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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE TESTING MODELS

CASE STUDY OF FIRST YEAR LINGUISTICS' TESTS IN THE ENGLISH
BRANCH AT MOHAMED KHIDER UNIVERSITY OF BISKRA

**Thesis submitted to the Department of Letters and English in Candidacy for the
Degree of Doctorat "Es-Sciences" in Applied Linguistics**

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Dedication

To my beloved mother, Halima

To the memory of my father, Abdelhamid

To my brothers and sisters,

To my sisters-in-law

To my lovely nieces and nephews

To my husband, Salah-eddine AYACHE

To my in-laws

To my Little Angels 'Amina' and 'Ahmed Ziad'

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Abstract

Teaching Linguistics for first year classes of the English Branch at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra is a challenging task for most teachers. The majority of students have difficulties in achieving satisfactory results in Linguistics tests. The present study aims at investigating the reliability and validity of the testing models of Linguistics taking the case of first year students of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. The study targets first year classes of the academic year 2011/2012 of the English Branch including 12 groups. The sample concerns 7 groups out of 12 and 8 teachers of Linguistics (7 full-time teachers and 1 part-time teacher). The researcher utilized a triangulated research method encompassing four data collection tools: questionnaires for both teachers of Linguistics and first year students, an interview with teachers, a focus group discussion with students, and a classroom observation. The result those students' deficiencies in Linguistics do not lie in the reliability and validity of the tests themselves, but rather in the teaching environment/ context, namely the class size and the teaching methods in the first place. Finally, from an insider perspective and after living the experience of teaching Linguistics with the implementation of ICTs (namely the Language Laboratory and the Data Show), the researcher recommends the reduction of the class size and the provision of sufficient ICT tools to permit teaching Linguistics in a new setting which has proved its efficiency and positive impact on students' achievement/ test results

Key Words: Linguistics – Reliability – Testing - Validity

List of Abbreviations

%: Percentage

4th CL: Fourth Year Classical

BMD: Bachelor Master Doctorate

EB: English Branch

ECTS: European Credit Transfer System

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EHEA: European Higher Education Area

EHES: European Higher Education System

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

ICTs: Information and Communication Technologies

L1: First year License

L2: Second Year License

L3: Third Year License

LMD: License Master Doctorate

M1: First Year Master

M2: Second Year Master

MA: Magistère

MKU: Mohamed Khider University

NA: No Answer

NT: None of These

QI: Question Item

TD: Travaux Dirigés

UES: Unités d'Enseignements

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GENERAL

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

Introduction

Linguistics is one of the core curricula in the teaching of the English language in Algerian Universities. This privileged position necessarily requires special pedagogical and didactic treatment of this module to attain the preset objectives. The latter aims to come to the assistance of the students in their uptake, i.e., the amount of input internalized by students of the linguistic, socio-linguistic, and psycho-linguistic input of the human language in general and English in particular. By and large, 'linguistics' represents the students' major grievances as far as content, teaching methods, and testing and evaluation are concerned. First year students' deficiencies in linguistics are believed to be affected by the teaching methods and aids. Therefore, the students' results in tests are affected either negatively or positively. It is within the breadth of this research to disclose the intertwined factors (namely reliability and validity of tests) that directly or indirectly affect students' attitudes towards their evaluation of Linguistics achievement.

It is noteworthy to acknowledge that the teaching and learning processes are strongly related to assessment, evaluation and testing, i.e. one cannot be complete and thorough without the presence of the other.

It is in the context of this interrelated nature of teaching and testing that the present study addresses the issue of reliability and validity as the major criteria for useful educational measurements. The choice of reliability and validity is undertaken due to their symbiotic nature. In the literature, the aforementioned dichotomies appear to reflect the intimate existence of both constructs in the same circumstances. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to put claim that reliability and validity are indivisible.

The findings of our Magistere work (Rabehi, 2006) urged us to conduct further research on what lies behind our students' deficiencies in linguistics particularly giving much more focus to the linguistics' testing models including official exams, and written quizzes, etc.

In the present study, the term "test" stands for all types of tests given in linguistics to first year classes at the English Branch at Mohamed Khider University - Biskra. The study attempts to shed light on those testing models in terms of design, number of activities, time allotted, marks given to each activity, keeping in mind students' differences' in terms of motivation, degree of comprehension, and English background knowledge.

Our main line of research encompasses the study of linguistics tests' models reliability and validity. Our mission is to find out the adequate answers that accommodate staff and students' grievances. We are motivated as yet by our mindfulness of the challenges that are posed by the evasive testing' models designed by teachers of Linguistics, and which do not follow predictable patterns. Oftentimes, students come to be taken by surprise by the format, content, tasks, and scoring scheme from semester to semester and from year to year because different teachers use different test formats and types of tasks.

The present investigation is undertaken with the view of laying out the foundations of the correlative relationship between testing in Linguistics and contextual challenges such as reliability and validity of tests in linguistics. The research is fundamentally premised by our interest in investigating the reliability and validity of linguistics tests as the source of success or failure in the module in question.

1. Statement of the Problem

This work developed thanks to an earlier academic investigation conducted in 2005. This led us to inquire in the current research whether or not failure in Linguistics lies in the fact that the examination papers do not resemble classroom practices. Owing to controversies in such important criteria such as reliability and validity, linguistics testing models seem to compromise the viability of the module, its syllabus, its objectives, its teaching methodologies, and its testing activities and feedback.

Furthermore, the issue of large classes appears to be an omnipresent concern for most teachers particularly more so when it comes to formative assessment and imposes tremendous pressure on teachers. Intuitively, formative assessment requires a limited number of students to obtain verifiable data on students' cognitive and intellectual growth and progress. Clearly, large classes frustrate teachers from undertaking this form of assessment as it proves to be time consuming and tiresome in the long run. This awkward situation seems to accentuate every year as more and more students opt for English language studies.

2. Aims of the Study

This work aims to:

- Outline stakeholders' attitudes and expectations vis-à-vis testing in Linguistics.
- Address stakeholders grievances and provide practical solutions if any.
- Sensitize stakeholders to the necessity of developing testing models in Linguistics.
- Highlight the issue of assessment, evaluation, and testing in most favorable light from the perspective of the Licence Master Doctorat higher education reform.

3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The present research attempts to address a host of issues relevant to the reliability and validity of the testing models in a case study of first year linguistics tests of the English Branch at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. The questions below target to address the issue of linguistics tests reliability and validity from three perspectives:

➤ **Perspective One:** Reliability and Validity

To what extent can a test reliability and validity affect the achievement gap?

➤ **Perspective Two:** Students' Language Proficiency

Is the students' failure in Linguistics influenced by their target language proficiency level?

➤ **Perspective Three:** Students' Study Behavior

Can students' understanding of tests contribute to closing the achievement gap?

In line with the above questions, the study formulated two main hypotheses. The first one is teacher-related, and the second one is student-related.

➤ **Hypothesis One**

➤ If teachers of Linguistics take into account the criteria of reliability and validity when designing the tests, the students' results will be satisfactory.

➤ **Hypothesis Two**

If students' understanding of tests increases, their engagement will significantly increase.

Students' positive responsiveness to the Linguistics input depends considerably upon commitment to extra-curricular activities such as: library work, study groups, and research-based studies.

4. Means of Research

The very nature of the present research calls upon the adoption of a dual descriptive-interpretive methodology. At the descriptive level, the research outlines tests and pertinent criteria such as reliability and validity. Moreover, it provides a comprehensive but by no means exhaustive description of the different though intertwining factors that affect tests and their reliability and validity. At the interpretive level, the study attempts to describe objectively a case study with the view of shedding light on the reliability and validity of the testing models.

Population and Sampling

A posteriori, the choice of population has been arguably undertaken with the view of representing the challenges that students of English in general and of linguistics in particular face during their study in the English Language Branch. The target population is first year classes of the English Branch at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra.

Out of twelve groups that form first year population (N= 683 students), we have selected seven groups (N= 393 students = 57.54%) on objective grounds (Linguistics tests designed by different teachers and taken by different students in different settings).

5. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is composed of six chapters besides to a general introduction and a general conclusion. The first two chapters deal with the theoretical aspects related to the issue under study.

Chapter one, entitled EFL Teaching Context: An Overview, develops along two main perspectives: the first undertakes to provide a comprehensive framework of EFL teaching context at Mohamed Khider University-Biskra , and the second to explore the Linguistics Course from different perspectives. The premise behind such an attempt is to discuss the factors that intertwine in shaping the different forces that control the Teaching

and Learning of English in general and of Linguistics in first year in particular at the English branch of MKU. Biskra. Furthermore, we aim, in this chapter to establish the drive and the scope of teaching Linguistics at the English Branch, which is the main focus of the present investigation. We have a quiet hope that this chapter reveals to different stakeholders (Teachers, students, administrators, curriculum designers, etc.) a clear picture on the EFL environment in Biskra.

Chapter two, entitled Reliability and Validity in Educational Measurements, investigates the concepts of assessment, evaluation, and testing from different vantage points. It should be mentioned from the very onset that a significant number of scholars use these three constructs interchangeably. Throughout the present work, despite being used in the same context, the two concepts we be utilized in different ways. Thus, the present chapter examines to some length the similarities and differences between these terms from the applied linguistics perspective. Besides, we shall focus on testing with respect to its techniques, design, formats, typology of tasks, marking, and feedback.

Chapter three, entitled Research Methodology: Students' and Teachers' Questionnaires, Interviews and Classroom Observation, undertakes to describe the research methodology from different perspectives such as research tools, population, samples, methodology, piloting, case study, and observation method. Besides, it includes the study design including description and explanation of the data gathering tools utilized in the research.

Chapter four, entitled Findings of Teachers' Views on the Learning and Testing of Linguistics, is devoted to the analyses and discussion of the teachers' questionnaire and interviews.

Chapter five, entitled Findings of the Students' Views on the Testing of Linguistics, is devoted to the analyses of the students' questionnaire and the focus group discussion.

Chapter six, entitled Findings of the Classroom Observation, discusses the results of the classroom observation. This part comes as the combination of the theoretical part of the work wherein we undertake to interpret in the light of the review of literature the findings of our two-year- long investigation. This crucial part aims at establishing a pattern in teachers and students' behavior as far as testing of Linguistics is concerned.

Besides, the dissertation includes a chapter which aims at providing an insightful perspective on the direct implications of our findings on classroom practices. Theory is essential for academics, but 'practice' is considerably cherished by classroom teachers whose grievances concerning the unintelligibility of theory and its jargon are often made public. This chapter, therefore, comes to assist teachers in their daily practices.

CHAPTER ONE:
EFL TEACHING CONTEXT

Chapter One: EFL Teaching Context

Introduction

This chapter provides a framework of EFL teaching context at Mohamed Khider University-Biskra (MKU). The premise behind such an attempt is to highlight the factors that intertwine in shaping the different forces that control the Teaching and Learning of English in general and Linguistics in first year classes in particular at the English branch of MKU. Biskra. Furthermore, we aim to establish the drive and the scope of teaching Linguistics at the English Branch, which is the main focus of the present investigation.

1.1 The Nature of Globalization

Globalization has become a household term in that it is used regularly by different people from different walks of life, which means that this term has grown evasive. For instance, this term is used in French under two labels: globalization and/or mondialisation. In this connection, scholars have provided a plethora of definitions each of which seems to include other components. The term globalization has become like a snowball gaining new understanding incessantly.

Globalization as a linguistic term was coined by the economist Theodore Levitt in 1985. Clearly, he was describing the global economies affecting production, consumption, and investment. Mok (2006, p.139) includes in his definition of globalization the exchange of scholars and knowledge. He points out “Globalization is also about the flows of people, ideas, and knowledge.” Besides, globalization seems to be an indelible component of modernization and modernity. According to Mok (*ibid.*) “Globalization is not a choice but a **necessity**”. (Emphasis added).

Therefore, globalization has two offshoots: economy and knowledge.

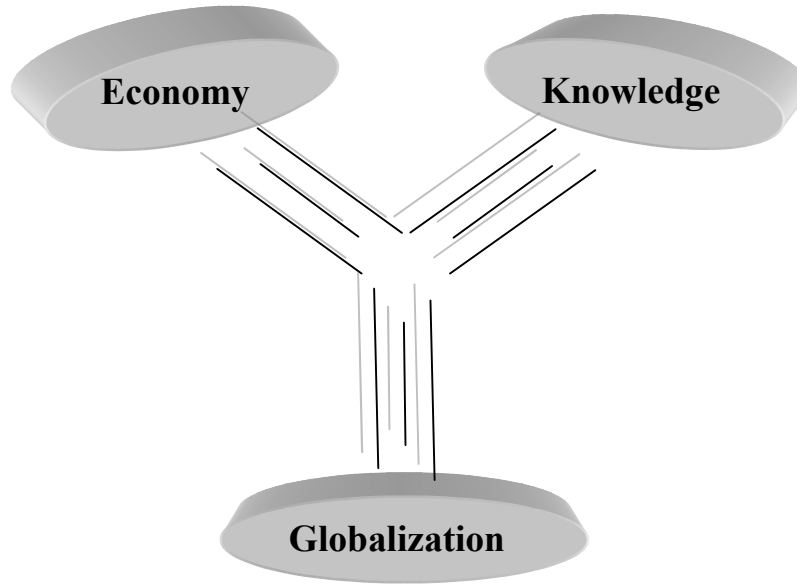


Figure 1.1 : Offshoots of Globalization

As it has been already acknowledged earlier (Mok, 2006), the definition of globalization includes the economic and human capital (researchers, scholars, etc.) are its hard currency. Scholte (1999, p.14) identifies the concept of globalization as follows: “Globalization refers to processes whereby social relations acquire relatively distanceless and borderless qualities, so that human lives are increasingly played out in the world as a single place.” (Cited in Al-Rodhan & Stoodmann, 2006, p.13).

We have judged essential to provide yet another definition of this seemingly evasive concept. Nguyen (n.d.p.1) states that globalization is a complicated process which has positive effects on many sides of socio-economic life. Nguyen accentuates the positive effects of globalization on society. True enough, globalization has affected people’s lives through the provision of technologies at lower prices; still it has problems of its own in that small nations’ cultures and economies are directly hit. Globalization is therefore the realization of the fittest shell survive.

1.2 The Impact of Globalization on Higher Education

Globalization has necessitated rearrangements in higher education policies in order to be suitable for the very many demands of the 21st c., which is commonly referred to as the information age. Hoadjli (cited in Daghbouche, 2010, p.147) pointed out that “Globalization in higher education indicates that the different changes rely on the development of new forms of independencies (sic) between universities, actors, and countries”.

As a byproduct of globalization in higher education, a host of policies and terms came to use such as internationalization of higher education, cross-border education, and mobility of staff and students.

The impact of globalization on higher education appears to gain momentum. Spring (2009, cited in Daghbouche, *op.cit.*) lists ten key points in a globalized education:

- a. The adoption of nations of similar educational practices, including curricula, school organization, and pedagogies.
- b. Global discourses that are influencing local and national educational policymakers, school administrators, and teachers.
- c. Intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations that influence national, local educational practices.
- d. Global networks and flow of ideas and practices.
- e. Multinational corporations that market educational products, such as tests, curricula and school materials.
- f. Global marketing of higher education and educational services.
- g. Global information technology, e-learning and communications.

- h. The effect of the world migration of peoples on national and local school policies and practices regarding multiculturalism.
- i. The current effect of English as the global language of commerce on local school curricula and cultures.
- j. Global models of religious and indigenous education.

The innovation of the Licence, Master, Doctorat (LMD) emerged as a Western European higher education reform as a response to the challenges of globalization. Fegan (2009 cited in Abdellatif- Mami, 2010, p.55) argues “Globalization presents many challenges and opportunities for higher education systems and institutions around the world”. The LMD system is therefore dictated by the international geopolitics, economics, and cultural interdependence of the world nations.

The history of the LMD system goes back to 18th and 19th June 1999. On that date, 29 European ministers of education convened in the Italian city of Bologna with the aim of creating a shared vision of the European HE. The choice of Bologna was a first choice because it was the oldest European university; it was built around 1088. Moreover, the *Università di Bologna* has a long tradition in teaching ideas. On score of that, it had chosen as a motto “Alma mater studiorum”, which means the ‘nourishing mother of all studies’. It was the birth place of the European Renaissance and Enlightenment.

The *Bologna Process*, which drew the road map for the creation of a common European Higher Education System (EHES), has set four major objectives in order to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA):

- a. It is easy to move from one country to the other (within EHEA) for the purpose of further study or employment.

- b. The attractiveness of European higher education is increased so many people from non-European countries also come to study and/or work in Europe.
- c. The EHEA provides Europe with broad high quality and advanced knowledge base and ensure the further development of Europe as a stable peaceful and tolerant community benefiting from a cutting edge European Research Area.
- d. There will be also a greater convergence between Europe higher education as it adopts the American system.

1.3 The LMD System in Algeria

The Algerian educational system has lived many reforms at all of its levels, especially the higher education with the implementation of the new LMD system. As it has been previously mentioned, the authors of *Aims of the LMD System* (2010, p.1) pointed out that the emergence of this system goes back to the “Sorbonne- Bologna Process” that currently involves 45 European countries. Again, this new system which concerns the European higher education in the first place draws its name LMD or BMD (Licence- Master- Doctorat or Bachelor’s- Master’s- Doctorate in English) from France in which this new organizational framework for university courses is adopted in all of its universities and is currently implemented in all European countries.

In 2003, it was the turn of Algeria along with the other two Maghreb countries Morocco and Tunisia to launch new reforms with the view of coping with the European higher education innovations. Abdellatif-Mami (2010, p.54) states “Increased student and faculty mobility offers new and exciting opportunities for international academic collaboration and cultural exchange”. Besides, the LMD system appears to provide Algerian academics a chance to integrate in the global village through the

internationalization of higher education after a considerable number of years of mediocrity. Abdellatif-Mami (*ibid.*) concurs:

Very often, in Algeria, skill requirement outstrip the capacities of the educational system of higher education. However, the LMD reform seems to encourage the higher education sector to orient its production to the requirements of the global market through cross-border education.

Hence, the LMD incorporation in the Algerian educational system represents a unique opportunity to staff and students communities to be an integral part of the new world order, globalization. Thus, the Algerian version of the LMD reform was dictated by the demands of globalization, rather than a choice and a fad.

1.4 English in the Globalized Era

On the one hand, the interest in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has grown constantly over the last decade. The latter has a direct relation with “Globalization” that makes of the whole world “a small village” in which people need to communicate and interact using a common medium that is the international language “English”. It is interesting to mention that most of the academic output is written and delivered in English. On the other hand, the use of English is clearly at the crux of a globalized world. And therefore, it has its own requirements, namely, a quality teaching staff.

As for our Department of Language Arts and Foreign Languages¹, like other departments across the country, the LMD scheme has attracted the attention of significant number of students over the years from 2004 (the year of its founding) till the present day. This explained in terms of two main reasons:

¹We are referring to the Department of Language Arts and Foreign Languages at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra.

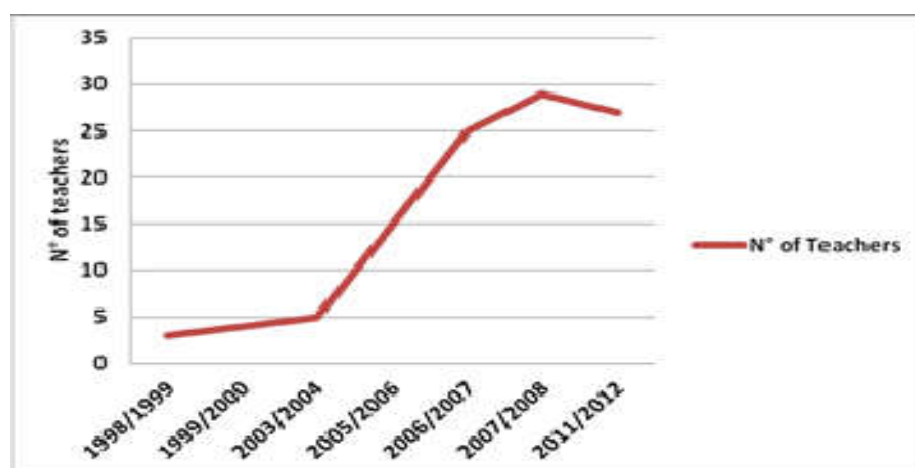
- (a) The department provides nearby facilities to study English, and
- (b) The LMD provides an opportunity for the students' community to move from under-graduation to post-graduation with great ease, a policy which was not inherent in the old system.

Unfortunately, it still suffers from a great lack of full-time teachers. As it is shown in the graph below, the English branch at MKU-Biskra witnesses a remarkable shortage of teaching staff as compared to the number of students which constantly increases.

School year	1998/1999	1999/2000	2003/2004	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2011/2012
N° of Teachers	3	4	5	15	25	29	27

Table 1.1: Teachers' Population Growth

We have judged essential to represent graphically the growth of teachers' population of the English Branch with the view of establishing a pattern that would help to clarify the increase in the hiring of the teachers. At first sight, the graph decreases noticeably in the academic year 2005/2006; it increases in the following year (namely, 2007/2008) only to decrease again in 2011/2012.



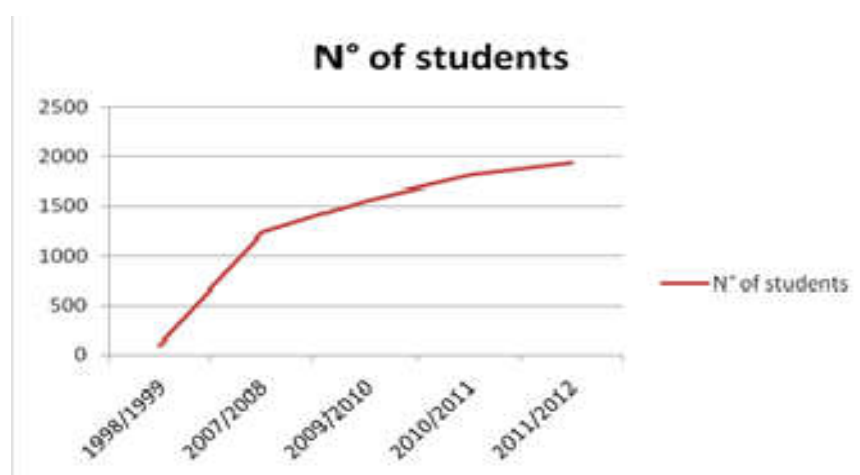
Graph 1.1: Teachers' Population Growth

The increase of the teachers mirrors the subsequent overgrowth of the students' population. It should be noted, however, that students' population is regulated by the administration of the university, and the teaching staff and the head of the English Branch are obliged to cope with the increasing number of students. As shown below, the remarkable increase in students' population starts from 2007/2008.

School year	1998/1999	2007/2008	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012
N° of students	96	1222	1554	1811	1933

Table 1.2: Students' Population Growth

The increase in students' population (Graph 2) is due to the fact that: both the old system and the LMD classes coexisted until 2012.



Graph 1.2: Students' Population Growth

The graph attests that there is a constant increase in the number of students and that is due to the increase in the number of the new *Bachelier*.²

We are interested exclusively in the population of the academic year 2011- 2012 in the Department of Language Arts and Foreign Languages, and more specifically the English Branch, at MKU- Biskra which comprises a total number of 1933 students of different Levels: first year licence, second year licence, third year licence, first year

²The term bachelier is the common term for students who have succeeded in the Baccalaureate examination; and the Bac is a standardized test in Algeria.

master, second year master, and fourth year classic (L1, L2, L3, M1, M2, 4th CL). This high figure comes to be taught by only 27 full-time teachers including the head of the Department, in addition to 35 part-time teachers in charge of the different courses devoted to each level. This population is composed of 1454 female students and 479 male students, 15 female full-time teachers, and 12 male full-time teachers; the division of this population appears in details in table 3.

