:

- Providing feedback on work on progress and involving them in planning strategies for improvement (Nicol & Milligan, 2006). This means that there are cases where feedback should be provided while the students' work is being undertaken as it was done within the present research⁶.
- Teachers can also send their feedback via emails so that students can read it again as well as file it.
- Giving students time to absorb and act upon or consolidate the feedback comments.
- Resubmission of the students work. Providing students with the chance to revise their work, re-do it and resubmit it allows them to work out the meaning of the teacher's feedback and learn from their mistakes.
- Giving students reflective worksheets on their teacher feedback asking them about their own interpretation of and opinions about that feedback, how they need to improve their performance, thereby prompting them to think about what strategies to select.

⁶ After checking the students' portfolios, they were provided with comments regarding what needs to be done to improve their work

- Supporting them with a checklist which relates to the task at hand, so that they can revise their work before their submission⁷.
- Discussing their work in groups before submitting them and providing oral feedback.

Moreover, an effective feedback also needs to communicate to teachers relevant information that can help them track their students' learning progress and refine their teaching and assessment practices accordingly. To achieve this objective, teachers need to talk to students about the quality of feedback to get valuable information about its effectiveness. They can also ask them about the feedback they would like when they make an assignment submission. Observation and questionnaire can be used to elicit such data. Besides, continuous evaluation of the feedback is necessary to find out whether it contributes to students' learning, improvement, motivation, autonomy and makes the classroom a place where feedback, including constructive criticism, is valued and viewed as productive (Brookhart,2008).

ii. Supporting Students to Make Effective Use of Formative Feedback: Some Practical Tips

“A response to feedback should be expected as long as the teacher’s comments are brief, clearly written and easy for the learner to understand” (Suffolk County Council, 2001, p.24). As teachers give feedback on students' work, it is crucial that students' responses to the feedback are fed back to teachers as a heuristic to help them develop reflective and effective feedback practices. But, even in cases where constructive feedback is provided students may not use it to improve their learning owing to their lack of awareness, willingness or skills to articulate that feedback. Thus, to make formative assessment more effective there is need to support students make effective use of feedback to improve their learning.

In effect, feedback needs to be conceived by students as a gate leading to their improvement and self-confidence instead of viewing it as an end in itself, reflecting either their success or failure. To increase students' interest in feedback, teachers need to raise their awareness of the importance of processing feedback to learn more about their strengths and weaknesses in relation to a specific course, then plan and take decisions to improve their performance. So, it needs to be considered as a stimulus for evaluating their learning process and outcome. In cases where it is conveying a criticism, feedback remains a source of learning which

⁷ The development checklist of the student portfolio is an example of this kind of support.

does not intend to demotivate or lower students' self-esteem but rather to motivate and prompt them to learn from their mistakes, their teachers' and peers' comments. In case it is congratulating students, further efforts are always required to make from success an intrinsic experience which goes beyond just passing.

To help students assimilate the significant role of feedback, teachers need to provide them with opportunities to learn from its comments. Still, there is a need to teach them from the outset how to use effectively these comments. Indeed, as Sadler 's (1989) observation show for students to be able to compare actual performance with a standard and take action to close the gap, then they must already possess some of the same evaluative skills as their teacher. For some writers, this observation has led to the conclusion that, as well as improving the quality of feedback messages, teachers should focus much more effort on strengthening the skills of self-assessment in their students (Boud, 2000; Yorke, 2003).

To this end, teachers need to give students opportunities to hold control over their learning through the use of self-assessment approach. This is because it *“teaches them where feedback comes from. They will learn the strategy at the same time as they learn how to improve their project, writing assignment, math problem solving, or whatever they are working on”* (Brookhart,2008, p.60). Involving students, for instance, in writing portfolios allows them to reflect on their performance and the provided feedback, thereby relating them to the task goals and criteria and setting plans to improve their performance.

Within self-assessment, students can be involved in interpreting, reflecting and acting upon feedback comments⁸. To interpret the latter students need time in class to compare their performance with the required performance. Teachers can provide them with questions that help prompt such interpretation. These can, for instance, include:

- What are the key words in the feedback comments?
- What mistakes or deficiencies these comments are addressing?
- What piece of advice is advocated?
- What kind of grade or mark corresponds to that feedback?

⁸ This requires good quality feedback which was discussed previously.

Teachers need to listen to each student's interpretation and provide response, i.e., explanation, etc. Holding such dialogue enables them to clarify and justify more their feedback, thereby identifying the learning gap.

Furthermore, encouraging students to reflect on the received feedback comments is crucial to help them close the learning gap. This includes the student's description of his/her opinions and feelings towards teacher's feedback comments and indication as well of the learning needs and plans to achieve them. To do so, reflective worksheets can be provided to students to complete them after class. These worksheets can be kept as part of the student portfolio, journal or set separately. An illustration is provided below.

1) How was your performance? *Very Good* *Good* *Ok* *Poor* *Very Poor*

2) Explain why ?.....

3) Did you expect to get such feedback comments? *Yes* *No*

4) Explain why?
.....

5) How did you feel after getting them?

- Happy because I
- Satisfied because they reflect my performance.
- Disappointed; I was expecting a better performance.

6) What do you need to do to improve your performance?

7) Indicate how you think it needs to be done.

Figure(5.2): A worksheet for reflecting on teacher's feedback.

Acting upon feedback comments implies involving in actions in attempt to close the learning gap. Indeed, after interpreting and reflecting on these comments, students need to be encouraged to initiate and take an active role to improve their performance. For example, a student receiving a feedback comment indicating a deficiency in the use of punctuation and capitalization, s/he needs to practise more exercises on this topic and attach them to those reflective worksheets so that the teacher can relate her/his plans to that practice (there must be a connection between the two). To encourage them to submit their reflection along with their initiative for correction, teachers can reward students for their efforts.

Moreover, students can get trained into how to process feedback. This is by introducing them to examples of feedback comments which relate to the course and ask them to interpret and reflect on them, besides guessing how it needs to be worked out more effectively. Another

alternative would be giving students examples of feedback's interpretations, reflection, decisions and plans intended to learn from them then asking them to guess the kind of feedback comments relative to them. This can be done in class (e.g., as a warm-up task) or assigned in groups as homework.

Hence, the reader can address the need to give grades in addition to teacher's comments. It should be stated, that providing grades or marks is not just limited to summative assessment forms, but teachers' need to provide them with formative assessment is also common to measure students' progress over time. Yet, as stated previously grades distract students from learning from feedback. Thus, since the objective of formative feedback is to contribute to students' learning, it is worth returning students' work with feedback comments without grades. But, the marks are written down in teacher's records and students can get them after submitting their feedback reflection and initiative. It is up to the teacher to decide whether s/he deserves extra points to improve the obtained mark.

Peer-feedback can also help achieve the above objective since it is likely to support students learn about what kind of feedback needs to be provided, in which cases, its way of delivery and articulation. To do so, peer-assessment needs to be integrated. Yet, training students into the process is required. Teachers need first to explain the benefit and purpose of reviewing another student's work and providing her/him with feedback. Then, they need to clarify the task objective, how to use the scoring rubrics, which errors to point out and how in the student's work. They can also give students the ground rules for peer editing to guide more their practices (see the example below). In pairs, students can peer edit each other, then engage in discussion to justify their feedback in relation to those rules.

- Read your peer's work carefully.
- Compare the work with the rubric.
- Talk about the work, not the person.
- Don't judge (e.g., don't say, "That's bad"); rather, describe what you think is good about the work and what's missing or could be done better.
- Make specific suggestions.
- Tell what you think, and then ask what the author thinks.

Figure(5.3): Ground Rules for Peer Editing (Brookhart,2008, p.70)

In the same concern, teachers can use peer-assessment of class presentations which is likely to stimulate students' interest and feeling of self-confidence as demonstrated by the present research. Students can record their views, comments and suggestions regarding the

quality of their peers' presentations and discuss them later in groups. Time can be devoted to indicating what kind of feedback they found more constructive and how it can be used to improve future class presentations. Still, to structure their feedback and focus more their observation there is a need to familiarize students with the criteria or rubrics set for such presentations. This can be achieved by having them as a guide which they can refer to as they work on those presentations (Brookhart,2008) or using assignment return sheets⁹. Students can also rely on the above ground rules to achieve this task.

In addition to peer and self-assessment approach, teachers can help students learn to use feedback through providing them with opportunities to use it fairly as soon as they receive it. According to Brookhart (2008) this can be achieved by designing lessons which involve students in using feedback on previous work to produce better work. This is by using, for instance, a series of homework, quizzes and projects which provide them with feedback on how to work and prepare for the next assignment (Brookhart,2008). Seminars can also support this aim as they provide opportunities for teachers to interact with students and discuss their feedback in case of large classes. Besides, teachers can use blogs to post their feedback on students' projects where they can post in turn their comments and views regarding the tasks.

Teachers need to understand how their students feel about and respond their feedback, in addition to what they want as feedback in order to avoid using strategies that are counter-productive. There are those who seek for how to improve their work and get a better grade. Others react indifferently to detailed comments concerning their work, whereas there are students who consider feedback comments as crucial¹⁰. Therefore, teachers need to get an idea about their students' learning styles and try to tailor their feedback accordingly (Brown & Knight, 1994).

To conclude, one has attempted to clarify more how formative assessment can be used as a source of learning through outlining its five key strategies which can help clarify where they are with respect to the target, where they need to be and what should be done to close the gap. Sharing understanding of what constitutes the language learning process can help both teachers

⁹ Assignment return sheets are coversheets for assignments that provide the marking criteria or rubric for the assignment.

¹⁰ Entwistle (1993) identifies four approaches: The deep approach where the student is interested in understanding his work and thus getting detailed comments. The surface approach where the student reproduces the material to be learned and they prefer general comments. The strategic approach where students are good time managers who seek for mark-related comments and finally the apathetic approach those who like confidence building comments.

and students track their progress and move forward to achieve the intended goals. Through questioning, dialogue and meaning negotiation are maintained among them, leaving thus less possibility for uncertainty, misunderstanding and confusion to take place. For assessment for learning to occur, students need to involve in self-assessment. Language portfolios and journals writing are examples of the assessment tools that serve as windows into students' thinking and learning. Also, using peer-assessment allows students to become instructional resources for one another who learn how to work out other's feedback to improve their work (Bennett, 2011). Feedback quality does matter, but supporting students learn from it remains the key issue. Still, to make from our assessment practices a positive learning experience for students rethinking summative assessment or examination is also required.

5.3.3 Improving Summative Assessment

Most of the discussion so far has been in relation to formative assessment and how to encourage students become more reflective and autonomous in language learning. Yet, final examinations are decisive for students' achievement as they can affect their motivation, learning beliefs, attitudes and so their autonomy development. Therefore, for a better use of examinations one is suggesting a set of recommendations for language teachers which can help them prepare for them and support meanwhile their students' revision process.

5.3.3.1 Get Ready for Examinations: Some Suggestions for Teachers

Few would debate the fact that the role of examinations in Higher Education is fundamental as its results can open doors to certain professions and/ post-graduation studies, affecting thus people's lives and careers. Teaching is, likewise, affected by such results. When students experience success teachers are likely to feel satisfied and rewarded as their teaching has contributed to good results. Indeed, as indicated in the theoretical part of this work washback effect can include teachers, students and even the whole society. For this reason, preparing and planning for examinations is essential for teachers and faculty members to help engender positive washback. Below are twenty suggestions, as put forward by the researcher, for teachers to cope effectively with exam preparation and correction.

- 1) Understand the course objective and write from the outset clear learning outcomes for it.
- 2) Learn about your students' needs, expectations and difficulties in relation to your module.
- 3) Clarify for yourself and your students what the specific purpose of assessment.

- 4) Keep yourself informed of exam regulations and administrative details(e.g., date, time, location of the exam, what they can take with them into the exam room)
- 5) Plan in advance for your course to ensure that there is adequate coverage of all the exams tasks and sufficient practice of exercises and revision techniques to avoid rushing to finish the syllabus before that exam¹¹.
- 6) Think about how marks from different elements of an assignment (within formative assessment) are added together and average with the examination mark. Make this explicit to your students.
- 7) Along with your teaching keep thinking about what needs to be assessed and what assessment criteria are appropriate.
- 8) Think about the sorts of questions or tasks to be used to test the language skill within your course before the exam approaches.
- 9) Talk to your colleagues about what you are looking for in assessing your students to get their opinions and advice.
- 10) Listen to your students' concerns and anxieties before designing your exam.
- 11) Assess students on what was taught.
- 12) Consider students' language level, exam duration and the assessment objective while designing the exam tasks.
- 13) Discuss with your colleagues how to weight the assessment criteria according to the university regulations and try to come to an agreement.
- 14) Formulate clear criteria and work out a detailed marking scheme showing exactly how many marks go to each element of students' work.
- 15) Post the exam correction with the assessment criteria and the making scheme few days after taking that exam.
- 16) Use a grid on a computer or a spreadsheet to keep your marks.
- 17) Allow assessed papers to be returned to all students and clarify meanwhile the assessment criteria and the marking scheme for them.
- 18) Try to give detailed feedback on examination to students.
- 19) Avoid humiliating students for bad results and encourage them to do better in the re-sit exam.
- 20) Listen to students' views regarding the examinations and seek for reasons of their failure or difficulties with them.

¹¹ Planning for the course includes setting the timing and content for your practices, i.e., teaching, assigning tasks, providing feedback, correcting formative assignments, etc.

It is worth noting that, the first six propositions need to be maintained at the beginning of the course. So, it is crucial, for instance, to be aware of the course objective, the learning outcomes, the credits to be obtained, the coefficient of the module, exam duration, how and when feedback is provided so that to make students familiar with the examination context from the start. There are also other issues which are to be fixed such as deciding how to weight criteria mainly when this concerns modules where language form and content are considered, when to give back assessed exam papers and how feedback needs to be articulated. This requires teachers' collaboration to reach a consensus with the support of the administration.

Furthermore, teachers at university might find themselves overloaded when they are faced with huge piles of exam papers to correct. Time pressure to return them back and give feedback is likely to make teachers discouraged to engage in correcting them. To soothe teachers in such case, Race et al., (2005) put forward the following propositions:

- 1) Keep only a handful of scripts or assignments which can be done within a given amount of time while putting the rest under your desk.
- 2) Plan to accomplish the process of correcting through setting stages and build in safety margins for any possible inconvenience.
- 3) A good marking scheme is often realized after the teacher found out the ways in which candidates are actually answering the questions. Put it in a place which can be easily seen while correcting the papers.
- 4) Mark at different places (for instance, at home, work, etc.) since carrying scripts around is likely to help teachers avoid depression doomed related places¹².
- 5) First mark one question through all the scripts. *“This allows you to become quickly at marking that question, without the agenda of all the rest of the questions on your mind. It also helps ensure reliability and objectivity of marking scheme. When you have completely mastered your marking scheme for all questions, start marking whole scripts”* (Race et al., 2005, p.112).
- 6) Ask for help, but do not do it too often otherwise you will make yourself unpopular.

Students are also concerned with exam preparation. They need their teachers' support to develop the necessary revision skills which can help them schedule for such revision and commit

¹² But not in public places.

themselves to its process. Still, exams tend to be associated with pressure and anxiety. Therefore, psychological support is required to lessen such impact and motivate students to make efforts to perform better. How to help students prepare for exams is the concern of the coming part.

5.3.3.2 Preparing Students for the Final Examinations:

To develop autonomous learning skills, students need to get their teachers' support to monitor their own progress towards the desired outcome or exam result. Helping students revise and prepare for their exams is essential to achieve this aim since it can foster their ability to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses and suggest strategies that help them build up those skills and knowledge areas which might otherwise let them down in such exams (Burgess & Head, 2005). This process can also support maintaining their motivation and encouraging them to make efforts to overcome their exam anxiety and succeed.

With regard to the process's approach, exam familiarization is required from the outset of a course so that students can feel secure and make the necessary revision. This entails raising their awareness of the exam regulations, objective and format. Teachers can show samples of previous exams in relation to the course and explain how responses relate to the exam objective. They can invite them to answer them and peer-assess their performance in class. In doing so, students are likely to get familiar with marks schemes and how these relate to the intended performance.

Furthermore, to provide more exam practice teachers can engage students in writing their own examination papers. In addition to the mark schemes, students can also indicate the objective of the examination and the lessons it covers and its duration¹³. This activity can be beneficial for both students and teachers as Philpott (2009) states:

“By preparing a question students have to consider which question style can access the relevant assessment objectives. Similarly preparing a mark scheme will challenge students to unpick an assessment objective and the progression within it. Students can then incorporate their ideas into their own responses. The extent to which students cope with this activity will provide the teacher with formative information about the individuals in their class”.

(Philpott, 2009, p.94)

Accordingly, by designing examinations students are getting aware of how an examiner or a teacher marks their work and what is expected from them to achieve the intended

¹³ As it was done in the present research.

performance. Through such questions teachers are likewise gaining formative feedback on how their students are getting on with their learning a given course.

Preparing students for the final examination involves as well helping them revise and organize more their learning. Indeed, *“If teachers aim to encourage independence then over-structuring and helping prepare student revision could arguably be counter-productive and result in a reversion to a spoon-fed approach to learning”* (Philpott, 2009, p.129). For this reason, teachers need to equip students with the necessary skills of revision through using revision techniques. Yet, as Philpott (2009) put forward since students’ learning styles differ it would be useful to introduce them to a range of revision techniques and give them the choice to select those that suit their learning approach.

In this respect, Philpott (2009) proposes a set of revision strategies which are summed up as follows:

1. Classwork: Students classwork are to be used with their notes, comments and target sheet which is to be placed at the front of the folder for feedback and next steps targets.
2. Homework: They need to be organized along with students’ classwork and purposeful to the topic or lesson of study. It need not always be marked or assessed so that students lose their motivation to complete it. Still, teachers need to check if it has been done and acknowledge it verbally or through a task which depends on the homework completion.
3. Targets from Feedback: It is important for students to understand teacher’s feedback and respond immediately so that they can learn from their mistakes and make use of the advice.
4. Electronic Work: Students can be encouraged to email their work to their teachers and receive their comments and feedback. Teachers can also print the student revised and amended work through use of feedback comments.
5. Planning: Deciding the timing and content of revision is essential. Therefore, teachers collaborating with students need to plan a timetable where students can decide on which areas of the course they need their teacher’s support and which areas they wish to work on their own. Besides, providing them with their revision timetable teachers need to reinforce the importance of showing commitment to its schedule.

It is worth noting that classwork, homework and students' participation in class are the main tools for exam revision. But, these are more effective when the student's work has been regularly fed back on. In this respect, formative assessment practices can support teachers in achieving this goal since they are supposed to provide informative results concerning where students are along an identified learning trajectory for a given standard (Black & Wiliam, 1998). To help students monitor their use of language, identify and correct their own mistakes, Burgess and Head (2005) recommend keeping an independent learning record or diary where students can record their work then discuss it with their teachers.

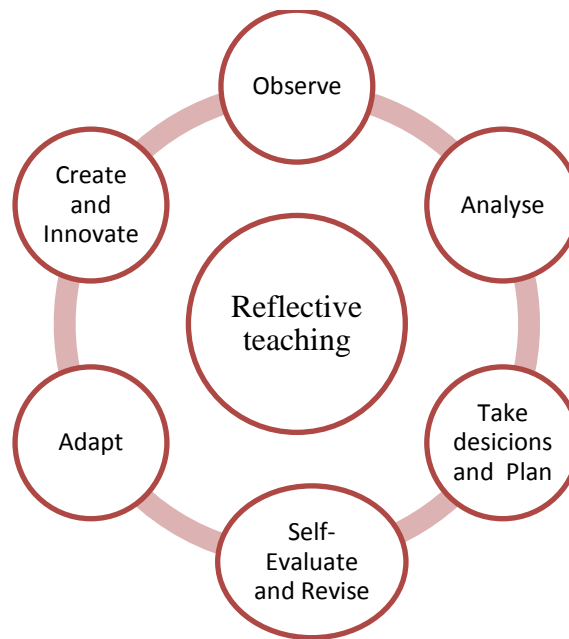
In addition to those revision strategies, there is a need for providing them with a relaxing learning atmosphere where their fears and anxiety of exam taking can be reduced. Indeed, teacher's talk is required to push them to work hard, raising meanwhile their self-confidence and self-esteem in their ability to deal with the task at hand. In the same vein, it is also important to let them speak and express their feelings as Burgess and Head (2005) state "*If we act supportively and offer the time to listen, the student should feel able to talk. Even if nothing of significance emerges at the time, they may come back later if there is really a problem, and ask us to help or advice*" (p.10). Mock exams can also help reduce students' anxiety. This is because they provide "*an experience of exam-taking which can be reviewed afterwards with the students, and which allows them to identify and discuss things that might be worrying them about the exam day*" (Burgess & Head, 2005, p.13).

To conclude, pressure on teachers to achieve results can lead to teaching towards examination where the ultimate goal is to help students pass rather than learn and develop their autonomy. But, preparing students for examinations they will sit can be a source of reflection and formative feedback for both teachers and students. Indeed "*By means of planned, structured and pleasurable revision strategies students can be fully prepared for the momentous examination while at the same time retaining their independence and motivation*" (Philpott, 2009, p.127). Teachers also need to make from such revision an integral part of learning from the beginning of the course and equip students with the organizational tools that can help them gain more autonomy and ownership over their revision process. Besides, evaluating that process and finding out how students are getting on with it is needed to modify its techniques and make them more effective. Teachers' reflection is thus called for.

5.3.4 Reflective Teaching: a Teaching Portfolio Sample format

Changing teachers' role has become a pervasive need of higher education to help students govern and accomplish their studies in an autonomous manner. As stated above, this requires a shift in language teaching and assessment practices from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred pedagogy. Nevertheless, though teachers' knowledge of how to foster this learning approach, their pedagogical skills and motivation to achieve that aim are essential, yet when it comes to practice unexpected outcome may emerge. This is due to "*the complexity of teaching as characterized by the individuality of students, the dynamic nature of classroom interactions and the demand for innovation defies any claim that teachers may be simply implementers of something that gains its legitimacy elsewhere*" (Grundy, 1998, p.31).

In fact, the classroom is a site that provides opportunities for experimentation, exploration and change for both teachers and students (Allwright, 2005). To this end, teachers' reflection is required to make them aware of the theory and motives behind their own teaching, to think about it, and to take some deliberate steps to develop (Gibbs, 1998). Reflective teaching is a cyclical process, as stated before, which includes teachers' observations of classroom behaviours, attitudes and interaction. This can result in revealing students' learning needs and styles within the course. Therefore, obtaining such data requires continuous analyses and reflection upon them as well as decision making and planning. Indeed, teaching practices also need teachers' evaluation and revision, then the adaption of their teaching contents and materials according to their students' learning needs and preferences; in addition to adopting, creating and bringing more innovation to their teaching.



Figure(5.4):Reflective Teaching Stages

To engage in those stages, teachers can use portfolios to innovate and adjust their teaching towards autonomous learning approaches. This is so, since a teaching portfolio can serve as a source of reflection and review through engaging the teacher in assessing his/her work, thereby promoting decision making regarding priorities, goals and areas for future development or improvement (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Besides, this tool can promote peer-review of other teachers' portfolios and collaboration with them for effective use.

In attempt to support language teachers benefit from its potential, a teaching portfolio sample is suggested here. Still, before describing its contents and process there is a need to account first for its purpose and intended audience. This is because *“The purposes and the audience for a portfolio are crucial in determining what is selected to go into it and how the contents of the portfolio are arranged”* (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.103). Thus, prior to creating this reflective tool teachers need to find answers to these questions:

1. Why am I creating this portfolio? For reward? My own professional development? For promotion?
2. Who will read it after me? My colleagues?

For the present teaching portfolio, it aims to promote English language teachers' reflection on their teaching and assessment practices so that these can be geared towards developing student

autonomy. Its intended audience can include other faculty members, i. e., teachers, teacher trainers, alumni and department head¹⁴.

5.3.4.1 Teaching Portfolio Contents:

Like a student portfolio, a teaching portfolio contains carefully selected evidence or artifacts which reflect teachers' experiences, ideas, goals, plans, reflections and decisions intended for improving their teaching and assessment practices as Evans (1995) states: "*It represents who you are, what you do, why you do it, where you have been, where you are, where you want to go, and how you plan on getting them*"(p.11). To this end, the sample teaching portfolio contains three sections which are: Teaching philosophy and goals, Teaching Dossier and Reflections on Teaching. More details about these sections are provided below.

i. Teaching Philosophy and Goals:

Teaching philosophy and goals refers to written description of the teacher's beliefs, values and goals specific to teaching and learning (Jones & Shelton, 2011). This helps understand the competences, teaching goals and strategies, thereby connecting what his/her beliefs with teaching practices. As a matter of fact, other faculty members can identify with such teaching philosophy and goals, understand what teachers are aiming at and find out whether the implemented teaching methods reflect such philosophy and goals or not. An example of the questions which can help teachers state their philosophy and goals is as follows:

➤ *Questions about Teaching:*

- What should teaching at university aim at achieving?
- What kind of relationships do teachers need to establish with their learners?
- How can students be motivated?
- What kind of teaching methods and techniques are you going to implement?
- What is the objective of assessing students?

➤ *Questions about Learning:*

- What does learning involve?
- How can you know whether learning is taking place or not?
- According to you, who is a good student?

Below is an extract of the author's teaching philosophy and goals at university.

¹⁴ This suggested teaching portfolio is not exclusively related to English language teaching contexts, but it can be also used in teaching other disciplines.

Educational values and beliefs	Promoting learners' autonomy and lifelong learning need to be the objective of any Higher Education system. Therefore, teachers, syllabus designers, course book designers should seek to target these objectives through their practices.
My goals	As a teacher, I need to create a relaxing learning atmosphere where my students are praised, can take risk and make mistakes without being afraid of my feedback. The latter needs to be constructive. That is I do not interrupt them while talking to correct their mistakes, but rather I let them finish then I point out to the incorrect use of the language in a very gentle way. I do the same thing with writing. I call the student to my desk and I show where the mistake lies and how it should be avoided. I always remind my students that when we make mistakes we learn, and we learn more when we are corrected by others, i.e., teachers and peers

Table (5.1): An example of a teacher's teaching philosophy and goals

Accordingly, this section of the portfolio can help clarify the role of the teacher, thereby getting an idea about who the teacher is. Besides, in this part the teacher can describe his/her teaching experience and how the latter has changed his/her teaching conception or added new values to it. He/she can mention the schools/institutions where he/she has been working, the type and duration of training received, and the obtained teaching awards. In addition to that, the teacher can justify why he/she has opted for teaching in general and teaching this discipline in particular, who /what has influenced the way he/she teaches, what is good about his/her teaching, etc. It is worth noting that, this part of the portfolio needs to be completed at the beginning of each academic year.

ii. Teaching Dossier:

The second section of the portfolio is the Teaching Dossier. The latter contains two parts: My Teaching Course and My Teaching in Practice. The former aims at clarifying the objectives to be attained through the course, its content, i.e., syllabus and the means by which this can be achieved. It includes the intended learning outcomes, the syllabus, and the materials provided. Indeed, the first task the teacher needs to do here is to identify the learning outcomes of the

course(s) he/she is in charge of which may be reflected in attitudes, behaviours, values, etc.¹⁵ Being aware of these learning outcomes help teachers align their teaching and assessment practices according to these outcomes, thereby making teaching relevant to the educational objectives. Therefore, the teacher's portfolio needs to include these learning outcomes, so that teachers can refer to them when involving in teaching and assessment practices. Moreover, these learning outcomes need to be communicated to students in order to help them understand what is expected of them.

In addition to including the intended learning outcomes in the portfolio, there is a need for outlining the course's syllabus and the teaching materials provided by the institution for its teaching. Also details can be provided about its assessment (are there projects which are included? Are there oral tests or are tests just written? etc.), the schedule for teaching the course, the credits required, and the whole time allocated for its teaching. Moreover, the teacher can precise what kind of references (books, journal articles, websites) students need to consult along their study of the course.

Further information can be included here, concerning the teacher's tutoring, supervision, conference/ seminars or workshop participation or attendance. Though these are not typically related to the course; but they are part of the teaching profession. Indeed, the schedule for tutoring students can be presented here along with students' names. Similarly, the names of the supervised students, their research themes and objectives can be included. Also, the teacher can outline the dates, places and themes of future seminars, workshops or conferences, so that to remember these events and get ready for them.

Concerning the second part 'My teaching in practice', this aims at describing the teaching process, clarifying thus the teaching methods, strategies, and the way students are being assessed. It consists of:

1. The lessons taught including the teacher's plan of the lesson, its contents and the activities suggested (classwork, homework, projects, teaching methods, techniques and materials)

¹⁵ For a definition of the learning outcome go back to chapter one of this work.

2. Assessment plan: the teacher states the type of assessment tools, he/she has integrated into the classroom to assess both learners' learning process and outcome (these can be portfolios, diaries, final tests/exams, etc.) and the purpose and criteria of assessment, the skills and competences targeted, besides identifying when and how teachers' feedback is provided.
3. Others 'feedback: these can be letters, comments and questions from students and other teachers about one's teaching.

Accordingly, this is the space for teachers to depict their daily practices. They need to state as well the objective of including each teaching method, technique and task into their teaching. They can also describe the type of students they have. This means describing their learning needs and styles. This is after having students filled in their needs analysis checklists which are related to the course.

iii. Reflection on My Teaching:

The third section of the portfolio includes the teacher's observation and self-evaluation. The objective of this section is to foster his/her reflection over teaching, help him/her get closer to students and learn more about their learning process, besides making and taking decisions to improve the teaching. The first part of this section includes the teacher's daily recording of observations, while the second part is devoted to teacher's evaluation.