Level	Students		Teachers				
	Gender		Gender		Degree		
	M	F	M	F	Dr	MA	L
L1	174	486	12	15		✓	
L2	125	367				✓	
L3	83	162				✓	
4 th CL	42	156				✓	
M1	34	185				✓	
M2	21	96				✓	

Table 1.3: Features of Teaching Staff and Students

The implementation of the LMD system inherently has engendered several changes at the level of the number of courses, the amount of time allotted to courses, as well as the evaluation procedures. For instance, the Linguistics module is allotted 90 minutes weekly in which students, due to the shortage of classrooms need to put up with a large number of classmates in lecture rooms. Despite some shy efforts to equip those sites with microphones and data/ slide projectors, most of them are still devoid of media to help teachers convey efficiently their tutorials for second and third year undergraduate students. However, first year students still attend Linguistics Course in classrooms.

Moreover, the LMD comes with different aims and points of interest as compared to the previous system. In broad terms, it aims at encouraging and promoting students' mobility and improving the transparency of qualifications on the job market. In addition, Pacenka (2008) asserts "Student mobility has remained one of the main action lines of the Bologna Process. Mobility in a broad sense has a high value for the European society of

knowledge”. The authors of *Aims of the LMD System* concurred that “To realize these goals, three strategies are used: organizing study around three levels, by defining programmers of study, and by using a credit system (ECTS) or European Credit Transfer System to recognize skills and knowledge”. In different terms, the LMD system requires that teachers should adopt new strategies in class which are, ideally, different from those used in the old system.

Interestingly, the LMD system provides staff and students a new approach to modules, units, degrees, and coefficients. As far as the units are concerned, they are organized in: Unités Fondamentales, Unités Découvertes, Unités de Méthodologie, and Unités Transversales. Besides, it furnishes a new perspective as for the modules (new ones are introduced and old ones are discarded). As a final note, each module has a specific coefficient in addition to different percentages to the tutorial and related TDs (Travaux Dirigés).

Each LMD degree is based on several semesters; each semester being validated for 30 Credit points according to the authors of *LMD System* (2010). University of Limoges (2008, p.2) specifies the mechanisms of the LMD system; it claims that the system is made up of compulsory and optional Unités d’ Enseignement (UES), each UE has a define value in European credits in proportion to the work (Classes supervised work, Practical work experience, Project Course work, etc.) which the student must provide in order to obtain his/her UE. In sum, students need to achieve 60 credits to pass to the next level. The following illustration (Fig.2) is adopted from Combarous & Lebouché “The LMD System” (n.d, p. 1).

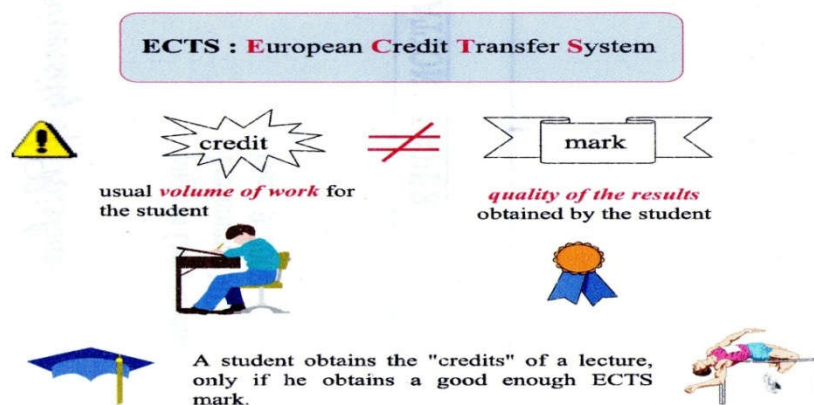


Figure 1.2 : European Credit Transfer System (adopted from Combarous & Lebouché “The LMD System” (n. d, p. 1)

At the heart of the distribution of the modules in the LMD system is the principle of units and credits. Units, on the one hand, refer to the time allotted to modules, number of courses, and the coefficients. The credit, on the other hand, reflects the marks of the tutorials and TDs, the mean of the marks- calculated through percentages- and 30 credits per semester are required as passing mark. Table 4 elicits the teaching units, the courses; the time allotted, the coefficients, the credit points per course, and per teaching unit.

Teaching Units	Courses	Time allotted	Coefficient	Credit points/Course	Credit points/ Teaching units
Fundamental Teaching Unit	Written Expression	3 hours	3	4	20
	Oral Expression	3 hours	3	4	
	Grammar	3 hours	2	4	
	Linguistics	1h30	2	2	
	Phonetics	1h30	2	2	
	Culture of the Language	1h30	1	2	
	Literary Texts	1h30	1	2	
Discovering Teaching Unit	ESP	3 hours	1	4	04
Methodology Teaching Unit	Research Methodology	3 hours	1	4	04
Transversal Teaching Unit	Foreign Language	1h30	1	1	02
	Computing	1h30	1	1	

Table 1.4: Distribution of the LMD Courses/ Units (Canvas of MKU of Biskra)

As can be understood from the table above, one semester contains four units where the students are required to obtain 30 credits. It is noteworthy to mention that students who

cannot obtain at least one third in one of the semesters may repeat the year while those who satisfy this requirement may pass all the more having debts that need to be accommodated in the following year(s).

Unlike the old system, the LMD system is noted for the workload embodied in the increase in the time allotment to the modules, the number of tutorials, coefficients, and the TD marks. Table 5 below illustrates this specificity of the new system.

In the following section, we shall discuss the quantitative aspects of both systems in order to provide credibility and hard facts about the different categories of the curriculum. Table 5 opposes the LMD system to the old system as far as the courses, coefficient and time allotment are concerned.

LMD				Classical		
First Year Licence (L1)						
Courses	Credits	Time	Coefficient	Courses	Time	Coefficient
Written Expression	4	3h00	3	Written Expression	3h00	1
Oral Expression	4	3h00	3	Oral Expression	3h00	1
Grammar	4	3h00	2	Grammar	3h00	1
Linguistics	2	1h30	2	Linguistics	1h30	1
Literary Texts	2	1h30	1	Phonetics	1h30	1
Culture of the Language	2	1h30	1	General Culture	1h30	1
Phonetics	2	1h30	2	Arabic Literature	1h30	1
ESP	4	3h00	1			
Methodology	4	1h30	1			
Computing	1	1h30	1			
Foreign Language	1	1h30	1			

Table 1.5: Features of the Two Higher Education Systems (First year / MKU of Biskra)

Table 6 as well juxtaposes the LMD system to the old system in what concerns second year courses, time, and coefficient respectively.

LMD				Classical		
Second Year Licence (L2)						
Courses	Credits	Time	Coefficient	Courses	Time	Coefficient
Written Expression	4	3h00	3	Written Expression	3h00	1
Oral Expression	4	3h00	3	Oral Expression	3h00	1
Grammar	4	3h00	2	Grammar	3h00	1
Linguistics	2	1h30	2	Linguistics	1h30	1
Literature	2	1h30	1	Phonetics	1h30	1
General Culture	2	1h30	1	American Civilization	1h30	1
Phonetics	2	1h30	2	American Literature	1h30	1
ESP	4	3h00	1	British Civilization	1h30	1
Methodology	4	1h30	1	British Literature	1h30	1
Computing	1	1h30	1	Arabic Literature	1h30	1
Foreign Language	1	1h30	1			

Table 1.6: Features of the Two Higher Education Systems (Second year/ MKU of Biskra)

Table 7 comes to oppose the LMD system to the old system concerning the third year with reference to the same items previously mentioned in tables 5 and 6.

LMD				Classical		
Third Year Licence (L3)						
Courses	Credits	Time	Coefficient	Courses	Time	Coefficient
Written Expression	5	3h00	3	Written Expression	1h30	1
Oral Expression	5	3h00	3	Oral Expression	1h30	
Pragmatics	4	3h00	1	Psychology	1h30	1
Linguistics	4	1h30	2	Linguistics	1h30	1
Didactics	4	1h30	2	Phonetics	1h30	1
Language Acquisition	2	1h30	1	American Civilization	1h30	1
Methodology	2	1h30	1	American Literature	1h30	1
Foreign Language	2	3h00	1	British Civilization	1h30	1
Statistics	2	1h30	1	British Literature	1h30	1
				Arabic Literature	1h30	1

Table 1.7: Features of the Two Higher Education Systems (Third year/ MKU of Biskra)

Clearly, tables 5, 6, and 7 attest that the new system is more demanding as it targets to evaluate the students workload. The old system is simpler in structure, and it may seem paradoxical to claim that the LMD suffers from a terrible drawback, namely that is the confusion of goals.

1.5 The LMD and the Classical Systems

Since our focus in the present research is on first year classes particularly as teachers with experience in teaching in the Classical system as well as in the LMD, what we have noticed is the differences in the number of courses, time allotment, syllabi content, evaluation tools, and especially the students' workload which is the core of the new system.

1.5.1 Courses

The term course throughout the current research refers to the content of the modules. A priori, the LMD system puts a clear cut boundary between the theoretical input that students receive in tutorials and the actual practice of the input in question. This innovative approach to the acquisition of knowledge assists students to acquire the necessary 21st century ‘know how’. It should be kept in mind that the new system aims at bridging the gap between book knowledge and real life experiences.

As it has been previously mentioned in the present chapter, the new system singles out the different units of knowledge. The categorization runs from Unité Fondamentale, which targets to lead students to acquire basic knowledge without which students have a little chance to achieve successfully in their continuous examinations. The time allotted to the acquisition of the UF in comparison with the other units (i.e., 15 hours per week) which means that it is allotted 67.26% of the total teaching time (TTT). It should be noted that the UD receives 3 hours per week, which means 13.45% of the TTT. While the UM is allotted 1 hour and a half which refers to 6.66% of the TTT; the UT is attributed 1 hour and a half for the Computing course and 1 hour and a half for the second foreign language i.e., French. Hence, this unit receives 13.45% of the TTT (viz., 6.66% for each course).

Table 8, adopted from Combarous & Lebouché “The LMD System” (n.d, p.1), juxtaposes the different grading scales adopted in the Bologna Process. It should be noted from the very onset that university teachers have gone on using the traditional grading and marking scales: Algerian higher education staff preserve the out -of- twenty evaluation scales.

ECTS GRADING SCALE

ECTS mark	Percentage of successful students normally achieving the grade	Comment	Definition
A	10%	EXCELLENT	Outstanding performances with only minor errors
B	25%	VERY GOOD	Above the average standard but with some errors
C	30%	GOOD	Generally sound work with a number of notable errors
D	25%	SATISFACTORY	Fair but with significant shortcomings
E	10%	SUFFICIENT	Performance meets the minimum criteria
FX		FAIL	Considerable further work is required
F		FAIL	

Table 1.8: The Bologna Process Grading Scale

In the old system, all of the courses were taught in small groups whereas in the LMD system some courses are taught in small groups and the others in large sections (i.e., lectures) as shown in table 9.

First Year Classes	
Courses taught in S.G	Courses taught in L.S
Grammar Linguistics Oral Expression Written Expression Foreign language (<i>French</i>) Computing	Literary Texts Methodology Phonetics Culture of the language English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Table 1.9: The Distribution of Courses.

The LMD system focuses on delivering knowledge in small groups, which signifies that the tendency is promoting the students' personal involvement in managing and producing knowledge. This ideal is compromised in our case by three major challenges: shortage of teaching staff, lack of space, and the excessive number of students.

1.5.2 Time Allotment to Overall Courses

The researcher views that first year students' deficiencies in Linguistics may be the result of the number of the weekly study hours and the personal projects required in almost every module. First year classes of the old system had seven courses with 1H30 for each course except for some such asp. Grammar, Oral expression, and Written Expression in which are allotted 3 hours per week instead. Similarly, the LMD system counts eleven courses with 1H30 for practically every module except Grammar, Written Expression, Oral Expression, and ESP. This is shown in figure.2.

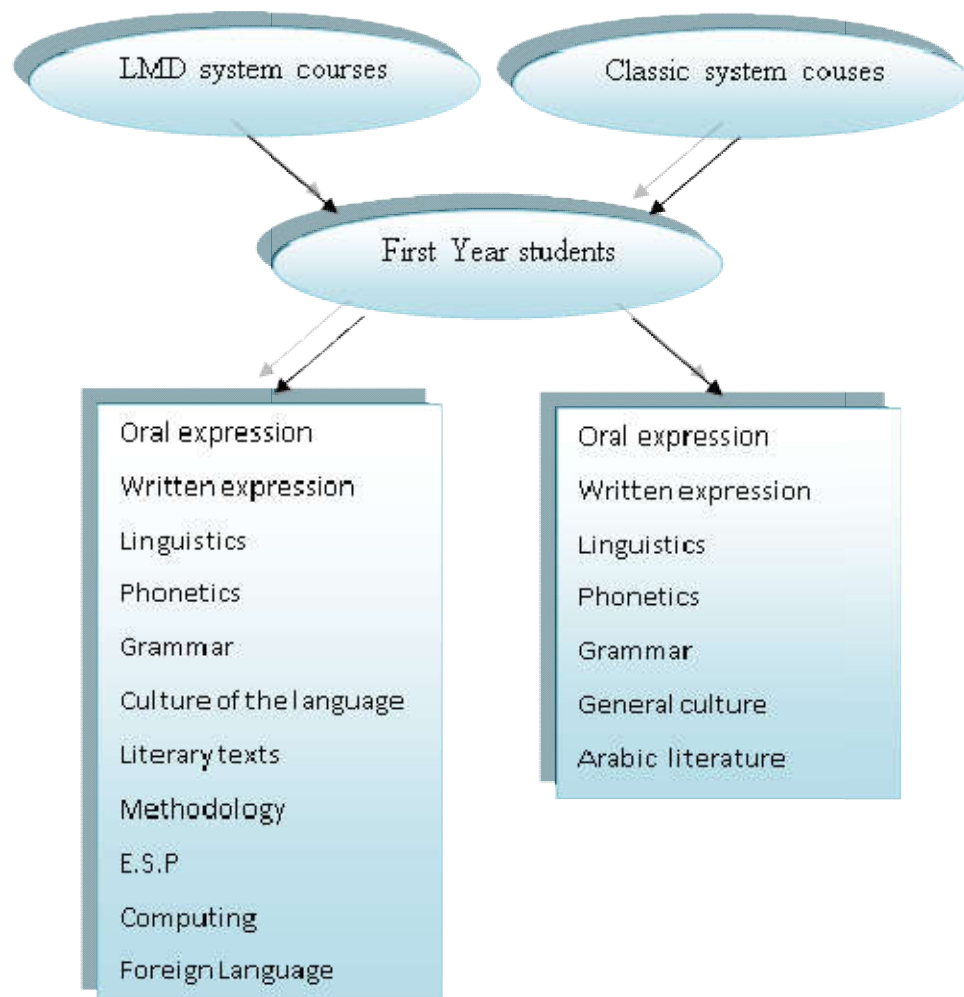


Figure 1.3: Divergences between the Classical System and the LMD System Courses

The LMD system provides more modules that cover a wide range of knowledge reflecting thus the 21st century higher education.

1.5.3 Syllabus Design in the LMD System

The new system allows teachers to elaborate programs³ that accommodate students' needs and interests. Furthermore, it gives much importance to students' personal work to help them to obtain their UE, hence, to succeed. The major difference between the two systems lies in the percentage devoted to the students' workload which has a great impact on their success or failure. Nevertheless, a great number of teachers still utilize obsolete methods and the old system traditionally related assessment in evaluating LMD students. It may seem paradoxical that teachers have not changed an iota their approach to assessing students according to the students' contributions.

The problem appears to have emerged from the early days of the implementation of the LMD system in that teachers were called upon individually to elaborate tentative syllabi that fit the new requirements. However, as the LMD confirmed its position in the Algerian higher education, it was incumbent upon the pedagogical groups to elaborate an up-to-date version of the previously proposed syllabi. Still, the current syllabi have not accommodated the expectations of some teachers and students. Grievances such as the syllabi suffer from serious pitfalls are oftentimes noticed.

Besides the outrage that the syllabi have caused, the assessment system seems leaving so much to be desired. Again, a significant number of teachers perceive the LMD system as an extension of the old system instead of a clear-cut breach with its evaluation system. This perplexing situation appears to cause serious problems to both teachers and students. It should be noted that in this section, assessment and evaluation are used interchangeably, which is not the case in the upcoming chapters.

³ The term program is the French equivalent of the Anglo-Saxon term curriculum and /or syllabus.

1.5.4 Evaluation Tools

By definition, evaluation refers to giving value to the test takers' work either during regular sessions or periodic examinations. On the one hand, if compared to the old system evaluation tools, we note that both systems share one feature: two official exams which take place over the academic year (namely, one semestrial examination in January, and another one in May, and a make-up examination in June for those who fail). On the other hand, the major difference lies in the fact that unlike the old system, the LMD focuses primarily on the formative evaluation. In other words, as mentioned previously the major pillar of the LMD system is the so called "TravauxDirigés" or "Practicum" that is known for students as "TD" mark. The LMD evaluation strategies are much more useful because of the importance given to the continuous "formative" evaluation which is compulsory in that new system; it is not absent in the old system but it could be assessed as *optional*.

Since the formative evaluation also known as the "TD" mark is given just once, which means that the students should be aware that the TD mark once given remains the same throughout the semesters even if the students sit the make-up examinations in June. Moreover, students should be made aware of their crucial roles including the students' attendance during all courses, submission of their homework on time, making enough efforts to understand their courses to obtain good TD marks.

As the LMD system gains ground, the evaluation system is regularly updated and outlined. Formative evaluation is clearly the core of pass and/or fail grade. This focus on the formative evaluation is recommended by Article 16 of Chapter III of the year 2006 on the *Evaluation et Contrôle des Connaissances*. The article in question regulates the rules governing studies in the LMD system:

L'évaluation d'une matière est appréciée semestriellement par la moyennep.

du contrôle continu (CC) (assiduité, participation, au moins deux interrogations écrites, stage, travail personnel doté d'un coefficient un (1). Il fait, autant que possible, l'objet d'une application prioritaire.

The assessment of the subject-matter is conducted every semester through the average of the continuous assessment (CA), namely, attendance, participation, at least two written quizzes, training, personal project whose coefficient is 1. The latter is prioritized whenever possible. (Author's translation).

In 2009, the decree number 137 Article 20, which regulates the process of evaluation, success, and orientation in the License and Master's phases, states that:

Art 20p. L'évaluation de l'étudiant porte, selon le parcours de formation, sur :

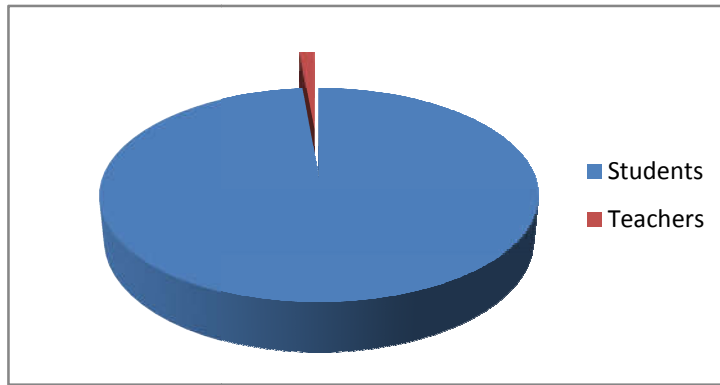
- _ Les enseignants,
- _ Les travaux pratiques,
- _ Les travaux dirigés,
- _ Les sorties sur le terrain,
- _ Les stages pratiques,
- _ Les séminaires,
- _ Le travail personnel.

- *Teachers (or staff),*
- *Practicum,*
- *Supervised (or monitored) experiments,*
- *Fieldwork trips,*
- *Practical training,*
- *Seminars (or workshops),*
- *Personal projects. (Author's translation)*

The same regulations are calqued in the decree 712 of the year 2011. Arguably, the decision makers have left ample room to practitioners (*viz.*, staff) to interpret the different nuances of meaning in the criteria mentioned above. It appears that some of these evaluation criteria are applicable to scientific branches and others to humanities and social sciences. Besides, the criterion “attendance” is implicitly understood in the decree 137 and 712 respectively.

Indeed, the present state of the Department of Language Arts and Foreign Languages in general and the “English Branch” in particular leads us to work against the LMD principles as far as the “formative assessment” is concerned. The latter refers mainly to the lack of full-time teachers and the huge number of students who access the department each year. This fact stands as an obstacle in our way to apply the LMD principles appropriately i.e., large groups + small number of teachers= makes more courses taught in big sections which render teachers unable to evaluate the students individually.

Graph 1.3 illustrates the difference in percentage between staff and students populations.



Graph 1.3: Staff and Students Populations

1.6 Identification of the Linguistics Course

One of the challenges of decision makers and syllabus designers in the Algerian tertiary level is the confusion of goals that entailed confusion of content, scope, and in the long run the nature of the degree. It appears that stakeholders do not address the crucial issue of teaching linguistics. As a matter of fact, linguistics is included in the curricula for a specific purpose that could be couched as follows: Linguistics is taught to make linguists out of students. Unfortunately, in the Algerian universities linguistics is taught clearly for another purpose: to acquaint with the relevant concepts, schools, and influential figures to help them learn general English. This failure to give linguistics its right due accounts for the shortage of Algerian linguists, which proves that this important module is not appropriately handled. It should be noted that Algeria is a rich ore as far as languages, dialects, accents, code switching, and language planning are concerned.

Although in this research linguistics is referred to as linguistics module and linguistics course, we have a rather different perception of these constructs. A module is understood as a series of lessons and/or tutorials that aim to introduce a discipline and its field of research. A course is much broader as it aims at developing the abilities and the skills to be a researcher rather than a mere student.

Noticeably, the Linguistics course makes the core of students' training in the Language Sciences Option which attracts most of our students. The latter is taught approximately at all levels namely graduate and post-graduate. This fact attests the importance of such a course in the students' curriculum. Unfortunately, such importance counters to a remarkable failure degree from the students' side. Indeed, linguistics, as the statistics indicate, stands as a major obstacle in front of the students' success.

We have judged essential to draw some illustrative tables (See appendices 1, 2, and 3) that aim to provide a panoramic perspective of the Linguistics syllabus. It should be mentioned that the Linguistics course is taught to students of different levels to attain certain objectives. The latter takes place in different sites using different teaching materials and including different items.

1.6.1 Teachers' Objectives

(i) Aims, Goals, and Objectives

In the field of applied linguistics, three terms namely aims, goals, and objectives are usually used in different ways from other disciplines. Aims refer to broad statements that target the achievement of the curriculum. Print (1993, p.22) defines aims as follows:

Broadly phrased statements of educational intent. They state what is hopefully achieved by the curriculum. They are long term in nature and may cover a time span of many years, even the entire school life of a child.

Differently stated, aims are positive statements of educational purposes. As for goals, they are more tangible than the previous ones. Print (*ibid.*) identifies goals as:

Specific, precisely worded statements of curriculum intent and are derived from aims. They are usually phrased in non-technical language; goals are directed towards student achievement by emphasizing content and skills.

In other words, goals may target to develop students' attitudes and awareness. According to Stern (1992) there are four types of goals: proficiency, cognitive, affective, and transfer. Finally, objectives are the physical realization of goals. Graves (1993, p.16) defines objectives as "the specific ways in which the goals will be achieved. The objectives are the various points that chart the course toward a destination". In sum, objectives target the content and activities students need to learn.

Nonetheless, very few teachers are aware of the technical nuances that these constructs are made of. For the purpose of this research, we requested teachers of linguistics to provide us with the syllabi that they have developed themselves. We noticed that they included the term objectives to mean all the three constructs interchangeably. For that particular purpose, we opted for the use of the term objectives instead of the other two constructs.

As far as the teachers' objectives are concerned, the common objectives teachers of linguistics plan to attain by the end of each year can be summarized as follows: as many as seven major objectives characterize the syllabus of linguistics for the first year. The latter includes broad definitions of the concept of language, the distinction between human language and animal communication system, the statement of the basic concepts of language (structure, use, and change), the explanation of the interdisciplinary nature of linguistics and finally the outlining of Saussurean dichotomies. As an educated criticism to the syllabus of first year classes (See appendix 1), we may reproach to the syllabus

designers the broad objectives and the non-scientific arrangement of the items, which creates knowledge gaps as far as students are concerned.

As for second year syllabus of linguistics (See appendix 2), the stakeholders included the following items from which we may deduce their objectives. It is clear that teachers tend to instruct their students of linguistics singularly on structuralism from its European and American perspectives. It should be noted however, that the second year syllabus is somewhat scrambled as previous knowledge is followed by new input, i.e., structuralism, and again followed by previous knowledge. Furthermore, the European and American structuralism come to be included in the same heading indiscriminately from the different origins, scope, and drive of both branches of structuralism. This unsystematic approach to second year linguistics syllabus design appears to compromise the orderly presentation of linguistic input which confuses an otherwise unsure of student community.

The third year syllabus of linguistics targets macro-linguistic approach to human language studies. In other terms, the teachers included branches of linguistics (namely psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics). The second major input concerns approaches to language teaching which indicates that teachers aim at discussing the didactics based knowledge in the linguistics course. Again, the syllabus designers returned to sociolinguistics when they proposed bilingualism then they went back to applied linguistics to study syllabus design. So, third year linguistics syllabus does not seem to be different from the other syllabi in that it is linear-cyclical in nature. Despite its merits, the linear-cyclical approach could be confusing if the input is not systematically arranged for students' cognitive accretion.

1.6.2. Teaching Facilities

The Linguistics course is taught in classrooms only for first year classes; it is taught in halls (*viz.* Amphitheatres) for the other classes (second ‘L2’ and third ‘L3’). The choice for the halls is dictated by the fact that they can contain large groups of students. The teaching of linguistics in classes would have posed tremendous pressure on the administration as far as the rooms and the time allotment are concerned. Hiring more teachers (i.e., full-time teachers) is yet another problem that compromises the teaching of linguistics in small groups. Hopefully with more readiness to hire new teachers (MKU of Biskra usually employs new teachers without reservation) and so it will be possible to cope with such a critical situation of our Branch.

1.6.3. Time Allotment

Although time is a luxury when the human capital and the setting are concerned, modules as important as Linguistics need to receive the adequate amount of time. Undoubtedly, the nature of the subject calls for sufficient time to provide both pillars of the teaching/learning process the opportunity to realize their goals (namely considerable achievements). Unfortunately, the time allotted for the Linguistics course at all levels (L1, L2, and L3) does not exceed 1h30 which is quite insufficient to fulfill the aforementioned objectives.

It should be noted that to master the foreign language from different aspects requires no less than 1500 hours, and thus, time allotment should be tailored to the importance of the module. The Linguistics course needs necessarily boosting up the time allotted to at least two sessions per week which amounts to 3h weekly which makes around 78 hours a year.

1.6.4. Syllabi Content

As a follow up to the previous section, to cover every item included in the syllabi content designed for each level, it seems hard for the teachers to transmit such amount of knowledge in no more than 36 hours along the whole academic year keeping in mind that it may be less if we take into consideration the days off of the different religious and national events. For each level, the syllabi content is divided into main and sub sections according to the decision makers (i.e., training team) who are the first responsible in charge of the elaboration of those syllabi. The team's decision about the division of the items is based on certain factors which can be summarized in the two following points:

- ✓ The length of each semester
- ✓ The students' level of understanding

1.6.5. Teaching Materials

As any other course, Linguistics is taught to EFL students with the help of different teaching aids. The latter includes the board which is used mainly to supply students with illustrative examples such as some drawings that help in clarifying ambiguous ideas as well as to write some unfamiliar terms to ensure that the students take the right spelling. Besides, and as previously stated, the number of the students and the lack of time lead the teachers most of the time to rely on handouts to be their main teaching material, hence they gain time and will be able to cover the maximum of the elements included in the course content.

Moreover, the use of video projector decidedly gains on the other materials although timidly; teachers are growing aware that the introduction of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) not only facilitate teaching and learning but also involve meaningfully and motivate the audience, namely students, to be responsive to an otherwise difficult module.

As for reference books, the main university and faculty libraries contain invaluable number of books written by authorities in Linguistics. For the purpose of this research, we have estimated the number of linguistics' reference books at 152 books. Despite the fact that these reference books are available, it seems that very few students venture to borrow and read. Apparently, the reason is that students are unable to overcome the difficult and oftentimes complex jargon and terminology employed in these books.

Note taking refers to students' activity in jotting down the gist of the lectures and tutorials in simple language chunks. We have observed during our experience as a teacher of different modules that students still struggle to master properly how to take notes. Another challenge that seems to bother students in making notes is that they are unable to expand notes and to rephrase in plain though formal academic English the notes they happen to copy from the board. It should be noted that most teachers rely on notes on the board to make their point.

Although pedagogical aids such as hand-outs, video projectors, and books are available, they are in most of cases hard to get access to. This compromises teachers' commitment to introduce ICTs and other aids to facilitate learning. It is customary to notice traditional methods being utilized in Algerian tertiary level classes.

1.7 Teaching of Linguistics: Contextual Probe

The upcoming section seeks to highlight some contextual issues from teachers of linguistics vantage point. The overall objective is to lay out teachers' attitudes toward and perceptions of the workplace constraints such as staff shortage, student influx, pedagogical aids, assessment tools, teachers' feedback, and pass-failure criteria.

1.7.1 Staff Shortage

It is fair to acknowledge that teachers of linguistics are markedly fewer in comparison with other teachers of other modules. Linguistics, by its very nature, frustrates the taking up of the module by teachers. The latter recognize that linguistics stands for students 'bête –noire'. Its syllabus is long and tiresome; it requires a good deal of preparation; it needs a lot of explaining, and very few students seem to be responsive. These conditions compromise teachers' willingness to teach linguistics.

The teachers of Linguistics prove to be a rare commodity since they represent a minority within a minority. As far as under graduation is concerned, the number of teachers of linguistics does not exceed five, three of whom teach first year classes and two teach the second and third year classes. This shortage of staff has eventually a negative impact on teaching and learning in general and the formative assessment (FA) in particular. As students pass from L1 to L2 and L3, teachers of linguistics are clearly shy to assess students according to FA criteria.

1.7.2 Student Influx

Student population outnumbered by far that of teachers of linguistics. As linguistics is compulsory, practically all students ought to attend the module. The great influx of students puts pressure on teachers in terms of voice power –teachers need to speak at the top of their voices to be heard in the back of the halls. They also need to make hand-outs to accommodate the great numbers of students.

Discipline-related challenges appear to impose themselves on teachers, which accentuates their workplace stress. It should be acknowledged that this challenge extends to classroom-related tutorials: teachers of linguistics face large classes whose students do not respect the sitting arrangements.

1.7.3 Assessment Tools

Examination pen and paper tools remain the major tools in the assessment of students. Most teachers of linguistics attempt to diversify the tasks and provide fair scoring schemes, and nonetheless, students' marks attest to be low. This accounts for the students' inability to handle linguistics input. Although there is teachers use mock tests to enable students to cope with the official examination, practically most of the students fail to properly submit an answer sheet that reflects deep understanding of the tests' subject matter, which accentuates both teachers and students frustration.

1.7.4 Feedback

Most teachers of linguistics do not provide students with written feedback. The answer model is rarely prepared and printed. Teachers explain orally the correct answers and at best students copy down. One of the students repeated grievances is that they do not receive adequate feedback on the way they tried to handle the subject matter of the examination paper. Often, they need to accept without complaining the marks attributed to them and in most cases they are low. Thus, students' expectations of being able to respond properly in linguistics' examination papers attest to be deplorable even before sitting the examination.

1.7.5 Pass-Failure Criteria

Pass-failure criteria rely heavily on in-class examination paper marks. If students obtain the average and more, they are likely to pass. If they fail to score high in the in-class examination, failure is definitely the inevitable destiny. With the LMD system and its focus on the students' workload, the situation seems to improve though slowly. Algerian universities do not appear to have changed an iota as far as the priority of the examination paper mark on the TD mark. As a final analysis, priority needs to be given to TD mark because once given it remains the same throughout the year, whereas the in-

class examination score may be improved in make-up examinations. Students, therefore, must be made aware of the seriousness in their attempt to get better marks in their TD and class contribution.

As a case in point, students who have passed to the next level have debts in Linguistics which means that they need to obtain better marks in the other modules of UF (Unité Fondamentale). Statistics demonstrate that most students undergo at a certain point of their studies the uncomfortable situation of setting their debts. Table 10 recapitulates students who passed to the next level all the more having debts in Linguistics.

	Semester one (S1+S3)	Semester two (S2+S4)
L1	87.67%	80.82%
L2	44.44%	55.55%
L3	Not available	/

Table 1.10: Students Passing to the Next Level with Debts in Linguistics (2011/2012)

The fluctuation in percentages demonstrates that on the one hand the percentage of students who passed to L2 with debts in Linguistics appears to drop significantly from S1 to S2, and on the other hand, their number seems to pop up as far students who pass to L3 with debts in Linguistics from S3 to S4.

The statistics collected for the purpose of this study disclose that the failure rate in linguistics is clearly significant in comparison with the other modules. The students' population of the year 2011/2012 counts 12 pedagogical groups composed of 683 enrolled students among which 7 groups (*viz.* 393 students representing our sample). In the S1, 38.36% of the students failed to obtain the average mark (i.e., 10/20 in the LMD system); in S2 the figure drops down to 28.98%. This 10% drop may explain the nature of the content of the syllabus and students' acquaintance with the module and its

requirements. Moreover, S2 represents an opportunity for revision and feedback of the previously dealt with Linguistics' syllabus.

Conclusion

In the foregoing chapter, we have attempted to provide a comprehensive overview on the EFL context in MKU-Biskra, though by no means exhaustive. Our discussion has been on the impact of globalization on higher education worldwide in general and in Algeria in particular. Besides, the structure and objectives of the new reforms have been outlined with the view of providing a thorough understanding of the focus and drive of the LMD system. Moreover, we described the working conditions in the English Branch of MKU of Biskra and uncovered the various constraints (professional, pedagogical, didactic, and managerial) that the teachers of Linguistics face. More than any other module, linguistics needs to be rethought in terms of class size, staff, time allotted, pedagogical aids, and assessment models.

**CHAPTER TWO:
RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY IN
EDUCATIONAL
MEASUREMENTS**

Chapter Two: Reliability and Validity in Educational Measurements

Introduction

The current chapter investigates an overriding, across-disciplines issue. It is widely recognized that educational measurement needs to be constructed not only with the view of testing learners' acquired knowledge but also with the view of accommodating three main pre-requisites: reliability, validity, and practicality. Therefore, educational measurements should measure what they purport to measure, reflect practically the same scores after a span of time and with different scorers, and finally they should not be technically and financially burdensome. Thus, the present chapter examines the similarities and differences between these different concepts from the applied linguistics perspective. Besides, it focuses on testing and its related techniques, authenticity, wash back, design, formats, typology of tasks, marking, and feedback.

2.1. Reliability

This section provides a survey of the first most important concept in the field of foreign language assessment.

2.1.1 Definitions of Reliability

Reliability has attested to be a construct of overriding importance in the field of Applied Linguistics. As far as educational measurements are concerned, reliability is decisive in informing whether or not the obtained data on students' cognitive achievement can be considered trustable and dependable.

One common denominator in dictionary definition of reliability is the construct 'trust'. In other terms, trust defines whether or not a person or a test could be labeled 'reliable'.

Longman definition of reliability states that the latter signifies that someone or something that is reliable can be *trusted* or depended on. (Emphasis added).

Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary puts forward the following definition of reliability; it is consistently good in quality or performance, and so deserving *trust* ... (Emphasis added).

As can be noted, for a test to be reliable it needs to gain stakeholders' trust. The latter adds to testees and scorers self-confidence and confidence in the test, its content and its scoring scheme, which ideally will contribute in students' performance and achievements.

Test developers' main concern is to construct ideally an error-free test in order to maximize the dependability of the test in question. Bachman (2011, p.160) attests:

A fundamental concern in the development and use of language test is to identify potential sources of error in a given measure of communicative language ability and to minimize the effects of these factors on that measure. We must be concerned about errors of measurement, or unreliability, because we know that test performance is affected by factors other than the abilities we want to measure.

Test reliability is, therefore, the first pre-requisite in the development of useful and beneficial tests. Although different scholars put forward different definitions of this construct, most of them include two variables: consistency and dependability of test scores. Brown (2007, p. 447) points out that "A reliable test is consistent and

dependable”. Differently stated, test reliability refers to the consistency and stability of test scores on different occasions.

Similarly, Schmitt (2000, p. 166) couches the definition of reliability in the following terms: “Reliability concerns the stability or consistency of a test’s behavior over time”. In different terms, the same test-taker would ideally get the same results in the same test if taken in a different date. McMillan (2007, p. 69) telescopes in his definition of reliability the three variables: consistency, stability, and dependability; in that he states “Reliability is concerned with the consistency, stability, and dependability of the scores”. In sum, reliability is score-oriented in that it is not concerned with the other three variables: test-takers, test scores, and test- scheduling.

A test is said to be reliable when and if the scores do not soar or plunge for no cogent reason. In his authoritative book *Language testing: The Construction and Use of Foreign Language Tests* (3 ed.), Lado (1964, p. 330) corroborates the above views and says:

Reliability has to do with the stability of scores for the same individuals. If the scores of students are stable the test is reliable; if the scores tend to fluctuate for no apparent reason, the test is unreliable.

Interestingly, test reliability is intimately intertwined with the length of the test; the longer is the test, the more it tends to be reliable. Orlich *et al.* (2009, p.322) advise stakeholders to remember the golden rule to achieve reliability “One rule for you to remember is that reliability increases with test length”. Overall, to achieve test reliability,

test developers need to construct a test paper that is varied and comprehensive to give an opportunity or a second chance to different learning styles to be accommodated.

2.1.2 Sources of Unreliability

Different psychological, social, and pedagogical factors may chip at the reliability of tests. According to Lado (1964, p. 330-1), the sources of unreliability count time and circumstances-related factors, test inherent flaws- related factors, and examiner-related fluctuation factors. He claims: “The skill we are testing may normally vary with time and with various circumstances that may be considered normal for the performance of the skill”. In other words, the test reliability may be influenced negatively by “irrelevant circumstances and time change” (*ibid.*). Furthermore, it is impossible to attain identical results from the same test. In this vein, Lado (*ibid.*) claims “No test or measure ever yields in practice absolutely identical results except in abstract mathematical operations”. Finally, some types of free production, subjectivity of the scorer can exert real influence on the scorers’ decision. Lado (*ibid.*) observes “In various production, tests and essay or long response tests, scorer fluctuation can be a major factor of the unreliability of a test”. Overall, reliability can be directly affected by different factors which eventually detract the real worth and merit of the good test.

From another perspective, Derradji (2010, p. 74) stipulates three factors which denigrate the worth and value of good tests: (1) internal consistency, (2) consistency of test administration and marking, and finally (3) factors affecting individual test takers’ performance.

Sources of Unreliability	Illustrations
Internal Consistency	It is related to the relevancy of subtests which are supposed to be internally consistent in that they measure the same attribute: length of the questions, types of the questions , and difficulty of the test, etc.
Consistency of Test Administration and Marking	It is related to the situation wherein the test takes place and different scorers' markings. Such factors are related to the differences in scores ' <i>L'écart</i> ' which is estimated at 4 out of 20. Also, other such aspects that cause unreliability include (in) adequacy of premises and equipment used as well as time allotted to test takers.
Individual Factors	These are related to the individual test takers' psychological, cultural, social, and educational backgrounds. Some such factors are: anxiety, fatigue, cognitive styles, previous experience, and degree of familiarity with the test.

Table 2.11: Sources of unreliability (Derradji, 2010, p.74)

The test reliability is of overriding importance as it defines whether the scores obtained are stable and consistent, and therefore they could be trusted and depended upon. It has been noticed out of ignorance or inconsiderateness, some teachers and test developers do not take seriously the previously stated factors that lead to unreliable tests.

When the results of tests can be trusted, then tests have achieved reliability. Basanta (1995, p.56) explains “Tests are reliable if their results are consistent, i.e., if administered to the students on another occasion, they would obtain the same results”. Other factors, however, intervene not to obtain the same results such as forgetfulness. It is noteworthy to mention that reliability increases or decreases according to four factors as illustrated in table 12:

Environment	Cold, heat; arrangement sitting, wall color, etc.
Pedagogy	Type of tasks, layout, clarity of instructions, etc.
Biology	Hunger, thirst, lack of sleep, etc.
Psychology	Anxiety, anger, fear, happiness, etc.

Table 2.12: Reliability-affecting Factors

Similarly, Bachman (*op.cit.* 165) identifies four factors that affect *language* test scores (Emphasis added): Communicative language ability, Random factors, Personal attributes, and Test method facets as shown in Figure 4.

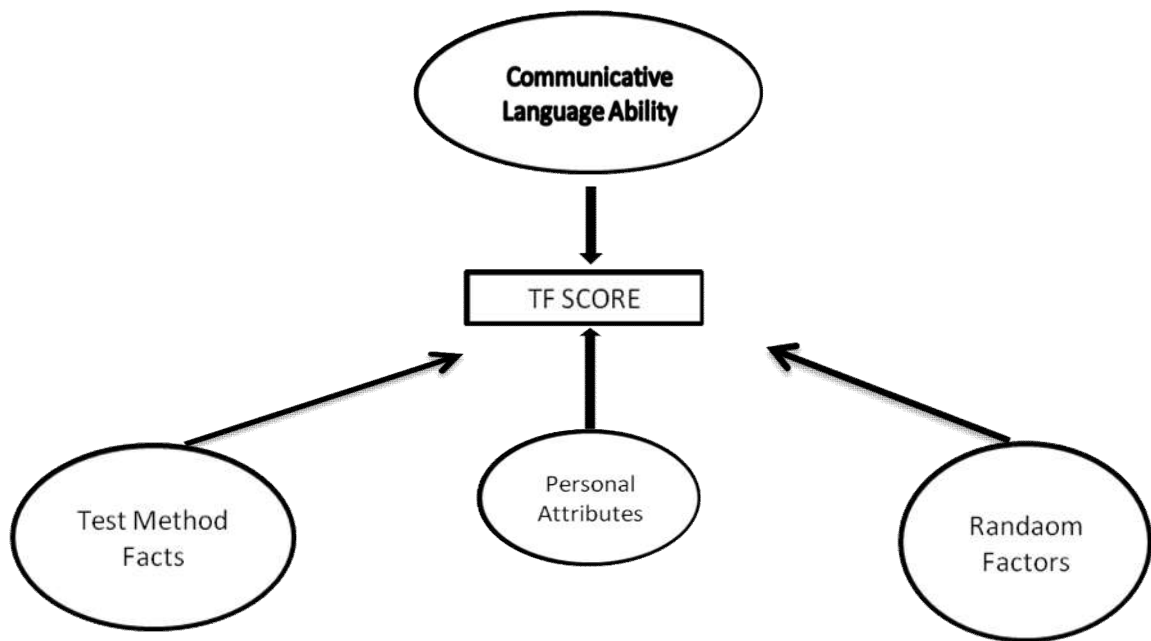


Figure 2.4: Factors Affecting Language Test Scores

2.1.3 Typology of Reliability

Researchers on language tests have identified four types of reliability: Inter-rater reliability, Parallel-forms reliability, Test-retest reliability, and internal consistency. All these forms of reliability have a direct impact on the stability, consistency, and

dependability of tests; this is more particularly so in high stakes tests such as the standardized tests. The premise behind the current section is to highlight the influence of the aforementioned factors on the degree of reliability of tests in general, and those of Linguistics in MKU-Biskra in particular.

2.1.3.1 Inter-rater Reliability

Inter-rater reliability refers to the collection of stable and consistent scores of the same test by the same test takers and different scorers. In other words, the scores attributed by two or more scorers should not demonstrate a large interval. In the Algerian standardized tests, the interval should not exceed 4 marks out of 20 between two scorers, otherwise, a third scorer is asked to re-correct the same test in order to decide for the right score. A difference in scoring is mainly due to fatigue, boredom, emotional distress, biological pressure for example lack of sleep, and finally professional experience (*viz.*, novice vs. senior teachers).

2.1.3.2 Test-retest Reliability

Test-retest reliability indicates the consistency and stability of the scores which means that the scores of a test should be consistent and stable even though the scheduling of the test is different whereas the scorers, the test-takers, and the test are the same. Farhady (2012, p. 40) claims:

If we want to see whether a test produces consistent results, the simplest way is to administer it to a group of test takers twice. The first administration is called “test” and the second administration is referred to as “retest”. The correlation between the two sets of scores obtained from testing and retesting would determine the reliability.

The premise is to verify whether or not different scheduling may have a direct impact on scorers' decisions and test-takers' achievements.

2.1.3.3 Parallel-forms Reliability

This parallel-forms reliability refers to different people sitting at the same time a different kind of tests. It is worth to mention that the scorers are not taken into consideration, which means that the same or different scorers can score the proposed tests. According to Farhady (*ibid.*), "Two parallel forms of a single test are given to one group of examinees. The correlation between the scores obtained from the two tests is computed to be the reliability of the scores". The focus, therefore, is on the nature of the people and the scheduling of the tests which may be the enduring influencing factors on the test-takers achievements.

2.1.3.4 Internal Consistency

According to Frank-Stromborg & Olsen (2004, p.7) "Internal consistency is concerned with the degree to which a set of items designed to measure the concept are interrelated". Moreover, internal consistency is also known as Split-half. Gravetter & Forzano (2009, p.459) define split-half in the following terms "All the different items of the test measure the same variable and, therefore, the measurement obtained from each individual item should be related to every other item". In other words, the components of the same test should be complementary.

Moreover, Bachman (2005, p. 126) notes three important types of reliability: testee-, tester-, and test -related reliability. While testee- reliability aims at obtaining of the same results by the same students at other occasions even though the circumstances are different, tester- related reliability aims at attributing the same scores to the same test-

takers answers, and the test- related reliability means the consistency in results if taken at other times.

2.1.4 Reliability-Validity: Complementary Duality

It is widely accepted that the constructs of reliability and validity are symbiotic, which accentuates their inter-dependability. A good or a useful test to put it in Bachman's words; is the one which accommodates both demands. On the other hand, Weir (2005, p.7) claims that "In these early days of language testing, reliability and validity were often seen as dichotomous concepts."

2.2. Validity

The second most important concept in language assessment and evaluation is termed 'validity'. Language test validity is concerned with testing what it purports to test. In other terms, a grammar test necessarily measures grammar items and not any other item such as writing or spelling. This section, therefore, explores in depth this construct from different perspectives.

2.2.1 Definitions

It appears that validity is concerned with truth and sensibility, and on the score of that what is being evaluated could be accepted seriously and used. English dictionaries seem to emphasize the sensibility and acceptability in order to judge whether or not something is valid. As for Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, validity is 'based on what is *true* or *sensible*, and so should be accepted or treated in a *serious* way' (Emphasis added).

In the same breath, Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary succinctly defines validity as 'well-based or *logical*, and legally *usable* or *acceptable*' (Emphasis added).

A priori, something which is valid is something which is well-grounded. In other words, validity is objective in nature and never subjective; it is rationally oriented rather than emotionally directed. When a test is therefore scored in a subjective way that means that the test is no more valid. Or when a test does not purport to test what it should test, then, this test in question has lost its validity.