In fact, observation is considered as the core around which reflection can take place and professional development can be achieved (Swan, 1993; Wallace, 1991). As Gebhard (1999) defines it, observation is "*non-judgemental description of classroom events that can be analyzed and given interpretation*"(p.35). Indeed, capturing what is happening in the classroom can help teachers gather data and gain insights into the process of learning. Therefore, observation should not be used as an end in its self, but rather as a stimulus for teachers' reflection, questioning and reinforcement of students-teachers interaction.

As a matter of fact, the teacher needs to keep recording of his/her observations and reflect on them while being out of class. However, different classroom behaviours can be observed. For that purpose, it is better to make one's observation more focused. This is through using

observation sheets which help collect focused data. It is worth noting, that the purpose of this data collection tool within this teaching portfolio is to help teachers improve their awareness, abilities to interact and evaluate their own teaching behaviours (Williams,1989).

In addition to his/her observation, the teacher's evaluation process of his/her work is required. This is because evaluation is "*the means by which a course or a curriculum change can be monitored to see if, in fact, it is what it claims to be and if it achieves, in students, the intended outcomes*" (Johnstone,2005, p.02). So, an effective evaluation leads to change towards improvement and achievement of the intended outcomes. But, what should be evaluated and how it should be done? In fact, to reflect effectively through their portfolio teachers need to evaluate continuously their teaching and assessment process as well as their students' learning process and outcome.

I. Teacher's evaluation of the teaching process can cover:

1. Evaluation of the course and tasks content.
2. Evaluation of the way the course is being taught. (teaching methods and techniques)
3. Evaluation of the teacher's talk.
4. Evaluation of the teaching materials being used.
5. Evaluation of classroom management.

II. Teacher's evaluation of students' learning can cover:

1. Evaluation of their learning needs and styles.
2. Evaluation of their learning attitudes, behaviours and motivation.
3. Evaluation of their use of learning strategies within the course.
4. Evaluation of their output (performance or learning outcome).
5. Evaluation of their feedback (question, comments, etc.).

III. Teacher's evaluation of the assessment process:

1. Evaluation of the implemented assessment tools (their validity and reliability).
2. Evaluation of the criteria used in students' assessment.
3. Evaluation of the way of correcting students' mistakes/errors and providing feedback.

For Brown et al., (1995) to evaluate assessment practices a set of questions can be raised:

- Is time sufficient for your assessing?

- Can you set clear assessment criteria for each piece of work you assess to make from your assessment objective and fair?
- Can you share assessment criteria with your students after setting coursework?
- Are you able to share past assessment criteria with your students to get an idea about how their work is assessed?
- Can you collaborate with colleagues to get the opinions, ideas concerning your assessment practices?
- Can you involve students in self-assessment of their own work while providing them with clear, understandable marking schemes and criteria?
- Can you involve students in peer-assessment within the coursework elements of your subject?
- Can you stick to an agreed assessment scheme which has been moderated and checked?

IV. Other teacher's evaluation can include:

1. Evaluation of the way students are being tutored and supervised.
2. Evaluation of his/her participation or attendance in previous conferences/workshops or seminars. In this case the teacher can address questions like: How was my presentation? Did it stimulate questions and debate among the audience? Was it relevant to the conference/workshop or seminar's theme or objective? How did these events contribute to my knowledge and understanding of my profession? How can I improve my teaching in light of what was gained from these events? etc.
3. Evaluation of other colleagues or faculty members' comments and pieces of advice concerning teaching.

It is worth stating that, the process of evaluation entails questioning one's teaching through administering questionnaires for students and through engaging in self-questioning of most actions undertaken in the classroom. Hence, teacher's evaluation remains incomplete if the teacher does not set goals and plans for achieving them. Thus, he/she needs to think about how to adapt the teaching contents, methods and materials according to students' learning needs and styles. He/she also needs to decide what kind of strategies should be used to help them not only understand better the course, but also participate and involve themselves in learning. Indeed, to enhance their motivation, there is a need for flexibility in teaching and assessment practices.

Including a variety of assessment tools and involving students in assessing themselves need to be among the teacher's goals.

In order to make an effective plan to achieve his/her goals, the teacher needs to take into account the following factors:

- a. Students' learning needs and styles: The teacher needs to refer to them whenever he/she intends to plan for his/her goals and bear in mind that these can be changeable along the course.
- b. The learning outcomes to be achieved: These are to be kept in mind since they are stable and should be achieved at the end of the course.
- c. Time factor: The teacher should focus on particular goals which are to be achieved within a given period of time. So, there is a need to precise the time for each action or decision he/she has made and taken as well as indicate the time by which these goals might be realized.
- d. Affective factors: It is not only the cognitive aspect of learning, but also the affective one needs to be handled with care. Enhancing students' motivation, reducing their anxiety and inhibition, etc., should be among the teacher's goals as stated above. Also, while planning, the teacher needs to think about how and when to ask students to participate, interact and involve in more risk taking tasks. He/she should be careful in dealing with these matters.

5.3.4.2 Teaching Portfolio Process:

After suggesting a teaching portfolio model, one needs now to clarify how this tool needs to be used to enhance reflective teaching. Firstly, it needs to be maintained that the teaching portfolio should be used along the teaching process and reviewed regularly by the teacher. Thus, the teacher needs to indicate the time when he/ she has completed every section or part of it. Organization of each section is necessary. He/she needs to separate each section and state the main objective of each. The portfolio should be creatively and visually appealing, including the cover, graphics, etc.

In addition to that, the teacher needs to justify each piece of work included in the portfolio, or what is known as evidence. Indeed, each piece of evidence needs to be stated clearly, related to the portfolio's objective and it needs to communicate connection to the teaching philosophy and goals. This is so, because the evidence reflects who the teacher is. It must thus express

his/her personality and voice. In case there are criteria which are set beforehand for the teacher's portfolio, the evidence should not be weighed and do not match those criteria. Therefore, the teacher needs to understand those criteria and produce his/her portfolio accordingly.

Concerning the teacher's reflections, the portfolio can include teacher's diaries which might be personal and should remain unconcealed. Therefore, the teacher can keep this part with him/her when submitting the portfolio for other faculty members to be read. Another alternative is that those diaries can be recorded and kept with the teacher. Yet, students as well can be the audience of the teacher's portfolio. This can help motivate them and stimulate their interest in using their own portfolios or developing them.

Finally, collaboration between teachers and students and among teachers themselves is crucial for making effective use of teaching portfolios. Indeed, teachers can reveal to each other their views, attitudes towards using these tools and how such use has influenced their teaching as well as their students' learning. They can discuss their components and use and learn from each other's experience. Also, teachers can talk to their students about their portfolios, show them their future goals and plans which may help them learn and succeed. Students can, then, communicate to their teacher their opinions concerning such goals and effectiveness of their plan.

5.4 Students' Role: Learning to Get Autonomous

As stated in the first chapter of this thesis, developing students' autonomy requires their own motivation, active involvement in the process as well as their collaboration with all partners to achieve that goal. Indeed, students play an essential role that must not be negated when autonomous learning is a targeted mode. To this end, this section intends to help students learn how to depend on themselves to manage their own learning and thus gain certain degree of autonomy. This is through providing them with a set of learning tips and guidelines which the researcher has come out with from conducting the present research work¹⁶. Since this research is based upon the assumption that developing students' autonomy in learning requires their motivation, reflection and interaction, these recommendations cover both knowledge and practical tips to develop these three building blocks of autonomy.

¹⁶ For this reason, the author uses here the personal pronoun 'you' to address to students.

5.4.1 Motivation

Motivation is the engine towards success and students' autonomy cannot develop unless h/she is motivated to get autonomous. Thus, to own this engine, students need first to like what they are doing. This is the basis upon which learning motivation is constructed. When they like their studies they will be able to defeat all obstacles that stand against their willingness to achieve success. As shown in the present work, in spite of being a queer and difficult experience for most students, when they liked their portfolios they felt committed and motivated to complete them properly and thought even of using them again. To like what they are doing students have got to believe in its worth and the outcome or the benefit they are going to gain from it. So, believe in relying on yourself to improve your English and in your capacity to do so.

In fact, motivation also grows out of being self-confident. A student lacking confidence in her/ himself is likely to lose his/her motivation to study, get passive and have a lower self-esteem. To develop this self-confidence, there is a need to recognize one's significant role in determining success or failure. Students need to get convinced that their teacher acts as a guide for them and the university is just one major context where their learning takes place. But, they can learn much outside that context, i.e., at home, library, with friends, etc., and this depends on their efforts and hard work.

Furthermore, students need to understand their approach to studying whether it is a deep approach, surface or strategic approach and that autonomy requires a deep approach in which students must understand ideas and be able to apply knowledge to new situations. Also, to get self-confident it is important to know one's strengths and weaknesses in learning. As students come to know themselves better, they will be able to understand how they need to learn effectively (Arnold & Brown, 1999). Therefore, know your own capacities and try to work out on the learning gap through

1. Reflecting continuously on your performance at university and identifying which module you have to improve in.
2. Seeking your teacher's opinion regarding your performance and what you need to improve.
3. Learning to talk to yourself stating I can succeed and achieve my goal.
4. In addition to knowing your strengths and weaknesses, identify your learning style, i.e., how you prefer to learn and what learning habits you need to maintain and eliminate.

5. Participating in class: Try to tolerate ambiguity and accept that making mistakes is part of the learning process.
6. Practicing your English outside class and trying to identify your weaknesses asking yourself what do I need to improve in my English?
7. Seeking to be among the good students through involving in competition with others to achieve success and improve your English.

In addition to liking your studies and being self-confident to get motivated you need to have a clear objective from the start. Ask yourself questions such as:

- What do I want to do with my English after graduating?
- What kind of studies am I going to pursue? (Master, Doctorate)
- Which language skills do I have to improve more?
- What English level am I looking for?
- What do I want to prove to the others (my family, friends, etc.)?
- How do I need to learn better my English?

Students may have tentative answers to the above questions since learning goals may change or get more focused along with learning. Yet, it is still necessary to determine what you want to achieve by the end of a given study term to be more self-determined. Moreover, to develop “*a love of knowledge in independent minds*” students need to strive for improving their English instead of seeking just for achieving grades to pass (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p.14). It is thus important for students to reflect on their learning.

5.4.2 Reflection

Reflection is an important capacity for students to develop since it can contribute to their learning and autonomy. Yet, to achieve successfully this process students need to understand what effective reflection means and how it can be developed. Reflection involves self-assessment of the learning process including the learning approach, goals, progress as well as the learning outcome (achievement, performance, feedback). Thus, effective reflection mirrors:

- Who the students are in terms of their level, interest, motivation and learning style.
- What they want to achieve.
- What they have learned.
- How they have learned it.
- What difficulties they are facing in the course.

- What they need to learn and improve.
- How they need to learn and improve.
- What progress they are making (in which area?).
- How they are progressing.

As this research has shown, reflection needs to be an integral part of practice and students need time to develop this skill. To this end, they need to reflect on their practices in a structured way. That is, it needs to be done following a given schedule or after an experience. For instance, the participants within this study were asked after each lesson of the course to fill in reflective worksheets where they summed up the lesson, indicate how they found them, their needs and their work plan. It is also important to opt for an assessment tool to record your reflection, i.e., portfolios, journals, diaries, etc. Besides, your interest and commitment to keep ongoing reflection is necessary to make it fruitful to your learning. To do so,

- reflection must be honestly written and you need to enjoy its production;
- do not care about the style, but keep it well organized;
- get convinced of its importance to your learning;
- it is your own work which reflects your thoughts and thus your personality.

Furthermore, to make their reflection structured, students need to develop a set of questions or format to follow. The reflective worksheet used in the student's portfolio is an example of the kind of questions that can stimulate students' reflection. To understand the lessons, identify their learning needs and difficulties, students can use reflection on the lessons worksheet suggested in this work. In addition to that, they can assess as well how they are learning. This includes the strategies used in answering exercises, exam questions, revising lessons, preparing for exams, designing their plans, setting decisions and goals, besides interacting in class (participation, note taking, collaboration with their peers), etc. Students can address the following questions to assess the way they are learning:

- What am I trying to achieve?
- What theories/models/research informed my practice?
- What was the reason for doing that (using a given strategy)?
- How successful was it?
- What alternatives were there?
- Could I have dealt with the situation (exercise, exam,) any better?

- How would I do it differently next time?
- What do I feel about the whole experience?
- What knowledge/values/skills were demonstrated?
- How do I know I have learned?
- When do I know I have learned enough?
- Am I flexible in adapting and applying knowledge?

Reflection also concerns achievement and learning performance.

- How was my performance?
- Why did I perform in such a way?
- How do I feel about that exam? Why?
- What knowledge/skills have I developed and what others do I need to develop?
- How do I need to develop them?

Furthermore, setting learning goals is an essential part of students' reflective practices. Students need to bear in mind that these goals need to be:

Relevant: Learning goals should be related to your needs. This is by asking questions such as what do I know or can do now/what do I still need to know or be able to do/how can I go about making that improvement?

Specific: That is you precise exactly what you will achieve from each lesson. Then indicate how you will reach this goal listing at least 3 action steps you'll take.

Achievable: They must be something you are capable of attaining. So, ask yourself what resources I need to achieve my goal

Time-bound: Students need to specify when to achieve the target. Therefore, set a time line for each goal stating for instance by next week I will be able to write a topic sentence. You can also add additional dates and milestones that you will aim for.

Measurable: It is possible to know whether the learning goals have been accomplished. You can indicate "I will know I've reached my goal when....". You can also ask: what methods can I use to measure or track my goal? (ex, practise more exercises to ensure whether your goals have been achieved or not).

After setting their own goals in relation to each course, students need to design their own work plan or schedule to achieve their goals. This is, for instance, can be achieved through indicating the date, time, the type of task they plan to engage in, the type of materials they need and whether their plan was achieved. They can then evaluate their work plan through finding how effective it was in achieving the target.

Time	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thur</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>	Resources to be used	Done? Yes/No
08:00 - 09:00 p.m.			Revising the lesson of Written Expression: <i>Punctuation.</i>					My notes and my book “Improving Writing Skills”	Yes
10-12 a.m.					Doing my homework of Phonetics				Yes

Table (5.2): An example of a students’ work plan or schedule for learning

5.4.3 Interaction

Students’ autonomy develops from interacting with their teacher, peers and the language learning tasks. Interaction entails active involvement in learning where students construct their own meaning and engage in a culture of shared learning. According to Tsui (1995) “*classroom interaction is a cooperative effort among participants in which each participant contributes in determining the direction and outcome of the interaction*”(p.06). In this respect, one accepts that it involves students’ participation, collaboration and peer-assessment.

5.4.3.1 Participation:

Participation can be seen as an active engagement process which can include preparation, contribution to discussion, group skills, communication skills, and attendance (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005). Participation in class is necessary for students’ learning since research findings revealed that it can help students engage in higher levels of thinking, including interpretation, analysis, and synthesis (Smith, 1977), get motivated (Junn,1994), improve their communication skills (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005) and learn better (Weaver & Qi, 2005).

However, participation needs to go beyond asking and answering teachers' questions to include taking the initiative in suggesting new ideas, bringing new materials to the classroom, thus acting beyond the teacher's instructions. Though students may not have the opportunity to initiate but they need to encourage their teachers to let them this chance. The following tips may help achieve that aim:

- Ask your teacher to let you step on the board to explain what you have understood to your classmates. This can help ensure what you have learned.
- Work outside classes and do not depend just on your teacher's input.
- Search for more exercises, lessons, and other learning resources to share with your teacher and classmates.
- Be the first to engage in research/projects.
- Organize group revision activities (e.g.,: take your classmates to the library).
- Take part in conferences, seminars, magazine writing, etc, and share your creativity with others.
- Communicate to your teacher your learning needs, difficulties (either orally or in writing) and what you want to achieve at the end of the course (your learning expectations).
- Seek scaffolds and support from your teacher, then identify your own routes of research and improvement.
- Try to use your teacher's feedback more constructively through understanding the criteria of good performance, reflecting on your learning needs and setting targets for future improvement.
- Be ready to ask for help from your teacher and classmates.

5.4.3.2 Collaboration:

Collaborating with others can be a powerful way to improve academic achievement and satisfaction with the learning experience. Besides, it can help promote autonomous learning since it shifts the responsibility for learning to the student in the role of "researcher" and self-directed learner (Dooly, 2008). Thus, students should recognize the need to work together to achieve a common goal. Even if the teacher is not providing them with the chance to collaborate, they can do so outside classes. Students can meet in groups immediately after class has ended to compare and share notes since listening and note-taking are demanding tasks, so one of the teammates often may have picked up something others missed or vice versa. Also, by teaming up

immediately after class, the group may still have the opportunity to consult with the instructor about any missing or confusing information before s/he leaves the classroom.

Students can also collaborate for other academic tasks such as practising exercises, preparing for exams, reviewing their teammates' test/exam sheets to identify the source of their mistakes, bringing other learning resources to practice their English, etc. Still, considering how groups should be formed is essential to collaborate effectively. To this end, the following guidelines are provided for students as follows:

- When forming teams, seek peers who will contribute quality and diversity to the learning experience: motivated, attend class regularly, who are attentive and participate actively while in class, and who complete class assignments.
- Do not select just your friends or classmates who have similar interest or you are familiar with, but seek also for those from different ethnic or cultural background which can help bring different experiences, opinions and ideas.
- Keep you group size small (3-5 teammates) to allow for more face- to- face interaction and role sharing. You can work in pairs.

In addition to picking the right collaborators, what is also essential is how you can best make the collaboration works. To this end, students need to be aware that effective collaboration requires:

- Collaborating regularly by establishing a timeline of events with specific dates and deadlines.
- Defining the group's objectives at the beginning of every group session stating explicitly what the group aims to achieve to clarify any confusion that might hinder progress.
- Assigning roles to everyone who participates in the group clarifying who is expected to do what and when.
- Reflecting on what was covered in each session and making sure everyone knows what is expected of them for future meetings.
- Teammates who are open and honest sharing materials, exchanging ideas, supporting each other and doing their roles.
- Shared respect and communication should be maintained among all group members to make sure the progress.
-

5.4.3.3 Peer-assessment:

As stated before, peer-assessment provides learners with the opportunity to take responsibility for analysing, monitoring and evaluating aspects of both the learning process and product of their peers. It can thus promote students' reflective thinking. Yet, students need to understand its objective and contents. Peer-assessment means assessing another's student work for the sake of attributing a mark and/ exploring the quality of the work and discussing individual's working strategies. Its objective is not to criticize other work to show one's competence or understanding, but rather to provide constructive feedback and learn from each other.

Prior to engaging in peer-assessment, it is important for students to know and understand the assessment criteria of that work as put forward by their teacher. In addition to that, they need to be aware that:

- they need to have a culture of shared learning where being open, respectful and objective are required in assessing their peers;
- they need to get convinced that making mistakes is part of learning and listening to other's comments and advice can support such process;
- it is not necessary to give marks to the work, but what counts more is bringing about fruitful discussion and construction of meaning regarding the outcome and process of the achieved work, thereby learning from each other how to improve future performance;
- being self-confident is essential to give one another feedback and learn from it.

It should be noted that even if peer-assessment is not part of teachers' assessment approaches, students can assess their peers outside classes. They can assess, for instance, each other's homework or exercises, projects, revision strategies, notes of lectures, etc. In this case, setting assessment criteria in groups is essential. This can be done through discussing what makes a good work (presentation, exercise, exam, etc.), what will be assessed (subject knowledge, specific skills, presentation, application of method, etc.) and when it will be assessed (completed work or work in progress). To assess effectively and constructively other's work, you should:

- respect other's work through reading it attentively and responding accordingly;
- ask questions for things that seem unclear;
- provide descriptive feedback comments where you explore the quality of the outcome and suggest ways of improving;
- avoid giving overly negative comments, start and finish with something positive;

- be helpful, not harmful;
- be sharp, focused and clear in your comments. In case you are assessing a presentation make notes as you go along, marking a handout sheet for example, so that your comments can be precisely related to specific points at a later stage;
- if you are assessing at an early stage, you should not criticize something as if it were the final product;
- always be aware of how something could be improved, even if you believe it to be excellent;
- remember that everyone has a different way of doing things;
- be flexible and avoid focusing on how you would have done it.
- seek your peer’s opinions regarding your comments (whether they are useful, clear, etc.);
- learn from assessing your peers through reflecting on how this can help you to improve your work.

A supportive and constructive environment needs to be created when providing peer-feedback. Students can meet regularly to assess their peers’ work and devote time for their discussion of their feedback. They can seek for their teacher’s help and opinion to improve this assessment approach. Students can provide their peer-feedback comments not only face-to-face, but also via emails, blogs and social media such as facebook and tweeter. Table (5.3) below can be used for providing this feedback.

Assessment criteria	1. 2. 3. 4.
Score	
Things done well	
Things to improve	
Ways to improve	

Table (5.3): Peer-assessment worksheet

To conclude, developing autonomous learning requires students' motivation, active participation in learning, their reflection and interaction within. This cannot be achieved without recognizing the benefits of such process over their learning progress and improvement. Indeed, adopting a deep approach to learning needs to be stimulated by the student's desire to learn better and develop a good mastery of the English language, which goes beyond the classroom context, including teachers' control and the need to pass his/her exams and tests.

5.5 Conclusion:

Making educational reform entails involving in a process of change where the ultimate goal is to improve outcomes through an alteration of practices. But, the process of change is complex with the existing difficulties to alter the status quo. Thus, considerable amounts of collaboration, time and effort are required from institutions, teachers and students within the LMD system to make a gradual shift from traditional instructional paradigm to a learning paradigm where students autonomy get enhanced. This requires first reconceptualization of the nature of learning according to the demands of a knowledge based-society. There is also a need to understand the local requirements, the available conditions and the kind of autonomy needed within that context. Besides shifting teachers-students' role requires training them into its tools and approaches while catering for their views and difficulties along the course of time. As Littlewood (2010) argues a key factor in developing strategies for increasing learner autonomy is to study which forms of it best suit the learners and how compatible these strategies are with learners' own beliefs, preferences and expectations.

In addition, since an assessment for learning culture can be a powerful means to help language students develop their autonomy, it is important thus to recognize the role of formative assessment instead of relying just on summative purposes or measurement tests. To this end, institutions need to provide teachers with the necessary training that can enable them make from their assessment practices a meaningful experience that supports and promotes learning. Still, to make from their teaching and assessment thought provoking processes where students are actively involved in, teachers' reflection over their practices remains the key for their professional development. The suggested teacher portfolio in this chapter intends to serve this aim. Still, in addition to the need for ongoing reflection on one's practices attending and participating in conferences/workshops, involving in teacher training programmes and updating teaching knowledge through reading can support such development. Students also have a major role in developing their autonomy since their motivation, interaction and reflection are required.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Rapid changes in present, networked, knowledge society give rise to new challenges and requirements for work life competence. Productive participation in such society requires that individual professionals, their communities, and organizations continuously surpass themselves, develop new competencies, advance their knowledge and understanding as well as produce innovations and create new knowledge. To be able to productively participate in knowledge work, students must develop high-level cognitive skills such as problem solving and critical thinking, to learn to go beyond individual efforts, and collaborate for the advancement of knowledge.

Higher education, therefore, needs to change its conceptions and practices of the teaching and learning process. Still, a reappraisal of the role of assessment has to occur to move towards more learning-oriented assessment that can help enhance students learning. To meet such expectations and update its practices to conform to international trends, Algerian Higher education adopted the Bologna reform where studies are organized within a new structural framework called the LMD system. This aims at promoting students' autonomy through enhancing student-centred learning within the three degree cycles.

Hence, if reform were to take place, the seeds of change would have to be planted in the classroom. Despite the general agreement on the importance of autonomy as an educational goal in language teaching, student autonomy is still alien to the present learning context. In effect, examining that context in respect of the Written Expression course (During the first and second semesters) has shown that "*the basic instructional approach of teachers talking to students as they sit passively in their seats*" continues to be the main teaching strategy (Kelly et al.,2009, p.12).

Besides, the current assessment practices still manifest in grades and individual certification, limiting thus opportunities for students' involvement in the assessment process, reflection and learning from reconstructing feedback. Indeed, teachers are not assessing formatively their students, since no kind of alternative assessment, i.e., portfolios, journal, diaries, projects, etc. was integrated in this course. Rather, they were in reality completing on-going summative assessments that they then used primarily for grading purposes. It follows from

this, that the role of both teachers and students in formative assessment is inadequately understood and explicated in the present learning context. This might be due to teachers' limited theoretical understanding and lack of training of how assessment could and should be integrated into the learning/teaching process.

It could be, therefore, unrealistic within the present learning context to expect the students to develop their autonomy. This is so since reviewing the literature in the second chapter of this thesis has revealed that learner autonomy depends on the context where learning is taking place. Fostering such a process in the foreign language classroom requires a process of change from a teacher-centred approach to language learning to a more learner-centred approach. Learners are allowed to take certain control over their learning process such as setting their learning goals, selecting their materials, or determining the pacing of their learning, among others. Thus, to develop their autonomy learners need to be equipped with the necessary skills and techniques which enable them to take ownership of their learning. Their motivation and self-confidence are also necessary to encourage them to engage and involve actively in autonomous learning.

Furthermore, studies exploring the nature of learner autonomy emphasized the social aspect of this process. Certain interdependence is required with the need of teacher's help and guidance. Indeed, learner autonomy grows out of collaboration and social interaction where learners negotiate meaning with their teachers and peers and reconstruct their knowledge and understanding. To this end, institutional support is deemed important to create supportive learning culture of this goal where a variety of teaching and learning resources are provided to involve students in decision making which go beyond teachers' courses and infrastructure.

Hence, pedagogy for autonomy also requires a shift in assessment culture and practices from focusing entirely on summative end of course assessment to opening possibilities for assessment for learning as the third chapter of this work has displayed. This is since effective formative assessment approaches are considered as important tools for the notion of promoting, practicing and developing learner autonomy. In this respect, research evidence shows that self-assessment contributes to students autonomy, motivation, self-efficacy, positive perceptions and learning attitudes towards assessment as well as achievement in learning.

Portfolios are among the self-assessment tools which can have the potential benefit to make the link between learners' engagement and success through promoting a reflective approach to learning where they take responsibility for what and how they learn. Besides, developing students' writing ability, promoting their motivation, encouraging their interaction and supportive feedback were among the advantages which were outlined in the theoretical part of this thesis. Yet, to gain such potential it is necessary to recognize the purpose and process of their use. When used for formative purposes, teachers need to encourage their students consider them as reflective vehicles through which they can assess themselves, set goals and make decisions to improve their learning, instead of regarding them just as folders or containers of their work. Thus, reflection needs to underpin all stages of portfolio development and use in a given course, starting from selecting evidence, evaluating their worth, to reflecting on the portfolio content and evaluating the whole product in relation to teacher feedback and what they have learned from their use.

Nevertheless, the author's review of the related literature to portfolio assessment in ESL/EFL context has reflected the need for more investigations regarding the effects of this alternative assessment approach on language learning. In effect, despite their benefit, implementing portfolio assessment remains a challenging task for both teachers and students. Therefore, the present research aims to explain the nature of portfolios through finding out their effects on the students' autonomy in writing classes. One's motivation to investigate this issue is also driven by the current assessment practices in the present learning context which rely heavily on grades or marks leaving no alternative for students' involvement, choice, or contribution to the process, thus opportunities to develop their autonomy.

As indicated in the third chapter of this work, to provide a tentative answer to the above question an experimental research was carried out on a sample of first year students who received portfolio training in the Written Expression course at the Department of English of the University of Mostaganem. Those portfolios were considered not only for assessment purposes but also for enhancing learning. Along such an experiment other data collection tools were also used to elicit data about the effects of such training. The research findings revealed that portfolio training and use in this course has contributed in raising the participants' motivation to study English in general, and the course in particular. Certain attitudes have also developed among most of them. These include self-assessment and reflection on their learning process and

progress which have led to raising their awareness of their writing needs, difficulties and the strategies needed to improve this skill.

However, portfolio training has not affected their perceptions concerning teacher and student role since they were still supporting the traditional authoritarian teaching mode where their passivity prevails. This also justifies why their learning styles outside were stable as they persisted not engaging in further tasks thus limiting their interaction with the language beyond the classroom. Indeed, apart from completing their portfolios and the other related tasks, i.e., projects and peer-assessment, the participants showed no other initiatives. Thus, their involvement was stimulated by their teacher's instructions and also their interest in getting good marks.

In fact, using the second pretest has proved that the participants have developed a low degree of autonomy as a result of being trained in those portfolios. Being at the early stages of the process, the students were likely to remain dependent on their teacher's support and guidance and hold views reflecting their need for such role. This is since they still lack the necessary skills and knowledge which help them take further initiatives and change their learning styles and practices outside class. It follows from this, that six months of training was not enough to help the students develop a degree of autonomy whereby they could act beyond the teacher's control. This refutes one's hypothesis that portfolio would make them autonomous within this context.

It is worth stating, that the data gathered from this investigation have an original contribution to knowledge in relation to learner autonomy and portfolio assessment. In addition to confirming previous research findings that learner autonomy develops by degrees, the gathered data also show that such a process requires much more time, practice and continuous evaluation within context where students are more familiar with teacher-centred approaches. Indeed, students get autonomous only when they reach a degree where their learning is self-governed and geared by their own initiation and actions intended to improve it, which are not dictated by their teacher, but come out of their reflection on their learning, awareness of their needs and interest to pursue such goal.

Accordingly, the students' dependence on their teacher is common mainly at the first stages of developing their autonomy. This dependence should not be regarded as an obstacle for the development of their autonomy, but it needs rather to be exploited by the teacher to enhance

their interdependence. Indeed, as stated previously, the social aspect of autonomy is required for its development. Yet, after developing this process the individual aspect gets more pre-eminent for its practice.