Alderson *et al.* (2005, p.170) term this construct ‘*validation*’, and consider it “*The most important question of all in language testing*”. They state that “This issue should be of central concern to all testers, since if a test is not valid for the purpose for which it was designed, then the scores do not mean what they are believed to mean”. Quoting Henning (1987), they reproduce the definition of validity and say:

Validity in general refers to the appropriateness of a given test or any of its component parts as a measure of what it is purported to measure. A test is said to be valid to the extent that it measures what it is supposed to measure. It follows that the term **valid** when used to describe a test should usually be accompanied by the preposition **for**. Any test then may be valid for some purposes, but not for others.
(Emphasis in original)

Therefore, a test needs to gauge one specific language content but not others to be termed valid. McMillan (2007, p.64) identifies validity as the concept which “... is concerned with the soundness, trustworthiness, or legitimacy of the claims or inferences that are made on the basis of obtained scores”. Brown (2007, p. 448) illustrates the notion of validity with a reading test and says: “A valid test of reading ability is one that actually measures reading ability and not, say, 20/20 vision previous knowledge of a subject, or some other variable of questionable relevance”. Similarly, Orlich *et al.* (2009, p. 322),

claim that validity “refers to degree to which a test measures what it is intended to measure”. In addition, “validity is relative to purpose- a test may be valid for one purpose but not to another” (*ibid.*). In sum, traditional view of validity takes one criterion to decide on the validity of a test: to measure what a test purports to measure.

Recent definitions of validity appear to be more complex and more comprehensive as they include test takers behavior and test scorers’ interpretation of the test results. Along those lines, Bachman (2011, p. 237) claims “Validation must consider, in addition to test content and method, how test takers perform”. Later, he (*ibid.*238) explains:

In test validation, we are not examining the validity of the test content or of even the test scores themselves but rather the validity of the way we interpret or use the information gathered through the testing procedure.

Validity (or validation according to Alderson *et al.* and Bachman) is interested also in the method of interpreting and/or using the results obtained through tests.

2.2.2 Typology of Validity

Assessment specialists have identified three types of validity: face validity, content validity, and construct validity. The first construct namely, face validity is externally measuring what it is supposed to measure; the second construct, content validity gages the input and does only that; and finally construct validity adheres to a particular theory and measures the achievement thereof. In the following section, we attempt to provide a comprehensive approach to the understanding of the three concepts

with the view of spelling out the intrinsic nature of validity or validation (interchangeable throughout).

It is noteworthy to acknowledge the scholars' approach to the typology of validation in somewhat perplexing manner. Brown (2007, p. 449) identifies three overlapping concepts (*viz.*, content, face, and construct). The latter are perceived as two different concepts, whereas Gareis & Grant (2008) claim that construct and face validity are interchangeable concepts. In this investigation, however, we adhere to Brown's distinction between the two concepts for the extensive reading of the literature has given us convictions that face and construct validity are two distinct entities though close in perspective.

2.2.3 Test Validity

In their book *Teacher-Made Assessments: How to Connect Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Learning*, Gareis & Grant (2008) look at test validity as jewelers look at a diamond. Jewelers consider the four (04) Cs: Cut, Color, Carat Weight, and Clarity. In like manner (more or less), educationalists and test designers look at validity as being four- Cs- dimensional. Construct, Content, Criterion and Consequential Validity. Table 13 illustrates the four concepts according to Gareis & Grant.

Type of Validity	Definitions	Questions
<i>Construct (or Face) Validity</i>	Construct related evidence of validity is concerned with how accurately an assessment aligns with theoretical framework of interded learning outcomes, standards, or objectives of the instructional unit	Can we infer students' knowledge and/ or or skills in this subject area from the assessment? (Are you aiming at the right target?)
<i>Content (or Sampling) Validity</i>	Content-related evidence of validity is concerned with ensuring that an assessment adequately samples the standards or objectives of an instructional unit and concisely that it does not assess learning outcomes that were not intended for nor taught to students.	Does the assessment adequately sample the intended learning outcomes?
<i>Criterion Validity</i>	Criterion-related evidence of validity is concerned with how accurately an assessment equates with another assessment that is intended to measure the same learning outcomes, standards, or objectives. It could be determined when 2 related assessment occur in proximity to each other.	Does the assessment measure intended outcomes of learning that are also measured on some other assessment? Are there items on the assessment with no corresponding intended learning outcomes?
<i>Consequential Validity</i>	Consequential-related evidence of validity is concerned with appropriateness of the intended and unintended outcomes that ensue from an assessment	What are the consequences of using the assessment for decision regarding student's learning? For better or worse, are there any unintended consequences of this assessment for students?

Table 2.13: Types of validity (adapted from Gareis & Grantp. 40- 42)

According to the aforementioned authors' light, construct validity is usually considered the most fundamental and encompassing of the four type of validity. For

Basanta (1995, p. 56), face validity necessarily requires the approval of laymen; she notes “If a test is appealing to laymen- students, administrators, etc. - it has face validity”. In other words, if the format, layout, organization, scoring scheme, quality of print (e.g., no blotches or dark spots), legibility of the printing typography (e.g., typeface: alphabet, boldface, italics, numerals, and punctuation), clarity of images (or diagrams, etc.), and quality of paper are satisfactorily represented in the test paper to the liking of laypeople, consequently, we may judge the test as having face validity.

2.3. Practicality

It should be noted from the onset that practicality is as an integral part of test construction and administration as the other qualities (i.e.; reliability and validity). It affects the test and test agents as much as the aforementioned qualities. On score of that test developers and administrators ought to give it due consideration and seek to establish a balance between the qualities.

Definitions

Practicality is related to real life experience of stakeholders, and therefore, practicality targets real situations, events, and matters. The LDCE defines practicality as ‘concerned with *real* situations and events’ (Emphasis added). Overall, practicality concerns itself with verifying whether or not circumstances are real.

Fulcher & Davidson (2007, p.15) point out that practicality “is concerned with the test implementation rather than the meaning of test scores”. In other words, practicality takes into consideration the circumstances in which a test is administered. Davies (1999, p. 148) explains:

The term practicality covers a wide range of issues, such as the cost of the development and maintenance, test length, ease of marking, time required to administrate the test (individual or group administration), ease of marking time required to administrate the test (individual or group administration), ease of administration (including availability of suitable interviewers, and raters, availability of appropriate room or rooms) and equipment required (computers, language laboratory, etc).

Bachman & Palmer (1997, p. 35) claim “In designing and developing a test, we try to achieve the optimum balance among the qualities.” Practicality is then at the fulcrum of the testing process all the more as it “pertains primarily to the ways in which the test will be implemented, and to a large degree, whether it will disfavor the implementation and use of a given test. For instance, if students are on strike, it is advisable not to force them to sit an examination, otherwise the scores will certainly demonstrate a lot to be desired and students will be emotionally offended.

By definition, practicality is the balance between available resources and required resources. In some instances, there are more test takers than rooms available. The shortage in these material resources directly affects academic dishonesty (i.e.; cheating, plagiarism, etc.). As a rule of thumb, the more the rooms are crowded, the more there are chances for cheating on the examination.

2.4. Assessment, Evaluation, and Testing: Demarcation

Different people use different terms to mean different phenomena without worrying of their semantic and academic usage. One such instance is the interchangeable

usage of assessment, evaluation, and testing. Although, assessment, examination, evaluation, and tests are an integral and inherent part of the teaching- learning process, each term comes to designate specific nuances. It may seem paradoxical that both stakeholders, i.e., teachers and students tend to confuse the aforementioned constructs.

The teaching learning process and educational measurements are intimately intertwined. Soled (1995, p.1) recognizes that “assessment, testing, and evaluation are everyday occurrences in... education”. Atkin *et al.* (2001, p. 7) state “Assessment is universally present in schools and a natural part of both teaching and learning”. Therefore, educational measurements of students’ achievement (or otherwise) are inevitable. It may appear surprising to notice that future prospects depend fairly enough upon the outcomes of these measurements. Societies the world over have at times gained and lost “geniuses” because of either effective or devastating measurement systems. These metrics will stay as yardsticks in our schools as long as these are meant to stay. Their intellectual and psychological effects will (as they always have) mark us for the rest of our lives.

2.4.1 Assessment, Evaluation, and Testing: Definitions

1. Assessment: (Lat. Ad+ census: to add or count/ Lat. Assidere: sit beside). Assessment is taken to mean gather information or data about student behavior, and performance, etc. Also assessment means in an educational context, the process of observing learning; describing, collecting, recording, scoring, and interpreting information about a student’s or one’s own learning. At its most useful, assessment is an episode in the learning process; part of reflection and autobiographical understanding of progress. Traditionally, student assessments are used to determine placement, promotion, graduation, or retention.

2. Evaluation: (Lat. E+valu+ation: to come up with a judgment). “*Evaluation is a systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgment or decisions...*” (Lynch, 1997, p. 2).
3. Testing: (Lat. Testum: earthen pot). A test is a systematic procedure for obtaining a sample of student behavior.

It should be noted that an overarching commonality among these three constructs is *systematicity* of the operation of collecting data on students’ performance so that a judgment and/ or decision is made about their performance, feedback and future achievement. Hanauer *et al.* (2009, p. 23) suggest that:

Assessment like science is a practical, systematic, evidence-driven activity. Assessment like science produces knowledge that is used to make decisions about the nature and characteristics of the world. Simply put, assessment and science are conceptually compatible activities.

Assessment is literally sitting beside someone to add up counts; it was used in English in the 16th century (1540) in the sense of attributing a value to a property for tax purposes. *Evaluation* is taken to mean issuing judgments about students’ performance and/ or knowledge. *Test* is literally an earthen pot in which metals were melted with the view of verifying their quality. It was used in English in the late 16th century (1590) in the sense of a trial or examination to determine the correctness of something.

2.4.2. Probe on Educational Measurements

The following section tracks down assessment, evaluation, and testing along their types. The objective thereof is to elicit the similarities and differences of the three concepts.

2.4.2.1. Types of Assessment

Educational assessment seeks to determine how well students are learning and is integral part of the quest for improved education. It provides feedback to students, educators, parents, policymakers, and the public about the effectiveness of educational services (Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2001, p.1)

Scholars identify three (03) types of assessment:

1. **Summative Assessment (Latin summa: sum/ total).** Sawyer (2004, p. 106) quotes Gipps (1994) who defines summative assessment (SA) an assessment which takes place at the end of a term or course and is used to provide information about how much students have learned and how well a course has worked. According to Avis *et al.* (2009, p. 170) SA normally leads to an award of qualifications: grades, diplomas and certificates. Therefore, SA is basically an assessment of learning (*ibid*, p. 171).
2. **Formative Assessment (Latin formare: to shape/ to mold/ to make):** Quoting Gipps, Sawyer (2004) also claims that formative assessment (FA) takes place during the course of teaching and is used essentially to feedback into teaching and learning (*op.cit*). Avis *et al.* note that FA is an assessment for learning- it takes place during a course or programme of study, as an integral part of the learning process (*op.cit*). Consequently, FA is assessment for learning (*ibid.*). In the same

vein, according to Bereiter & Scardamalia (1989) FA is “an active and intentional learning process that partners the teacher and the students to continuously and systematically gather evidence of learning with the express goal of improving student achievement”. (Cited in Moss & Brookhart, 2009, p.6).

3. **Ipsative Assessment (Latin Ipse: him/ herself)**p. Again following in Gipps’ footsteps, Sawyer defines ipsative assessment (IA) as an assessment in which the student evaluates his/ her performance against his/ her previous performance. Ideally, it continues throughout the professional career.

In table 14, Sawyer (2004, p.107) lays out the types of assessment all while distinguishing their features and giving examples.

Types of Assessment	Their Features+ Examples
Summative Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jury/ instructor evaluation at the end of the program or course; 2. Determines how well student has learned and whether teaching is effective; 3. Degree and course examinations, thesis/ portfolio.
Formative Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructor evaluation during course of teaching; 2. Feedback into teaching and learning process; 3. Grading on assignment; 4. Feedback on ipsative assessment (self-assessment statement, journal, field notes, or log).
Ipsative Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self- evaluation by a reflective practitioner; 2. Evaluation of current performance against previous performance and performance of other participants; 3. Ongoing reflection on learning, 4. Integrates instructor and peer feedback; 5. Formalized in self-assessment statements; journal, field notes, or log; 6. Ideally, continues throughout the professional career.

Table 2.14: Types of Assessments, Features and Examples (Adopted from Sawyer, 2004, p.107)

It should be worth of note to observe that ipsative assessment (IA) can both be evaluated by the student him/ herself as well as by the instructor and peers according to Sawyer. Jarvis (2002, p. 163) notes, however, that “Ipsative assessment must be criterion-referenced but need not be assessed by any outsiders. The benchmark of achievement is oneself”.

2.4.2.2 Types of Evaluation

Lynch (1997, p.2) defines evaluation as: “A systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgments or decisions. Evaluative information can both be gathered through different methods such as observation of administration of pencil- and-paper tests”. In this respect, Rea-Dickins & Germaine (1992, p. 3) define evaluation as “an intrinsic part of teaching and learning. It is important for the teacher because it can provide a wealth of information to use for the future direction of classroom practice, for the planning of courses, and for the management of learning tasks and students”. Differently stated, evaluation tells us in what way this information is important and worthy in taking and making informed decisions about students’ performance, program, and course, etc. Scriven (1991) points out that evaluation needs to have merit (intrinsic value of something; or relative excellence of program, person, and object) and worth (the value of something to an individual, organization, institution; or the extent where to a person, program, institution, object that fulfills a need).

Three types of evaluation have been identified in the context of instruction:

1. **Summative Evaluation:** Morrison et al. claim that summative evaluation attempts to measure how well the major outcomes of a course or program are attained at the conclusion of instruction (Posttest) or thereafter on the job (quoted in Anfara *et al*, 2005, p. 126). Moreover, it answers the question “How did we do? (*ibid.*)”. Its focus is the final result (e.g.) to determine the effects of Reading Program A on increasing student achievement (*ibid.*).

2. **Formative Evaluation:** attempts to measure the intermediate result answering the question “How are we doing?”. Therefore the purpose of FE is to measure the improvement of a course or program to determine that each major component of reading Program A is working as designed. (*ibid.*).
3. **Diagnostic Evaluation :** Srivasta Va & Kumari (2005, p.2) define diagnostic evaluation (DE) as “being used when the teacher decides that information is needed about student knowledge or skills prior to deciding on the most effective instruction. DE then informs instruction.

2.4.2.3 Types of Testing

Testing is just one way to assess and evaluate students. Other major tools that can be used to measure students’ performance are questionnaires, observation schedules, interviews guides, opinionnaires, and surveys. Testing and tests cannot, therefore, be confused with assessment and evaluation.

Different definitions of tests/ testing are found in the literature. Popham (2003, p.5), for instance, considers a test “a formal attempt to describe a student’s status with respect to educationally relevant variable”.

Testing according to the free Dictionary is “A series of questions, problems, or physical responses designed to determine knowledge, intelligence or ability.

Allison (1999) identifies testing as: “Formal modes of assessment that are officially scheduled, with clearly delimited time on task and strict limitations on available guidance”.

2.4.3 Credits of Testing in Education

Although an educational measurement represents a stressful procedure, it represents an exceptional opportunity to review the ins and outs of the teaching learning process. Koretz (2008, p.1) observes that: “Testing has an enormous impact on the practice of education, and it looms large in the minds of countless families as they decide where to live and whether to use public schools”. Likewise, Hedge (2000, p.378) states that “testing refers to the specific procedures that teachers and examiners employ to try to measure ability in the language; using what learners show they know as an indicator of their ability”. In different terms, educational measurements affirm or disconfirm whether or not teaching and learning have taken place.

Testing is revealing to all stakeholders. Basanta (1995, p. 56) outlines the benefits of testing:

1. Testing tells teachers what students can or cannot do.
2. Testing tells students how well they are progressing.
3. Testing can help identify areas of remedial work.
4. Testing will help evaluate the effectiveness of program, course book, and methods.

Educational measurements spot the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching learning process. It maximizes benefits of good teaching learning, and it minimizes the negative circumstances that cause teachers and students to positively interact over the curriculum content.

2.4.4 Types of Tests

Scholars generally identify five types of tests each of which serves particular objectives:

1. Achievement Tests: According to Hughes (2003, p. 13), achievement test is “directly related to language course, their purpose being to establish how successful individual students, groups of students, or the courses themselves have been achieving objectives”. Kaplan & Saccuzzo (2008, p. 309) define achievement test as “an attempt to assess what a person has learned following a specific course of instruction”. Besides, according to Harmer (2007, p.166) achievement tests are also known as ‘exit’ tests. Their outcomes determine the class that the learner will be placed in next year.

2. Aptitude Tests: they are standardized tests that measure learners’ ability to acquire knowledge and skills. Kaplan & Saccuzzo (2008, p.309) identify Aptitude tests as the “attempt to evaluate a student’s *potential for learning* rather than *how much* a student has already learned”. Moreover, ApT evaluate a wide range of experiences obtained in a variety of ways; in the same breath, they evaluate the effects of unknown and uncontrolled experiences (*ibid.*). In the Aptitude Test Workbook, Barrett (2004, p. 4) gives the following examples:

A. Which word has the closest meaning to seek?

- a) Lose b) Pursue c) Hide d) Cover

B. Which is the one odd out?

- a) Fur b) Hair c) Feathers d) Pile

3. Placement Tests: They are tests that help teachers or administrators determine learners' knowledge/ language level, used for creating classes with distinct levels. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines Placement tests by pointing out to the objective "To find out the appropriate level for students in a course or programme of study". In the same vein, Merriem- Webster Dictionary identifies Placement tests as "A test usually given to a student entering an educational institution to determine specific knowledge or proficiency in appropriate courses or classes".

4. Proficiency Tests: They are tests that measure learners' language background and skills (often used a placement test). Hughes (*op.cit.*: 11) claims "Proficiency tests are designed to measure people's ability in language, regardless of any training they may have had in that language". Additionally, "the content of Proficiency tests is based on specification of what candidates have to be able to do in the language in order to be considered proficiency" (*ibid.*). Besides, Heaton (1988, p.172) asserts that "whereas an achievement test looks back on what should have been learnt, the proficiency test looks forward, defining students' language proficiency with reference to a particular task which he or she will be required to perform".

5. Standardized Tests

Every year millions of Algerian pre-tertiary students sit three standardized tests: The Certificate of Primary Education (previously Fundamental Education); The Certificate of the Middle School Education (**BEM**, formerly **BEF**); and the **Baccalauréat**. The latter is a high stake test as many students' future prospects depend upon the success or failure in the Bac. In Italy the Bac. Is called *Maturità*; in Poland *Egzamin Maturalny*, in Britain *A- Level*, in Germany *Abitur*, and Israelis call it *Bagrut*.

In his book *Standardized Testing in Canada*, Traub (1994, p.6) says “Standardized Test [is a test that is] administered and scored in the same way whenever and wherever it is used, so that scores of anyone taking it can be compared”. Besides, Cohen & Wollak (2006, p.358) define the standardized test in the following way: “Tests are standardized when the directions, conditions of administration, and scoring are clearly defined and fixed for all examinees, administrations, and forms”. (Cited in Fulcher, 2010, p.5) So, a standardized test such as the BAC is seated throughout Algeria at the same time using the same scoring schemes and cut scores. It should be noted, however, that Standardized tests are achievement tests in nature. On score of that, they are usually called by their acronym SAT in the USA.

2.5 Grading Scale System

Decidedly, assessment, evaluation, and testing require tangible standards to attest whether the teacher has been able to teach the course program and the students have learnt the content thereof. It is common that different institutions use different systems to reflect the standards of grading students’ work and intellectual growth. Some universities, for instance use marks; others use percentages, and some others use grades. In Continental Europe mainly in France, Italy, and Germany, the preference is for out-of-twenty grading scale system. The test is constructed around question items that are valued at certain marks for example: 2/2, 5/5, until the overall mark is 20/20. Table 15 elicits the system in question with the percentile counterpart.

As it can be seen in table, the most praised *mentions* receive the highest marks, and likewise the highest percentile. Inversely, the less praised *mentions* are attributed the lowest marks and likewise the lowest percentile.

Mention	Grade	Percentile
<i>Assez Bien</i> ("rather good") - "Honors"	12 to 13.9	10 to 15% of candidates
<i>Bien</i> ("good") - "High Honors"	14 to 15.9	5% of candidates
<i>Très Bien</i> ("very good") - "Highest Honors"	16 and above	1-2% of candidates

Table 2.15: Marks and Percentile Grading Scale Systems

Unlike the CE grading scale system, the Anglo-American system appears to favor the attribution of the alphabetical grades (namely A, B, C, D, E, and F). The table below points out to the different grading scale values in the American system of evaluation of students' work.

FRENCH MARKS		AMERICAN MARKS
Grades Sixième-Troisième (6 th -9 th grades)	Grades Seconde-Terminale (10 th - 12 th grades)	
17-20	15.5-20	A+
15-16.5	13.5-15	A
14-14.5	12-13	A-
13-13.5	11-11.5	B+
12-12.5	10-10.5	B
10.5-11.5	9-9.5	B-
9.5-10	8.5	C+
8.5-9	7.5-8	C
7.5-8	7	C-
7	6.5	D+
6.5	6	D
6	5.5	D-
5 and under	5 and under	F

Table 2.16: Franco-American Comparative Grading Systems (drawn upon Fulbright Commission 2009)

To sum up, the Algerian educational system has inherited the French evaluation or grading scale system in that it adheres to the marks and honors that the French school system implemented during the colonial system. It does not seem however, that an Algerian grading system is to be elaborated anytime soon.

It is noteworthy to discuss as yet the degree of comprehensiveness towards discreteness of tests' grading systems. Bachman identifies these two constructs as holistic and analytic approach to grading systems. He considers holistic approach as more comprising than an analytic approach. Moreover, the former includes all the relevant material so that a global framework is drawn. Table 17 illustrates the differences between

holistic and analytic approaches to grading scale systems. It should be borne in mind that both holistic and analytic approaches accommodate the six constructs of test usefulness.

Quality	Holistic Scale	Analytic Scale
Reliability	lower than analytic but still acceptable	higher than holistic
Construct Validity appropriate aspects of different rates	holistic scale assumes that all relevant aspects of writing ability develop at the same rate and can thus be captured in a single score: holistic scores correlate with superficial aspects such as length and handwriting	analytic scales more for L2 writers as different writing ability develop at
Practicality	relatively fast and easy	time-consuming: expensive
Impact instruction: training	single score may mask an uneven writing profile and may be misleading for placement	more scales provide useful diagnostic information for placement and/or more useful for rater
Authenticity	White (1995) argues that reading holistically is a more natural process than reading analytically	raters may read holistically and adjust analytic scores to match holistic impression
Interactiveness	n/a	n/a

Table 2.17: Holistic and analytic scales on six qualities of test usefulness (Drawn upon Weigle, 2002, p. 121)

2.6 Class Size Impact

In the current section, we intend to probe the impact of class size on formative assessment. This endeavor is premised by the fact that most teachers believe that

huge class size compromises their willingness and readiness to undertake an otherwise challenging formative assessment.

2.6.1 Class Size Impact on Teaching

Teachers prove to be frustrated by the ever increasing number of students in their classes, which ultimately disfavors teachers' commitment to better assessment and evaluation systems. Hence, the teaching learning process appears to have lost an essential component that helps classify students according to their engagement in the learning process. Table 18 juxtaposes the merits of small class size and demerits of large classes.

Merits of Small classes	Demerits of Large Classes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More teacher involvement in the teaching learning process • Less stress • More teacher attention toward individual learners • Less discipline-related troubles • More time to teacher-student meaningful exchange of input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of teacher involvement in in-class practices • More teacher stress and frustration • Less time to individual learners and focus on completion of the lesson • More discipline-related challenges • Less time to teacher-student engagement

Table 2.18: Merits and Demerits of Class Size

As it could be noticed, we have included an equal number of merits and demerits of class size. It is by no way an exhaustive list; the merits of small class size can be longer and the demerits of large classes can be equally longer.

2.6.2 Class Size Impact on Formative Assessment

In line with the LMD principles importance is given to the students' personal workload. Both Decrees 137 and 712 come to emphasize this aspect particularly as it appears in Article 20 as stated earlier in Chapter I, p.28-29.

Moreover, assessing students individually requires specific conditions. The latter includes primarily the number of students per group. In fact, in the case of our Branch, we face a serious problem concerning this issue in connection with the shortage of staff in the first place. Therefore, it is not possible to assess students individually in all courses because of the cogent reason that most of the courses are taught in halls (*viz.*lectures), if not the number of students per group which in some cases exceeds the norms (namely 60 to 70 students per group). In those conditions, it is quite hard if not impossible to deal with formative assessment.

A priori, class size may affect negatively the process of FA in that the huge number of students compromises the credibility of the FA process. Popham (2008, p. 6) notes "Formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment- elicited evidence of students' status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics". Differently couched, when the number surpasses teachers' ability to assess effectively students' ongoing achievement, and eventually frustrating the effectiveness of the teachers' instructional procedures, that would burden the assessor and would not be informative. Along the same framework of thought, Hamm & Adams (2009, p. 2) assert that "Formative assessment frequently takes place during instruction-allowing teachers to provide feedback and make adjustments that will help ensure students' success". So, large classes compromise the accuracy of FA.

Conclusion

This present chapter highlighted the most significant characteristics and criteria of language tests and testing. Most importantly, it provided dictionary and scholars' definitions of three criteria of good test: reliability, validity, and practicality. It also highlighted the notions of assessment, evaluation and testing and their types. The chapter laid focus on formative assessment, being one of the LMD principles, in the English Branch at MKU of Biskra. In this connection, it demonstrated the negative impact of class size on FA, i.e., large classes do not allow teachers to assess the students' progress. The following chapter describes the research methodology followed in the current study.

**CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH
METHODOLOGY: STUDENTS'
AND TEACHERS'
QUESTIONNAIRES AND
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION**

Chapter Three: Research Methodology: Students' and Teachers' Questionnaires, Interviews and Classroom Observation

Introduction

The present chapter undertakes to survey the research methodology from different perspectives such as research tools, population, samples, methodology, piloting, case study, and observation method. It concerns itself to research various definitions and applications of the different constructs relevant to the present work. First, it highlights the differences between research methodology and research method, as it identifies the main objectives of research. Second, it spots light on the different types of research. Third, it determines the nature of the case study. Besides, it deals with triangulation, the data collection tools, population and sampling, and the benefits of the pilot study. Moreover, the researcher has conducted two types of discussions: an interview with teachers and a focus group discussion with students. Finally, a research design section is included to explain the different phases in the present study clarifying the usefulness of triangulation and the way in which the data gathering tools complete each other to obtain valid results.

3.1 The Nature of Research Methodology

By definition, research methodology indicates the various ways and tools used to gather information about a particular issue. The objective of research methodology could be summarized as follows: (a) reliable methodology of data gathering, (b) sound interpretation of findings, and (c) implication of the findings. This view is supported by Cohen *et al.* (2005, p. 3) who outline the triad of research methodologies:

- (a) scientific and positivistic methodologies;
- (b) naturalistic and interpretive methodologies;
- (c) methodologies from critical theory.

Besides, Rajasekar *et al.* (2006, p.1) identify research as: “A logical and systematic search for new and useful information on a particular topic. It is an investigation of finding solutions to scientific and social problems through objective and systematic analysis.”

Yet again, the aforementioned authors stress the systematicity and the objectivity of the research. Goddard & Melville (2007, p.1) corroborate that:

Research is not just a process of gathering information, as is sometimes suggested. Rather, it is about answering unanswered questions or creating that which does not currently exist. In many ways, research can be seen as a process of expanding the boundaries of our ignorance.

Through the present chapter, we would like to communicate to potential readers and other stakeholders our steadfast intention to furnish a work whose findings are trustworthy. It is intuitive to claim that research methodology which is rigorous about scientific procedures yields viable findings and interpretations. One major denominator of a sound research methodology lies in its systematicity.

It should be interesting to acknowledge that in the research field two terms need to be set apart: research methodology and research method. For convenience sake, we have drawn table 19 after Rajasekar *et al.* (2006, p.2) in which we juxtapose both constructs with the view of laying out the differences and similarities.

Research Methodology	Research Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A systematic way to solve a problem. • A science of studying how research is to be carried out. • The study of methods by which knowledge is gained. • Its aim is to give the work plan of research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The various procedures, schemes, algorithms, etc. used in research. • They are essentially planned, scientific and value-neutral. • They include theoretical procedures, experimental studies, numerical schemes, statistical approaches, etc. • Help us collect samples, data and find a solution to a problem. • They accept only those explanations which can be verified by experiments.

Table 3.19: The nature of research methodology and research method (Rajasekar *et al.* (2006, p.2)

All in all, research methodology englobes research method. In other words, one research methodology may have more than one research method.

3.2 Objectives of Research

Any serious research should mirror a sound methodology of research that assists conscientious researcher attain verifiable data and reliable interpretation. According to Goddard & Melville (2007, p.3) “Good research is ‘systematic’ in that it is planned, organized and has a specific goal”. Research confirms the existence of six main objectives that span from the discovery to solving problems. (Rajasekar *et al.* 2006, p.1).

Accordingly, research aims:

- (1) **to discover** new facts
- (2) **to verify** and test important facts

(3) **to analyze** an event or process or phenomenon to identify the cause and effect relationship

(4) **to develop** new scientific tools, concepts and theories to solve and understand scientific and nonscientific problems

(5) **to find** solutions to scientific, nonscientific and social problems and

(6) **to overcome** or solve the problems occurring in our everyday life (Author's emphasis in bold).

On the light of the aforementioned objectives of research, this study aims to solve first year students' problems with Linguistics tests as to verify the efficiency of applying new teaching methods implementing ICTs and its impact on the students' test results.

Hence, all researchers can be called scientists as long as they respect the criteria mentioned above. Goddard & Melville (2007, p.3) support this view when they indicate that "...all research is scientific, and all researchers are scientists, regardless of their field of work". Better or worse, research is about creating knowledge. In this respect, the authors argue that "The discovery and the creation of knowledge ... lie at the heart of research".

Similarly, the authors of *Research Methodology: An Introduction* (n.d., p. 2) lay out the objectives of research as follows:

The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures. The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered as yet. Though each research study has its own specific

purpose, we may think of research objectives as falling into a number of following broad groupings:

1. To gain familiarity with a phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it (studies with this object in view are termed as *exploratory or formulative* research studies);
2. To portray accurately the characteristics of a particular individual, situation or a group (studies with this object in view are known as *descriptive* research studies);
3. To determine the frequency with which something occurs or with which it is associated with something else (studies with this object in view are known as *diagnostic* research studies);
4. To test a hypothesis of a causal relationship between variables (such studies are known as *hypothesis-testing* research studies).

Subsequently, research has at least four major objectives: familiarity and awareness of the subject, accurate description of the subject, frequency of the occurrence, and finally hypothesis-testing.

The current research has set a number of objectives that are outlined in the section below:

1. It targets to study a recurrent theme in the tertiary level.
2. It aims at establishing a pattern as far as assessment conditions are concerned at MKU of Biskra.
3. It studies the effects of reliability and validity on the construction of linguistics' tests and on the feedback planning.

3.3 Types of Research

Research methodologists recognize two types of research methodologies. In fact, it is the nature of the issue under investigation that defines the type of research. In other words, it is the drive and scopes of the investigated issue that determines whether the researcher needs to conduct an experimentation to test his/her hypotheses or a simple description and interpretation of the issue. In both cases, the researcher must establish a paradigm that explains the reasons and the variables that control the issue in question. Hence, two methodologies are outlined: quantitative and qualitative. These two constructs are also known as positivist and/or experimental, and descriptive-interpretive in the second case.

3.3.1 Quantitative Research

As its label quantitative research indicates, this research methodology is concerned with the production of quantities or digit outcomes. The authors of *Research Methodology: an Introduction* (n. d., p. 3) echo “Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity”. Therefore, the major concern of the researcher is to provide accurate measurements of the issue s/he investigates. Moreover, this type of research is also known as experimental or positivist in that it favors experimentation in order to come up with positive amount measurements. Bowling (2002, p.216) states that:

The experiment is a situation in which the *independent variable* (also known as the exposure, the intervention, the experimental or predictor variable) is carefully manipulated by the investigator under known, tightly defined and controlled conditions, or by natural occurrence. At its most basic, the experiment consists of an

experimental group which is exposed to the intervention under investigation and a control group which is not exposed. The experimental and control groups should be equivalent, and investigated systematically under conditions that are identical (apart from the exposure of the experimental group), in order to minimize variation between them.

Although, quantitative research is popular in exact sciences such as physics, mathematics, and so on, it has recently been adopted in social sciences (namely psychology, sociology, and anthropology) and cognitive sciences (*viz.*, linguistics and neuro-sciences).

Our research on the reliability and validity of the Linguistics' testing models which adheres to applied linguistics, i.e., cognitive science does not unfortunately undertake to conduct a quantitative research methodology for two reasons:

1. It is hard to provide quantitative measurements on reliability and validity.
2. It would be out of the scope of the research to conduct experimentation.

3.3.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is rather popular with social sciences which investigate issues related to man in the society. Hancock *et al.* (2007, p.7) define qualitative research as a methodology that is "... concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena". It should be acknowledged that unlike quantitative research, qualitative research is fairly flexible in that respondents receive the same question items and it is incumbent upon the researcher to provide meaningful comparison of the responses. The objective of qualitative research is to attempt to provide deep insights about social phenomena.

Hancock *et al.* (2007, p.1) point out that “Qualitative research attempts to broaden and/or deepen our understanding of how things came to be the way they are in our social world”.

Mack *et al.* (2005, p. 1) state five features which appear to characterize qualitative research, the latter:

- seeks answers to a question
- systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question
- collects evidence
- produces findings that were not determined in advance
- produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study

The current research adheres to qualitative research methodology in that:

- It is a follow-up to our Magister dissertation.
- The work does not involve an explicit experimentation.
- The ultimate goal is to furnish interpretations and analyses rather than quantified data.

3.3.3 Quantitative versus Qualitative

We have judged essential to compare and contrast both methodologies with the view shedding more light on their similarities and differences with respect to the present study. The table below outlines the features characterizing each of the methodologies under investigation. In their article entitled *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide*, Mack *et al.* (2005, p. 3) have drawn table 20 below:

	Quantitative	Qualitative
General Framework	<p>Seek to confirm hypotheses about Phenomena</p> <p>Instruments use more rigid style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions</p> <p>Use highly structured methods such as questionnaires, surveys, and structured observation</p>	<p>Seek to explore phenomena</p> <p>Instruments use more flexible, iterative style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions</p> <p>Use semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation</p>
Analytical objectives	<p>To quantify variation</p> <p>To predict causal relationships</p> <p>To describe characteristics of a population</p>	<p>To describe variation</p> <p>To describe and explain relationships</p> <p>To describe individual experiences</p> <p>To describe group norms</p>
Question format	Closed-ended	Open-ended
Data format	Numerical (obtained by assigning numerical values to responses)	Textual (obtained from audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes)
Flexibility in study design	<p>Study design is stable from beginning to end</p> <p>Participant responses do not influence or determine how and which questions researchers ask next</p> <p>Study design is subject to statistical assumptions and conditions</p>	<p>Some aspects of the study are flexible (for example, the addition, exclusion, or wording of particular interview questions)</p> <p>Participant responses affect how and which questions researchers ask next</p> <p>Study design is iterative, that is, data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned</p>

Table 3.20: Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Approaches (Mack *et al.* 2005, p.3)

A priori, the aforementioned authors have drawn a comprehensive assessment frame for the two methodologies that span from analytical objectives to flexibility criteria. Besides, Bamberger (1999, cited in Marvasti 2004, p.12) proposes other completing criteria that distinguish the two research methodologies from a sociological perspective in which he highlights the selection of research participants, data collection, data analysis, and the role of conceptual framework. Table 21 illustrates the two methodologies.

Research activity	Quantitative	Qualitative
Selection of research participants	Random sampling	Theoretical or purposive sampling
Data collection	Pre-coded surveys or other formulaic techniques	Direct, fluid, observational techniques
Data analysis	Statistical analysis aimed at highlighting universal cause and effect relationships	Analysis focused on context-specific meanings and social practices
The role of conceptual framework	Separates theory from methods	Views theory and methods as inseparable

Table 3.21: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods (Marvasti, 2004, p.12)

In sum, both research methodologies serve different objectives and meet different needs of research and researchers. No one methodology is superior to the other and basically completes one another.

3.4 Objectives of Research

Research has at least four major objectives: familiarity and awareness of the subject, accurate description of the subject, frequency of occurrence, and finally to test the hypothesis.

The current research has set a number of objectives. Specifically:

1. The study does not build a case against anyone; it only targets to study a recurrent theme in the tertiary level.
2. It aims at establishing a pattern as far as assessment conditions are concerned at MKU of Biskra.
3. It also investigates the effects of reliability and validity on the construction of tests and on the feedback planning.
4. It undertakes to target the reliability and validity of Linguistics' testing papers and feedback.

3.5 The Nature of Case Study

By definition, a case study refers to one single situation that comes under investigation for the purpose of discovering the underlying reasons for a more complex phenomenon. In this regard, Mikkelsen (2005, p. 92) suggests in his identification that:

Case studies, as the name indicates, concentrate on special cases. Generalizations from case studies must be handled with care. To serve a foundation for generalizations, case studies should be related to a theoretical framework, which in turn may be adjusted as case study results provide new evidence. The ‘generalizability’ of case studies can be increased by strategic selection of *critical cases*. (Emphasis in original).

In addition, Stenhouse (1985, p.49) claimed that “The task of a case study is to produce ordered reports of experience which invite judgement and offer evidence to which judgement can appeal”. (Cited in Bassey, 1999, p.26). So, a case study analyzes one example with the premise to find out a generalization. Furthermore, it studies a phenomenon that is known to be overlapping and complex.

The objective of case studies is to shed light on the dark aspects of a phenomenon which is not easily discernible. Yin (2003, p.4) echoes “The case study is the method of choice when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context”. This view is also supported by Goddard & Melville (2007, p.9) who state that “Descriptive research may be used when the object of the research is very complex”. It should be mentioned that these scholars use descriptive research and case study interchangeably ‘Descriptive’ or ‘Case study’ is research in which a specific situation is studied either to see if it gives rise to any general theories or to see if existing general

theories are borne out by the specific situation”. (*ibid.*) To labor the point again, a case study takes one instance to build a generalization.

It is worth to acknowledge Simons’ (1996) identification of the six paradoxes concerning case studies. Below, the six paradoxes are laid out. They:

- reject the subject–object dichotomy, regarding all participants equally
- recognize the contribution that a genuine creative encounter can make to new forms of understanding education
- regard different ways of seeing as new ways of knowing
- approximate the ways of the artist
- free the mind of traditional analysis
- embrace these paradoxes, with an overriding interest in people (cited in Cohen *et al.* 2007, p.245).

In the same vein, scholars have established three types of case study based on the outcomes of each type. Yin (1984), for example, identifies three types exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. Table 22 summarizes the above proposition:

Case Study Types	Outcomes
Exploratory	a pilot to other studies or research questions
Explanatory	testing theories
Descriptive	providing narrative accounts

Table 3.22: Case Study Types (Yin cited in Cohen *et al.* 2007, p.245.)

Although a case study proves that the researcher has a little control over events (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Hitchcock & Hughes (1995) suggest that case study has seven hallmarks:

- It is concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case.
- It provides a chronological narrative of events relevant to the case.
- It blends a description of events with the analysis of them.
- It focuses on individual actors or groups of actors, and seeks to understand their perceptions of events.
- It highlights specific events that are relevant to the case.
- The researcher is integrally involved in the case.
- An attempt is made to portray the richness of the case in writing up the report.

(Cited in Cohen *et al.* , p.253)

It is worth noting that in a case study the researcher is an indelible agent in the study which is our case.

The present work sits well with this type of research, i.e., descriptive research and/or case study, as it takes one sample of the staff and students population in MKU of Biskra. This is premised by our hope to establish a general framework that explains the reliability, validity, and testing models.

3.6 Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the three tools that have been utilized to collect the target information. These three tools are (1) classroom observation, (2) questionnaires, and (3) interviews, each of which has its own specific objectives and target population. It is noteworthy that the tools in question were designed to complete one another for more than one reason. First, to capitalize on the weaknesses of the previous used tools, and second to add to the accuracy and credibility of the data collected.

Research major concern is to provide accurate and trustworthy results. On score of that, it is recommended to employ more than one methodology of research, i.e., triangulated methodology. According to Cohen *et al.* (2000, p. 112) “Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior”. In other terms, a serious researcher needs to combine more than one method of research to find out verifiable data with the view of attaining ultimately precise outcomes and interpretations.

Although the concept of triangulation stands for the employment of three research methodologies, Denzin (1985 cited in Wragg 1994, p.113) distinguishes four different kinds of triangulation, i.e., data, investigator, theory, and methodological. The four types of triangulation are laid out below:

- 1- Data triangulation involving different time, space, or people.
- 2- Investigator triangulation where various observers cross-check each other.
- 3- Theory triangulation which brings different theories to bear on the observations.
- 4- Methodological triangulation whereby more than one methodology of enquiry is employed.

The current work is centered on the fourth type namely, methodological triangulation as it has employed three different methods of research: classroom observation, interviews, and questionnaires.

3.7 Data Collection Tools

Research uses different tools of data gathering to attain different objectives, target different and same populations, and collect the required information that would help researchers interpret as accurately as possible the phenomenon under investigation.

For systematic reasons, the present section deals with a detailed description of the different data gathering tools.

3.7.1 Classroom Observation

Classroom observation refers to the direct involvement of the researcher in collecting data from classrooms. In their definition of classroom observation, Cohen *et al.* (2000, p.396) say:

The distinctive feature of observation as a research process is that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations. In this way, the researcher can look directly at what is taking place *in situ* rather than relying on second-hand accounts.

Subsequently, the researcher becomes an insider as s/he relies on his/her own observations of the different behaviors of the target population inside classrooms. The researcher lives along with the participants the dynamics of classroom practices but with different objectives. The participants strive to understand the input, whereas the researcher attempts to establish the regular pattern of the participants' behaviors.

The merits of classroom observation are many as it enables the researcher to collect first-hand information about the target population. Wajnryb (1992, p.1) elicits:

Observation is a multi-faceted tool for learning. The experience of observing comprises more than the time actually spent in the classroom. It also includes preparation for the period in the classroom and follow-up from the time spent there. The preparation can include the selection of a focus and purpose and a method of data collection, as well as collaboration with others involved.

Differently stated, classroom observation as a data gathering tool helps the researcher to obtain the information s/he may not get through another data collection tool such as the questionnaire. The researcher’s presence in classroom observation allows him/her to discover the participants’ perceptions and attitudes towards the course, unlike the questionnaire where s/he may get an answer which can affect the validity of the findings of the study.

For the sake of clarification, table 23 is drawn upon Wajnryb’s outlining of the features of classroom observation.

	Classroom Observation
Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-faceted tool • Experience of observation • Preparation for the attendance (selection of a focus, purpose, and method of data collection • A follow-up

Table 3.23: Features of Classroom Observation (Wajnryb, 1992)

Classroom observation represents a trustworthy tool for researching participants’ behaviors inside their classrooms. It helps the researcher to live the situation and obtain valid data about the phenomenon under investigation.

This first-hand account enables the researcher to reach insightful interpretations of the constraints within classrooms. Often CO represents itself as a quiet interview and/or

questionnaire in that the researcher observes the participants in their natural milieu, which transpires unsophisticated behaviors and subsequent interpretations. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003, p. 117) believe that classroom observation:

can allow researchers to understand much more about what goes on in complex real-world situations than they can ever discover simply by asking questions of those who experience them (no matter how probing the questions may be), and by looking only at what is said about them in questionnaires and interviews.

From this, we can conclude that once in the classroom, the researcher may add to his role as an investigator two other roles: either s/he gets involved with the participants over the content of the investigation in question or over the input (*viz.* Linguistics syllabus) in which case s/he is a participant observer. The other role may require of him/her to be a silent guest whose main mission is to record the classroom events.

In the present study, the researcher has played the role of a non-participant observer, i.e., the researcher was silent during the attendance of the linguistics sessions recording every single detail which may help to obtain the necessary data about the informants themselves (teachers and students) as well as the setting, the teaching aids, and the surrounding environment. . We attempted to lie low to give elbow room for both teachers and students to interact as naturally as possible. For honesty's sake, our direct interventions were limited to some brief comments when we felt it to be absolutely necessary given that we are Linguistics' teachers of the same level, i.e., first year classes.

3.7.2 Interviews

Although interviews are educated and systematic, they are entirely different from a day-to-day conversation. Dyer (1995, pp.56-8) corroborates “an interview is not an ordinary, everyday conversation” in that it requires certain procedures that govern these scholarly meetings. Dyer (*ibid.*) outlines the differences between scholarly interviews and casual conversations:

For example, in contrast to an everyday conversation, [the interview] has a specific purpose, it is often question-based, with the questions being asked by the interviewer; the interviewer alone may express ignorance (and not the interviewee), and the responses must be as explicit and often as detailed as possible. The interview is a constructed rather than naturally occurring situation, and this renders it different from an everyday conversation; therefore the researcher has an obligation to set up, and abide by, the different ‘rules of the game’ in an interview.

Drawing upon this insightful juxtaposition between interviews and conversations, we draw table 24 in which features of both are laid out:

Interviews	Everyday Conversations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose specific• Question-based• Detailed and explicit responses• Constructed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Naturally occurring• Spontaneous• Open• Non-constructed

Table 3.24: Features of Interviews vs. Everyday Conversations

Interviews are oftentimes understood as face-to-face interactive procedure, which aims to collect first-hand data from the target population in one sitting session. The

interview is to put it in Marvasti's words- "one of the most elementary forms of data collection ... (it) involves asking people questions and receiving answers from them" (*ibid.*). Basically, interviews are about writing down or recording the participants' responses as accurately as possible with the view of eliciting the required data that would ideally serve our purpose.

Interviews serve researchers' different needs, wants, and objectives. McKay (2006, p.51) lays down the uses of interviews:

1. Some questions target information about teachers' and students' background;
2. Some questions aim to find out teachers' and students' reported behavior;
3. Some questions may target to gauge teachers and learners opinions and attitudes.

Whatever the type of interview is (tape-recording, note-taking or focus group discussion), the presence of the interviewer in front of the interviewee gives the researcher the opportunity to fill the gaps s/he may find in the participants' answers of the questionnaire for instance. Besides, the interview as a data gathering tool allows the researcher to ask follow-up questions according to the received answers; therefore, s/he is able to attain his/her set objectives.

3.7.2.1 Types of Interviews

As it has been stated in the previous section, interviews may be categorized into three classes depending on the objectives of the researcher. Patton (1990 cited in McKay, *ibid.*) delineates three main types of interviews:

- a) Informal conversational interviews: These deal with topics as they raise in conversation

b) Interview guide approach: The same topics are covered with every one of the participants.

c) Standardized open-ended interviews: It is a highly structured interview because the exact wording and the order of the questions are specified.

Back in 1980, Patton (1980 cited in Cohen *et al.* 2007, p.353), acknowledged the strengths and weaknesses of the types of interviews he developed. Table 24 displays the merits and demerits of the interview' types.