Furthermore, being extrinsically motivated to use their portfolios can help students benefit from their use. Recognizing their benefit on their learning can yield to developing their intrinsic motivation, thereby keeping their use for the future. As research has shown portfolio assessment is time consuming and hard to achieve for both teachers and students. Yet, as this research has proved introducing gradually the content and process of this assessment approach can lessen such impact. Feedback also plays a central role in supporting teachers and students deal successfully with this task. Both oral and written feedback are required from teachers in a more descriptive form along the scheduled conferences.

In fact, promoting students autonomy through portfolios requires considerable efforts and collaboration among teachers, institutions and students themselves. As the last chapter suggested there is a need first for institutions to understand what student autonomy entails in EFL context, and define its kind and degree required within their learning contexts, so that they can determine the necessary means to achieve this goal. Besides, since student autonomy is a complex construct teachers need to recognize its importance to students' learning and achievement, understand its process and how they need to shift gradually their control to their students.

It was also emphasized that a shift towards an assessment for learning culture requires changing institutions' views, policies and practices regarding the purpose of assessment and its relation to teaching and learning. Indeed, both summative and formative assessment needs to be considered part of students' learning which they take part in rather than a process that is done to them (Robinson & Udall, 2006). To this end, teachers and students alike need to receive training and support in relation to their assessment practices.

As with any study, there were some limitations that affect the generalizability of the results. One of the limitations of this study is the small size of the sample (=48). Besides, since developing autonomy is a process which requires time and practice, portfolio training needs to be prolonged (for example: along the Bachelor degree cycle). Thus, to improve the validity of the findings and conclusions, the study needs to be carried out on a larger number of participants over a longer term.

Finally, the present research which was investigative in nature leaves several questions that still need answers. For example, the research did not focus on finding out about the effects of portfolios on the students' writing ability in English. In addition, more research is needed to examine the relationship between portfolio assessment and summative assessment, i.e., does portfolio assessment contribute to improving summative results? Other questions can also be of interest for researchers such as: How can teacher's assessment literacy affect their assessment practices? How to change teachers' practices from ongoing summative assessment to effective formative assessment? What kind of teacher's feedback is needed in formative assessment? How can teachers' conceptualization of the notion of learner autonomy impact the achievement of such goal?

Bibliography

- Abbott, R. D., & Berninger, V. W. (1993). Structural equation modeling of relationships among developmental skills and writing skills in primary- and intermediate-grade writers. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85(3), 478-508.
- Abraham, R., & Vann, R., (1987). Strategies of two learners: A case study. In A.L. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp. 85-102). New York: Prentice Hall.
- Adam, S. (2004). *Using learning outcomes: A consideration of the nature, role, application and implications for European education of employing learning outcomes at the local, national and international levels*. Report on United Kingdom, Bologna Seminar, July 2004, Herriot-Watt University. Retrieved from: http://www.aic.lv/bologna/Bologna/Bol_semin/Edinburgh/S_Adam_Bacgrerep_presentati_on.pdf
- Adie, L. E., et al. (2012). Towards an understanding of teacher judgment in the context of social moderation. *Educational Review Journal*, 64(2), 223-240. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2011.598919>
- Airasian, P.W.(1991). *Classroom Assessment*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Alderson, J.C.(1978). *A study of the cloze procedures with native and non-native speakers of English*. Ph. D. Thesis. University of Edinburgh.
- Alderson, J. C. & Wall, D. (1993). Does washback exist? *Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 115– 129.
- Alderson, J. C., & Banerjee, J.(2001). Language testing and assessment (Part 1). *Language Teaching* 34 (4), 213-236.
- Alderson, J.C. (2004). Foreword. In L. Cheng, Y. Watanabe, & A. Curtis (Eds.), *Washback in language testing: Research contexts and methods*. (pp. ix-xii).Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Al-Hazmi, S. (2006). Writing and reflection: Perceptions of Arab EFL learners. *South Asian Language Review*, 16(2), 36-52.
- Allwright, R. (1981). What do we want teaching materials for? *English Language Teaching Journal*, 36 (5) -18.
- Allwright, D.(2005). From Teaching Points to Learning Opportunities and Beyond. *TESOL Quarterly* 39(1), 9-31.
- Altbach, P.G and Davis, T.M. (1999). Global Challenge and National Response :Notes for an International Dialogue on Higher Education. In P.G Altbach & P.M Peterson (Eds.), *Higher education in the 21st Century: Global challenge and national response* (pp.03-

- 10.). Boston: Boston College and Institute of International Education and Council on International Exchange of Scholars.
- Amaro, J. (2002). Negotiating evaluation in the EFL classroom. In F. Vieira, M. F. Moreira, I. Barbosa & M. Paiva (Eds.), *Pedagogy for autonomy and English learning: Proceedings of the 1st Conference of the Working Group Pedagogy forAutonomy 2001* (pp. 87–98). University of Minho, Portugal.
- Amghar,K.(2010). *L'excellence en challenge*. La Tribune: Quotidien National d'information. Retrieved October 27, 2010, from : <http://www.latribune-online.com/pdf/2010/10/27102010.pdf>
- Anastasi, A.(1982). *Psychological testing*. London: Macmillan.
- Andrews, S., & Fullilove, J.(1994). Assessing spoken English in public examinations- why and how? In J. Boyle & P. Falvey (Eds.), *English language testing in Hong Kong* (pp. 57-86). Hong Kong:Chinese University Press.
- Andrews, S., Fullilove, J., & Wong, Y.(2002). Targetting washback -a case study. *System* 30(2): 207-23.
- Aoki, N.(1999). Affect and the role of teachers in the development of learner autonomy. In J. Arnold (Ed.) *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Arnold, J. & Brown, H.D.(1999). A map of the terrain. In J.Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp.01-24).Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Archbald, D. A.(1991). Authentic assessment: an introduction to a neo-behavioural approach to classroom assessment. *School Psychology Quarterly* 6, (4)273-278.
- Aschbacher, P.R. (1993). *Issues in innovative assessment for classroom practice: Barriers and facilitators*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing.
- Atkinson, R. L.; Atkinson, R C.; Smith, E. E., & Bem, D. J. (1993). *Introduction to psychology*. Forth Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Audibert, S. (1980). En d'autres mots...l'évaluation des apprentissages ! *Mesure et évaluation en éducation, Vol. 3*, 59-64.
- Aviram, A. (2000). Beyond constructivism: Autonomy-oriented education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*. 19 (5-6), 465-489. Doi: 10.1023/A: 1005267111741
- Azzouz,S .(2010). *Les maux de l'université*. La Tribune :Quotidien National d'information. Retrieved October 27, 2010, from : <http://www.latribune-online.com/pdf/2010/10/27102010.pdf>

- Bachman, L. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bachman, L. (2002). Some reflections on task-based language performance assessment *Language Testing*, 19, 453-476.
- Bachman, L. (2004). *Statistical analyses for language assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bachman, L.; & Palmer, A.S. (1989). The construct validation of self-ratings of communicative language ability. *Language Testing*, 6 (1): 14-29
- Bachman, L.; & Palmer, A. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bachman, L.; & Palmer, A. (2010). *Language assessment in practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bailey, K.D.(1994). *Methods of Social Research* (fourth edition). New York: The Free Press.
- Bailey, K. (1999). *Washback in language testing. TOEFL Monograph Series MS-15*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Banfi, C.S.(2003). Portfolios: Integrating Advanced Language Academic and Professional Skills. *ELT Journal*,57 (1),34-42.
- Barakat, J.; Holler, J.; Prettnner.K., & Schuster, J. (2010). *The impact of the economic crisis on labour and education in europe*. Vienna Institute of Demography Austrian Academy of Sciences:Vienna-Austria. Retrieved from: http://www.oeaw.ac.at/vid/download/WP2010_06.pdf
- Bárbara,N.M.(2012). *Autonomy in English language learning. A case study*. Universidade de Aveiro. Departamento de Educação. Dissertação apresentada à Universidade de Aveiro para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Doutor em Didática, realizada sob orientação científica da Doutora Gillian Grace Owen Moreira.
- Barfield, A., Ashwell, T., Carroll, M., Collins, K., Cowie, N., Critchley, M., Head, E.,Nix, M., Obermeier, A. & Robertson, M.C. (2001). Exploring and defining teacher autonomy: A collaborative discussion. In A. S. Mackenzie & E.McCafferty (Eds), *Developing Autonomy. Proceedings of the College and University Educators' 2001 Conference, Shizuoka, Japan*, (pp. 217-22). Tokyo: The Japan Association for Language Teaching. Retrieved from: <http://www.encounters.jp/mike/professional/publications/tchauto.html>
- Barnett, L. (1993). Teacher off: Computer technology, guidance and self-access. *System*, 12, 295-304.

- Barton, C. & Collins, A. (1997). *Portfolio Assessment: A Handbook for Educators*. New York: Dale Seymour Publications.
- Batzle, J. (1992). *Portfolio assessment and evaluation: Developing and using portfolios in the classroom*. Cypress, CA: Creative Teaching Press.
- Beck, U (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a new modernity*, London: Sage.
- Belkhadem,A. (04 May 2008). *Official Journal of the Algerian Republic N°23*. Executive decree n°08-129 of the 3rd of May 2008 clarifying the status of university teachers. Article 05 (p.07). Retrieved from: <http://www.joradp.dz/FTP/jo-francais/2008/F2008023.pdf>
- Belkhadem,A. (04 May 2008). *Official Journal of the Algerian Republic N°23*. Executive decree n° 08-131 of the 3rd of May 2008 clarifying the status of permanent researchers. Article 40 (p.28). Retrieved from: <http://www.joradp.dz/FTP/jo-francais/2008/F2008023.pdf>
- Benghabrit Remaoun, B.N & Rabhi-Senouci, Z.(2009). Le System LMD (Licence-Master-Doctorat) en Algérie :de L'illusion de La Nécessité ou Choix de L'opportunité . JHEA/RESA vol.7. Nos 1&2, 189-207.Conseil pour le développement de la recherche en science sociales en Afrique .
- Bennett, R. E. (2011). Formative assessment: a critical review. *Assessment in Education:Principles, Policy & Practice*, 18 (1), 5-25. Retrieved January 25, 2011 from:http://www.skolverket.se/polopoly_fs/1.126607!Menu/article/attachment/formative_assassement.pdf
- Benoit, J.; & H. Yang.(1996). A redefinition of portfolio assessment based upon purpose: Findings and implications from a large-scale program. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 29(3), 181-191.
- Benson,P.(1995). A Critical view of learner training. *Learning Learning* 2(2), 2-6.
- Benson,P., & Voller, P. (1997). *Autonomy and independence in language Learning*.London: Pearson Education Limited.
- Benson, P.(1999). *A Critical View of Learner Training*. Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Retrieved from: <http://penta.ufrgs.br/edu/telelab/7/phil22e.htm>
- Benson,P.(2000). Autonomy as a learners' and a teachers' right. In B. Sinclair , T. Mc Grath & T. Lamb (Eds.). *Learner autonomy, teacher autonomy: Future Directions*. Harlow: Longman.
- Benson, B. (2003). Framing culture within classroom practice: Culturally relevant teaching. *Action Teacher Education*, 25(2), 16-22.
- Benson, P. (2006). Autonomy in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching*,40, 21-40.

- Benson, P. (2006). *Autonomy in Language Learning*. Retrieved August 10, 2006 from <http://ec.hku.hk/autonomy/#k>
- Benson,P. (2010). Measuring autonomy: Should we put our ability to the test? In A. Paran & L. Sercu (Eds.), *Testing the untestable in language education* (pp.77-97). UK: Short Run Press Ltd.
- Bergan, S.(2007-2009). Facilitating Mobility Between National Systems. In EUA (1999-2010), *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives* (p.22). Berlin:European HEA.
- Bergan, S.(2009-2010). Stakeholders at the heart of decision making in Bologna. In EUA (1999-2010), *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives* (p.13). Berlin: European HEA.
- Berryman; L. & D. Russell.(2001). Portfolios across the curriculum: Whole school assessment in Kentucky. *English Journal, Urbana*; Jul 2001; Vol. 90, (6); High school edition, 76-78.
- Bialystok, E.(1990). *Communication strategies: A psychological analysis of second-language use*. Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell.
- Bickley, V. (Ed.). (1989). *Language teaching and learning styles within and across cultures*. Hong Kong: Institute of Language in Education, Education Department.
- Biggs, J. (1995). Assessing for learning: some dimensions underlying new approaches to educational assessment. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 41*,1-17.
- Bintz W. & J. Harste. (1991). Whole language assessment and evaluation: The future. In B. Harp(Ed.), *Assessment and evaluation in whole language programs* (pp.219-242). Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon.
- Birenbaum, M., & Dochy, F.(Eds.)(1996). *Alternative in assessment of achievements, learning processes and prior knowledge*, Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Birgin, O. (2003). *Investigation of the application level of a computer based portfolios*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Karadeniz Technical University, Trabzon.
- Birgin,O., & Baki, A.(2007). The use of portfolio to assess student's performance. *Journal of Turkish Science Education .Volume 4, Issue 2* (September), 75-90.
- Bitchener, J. (2008). Evidence in support of written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 17*(2), 69-124.
- Black P, Harrison C, Lee C, Marshall B, & Wiliam, D. (2003). *Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

- Black P., & Wiliam, D.(1998). Assessment and Classroom Learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice, Vol. 5, No. 1*, pp. 7-74.
- Black P.; & Wiliam,D. (2003). In praise of educational research': formative assessment. *British Educational Research Journal, 29, (5)*, 623-637.
- Black,P. & Williams,D.(2006). Assessment for learning in the classroom. In J. Gardner (Ed.), *Assessment and learning* (pp.09-25). London: SAGE.
- Blackbourn, J. M., Blackbourn, R., Papasan, B., & Vinson, T. P. (2000). Leadership for the new millennium: Lessons from Deming, Glasser, and Graves. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision – Electronic, 17E(4)*, 57-63.
- Blanche, P; & Merino, B. J.(1989). Self-assessment of foreign language skills: Implications for teachers and researchers. *Language Learning. A Journal of Applied Linguistics, 39 (3)*, 313-340.
- Blanche, P. (1990). Using standardized achievement and oral proficiency tests for self-assessment purposes: the DLIFC study. *Language Testing, 7 (2)*, 202-29.
- Blomquist, C.(2009-2010). Fostering mobility For lifelong learning. In EUA (1999-2010). *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives* (p.24). Berlin:European HEA.
- Bodric, R.(2008). Language pedagogy in an era of standards. *Research Notes Issue 33*. August, 25-28.
- Boekaerts, M.(1997). Self-regulated learning: A new concept embraced by researchers, policy makers, educators, teachers, and students. *Learning and Instruction, 7 (2)*, 161-186.
- Bologna Declaration.(1999). Retrieved from: http://www.magna-charta.org/resources/files/BOLOGNA_DECLARATION.pdf
- Bologna Official Seminar on Employability (2004). *Employability in The Context of Bologna Process*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Seminars/041023Conclusions.pdf>
- Bologna Process Official Website: <http://www.ehea.info/>
- Bologna Process Working Group.(2007). *Key issues for The European Education Area :Social Dimension and Mobility*. Sweden: The Ministry of Education and Research. Retrieved from: <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/WGR2007/Socialdimensionandmobilityreport.pdf>

- Boomer, G. (1992). Negotiating the curriculum. In G.g Boomer, N. Lester, C. Onore, & J. Cook (Eds.), *Negotiating the curriculum: Educating for the 21st century* (pp. 4-14). London: The Falmer Press.
- Borg,S & Al-Busaidi,S. (2011). *Learner autonomy: English language teachers' beliefs and practices*. London:British Council.
- Bossert, S. T. (1988). Cooperative activities in the classroom. *Review of Research in Education*, 15(1988-1989), 225–250.
- Bouabka, A.(2010). *L'université Algérienne ou L'impératif Défi de La Qualité*. La Tribune : Quotidien National d'information. Retrieved October 27, 2010. from: <http://www.latribune-online.com/pdf/2010/10/27102010.pdf>
- Boud, D., Keogh, R & Walker, D.(1985). *Reflection: Turning experience into training*. London: Kogan Page.
- Boud, D.(Ed).(1988). *Developing student autonomy in learning*. Kogan Page Limited, London,UK.
- Boud, D. (1995). Assessment and learning: Contradictory or complementary? In P. Knight (Ed.), *Assessment for learning in higher education* (pp. 35-48). London: Kogan Page.
- Boud, D. (2000). Sustainable assessment: Rethinking assessment for the learning society. *Studies in Continuing Education* 22 (2), 151–167.
- Boudjamaa, B.M. (2010). *La Reforme LMD : L'université Algérienne était-elle prete ?* Le Quotidien d'Oran. Retrieved November 28, 2010 from : <http://www.djazairress.com/fr/lqo/5146016>
- Bouteflika,A. (27 february, 2008). *Official Journal of the Algerian Republic N°10*. Executive decree n°08-06 of the 23rd February 2008 modifying and completing the law n° 99-05 of the 4th April 1999 clarifying the law of orientation on higher education. Articles,12,19(pp.33-34). Retrieved from : http://www.univ-usto.dz/v_graduation/fichier2/loi%20ens%20sup.pdf
- Bouteldja,R. *Teaching Study Skills and Research Skills in the LMD System: The Missing Link* Department of English Mouloud Mammeri University, Tizi Ouzou. Retrieved from: http://www.ummtto.dz/IMG/pdf/Article_Riche.pdf
- Braman, O. R. (1998). *The cultural dimension of individualism and collectivism as a factor in adult self-directed learning readiness*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi.
- Brandus, D.,& Ginnis,P.A.(1986). *Guide to student-centred learning*. Oxford: Black Well.

- Breen, M. P. (1984). Process syllabuses for the language classroom. In C. J. Brumfit (Ed.), *General English syllabus design_ ELT Documents No. 118*. (pp. 47-60). London: Pergamon Press & The British Council.
- Breen, M.; & S.Mann.(1997). Shooting arrows at the sun. In P.Benson & P.Voller (Eds.) *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Breen, M. P., & Littlejohn, A. (Eds.). (2000). *Classroom decision-making: Negotiation and process syllabuses in practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Breen, M. P., & Candlin, C. (2001). The Essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching. In D. Hall & A. Hewings (Eds.), *Innovation in English language teaching: A Reader* (pp. 9-26). London: Routledge.
- Breland, H.M.; & Jones, R.J. (1982). *Perceptions of writing skill*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.
- Brew, A. (1999). Towards autonomous assessment: Using self-assessment and peer- assessment. In S. Brown & A. Glasner, *Assessment matters in higher education*. (pp.159-171). UK: SRHE (The Society for Research into Higher Education) and Open University Press.
- Briggs, J. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning: A role for summative assessment? *Assessment in Education*, 5 (1), 103-110.
- Brindley, G. (2003). Classroom-based assessment. In D. Nunan (Ed.), *Practical english language teaching* (pp.309-328). New York: McGraw-Hill Contemporary.
- Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1996). Implementing service learning in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education*, 67(2).
- Brookes A. & Grundy, P. (Eds.). (1988). *Individualization and autonomy in language learning*. ELT Documents 131. UK: Modern English Publications and the British Council.
- Brookfield, S.(1981). Independent Adult Learning. *Studies in Adult Education* 13(1), 15-27.
- Brookfield, S. D. (1986) *Understanding and facilitating adult learning. A comprehensive analysis of principles and effective practices*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Brookhart,S.M.(2008). *How to give effective feedback to your students*. USA: ASCD publications.
- Boud, D.(1994). Conceptualising learning from experience: Developing a model for facilitation. Paper presented at 35th *Adult Education Research Conference*, College of Education. University of Tennessee.
- Boud, D. (1995). *Enhancing learning through self-assessment*. London: Kogan Page
- Boud, D. & Falchikov, N. (2007). *Rethinking assessment in higher education*. London: Kogan Page.

- Brown, H. D. (1987). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Brown, J. O.(2001). The Portfolio: A reflective bridge connecting the learner, Higher Education, and the Workplace. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 49, (2). Retrieved from: <http://www.josemnazevedo.uac.pt/proreitoria/docs/portfolio.pdf>
- Brown, H. D. (2003). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Brown, J. D. (2005). *Testing in language program*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Brown, E., & Glover, C.(2006). Evaluating written feedback. In C. Bryan & K.Clegg, *Innovative assessment in higher education* (pp.81-91). New York: Routledge.
- Brown, G., Bull, J., & M. Pendlebury.(1997). *Assessing students learning in higher education*. New York: Routledge.
- Brown, S., & Knight, P. (1994). *Assessing learners in higher education*. London: Kogan.
- Brown,S; Race, P.; & Rust, C. (1995). Using and experimenting assessment. In P. Knight (Ed.), *Assessment for learning in higher education* (pp.75-85). London:Kogan Page Limited.
- Bryant,S.L. & Timmins, A.A (2002). *Portfolio assessment: Instructional guide (Second edition)*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Education.
- Burgess,S.; & Head,K. (2005). *How to teach for exams*. England: Longman.
- Burkert,A.(2008). Preparing student teachers for learner autonomy: Some personal Reflections. Spring 2008 *Independence 43* (IATEFL Learner Autonomy SIG), 24-25.
- Burkert, A. & Schwienhorst, K. (2008). Focus on the student teacher: The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) as a Tool to Develop Teacher Autonomy”. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*. 2 (3)238- 252.
- Burt, M., & Keenan, F. (1995). Adult ESL learner assessment: Purposes and tools. *ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education Washington DC*, ERIC Identifier ED386962, 1-5.
- Butler, R. (1987). Task-involving and ego-involving properties of evaluation: effects of different feedback conditions on motivational perceptions, interest and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 78 (4), 210–216.
- Cambra- Fierro, J.,& Cambra-Berdún, J.(2007). Students’ self-evaluation and reflection (part 2): An Empirical Study. *Education +Training*, 49 (2),103-111.

- Cameron, C., Tate, B., D. Macnaughton, & Politano, C. (1998). *Recognition without rewards*. Winnipeg, MB: Peguis Publishers.
- Camp, R. (1993). Changing the model for the direct assessment of writing. In M. Williamson & B. Huot (Eds.), *Validating holistic scoring for writing assessment* (pp.45–78). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Candy, P. (1991). *Self-direction for lifelong learning: a comprehensive guide to theory and practice*. San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cantrell, R.J., Fusaro, J.A. & Dougherty, E.A. (2000) Exploring the effectiveness of journal writing on learning social studies: a comparative study, *Reading Psychology*, 21(1), 1–11.
- Carey, K. (2008). The teacher autonomy paradox. *The American Prospect*. September 17.
- Carpenter, C. (1996). Peer teaching: a new approach to advanced level language learning. In E. Broady, M. Kenning (Eds.), *Promoting learner autonomy in University language teaching* (pp. 23-38). London: Association for French Language. Studies in association with CILT.
- Carney, J. H., Joiner, J. F., & Tragou, H. (1997). *Categorizing, coding, and manipulating qualitative data using the WordPerfect word processor*. Retrieved August 8, 2003, from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-1/carney.html>
- Carney, J.M. (2001). *Electronic and traditional paper portfolios as tools for teacher Knowledge representation*. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Washington.
- Carnoy, M.(2005). *Globalization, Educational Trends and The Open Society*. Stanford University, School of Education /OSI Education Conference. Retrieved from: http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/carnoy_english.pdf
- Carroll, J.B.(1973). Implications of aptitude test research theory and psycholinguistic theory for FL teaching. *International Journal of Psycholinguistics* 2: 5–14.
- Carroll, B, J.(1980). *Testing communicative performance*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Carroll, J.B.(1983). Communicative language tests: Tasks, enabling skills, formats, and Measurement criteria. *World Language English*, 2(1), 37-39.
- Carton, A.(1971). Inferencing: a process in using and learning language. In P. Pimsleur & T.Quinn (Eds), *The psychology of second language learning* (pp.45-58). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Catania Declaration, *Euro-mediterranean area of higher education and research*. Retrieved from: <http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/catania.pdf>

- Chamber G.N. (1999). *Motivating language learners*, Clevedon. Multilingual Matters. Ltd.
- Chamot, A.U., Barnhardt, S., El-Dinary, P., & Robbins, J.,(1996). Methods for teaching learning strategies in the foreign language classroom. In R. Oxford (Ed.), *Language learning strategies around the world: Cross-cultural perspectives* (pp.175-188). Manoa: University of Hawaii Press.
- Chamot, A. C. Keatley, C.F. Meloni M. Gonglewski & Bartoshesky, A.(1999). Learning strategies instruction in higher education. *National Capital Language Resource Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.nclrc.org/guides/HED/index.html>
- Champagne M.-F., Clayton T. D. N., Laszewski M., Savage W., Shaw J., Stroupe R., Thein M., & Walter, P. (2001). The assessment of learner autonomy and language learning. *AILA review 15*, 45-55.
- Chan, V. (2001). Readiness for Learner Autonomy: what do our learners tell us? *Teaching in Higher Education*, 6 (4), 505-518.
- Chapelle, C.; & G. Brindley (2002). Assessment. In N.Schmitt (Ed.) , *An introduction to Applied Linguistics*. London: Arnold.
- Cheng, L.(1997). How does washback influence teaching? Implications for Hong Kong. *Language and Education 11*(1): 38-54.
- Cheng, L.(1998). Impact of a public English examination change on students' perceptions and attitudes toward their English learning. *Studies in Educational Evaluation 24*(3),279-300.
- Cheng,L; Rogers,T & Wang, X.(2008). Assessment Purposes and Procedures in ESL/EFL classroom. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education 33*, 9-32.
- Chenoweth, N. A., & Hayes, J. R.(2001). Fluency in writing. Generating text in L1 and L2. *Written Communication*, 18(1), 80-98.
- Cherbal, F.(2006). *La Réforme LMD et L'université Algérienne : Les Vrais Enjeux*.USTHB Alger . Retrieved from: <http://www.algerie-dz.com/article1073.html>
- Chong Yang Kim,(2002).Teachers in digital knowledge-based society new roles and vision. *Asia Pacific Education Review*,3 (2),144-148.
- Christopher, N.M.(2009). Interrelation between Environmental Factors and Language Assessment in Nigeria. *Research Notes*, issue35 March, 10-15.
- Cicmanec, K.M. & Viecknicki, K.J. (1994). Assessing mathematics skills through portfolios: Validating the claims from existing literature. *Educational Assessment*, 2(2), 167-178.

- Clegg, K.; & Bryan, C.(2006). Reflections, rationales and realities. In C. Bryan & K. Clegg (Eds.), *Innovative Assessment in Higher Education* (pp.216-227). New York: Routledge.
- C.N.E.S (2007). The National Report on the Human Development: Algeria 2006. Retrieved from: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/nhdr_2006_algeria-fr.pdf
- Cohen, A. D. (2002). Preparing teachers for styles-and strategies-based instruction. In .V. Crew, C. Davison, & B. Mark (Eds.), *Reflecting on language in education* (pp. 49-69). Hong Kong: Center for Language in Education, Hong Kong Institute of Education.
- Cohen.L., Manion,L., & Morrison,K.(2007). *Research methods in education*. New York: Routledge.
- Cole, P. G., & Chan L. K.S. (1994). *Teaching principles and practice*. Australia: Prentice Hall.
- Collins, A. (1992). Portfolios in science education:Issue in purpose, structure and authenticity. *Science Education*, 76 (4), 451-463.
- Communiqué of the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in Budapest-Vienna Conference, (2010). *Budapest-Vienna Declaration on the European Higher Education Area*, Retrieved from: http://www.bmbf.de/pub/budapest_vienna_declaration.pdf
- Communiqué of the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in The Leuven/Louvain-La Neuve. (2009). *The Bologna Process 2020 -The European Higher Education Area in the new decade*, Retrieved from: : http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/Leuven_Louvain-la-Neuve_Communique%C3%A9_April_2009.pdf
- Communiqué of the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in London ,(2007). *Towards the European Higher Education Area: responding to challenges in a globalised world*, Retrieved from: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/MDC/London_Communique18May2007.pdf
- Communiqué of the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in Bergen. (2005). *The European higher education area-achieving the goals*, Retrieved from: http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/Bergen_Communique1.pdf
- Communiqué of the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in Berlin. (2003). *Realizing the European Higher Education Area*, Retrieved from: http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/030919Berlin_Communique.PDF

- Communiqué of the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in Prague. (2001). *Towards The European Higher Education Area*, Retrieved from: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/mdc/prague_communique.pdf
- Connolly, S. (2012). Moderation and consistency of teacher judgment: Teachers' views. *British Educational research Journal*, 38(4), 593-614. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2011.569006>
- Connor-Greene, P.A. (2000). Making connections: Evaluating the effectiveness of journal writing in enhancing student learning, *Teaching of Psychology*, 27(1),44–46.
- Cook, V.(2001). *Second language learning and second language teaching*. London: Arnold.
- Coombe, C. (2010). Assessing foreign/second language writing ability, education, business and society: *Contemporary Middle Eastern* 3, 178 – 187.
- Coombe,C.; Al-Hamly & Troudi, S. (2009). Foreign and second language teacher assessment literacy: Issues, challenges and recommendations. *Research Notes* November 38, 14-18.
- Cooper, P.L. (1984). *The assessment of writing ability : A review of research*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RR-84-12-Cooper.pdf>
- Cotterall, S. (1995). Readiness for autonomy: Investigating learners beliefs. *System*, 23(2),195-205.
- Cotterall, S.(1998). Roles in autonomous learning. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21(2), 61-78.
- Cotterall, S.(1999). Key variables in language learning: What do learners believe about them? *System* 27(4), 493-513.
- Cotterall, S.(2000). Promoting learner autonomy through the curriculum: Principle for designing language courses. *ELT Journal*, 52(2), 109-117.
- Council of Europe (2006). *European Language Portfolio:Teacher's Guide*. Retrieved from: http://deniscousineau.pbworks.com/f/teachersguide_revised.pdf
- Cowan, J.(1998). *On becoming an innovative university teacher*. Buckingham: RHE and Open University Press.
- Crabbe, D.(1993). Fostering Autonomy From within the Classroom: the Teacher's Responsibility. *System* 21(4), 443- 452.
- Craven, R.G., Marsh, H. W.,& Debus, R.L. (1991) Effects of internally focused feedback on the enhancement of academic self-concept. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 83 (1),17–27.