Type of interview	Characteristics	Strengths	Weaknesses
Informal conversational interview	Questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things; there is no predetermination of question topics or wording.	Increases the salience and relevance of questions; interviews are built on and emerge from observations; the interview can be matched to individuals and circumstances.	Different information collected from different people with different questions. Less systematic and comprehensive if certain questions don't arise 'naturally'. Data organization and analysis can be quite difficult.
Interview guide approach	Topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and working of questions in the course of the interview.	The outline increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. Logical gaps in data can be anticipated and closed. Interviews remain fairly conversational and situational.	Important and salient topics may be inadvertently omitted. Interviewer flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can result in substantially different responses, thus reducing the comparability of responses.
Standardized open-ended interviews	The exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same	Respondents answer the same questions, thus increasing comparability of responses; data are complete for each person on the topics	Little flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and circumstances; standardized wording of questions may

	order.	addressed in the interview. Reduces interviewer effects and bias when several interviewers are used. Permits decision-makers to see and review the instrumentation used in the evaluation. Facilitates organization and analysis of the data.	constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers.
Closed quantitative interviews	Questions and response categories are determined in advance. Responses are fixed; respondent chooses from among these fixed responses.	Data analysis is simple; responses can be directly compared and easily aggregated; many short questions can be asked in a short time.	Respondents must fit their experiences and feelings into the researcher's categories; may be perceived as impersonal, irrelevant, and mechanistic. Can distort what respondents really mean or experienced by so completely limiting their response choices.

Table 3.25: Strengths and Weaknesses of Different Types of Interview (Patton .1980 cited in Cohen *et al.* 2007, p.353)

It should be interesting to overview chronologically the development of the types of interviews. Lincoln & Guba (1985) mention structured interviews. Oppenheim (1992) adds exploratory interviews. The real prize comes with LeCompte & Preissle (1993) who highlighted six types of interviews: standardized interviews, in-depth interviews, ethnographic interviews, elite interviews, life history interviews, and finally focus groups interviews.

In our investigation, we opted for tape-recording interviews for their major advantage of having the exact speech of the interviewees that allow the researcher to analyze the data gathered later in time. This idea is pointed out by McKay (2006, p.55) in the

following terms: “The advantage of tape-recording an interview is that this preserves the actual language that is used, providing an objective record of what was said that can later be analyzed”.

Therefore, tape-recording of interviews represents an exceptional opportunity for the researcher to go beyond the interview in that even non-verbal communication could be observed and analyzed. Blaxter *et al.* (2006, p. 172) argue that:

Using an audio or digital recorder means that you need only to concentrate on the process of the interview. You can focus your attention on the interviewee; give appropriate eye contact and non-verbal communication. You will have a verbatim record of the whole interview.

The interviews with both teachers and students were no exceptions as we made it our point to ask direct, simple, candid, and clear questions. It is noteworthy to mention that we organized both types of interviews: structured and unstructured. With the staff in question, we met them separately according to their availability and willingness to sit the interviews. As for the students, structured interviews were held in the off sessions so that we would not frustrate their schedule mostly in the morning for a simple reason they are fresh in that period of the day.

3.7.3 Focus Group Discussion

As far as FGD with students is concerned, the aim behind opting for such type of interviews is that it allows the researcher to examine the participants’ points of view different issues. Jenny Kitzinger, who is a well-known focus group researcher, stated that “the focus group method is an ‘ideal’ approach for examining the stories, experiences,

points of view, beliefs, needs and concerns of individuals” (2005, p.57 cited in Liamputtong , 2010, p.5). In the same vein, Kumar (1987) believed that the focus group discussion is a rapid assessment, semi-structured data gathering method in which a purposively selected set of participants gather to discuss issues and concerns based on a list of key themes drawn up by the researcher/facilitator (cited in Escalada & Heong ,2009, p.1).

In the present study, the FGD took place on May 15th, 2012 from 8:00 to 11:00 in Room 8 at the level of the Faculty of Arts and Foreign Languages of MKU of Biskra. The discussion started first with a group of 6 students from 8:00 to 9:30, and then it dealt with 7 other students from 9:30 to 11:00. According to the authors of Focus Group Methodology: Introduction and History (2010, p.3), “Methodologically, focus group interviews involve a group of 6-8 people who come from similar social and cultural backgrounds or who have similar experiences or concerns”. In our case, the participants belong to the same culture and share the same interests and concerns as first year students. The FGD includes questions. (Appendix 9).

3.7.4 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are practical, easy to design and administer and analyze. These features render the questionnaire a popular tool for research. Gillham (2000, p.1) affirms that “the great popularity of questionnaires is that they provide a ‘quick fix’ for research methodology; no single method has been so much abused”. By definition, questionnaires contain questions that target a particular population for particular goal. Gillham (*ibid*, p. 2) points out that “questionnaires are just one of a range of ways of getting information from people (or answers to our research questions), usually by posing direct or indirect questions”, with the view of collecting verifiable data.

In the academia, questionnaires are minutely designed and planned. Dörnyei & Taguchi (2009, p.9) state:

The typical questionnaire is highly structured data collection instrument, with most items either asking about very specific pieces of information (e.g., one's address or food preference) or giving various response options for the respondent to choose from, for example, by ticking a box.

In the present study, the questionnaire for both teachers and students includes from four to five sections. The teachers' questionnaire consists of five different sections. The first section seeks specific information about the teachers' degree, teaching experience, and the will to teach English in general and Linguistics in particular. The second section is composed of 7 questions asking about the teachers' motivation of teaching Linguistics, their opinion about the Linguistics' current syllabus, the syllabus content and the first year classes' level, and the time allotted to the Linguistics course.

The third section includes 8 questions. The latter look for information about first year students' motivation to study English and Linguistics, the students' attitudes towards Linguistics, the students' background knowledge, as well as their level of motivation, concentration, understanding and participation. The fourth section which takes the lion share of the questionnaire is about testing and tests (15 questions). It includes questions about the students' level and test preparation, the students' attitudes towards the test setting, the test time allotment, the test timing, the test design criteria, the test length, and the test activities. The fifth section deals with test reliability and validity. It consists of 10 questions about Linguistics' test reliability and validity, reliability and validity as test design criteria, types of tests, and the students' level and the Linguistics' test grades.

Finally, section six includes 1 question looking for the teachers' comments and suggestions as far as the questionnaire and the topic under investigation are concerned.

On the other hand, the students' questionnaire in its final version is divided into four main sections. Section one looks for particular information concerning the students' name, age and sex, their choice of studying English, their level in English, their will to study English, their BAC stream, and their BAC English exam mark. Section two includes 10 questions about first year courses' difficulty, Linguistics' comprehension, students' motivation to study English in general and Linguistics in particular, time allotted to Linguistics, and the class size and the students' comprehension. Section three is composed of 22 questions about testing. The latter ask about the students' attitudes towards tests, Linguistics' test difficulty and length, Linguistics' test time allotment and timing schedule, Linguistics' test activities and grading scale, the test setting, and the students' low grades and the teachers' instructions. Section four seeks the students' suggestions concerning the Linguistics' test setting and activities.

There are two types of questionnaire' administration: one-to-one administration and group administration. Dörnyei (2003, p. 81) defines the former as the type that:

refers to a situation when someone delivers the questionnaire by hand to the designated person and arranges the completed form to be picked up later (e. g., handing out questionnaires to colleagues at work). This is a much more personal form of administration than mail surveys and therefore the chances for the questionnaires to be returned are significantly better. The personal contact also allows the questionnaire administrator to create rapport with the respondent, to

explain the purpose of the enquiry, and to encourage cooperation.

(Italics in original)

And the latter, i.e., group administration in L2 research as:

the most common method of having questionnaires completed. One reason for this is that the typical targets of the surveys are language learners studying within institutional contexts, and it is often possible to arrange to administer the instrument to them while they are assembled together, for example, as part of a lesson or slotted between certain other organized activities. The other reason for the popularity of this administration format is that it can overcome some of the problems just mentioned with regard to postal surveys or one-to-one administration. Groups of students are typically 'captive groups' in the sense that a response rate of nearly 100% can be achieved with them, and because a few questionnaire administrators can collect a very large number of questionnaires, it is easier to make sure that all of them are adequately trained for the job.(*ibid*: 82)

(Italics in original)

In the current research, we applied both methods of questionnaire administration. While the teachers' questionnaire was conducted in one-to-one administration method because of the limited number of teachers, the students' questionnaire was group administered because of the large number of the sample. It should be noted that the main feature of our questionnaires to both stakeholders are open-ended question items. Still, some other question items are designed according to Yes/No and Multiple Choice Questions option selection.

As far as the participants in the questionnaires are concerned, we have attempted to be honest, straightforward, candid, and forthcoming. Furthermore, we have taken participants comments and suggestions into account particularly more so during the piloting process. As for the questions wording, we made sure to include simple and direct questions with the view of avoiding confusion. Last but not least, anonymity of the participants has been honored for the sake of attaining objectivity and safeguarding the participants' *amour-propre*.

We have made it our point to hedge intimidating the would be respondents of our questionnaires. First, we have tried to make them feel comfortable and familiar with the setting as we chose to administer the questionnaire during their regular sessions. Second, we debriefed them on the objectives, the instructions and the structure of the questionnaires. Furthermore, we have deliberately constructed straightforward and simple statements to reduce specialized jargon and opt for non-technical wording. On score of that, we noticed that the respondents felt self-confident especially as they had been given sufficient time to respond to the questionnaire (namely in the piloting phase). To collect the required number of copies especially at the final phase, our respondents were urged to submit their answers by the end of the session.

3.8 Population and Sampling

A researcher needs a population and a sample of the population in question in order to conduct his/her experiment or survey. A judicious decision on the population and the sample defines much of the success or failure of the research. Dörnyei (2003, p.70-71) highlights these two constructs in the following terms:

Broadly speaking, the *sample* is the group of people whom researchers actually examine and the *population* is the group of people whom the survey is about. For example, the population in a

study might be EFL learners in Taiwanese secondary schools and the actual sample might involve three Taiwanese secondary classes. That is, the target population of a study consists of all the people to whom the survey's findings are to be applied or generalized. (Italics in original)

Sampling targets to build generalizations from particular data, in other words, a sample is the actual sub-group on which the researcher undertakes to examine while the population is the whole community that is observed.

In this respect, Ary *et al.* (2010, p.148) concur:

The small group that is observed is called a *sample*, and the larger group about which the generalization is made is called a *population*.

A **population** is defined as all members of any well-defined class of people, events, or objects. For example, in a study in which students in American high schools constitute the population of interest, you could define this population as all boys and girls attending high school in the United States. A **sample** is a portion of a population.

(Emphasis in original)

Differently stated, selecting a sample out of a population helps the researcher to limit the scope of his/her study. Besides, the sample as mentioned above is a portion of a population, i.e., it represents this population in the sense that those answers collected from the subjects of the sample can be generalized. In our case, the sample concerns 7/12 first year classes of English at MKU of Biskra. The selection was based on one main criteria is that the seven groups are taught Linguistics by different teachers and composed of a

number of students who share the same age, background knowledge, culture, way of thinking, etc.

3.8.1 Sampling Objectives

Verifiable data collection depends heavily on the procedures and selection of the research demographics. Outlines the sampling objective, Ross (2005, p.1) says:

Sampling in educational research is generally conducted in order to permit the detailed study of part, rather than the whole, of a population. The information derived from the resulting sample is customarily employed to develop useful generalizations about the population.

In other words, the major objective of sampling is to allow generalizations out of the results obtained of a limited sample rather than working with a whole population which is in most cases impossible to take place. Furthermore, Sapsford & Jupp (2006, p.26) lay out other benefits of sampling in that it helps:

- Save time
- Save effort
- Obtain consistent and unbiased estimates of the population status.

In the same vein, Sapsford & Jupp stress the fact that working with a selected sample is more beneficial than working with a population because the latter is time and effort consuming and may mislead the researcher to reach the expected results. Undoubtedly, the judicious selection of the population and the sample adds immeasurably to the credibility and accuracy of the research findings.

3.8.2 Types of Sampling

Sampling comes to be selected according to two criteria. Sapsford & Jupp (2006, p. 29) point out the probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling. The former includes simple random sampling, stratified sampling, and cluster sampling, while the latter includes judgment, convenience, and quota sampling. In the present investigation, our sample is a quota sample, sometimes called ‘opportunity’ sampling. The circumstances that led to the choice of this sampling type are dictated by the fact that “whoever is available and willing” (Ross, 2005, p.30) to participate.

Furthermore, Ross (*ibid.*, p. 5) acknowledges:

The use of samples in educational research is usually followed by the calculation of sample estimates with the aim of either (a) estimating the values of population parameters from sample statistics, or (b) testing statistical hypotheses about population parameters.

The target population of the current investigation is first year students of the English Branch at MKU of Biskra. The choice of the population is governed by cogent reasons: first, we have noticed that a persistent challenge in Linguistics is that students cope with difficulty to the demands of the Linguistics tests. Second, we have an optimistic hope to handle this challenge right from the first year so that students in other levels would benefit from the findings of this research. Our population is estimated at 683 enrolled students; however, it should be noted that not all the students attend classes.

Out of the twelve groups that represent our population, our sample comprises seven groups with a total number of students (N=3393). In other terms, our sample represents

57.54% of the total population. A deliberate choice of seven groups is grounded in the following justifications:

- In order to identify the impact of class size on students' achievements. On score of that, we decided to teach two groups in a sub-section;
- Also, we teach two other groups separately (one overcrowded group (N=60) and the other one is fairly large (N=27));
- The other three groups in our sample are taught by other 2 teachers as control groups.

3.9 Piloting

Piloting is an indelible step in research as it paves the way to further rectification and innovations. Blaxter *et al.* (2006, p.137) state that:

Piloting, or re-assessment without tears, is the process whereby you try out the research techniques and methods which you have in mind, see how well they work in practice, and, if necessary, modify your plans accordingly.

Piloting, therefore, may be considered the second step after the construction of research tools.

Different scholars define piloting in different ways. Arnold *et al.* (2009 cited in Arain *et al.* 2010, p.1) say that a pilot study is “a 'small study for helping to design a further confirmatory study”. As for the authors of the National Centre of the Replacement, Refinement, and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs, 2006, p.1):

A pilot, or feasibility study, is a small experiment designed to test logistics and gather information prior to a larger study, in order to

improve the latter's quality and efficiency. A pilot study can reveal deficiencies in the design of a proposed experiment or procedure and these can then be addressed before time and resources are expended on large scale studies.

Further, pilot testing is regarded as feasibility study in that it helps researchers recognize the different variables of the study. Polit *et al.* (2001, p. 467) sustain:

The term pilot study is used in two different ways in social science research. It can refer to so-called feasibility studies which are “small scale version[s], or trial run[s], done in preparation for the major study.

The importance of pilot testing cannot be detracted as it draws a roadmap for the researcher that would eventually lead him/her to attain his/her most cherished goals with minor grievances. Both definitions above (NC3Rs, 2006, p.1 and Polit *et al.* 2001, p. 467) are based on the principle that a pilot study, in both fields of research ... and social science, is a preparatory phase for a larger scale study. It aims at identifying the weaknesses of the design of, for instance, the wording, number, order, and relation to the topic under investigation of the questions in a questionnaire or interviews.

Thus, pilot testing is not luxury but unavoidable necessity as it paves the way to a better refined and finalized version of the study. To clarify this point, pilot testing is not limited only to the questionnaire as a data gathering tool. Baker (1994, pp.182-3) echoes “a pilot study can also be the pre-testing or ‘trying out’ of a particular research instrument”. In the same vein, De Vaus (1993, p. 54) advises researchers “Do not take the risk. Pilot test first”. Therefore, pilot testing cannot be considered a burden; rather it is a procedure that saves the researcher serious flaws and confusion. Accordingly, in the

present study, the piloting phase helped the researcher to discover the ambiguities in the wording of some questions and in the order of some other questions.

3.10 Research Design

Based on what has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, we judge it essential to highlight what fit our investigation as far as the data collection instruments are concerned.

3.10.1 Questionnaires

We relied primarily on the questionnaire for two types of population. We have designed two questionnaires one for the teachers of linguistics at the English Branch (EB) of MKU of Biskra, and another for first year classes of the EB of MKU of Biskra in the academic year 2011/2012.

The first questionnaire (Appendix 4) designed for teachers was composed of 6 sections including 46 question items. Table 26 sums up the questionnaire parts in details.

Sections Number	Sections' Title	Questions' Number	Questions' Nature
I	General Information	6	4 MCQ 2 Open-ended
II	About Linguistics	7	4 Open-ended 2 Yes/No 1 MCQ
III	About First Year Students	8	5 Open-ended 3 Yes/No
IV	About Testing and Tests	15	10 Open-ended 3 Yes/No 2 MCQ
V	About Tests' Reliability and Validity	10	7 Open-ended 3 Yes/No
VI	Comments and Suggestions	1	Open-ended

Table 3.26: Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was first administered for pilot purposes, i.e., to ensure that all the questions are clear for the respondents, but the collected data lead us to keep it for the

final study. In other words, the answers received from our subjects were satisfactory in the sense that they meet our expectations, so that we find it useless to re-administer the questionnaire for the same teachers who represent our sample and our population as well.

The second questionnaire designed for the students was composed of 4 sections including 36 question items (See appendix 5). In fact, the questionnaire was piloted twice before the final study which includes 45 question items (See appendix 7). Based on the students' answers, comments and suggestions; we have modified the questionnaire twice as far as the number of the question items, the wording, and the ordering of the questions to ensure the maximum of clarity, hence to reach the desired results.

Those modifications concern the following questions respectively. Q5 in section I was added as a follow-up question to Q4. Concerning section II, Q13 in the final version which was Q12 in the pilot study is modified for the sake of clarity by giving options for the classification of courses. Q15 and Q17 were added as follow-up questions to Q14 and Q16. Q18 in the Final version was divided into two parts. Besides, we have added 2 questions about class size impact on the students' understanding of Linguistics. In section III, we have added Q24 and Q26 as follow-up questions to Q23 and Q25 in the final version (Q18 and Q19 in the pilot study). Two questions (Q30+Q31) were added to ask about the time allotted to the exams separately from Q28+Q29 which ask about the time allotted to tests (i.e., FA). Another question (Q37) was added to ask about linguistics' test composition in terms of activities. Moreover, Q41 was added as a follow-up question to Q40 (Q31 in the pilot study). We find it necessary to reorder some questions: Q27 in the pilot study became Q40 in the final study and Q34+Q35 became Q38+Q39. Table 27 provides a detailed description of the final version of the students' questionnaire.

Sections' Number	Sections' Title	Number of Questions	Questions' Nature
I	General Information	10	2 Yes/ No 8 MCQ
II	About Linguistics Course	8	4 MCQ 3 Yes/No 1 Open-ended
III	About Testing and Tests	18	8 MCQ 5 Yes/No 5 open-ended
IV	Suggestions	1	Open-ended

Table 3.27: Description of the Students' Questionnaire

3.10.2 Interviews

Besides the questionnaires, we relied on the interview as our second data gathering tool. For their significant advantages, we opted for the tape-recording interviews with the teachers. The interview comprises 14 question items tackling different angles as: the class size impact on students' test results, the group work benefits, the tests' construction and grading scale, the validity and reliability of the Linguistics test, and feedback provision.

On the one hand, a tape-recorded interview had been conducted in the staff room of the Faculty of Arabic Language Arts and Languages at MKU of Biskra with only 5 teachers at different times according to their work schedules and availability. However, we were obliged to opt for the note-taking interview with the 3 other teachers because of time constraints.

On the other hand, a focus group discussion (FGD) took place with the students four days before the second semester exams of the year 2011/ 2012 (May 15th, 2012). The interview took the form of a focus group discussion according to the students' time and availability in Room 08 in the Faculty of Arabic Language Arts and Languages. The FGD with the students includes 18 questions dealing with different aspects as the number of students per group, their level in English generally and in Linguistics particularly, their grades in Linguistics, their attitudes towards the tests' type of activities, instructions and

scoring, their motivation and their satisfaction as far as their level in linguistics is concerned.

Moreover, a feedback interview was held with 8 out of 22 students after teaching them Linguistics in the language laboratory via the Data show seeking their attitudes towards the implementation of ICTs in teaching linguistics and its impact on their achievements. As far as the number is concerned, 8 represent the number of students who accepted to answer the feedback interview questions whereas the other 14 students refused to answer claiming that they are busy revising for the second semester exam. Besides, the main objective of this interview is to find out the link between the teaching method and aids and the students' test results. In other words, we aimed to examine the influence of changing the method and aids in teaching linguistics on the students' test results.

3.10.3 Classroom Observation

The Third data collection tool we used in our work is the classroom observation (CO). The latter took place along approximately four months and a half (from November, 2011 till April, 2012). It was a non-participant classroom observation which was carried out with seven different 1st year groups taught by 4 different teachers. The CO took place along three phases: pre-test, in-tests, and after tests. In addition to the focus on different aspects as the students' degree of concentration, motivation, participation, attendance and noise in and outside the classroom, the teacher's way of presenting the lecture, the material used and the sitting arrangement, a course evaluation form (CEF) was adapted to measure the students' attitudes towards different aspects including the instructor, the classroom environment, the tests' instructions and grading scale, and the course difficulty. The latter was used to support the obtained data from our observation. The CEF comprises 5 sections including 33 statements. (See appendix 10).

Conclusion

The current chapter undertook to explore ontologically and explain epistemologically the research methodology that had been fostered throughout this investigation. The premise has been to elicit the adoption of the different procedures to attain our goal in studying the intertwined variables that affect the teaching and learning of linguistics, assessment of linguistics examination papers, activities included, and reliability and validity thereof.

CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS OF TEACHERS'

VIEWS ON THE LEARNING AND

TESTING OF LINGUISTICS

Chapter Four: Findings of Teachers' Views on the Learning and Testing of Linguistics

Introduction

The present chapter is devoted to the description of the teachers' questionnaire that was administered to the teachers of Linguistics of first year classes at the English Branch of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra and the interviews that were conducted with them. Besides, it presents the interpretation of the obtained results. The chapter describes the approach to the construction of the questionnaire from an insider's vantage point of view with the aim of identifying the interplaying factors that either hinder or foster good teaching and learning Linguistics. It is against this backdrop that the questionnaire includes the rationale, the format description, and the analysis and interpretation of the results. Moreover, the chapter includes definitions of some key concepts with the view of clarifying the focus and the drive of the work.

4.1 Teachers' Questionnaire

4.1.1 Rationale of the Questionnaire

As far as the objectives of our investigation are concerned, we strongly believe that developing a structured questionnaire is quite helpful in obtaining the necessary data. The latter was chosen to be our primary data gathering tool for the advantages that were pointed out by Gillham (2000).

The main attraction of questionnaires is their unprecedented efficiency in terms of (a) researcher time, (b) researcher effort, and (c) financial resources. By administering a questionnaire to a group of people, one can collect a huge amount of information in less than an hour, and the personal investment required will be a fraction of

what would have been needed for, say, interviewing the same number of people. (Cited in Dörnyei, 2003, p. 9).

In Dörnyei's "Questionnaire in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing", Brown (2001, p.3) defined the questionnaire as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions, or statements to which they react by writing out their answers selected from the existing answers".

4.1.2 Description of the Questionnaire

The developed questionnaire consisted of 45 questions including 3 information questions, 3 multiple choice questions, and 39 open ended questions. In line with Dörnyei (2003, p.47) the latter were used for the following merits: The open responses can offer graphic examples, illustrative quotes, and can also lead us to identify issues not previously anticipated. Furthermore, sometimes we need open-ended items for the simple reason that we do not know the range of possible answers and therefore cannot provide pre-prepared response categories.

The questionnaire was divided into six sections concerning different sub-themes:

1. General Information,
2. About Linguistics,
3. About First Year Students,
4. About Testing and Tests,
5. About Tests' Reliability and Validity, and
6. the last for Comments and Suggestions.

Sections four and five take the lion share of the questionnaire because they deal with the core of the research. For practical reasons, each item in the same question appears separately. For that particular reason and reading conveniences, the "sub-items" do not come to be enumerated in the interpretation section.