- Creswell, J.W., & Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Crookall, D. & R.L. Oxford. (1990). *Simulation, gaming and language learning*, Newbury House, New York.
- Crosier, D.; Purser, L. & Smidt, H. (2007). *Trends V: Universities shaping the European Higher Education Area*. Belgium : European University Association.
- Daalen, M.V. (1999). Test Usefulness in Alternative Assessment. In *Dialog On Language Instruction*. Woytak, L. (ed.). 1999, Vol. 13, Nos. 1 & 2, 1-26.
- Daly, J. A., & Shamo, W. (1978). Academic decisions as a function of writing apprehension. *Research in the Teaching of English*, vol. 12, 119–126.
- Dam, L. (1990). Learner autonomy in practice: An experiment in learning and teaching. In I. Gathercole (Ed.), *Autonomy in language learning: papers from a conference held in January 1990* (pp. 16-37). London: Centre for Information on Language Teaching & Research.
- Dam, L. (1995). *Learner autonomy 3: from theory to classroom practice*. Dublin: Authentik.
- Dam, L. & L. Legenhausen. (1996). The Acquisition of vocabulary in an autonomous learning environment – the First months of beginning English. In R. Pemberton, E. Li, W. Or & H. Pierson (Eds.), *Taking control. Autonomy in language learning* (pp. 265-280). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Dam, L., & Legenhausen, L. (1999). Language Acquisition in an autonomous Learning Environment: Learners' Self-Evaluations and External Assessments Compared. In S. Cotterall & D. Crabbe (Eds.), *Learner Autonomy in Language Learning: Defining the Field and Effecting Change* (pp. 89-98). Frankfurt am Main.
- Dam, L. (2003). Developing learner autonomy: The teacher's responsibility. In D. Little, J. Ridley & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Learner autonomy in foreign language classrooms: Teacher, learner, curriculum and assessment*. (pp. 135- 146). Dublin: Authentik.
- Dam, L. (2008). In-service teacher education for learner autonomy. *Independence* (IATEFL Learner Autonomy SIG) Spring 2008. 20-25.
- Dam, L., & Legenhausen, L. (2010). Learners reflecting on learning: evaluation versus testing in autonomous language learning. In A. Paran & L. Sercu (Eds.), *Testing the untestable in language education* (pp. 120-139). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Dancer, D., & Kamvounias, P. (2005). Student involvement in assessment: A project designed to assess class participation fairly and reliably. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 30, 445-454.

- Dart, B.C., Boulton-Lewis, G.M., Brlwolee, J.M. & McCrindle, A.R. (1998). Change in knowledge of learning and teaching through journal writing. *Research Papers in Education: Policy and Practice*,13(3), 291–318.
- Darvas, P.(1999). A Regional Perspective: Central and Eastern Europe. In P.G Altbach & P.M Peterson (Eds.). *Higher education in the 21st Century: Global challenge and national response* (pp.79-90). Boston:Boston College and Institute of International Education and Council on International Exchange of Scholars.
- Davies, A. (1986). Indirect ESP testing: Old innovations. In M. Portal (Ed.), *Innovations in language testing* (pp. 55-67). Windsor: NFER Nelson.
- Davies, A., Cameron, C., Politano, & C. Gregory, K. (1992). Together is better: collaborative assessment, evaluation, and reporting. Winnipeg, MB: Peguis Publishers.
- Davis, M. M., & Wilson, E. K. (1999). A Title 1 teacher's beliefs, decision-making, and instruction at the third and seventh grade levels. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 38(4),290–299.
- Davies, A. (2000). *Making Classroom Assessment Work*. Merville, B.C.: Connections Publishing.
- Davies, A, & Le Mahieu, P. (2003). Assessment for learning: reconsidering portfolios and research evidence. In M. Segers, F. Dochy, & E. Cascallar (Eds.), *Innovation and change in professional education: Optimising new modes of assessment: In search of qualities and standards* (p. 141-169). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Davis, M.H, & Ponnampereuma, G. G.(2005). Portfolio Assessment. *JVME* 32(3) - 2005 AAVMC. 279-282.
- Day, R. R. (1990). Teacher observation in second language teacher education. In J. C. Richards & D. Nunan (Eds.). *Second language teacher education* (pp.43-61). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Day, C. (2001). Innovative Teachers: Promoting Lifelong Learning for All. In J. C. D. Aspin, M. Hatton, & Y. Sawano (Eds.), *International handbook of lifelong learning* (pp. 473-500). London: Kluwer.
- Deakin Crick R, Tew M, Taylor M, Durant & K, Samuel.E (2005). *A systematic review of the impact of citizenship education on learning and achievement. In Research Evidence in Education Library*. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education.

- Deca, L. (2009-2010). Stakeholders at the heart of decision making in the Bologna. In EUA (1999-2010), *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives* (p.14). Berlin: European HEA.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. NY: Plenum Press.
- Deci, E.L. (1995). *Why we do what we do: The dynamics of personal autonomy*. New York. Putnam's Sons.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78.
- De Fina, A. (1992). *Portfolio Assessment: Getting Started*. New York: Scholastic Professional Books.
- Deikelman, N., & Lampe S. (2004). Student-centered pedagogies: Co-creating compelling experiences using the new pedagogies. In teacher talk: *New Pedagogies for Nursing*, 43 (6), 245-247.
- Denholm, C. (2007). *Report from The Academic Register Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area-Implications for UTAS*. Retrieved from: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/uploads/documents/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf
- Denholm, C. (2010). *Université en Algérie : La Qualité en Question*. 8-09-2010. Retrieved from : <http://www.algerie360.com/algerie/universite-en-algerie-la-qualite-en-question/>
- Desheng, C., & Varghese, A. (2013). Testing and Evaluation of Language Skills. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education. Volume 1*, 31-33.
- Desheng, C. (1996). Working for washback: a review of the washback concept in language Testing. *Language Testing* 13(3): 257-79.
- Derradji, S. (2010). *EFL Testing Techniques*. Oran: Dar ELQuods.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*. Lexington, MA: Heath.
- Dickinson, L. (1987). *Self-instruction in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dickinson, L. (1988). *Self-instruction in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Dickinson, L. (1992). *Learner Autonomy 2: Training for language learning*. Dublin: Authentik.
- Dickinson, L. (1993). *Self-instruction in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Dickinson, L. (1993). Talking shop: Aspects of autonomous learning. *ELT Journal*, 41(10), 1040-1048.
- Dickinson, L.(1995). Autonomy and motivation: A literature review. *System*, 23(2), 165-174.
- Ding, A. (1997). Promoting learner autonomy through video film activities. In V. Darleguy, A. Ding, & M. Svensson, (Eds.). Journée de réflexion du 26 Septembre 1997. *Educational technology in language learning: Theoretical considerations and practical applications* (pp. 47-60). Villeurbanne Cedex: INSA Lyon.
- Dingwall, R. (1997). Accounts, interviews and observations. In G. Miller & R. Dingwall (Eds.), *Context and method in qualitative research* (pp. 51-65). London: SAGE Publications.
- Djoub, Z. (2013). Assessment and students' autonomy in language learning: A case study. In D. Arezki; H. Amziane & A. Guendouzi (Eds.), *Enseignement et apprentissage des langues étrangères en Algérie: Etat des lieux, réflexion, propositions* (pp.197-208). Tizi-Ouzou: CRASC.
- Dooly, M.(2008) (Ed.). *Constructing knowledge together*. Bern: Peter Lang. Retrieved from : <http://pagines.uab.cat/melindadooly/sites/pagines.uab.cat.melindadooly/files/Chpt1.pdf>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z.(2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Doukas, C.(2002). Learning cities: region in the framework of lifelong learning. In C. Medel-Añonuevo (Ed.), *Integrating lifelong learning perspectives* (pp.281-288).. Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education.
- Driessen, M.; Kleef, A.V. & Fitzpatrick, A.(2007). *Testing languages: From language competency profiles to evidences of proficiency*; The Netherlands: CINOP.
- Dudeny, G & Hockly, N.(2007). *How to Teach English with Technology*. Harmer, J.(ed.). England: Longman.
- Dunlap, J. C. & Grabinger, S. (2003). Preparing students for lifelong learning: A review of instructional features and teaching methodologies. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 1 (2), 6-25.
- Durth, K. A. (2000). *Implementing portfolio assessment in the music performance classroom*. Doctoral dissertation. Columbia University Teachers College.

- Dysthe, O, & Engelsen, K.S.(2004). Portfolio and assessment in teacher education in Norway: A theory-based discussion of different models in two sites. *Assessment and evaluation in Higher Education*.29 (2), 239-258.
- Edwards, R. (2001). Meeting individual learner needs: power, subject, subjection. In C. Paechter, M. Preedy, D. Scott, & J. Soler (Eds.), *Knowledge, Power and Learning* (pp.37-46). London: SAGE.
- Ehrman, M.(1998). The learning alliance: Conscious and unconscious Aspects of the second teacher's role. *System*,26, 93-106.
- Ehrman, M. Leaver, B., & Oxford, R., (2003). A brief overview of individual differences in second language learning. *System*, 31(3), 313-330.
- Ehrman, M., & Oxford, R.(1989). Effects of sex differences, career choice, and psychological type on adults' language learning strategies. *Modern Language Journal*, 73(1), 1-13.
- Ehrman, M., & Oxford, R. (1990). Adult language learning styles and strategies in an intensive training setting. *Modern Language Journal*, 74, 311-326.
- Elahinia, H. (2004). *Assessment of writing through portfolios and achievement tests*. Unpublished M.A thesis, Teacher Training University, Iran.
- Elbow, P. (1986). *Embracing contraries: Explorations in learning and teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Elbow, P. & Belanoff, P. (1997). Reflections on an explosion: Portfolios in the 90's and Beyond. In K.B. Yancey & I. Weiser (Eds.), *Situating portfolios: Four perspectives* (pp 21-23) Logan,UT: Utah State University Press.
- El-Ebyary, K.(March 2009). Deconstructing the complexity of washback in relation to formative assessment in Egypt. *Research Notes*, Issue35. 02-05.
- Elliott, M.(November 2010). The expression of affect in spoken English. *Research Notes*, Issue 42, 16-22.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R.(2008). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- English, J. A. (1998). Moo-based metacognition: Incorporating online and offline reflection into the writing process. *Kairos*, 3, 1.
- Entwistle,N.(1993). Recent research on student learning and the learning environment. Paper presented at *the Standing Conference on Educationl Development*. Birmingham,UK.

- Esch, E. (1996). Promoting learner autonomy: Criteria for the selection of appropriate methods. In R. Pemberton, E. S. L. Li, W. W. F. Or, & H. D. Pierson (Eds.), *Taking control: Autonomy in language learning*, (pp. 35-48). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Esch, K., Schalkwijk, E., Elsen, A., & Setz, W. (2000). Autonomous learning in foreign language teacher training. In L. Dam (Ed.), *Learner autonomy project inventory*. Retrieved January 10, 2003 from: <http://lc.ust.hk/ailasc/lapi2000.html>.
- ETF.(2003). *Accent sur les dispositifs de la formation continue en Algérie*. Retrieved from:[http://www.etf.europa.eu/pubmgmt.nsf/%28getAttachment%29/F5C9CA07EB671CDAC125701F004D732B/\\$File/MED_CVET_Algeria_03_FR.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/pubmgmt.nsf/%28getAttachment%29/F5C9CA07EB671CDAC125701F004D732B/$File/MED_CVET_Algeria_03_FR.pdf)
- European Commission (2009). *Coopération UE-Algérie: La Commission Européenne soutienne la modernisation de l'enseignement supérieur et la lutte au chômage en Algérie*. Retrieved October 19,2009 from: http://www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/countrycooperation/algeria/algeria_fr.htm
- Europe Unit. (2006). *Guide to the Diploma Supplement*. UK: Universities UK. Retrieved from: <http://www.europeunit.ac.uk>
- European Union. (2010). *The EU contribution to The European Higher Education Area*. Belgium :Publication Office of The European Union. Retrieved from: <http://www.europa.eu>
- EUROSTAT. (2009). *The Bologna Process in higher education in Europe key indicators on the social dimension and mobility*. Retrieved from: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference/documents/2009_eurostat_eurostudent_social_dimension_and_mobility_indicators.pdf
- Eurydice. (2009). *Higher education In Europe 2009 : Developments in the Bologna Process*. Brussels.The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACFA). Retrieved from:http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/eurydice09_en.pdf
- Eurydice. (2010). *Focus on higher education in Europe 2010: New Report on the impact of The Bologna*. Retrieved from: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/2010_conference/documents/FOCUS_HE_2010_Highlights_EN.pdf
- Evans.S.M. (1995). *Professional portfolios: Documenting and presenting performance excellence*. Teacher's Little Secret.Virginia Beach, VA.

- Eyler, J., & Giles, D. E. (1999). *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Falchikov, N.(1995). Improving feedback to and from students. In P.Knight (Ed.) *Assessment for learning in higher education. Staff and Educational Development Series* (pp.157-166). London: Kogan Page.
- Falchikov, N. (2007). The place of peers in learning and assessment. In D. Boud & N. Falchikov (Eds.), *Rethinking assessment in higher education: Learning for the longer term* (pp. 128-143). London: Routledge.
- Farmer,B. & Eastcott,D.(1995). Making assessment a positive experience. In P.Knight (Ed.), *Assessment for learning in higher education*,(pp.87-93).London:Kogan Page Limited.
- Farmer,F.(2006). *Professionalism in ELT*. México Plaza y Valdez/Universidad de Quintana Roo.
- Fazey, D. M. A.,& Fazey, J. A. (2001). The potential for autonomy in learning: Perceptions of competence, motivation and locus of control in first-year undergraduate students. *Studies of Higher Education*, 26(3), 345-361.
- Fine, M. (1988) Sexuality, schooling and adolescent females: The missing discourse of desire. *Harvard Educational Review*,58, 29–51.
- Forbes, D & Spence, J. (1991). An experiment in assessment for a large class. In R. Smith (Ed.), *Innovations in engineering education*. London: Ellis Horwood.
- Fosnot, C. (1996). Constructivism: A psychological theory of learning. In C.T. Fosnot (Ed.). *Constructivism: Theory, perspectives, and practice* (pp.8-33). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fritz, C.A. (2001). *The level of teacher involvement in the Vermont mathematics portfolio assessment*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of New Hampshire.
- Fulcher, G & Davidson, F.(2007) . *Language testing and assessment*. New York: Routledge Applied Linguistic.
- Fullan, M. (1993). Why teachers must become change agents, *The Professional Teacher*, 50 (6)12-17.
- Gardner, R.C. & Lambert, W.E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers.
- Gardner, H. (1993). Assessment in context: the alternative to standardized testing. In R. Gifford & M. C. O'Connor (Eds.), *Changing assessments: alternative views of aptitude*,

- achievement and instruction* (pp.77-120). Massachusetts, USA: Kluwer Academic Press.
- Gardner, D.(1999). Self-assessment for autonomous language learners. *Links & Letters* 7, 2000, September 1999, 49-60.
- Gardner, D & Miller, L. (1999). *Establishing Self-Access: from theory to practice*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.
- Gardner,D.(2007). Integrating self-access learning into an ESP course. In D. Gardner (Ed.), *Learner autonomy 10: Integration and support* (pp.08-32). Dublin: Authentik.
- Green, J., & Oxford, R.L.(1995). A closer look at learning strategies, L2 proficiency, and gender. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 261-297.
- Gremmo, M.J., & Riley, P. (1995). Autonomy, self-direction and self access in language teaching and learning: The history of an idea. *System*, 23 (2),151-164.
- Gearthart M. & Wolfe, S. (1995). *Teachers' and Students' roles in large-scale portfolio assessment: Providing evidence of competency with the purpose and processes of writing*. Los Angeles: UCLA/The National Centre for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.
- Geathart, M. & Herman, J.L. (1995). *Portfolio assessment: Whose work is it? Issu the use of classroom assignments for accountability*. National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Gebhard, J. G. (1999). Seeing teaching differently through observation. In J. G. Gebhard & R. Oprandy (Eds.), *Language teaching awareness: a guide to exploring beliefs and practices* (pp.35-58). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Genesee, F.,& Hamayan, E. (1994). Classroom-based assessment. In F. Genesee (Ed.) *Educating Second Language Children* (pp.212-239). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Genesee, F. & Upshur, J.(1996). *Classroom-based evaluation in second language education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gibbons.M;Bailey, A.; Comeau,P.; Schmuck,J., Seymour,S., & Wallace,D. (2002).Toward a theory of self-directed learning: A study of experts without formal training. Published by SAGE: *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 20 (2). Downloaded on August 4, 2009. Retrieved from: <http://jhp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/20/2/41>
- Gibbs, G. (1998). *Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning*. London:Further Educational Unit.

- Gibbs, G., & Simpson, C. (2004). Conditions under which assessment supports students' learning. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, 1*, 3-31.
- Gibbs, G. (2006). How Assessment Frames Student Learning. In C. Bryan & K. Clegg (Eds.), *Innovative assessment in higher education* (pp.23-36). New York: Routledge.
- Gibran, K.(2000). Learner autonomy and learner training. In T. Hedge (Ed.), *Teaching and Learning in The Language Classroom*, (pp.75-106). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gillard,P.(Ed.) (2003). *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gillespie, C., K. Ford, R. Gillespie, & A. Leavell .(1996). Portfolio assessment: Some questions, some answers, some recommendations. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy. 39*, 480 – 91.
- Gipps, C. (1994). *Beyond Testing*. Washington, DC, Falmer Press.
- Gómez, M., Grave, M., & Block, M. (1991). Reassessing portfolio assessment: Rhetoric and reality. *Language Arts, 68*, 620-628.
- Gómez, E.L.(1999). *Assessment Portfolios and English Language Learners: Frequently Asked Questions and a Case Study of the Brooklyn International High School*. LAB at Brown University. Retrieved from :
http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/ass_port_ell/ass_port_ell.pdf
- Goolam,M.(1999-2010). Europe's Role in The Global Higher Education Setting. In EUA (1999-2010), *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives* (p.30). Berlin: European HEA.
- Gottlieb, M.(1995). Nurturing student learning through portfolios. *TESOL Journal 5*, (1),12-14.
- Gottlieb, M. (2000). Portfolio practices in elementary and secondary schools. In G. Ekbatani & H. Pierson (Eds.), *Learner directed assessment in ESL* (pp.89-104). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Grabe, W., & Kaplan, R. B. (1996). *Theory and practice of writing. An applied linguistic perspective*. London and New York: Longman
- Grath (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. London: Pearson Education Limited.
- Grath (2003). Principles for fostering autonomy in the classroom. In D.Nunan (Ed.), *Practical English Language Teaching* (pp.289-308), New York:The McGraw- Hill Companies.
- Green,R & McVie,A.(2007-2009). Creating a Europe Of Knowledge. In EUA (1999-2010), *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives* (pp.19-20). Berlin: European HEA.

- Grenfell, M., & Harris, V. (1999). *Modern languages and learning strategies: In theory and practice*. London: Routledge.
- Griffiee, D.T. (2012). *An introduction to second language research methods: Design and data*. USA: TESL-EJ Publications.
- Grundy, S. (1998). The curriculum and teaching. In E. Harton (Ed.), *Understanding teaching* (2nd edition), (pp.27-37). Marrickville, NSW: Harcourt Brace.
- Gullo, D. (1994). *Understanding assessment and evaluation in early childhood education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gussie, W.F. (1998). *Assessment of the implementation of portfolio assessment in the K- 8 school districts in New Jersey*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Widener University.
- International Telecommunication Union (2003). *ITU World Telecommunication Development Report: Access Indicators for the Information Society*. Geneva. Retrieved from : http://www.itu.int/wsis/tunis/newsroom/stats/WorldTelecomDevelopmentReport-2003_E.pdf
- Irujo, S. (2000). A Process syllabus in a methodology course: Experiences, beliefs, challenges. In M. P Breen & A. Littlejohn (Eds.), *Classroom decision-making* (pp.209-222). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Istvan, V. (2002). A Hungarian response to the EU memorandum on lifelong learning. In C. Medel-Añonuevo (Ed.). *Integrating lifelong learning perspectives* (pp.53-58).. Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education
- Hafner, C., & Young, J. (2007). From teacher to facilitator: Developing perspectives. In L. Miller (Ed.), *Learner autonomy 9: Autonomy in the classroom* (pp.103-126). Dublin: Authentik.
- Hägström, B.M. (1994). Using a video-camera and task-based activities to make classroom oral testing a more realistic communicative experience. *Foreign Language Annals*, 27(2).
- Hägström, B.M. (Ed.) (2004). *The role of libraries in lifelong learning final report of the IFLA project under the section for public libraries*. Sweden. Retrieved from : <http://archive.ifla.org/VII/s8/proj/Lifelong-LearningReport.pdf>
- Haladyna, T.M. (1997). *Writing test items to evaluate higher order thinking*. USA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Hall, D., & Kenny, B. (1988). An approach to a truly communicative methodology: The AIT pre-sessional course. *English for Specific Purpose*, 7, 19-32.

- Halbach, A. (2000). Finding out about students' learning strategies by looking at their diaries: A case study. *System*, 28, 85-96.
- Hamayan, E. V. (1995). Approaches to Alternative Assessment. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 15, 212-226.
- Hamp-Lyons, L. (1997). Washback, impact and validity: Ethical concerns. *Language Testing*, 14, 295-303.
- Hamp-Lyons, L. (1998). Ethical test preparation practice: The case of the TOEFL. *TESOL Quarterly* 32(2), 329-37.
- Hamp-Lyons, L. (2002). The scope of writing assessment. *Assessing Writing*, 8, 5-16.
- Hamp-Lyons, L. (2001). Fourth generation writing assessment. In T. Silva & P. K. Matsuda (Eds.), *On second language writing* (pp.117-128). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hamp-Lyons, L. (2006). Feedback in portfolio-based writing courses. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues* (pp.140-161). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hand, M. (2006). Against Autonomy as an educational aim. *Oxford Review of Education* 32, (4), 535-550.
- Handal, G. & Lauvas, P. (1987). *Promoting reflective teaching*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practical of English language teaching*. England: Longman.
- Harris, M. & McCann, P. (1994). *Assessment*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Harris, V. (2003). Adapting classroom-based strategy instruction to a distance learning context. *TESL-EJ*, 7(2). Retrieved from: <http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume7/ej26/ej26a1/>
- Harutyunyan, G & Bonete, R. (2007-2009). Enhancing opportunities for students and staff. In EUA (1999-2010), *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives* (pp.31-32). Berlin: European HEA.
- Harvey, L. & Knight, P. (1996). *Transforming higher education*. Buckingham: SRHE/ Open University Press.
- Hashemian, M., & Fadaei, B. (2013). Fostering EFL learners' autonomy in light of portfolio assessment: Exploring the potential impact of gender. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research* 1(2), (July, 2013) 135-151. Urmia University, Iran Retrieved May 15, 2009, from: <http://www.urmia.ac.ir/ijltr>
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77, 181-112.

- Haughton, G., & Dickinson, L. (1989). Collaborative assessment by masters' candidates in a tutor based system. *Language Testing*, 5(2), 233–246.
- Hayward, L., & Hedge, N. (2005). Travelling towards change in assessment: policy, practice and research in education. *Assessment in Education*, 12, (1), 55-75.
- Heaton, J.B. (1988). *Writing English language tests*. London: Longman
- Heaton, J.B. (1990). *Classroom testing*. London: Longman.
- Hedgcock, J. S. (2005). Taking stock of research and pedagogy in L2 writing. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp.579- 614). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom: A guide to current ideas about the theory and practice of English language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hedlund, D.E., Furst, T.C. & Foley, K.T. (1989). A dialogue with self: The journal as an educational tool, *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development*, 27, 105–113.
- Herman, J.L, Gearhart, M., & Baker, E. (1993). Assessing writing portfolios: Issues in the validity and meaning of scores. *Educational Assessment*, 1(3), 201–224.
- Herman, J.L, & Winters, L.(1994). Portfolio research: a slim collection. *Educational Leadership*, 52 (2),48-55.
- Herman, J. L. (1996). Technical quality matters. In R. Blum & J.A. Arter (Eds.) *Performance assessment in an era of restructuring*. (pp. 1-7:1 – 1-7:6). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Heron, J. (1993). *Group facilitation: Theories and models for practice*. London: Koganpage Ltd.Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Herrington, J., Reeves, T. C. & Oliver, R. (2006). Authentic Tasks Online: A synergy among learner, task and technology. *Distance Education*, 27(2), 233 - 247.
- Higgins, R.(2000). Be More Critical!: Rethinking Assessment Feedback. Paper presented at *the British Educational Research Association Conference* (Cardiff University, September 7-10 2000).
- Hill, J. & Hawk, K. (2000). Four Conceptual Clues to Motivating Students: learning from the practice of effective teachers in low-decile, multi-cultural schools. A paper presented at *the NZARE Conference*, Waikato. November 2000.
- Hiller, I.(2010).Forward from Hungary. In European Higher Education Area, Bologna (1999-2010)achievements, challenges and perspectives (p.04). Retrieved from:

http://www.duz.de/cms/media/uploads/user/coporatepublishing/duzBologna_final_monitor.pdf

- Hillocks, G. Jr.(2002). *The testing trap: How states writing assessments control learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hillocks,G. Jr.(1999). *Way of thinking, ways of knowing*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hirose, K., & Sasaki, M. (1994). Explanatory variables for Japanese students' expository writing in English: An exploratory study. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 3(3), 203-229.
- Hirvela, A., & Sweetland, L. (2005). Two case studies of L2 writers' experiences across learning directed portfolio contexts. *Assessing Writing*, 10, 192-213.
- Ho, J., & D. Crookall.(1995). Breaking with Chinese cultural traditions: Learner autonomy in English language teaching. *System* 23(2), 235-243.
- Holec, H. (1980). Learner Training. In H. Altman & V. James (Eds.), *Foreign language teaching: Meeting individual needs* (pp.30-45). Oxford: Pergamon Institute of English.
- Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy in foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Holec, H. (1985). On autonomy: Some elementary concepts. In P. Riley (Ed.), *Discourse and learning* (pp. 173-190). London, UK: Longman.
- Holec, H. (1987). The learner as manager: managing learning or managing to learn. In A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp.145-157). Prentice Hall: New York.
- Holec, H.(1988) (Ed.). *Autonomy and self-directed learning. Present fields of application*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Holi Ali,H.I, & Al Ajmi,A.A.S.(2013). Towards Quality Assessment in an EFL Programme. *English Language Teaching*, 6, (10);ISSN 1916-4742 E-ISSN 1916 4750. Retrieved from : <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n10p132>
- Hosseini,H & Ghabanchi,Z .(2014). The Effect of portfolio assessment on EFL learners' reading comprehension and motivation. *English Language Teaching* 7 (5),110-119.
- Howard, K. , & P. LeMahieu. (1995). Parents as Assessors of Student Writing: Enlarging the community of learners. *Teaching and Change*, 2 (4), 392-414.
- Hounsell, D. (1997). Contrasting conceptions of essay-writing. In F. Marton, D. Hounsell & N. Entwistle (Eds.), *The experience of learning*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

- House of Common Education and Skills Committee (2007). The Bologna Process : Fourth Report of Session 2006–07. Retrieved from: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmmeduski/205/205.pdf>
- Hughes, A. (1986). A pragmatic approach to criterion-referenced foreign language testing. In M. Portal (Ed.), *Innovations in language testing* (pp. 31-40). Windsor: NFER Nelson.
- Hughes, A. (1989). *Testing for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hughes, A. (2003). *Testing for language teachers* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hunt,E.S.(1999-2010). Improving recognition Across Systems. In EUA (1999-2010), *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives* (p.25). Berlin: European HEA.
- Huang, J. (2005a). Metacognition training in the Chinese university classroom: An action research study. *Educational Action Research*, 13(3), 413–434.
- Huang, J. (2005b). A diary study of difficulties and constraints in EFL learning. *System*, 33(4), 609–621.
- Huang, J. (2006a). Learner resistance in metacognition training? An exploration of mismatches between learner and teacher agendas. *Language Teaching Research*,10(1), 95–117.
- Huang, J. (2006b). Learner autonomy in the Chinese university classroom: An insider perspective of teacher–learner role relationships. In P. Benson (Ed.), *Insider perspectives on learner and teacher autonomy* (pp. 84–103). Dublin: Authentik.
- Hughes, A. (1981). Conversational cloze as a measure of oral ability. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 35, 161-168.
- Hyers, A.D. (2001). Predictable achievement patterns for student journals in introductory earth science courses, *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 25(1), pp. 53–66.
- Jakobovits, L.A. (1970). *Foreign language learning: A psycholinguistic analysis of the issues*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- James, R; McInnis, C., & Devlin ,M.(2002). *Assessing learning at Australian universities*. Center for the Study of Higher Education. The University of Melbourne, Australia, Retrieved from: <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/>
- James,R.(n.d.). *The skill of questioning*. Retrieved from: http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/resources_teach/teaching_in_practice/docs/Skill_Questi on.pdf

- Jang, H., Reeve, J., & Deci, E. L. (2010). Engaging students in learning activities: It is not autonomy support or structure but autonomy support and structure. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *10*(3),588–600.
- Johnson, F., Delarche, M., Marshall, N., Wurr, A., & Edwards, J. (1998). Changing teacher roles in the foreign language classroom. *Texas papers in foreign language education*, *3* (2), 71-89. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 423676).
- Johnson, K. E. (1992). The relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices during Literacy instruction for non-native speakers of English. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, *24*(1), 83–108.
- Johnson, K. E. (2006). The sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, *40*(1), 235-257.
- Johnstone,A.(2005). Evaluation of teaching. UK: Higher Education Academy Physical Sciences Centre. Retrieved from: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/ps0073_evaluation_of_teaching_oct_2005.pdf
- Joint Committee on Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing of the AERA, APA, and NCME. (1999). Retrieved from: <http://www.riversidepublishing.com/pdfs/WebGlossary.pdf>
- Jones, J. (1995). Self-access and culture. *ELT Journal*,*49*(3), 228-234.
- Jones, F. R. (1993). Beyond the fringe: A framework for assessing teach-yourself materials for ab initio English-speaking learners. *System*, *21*, 453-469.
- Jones, F. R (1995). Self-Access and Culture. Retreating from Culture. *ELT Journal* *49*(3) , 228-234.
- Jones, M., & Shelton,M. (2011). *Developing your portfolio: Enhancing your learning and showing your staff*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Jones, J. (2001). CALL and the teacher's role in promoting learner autonomy. *CALL-EJ Online*,*3*(1). Retrieved November 6, 2009, from: <http://www.tell.is.ritsumei.ac.jp/callejonline/journal/3-1/jones.html>
- Joslin, G. (2002). *Investigating the influence of rubric assessment practices on the student's desire to learn*. Unpublished manuscript San Diego State University.
- Julius, T. M. (2000). *Third grade students' perceptions of portfolios*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- Junn, E. (1994). Pearls of wisdom: Enhancing student class participation with an innovative exercise. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*,*21*, 385-387.

- Juwah, C., D.; Macfarlane-Dick, B. Matthew, D. Nicol, D. Ross, & B. Smith. (2004). *Enhancing student learning through effective formative feedback*. York: Higher Education Academy Generic Centre.
- Kashefian, S. N. (2002). *An investigation into college EFL learners' beliefs demonstrating their predispositions towards learner autonomy*. Unpublished Master's thesis, Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran.
- Katsumasa, S. (1997). Communicative language testing: Principles and problems. *English Review*, 12, 3-24. Retrieved December 1, 2007, from: <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/110004693443/en/>
- Kaur ,R., & G.K. Sidhu.(2000). Learner autonomy via asynchronous online interactions: A Malaysian perspective. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT)*, 2010, 6(3), 88-100.
- Khelfaoui, H. *La recherche scientifique en Algérie entre exigences locales et tendances internationales*. Retrieved from : <http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/files/53297/11797117335Khelfaoui.doc/Khelfaoui.doc>
- Kelo, M; Teichler,U.; & Wachter,B.(Ed.). (2006). *EURODATA-students mobility in European Higher Education*. ACA papers. Bonn: Lemmens.
- Kellogg, R. T. (1988). Attentional overload and writing performance: Effects of rough draft and outline strategies. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*,14, 355–365.
- Kelly, R.(1978). *On the construct validation of comprehension tests: An exercise in Applied Linguistics*. Ph. D. Thesis. University of Queensland.
- Kelly, R. (1996). Language counselling for learner autonomy. In R. Pemberton, E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or & H.D. Pierson (Eds). *Taking control: Autonomy in language learning* (pp.93-113). Hong Kong University Press.
- Kelly, F. S., McCain, T., & Jukes, I. (2009). *Teaching the digital generation: No more cookie-cutter high schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Kennedy,D; Hyland, A., & Ryan,R. (2009). Learning Outcomes and Competences. Retrieved from: http://skktg.vdu.lt/downloads/seminaro_medziaga_100622-23/learning_outcomes_and_competences.pdf
- Kenny, B. (1993a). For more autonomy. *System*, 21(4), 431–442.

- Kenny, B.(1993b). Investigative research: How it changes learner status. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(2), 217–231.
- Kenny, B. (1996). Knowledge, experience and language teaching. *System*, 24(4),449– 460.
- Khelfaoui, H.(2009). The Bologna Process in Africa: Globalization or return to colonial situation? *JHEA/RESA*, 7, (18/2), 189-207.
- Kim, C.Y.(2002). Teachers in digital knowledge-based society:New Roles and Vision. *Asia Pacific Education Review* 2002, Vol. 3, No. 2, 144-148.
- Kinchin, G.D.(2001, February). Using team portfolios in a sport education season. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*. 72(2), 41-44.
- King,A.(1992). Facilitating elaborative learning through guided student-generated questioning. *Educational Psychologist* 27,111-126.
- Kirkland,M.C.(1971). The Effects of tests on students and schools. *Review of Educational Research* 41,303-350.
- Kitano, K. (2001). Anxiety in the college Japanese language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 85, 499-561.
- Klenowski, Val. (2000, July). Portfolios: Promoting teaching. *Assessment in Education*, 7(2), 215-236.
- Knowles, M. (1975). *Self-directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers*. New York: Cambridge, The Adult Education Company.
- Kohonen, V. (1991). *Foreign language learning as learner education: Facilitating self-direction in language learning. Transparency and coherence in language learning in Europe*. Switzerland : Council for Cultural Co- operation,
- Kohonen, V. (1999). Authentic assessment in affective foreign language education. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp.279-294). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kohonen, V. (March 2002). Student autonomy and the teacher' professional growth: fostering collegial culture in language teacher education. Paper presented at *The learner autonomy symposium*. Dublin University.
- Kothari,C.R.(2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Delhi : New Age International (P) Ltd., Publishers
- Koretz, D., Stecher, B., Klein, S., & McCaffrey, D. (1994). The Vermont portfolio assessment program: Findings and implications. *Education Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 13 (5), 5-16.

- Krashen, S. (2003). *Explorations in language acquisition and use: The taipei lectures*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Krueger, R., & Casey, M. (2000). *Focus groups: A Practical guide for applied Research* (3rd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kuhs, T. (1994). Portfolio Assessment: Making it Work for the First Time. *The Mathematics Teacher* 87(5), 332-335.
- Lacey, F. (2007). Autonomy, never, never, never!. *Independence*, 42, 4-8.
- Lai, J. (2001). Towards an analytic approach to assessing learner autonomy. In Dam (Ed.) *Learner Autonomy: new insights*. Aila review 15, 34-44.
- Lai, C.(2011). In-service teacher development for facilitating learner autonomy in curriculum-based self-access language learning. In D. Gardner (Ed.), *Fostering autonomy in language learning* (pp.148-160). . Turkey: Zirve University.
- Lam, H. P.(1994). Methodology washback- an insider's view. In D. Nunan, R. Berry, & V. Berry (Eds.), *Bringing about change in language education: Proceedings of the International language in education conference 1994* (pp.83-102). Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong.
- Lam, R., & Lee, L. (2010). Balancing the dual functions of portfolio assessment. *ELT Journal*, 64(1) 54-64.
- Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne,S.L.(2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Laourari,H.(2010). Problematique de l'insertion professionnelles des jeunes issus de l'enseignement Supérieur en Algérie : Etat des lieux et pistes de réflexion. Paper presented at: Colloque *Des Formations pour Quels Emplois: Regards Croises Universités-Entreprises*. Mentouri University of Constantine. 02-03 June 2010.
- Larrivee,B.(2006). *An Educator's guide to teacher reflection*. USA : University of Virginia.
- Laufer, B., & Nation, P.(1995). Vocabulary size and use: Lexical richness in L2 written production. *Applied Linguistics*, 16(3), 307-322.
- Laureates, N.(2007). *Encyclopedia Britannica*. UK: Encyclopedia Britannica.
- Laurillard,D.(2002). *Rethinking university teaching*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Law, B. & Eckes, M. (1995). *Assessment and ESL*. Winnipeg, MB: Peguis Publishers.
- Lanzendorf, U. (2006). Foreign students and study abroad students. In M. Kelo, U.Teichler & B.Wächter (Eds.), *EURODATA: Student mobility in European higher education*,(pp.07-53). Lemmens Verlags- & Mediengesellschaft mbH :Bonn.
- Lee, I. (1998). Supporting greater autonomy in language learning. *ELT Journal*. 52, (4), 282-89.

- Lee, J. (2000). *Tasks and communicating in language classrooms*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Lefrancois, G. R. (1997). *Psychology for teaching*. Toronto: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Legenhausen, L. (1999). The emergence and use of grammatical structures in conversational interactions: comparing traditional and autonomous learners. In B. Mißler & U. Multhaup (Eds.), *The construction of knowledge, learner autonomy and related issues in foreign language learning* (pp. 27-40). Tübingen: Stauffenberg.
- Leki, I. (1991). The preferences of ESL students for error correction in college-level writing classes. *Foreign Language Annals*, 24(3), 203-218.
- LeMahieu, P.G., Gitomer, D.A., & Eresh, J.T. (1995). Portfolios in large-scale assessment: Difficult but not impossible. *Educational measurement: Issues and practice. Journal of the National Council on Measurement in Education*, 13 (3).
- Le Quotidien d'Oran (2010). *Université En Algérie: La Qualité en Question*. Retrieved from: <http://www.el-annabi.com/nationale/442-universite-en-algerie-la-qualite-en-question.html?com=oui>
- Lewis, T.; Woodin, J. & John, E. (1996). Tandem learning: independence through partnership. In E. Broady, M. Kenning (Eds.), *Promoting learner autonomy in university language teaching* (pp. 105-120). London: Association for French Language Studies in association with CILT.
- Li, X. (1990). How powerful can a language test be? *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 11(5), 393-404.
- Lipstein, R. L., & Renninger, K. A. (2007). Interest for writing: How teachers can make a difference. *English Journal*, 96(4), 79-85.
- Little, D. (1990). Autonomy in language learning. In I. Gathercole (Ed.), *Autonomy in language learning* (pp. 7-15). London, CILT.
- Little, D. (1991). *Learner autonomy: Definitions, issues and problems*. Dublin: Authentik Limited.
- Little, D. (1994). Learner autonomy: A theoretical construct and its practical applications. *Die Neuren Sprachen*, 93(5), 430-442.
- Little, D. (1997). Language awareness and the autonomous language learner. *Language Awareness*, 6(2/3), 93-104.
- Little, D. (1995). Learning as dialogue: The dependence of learner autonomy on teacher autonomy. *System* (23/2) 175-182.
- Little, D. (1996). Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: Promoting learning autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies. In Pemberton, R.,

- E.S.L. Li, W.W.F. Or & H.D. Pierson (Eds.). *Taking Control* (pp.203-218). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Little,D.(1999). Learner autonomy is more than a western cultural construct. In S. Cotterall & D. Crabbe (Eds.), *Learner autonomy in language learning: Defining the field and effecting change*, (pp.11-88). Frankfurt am Main: Lang.
- Little, D. (2000). We're all in it together: Exploring the interdependence of teacher and learner autonomy. Paper presented at Autonomy 2000, University of Helsinki Language Centre, 7-9 September 2000. In *Newsletter of the IATEFL PL Autonomous Learning SIG 4*. Retrieved from: <http://www.iatefl.org.pl/sig/al/all.html>
- Little, D. (2002). The European language portfolio: Structure, origins, implementation and challenges. *Language Teaching* 35, 182–189.
- Little,D.(2003). *Languages in the post-primary curriculum*. Dublin: NCCA.
- Little, D. (2004). Constructing a theory of learner autonomy: Some steps along the way. In K. Mäkinen, P. Kaikkonen, & V. Kohonen (Eds.), *Future Perspectives Foreign Language Education* (pp. 15–25).Oulu.
- Little,D.(2004). *Learner autonomy, teacher autonomy and the European Language Portfolio*. Retrieved from: <http://www.utc.fr/~untele/2004ppt/handouts/little.pdf>
- Little, D. (2007). Language learner autonomy: Some fundamental considerations Revisited. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1),14-29.
- Littlewood, W. (1996). Autonomy: an anatomy and a framework. *System*, 24(4), 427-435.
- Littlewood, W. (1997). Self-access: Why do we want it and what can it do? In Benson & P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning* (pp. 79-92). London: Longman.
- Littlewood, W.(1999). Defining and developing autonomy in East Asian contexts. *Applied Linguistics*, 20(1), 71-94.
- Littlewood, W. (2002). Cooperative and collaborative learning tasks as pathways towards autonomous interdependence. In P. Benson & S. Toogood (Eds.), *Learner autonomy 7: Challenge to research and practice* (pp.29-40). Dublin: Authentik.
- Littlewood, W. (2010). Chinese and Japanese students' conceptions of the 'ideal English lesson. *RELC Journal*, 41 (1), 46-58.
- Long,M.H.(1983). Inside the Black Box: Methodological issues in classroom research on language learning. In H.W. Seliger & M.Long (Eds.), *Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition*. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House.

- Looney, J. W. (2011). Integrating formative and summative assessment: Progress toward a seamless system? *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 58, OECD Publishing. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5kghx3kbl734-en>
- Loveless, A. M., Williams, C. M., & Kutnick, P. J. (2000). Evaluating teachers' use of portable computers in administration and the curriculum. Paper presented at *The British Educational Research Association Conference*, Cardiff.
- Macaro, E. (1997). *Target language, collaborative learning and autonomy*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Macaro, E. (2001). *Strategies in Foreign and Second Language Classrooms: Learning to Learn*. London: Cassell.
- Madsen, H. S. (1983). *Techniques in testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mami Abdelatif, N.(2007-2008). *Guidance and Counselling to Enhance Lifelong Learning in Algeria*. An“es. Science” Doctorate degree In Psychopedagogy and language learning. Alhadj Lakhdar University– Batna –Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences Department of English.
- van Manen, M. (1977). Linking ways of knowing with ways of being practical. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6(3).205-228. Retrieved January 12,2009 from: <http://amitay.haifa.ac.il/images/1/1f/Mannen.pdf>
- Marashi, H., & Jafari, R. (2012). The comparative effect of using critical thinking, constructivist learning, and a combination of the two techniques on EFL learners writing. *Iranian EFL Journal*, 8(4), 206-225.
- Marcelo,C.(2005). Teachers learning for a learning society – Literature review. In J.M.Moreno (Ed.), *Learning to teach in the knowledge society* (pp.04-34). Retrieved from: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/2782001126210664195/1636971-1126210694253/Learning_Teach_Knowledge_Society.pdf
- Marginson,S., & Wende,M. (2006). *Globalization and higher education* ,12 September, prepared for OECD. Retrieved from: <http://www.oecd.org/innovation/research/37552729.pdf>
- Marginson,S.(29 February,2008). *Higher education and globalization: Issues for research part II: Cross border mobility, flows and the globalization of the academic profession*. Berlin. EAIE Forum. Retrieved from: http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/marginson_docs/EAIE%20290208.pdf

- Marshall, K. (1996). The rewards and pitfalls of autonomy: a Bangor experience. In E. Broady & M. Kenning (Eds.), *Promoting learner autonomy in university language teaching* (pp.39-60). London: Association for French Language Studies in association with CILT.
- Mauranen, A.(1994). Two discourse worlds: Study genres in Britain and Finland. *FINLANCE. A Finnish Journal of Applied Linguistics. Vol. XIII.* 1-40.
- McCarthy, C. P.(1998). *Learner training for learner autonomy on summer language courses*. Celbridge: The Salestian English Language Center. Retrieved February 21, 2003, from: <http://www.homepage.tinet.ie/ciaranmac19/training.html>
- McCurdy,B., & Shapiro, E.(1992). A comparison of teacher monitoring, peer monitoring, and self-monitoring with curriculum based measurement in reading among students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Special Education* 22:162–180.
- McDevitt, B. (2004). Negotiating in the syllabus: A win-win situation? *ELT Journal*,58(1),3-9.
- McDonald, B., & Boud, D. (2003). The impact of self-assessment on achievement: The effects of self-assessment training on performance in external examinations. *Assessment in Education*, 10(2), 209-220.
- McDonough, S. (1995). *Strategy and skill in learning a foreign language*. London: Edward Arnold.
- McClure, J. (2001). Developing language skills and learner autonomy in international postgraduates. *ELT Journal*, 55 (2), 142-148.
- McGarry, Dee. (1995). *Learner autonomy 4: The role of authentic texts*. Dublin: Authentik.
- McGrath, I. (2000). Teacher autonomy. In B. Sinclair, I. McGrath & T. Lamb (Eds.), *Learner autonomy, teacher autonomy: Future directions* (pp.100-110).London: Longman.
- McKay, P. (2001). Innovation in English language assessment: Looking towards long-term Learning. In C. Davison, V. Crew & J.Hung (Eds.), *Conference Proceedings. International Language in Education Conference, 2000*, Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong.
- McLoughlin, C. (2002). Learner support in distance and networked learning environments: Ten dimensions for successful design. *Distance Education*, 2(23), 149 - 162.
- McNamara, T. F. (1996). *Measuring second language performance*. London: Longman.
- McNamara, T. (2000). *Language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Meadows, R. B., & Dyal, A. B. (1999). Implementing portfolio assessment in the development of school administrators: Improving preparation for educational leadership. *Education*, 120(2), 304-315.

- Medel-Añonuevo, C.(Ed.) (2002). *Integrating lifelong learning perspectives*. Germany:UNESCO Institute for Education.
- Megnounif,A.(2009). *The LMD system and the Algerian university: Five years after. The case of the faculty of Engineering*, Tlemcen-Algeria. Retrieved from:
http://fsi.univ-tlemcen.dz/MEGNOUNIF_LMD_UABBT_FSI_Nov2009_englishs.pdf
- Meirink, J. A., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2007). A closer look at teachers' individual learning in collaborative settings. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*,13(2), 145-164.
- Melograno, V.J. (2000). Designing a portfolio system for K-12 Physical education: A step-by-step process. *Measurement in Physical Education & Exercise Science*,4(2), 97-116.
- Messick, S. (1996). Validity and washback in language testing. *Language Testing*, 13(3).
- Messina,G.(2002). Gender equality in basic education: A gateway towards lifelong learning for all. In C.Medel-Anonuevo(Ed.), *Integrating lifelong learning perspectives*. (pp.143-160). Germany :UNESCO Institute for Education.
- Michael,E.(2007-2009). Widening access and participation to European higher education. In P. Zgaga (1999-2010), *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives* (pp.17-18). Berlin: European HEA.
- Micklo, S.J. (1997). Math portfolio in the primary grades. *Childhood Education*, 97 (Summer), 194-199.
- Midthassel, U. V., & Bru, E. (2001). Predictors and gains of teacher involvement in an improvement project on classroom management. Experiences from a Norwegian project in two compulsory schools. *Educational Psychology*, 21(3), 229-242.
- Miliani,M. (2004). Formation LMD en langues et mondialisation: Un problème de curricula ? *Revue Laros N°1/2004*, 20-24.
- Ministère de L'enseignement Supérieur et de La Recherche Scientifique (1999). *Loi n° 99 05 du 18 Dhou El Hidja 1419 Correspondant au 4 avril 1999 portant loi d'orientation sur l'enseignement supérieur modifiée et complétée*. Retrieved from:
<https://www.mesrs.dz/documents/12221/32650/la+loi++99-05+modifiee+et+completee.pdf/585eb326-0139-4c6d-ad3a-a44477c7e8dd>
- Ministère de L'enseignement Supérieur et de La Recherche Scientifique (2003). *Dossier Reformes Des Enseignements Supérieurs : Nouvelle Architecture Formations Basée sur Le Dispositif Licence/Master/Doctorat*. Retrieved from :
<http://www.djamiatic.net/participations/DOCUMENT%20FINAL%20COMPLETE%5B1%5D.pdf>

- Ministère de L'enseignement Supérieur et de La Recherche Scientifique (2004). Note d'orientation de Monsieur le Ministre de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique portant 'mise en œuvre de la réforme des enseignements supérieurs. Retrieved from : <https://pufas.wordpress.com/2007/02/07/57/>
- Ministère de L'enseignement Supérieur et de La Recherche Scientifique (2007). *Reforme des Enseignements Supérieurs*. Retrieved June 2007, from <http://www.mesrs.dz>
- Ministère de L'enseignement Supérieur et de La Recherche Scientifique. (2010). *EL BAHTH*. Revue de La Direction Générale de la Recherche Scientifique et du Développement Technologique N°03 -04ème Trimestre. Retrieved from: http://www.dgrsdt.dz/admin/news_upload/RevueElBahth2.pdf
- Ministère de L'enseignement Supérieur et de La Recherche Scientifique (June,2011). Guide pratique de mise en oeuvre et de suivi du LMD. Retrieved from: <https://www.academia.edu/8409283/guide-LMD>
- Mitchell,R.(1992). *Testing for learning: How new approaches to evaluation can improve American Schools*.New York: The Free Press.
- Mitsuta, A.(1999). Universal problems and national realities: Japan in comparative perspective. In P.G Altbach & P.M Peterson (Ed.), *Higher education in the 21st century: global challenge and national response* (pp.59-66)..Boston: Boston College and Institute of International Education and Council on International Exchange of Scholars.
- Moir,J, (2011). *First and foremost: Learner autonomy in the first year*. Glasgow: The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Retrieved from: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk>
- Moller, A. (1981). Reactions to morrow paper (2). In J. C. Alderson & A. Hughes (Eds.), *Issues in language testing* (pp.38-44). ELT Documents 111. London: The British Council.
- Moore,Z.(1994). The portfolio and testing culture. In C. Hancock (Ed.), *Teaching, testing and assessment* (pp.163-182). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.
- Morrison, K. R. B. (1993). *Planning and accomplishing school-centred evaluation*. Dereham, UK: Peter Francis.
- Morrison, K. (1996) Developing reflective practice in higher degree students through learning journal, *Studies in Higher Education*, 21(3), 317–332.
- Morrison, B.(2005). Evaluating learning gain in a self-access language learning centre. *Language Teaching Research* 9 (3), 267-293.

- Morrow, K. (1979). Communicative language testing: revolution or evolution. In C.J. Brumfit & K. Johnson (Eds.) *The communicative approach to language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Morrow, K. (1981). Communicative language testing: evolution or revolution? In J.C. Alderson & A. Hughes (Eds.), *Issues in Language Testing*. ELT Documents 111. London: The British Council.
- Moskowitz, G. (1999). Enhancing personal development: Humanistic activities at work. In Arnold, J. (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp.177-193). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Moya, S.S. , & O'Malley, J.M. (1994). A portfolio assessment model for ESL. *The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students*, 13, 13-36, Spring 1994.
- Mullin, J.A. (1998). Portfolios: Purposeful collections of student work. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 74 (summer), 74-87.
- Murphy, R. (2006). Evaluating new priorities for assessment in higher education. In C. Bryan & K. Clegg (Eds.), *Innovative assessment in higher education* (pp.37-47). New York: Routledge.
- Murphy-Lejeune, E. (2008). The student experience of mobility: A contrasting score. In M. Byram & F. Dervin (Eds.). *Students, staff and academic mobility in higher education* (pp.12-30). UK: Cambridge Scholars Publisher.
- Naeini, J. (2011). Self-assessment and the impact on language skills. *Educational Research*, 2(6), 1225-1231. Retrieved June, 2011 from : <http://www.interestjournals.org/ER>
- Nicol, D.J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2004). *Rethinking formative assessment in HE: A theoretical model and seven principles of good feedback practice*. Higher Education Academy. Retrieved from: http://www-new1.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/assessment/web0015_rethinking_formative_assessment_in_he.pdf
- Nicol, D.J., & Milligan, C. (2006). Rethinking technology-supported assessment practices in relation to the seven principles of good feedback practice. In C. Bryan & K. Clegg (Eds.), *Innovative assessment in higher education* (pp.64-77). New York: Routledge.
- Nielson, L.L. (2009-2010). Stakeholders at the heart of decision making in Bologna. In EUA (1999-2010), *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives* (p.15). Berlin: European HEA.
- Nikolova, O. R. (2002). Effect of students' participation in authoring of multimedia materials on students acquisition of vocabulary. *Language Learning & Technology*, 6(1), 100-122.

- Norton, L. S. (1990). Essay writing: what really counts? *Higher Education* 20 (4), 411–442.
- Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and Educational change*. Harlow: Longman.
- Novak, John R., Herman, J.L. & Gearhart.M. (1996). Establishing validity for performance-based assessment: An illustration for collections of student writing. *Journal of Educational Research*.Vol. 89 (4), 220-233.
- Nunan, D. (1988). *The learner-centred curriculum*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Nunan, D. (1995). Closing the gap between learning and instruction. *TESOL Quarterly* 29 (2),133-158.
- Nunan,D.(1995). *ATLAS: Learning-centered communication*. Boston MA: Heinle/Thomson.
- Nunan, D. (1996). Towards autonomous learning: Some theoretical, empirical and practical issues. In R. Pemberton, E. Li, W. OR & H.D. Pierson (Eds), *Taking control- autonomy in language learning*. (13-27). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press
- Nunan, D. (1997). Designing and adapting materials to encourage learner autonomy. In P. Benson, & P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning* (pp. 192-203). London: Longman.
- Oatley,K., & J. Jenkins.(1996). *Understanding emotions*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Obasi,N.I & Olutayo,O.A, (2009). Globalization, the Bologna Process and African universities: Limits and contradictions of market-oriented higher education reforms. *JHEA/RESA*, 7, (1&2), 159–187.
- O'Connor, A & Diggins, C.(2002). *On reflection*. Lower Hutt, N.Z: Open Mind Publishing.
- Oczkus, L. D. (2007). *Guided writing: Practical lessons, powerful results*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- O'Donnell,A.(2009). *Promoting student mobility and exchange in Hungary*. Hungary: Central European University. Retrieved from: http://www.etd.ceu.hu/2009/odonnell_ailee
- OECD. (2005). *Formative assessment: Improving learning in secondary classrooms*. OECD: Paris.
- Official Bologna seminar on employability in the context of the Bologna Process.(2004) General Conclusion and Recommendations Bled/Slovenia 21st, 23rd of October. Retrieved from : <http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Seminars/041023Conclusions.pdf>
- OIC, (April 2007). *Academic rankings of universities in the OIC countries*. SESRTCIC/Ankara Centre Turkey. Retrieved from: <http://www.sesric.org/files/article/232.pdf>

- O'Leary, C. (October 2007). Should learner autonomy be assessed? Proceedings of *the Independent Learning Association 2007 Japan Conference: Exploring theory, enhancing practice: Autonomy across the disciplines*. Kanda University of International Studies, Chiba, Japan.
- Oller, J.W.(1979). *Language tests at schools*. London: Longman.
- Omaggio, A. (1978). Successful language learners: What do we know about them? *ERIC / CLL News Bulletin*, May, 2-3.
- O'Malley, J. M. & Chamot, A. V.(1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. London: Macmillan.
- O'Malley, M., & Pierce, L. V. (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language learners*. New York: Addison Wesley.
- Onderolir,S.(2009-2010). Developing a National Qualification Framework (NQF):The Example of Turkey. In EUA (1999-2010). *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives* (p.23). Berlin: European HEA
- Ondigi,R.S., & Ondigi,A.N. (November,2011). The role of research in teaching and learning processes in Kenyan universities. *International Journal of Business and Management Tomorrow*,1, (2), 1-9.
- Orsmond, P., Merry, S., & Reiling, K. (2002) The use of formative feedback when using student derived marking criteria in peer and self-assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 27 (4), 309–323.
- Oskarsson,M.(1989).Self-assessment for language proficiency: Rationale and Applications. *Language Testing*, (6)1, 1-13.
- Ouyahia,A.(03 October, 2010). *Official Journal of the Algerian Republic N°57* (03 October 2010). Executive decree n° 10-231 of the 2nd October 2010 clarifying the status of PhD students. Article 02,04,11 (p.13) Retrieved from: <http://www.mooddeutsch.com/offizielle%20Dokumente/loi%20doctorant.pdf>
- Oxford, R.L.(1989). *Language Learning Strategies: What every teacher should know*. Boston, Massachusetts: H&H Publishers.
- Oxford, R.L.(1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Oxford, R.L. (1996a). *Language learning strategies around the world: Cross-cultural perspectives*. Manoa: University of Hawaii Press.
- Oxford, R.L. (1996b). Personality type in the foreign or second language classroom: Theoretical and empirical perspectives. In A. Horning & R. Sudol (Eds.), *Understanding literacy:*

- Personality preferences in rhetorical and psycholinguistic contexts* (pp.149-175). Creskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Oxford, R.L.(2001). Language learning strategies. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 166-172). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford, R. L. (2003). Toward a more systematic model of L2 learner autonomy. In D. Palfreyman & R. C. Smith (Eds.), *Learner autonomy across cultures: Language education perspectives* (pp. 75-91). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Palfreyman, D. (2003). Introduction: Culture and learner autonomy. In D. Palfreyman & R.C. Smith (Eds.), *Learner autonomy across cultures: Language education perspectives* (pp.01-19). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Palfreyman, D. (2004). Introduction. In D. Palfreyman & R. C. Smith, *Learner autonomy across cultures*. Great Britain: Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham and Eastbourne.
- Pârgaru,I ; Gherghina,R., & Duca,I.(2009). The role of education in the knowledge-based society during the economic crisis. *Annales Universitatis Apulensis Series Oeconomica*, 11(2), 646-651.
- Paris, S. G., & Winograd, P. (1990). How meta-cognition can promote academic learning and instruction. In B. F. Jones & L. Idol (Eds.), *Dimensions of thinking and cognitive instruction*. Hillsdale, NJ: Earlbaum.
- Park,H.M. (2009). *Comparing group means: T-tests and one-way ANOVA using stata, SAS, R, and SPSS*. University Information Technology Services Center for Statistical and Mathematical Computing Indiana University. Retrieved from: <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/handle/2022/19735>
- Parr, J. (1999). Extending educational computing: a case of extensive teacher Development and support. *Journal of Research on Computing in Education*, 31, 280-291.
- Patri, M. (2002). The influence of peer feedback on self- and peer-assessment of oral skills. *Language Testing*, 19(2), 109–131.
- Peng,W.(2002). Globalization, lifelong learning and response of the universities. In C.Medel-Añonuevo (Ed.), *Integrating lifelong learning perspectives* (pp.128-133). Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education.
- Pennycook, A. (1997). *The cultural politics of English as an international language*. London: Longman.