4.1.3 Pilot Questionnaire

At first, the questionnaire was piloted with 7 full-time teachers who taught Linguistics for 1st year classes at the Department of Language Arts and Foreign Languages “English Branch” at MKU- Biskra from its establishment in 1998 till the present day, in addition to 2 part-time teachers who have taught first year linguistics the last 3 years. The pilot questionnaire was administered in January 2012 face- to- face to obtain reliable and verifiable results as it is pointed out by Blaxter *et al.* “Face-to- face surveys may get a better response rate” (2006, p. 179). For that particular purpose, we undertook to conduct both the pilot and the main questionnaire despite the teachers’ busy schedules.

After we have received back the teachers’ pilot answers, we decided to keep the pilot questionnaire of the pilot study as the final version according to the answers provided by each teacher. We should acknowledge that 8 of the surveyed teachers (9) handed back the questionnaire, which means a response rate of 88.88%. We strongly think that this percentage enables us to consider the outcomes of the research to a great degree faithful to the objectives of the questionnaire.

For ethical matters, we assured the teachers that this questionnaire was anonymous as “Anonymity is a property that captures the protection of released data against possible re-identification of the respondents to whom the released data refer.” Ciriani *et al.* (n. d, p. 3). Besides, this feature gives the respondents more freedom as well as more confidence to provide the required information as it is believed “.... If they are, people may be more honest and informative in their responses.” (Wallace, 1998, p.134). We have used codes (i.e., T1, T2, T3, etc) to refer to each teacher so that we keep the maximum of objectivity throughout the work. The premise behind such a procedure is to avoid being influenced by teachers’ answers and justifications with the ultimate purpose of sustaining objectivity.

4.1.4 Questionnaire Analysis and Interpretation of Results

As mentioned in section 4.1.2, the questionnaire comprises six sections dealing with different sub-themes; so the analysis of those responses will consider each section systematically for the purpose of consistency.

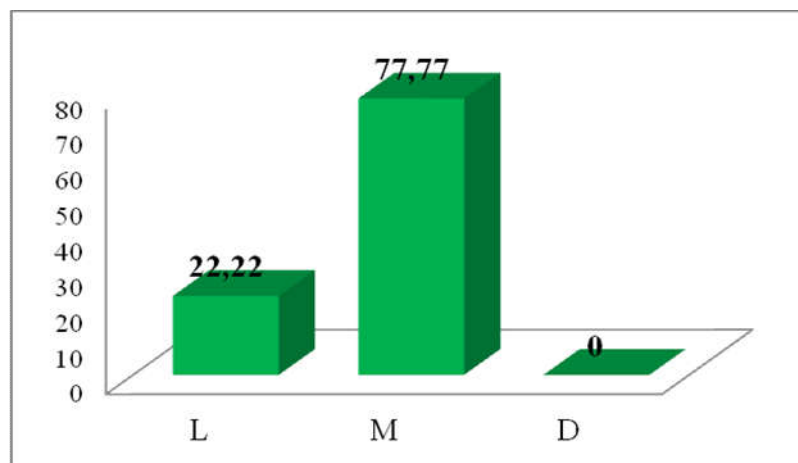
Section I: General information

Q2: Please identify your Degree

- a. Licence
- b. Magister
- c. Doctorate

Options	N	%
L	02	22.22%
M	07	77.77%
D	00	00%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.28: Teacher's Qualifications



Graph 4.4: Teacher's Qualifications

We need to specify from the onset that the surveyed teachers comprise both tenured (viz., full-time, permanents) teachers represent 77.77% of the respondents while supply (i.e., part-time, vacataires) teachers represent 22.22%. As it can be noticed, doctorate-holder teachers are not available at our department, and this absence can be

accounted for the relatively recent founding of the English Language department at MKU- Biskra.

Q3: Please state the number of years to describe your experience in

Teaching English
Teaching Linguistics to 1 st Year Classes
Teaching Linguistics to other Classes

The aim of the present question item is to identify an important criterion for teaching efficiency: seniority and experience. We should explain the difference between the two aforementioned concepts due to their interchangeability in many contexts whereas in teaching, they stand for two different concepts: the former is age-related which means that some of the teachers are middle-aged while others are in their mid-twenties. The latter is knowledge and practice-related. The responses to this question showed that the teachers' length of experience with respect to the number of years in teaching English is between 7- 32 years, in teaching linguistics to 1st year is between 2- 25 years, and in teaching linguistics to other classes between 4- 20 years.

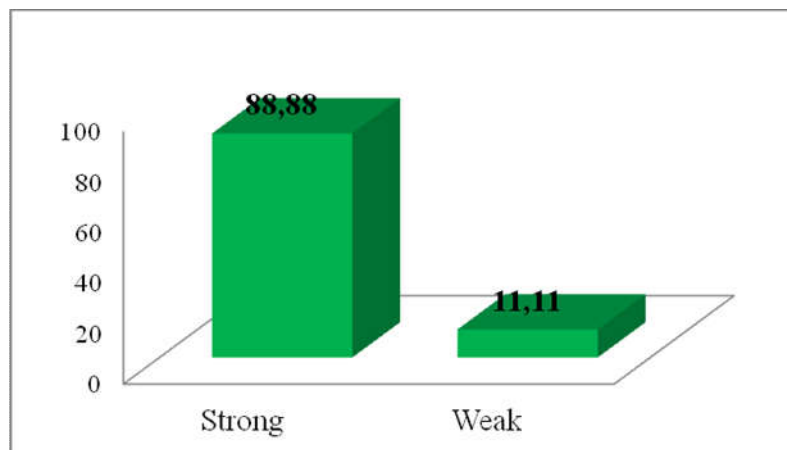
The responses to questions two and three indicate that the lack of experienced teachers with a high degree led the department to hire less experienced teachers with a Licence degree teaching such a demanding course as Linguistics to those freshers i.e., first year students of English. In fact, those students need experienced, efficient, and knowledgeable teachers particularly in linguistics.

Q4: Is your will to teach English

Strong?
Weak?

Options	N	%
Strong	08	88.88%
Weak	01	11.11%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.29: Teacher’s Will to Teach English



Graph 4.5: Teacher’s Will to Teach English

The aim of this question item is to know about the teachers’ willingness to teach English language. Table 2 indicates that 88.88% of the respondents have a strong will to teach English, in contrast with 11.11% whose will is weak. Those teachers who have a strong will stated that teaching English for them is devotion; we have kept the same terms used by the surveyed teachers; a case in point is the term ‘devotion’ which we think is used to mean ‘vocation’. Teachers come into the profession because they feel they are born to be teachers, and they suspect that they cannot do any other job except teaching. The result in question showed that the solid majority of the teachers are doing their job

voluntarily and enthusiastically; hence, they will do their best to achieve their objectives to ensure quality teaching.

Q5: Is your will to teach Linguistics

Strong?
Weak?

Options	N	%
Strong	08	88.88%
Weak	00	00%
NA	01	11.11%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.30: Teacher’s Will to Teach Linguistics

The aim of this question is to identify whether or not it is our respondents’ own choice to teach Linguistics or the module has been imposed on teachers due to staff shortage. From the answers and as we have expected, none of the teachers has a weak will to teach Linguistics.

Q6: Please state your reasons:

Most teachers have a strong will to teach Linguistics for the following five reasons put in teachers’ own words:

1. It is an interesting challenge
2. It is a motivating and a crucial topic
3. It is a passion
4. It helps to improve language proficiency
5. It gives opportunity to have knowledge about the components of language, its history, its development, and its usages and varieties.

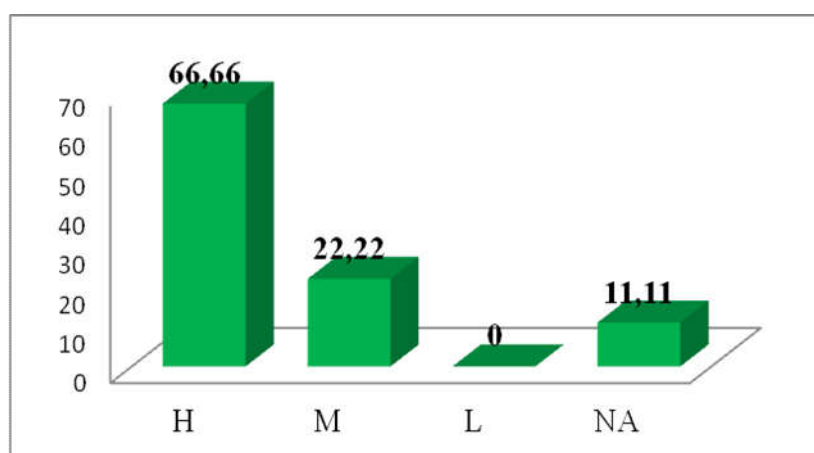
Section II: About Linguistics

Q7: Is your motivation in teaching Linguistics

High?	Medium?	Low?
...

Options	N	%
High	06	66.66%
Medium	02	22.22%
Low	00	00%
NA	01	11.11%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.31: Teacher's Motivation to Teach Linguistics



Graph 4.6: Teacher's Motivation to Teach Linguistics

Accordingly, we strongly believe that motivation is a contributing factor behind one's success or failure as Dörnyei, 2001, p.9 put it:

In a general sense, motivation can be defined as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and

motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out.

This question item is a follow-up question to identify teachers' commitment to teaching Linguistics. Furthermore, it aimed at defining the teachers' degree of motivation to teach such a demanding and at times intimidating course as Linguistics. It has been already noted that Linguistics is reported to be a challenging task for both senior and novice teachers because of the nature of the module itself (i.e., linguistics as a new course with its new areas as pragmatics, semantics, and morphology represents a big challenge especially for those freshers who come with poor background knowledge).

The outcomes have not been expected due to the achievement gap which constantly increases between what students know and achieve in the term examinations. The results of this question item are here exposed from the highest to the lowest percentages: 66.66% of the respondents are highly motivated to teach Linguistics. 22.22% claim that their motivation to teach Linguistics is medium. Unfortunately, 11.11% of the participants provided no answer to this question item, which has been disappointing to us. As expected, none of the participants has a low motivation level.

Q8: Please, justify your choice.

The highly motivated teachers appear to be attached to the module in question for the reasonable argument that it is knowledge enriching from their perspective as already justified in Q6. Those medium-motivated teachers justify their point of view in terms of the lack of Linguistics teaching materials and the lack of the students' interest in learning Linguistics i.e., the students give less importance to Linguistics than to other courses. We believe that these reactions are mainly due to the reliance of the teachers on theory rather than on practice: Linguistics is both a theoretical and practical course, and unfortunately

most teachers count on explaining evasive linguistic concepts. By the same token, students appear to hedge to respond to theoretical concepts.

Q9: What do you think about Linguistics first year course current syllabus?

The purpose behind this question item is to understand teachers' attitude concerning the current syllabus of first year Linguistics Course taught in first year, which means to find out whether or not the teachers are satisfied with that syllabus. For this open-ended question, we collected a variety of responses according to each teacher's point of view. The latter can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ So far, so good
- ✓ It deals just with linguistic concepts
- ✓ It needs updating and polishing up
- ✓ It is quite satisfactory especially within the LMD system
- ✓ It caters for the needs of first year students
- ✓ It offers some effective insights into the nature of the human language and the components of, issues in Linguistics, and so on.

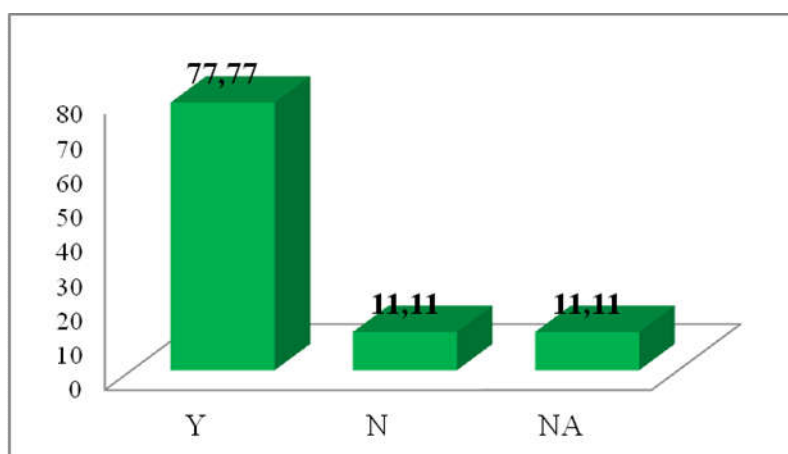
From what is stated above, we can claim that the current first year Linguistics syllabus is to some extent satisfactory and suitable despite some relevant remarks that should be taken into consideration in the future by decision makers especially with respect to the time allotted to such course.

It may appear paradoxical that the same teachers who have developed the first year Linguistics syllabus- according to the recommendations of the LMD decrees- are themselves claiming reservations on their own suggestions.

Q10: Do you think that the structure and the grading of the syllabus content suit first year students' level? Yes (...) No (...)

Options	N	%
Yes	07	77.77%
No	01	11.11%
NA	01	11.11%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.32: Teacher's Opinion about Syllabus Structure/Grading



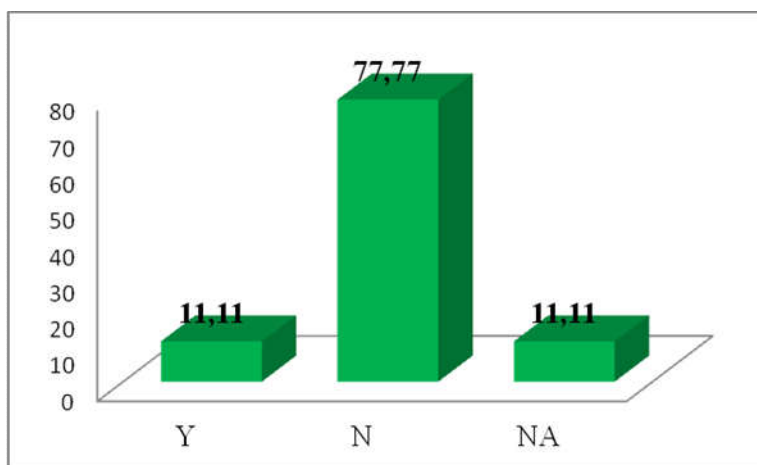
Graph 4.7: Teacher's Opinion about Syllabus Structure/Grading

This question item aims to verify the teachers' view of different divisions and rubrics of the current syllabus content. The results disclose that the great majority of the participants (77.77%) agreed that the syllabus content structure in terms of complexity of concepts is suitable for first year classes as far as the students' level is concerned, while only 11.11% disagreed with that structure and they suggested addition of new linguistics sub-disciplines as neuro-linguistics, and assigning extra-curricular readings to the students.

Q12: Are you satisfied with the number of hours devoted to First years Linguistics classes? Yes () No ()

Options	N	%
Yes	01	11.11%
No	07	77.77%
NA	01	11.11%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.33: Linguistics' Time Allotment



Graph 4.8: Linguistics' Time Allotment

The objective of this question item is to explore the teachers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the time allotted to first year Linguistics 'Course. We have calculated according to the data given to us the time allotted to the Linguistics module at 39 hours during the entire academic year. Only 11.11% of the participants are satisfied, while 77.77% are not.

Q13: Please justify your answer.

The 77.77% of the surveyed teachers suggested that the need of more time is quite evident because of three main reasons namely:

1. The students need more practice, so that they need more time
2. The students have no previous knowledge about the term Linguistics itself
3. The number of sessions (one session of one hour and a half per week) is quite insufficient with regard to the students in the LMD scheme i.e., Applied Language Studies (it is known that Linguistics represents the fundamentals of this type of studies) in addition to the numerous job opportunities that are available nowadays which require an advanced command of Linguistics.

As expected approximately all of the surveyed teachers are not satisfied with the number of hours devoted to first year Linguistics Course. This result indicates that there is a clear need for additional sessions so that both first year teachers of Linguistics as well the students will achieve better outcomes.

Section Three: About first year students

Q14: Do you think that your students are motivated to study English in general and Linguistics in particular? Yes () No ()

Options	N	%
Yes	06	66.66%
No	01	11.11%
NA	02	22.22%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.34: Students' Motivation towards English and Linguistics

Obviously, motivation is one of the major factors which affect students' learning. In this connection, Davies & Pearse (2000:13) claim that "...motivation is a complex phenomenon, and not all learners respond to teaching in the same way." They believe that "Most teachers consider motivation essential for successful language learning." (*ibid.*). This question aims at discovering the teachers' attitudes towards their students' motivation to study English in general and Linguistics in particular. According to most of the teachers (66.66%) the students are motivated to study both English and Linguistics.

Q15: Please explain:

The 66.66% of the participants justified their answers as follows:

- ✓ Great number of publications are realized in English
- ✓ Large variety of jobs necessitate the mastery not only of English but also Linguistics
- ✓ Students are motivated to study Linguistics, but they lack the linguistic means that allow them to take part in discussions and do extensive research

11.11% of the respondents pointed out that the students are not motivated to study neither English nor Linguistics because of their very low language proficiency that does not allow them to cope with the complex content of linguistics. 22.22% of the participants did

not provide answers to this question, one can understand that this category of teachers is either unaware of their students' motivation or does not care about this issue. It should be acknowledged that students come into English language major course via the national direction computer program, which does not account for the low interest of students to pursue higher education studies in English that has been imposed on them and not from their free will.

Q16: Do you think that your students have a negative attitude towards Linguistics?

Yes () No ()

Options	N	%
Yes	02	22.22%
No	05	55.55%
NA	02	22.22%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.35: Students' Attitudes towards Linguistics

The purpose behind this question item is to find out the teachers' perception of their students' attitudes towards Linguistics. The results obtained from the collected answers revealed that 55.55% of the participants claimed that it is the teachers' responsibility for inducing the students' negative attitude towards Linguistics. On the other hand, 22.22% of the respondents have a different point of view, i.e., they believe that their students have a negative attitude towards Linguistics.

Q17: Please say why:

The 55.55% of the respondents pointed out that the students do not know how to deal with such a course, hence, it is not a question of either a negative or a positive

attitude but it is the teachers' responsibility to make the students love them to love what is taught. One of the teachers reported that in order to be an effective teacher of Linguistics "make *them love you to love what you give them*". Similarly, the same participant argued that since the students show interest in the subject questions and interactions, and then the teachers drew the conclusion that their students have a positive attitude towards Linguistics instead.

By contrast, 22.22% of the teachers believe that the students have a negative attitude towards Linguistics. They relate such attitude with what they claim to be:

- ✓ the students' previous impression about the subject in question as being the most difficult one,
- ✓ the abstract ideas that make the task of grasping more complicated, and
- ✓ the difficulty pre-established by inhibiting methodologies of the teachers.

Q18: What do you think about your students' background knowledge in English?

The integration of this open-ended question item aims at exploring the teachers' evaluation of the students' background knowledge in English so that we may gauge the students' engagement in Linguistics.

The answers collected proved our belief that one of the main factors behind our students' deficiencies in Linguistics is the significant poor background of English that they come with to the university level to be EFL students. The shared assessment among the respondents is that the first year students' background knowledge in English is arbitrarily medium to weak. The participants claimed that the students

come with a very poor level in English that put teachers in a critical situation whether to work hard to improve the students' English or to provide them with the required content on the topic. Moreover, they stated that the students' level in English is limited in general. Besides, in spite of their agreement on the poor level of most of the students, the teachers did not deny the existence of some students who come with considerable language proficiency.

Q 19: Do you notice any difference(s) between your students' level of motivation, concentration, understanding, participation, etc. Yes () No ()

Options	N	%
Yes	06	66.66%
No	01	11.11%
NA	02	22.22%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.36: Teachers' Attitude towards Students' Level Differences

This question item attempts to find out about the teachers' awareness and assessment of their students' differences in terms of their concentration, participation, understanding, motivation, etc. 66.66% are aware of students' differences related with psychological factors, 11.11% do not notice such differences, and finally 22.22% did not provide any answer.

Q20: Please explain.

The surveyed teachers provided four main reasons: methodological-related reasons, diversity-related reasons, cognitive-related reasons, and finally group-related reasons. The teachers' justifications are listed as follows:

- Teaching is based on selection, competition, and cooperation among students so differences of level are quite necessary.
- Diversity is an advantage for both students as well as teachers.
- Good students concentrate and participate through questions and comments, but the others do not make efforts.
- The groups are heterogeneous because of diverse backgrounds.

Q21: Do you think that class size has a negative impact on your students' outcomes/ understanding? Please, explain.

Large classes are common in Algerian universities, which has caused many teachers to express their outrage to the lack of sensible management of the over crowdedness. Along those lines, we have purposefully included a question that addresses that grievance with the aim to explore the teachers' attitude towards the class size influence on the students' understanding. We have a strong belief that the number of students per group has negative impact on the students' achievements i.e., the larger the groups, the less they are beneficial to the students. The answers to this question item revealed that the great majority of the respondents agreed that the class size has a negative impact on the students' outcomes stating that:

- ✓ The large number of students per group negatively affects the teaching learning process, i.e., Linguistics requires illustrations, clarifications, exemplifications that can be provided to solely a reasonable number of students (no more than 25 students per group).
- ✓ Overcrowded classes are not an appropriate setting for good achievement. They hinder the students' progress and lessen the students' opportunities to learn.
- ✓ The class size is a key factor to the creation of a healthy atmosphere in the pedagogical sense (a small class is easily managed and discipline imposed).

- ✓ It is a problem of logistics: small size of classrooms, and lack of chairs.
- ✓ It is a crucial factor: the more a course, including Linguistics, is taught in a small group, the better the teacher's performance will be, and the effective grasping on the part of students is going to be attained.

However, only a few of the participants do not believe altogether that the class size has its impact on the students' achievements without coming up with justifications as it was expected from them.

Section Four: About Testing and Tests

Q22: Do you take into consideration your students' differences in English when preparing tests in Linguistics? Yes () No ()

Options	N	%
Yes	05	55.55%
No	02	22.22%
NA	02	22.22%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.37: Students' Level and Linguistics Test Design

The premise behind this question item is to find out the degree of the teachers' awareness of their students' differences in English in general and Linguistics in particular especially when preparing tests. In other words, we aimed at discovering the impact of the students' differences on the teachers' approach to designing tests in Linguistics. The outcomes indicated that the solid majority of the teachers (55.55%) believe that the students' differences are a crucial criterion and they should be taken into consideration when designing and constructing Linguistics tests. Another percentage calculated at 22.22% represents the second largest proportion of respondents, points to teachers' beliefs that those cognitive differences are not an important factor without any

justification, unfortunately, for this view. The respondents seem to think that the most important aspect in a test is the elaboration of a balanced series of questions that take into account the average (usually medium) level of the students. They stated in simple words “*We test them on what they are taught so we suppose that they have understood*”. It is widely accepted that examination papers need to mirror classroom practice in order to be valid and reliable.

Q23: If Yes, for what reason(s)?

Those 55.55% of the participants justified their answer by claiming that:

- ✓ All tests must be gradual, i.e., exercises or activities must at least conform as well as suitable for students’ differences.
- ✓ This should be considered simply because it is one of the testing requirements.

Q24: If No, please say why.

The 22.22% of the surveyed teachers did not state any reason to support their belief.

Q 25: What do you think of the physical setting of testing?

The purpose of this question item is to understand the extent to which the physical setting (namely classrooms, halls, light, furniture, and temperature, etc.) of testing influences the students’ outcomes. This question led to a variety of responses that come to confirm our beliefs, i.e., that the setting of testing is unacceptable especially in terms of size and some other crucial equipment such as the air conditioner, security (too much noise in halls), light, etc. Most of the respondents claim that the setting of testing is completely inappropriate describing it as being:

- ✓ Awkward
- ✓ Absolutely unacceptable because of the *incredible* number of students (hundreds) in a very narrow space ironically one of the respondents entertainingly comments “*We let you imagine the consequences*”.

By contrast, a few of the surveyed teachers believe that the setting is good, and it needs some (re)-adjustments and reorganizations (*viz.*, room sitting arrangement).

The assessment of the surveyed teachers' views discloses that the managers need to give more importance to this crucial issue in order to reach satisfactory results. In short, they should think seriously about the class size which has its negative impact on both the students' understanding as mentioned earlier as well as the setting of testing.