- Perrenoud, P. (1998). From evaluation to a controlled regulation of learning processes: Towards a wider conceptual field, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, Vol. 5, 85-102.
- Philpott, J.(2009). *Captivating your class: Effective Teaching skills*. UK: Antony Rowe.
- Pieck, E (2002). Lifelong learning and work in developing countries. In C.Medel-Añonuevo (Ed.), *Integrating lifelong learning perspectives* (pp.113-125).Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education.
- Pierce, L.V., & O'Malley, J.M. (Spring,1992). Performance and portfolio assessment for language minority students. *NCBE Program Information Guide Series 9*,01-38. Retrieved from : <http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu>
- Pierce, B.N.; Swain, M., & Hart, D. (1993). Self-assessment, French immersion and locus of control. *Applied Linguistics*, 14 (1): 25-42.
- Poehner,M.E & Lantolf,J. (2005). Dynamic assessment in the language classroom. *Language Teaching Research*, 9,1-33.
- Polit, D.F., Beck,C.T. & Hungler, B.P.(2001). Essentials for nursing research: Methods, appraisal, and utilization (5th ed.). Philadelphia:Lippincott.
- Politano,C., C. Cameron; B. Tate; & D. MacNaughton.(1997). *Recognition without rewards*. Winnipeg, MB: Penguis Publishers.
- Politzer R, & Weiss, L. (1969). *Experiment in improving achievement in FL through learning selected skills*. Stanford, California: Stanford University.
- Pollard.A; Anderson,J; Maddock,M; Swaffield, S; Warin,J & Warwick, P.(2008). *Evidence-informed professional practice. Reflective teaching* (3rd Edition). New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Popham,W.J.(1987). The merits of measurement-driven instruction. *Phi Delta Kappan* 68, 679-682.
- Potter, Ellen F. (Summer, 1999). What should I put in my portfolio? Supporting young children's goals and evaluations. *Childhood Education* 75(4), 210-214.
- Pressley, M. & McCormick, C.B. (1995). *Advanced Educational Psychology for educators, researchers, and policymakers*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Price,M. & B.O'Donovan. (2006). Improving performance through enhancing student understanding of criteria and feedback. In C. Bryan & K.Clegg (Eds.), *Innovative assessment in higher education* (pp.100-109). New York: Routledge.
- Puchta, C. & Potter, J. (2004). *Focus group practice*. London: SAGE Publications.

- Qinghua, L. (2010). The impact of portfolio-based assessment on EFL writing development of Chinese learners. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics (Bimonthly)*, 33(2), 103-116.
- Race, P. (1995). The art of assessing 1. The new academic. *The magazine of teaching and learning in higher education*, 4, (3), Autumn. 3-6.
- Race, P.; Brown, S., & Smith B. (2005). *500 Tips on assessment*. UK: Routledge Falmer.
- Ramaprasad, A. (1983). On the definition of feedback. *Behavioural Science*, 28, 4-13.
- Ramsden, P. (2003). *Learning to teach in higher education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Randall, S. (2010). Cambridge ESOL's growing impact on English language teaching and learning in national education projects. *Research Notes, issue 40* May, 2-3.
- Rao, Z. (2006). Helping Chinese EFL students develop learner autonomy through portfolios. *Reflections on English Language Teaching 5* (2), 113-122. Retrieved from : <http://www.nus.edu.sg/celc/publications/Vol52Rao.pdf>
- Rauhvargers, A.; Deane, C. & Pauwels, W. (2009). *Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2009*. Retrieved from: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference/documents/stocktakingreport_2009_FINAL.pdf
- Ravindram, R. (2000). Towards learner autonomy: Evolution in practice: The certificate in independent language learning. In B. Sinclair, T. Lamb & I. McGrath (Eds.), *Learner autonomy, teacher autonomy: Future directions* (pp.60-72). London: Longman.
- Rea-Dickins, P & Germaine, K. (1992). *Evaluation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rea-Dickins, P. (2000). Assessment in early years language learning contexts. *Language Testing*, 17, 115-122.
- Rea-Dickins, P., & Gardner, S. (2000). Snares and Silver Bullets: Disentangling the construct of formative assessment. *Language Testing*, 17, 215-243.
- Read, J., & Hayes, B. (2003). The impact of IELTS on preparation for academic study in New Zealand. IELTS International English Language Testing System. *Research Reports* 4, 153-206.
- Rees-Miller, J. (1993). A critical appraisal of learner training: theoretical bases and teaching implications. *TESOL Quarterly* 27, 679-89.
- Reese, Barbara F. (November, 1999). Phenomenal portfolios. *The Science Teacher*, 25-28.
- Reichert, S., & Tauch, C. (2003). *Trend III. Progress towards The European Higher Education Area*. European University Association. Retrieved from:

http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/EUA1_documents/trends2003final.1065011164859.pdf

- Reichert, S., & Tauch, C. (2005). *Trends IV: European Universities Implementing Bologna*. European University Association. Retrieved from: http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/trendsiv_final.1114509452430.pdf
- Reinders, H. (2000). *Do it yourself? A learners' perspective on learner autonomy and self-access language learning in an English proficiency programme*. Unpublished MA Dissertation. University of Groningen, the Netherlands.
- Reinders, H. & Lewis, M. (2006). The development of an evaluative checklist for self-access materials. *ELT Journal* 60(2), 272-278.
- Reinders, H. (2007). Big brother is helping you: Supporting self-access language learning with a student monitoring system. *System*, 35, 93-111.
- Reinders, H. (2010). Towards a classroom pedagogy for learner autonomy: A framework of independent language skills. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* Vol 35, 5, August 2010.40-55.
- Reinders, H., & Balcikanli, C. (2011). Learning to foster autonomy: The role of teacher education materials. *SISAL Journal*, 2 (1), 15-25.
- Reley, P. (1986). Who is who in self-access. *TESOL France News* (6/2)23-35.
- Richards, J.C & T. S. Rodgers. (1986). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C., & Farrell, T.S.C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2006). *Cooperative learning and second language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C & Rodgers, T.S. (2009). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richter, S. E. (1997). Using portfolios as an additional means of assessing written language in a special education classroom. *Teaching and Change*, 5 (1), 58-70.
- Richter, E., & Teichter, U. (2006). Student mobility data: Current methodological issues and future prospects. In M. Kelo, U. Teichler & B. Wachter (Eds.). *Eurodata Students Mobility in European Higher Education* (pp78-95). Bonn: Lemmens .
- Rijlaarsdam, G., & Van den Bergh, H. (1996). The dynamics of composing - An agenda for research into an interactive compensatory model of writing: Many questions, some answers. In C.M. Levy & S. Ransdell (Eds.), *The science of writing: Theories, methods,*

- individual differences and applications* (pp. 107-125). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Riley, P. (Ed.). (1985). *Discourse and learning*. Harlow: Longman.
- Riley, P. (1986). Who's who in self-access. *TESOL France News* 6 (2),23-35.
- Riley, P.(1994). Aspects of learner discourse: why listening to learners is so important. In Esche. (Ed.), *Self-access and the adult language learner* (pp.7-18). London: CILT.
- Robinson,J.P.(2000). The workplace. *Cooperative extension system, I*(3). Retrieved September 15, 2000. from: <http://www.fremont.k12.ca.us/cms/lib04/CA01000848/Centricity/Domain/189/employability-skills.pdf>
- Robinson,A. & Udall, M.(2006). Using formative assessment to improve student learning through critical reflection. In C.Bryan & K. Clegg (Eds.), *Innovative Assessment in Higher Education* (pp,92-99). New York: Routledge.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research* (second edition). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rogers, D., & Babinski, L. (2002). *From isolation to conversation: Supporting new teachers' development*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Ronai,J.(2002). Citizenship and democracy in socrates and grundtvig's Europe. In. C.Medel-Añonuevo (Ed.). *Integrating lifelong learning perspectives* (pp.88-101). Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education.
- Ross, J. A., Rolheiser, C., & Hogaboam-Gray, A. (1998). Skills training versus action research in-service: Impact on student attitudes to self-evaluation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 14*(5), 463-477.
- Ross, J. A., Rolheiser, C., & Hogaboam-Gray, A. (1999). Effect of self-evaluation on narrative writing. *Assessing Writing, 6*(1), 107-132.
- Rousseau, J-J. (1966). *Emile*. London: Dent. (Translation from 1762 *Emile ou de l'éducation*).
- Rowell, L.V., & Libbon, G. (1994). The sound of one-hand clapping: How to succeed in independent language learning. *Canadian Modern Language Review* 50(4), 668-688.
- Rubin,J. (1975). What 'The Good Language Learner' can Teach us". *TESOL Quarterly* (9/1) 41-51.
- Ruffio,P. ; Heinämäki,P., & Tchoukaline,C.C. (Avril,2010). Une Etude TEMPUS : Etat du processus de Bologne dans les pays Tempus du sud de la Méditerranée (2009 - 2010). *Volume3*. Retrieved from: http://www.enpi-info.eu/library/sites/default/files/bologna_implementation_mediterranean_countries_1005_fr.pdf

- Rust, C. (2007). Towards a scholarship of assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 32, (2), 229–37.
- Ryan, R.M., & Grolnick, W.S. (1986). Origins and pawns in the classroom: Self-report and projective assessments of individual differences in children's perceptions". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 50, 550-558.
- Sadler, D.R. (1989). Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems. *Instructional Science* ,18, 145–165.
- Sadler, D.R. (1998). Formative assessment: revisiting the territory. *Assessment in Education*. 5 (1), 77–84.
- Sambell, K.; McDowell, L.; & Sambell, A. (2006). Supporting diverse students: Developing learner autonomy via assessment. In C. Bryan & R. Clegg (Eds.), *Innovative assessment in higher education*. New York: Routledge.
- Sawyer R, Graham S.. & Harris ,K. (1992). Direct teaching, strategy instruction and strategy instruction with explicit self-regulation: effects on the composition skills and self-efficacy of students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 84, 340–350.
- Scharle, A & Szabo, A. (2000). *Learner autonomy: A guide to developing learner responsibility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schneckenberg, D. (2006). *E-competence in European higher education. ICT policy goals, change processes and research perspectives*. Germany. Retrieved from: <http://www.ecompetence.info/uploads/media/ch21.pdf>
- Schön, D.A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schunk, D. H. (1996). Goal and self-evaluative influences during children's cognitive skill learning. *American Educational Research Journal*, 33(2), 359-382.
- Schwienhorst, K. (2002). Why virtual, why environments? Implementing virtual reality concepts in computer-assisted language learning. *Simulation & Gaming*, 33(2), 196-209. Retrieved October 26, 2009, from: <http://sag.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/33/2/196>
- Scott, P. (2006). *The academic profession in a knowledge society*. Retrieved from: <http://www.portlandpress.com/pp/books/online/fyos/083/0019/0830019.pdf>
- Seeler, D.C., Turnwall, G.H. & Bull, K.S. (1994). From teaching to learning, Part III: Lectures and approaches to active learning, *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, 21(1). Retrieved from: <http://borg.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JVME/V21-1/Seeler1.html>

- Seliger, H.W., & Shohamy, E. (1989). *Second Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sercu, L. (2010). Assessing intercultural competence: More questions than answers. In A. Paran & L. Sercu (Eds.), *Testing the untestable in language education* (pp.17-34). UK: Short Run Press Ltd.
- Shapley, K.S. & Pinto, M.F. (1995). *Final report of the development of the 1994-95 chapter I: Portfolio assessment*. Dallas, TX: Dallas Public Schools, Division of Research Planning and Evaluation.
- Shapley, K.S., & Bush, M.J. (1999). Developing a valid and reliable portfolio assessment in the primary grades: Building on practical experience. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 12 (2), 11-132.
- Sharon S. Moya; J., & O'Malley, M. (Spring 1994). A portfolio Assessment Model For ESL. *The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students*, 13, 13-36.
- Sheerin, S. (1991). Self-Access. *Language Teaching* 24 (3), 143-157.
- Sheerin, S. (1994). *Self-access*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sheerin, S. (1997). An exploration of the relationship between self-access and independent learning. In P. Benson, & P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. London: Longman.
- Shin, S.J. (June, 2006). Learning to teach writing through tutoring and journal writing. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and practice*, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 325-345
- Shohamy, E. Donitsa-Schmidt S., & Ferman, I. (1996). Test impact revisited: Washback effect over time. *Language Testing*, 13, (3) 298-317.
- Shut, V.J. (2007). Focus on formative feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(1), 153-189.
- Sinclair, B. McGrath, I. & Lamb, T. (1999). *Learner autonomy, Teacher autonomy: Future directions*. Harlow: Longman.
- Sinclair, B. (1999). Wrestling with a jelly: The evaluation of learner autonomy. In B. Morrison (Ed.), *Experiments and evaluation in self-access language learning* (pp.95- 109). Hong Kong: Association for Self-Access Learning and Development.
- Sinclair, B. (2000). Learner autonomy: The next phase. In B. Sinclair, I. McGrath & T. Lamb (Eds.). *Learner autonomy, teacher Autonomy: Future Directions*. Harlo: Longman.
- Sinclair, B. (2006). Learner training (Part II). Retrieved from: <http://learnerautonomy.org/learnertrainingarticle1.html>

- Skehan, P. (1998). *A cognitive approach to language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Slater, T.F. (1996). Portfolio assessment strategies for grading first-year university Physics student in the USA. *Physics Education*, 31, 82-86.
- Smith, D. G. (1977). College classroom interactions and critical thinking. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 69, 180-190.
- Smith, P.(1985). It's not their fault. *Journal of Language Studies* 2, 42–59.
- Smith, K. (1993). Becoming the ‘guide’ on the side. *Educational Leadership*, 51(2), 35- 37.
- Smith, A. (Summer 2000). Reflective portfolios: Preschool possibilities. *Childhood Education*.Vol. 76(4), 204-208.
- Smith, R.C. (2001). Learner and teacher development: Connections and constraints. *The Language Teacher* 25/6, 43-4.
- Smith, R. C.(2001). Group work for autonomy in Asia: insights from teacher-research. In L. Dam, (Ed.), *Learner autonomy: New insights* (pp.70-81). West Yorkshire: The Charlesworth Group.
- Smith,A.(2002). The EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. In C.Medel-Añonuevo (Ed.), *Integrating lifelong learning perspectives* (pp.47-52). Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education.
- Smith, R.C. (2003). Pedagogy for autonomy as (becoming-) appropriate methodology. In D. Palfreyman & R.C. Smith (Eds.), *Learner autonomy across cultures: Language education perspectives* (pp.129-146). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Smith, R. C. (2008). Learner autonomy (Key concepts in ELT). *ELT Journal*, 62 (4) 395-397.
- Smith, R.C. & Erdogan, S. (2007). Teacher-learner autonomy: Programme goals and student teacher constructs. In T.Lamb & H.Reinders (Eds). *Learner and teacher autonomy: Concepts, realities and responses* (pp. 83-103). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Smolen,L.Newman,C,Wathen,T., & Lee,D.(1995). Developing Student Self-assessment Strategies. *TESOL Journal*,5 (1):22-27.
- Somtrakool,K.(2002). Lifelong learning for a modern learning society. In C. Medel-Añonuevo (Ed.), *Integrating Lifelong learning perspectives* (pp.29-36). UNESCO Institute for Education : Philippines.
- Song, B., & August, B. (2002). Using portfolios to assess the writing of ESL students: A powerful alternative? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 11(1), 49-72.

- Sparks, G. E. (1991). *The effect of self-evaluation on musical achievement, attentiveness and attitudes of elementary school instrument students*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College.
- Spaulding, E., & Wilson, A. (2002). Demystifying reflection: a study of pedagogical strategies that encourage reflective journal writing. *Teachers College Record*, 104(7), 1303-1421.
- Spiller, D. (2012). *Assessment Matters: Self-Assessment and peer Assessment*. Teaching Development Unit | Wāhanga Whakapakari Ako. Retrieved from : http://www.waikato.ac.nz/tdu/pdf/booklets/9_SelfPeerAssessment.pdf
- Spolsky, B. (Ed.) (1975). Language testing: Art or science. Paper read at the 4th International Congress of Applied Linguistics. Stuttgart: Germany.
- Spolsky, B. (1995). *Measured words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sporn, B. (1999). Current issues and future priorities for European higher education systems. In P.G. Altbach & P.M. Peterson (Eds.), *Higher education in the 21st century: global challenge and national response* (pp.67-78). Boston: Boston College and Institute of International Education and Council on International Exchange of Scholars.
- Stanescu, J.D. (1991). The personal journal as a learning and evaluative tool in geology field-trip courses, *Journal of Geological Education*, 39(3), 204–205.
- Stanley, C. (1999). Learning to think, feel and teach reflectively. In J. Arnold (Ed.) *Affect in language learning* (pp.109-124). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stecher, B. (1998). The local benefits and burdens of large-scale portfolio assessment. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policies & Practice*, 5(3), 335-351.
- Stefani, L., Mason, R. & Pegler, C. (2007). *The educational potential for e-portfolios: supporting personal development and reflective learning*. London. New York: Routledge.
- Stein, M. (2001). Jumping onto the Portfolio Bandwagon: What teachers say about the process. Proceedings from *AETS 2001*. Costa Mesa, CA.
- Stevens, V. (2007). The multiliterate autonomous learner: Teacher attitudes and the inculcation of strategies for lifelong learning. *Independence*. 42, 27-29.
- Stevick, E.W. (1990). *Humanism in language teaching: A critical perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stevick, E.W. (1999). Affect in learning and memory: From Alchemy to Chemistry. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp.43-57). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Stiggins,R.J.(1994). *Student-centered classroom assessment*. New York: Macmillan Publisher Company.
- Stiggins,R.J. (1996). *Student centered classroom assessment*. Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing.
- Stiggins, R.J., & A. Davies. (1996). *Student involved conferences (video)*. Assessment Training Institute. Portland, OR.
- Stiggins,R.J. (2001). *Student involved classroom assessment*. Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing.
- Stiggins,R.J; Arter,J.A. ; Chappuis, J., & Chappuis,S.(2007). *Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing right—using it well*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org>
- Stiggins,R.J. (2008). *An introduction to student-involved assessment for learning*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson-Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Strachey, L. (2000). Writing. In T. Hedge (Ed.), *Teaching and learning in the language classroom* (pp.299-333). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sturtridge, G. (1992). *Self-access. Preparation and training*. London: The British Council.
- Sturtridge, G.(1997). Teaching and Language Learning in Self-access Centres: Changing Roles? In P. Benson & P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. Harlow: Longman.
- Suffolk County Council. (2001). *How am I doing? Assessment and Feedback to Learners*. Ipswich: Suffolk Advisory Service. Retrieved from: http://www.slamnet.org.uk/assessment/edp_booklet.htm
- Sursock,A. & Smidt,H.(2010).*Trends 2010: A decade of change in European higher education*. Belgium : European University Association.
- Swan, J. (1993). Metaphor in action: the observation schedule in a reflective approach to teacher education. *ELTJ*, 47(3), 243-249.
- Tannenbaum, Jo Ellen. (1996). Practical ideas on alternative assessment for ESL students. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics Washington DC*,ERIC Identifier ED395500, 1-6.
- Taras, M. (December, 2005). Assessment – summative and formative –some theoretical reflections. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol.53, No.4, pp466–478
- Taylor, L.(2005). Key concepts in ELT washback and impact. *ELT Journal Volume 59/2* April 2005.Oxford University Press .

- Taylor, L.(2009). Developing Assessment Literacy. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21-36.
- Tempus. (2010). *Higher Education in Algeria*. European Commission. Belgium. Retrieved from: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/overview/Algeria.pdf
- Thanasoulas, D. (2000, November). What is learner autonomy and how it can be fostered? *The Internet TESLJ Journal*, VI (11). Retrieved October 15, 2010, from: <http://iteslj.org>
- Thang, S. M. (2003). How ready are Malaysian learners for online learning? An investigation into learner characteristics. *Proceedings of ASIACALL International Conference on Information Technology and Language Education, Bangkok, Thailand*.
- Tholin, J . (2009). Learner and teacher autonomy: Concepts, realities, and responses. *ELT J*. 63: 179-181.
- Thome, C.C. (2001). *The Effects of classroom-based assessment using an analytical writing rubric on high school students' writing achievement*. Unpublished Dissertation. Cardinal Stritch University.
- Thomas, C., Blackbourn, R., Blackbourn, J., Papson, B., Tyler, L., Britt, P., & Williams, F.(2005). Portfolio assessment: A guide for teachers and administrators. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal-Electronic*, 23 (4), 1-8. Retrieved from: <http://www.nationalforum.com/Journals/>
- Tomlinson, B. (2003). *Developing materials to develop yourself. Humanising Language Teaching*. Retrieved July 25 2005, from: <http://www.hlomag.co.uk/jul03/mart1.htm>
- Thomson, C.K. (1996). Self-assessment in self-directed learning: issues of learner diversity. In R. Pemberton, E. LI, W. OR, H.Pierson (Eds.). *Taking control: autonomy in language learning*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Tierney, R. J., M.A. Carter, & L.E. Desai. (1991). *Portfolio assessment in the reading- writing classroom*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.
- Toogood, S., & Pemberton, R. (2002). Integrating self-directed learning into the curriculum: A case study. In P. Benson, & S. Toogood (Eds.), *Learner autonomy7: Challenges to research and practice* (pp. 86-110). Dublin: Authentik.
- Tort-Moloney, D. (1997). *Teacher autonomy: A Vygotskian theoretical framework*. CLCS Occasional Paper No. 48. Dublin: Trinity College, CLCS.
- Tort-Moloney, D. (1997). Teacher Autonomy: A Vygotskian theoretical framework".CLCS Occasional Paper No. 48.

- Tosh,D., Werdmuller, B., Chen, H., Light, T. & Haywood, J.(2006). The learning landscape: A conceptual framework for e-portfolio. In A. Jafari & C. Kaufman (Eds.), *Handbook of research on e-portfolio* (pp24-32). Hershey, USA; London, UK: Ideas Group.
- Toyoda, E. (2001). Exercise of learner autonomy in project-oriented CALL. *CALL-EJ Online*,2(2). Retrieved December 2, 2009, from: <http://www.tell.is.ritsumei.ac.jp/callejonline/journal/2-2/toyoda.htm>
- Trejos,C.M.A.(2008). Using Journals for Learners' Reflection and Self-Assessment. Retrieved from: <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Arciniegas-LearnersJournals.html>
- Trevisan,M.S.(2002). The States' role in ensuring assessment competence. *Phi Delta Kappan*,83/10,766-771.
- Trinh, L. Q.(2005). Stimulating learner autonomy in English language education: A curriculum innovation study in a Vietnamese context. Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of Amsterdam. The Netherlands.
- Tsui, A.B.M.(1995). *Introducing Classroom Interaction*. London: Penguin.
- Tudor,I.(1996). *Learner-centeredness as language education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Usher, R. S. (1985). Beyond the Anecdotal: Adult Learning and the Use of Experience. *Studies in the Education of Adults* 7(1), 59–74.
- Ushioda, E. (1996). *Learner autonomy 5: The role of motivation*. Dublin: Authentik.
- Vandergrift, L., & Bélanger, C. (1998). The National core french project design and field test of formative evaluation instruments at the intermediate level. *The Canadian Language Review*.54, 553-578.
- Varghese,N.V.(2009). *Contribution of higher education and research to education for all* (EFA). UNESCO. Retrieved from: <http://www.unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/.../180085e.pdf>
- Varvus, L. (1990, Aug.). Put portfolios to the test. *Instructor*, 49-52.
- Vescio, V., Ross, D., & Adams, A. (2008). A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 80-91.
- Victori, M. (1999). An analysis of writing knowledge in EFL composing: A case study of two effective and two less effective writers. *System*, 27, 537-555.
- Vieira,F.(1997). Teacher development for learner autonomy: Ideas from an in-service teacher training project. *English Language Teaching News* (The British Council and Teachers of English in Austria) 33, 61-7.

- Vieira, F., Moreira, M.A., Barbosa, I. & Paiva, M. (eds). (2002). *Pedagogy for Autonomy and English learning*. Braga: University of Minho.
- Vieira, F. (2003). Addressing Constraints on Autonomy in School Contexts: Lessons from working with teachers. In D. Palfreyman & R. Smith. (eds.), *Learner autonomy across cultures: Language education perspectives*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vieira, F. (2007). Teacher autonomy: Why should we care? *Independence 40* (IATEFL Learner Autonomy SIG) Spring 2007, 20-28.
- Von Elek, T. (1985). A test of Swedish as a second language: An experiment in self-Assessment. In Y. P. Lee, A. C. Y. Fok, R. Lord, & G. Low (Eds.), *New directions in language testing* (pp. 47-55). Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Voller, P. (1997). Does the teacher have a role in autonomous language learning? In P. Benson & P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. Harlow: Longman.
- Voss, M.M. (1988). The light at the end of the journal: a teacher learns about learning, *Language Arts*, 65(7), 669–674.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. USA: Harvard.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). Thinking and speech (N. Minick, Trans.). (Orig. 1934) In R. W. Rieber & A. S. Carton (Eds.), *The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky. Volume 1: Problems of General Psychology* (pp. 37-285). New York: Plenum Press.
- Wachter, B. (May 2008). *Internationalization and The European Higher Education Area*. Retrieved from: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/BolognaSeminars/documents/Ghent/Ghent_May08_Bernd_Waechter.pdf
- Walden, P. (1988). A learning journal as a tool to promote lifelong learning skills, *Feminist Teacher*, 3(2), 14–17.
- Wall, D. (1996). Introducing new tests into traditional systems: Insights from general education and from innovation theory. *Language Testing*, 13 (3), 334-354.
- Wall, D. (2000). The impact of high stakes testing on teaching and learning: can this be predicted or controlled? *System* 28(4), 499-509.
- Wallace, M. J. (1991). *Training foreign language teachers*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Walsh, J.A., & Sattes, B.D. (2005). *Quality questioning: Research based practice to engage every learner*. London: Sage.

- Wang, Y. H., & Liao, H. C.(2008). The application of learning portfolio assessment for students in the technological and vocational education system. *Asian EFL Journal*, 10(2), 132-154.
- Watanabe, Y.(November 2011). Teaching a course in assessment literacy to test takers: Its rationale, procedure, content and effectiveness. *Research Note*, issue 46, 29-34.
- Watanabe, Y. (2004). Methodology in washback studies. In L. Cheng, Y. Watanabe & A.Curtis (Eds.), *Washback in language testing: Research contexts and methods* (pp.19-36). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Weaver, S. D. (1998). *Using portfolios to assess learning in chemistry: One school's story of evolving assessment practice*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- Weaver, R. R., & Qi, J. (2005). Classroom organization and participation: College students' perceptions. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76, 570-601.
- Weifang, M.(1999). Global challenges and the Chinese response. In P.G Altbach & P.M Peterson (Eds.), *Higher education in the 21st century: Global challenge and national response* (pp.11-18). Boston: Boston College and Institute of International Education and Council on International Exchange of Scholars.
- Weigle, S. C. (2002). *Assessing writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weiner, B. (1990). History of motivational research in education. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82(4), 616-622.
- Weir, C. J. (1990). *Communicative language testing*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Wenden, A. (1991). *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy*. London: Prentice Hall international.
- Wenden, A. (1995). Learner training in context: A knowledge-based approach. *System* (23/2) 183-94.
- Wenden, A. (2002). Learner development in language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 23(1), 32-55.
- Wesche, M. B. (1983). Communicative testing in a second language. *The Modern Language Journal*, 67 (1), 41-55.
- White, E. (1995). An apologia for the timed impromptu essay test. *College Composition and Communication*, 46(1), 129–139.
- White, C. (2000). The role of research in online teaching and course development. Paper presented at *The Alberta Online Consortium 's online Symposium*, Canada.

- Wiggins,G.(2001). *Educative assessment*. San Francisco:Jossey-Bass.
- William, D., & M. Thompson.(2008). Integrating assessment with learning: What will it take to make it work? In C.A. Dwyer (Ed.), *The future of assessment: Shaping teaching and learning* (pp.53–82). New York: Erlbaum.
- Williams, M. (1989). A developmental view of classroom observations. *ELTJ*, 43(2), 85-91.
- William, M.; & Burden, R,L.(1997). *Psychology for language teachers: A social Constructivist Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, F. (2005). Portfolio Assessment: A guide for teachers and administrators. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal Electronic*, 23 (4), 1-8. Retrieved from: <http://www.nationalforum.com/Journals/>
- Willis, D. J. (2000). *Students perceptions of their experiences with Kentucky's mandated writing portfolio*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Louisville.
- Wilson, L. (2009-2010). The Bridge between European higher education and research. In EUA (1999-2010), *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, Challenges and Perspectives*_(pp.26-27). Berlin: European HEA.
- Wolf-Quintero, K. (2000). Negotiation as a participatory dialogue. In M.P. Breen & A. Littlejohn. (Eds.), *Classroom Decision-Making* (pp.248-271). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Woods, D. (1996). *Teacher cognition in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Working Group on Employability.(2009). *Report to Ministers-Bologna Conference-Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve 28-29 April 2009*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/actionlines/employabilitysurvey.htm>
- Working Group on Employability. (2008). *Department for innovation, universities and skills*. London. Retrieved October 29, 2008 from : http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/BolognaSeminars/documents/Luxembourg/Luxembourg_Seminar_Employability_WG_update.pdf
- Wyat, R. L., & Looper, S. (1999). *So you have to have a portfolio: A teacher's guide to preparation and presentation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Underhill, A.(1999). Facilitation in language teaching. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in Language Learning* (pp.125-141). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- UNESO.(2006-2007). La mobilité des étudiants Algériens. Retrieved from: http://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/etude_prospect/stats_pays/fr/algerie_fr.pdf

- Université Abdelhamid Ibn Badis. *Guide de la Faculté des Lettres et des Arts : Année universitaire 2012 – 2013*. Retrieved from the university website : <http://fla.univ-mosta.dz/>
- Université Djillali Liabese. *Guide du tuteur*. Retrieved from: <http://www.univ-sba.dz/fla/index.php/tutorat>
- Université Mentouri Constantine (January 8, 2008). La Reforme LMD :Journée sur Le Tutorat. Retrieved from <http://www.umc.edu.dz/vf/pdf/OAEF2512d01.pdf>
- Yancey, K.B., & Weiser,I. (1997). *Situating portfolios: Four perspectives*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.
- Yang, N.(2003). Integrating portfolio into strategy-based instruction for EFL college students. *IRAL* ,41 (4), 293-317.
- Yin,M., & Sims,J.(2006). Diagnostic Language Testing for Taiwanese University Students: The Online English Assessment System (OEAS) Project. 2006: *International Conference on English Instruction and Assessment*. Retrieved from : http://filcccu.ccu.edu.tw/conference/2005conference_2/download/C44.pdf
- Yorke, M. (2003). Formative assessment in higher education: Moves towards theory and the enhancement of pedagogic practice. *Journal of Higher Education*, 45(4), 471-501.
- Young, R.(1986). *Personal Autonomy:Beyond negative and positive liberty*. London: Croom Helm.
- Young, C.A. (2001). *Technology integration in inquiry-based learning: An evaluation study of web-based electronic portfolios*. USA:University of Virginia.
- Zangl, R. (2000). Monitoring language skills in Austrian prim ary (elementary) schools: A case study. *Language Testing*, 17, 250-60.
- Zeichner, K. & Liston, D. (1996). *Reflective teaching: an introduction*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Zerhouni,N (06 January,2009). *Official Journal of the Algerian Republic N°01:Executive decree n° 09-03 of the 3rd January 2009 defining the mission of tutoring: Articles 02,03,04,05,06,08,09 (pp.22-23)*. Retrieved from: <http://www.univ-sba.dz/vrpeda/images/pdf/Dcret09-03du03-01-2009fixantlesmodalitsdututorat.pdf>
- Zhuang, J.(2010). The changing role of teachers in the development of learner autonomy— based on a survey of English dorm activity. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*,1 (5), 591-595.
- Zgaga, P.(1999-2010). The Making of Bologna. In EUA (1999-2010), *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, Challenges and Perspectives* (pp.7-9). Berlin: European HEA.

Appendices

Appendix A:
The student's portfolio



NAME :



Your Language Portfolio

It is not only a collection of the work that you have done by yourself (or in groups) either in class or at home, but it is also a reflective tool which helps you think about your learning process and outcome in this course and gain much more autonomy in learning. In addition to that, it helps your teachers achieve quality in the course and examination, thereby making your progress under way. To achieve this objective and obtain a favourable mark for your portfolio, you need to show commitment to your portfolio writing through :

- a. Providing accurate information about you as a student in the language biography.
- b. Completing the tasks assigned to you in the language dossier and within the time allotted for their writing.
- c. Keeping up to date with your assessment of each task or learning act which you have done or plan to do.
- d. Showing your creativity and thinking ability through bringing new worksheets and suggestions concerning the course.
- e. Keeping your language portfolio well organized and submitting them on time to your teacher to be assessed .

Criteria used in assessing your portfolio :

- a. Completion of the tasks assigned to you with respect to time constraint.
- b. Your worksheets and ideas in relation to the course are going to be assessed in terms of quality.
- c. Portfolio organization and language form.
- d. Your commitment to self-assessment along the process of portfolio writing.


MY LANGUAGE BIOGRAPHY

The Language Biography Tells More about Your Profile

- It contains information about you .
- Its objective is to provide an accurate picture of your language ability, how you prefer to learn and what you need to improve in this course.
- It helps your teacher enhance the learning opportunities which you need to achieve your academic success.

HOW TO USE YOUR LANGUAGE BIOGRAPHY

1. Provide first personal information related to your name, age, nationality, etc.
2. **In section (I) :**
 - Tell your teacher about the languages you know and use in your daily life.
 - Explain why you have decided to study English at university.
 - Describe your previous learning experience of English,i.e., how did you find learning this language easy/interesting or boring ?, was it a good experience ?, How was your relationship with your teacher ?, How about your marks in English ?,etc.
3. **In section (II) :**
 - Describe your current ability in using English in the four skills and tell what abilities you would like to develop in future.
4. **In section (III) :**
 - Describe how you prefer to learn English outside classes so that to improve it, and also how you prefer to study it with your teacher in class.
 - Tell your teacher what you want and need to study in the written expression course, i.e., what kind of lessons and activities or tasks you need to study and engage in to improve your writing skill in English.
 - Keep recording these learning needs and preferences along your studying of this module.



Full Name :

Age :

Nationality :

Qualifications obtained:

Mother Tongue:

Hobbies :

I. MY LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

	<i>Arabic</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>Another Language ?</i>
<i>I can speak it well</i>					
<i>I can write it well</i>					
<i>I understand it well</i>					
<i>I want to improve it more</i>					

Which language(s) is used?

- At home we talk in.....
 Sometimes Often
- I watch TV programmes and films in
 Sometimes Often
- I read books, newspapers or magazines in
 Sometimes Often
- I meet people who speak.....
 Sometimes Often
- I write e-mails and chat to my friends in
 Sometimes Often
- I listen to music in
 Sometimes Often

Why are you studying English ?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Describe your previous learning experience of English



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

II. MY LANGUAGE SKILLS IN ENGLISH

- *Select the statement which best describes what you can do now, and what you would like to do with your language skills in future*.*

Listening	<i>I do this now</i>	<i>I'd like to do this in future</i>
I can understand simple questions about myself when people speak clearly and slowly.		
I can understand very short dialogues when people speak clearly and slowly.		
I can understand short simple instructions and directions given in clear slow speech.		
I can understand simple phrases, information relating to basic personal needs, e. g shopping, eating out, going to the doctor, etc.		
I can identify the topic of conversation around me when people speak slowly and clearly.		
I can identify the main topic of TV news items reporting events accidents, etc, if there are accompanying pictures.		
I can catch the main elements of many radio or TV news bulletins and recorded audio material on topics of personal and professional interest delivered in relatively slow, clear standard speech.		
I can work out the meaning of unknown words from a familiar context.		
I can understand specific details and general information from routine telephone calls.		
I can understand standard spoken language on both familiar and unfamiliar topics in every day situations.		
I can follow lively conversations with several fast spoken, although I may have a problem joining in.		
I can grasp the overall meaning of most radio programmes and audio material delivered in standard speech and identify the speaker's needs, tone, etc.		
I can grasp the overall meaning of most films, TV news programmes, documentaries, interviews, chat shows in standard speech.		
I can follow most talks, discussions and debates related to my area of work or study with relative ease.		
I can recognize a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms and appreciate different styles and degrees of formality.		
I can understand complex technical information such as operating instructions, specification for familiar products and services.		
I can understand any native speaker whether live or broadcast.		

*These 'can do statements' are adopted from *The European Language Portfolio for Adults*.

Reading	<i>I do this now</i>	<i>I'd like to do this in future</i>
I can understand simple forms well enough to give basic personal details, e.g.name, address, date of birth, etc..		
I can follow instructions that have clear pictures and few words.		
I can understand short simple messages and texts containing basic to everyday vocabulary relating to areas of personal interest or relevance to my job or studies.		
I can skim simple everyday materials for specific predictable information,e.g.use a directory to find a service, find the prices of secondhand items in classified newspaper adverts, use a menu.		
I can scan long texts in order to locate specific factual information.		
I can understand standard business letters.		
I can follow clear routine instructions, e.g for games, recipes, using equipment, etc.		
I can understand in details texts directly related to my specialist personal or work interest.		
I can understand articles on a range of specialised topics using a dictionary and other reference resources.		
I can understand articles and reports in which writers express their opinions		
I can read contemporary literary texts with ease.		
I can understand long complex instructions, e.g.the use of a new piece of equipment.		
I can extract information from highly specialised texts in my own field,e.g research reports		
I can understand and interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language including abstract highly literary and non-literary writings.		
I can understand complex factual documents such as technical manuals and legal contracts.		
I can understand a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning.		

<i>Speaking</i>	<i>I do this now</i>	<i>I'd like to do this in future</i>
I can make basic introduction, i.e introducing myself and others.		
I can ask and answer simple questions about my place of work, or study, family, interests, etc.		
I can address people in both formal and informal ways.		
I can make and respond to invitations, apologies and requests for permission.		
I can carry out simple transaction, e.g. in shops, post offices, railway stations and order something to eat and drink.		
I can express what I feel in simple terms and express thanks.		
I can ask for and provide simple practical information, e.g. directions, time, dates, job roles, etc.		
I can start, maintain and close face to face conversations on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or related to everyday work, with generally appropriate use of formal and informal language.		
I can handle most practical tasks in everyday situations, e.g. making telephone enquiries, asking for a refund, etc.		
I can agree and disagree politely exchange personal opinions and discuss what to do next, compare and contrast alternatives.		
I can participate fully in conversations on general topics with a degree of fluency and naturalness, and appropriate use of formal and informal language.		
I can express my ideas and opinions clearly and precisely and can present and respond to complex lines of reasoning convincingly, providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments.		
I can participate fully in an interview, as either an interviewer or interviewee, fluently expending and developing the point under discussion and handling interjections as well.		
I have a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with an awareness of implied meaning and meaning by association.		

Writing	<i>I do this now</i>	<i>I'd like to do this in future</i>
I can write a greeting card or simple postcard.		
I can fill in a simple form or questionnaire with my personal details, e.g. nationality, date of birth, address.		
I can write about aspects of my everyday life (holidays, studies, interests, etc.) in simple linked sentences.		
I can write very short basic descriptions of events and activities.		
I can write very basic standard letters requesting information, e.g. about hotel accommodation.		
I can write a simple note or letter to a friend to accept or offer an invitation, thank someone or apologise.		
I can write simple clear instructions about work routines or how a machine works.		
I can write my CV in summary form.		
I can describe an event, e.g. a recent business trip or holiday.		
I can write messages and very brief reports in a standard format communicating enquiries and factual information, explaining problems.		
I can write standard letters giving and requesting detailed information, e.g. applying for a job.		
I can write personal letters giving news, describing experiences and expressing feelings.		
I can write clear detailed texts on a range of subjects relating to my studies or interests.		
I can write summaries of articles on topics of general interests or related to my studies, and summarise information from different sources and media.		
I can write a short review of a play, film or a book.		
I can write an essay which develops an argument, giving reasons to support or negate a point of view, weighing pros and cons.		
I can write letters and e-mails which are more or less formal according to how well I know the person I am writing to.		
I can write fluently and accurately on a wide range of topics related to my studies or personal interests, varying my vocabulary and style according to the context.		
I can write clear detailed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal, natural style appropriate to the reader's mind.		
I can write a well-structured review of a paper or project giving reasons for my opinion.		

III. MY LEARNING STYLES AND NEEDS

How do you like to learn English?

- I like to learn English by studying grammar.
- I like to learn English by watching and listening to native speakers.
- I like to learn English by talking to friends in English.
- I like to learn English by reading books, newspapers and magazines in English.
- I like to learn English by writing poems, stories or essays in English.
- I like to learn English by exchanging emails with friends.
- I like to learn English by using internet learning English resources.
- I like to learn English by chatting on the internet.
- I like to learn English by learning songs by heart.
- I like to learn English by listening to songs

✚ If you have other learning preferences whether inside or outside classes, write them in the space provided below.

My Additional Comments

.....

.....

.....

.....

- What do you need and like to study in the Written Expression course?

.....

.....

.....

.....

MY LANGUAGE

DOSSIER

The dossier is your own personal property

- It reflects your work, i.e., participation, involvement and accomplishment of the assigned tasks.
- It seeks to help you understand and practise the lessons' content.
- It provides you with the chance to design teaching materials and tasks which make you participate in taking decisions over your learning process.
- It shows as well to your teacher what you have learned or reached from the course content.

HOW TO USE YOUR LANGUAGE DOSSIER

- ❖ You should collect learning evidence or pieces of work which describe best and illustrate what you have learned. These include :
 - **Homework**: tasks assigned to you to do outside the class, as well as individual works and projects.
 - **Your own worksheets**: activities, lessons, tests, etc. which are designed by you, and you suggest them to the rest of your class. For suggested activities and tests they must be related to the Written Expression lessons, and you should do them, showing your answers, key answers (in case they are found) and your remark concerning your performance. The suggested lessons are the lessons which are not included in the programme but they can help students improve their writing.
 - **Tests**: the correction of the tests or exams assigned by the teacher.
- ❖ *You can also include audio or video recordings, a personal word list, pictures, e-mail messages, etc. But your dossier needs to be organized. For that purpose, you need to divide it into sections.*

MY HOMEWORK OF WRITTEN EXPRESSION



The Student's Name:

Group:

Week:

Date:

Time:

Homework N°11: Sentence Classifications

The tasks' Objectives: To make the difference between declarative, imperative and interrogative sentences, and between simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences.

Exercise N°01: Classify the following sentences according to their purpose.

- 1) We have already found the answer.
- 2) Were you able to find the way in that town.
- 3) What a clever boy you are Jim!
- 4) Why are you screaming?
- 5) Stay here!
- 6) The Serpentine is a lake in Hyde Park.
- 7) I decided to work hard to realize my dream.

Exercise N°02: Classify the following sentences according to their kind.

- 1) My doctor told me to take these vitamins.
- 2) Keep away!
- 3) He ordered me to keep away.
- 4) What a beautiful car you have!
- 5) Was he capable of driving when he was young?
- 6) Jane plays the piano and practices sport in her free time.
- 7) I do not like the colour of these shoes; they are expensive.
- 8) Take a seat and wait for a moment.

Exercise N°03: Write three sentences of each kind (*declarative, imperative, interrogative, simple, compound, complex and compound-complex*)

My Performance:

My Teacher's Remark:

MY OWN WORKSHEETS



Exercises

Lessons

Tests

THE SUGGESTED EXERCISES

Week :03
Date :25/11/13
Time :06p.m

The Lesson's title :Verb tenses.

The Exercise Source : <http://www.englishexercises.org/makeagame/viewgame.asp?id=414>

The Objective of inclusion :It will help me practice using the simple past, past continuous and past perfect tenses.

Put the verbs in brackets into the *Simple Past* or *Past Continuous*.

1. They (buy) ice-creams while they (wait) to play.
2. They (play) when it (start) to rain.
3. They (stop) when the rain (start) .
4. When the rain (stop) they (go on) with the

Rewrite the sentences using past simple and past perfect simple. Use the words in brackets.

1. The woman slept. Then, her husband came home. (already / when)

2. She put on her make-up. Then, she went to work. (after)

3. He noticed the smoke in the house. Then, he called the fire brigade. (before)

4. I finished setting the table. Then, the guests knocked the door.

I had just finished setting the table when the guests knocked the door.

Correcting my mistakes

Exercise N°01 :were playing. **Exercise N°02** :She had put on her make-up after she went to work.

My Performance: It is good, because I made just two mistakes.

I NEED TO: revise and practise more exercises on the past continuous and

Week :04
Date :14/12/13
Time :05p.m

THE SUGGESTED LESSONS

The Lesson's title :Question Tags

The Lesson's Source :

http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/grammar_list/fragen.htm

The Objective of inclusion :to know how to use tag questions in writing dialogues and understand their meaning.

Use

frequently used in spoken English when you want to agree or disagree

Form

Positive statement+ negative tag – It is very warm, isn't it?

Negative statement + positive tag – It isn't very warm, is it?

Examples

with auxiliaries

You've got a car, haven't you?

without auxiliaries (use: don't, doesn't, didn't)

They play football on Sundays, don't they?

She plays football on Sundays, doesn't she?

They played football on Sundays, didn't they?

Questions tags are used to keep a conversation going. You can agree or refuse to a sentence with a question tag.

You go to school, don't you?

You agree.

You refuse.

Yes, I do.

No, I don't.

You aren't from Germany, are you?

You agree.

You refuse.

No, I'm not.

Yes, I am.

THE SUGGESTED TESTS

Week :08
Date :09/03/14
Time :06p.m

Test N°:02
The Lessons Covered in the test: Part of speech, punctuation and capitalization.
The Exercises' Source(s):www.learnenglish.com
The Objective of inclusion: This test aims at checking my understanding of part of speech and how to use punctuation and capitalization more correctly.

- Test Questions
- Test Answers
- Test Scoring
- Duration.

Exercise 01: Punctuate and capitalize the following paragraph (08,50 pts)

classes in literature are useful no matter what job you intend to have when you finish university books are about life people who study literature learn the skill of reading carefully and understanding characters situations and relationships this kind of understanding can be useful to teachers and business people alike literature classes also require a lot of writing so they help students develop the skill of clear communication of course a professional writer needs to have this skill but it is an equally important skill for an engineer finally reading literature helps develop an understanding of many different points of view reading a novel by a russian author for example will help a reader learn more about russian culture for anyone whose job may bring them into contact with russian colleagues this insight can help encourage better cross cultural understanding studying literature is studying life so it is relevant to almost any job you can think of

Exercise 03: Use each of the following words in a sentence, then identify the part of speech of these words in these sentences. Much, Whom, Hardly, Besides, Friendly, Among, Into. (07 pts)

1.
2.
3.
4.

MY LANGUAGE PASSPORT

**The Passport is a record of Your Learning Progress
And a Reflective Tool to Achieve Your Success**

- It aims to involve you in assessing your process of learning, so that you become more aware of the progress you are making
- It encourages you to reflect on your learning process and make the necessary plan to achieve your learning objectives.
- It encourages to write and express your ideas and thoughts in English.
- It helps your teacher get an idea about your learning process and progress in the course.

HOW TO USE YOUR LANGUAGE PASSPORT

It includes :

A. Your reflection over the lessons of Written Expression :

- State what you have learned from each lesson: new vocabulary, expressions, rules concerning writing, grammar, etc.
- Describe how did you find each lesson, difficult, interesting, long, engaging etc, and justify why you describe it in such a way.
- After doing the exercises in class, state how you feel concerning your understanding of each lesson (have they helped or not?) and how you found such exercises.
- Express your learning needs from each lesson (what is still not clear?).
 - Plan for you learning by stating what you are going to do to understand the lesson and perform well in the exercises. This is through indicating, for instance, What kind of support are you going to use : books, the internet , teachers, friends..etc. What sort of exercises you need to practise more, etc.
- Create and commit to a schedule that provides regular study: here you mention when are you going to fulfill the above planned actions by completing the chart.

- After doing each homework describe it and indicate the strategies used in answering its exercises.
- Reflect over the tests and exams designed by your teacher in Written Expression Module.
- Complete the checklist for assessing your progress.

Reflection over the Lessons

The Lesson's Title:

Week :
Date :
Time :



➤ What I have learned from this lesson...

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

➤ I find this lesson.....because.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

➤ After doing the exercises in class I feel that.....
.....because I find them.....

.....

➤ I need

.....
.....
.....
.....

MY PLAN TO ACHIEVE MY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

I am going to...

1.

2.

3.

My Schedule for studying Written Expression

	<i>Morning-from/ to</i>	<i>Afternoon- from / to</i>	<i>Evening-from / to</i>	<i>Your Planned Actions</i>
Saturday		From 13 :00 p.m to 14 :30 p.m.		I revise the lesson of Written Expression
Sunday	From 10 :00 a.m to 11 :00 a.m			I go to the library to search for books
Monday			19 :00p.m to	I practice
Tuesday	MY PLAN TO ACHIEVE MY LEARNING OBJECTIVES I am going to... 			
Wednesday				

Thursday				
Friday				
Date: Time:	How did you find this homework		(X)	Why did you find it so?

My Reflection over the Homework

Description of The Homework	Difficult: it is not easy to give the answers.	
	Interesting: you like the exercises, they relate to the lesson.	
	Useful: it helps you understand more the lesson.	
	Long: it takes time to answer.	
Date: Time:	How did you do this homework?	(X)
Strategies used	I checked my understanding of the lesson through asking myself questions or explaining things to myself, etc.	
	I identified the objective of the task.	
	I kept thinking while writing and checked what I am producing to see to what extent it makes sense.	
	I pay attention to the question, e.g., by underlining keywords.	
	I thought about what I have learned in the lesson and what I know to do the task.	
	I selected important ideas or information to do the task.	
	I used books, dictionaries, encyclopedias, or websites, etc.	
	I summarized the lesson.	
	I used a given rule.	
	I practiced more similar tasks.	
	I tried to remember my teacher's explanation.	
	I tried to guess the meaning of words from context.	
	I translated words/sentences in Arabic or French	
	I asked my teacher and/ my classmates for more clarification.	
	I worked together with the others to see whether I have understood the lesson or not.	
	I communicated to the others what I have understood through for instance participating in class.	
I encouraged myself to overcome my learning difficulties		
I relaxed to lower anxiety.		
I talked about my feelings to my teacher/peers to get their support.		
Other Strategies	
	
	
	
	
	
Date:	How was your performance? (tick the adjective	Why did you

Time:	which describes your performance)	perform in such a way?
Description of Your Performance	Very Good	
	Good	
	OK	
	Poor	
	Very Poor	

My Reflection over The Teacher's Tests/Exams

Semester:

Test N°:

Week:

	How did you find this test?	Yes	No	Why did you find it so?
	<i>Difficult</i>			

Description of the Test	<i>Interesting</i>			
	<i>Long</i>			
	<i>Other descriptions?</i>			
	How was your performance?		Why did you perform in such a way?	
	<i>Very Good</i>			

	Not Yet	With Help	On My Own
--	----------------	------------------	------------------

	<i>Good</i>	
	<i>OK</i>	
	<i>Poor</i>	
	<i>Very Poor</i>	

Your Needs to improve your Performance
--	--

Week :

Date :

Time :

I can write short, simple notes and messages.			
I can write simple sentences describing people, objects in the simple present.			
I can describe past events or narrate a story using past tenses.			
I can write sentences in the passive voice.			
I can use adjectives and adverbs correctly in sentences to describe people, situations, actions, etc.			
I can write sentences using modal auxiliary verbs to express advice, obligation, etc.			
I can write sentences connecting them with words such as and, but, because.			
I can use the most important connecting words to indicate the chronological order of events (first, then, after, later).			
I can use a dictionary to search for words' meanings.			
I can find the exact words to express my ideas in English.			
I can understand my teacher's English when she explains and talks to us (better than before).			
I can participate in class: ask my teacher questions and express myself better than before.			
I can do my exercises and homework correctly.			
I can organize my studies and revise regularly for my Written Expression exam.			
I can identify my learning needs and express them clearly in writing.			
I can identify my classmate's mistakes and correct them.			
I can explain to others what I have understood from the lessons.			
I can cooperate with others to understand better.			
I can summarize what I have studied in class.			

MY PROGRESS CHACKLIST IN WRITTEN EXPRESSION

(The end of the first semester)

- ❖ Use this checklist to record what you think you can do on your own, the things which you feel you cannot do yet (these are your objectives) and those you can do with your teacher's help (or with someone's help). Put a tick (√) next to your selected answer

MY PROGRESS CHACKLIST IN WRITTEN EXPRESSION

(The end of the second semester)

- ❖ Use this checklist to record what you think you can do on your own, the things which you feel you cannot do yet (these are your objectives) and those you can do with your teacher's help (or with someone's help). Put a tick (✓) next to your selected answer.

FEELING GOOD!



What makes you feel good about your English? When you answer your teacher's question correctly in English? When you understand a message you read? When you write without

	Not Yet	With Help	On My Own
I can write short, simple notes and messages.			
I can write simple sentences describing people, objects in the simple present.			
I can describe past events or narrate a story using past tenses.			
I can write sentences in the passive voice.			
I can use adjectives and adverbs correctly in sentences to describe people, situations, actions, etc.			
I can write sentences using modal auxiliary verbs to express advice, obligation, etc.			
I can write sentences connecting them with words such as and, but, because.			
I can use the most important connecting words to indicate the chronological order of events (first, then, after, later).			
I can use a dictionary to search for words' meanings.			
I can find the exact words to express my ideas in English.			
I can use punctuation and capitalization correctly in sentences.			
I can identify the different sentence patterns (svo,svo, etc.)			
I can write different sentence patterns.			
I can make the difference between a simple, a complex and a compound sentence.			
I can write complex sentences by joining clauses.			
I can write a short paragraph about a familiar topic.			
I can write about my feelings and experience in English making less mistakes.			
I can understand my teacher's English when she explains and talks to us (better than before).			
I can participate in class: ask my teacher questions and express myself better than before.			
I can do my exercises and homework correctly.			
I can organize my studies and revise regularly for my Written Expression exam.			
I can identify my learning needs and express them clearly in writing.			
I can identify my classmate's mistakes and correct them.			
I can explain to others what I have understood from the lessons.			
I can involve in a classroom discussion about a familiar topic.			
I can cooperate with others to understand better.			
I can summarize what I have studied in class.			
I can reflect continuously on my learning and take decisions to improve it.			
I can complete my portfolio properly respecting the timeline.			

mistakes? List some times you used English and felt proud.

Checklist for Portfolio Development

Check when the items have been completed

Date	What I did	How I felt (check one or more)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Great! <input type="checkbox"/> Surprised <input type="checkbox"/> Proud <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....
		<input type="checkbox"/> Great! <input type="checkbox"/> Surprised <input type="checkbox"/> Proud <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....
		<input type="checkbox"/> Great! <input type="checkbox"/> Surprised <input type="checkbox"/> Proud <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....
		<input type="checkbox"/> Great! <input type="checkbox"/> Surprised <input type="checkbox"/> Proud <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....
		<input type="checkbox"/> Great! <input type="checkbox"/> Surprised <input type="checkbox"/> Proud <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....
		<input type="checkbox"/> Great! <input type="checkbox"/> Surprised <input type="checkbox"/> Proud <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....
		<input type="checkbox"/> Great! <input type="checkbox"/> Surprised <input type="checkbox"/> Proud <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....

Stage1. Preparation

Collect artifacts for the Dossier:

- _____ Homework.
- _____ Exercises.
- _____ Lessons.
- _____ Tests.
- _____ Collect other artifacts to include in the portfolio (poems, stories, proverbs, etc.)

Stage 2. Building the portfolio

- _____ Title page.
- _____ Table of content.
- _____ Including all artifacts with justification and connection to criteria.

➤ Reflections over:

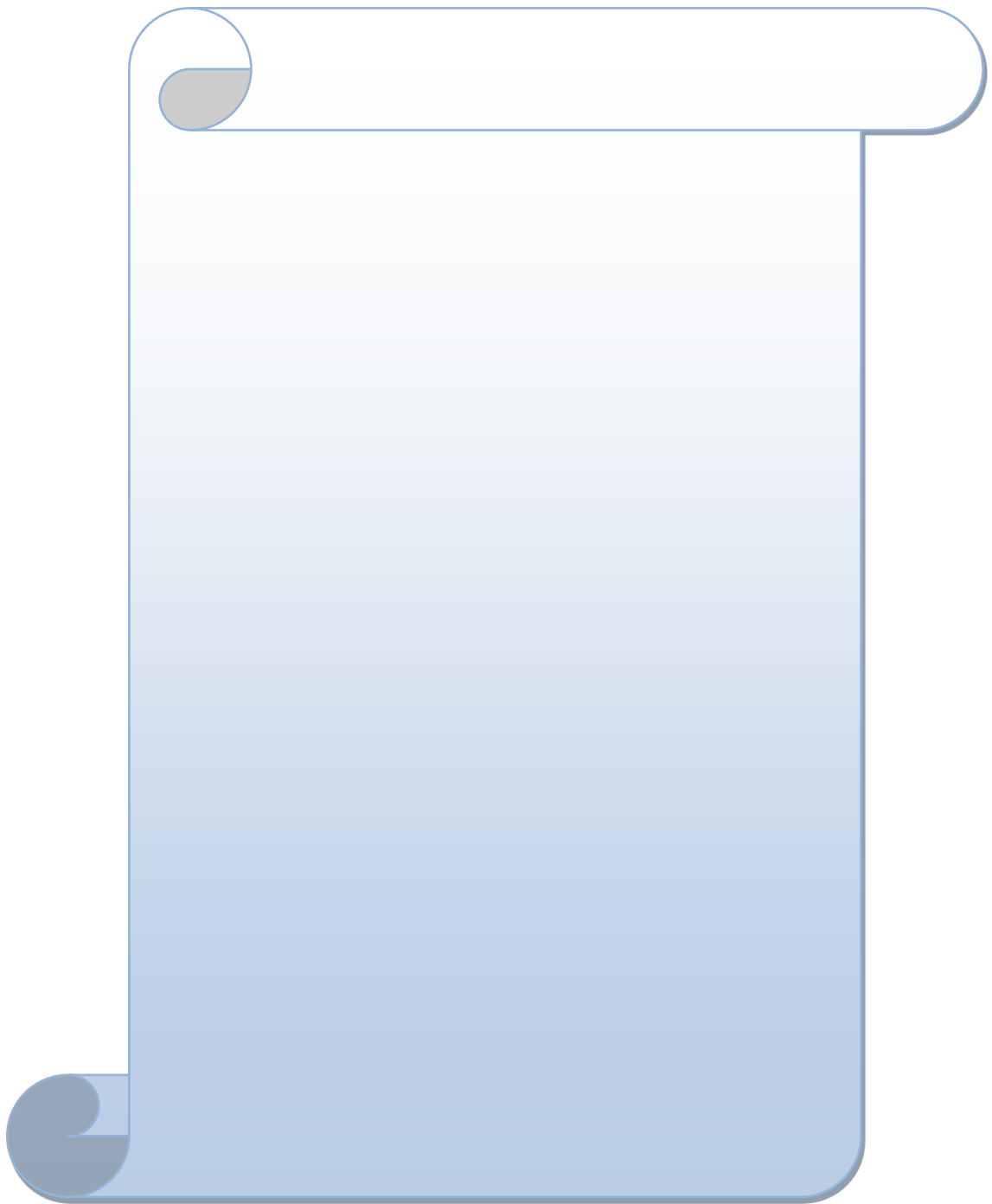
- _____ Homework.
- _____ Lessons.
- _____ Exercises.
- _____ Tests/exams.
- _____ Projects.
- _____ Progress.
- _____ Organization of the portfolio.
- _____ Respecting timeline.

Week:

Date:

Time:

My Questions to My Teacher :



Week :

Date :

Time :

MY TEACHER'S REMARKS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

	Excellent (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)	Rating	Weight	Score
--	----------------------	-------------------------	---------------------------	---------------	---------------	--------------

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Artifacts	All artifacts are well chosen because they relate to the lessons 'objectives.	The majority of artifacts are suitable for the portfolio.	The majority of artifacts do not match the portfolio's objective, so no effort or little in the selection.		03	
	All artifacts are clearly introduced, well organized and creatively displayed.	The majority of artifacts are introduced with some organization.	The majority of artifacts are not clearly introduced and lack organization.		03	
	All artifacts are varied and rich in terms of content.	The majority of artifacts are varied and rich in terms of content	The majority of artifacts are not varied or fewer and not rich in terms of content		03	
Reflection	The purpose of including each artifact is clearly stated and supported with evidence which shows student's understanding of the reasons of selection and reflection while doing so.	The purpose of including the majority of artifacts is stated and supported with enough evidence.	The purpose of including each artifact is not justified and student's random selection of artifacts is clear.		04	
	Setting clearly future goals and making effective plans to achieve them.	Setting future goals and making plans which do not support such goals.	Future goals are not clear or they are not set as well as learning plans.		04	
	Clear, honest and detailed assessment of the teaching contents and materials.	Some teaching contents and materials are either not clearly or honestly assessed.	The majority of teaching contents and materials are not clearly and honestly assessed or not assessed at all .		04	
	Clear, honest and detailed assessment of the learning process and progress.	Assessment of the learning progress or process is not clear or honest.	Both assessments are either missing or not clearly or honestly done.		04	
The Portfolio	All required elements are included.	One or two elements are missing.	More than two elements are missing.		03	
	All sections of the portfolio are organized and completed within timelines.	One section of the portfolio is not organized and not completed within timeline.	Two sections or all the portfolio is not organized and completed within timelines.		03	
	The portfolio is creatively and visually appealing. The cover, graphics and artwork.	The portfolio is missing one indication of its visual appeal.	The portfolio is not creatively and visually appealing		03	
Language Form	Appropriate use of grammar, spelling and punctuation.	Some misspelling, errors in writing which do not interfere with reading.	Frequent errors which interfere with reading.		03	

Appendix B:
The awareness raising stage
of students' portfolio
training process

A. The Teacher's Role:

The teacher's role is not to explain everything to you. Rather, s/he is supposed to encourage you to work outside the classroom, practise exercises, read books, while providing you with his/her guidance and support whenever this is needed. Your teacher is not supposed to correct all your mistakes since you need to discover them by yourself. Yet, s/he can help you avoid them in the future. You need to find your own way of learning by setting your own learning goals and thinking about how to plan and organize it. Because you know yourself, your efforts and abilities more than the teacher, so you can know and find out how you need to learn more effectively. So, learning is your responsibility and your success is determined by your efforts and work. You can do well in exams and improve your learning, you need just to remember that your teacher is here to help you, so that you should ask for his/her help but do not depend entirely on him/her and attribute your success or failure to your teacher.

B. The Student's Role:

You need to know that your success depends on you: what you do inside and outside the classroom. Your efforts, ambitions and motivation are the engines which lead to your success. So, you need to depend on yourself and do not wait just for your teacher. Supposing your teacher is not assigning exercises to you to do outside classes, in order to practise more what you have studied in class. Are not you going to do this by yourself? Or are you going to be pleased because you do not have to work? Good students work by themselves without being told by their teachers. They are never satisfied with the amount of input or practise provided by the teacher. So, you want to succeed you need to be autonomous. This means you should:

- Attend lessons and lectures.
- Ask questions to better understand, take risk, do not hesitate or be afraid of making mistakes. These are part of the learning process.
- Organize your learning through planning what to do, when and how it should be done.
- Set your learning objectives and indicate how you can achieve them.
- Think about what you need and how you should achieve it. Ask your teacher's help in case you need it.
- Revise regularly and practise exercises continuously. Do not wait for the teacher to give you his/her exercises. Search for more exercises and practise them.
- Do not get afraid of tests and exams, prepare yourself and have confidence in yourself. You 'CAN' do well.

- Suggest exercises and lessons for your teacher and ask for the reason of including the lessons which are taught in class.
- Think continuously about your learning and what and how you should improve it.
- Work collaboratively with your classmates and ask their help.
- Help your teacher create opportunities for you to practise the language through sharing decisions with him/her concerning what you need, and prefer to learn.
- Listen to English, watch TV programmes, and read a lot in this language. Try to talk in English with your classmates.

C. Your Language Portfolio

The language portfolio can help you achieve these tasks, get more autonomous and improve your English . This is through making you:

- An organized student who knows how to plan and revise regularly his/her lessons, practise exercises and thus getting less or not worried about the exams and tests.
- A student who knows what to do to avoid his/her difficulties and get good marks (how to learn).
- Practise the English language and avoid mistakes.
- Able to test yourself and check your mistakes and other's.
- Know how your English is progressing, making clear your learning goals.
- Enjoy learning and feel more self-confident about your abilities.
- Succeed since it is the TP mark.

The portfolio is also a very useful tool for your teacher because:

- It tells your teacher about who you are, i.e., your learning needs, styles, motivation, etc.
- It helps your teacher get feedback about how much you are learning, in order to take useful decisions and provide you with the necessary support.
- It helps your teacher involve you in assessing your learning process, and other's learning.
- As a form of assessment, it helps your teacher provide you with more learning opportunities and the chance to succeed.

Appendix C:
Kashefian (2002) Learner
Autonomy Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Directions: Please show how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the numbers that match your answers.

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1	2	3	4	5

1	The teacher should offer help to me.	1	2	3	4	5
2	The teacher should tell me what my difficulties are.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The teacher should tell me how long I should spend on an activity.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The role of the teacher is to tell me what to do.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The teacher should always explain why we do an activity in class.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The role of the teacher is to help me to learn effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
7	The teacher knows best how well I am.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The role of the teacher is to create opportunities for me to practice.	1	2	3	4	5
9	The role of the teacher is to set my learning goals.	1	2	3	4	5
10	The teacher should be an expert at showing learners how to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
11	The teacher should give me regular tests.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I need the teacher to tell me how I am progressing.	1	2	3	4	5
13	It is important to me to see the progress I make.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I know how to check my works for mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Having my works evaluated by others is helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Having my works evaluated by others is scary.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I like trying out new things by myself.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I have a clear idea of what I need of English	1	2	3	4	5
19	My language learning success depends on what I do in classroom	1	2	3	4	5
20	My own efforts play an important role in successful language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I myself can find the best way to learn the language.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I know how to plan my learning.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I know how to ask for help when I need it.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I know how to set my learning goals.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I know how my language learning progresses.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I know how to study languages well.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I know how to study other subjects well.	1	2	3	4	5

28	I have the ability to learn the language successfully.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I have the ability to write accurately in English.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I have the ability to get the score I try for in my next English test.	1	2	3	4	5
31	I know how to find an effective way to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I know best how well I learn.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I have been successful in language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I have my own ways of testing how much I have learned.	1	2	3	4	5
35	I am average at language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
36	Making mistakes is a natural part of language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
37	Making mistakes is harmful in language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
38	It is possible to learn a language in a short time.	1	2	3	4	5
39	Learning a language takes a long time.	1	2	3	4	5
40	I am above average at language learning.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix D:
The researcher's
questionnaire 'second pre-
and post-tests'

Questionnaire

Dear Student

This questionnaire was devised to get an idea about your learning motivation, beliefs and attitudes. Please do not write your name and put -X- where appropriate. Thank you very much for your help and patience!

1. Male Female 2. Age: 3. Nationality:

4. Branch of secondary school:.....

5. How would you describe your motivation (level)? (choose one answer)

1. Highly motivated to learn English.
2. Motivated to learn English.
3. Not at all motivated to learn English.

6. Why are you studying English?

1. You would like to teach this language.
2. You would like to work for a company and use this language (ex: as a translator)
3. You would like to go abroad after graduating to carry on your studies.
4. You are interested in the English culture, films, music, etc.
5. You do not know for what purpose you will use this English.

7. Outside class, you learn English by:

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
• Listening to English songs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Watching English TV programmes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Practicing grammar exercises.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Reading books, newspapers or magazines in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Talking to friends in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Others? Please mention them.....					

8. In class, you like:

	YES	NO
• the teacher to explain everything.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ to work in groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ to participate and ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• to write down everything the teacher says about the lesson.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• the teacher to use technology (e. g, internet resources) in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ to be involved in tasks which require reciting information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

and no thinking.

- the teacher to give you a lot of homework.
- the teacher to correct all your mistakes.
- the teacher to do tests regularly.
- to make suggestion to the teacher (e. g, you bring other exercises, lessons, ideas to your class).

Others?.....
.....

9. According to you, the most useful way in your English study is:

1. Taking lessons/ lectures from the internet.
2. Learning by heart lessons (mechanic memory).
3. Reading books related to the courses.
4. Doing exercises of grammar, translation words, etc.
5. Working cooperatively with your friends.
6. Others?.....

10. Do you think your writing in English needs to improve? YES NO

11. What kinds of difficulties do you have in writing in English?
.....
.....
.....
.....

12. Describe what you are doing to overcome such difficulties and improve your writing.
.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix E:

Observations checklists

OBSERVATIONS CHECKLISTS (Semester I)

The students' attitudes and beliefs before the treatment			
<i>From 10th to 26th of November</i>	O	N	<i>My observations</i>
The students' motivation to learn English	X		Most of them said that they like studying this language.
Their attendance to the lessons.	X		Most of them attended, but there were still absences.
Participation in class.	X		With most students, still there were those who remained silent.
Doing assigned homework.		X	Most students displayed their carelessness to the teacher's assigned homework.
Their familiarity with autonomous learning.		X	While holding the first conference with the students and discussing the teacher's and students' role at university, it was found that most of groups were not familiar with autonomous learning. Their surprise and skeptical reactions were apparent regarding such roles, besides their statements that the teacher is expected to give them everything they need.
The students' reaction towards the idea of the language portfolio			
<i>From the 26th to 28th of November</i>	O	N	<i>My observations</i>
Interest in using the portfolio.	X		With group 01 and 07, I noticed their interest in this process because they were asking questions about its purpose, whether I have used it before or not, and why I have decided to integrate it into my teaching. Except with group 03, I did not notice their interest at this stage, but rather they found it difficult and they seemed worried.
More enthusiastic when being shown other portfolios' samples.	X		Most of them got more enthusiastic about the process because they were asking for more clarification concerning its use, and they asked me for much more time to see and read those portfolios and discuss their contents in group.
How the students were getting along with the process of portfolios development			
<i>From 8th to 12th December</i>	O	N	<i>My observations</i>
Completing the Language Biography section	X		Most students completed this section.
Collecting artifacts for the Language Dossier section	X		All students were still collecting artifacts and asking for the criteria for selection.
Completing the Language Passport section.		X	Most students have not completed their reflections over the lessons, exercises and homework.
<i>From 15th to 19th December</i>	O	N	<i>My observations</i>
Collecting exercises.	X		They had started doing this
Collecting lessons.		X	For some students, but not the majority.
Collecting tests		X	Not yet, most of them said they would do this during the holiday.
Reflecting over the lessons.	X		This was done by most students, but still some students did not complete their reflections over the exercises.
Reflecting over the homework	X		This is was done by most students.

<i>From 5th to 14th January 2014 (2nd conference):Checking their portfolios before assessing them</i>	O	N	<i>My observations</i>
The students' 'Language Biography' section was completed successfully	X		This was observed among 66.66% of the students.
Most of the selected evidence were justified.		X	Most of them made their selection but not yet justifying it.
Most of the artifacts were well organized.	X		73.33% of the students' portfolios had well-organized artifacts.
The students were reflecting regularly in the Language Passport section.		X	Most of the students seemed to have difficulties with keeping reflecting regularly.
The students' portfolios were attractive and nice appealing.	X		83% of the portfolios were having such a trait.
All sections were separated and organized	X		66.66% of the students' portfolios sections were so.
The students' interest in completing their portfolios	X		Most of them were enthusiastic about this process. But, I felt that they were anxious as well.
<i>From the 22nd to 29th January portfolio evaluation</i>	O	N	<i>My observations</i>
Most students made good selection of artifacts	X		This was observed among 76.47% while only 5.88% selection was satisfactory and just 8.82% unsatisfactory.
Artifacts were creatively organized and introduced.	X		55.88% of the students' portfolios displayed this trait, while 23.52% got satisfactory selection and only 20.58% had unsatisfactory.
Artifacts were varied and rich in terms on content.	X		44.11% of them were varied and 17.64% were satisfactory while 38.23% were not varied.
Artifacts were clearly described and justified		X	Only 26.47% described clearly and provided evidence for their selection
Clear, honest and detailed reflection of lessons, homework, exams/tests		X	Only 08.82% of the students 'reflection was clear, honest and detailed.
Organization and appearance	X		76.47% of the students' portfolios were organized, creatively and visually appealing.
Including the requirement elements		X	Only 14.70% of the students' portfolios contained the all required elements:the table of contents, date,time and week, the suggested test.
Appropriate use of grammar, spelling and punctuation		X	Only 5.88% of the students language was accurately produced while 79.41% did some misspelling and grammatical errors which do not interfere with reading.
<i>After giving them their marks of the portfolio with the remarks 4th of February</i>	O	N	<i>My observations</i>
The students were satisfied with the marks they got		X	Not all of them as there were students who stated that they were expecting better marks than those they got.
<i>The third conference on the 20th of February</i>	O	N	<i>My observations</i>
The students' understanding of the assessment criteria and teachers' remark		X	At first they were still having difficulties with understanding some criteria, but after explaining, they realized their mistakes and what should have been done to improve it.
They were still interested in the process despite their marks.	X		They said that they would make much more effort in the second semester.
They preferred to change some parts or add tasks to their portfolios.	X		They asked for more space to write their reflections over the lessons.

OBSERVATIONS CHECKLISTS (Semester2)

How the students were getting along with the process of portfolios development			
Introducing new worksheets for their portfolios 13 week: 23 rd February	O	N	<i>My observations</i>
They liked the fact of adding further worksheet to the portfolio.		X	They were not happy they felt the more worksheet they have the harder work they will perform
They liked the idea of collaborating to do projects and present them in class.	X		They were so excited to have this chance and mainly because they were told that this would replace the mark of the second test for the second semester so they were happy to hear that
They disliked peer-assessment and hated to be corrected by others.		X	It was fun, they enjoyed giving marks to each other. They wanted to seem severe in attributing marks.
Checking how the students were getting along with their portfolios and the other related tasks: 14 th week to 20 th week (from 2 nd March to 10 th May)	O	N	<i>My observations</i>
They were still interested in completing their portfolios.	X		Most of them.
They were completing them regularly.	X		As the students get used of their portfolios, they devoted time for completing them. This was planned for better than it was in the first semester.
They completed the portfolio's parts better than they did in the first semester	X		Most of them completed the portfolio's parts which they were introduced in the first semester since as they said they got familiar with accomplishing them. Yet, this was not the case with the new integrated worksheets such as ?
They showed involvement and interest in conducting their collaborative projects.	X		Enthusiasm and motivation to achieve an interesting project was the aim of most students. This was also apparent through their questions concerning the criteria of a good project.
In doing their projects, they tried to show their creativity and do their best to perform better in class.	X		All students did a good job: interesting projects, good performance and collaboration which resulted in interactive funny classroom atmosphere.
The students' Portfolios: Evaluating the Product			
From the 10 th to 19 th of May	O	N	<i>My observations</i>
Good selection of artifacts.	X		93.54% of their portfolios contained relevants exercises, lessons, tests which fit with the portfolio's objective.
Artifacts were clearly introduced, well organized and creatively displayed.	X		64.51% had these artifacts.
Artifacts variety in terms of contents.	X		Only 22.58% included a few rich and varies artifacts while the rest of of the students had varied and rich ones.

Complete description and justification of the selected evidence.	X		61.29% of the portfolios' evidence were described and justified clearly while 29.03% did not have this type of evidence.
Clear, honest and detailed reflection of lessons, homework, exams/tests	X		45.16% assessed clearly, honestly and in details all the lessons, homework, tests, their own and the other projects, their learning progress and 38.70% did so most of them.
Organization and appearance	X		86.80% of the portfolios were creatively and visually appealing
Including the requirement elements		X	Only 32.25% contained all such elements.
Appropriate use of grammar, spelling and punctuation		X	Just 06.45% used appropriately grammar, spelling and punctuation while 90.32% did some misspelling errors which do not interfere with reading.

Appendix F:

Focus groups questions

The Students' Focus Groups

I. The First Focus Groups Questions:

- 1) How do you feel now as a first year student of English? Are you happy, motivated or not?
- 2) What do you know about studying at university? What others told you about it? (How to succeed? etc.
- 3) According to you, what is the role of the teacher at university?
- 4) Does it differ from that within middle or secondary schools?
- 5) What have you noticed here? Are your teachers giving you everything you need within their courses?
- 6) Do you find this acceptable (the teacher should facilitate your learning)
- 7) What is then the role of students?

II. The Second Focus Groups Questions:

- 1) How do you find completing your portfolios? Easy/ Difficult/ So and so?
- 2) Are you completing this process regularly? How often are you doing so?
- 3) Which section (s) of the portfolio do you find difficulties with? What are these difficulties?
- 4) Which section(s) or part(s) of your portfolio are you getting more interested in?
- 5) What do you need to produce the required portfolio, i.e., the one that meets the intended criteria?
- 6) What other questions are still occupying your minds in relation to the portfolio development process?

III. The Third Focus Groups Questions:

- 1) What do you think about the mark you got for your portfolio, i.e., do you like it? Are you satisfied?
- 2) Do you know why you have got such a mark? State then your difficulties with the process?
- 3) According to you, what needs to be done to get better marks for them?
- 4) Are you still interested in your portfolios and so in improving them? Yes/NO?
- 5) What kind of teacher's support are you in need of?

IV. The Fourth Focus Groups Questions:

- 1) What are your difficulties with your portfolios?
- 2) What are your needs within this process?

- 3) What do you think about the experience of assessing your classmate's homework? Do you like it? Did you find it useful, i.e., you learn from it?
- 4) How about your projects: How do you find working with your peer? What difficulties are you facing? Which stage of development have you reached? How do you feel about presenting your project in class?

Appendix G :

Evaluation questionnaires

Questionnaire 1

Dear Student,

The following questionnaire aims at revealing your learning attitudes, views and feelings about using your portfolios in the Written Expression module, besides your needs within this process. Would you please provide honest answers, in order to help your teacher make effective use of these tools in teaching that module; thereby improving your writing in English and helping you succeed. Thank you for your collaboration.

Note: Mark with (X) next to your selected answer(s).

The student's views and feelings concerning their portfolios

1. Have you found using portfolios in studying Written Expression module helpful ?

Yes No

2. If your answer is **Yes**, how does it help you?

- a. My language portfolio helps me practise a lot of exercises.
- b. My language portfolio helps me understand the lessons of Written Expression module.
- c. My language portfolio helps me organize my studies: plan for my learning and revise regularly.
- d. My language portfolio helps me think about how my English needs to improve.
- e. My language portfolio helps me get more interested in studying this module.
- f. My language portfolio helps me show my creativity, my ideas and opinions in English.
- g. My language portfolio helps me get more awareness about my learning needs and difficulties in writing.
- h. My language portfolio helps me feel that I am responsible for my learning.
- i. My language portfolio helps me get a good mark for the 'TP' in Written Expression module.
- j. Others? Please mention them.....
.....
.....

3. If your answer is **No**, explain why?
.....
.....

4. How do you feel about your portfolio?

- a) I enjoy filling in my portfolio and I am getting more interested in it.
- b) I get confused and I do not know what to do with it.
- c) It is a hard work, I feel tired and I wish not to use it again.
- d) Others? Please mention them.....
.....
.....

The student's difficulties in using their portfolios and their teacher's role

5. What kind of difficulties did you face in constructing your portfolio?

- a) Suggesting relevant exercises for each lesson.
- b) Suggesting relevant lessons.
- c) Suggesting a relevant test.
- d) Reflecting regularly over the lessons and the classwork.
- e) Reflecting regularly over the homework.
- f) Indicating my learning needs.
- g) Organizing the three sections.
- h) Completing my portfolio with respect to time (problem of time).
- i) Others? Please mention them.....
.....

6. How did you find the teacher's explanations and guidance concerning your portfolios?

(Choose just one answer)

- 1. Very Helpful.
- 2. Helpful, but it was not enough.
- 3. Not helpful at all.

7. What do you need and suggest for your teacher to make effective use of your portfolios?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Questionnaire 2

Dear Student,

The following questionnaire aims at revealing your learning attitudes, views and feelings about using your portfolios in the Written Expression module, besides your needs within this process. Would you please provide honest answers, in order to help your teacher make effective use of these tools in teaching that module; thereby improving your writing in English and helping you succeed. Thank you for your collaboration.

Note: Mark with (X) next to your selected answer(s).

The student's views and feelings concerning their portfolios

1. Have you found using portfolios in studying Written Expression module helpful?

Yes No

2. If your answer is **Yes**, how does it help you?

- k. My language portfolio helps me practise a lot of exercises.
- l. My language portfolio helps me understand the lessons of Written Expression module.
- m. My language portfolio helps me organize my studies: plan for my learning and revise regularly.
- n. My language portfolio helps me think about how my English needs to improve.
- o. My language portfolio helps me get more interested in studying this module.
- p. My language portfolio helps me show my creativity, my ideas and opinions in English.
- q. My language portfolio helps me get more awareness about my learning needs and difficulties in writing.
- r. My language portfolio helps me feel that I am responsible for my learning.
- s. My language portfolio helps me get a good mark for the 'TP' in Written Expression module.
- t. Others? Please mention them.....
.....
.....

3. If your answer is **No**, explain why?

.....
.....

4. How do you feel about your portfolio?

- e) I enjoy filling in my portfolio and I am getting more interested in it.
- f) I get confused and I do not know what to do with it.
- g) It is a hard work, I feel tired and I wish not to use it again.
- h) Others? Please mention them.....
.....

The student's views concerning the other related tasks to their language portfolios

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?(Cross X one answer for each statement)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1) Assessing my classmate's homework was an interesting and beneficial experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Doing a project instead of a test has made me feel more comfortable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Collaborating with my classmate to do our project has helped me feel more responsible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Presenting my project in class has made me feel more confident about my learning abilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Assessing my classmate's projects has made me happy and proud of myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Listening to other projects was interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The student's difficulties in using their portfolios and their teacher's role

6. What kind of difficulties did you face in constructing your portfolio?

- a) Suggesting relevant exercises for each lesson.
- b) Suggesting relevant lessons.
- c) Suggesting a relevant test.
- d) Reflecting regularly over the lessons and the classwork.
- e) Reflecting regularly over the homework.
- f) Reflecting over my progress.
- g) Reflecting over the tests and exams.
- h) Reflecting over my project.
- i) Reflecting over my classmate's project.
- j) Indicating my learning needs.
- k) Organizing the three sections.
- l) Completing my portfolio with respect to time (problem of time).
- m) Making a lot of mistakes in writing.
- n) Others? Please mention them.....

7. How did you find the teacher's explanations and guidance concerning your portfolios during this semester? (**Choose just one answer**)

4. Very Helpful.

5. Helpful, but it was not enough.

6. Not helpful at all.

8. Do you plan to keep a portfolio in the future (Will you use it in other modules including the Written Expression module)? Yes No

Explain Why?.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix H:

The mean score of each item
of the Learner Autonomy
Questionnaire of the post-
test of both groups

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
the teacher should offer help	2,162	,148	1,588	46	,119	,327	,206	-,088	,742
			1,807	37,559	,079	,327	,181	-,040	,694
the teacher should tell me what my difficulties are	1,983	,166	,766	46	,448	,218	,285	-,355	,792
			,907	41,216	,370	,218	,240	-,267	,704
the teacher should tell me how long I should spend on an activity	,738	,395	,760	46	,451	,255	,335	-,420	,929
			,794	30,269	,433	,255	,321	-,400	,909
the role of the teacher is to tell me what to do	,043	,836	3,607	46	,001	,848	,235	,375	1,322
			3,380	23,435	,003	,848	,251	,330	1,367
the teacher should always explain why we do an activity in class	3,619	,063	3,521	46	,001	,952	,270	,408	1,495
			4,069	38,998	,000	,952	,234	,479	1,424
the role of the teacher is to help me to learn effectively	,087	,770	1,957	46	,056	,545	,279	-,016	1,106
			2,054	30,622	,049	,545	,266	,004	1,087
the teacher knows best how well I am	1,814	,185	,303	46	,763	,091	,300	-,513	,695
			,341	36,654	,735	,091	,266	-,449	,631
the role of the teacher is to create opportunities for me to practice	1,335	,254	2,164	46	,036	,539	,249	,038	1,041
			2,495	38,794	,017	,539	,216	,102	,977
the role of the teacher is to set my learning goals	2,141	,150	1,569	46	,124	,436	,278	-,124	,996
			1,417	21,737	,171	,436	,308	-,203	1,075
the teacher should be an expert at showing learners how to learn	1,283	,263	2,864	46	,006	,739	,258	,220	1,259
			3,033	31,308	,005	,739	,244	,242	1,236
the teacher should give me regular tests	14,440	,000	1,787	46	,080	,545	,305	-,069	1,160
			2,144	42,251	,038	,545	,254	,032	1,059
I need the teacher to tell me how I am progressing	4,038	,050	,374	46	,710	,097	,259	-,425	,619
			,438	40,200	,664	,097	,221	-,350	,544
it is important to me to see the progress I make	1,198	,279	,733	46	,467	,152	,207	-,264	,567
			,698	24,219	,492	,152	,217	-,296	,599
I know how to check my works for mistakes	1,168	,286	-4,368	46	,000	-1,139	,261	-1,664	-,614
			-4,649	31,722	,000	-1,139	,245	-1,639	-,640
having my works evaluated by others is helpful	2,894	,096	-,817	46	,418	-,248	,304	-,860	,363
			-,754	22,662	,459	-,248	,330	-,931	,434

having my works evaluated by others is scary	,684	,413	,188	46	,852	,061	,322	-,588	,709
I like trying out new things by myself	1,691	,200	,440	46	,662	,109	,248	-,390	,608
I have a clear idea of what I need of English	1,764	,191	-2,056	46	,045	-,685	,333	-1,355	-,014
my language learning success depends on what I do in classroom	,522	,473	-,070	46	,945	-,024	,349	-,726	,678
my own efforts play an important role in successful language learning	,331	,568	-,236	46	,814	-,073	,308	-,692	,547
I myself can find the best way to learn the language	6,138	,017	-2,986	46	,005	-,988	,331	-1,654	-,322
I know how to plan my learning	1,457	,234	-4,723	46	,000	-1,370	,290	-1,953	-,786
I know how to ask for help when I need it	7,766	,008	-1,831	46	,074	-,473	,258	-,992	,047
I know how to set my learning goals	,281	,599	-2,956	46	,005	-,782	,264	-1,314	-,250
I know how my language learning progresses	,498	,484	-2,773	46	,008	-,758	,273	-1,307	-,208
I know how to study languages well	,520	,475	-2,641	46	,011	-,867	,328	-1,527	-,206
I know how to study other subjects well	,531	,470	-2,030	46	,048	-,618	,304	-1,231	-,005
I have the ability to learn the language successfully	,941	,337	-1,180	46	,244	-,370	,313	-1,000	,261
I have the ability to write accurately in English	,836	,365	-,191	46	,850	-,048	,254	-,560	,463
I have the ability to get the score I try for in my next English test	,000	,997	-1,326	46	,191	-,394	,297	-,992	,204
I know how to find an effective way to learn English	4,255	,045	-4,477	46	,000	-1,261	,282	-1,827	-,694
I know best how well I learn	,656	,422	-2,957	46	,005	-,939	,318	-1,579	-,300
I have been successful in language learning	2,300	,136	-1,654	46	,105	-,521	,315	-1,156	,113
I have my own ways of testing how much I have learned	2,449	,124	-3,938	46	,000	-1,158	,294	-1,749	-,566
I am average at language learning	2,909	,095	-2,045	46	,047	-,564	,276	-1,118	-,009
Making mistakes is a natural part	,592	,446	-1,121	46	,268	-,352	,314	-,983	,280

of language learning			-1,039	22,917	,309	-,352	,338	-1,051	,348
making mistakes is harmful in	,072	,790	,036	46	,971	,012	,337	-,666	,691
language learning			,036	27,928	,971	,012	,333	-,671	,695
it is possible to learn a language	,022	,883	-,640	46	,525	-,242	,379	-1,005	,520
in a short time			-,635	26,641	,531	-,242	,382	-1,026	,542
learning a language takes a long	,350	,557	-1,232	46	,224	-,430	,349	-1,134	,273
time			-1,207	25,907	,238	-,430	,356	-1,163	,303
I am above average at language	2,627	,112	-1,474	46	,147	-,394	,267	-,932	,144
learning			-1,574	32,010	,125	-,394	,250	-,904	,116