Q 26: Do you think that one hour and a half is sufficient for a test in Linguistics?

Yes () No ()

Options	N	%
Yes	04	44.44%
No	03	33.33%
NA	02	22.22%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.38: Linguistics Test and Time Allotment

Question 26 aims at studying the relationship between the time allotted to Linguistics tests and the students' achievements. In fact, the teachers of Linguistics believe that one hour and a half is sufficient for a test in Linguistics in the sense that they usually prepare a test that should be seated in the devoted time.

Q27: Please justify your answer and make suggestions if necessary?

On the one hand, the responses collected come to confirm our expectations as to the response rate of 44.44% of the participants who answered 'yes' emphasizing the following arguments:

- ✓ It depends on the nature of questions
- ✓ There should be a balance between time and length of questions
- ✓ It depends on the amount of information and the way you, as a teacher, design the test
- ✓ It is sufficient if there is a possibility of giving more than one test per semester

On the other hand, a considerable response rate of 33.33% of the participants indicates that 1h30 is insufficient and additional time, two hours for example, may be sufficient for a Linguistics test. Furthermore, they call for application of the international norms of tests which are known as one hour for a quiz and two to three hours for a written examination. Still 22.22% of the participants abstained from answering this question item.

Q28: Do you think that Linguistics' Tests are better taken in:

The morning	The midday	The afternoon
8h00/10h00	12h00	14h00/16h00
.....

Options	N	%
The morning	04	44.44%
The midday	01	11.11%
The afternoon	00	00.00%
None of These	04	44.44%
NA	00	00.00%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.39: Linguistics' Tests Taking Best Time

Question 28 attempts to understand teachers' views of best time for a Linguistics test taking. A large majority of 44.44% of the respondents believe that a Linguistics test should be taken in the morning between 8.00 a.m and 10.00 a.m. 44.44% of the teachers have chosen none of the suggested alternatives. Only 11.11% of the respondents prefer midday test taking for students.

Q29: Please, justify your choice.

The 44.44% of teachers are convinced that the students in this window of time are physically and psychologically ready to take tests, and they come with a considerable level of concentration. Moreover, they claim that Linguistics is more scientific than literary, and thus, its tests are best to be taken in the morning. 44.44% of the participants claim that there is no perfect timing for tests in Linguistics. According to them, time is not a significant parameter in Linguistics tests. They stated that there are many other factors like the space, the number of students, the degree of difficulty of the test, etc. However, to sit for an exam with fresh dispositions is always positive. They pointed out the test can be held at any time because they think that the subject is *futile*.

And the minority (11.11%) of the respondents, however, claims that there is a need of warming-up in the morning because of the technical nature of the subject.

Q 30: When preparing a test in Linguistics, what criteria of test design do you take into account?

This question item aims to shed light on the test design criteria that are taken into consideration in the process of preparing the tests in Linguistics. We collected a variety of answers reflecting each teacher's own appreciation of this issue. Those replies can be listed as follows:

- ✓ Variety, chronology, and syllabus objectives
- ✓ Students' level, content of the syllabus, difficulty of the questions, and the time allotted
- ✓ Bloom's taxonomy and criteria of a good test
- ✓ Consistency, covering the major parts of the lecture, balance in terms of the allocation of marks, and meeting students' general level

22.22% of the teachers did not answer this question claiming that it is not clear, while 22.22% expressed their views with respect to the tasks of the test. They say:

- ✓ MCQ, cloze test, Yes/No questions, True/False statements, direct questions to compose in small paragraphs.
- ✓ Students are asked to comment, discuss, analyze and bring appreciations on the subject after having been taught the Linguistics terminology.

Q31: As far as the length of the test is concerned, do you take into consideration the time allotted? Yes () No ()

Options	N	%
Yes	07	77.77%
No	00	00.00%
NA	02	22.22%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.40: Test Length and Time Allotted

While the vast majority of the respondents (77.77%) believe that time is a crucial factor that should be accounted for as far as the length of the test is concerned; while 22.22% of the participants provided no answer (NA) to this question item, and none of the respondents opted for 'No' answer. With these results in mind, we drew the conclusion

that the time allotted is one of the major factors that affect test design as we have expected.

Q32: Explain your choice:

The 77.77% of teachers reported that the common scheduled time (1h 30) granted for a written examination is not sufficient and consequently the students face many difficulties in confining their work within these limits. Hence, the teacher must create a pedagogical harmony between the length of the test and the time allotted. Furthermore, they believe that every point in the test is measured and considered as “minutes” out of the total time allotted. They also believe that the length of the test should correspond to the time allotted, so that the teacher’s evaluation will be more valid. In addition, the 11.11% of teachers justified their answer explaining that Q31 seems the same as Q26.

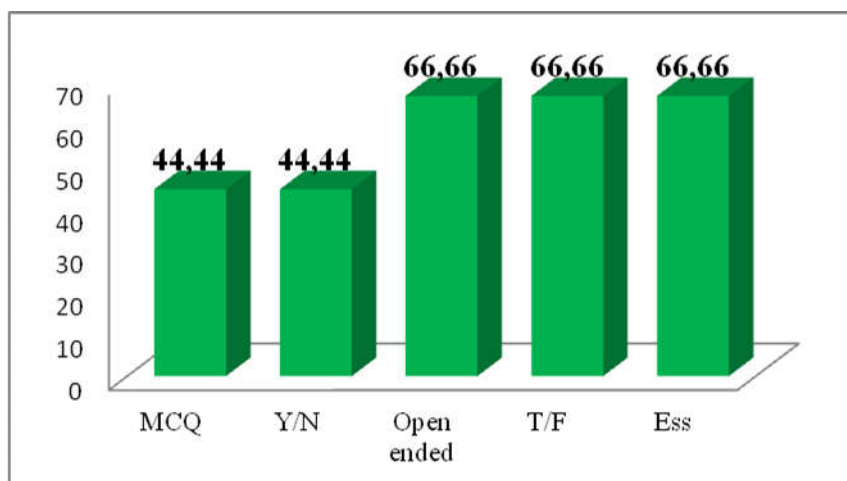
With these results recorded from the teachers’ responses, we came to the conclusion that the time allotted is one of the major factors that affect test design as expected.

Q33: What kind of activities do you include in the first year Linguistics’ tests?

MCQ	Y/N Q	Op/End Q	T/F Q	Essay Form
.....

Options	N	%
MCQ	04	44.44%
Yes/No	04	44.44%
Open Ended	06	66.66%
True/False	06	66.66%
Essay Form	06	66.66%
NA	00	00.00%

Table 4.41: Linguistics Test Activities/ Tasks



Graph 4.9: Linguistics Test Activities/ Tasks

This question addresses the type of activities or tasks included in first year Linguistics tests. With the choices offered in this question, we found that an equal response rate of 66.66% is given to the three last choices stated in table 40: Open ended questions, True/false activities, and essays form activities and another equal response rate of 44.44% is given to the two first choices provided in the same table: MCQ and Yes/no questions. Those findings reveal that the respondents' tendency is much more towards T/F, open ended, and essay activities rather than MCQ and Y/N questions. These preferences indicate that teachers favor analysis and hard facts rather than discrete points provided by MCQs and Y/N questions.

Q34: According to your teaching experience in Linguistics, which type (s) of activities do your students prefer? Explain.

As a follow-up to Q33, Q34 aims at identifying teachers' views on their students' preferences of the type of Linguistics test activities. Thus, as teachers of Linguistics we will take this into consideration when preparing the tests to maximize the students' chance of obtaining satisfactory grades. Noticeably, for the vast majority of the

respondents (77.77%) most of their students prefer MCQ, Yes/No, True/False, and Open Ended questions for the four reasons listed below:

- ✓ Very easy to answer
- ✓ Offer a high degree of “communication” (MCQ precisely), students communicate the numbers or letters.
- ✓ Offer “chance” (Y/N questions) when no justifications are required
- ✓ Students do not have to retrieve information, it is in front of them they spend less time in memorizing

This belief in fact is supported by Harmer (2007, p.169) who states that “Multiple choice questions have the great advantage of being easy to mark...Markers do not have to worry, then, about the language in the questions; it is simply a matter of checking the correct letters for each question.” He added “multiple-choice questions are attractive in terms of scorer reliability.” (*ibid.*)

However, 11.11% of the respondents point out that the choice of the testing method is the main task of a teacher.

Q 35: When giving scores to each activity, what do you take into account in the first place (form, content, etc.)?

This question aims at exploring the scoring techniques used by teachers of Linguistics when marking every activity in their tests. We supplied choices like content, form, and meaning so that to specify which factor takes the priority in dividing scores on the activities. The results reveal that 33.33% of the participants give equal importance to all of the three aforementioned factors stating that “*scoring englobes everything*”. 33.33% of

the respondents give priority to content, while 22.22% of the teachers give such priority to form then to content and meaning in addition to the organization of ideas.

From these findings, we concluded that teachers of Linguistics are interested not only in the content students provide in their test answer but also in the form in which those answers are presented. They believe that by devoting a part of the scores to the form, students will pay more attention to the way their answers will appear. Thus this proportion of scores will stand as a motivating factor that enhances students' English performance, i.e., scores devoted to form means well-structured answers.

Q 36: How many activities does your test in Linguistics generally include?

The purpose of this question (36) is to understand teachers' views of the relationship between the number of activities in a Linguistics test and the students' level, the time allotted, etc. The answers to this question varied depending on every teacher's points of view which are summed up in the following list:

Teachers' replies	Teachers' explanation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time and students capacities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No precise number	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time, content, and scoring scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 sections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unknown
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time factor precisely
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students need concentration, if more focus fades away

According to the responses provided in the list above, we can say that the time factor appears to be number one behind the decision of how many activities should be included in a Linguistics test.

Section Five: About Tests Reliability and Validity

Q37: Do you think your Linguistics' tests particularly are reliable and valid?

Yes () No ()

Options	N	%
Yes	06	66.66%
No	00	00.00%
NA	03	33.33%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.42: Linguistics' Test Reliability and Validity

This question seeks to know to what extent teachers of Linguistics believe in their tests' reliability and validity. The results show that 66.66% of the teachers believe that their Linguistics' tests are reliable and valid, 33.33% of them provided no answer, and none of them think their test lack validity and reliability. From the collected data, we can say that almost all of the teachers think that their Linguistics' tests are reliable and valid because, they are convinced that a test should be reliable and valid. These are the two crucial criteria that enable a test to be a 'good test'. Besides, they think that tests are designed in accordance with the time, situation, and access factors.

Q38: Please justify your answer.

They justified their answer suggesting that the problem of validity is more complex because it depends on the objectives assigned to the test and the students' attitudes.

Q 39: Do you take into account Reliability and validity as characteristics of good tests when designing a test in Linguistics? Why?

The aim of this question is to identify the importance teachers attach to reliability and validity among other features of good tests. The response rate to this question is 66.66% of the participants value both validity and reliability, while 11.11% of them did not provide an answer. The former believe that reliability means well organization and exhaustiveness and validity refers to appropriateness and correctness. They emphasize that these two features *must* be in, i.e., they should be given a special importance/focus because they help making decisions about the students' level.

Q 40: According to you, what is a reliable and valid test?

We approached the issue of reliability and validity in line with, on the one hand, the meaning of reliability associated with the consistency of tests results, i.e., if administered to the same students on another occasion, they [students] would obtain the same results". (Basanta, 1995, p.56), and on the other hand, with the meaning of validity in terms of "the degree to which a test measures what it is intended to measure" (Orlich *et al.* 2009, p.322)

We find it necessary to explore teachers' own appreciation of a reliable and valid test. 22.22% of the participants did not supply any opinion, 22.22% state some characteristics that, they believe, make the test reliable and valid. They point out, for instance, that a reliable and valid test is the one which does not include ambiguous questions, the one in which the time allotted equals the amount of information asked to give back, the one which meets the students' level and the actual testing situation, as it is the one which is accessible and clear. Besides, 33.33% of the participants supplied different descriptions of a reliable and valid test; they say for example:

- A valid test is a test whose content looks right to what has been taught as well as the one which is based on scientific tests and conditions of evaluation input \Rightarrow output.

- A reliable test is a test if scored again by different teachers; it will give the same results.

Q 41: what type of test is your test in Linguistics?

This question aims at specifying the type under which the teachers would classify the test of Linguistics, namely achievement tests, placement tests, diagnostic tests, etc., commonly known to teachers, we aimed to identify the Linguistics test type teachers use.

Unfortunately, the results were not as expected except for 11.11% of the respondents who classified the Linguistics test under Achievement Test type, while 22.22% provided no answer, and 44.44% referred to their Linguistics test type as 'reliable' and 'valid'. This category of teachers may be confusing types of tests with characteristics of tests.

Q42: Please explain:

The 11.11% of the surveyed teachers justified their answer explaining that the tests aim to judge how much the students have achieved in relation to the content taught and the assigned objectives.

Q 43: In your opinion, is there any relation between your students' level and their grades in Linguistics? Yes () No ()

Options	N	%
Yes	04	44.44%
No	01	11.11%
NA	04	44.44%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.43: Students' Level and Linguistics' Grades

Q 44: Do you think that your students are satisfied with their level in Linguistics?

Yes () No ()

Responses	N	%
Yes	01	11.11%
No	05	55.55%
NA	03	33.33%
Total	09	100%

Table 4.44: Students' Satisfaction of Linguistics 'Level

Undoubtedly, the students' grades in one way or another reflect the students' level to some extent. For this reason, we included Q43 and Q44 respectively to identify the nature of relationships between students' level and their grades, hence, to determine their satisfaction with their level as far as Linguistics is concerned. The results as they appear in Table 43 and Table 44 respectively indicate that for the vast majority of the teachers (44.44%) the students' grades in Linguistics have a strong relation with their level; 55.55% of the respondents point out that their students are not satisfied with their level in Linguistics.

Q45: Please, justify your answer.

The 55.55% of the surveyed teachers (Table 17) justified their responses stating that students:

- ✓ feel frustrated because they cannot explain their points of view.
- ✓ need years of study and practice to reach a satisfactory level.
- ✓ often grumble about tiny issues
- ✓ view Linguistics as philosophy and they fail to have good marks in tests.

On the one hand, teachers are convinced that students are able to grasp different issues, notions, and theories presented to them; however, they are unable to put forward their opinions and explanations and this is the result of their poor language proficiency level. On the other hand, 22.22% of the participants believe that teaching is the responsibility of teachers in the first place, i.e., if the student is successful is because s/he is intelligent, but if s/he fails it is because the teacher is inefficient. In addition, they suggest that satisfaction is not absolute because very often students think that Linguistics courses are difficult.

Section Six: Comments and Suggestions

In this section, we invited our participants to provide us with their comment(s) and suggestions if any about the issue addressed in this questionnaire. The response rate in this section is 77.77% for those who supplied us with worthy comments and suggestions; only 11.11% of the participants did not provide any comment or suggestion. Those provided comments and suggestions have been summarized in the following lines:

- ✓ The questions of the questionnaire are relevant to the topic being investigated.
- ✓ Teaching is subordinated to learning, so good teachers make good learners.
- ✓ The design of any kind of tests should to a large extent depend on the present situation of our department and university.
- ✓ The quality, validity, and reliability of any test will be questioned if the tests are not (or cannot be) organized in an optimal pedagogical (number of students and place allocation) situation. For honesty's sake, we have included the exact words of the surveyed teachers with the view of providing credibility to our work.

Besides, the participants provided a number of worth noting suggestions. The latter concerns some strategies that may help students benefit from Linguistics instead of considering it as their “bête noire”. They suggested strategies:

- ✓ To help students see language through Linguistics
- ✓ To make this topic less difficult by depassionating (*sic*) the creed of students towards learning Linguistics

4.2 Teachers' Interviews

As mentioned previously in Chapter three, the second data gathering tool in the current investigation is the interview. The latter was a tape-recording structured interview that was conducted at different points in time of the academic year (2011/2012) according to the teachers' work schedules. The interviewees were all teachers of first year Linguistics of the English Branch at MKU of Biskra, 8 full-time teachers and 1 part-time teacher.

4.2.1 The Tape-recording Interview

We opted for the tape-recording interview for its outstanding features: “it preserves actual language as it is naturalistic with objective record” (Nunan, 1992, p.153). The interviewer’s contributions are recorded as they enable the researcher to reanalyze the data after the event. In fact, in the present research, we supported the tape recording interview with note-taking for the sake of facilitating the transcription of the recorded material. In other words, following the recording of the interviews relying on a digital voice recorder (Olympus WS-750M), we provided the interviewees with a written version of the interview questions requesting their answer in a written form. This procedure is a helpful step in transcribing the recorded data as Nunan (*ibid.*) put it:

I have found in classroom research that taking copious notes in addition to recording the lessons under investigation greatly enhances the subsequent tasks of transcribing and interpreting the taped lessons. The same should also hold for interviews.

Based on Nunan’s principle, we opted for both types of interview as they fit our investigation’s needs and objectives.

4.2.2 Description of the Interview

As mentioned above, our interviews with the teachers of Linguistics of the EB at MKU of Biskra were conducted at the Faculty of Arts and Languages using both forms: tape-recording and note-taking. In addition, we relied on note-taking for our informants’ work schedules and availability. Among the nine (n=9) interviewed teachers, there were three (n=3) who did not have time to tape-record the interview, hence, we decided to get their answers in a written

form. The interview (Appendix 8) contains fourteen (n=14) question items whose objective is to fill the gaps that the previous triangulation tools may have failed to cover. Moreover, we felt that the addition of the interview in question would add details to our understanding of assessment of linguistics in our University.

4.2.3 Analysis of the Interview

Q1: Do you consider the number of students per group as an influential factor on their understanding of the Linguistics lessons? Please, explain.

It is widely accepted that class size represents a major concern for EFL teachers; in other words, teaching large classes is a challenging task for teachers. They often find it difficult to activate the quiet students, feel out of control as they feel trapped in the problems of classroom management. (Hess, 2001). All of our subjects strongly agree that the large classes have their negative impact on the students' understanding of Linguistics lessons in particular. They believe that large classes do not allow the teacher to evaluate his/her students' progress as it does not offer opportunities for discussion. Besides, they join their voice to Hess on the idea that the teacher in large classes spends more time dealing with behavior issues instead of instruction.

T1 claimed that: "the smaller, the better. Whenever the class size is small, the teacher and material are at the disposal of students, thus much information is attained".

To sum up this issue, we can say that it is required to call for class size reduction is necessary for students' better understanding of Linguistics, hence, to help them achieve better results in tests.

T2 pointed out 'the more we go down is idealistic, and the more we go up is dangerous'. (Author's emphasis).

Q2: Do you relate students' low level in Linguistics to their poor level in English? If not, to what other aspects you may relate this?

Some of the teachers relate the students' poor achievement in Linguistics to the students' poor proficiency level in English. They justify their answer stating that most of students come to university with a very low proficiency level in the target language, i.e., they lack the appropriate means: good command of spoken and written English. Furthermore, they believe that the students' choice of studying English studies is a matter of national direction process ,i.e., students succeed in the Baccalaureate exam and then find themselves in the English Branch without that strong will and/or their high level. In effect, the national direction process does not account fully for the students' readiness and preferences for their higher education programs.

Some other teachers believe that the students' poor level in English is only one of the factors standing behind the students' deficiencies in Linguistics. The low level of students is, according to them, a matter of other factors as: the students' lack of critical thinking skills, the lack of reading habit, and the total reliance on the handouts' content and the teacher's classroom explanation.

Still a minority of the participant teachers consider the newness of Linguistics as subject of study for new university comers as the primary obstacle hindering the students' assimilation of Linguistics. For this category of the participants, the teacher has a crucial role to play in students' success. Accordingly, first year students should not be condemned for their poor level, and the decision can be made after 2 and 3 years of study. They insist that the low level of students is directly related with the teacher him/herself.

Expectedly, we have found that having a good command of English helps the students a great deal to understand Linguistics as one of the courses taught to first year classes. According to some teachers, most of the students have deficiencies not only in Linguistics but also in some other courses primarily because of their poor proficiency level in English. Moreover, most of the students come to university with the idea that the teacher is the only knowledge provider; hence, they do not make efforts to take part in their studies in- and/or outside the classroom.

Q3: Do you think that the students' low grades in Linguistics are directly related to the way you, as a teacher of Linguistics, state the tests instructions?

The results reveal that the interviewed teachers strongly believe that there is no direct relation between the students' low grades in Linguistics and the teacher's way of stating the tests' instructions.

T1 stated that:

The students are careless, and most of the time they come to the test expecting questions that need answers from the handouts.

According to **T2**, *even if the instructions are clear, the lack of concentration when reading the questions often leads the students to misunderstand the exam questions; hence, to obtain low grades in Linguistics.*

Some other teachers think that the tests instructions directly affect the students' achievements. **T3** pointed out that:

The clarity and precision of tests' instructions depends to a great extent on the teacher's competence and experience. In addition, teachers as test developers have to pay attention to the clarity of the tests' instructions.

The data collected regarding this question indicate that the students' needs, learning differences, and test criteria should be taken into consideration when writing tests

instructions. In other words, unclear instructions lead to students' failure of understanding the test questions, and thus to wrong answers and low grades.

Q4: Do you encourage your students to work in groups? Please, explain.

It is worth noting that group work is a helpful strategy in language classrooms. Many researchers have shown the effectiveness of such strategy in enhancing language learners' competences through interacting with their peers and teachers. Taylor (1987), for example, indicates that "small groups provide language learners with many opportunities to interact directly with the target language". (Cited in Sugino, 1994, p.104). Indeed, when it comes to our participants' answers, when asked about whether or not they encourage group work in their classrooms, the interviewed teachers admit that group dynamics is an effective technique which can provide occasions for debate and exchange of opinions.

T5, for instance, expressed his opinion in the following terms:

Group work is used among other strategies in our classrooms even if we find it a bit challenging since we teach Linguistics in lecture halls.

On the other hand, three of the interviewed teachers think differently. They do not use group work strategy in their classrooms, and thus do not encourage this technique, for they want to diagnose each individual student.

T6 stated in this connection that:

Low-level students are more likely to be overcome and dominated by high-level students.

T7 and **T8** go on to add:

There are two other factors that hinder the use of group work. The first is time, i.e., one session per week (one hour and a half) is quite insufficient, and the second is class size, i.e., the huge number of students per group.

Ultimately, we can say that group work strategy may work to some extent precisely in our case (*viz.*, first year classes of the EB at MKU of Biskra). Although, it is impossible for some teachers to use group work strategy, it is still beneficial according to some others in that it encourages cooperation among learners especially those who feel shy to ask the teacher for clarification.

Q5: Do you think that group work is helpful for your students to understand better?

This question item seeks further explanation about the use of group work strategy in teaching Linguistics. The answers show that the first category of teachers believe in the advantages of group work. In this connection, Harmer (2007, p.43) points out that:

In pairs and *groups*, students tend to participate more actively, and they also have more chance to experiment with the language than is possible in a whole-class arrangement.

In addition to the cooperative spirit that group work creates among students, it also creates a sort of competition between students.

T1 asserted that:

Group work is a very advantageous strategy, and if used, teaching will be effective and learning fruitful.

T2 added that:

It helps decrease the students' level of anxiety since they work with their peers without external inhibitions and the teacher may be one of them.

However, the second category of the teachers claims that group work strategy works in some modules and not in others.

T6 stated for example that:

Some examples as Grammar, Written Expression, and Oral Expression in which the group work is effective and beneficial since these modules are taught to small groups in

the classrooms; whereas modules as Literature, Methodology, and Linguistics which are taught to large sections in lecture halls.

In addition, **T8** believes that:

There is no possibility to apply the group work strategy emphasizing the fact that class size has its impact on group work effectiveness.

Q6: Since the majority of students get low grades in in-class tests, have you ever given them take-home tests to get familiar with the activities, instructions, etc? If no, why? If yes, have you noticed any improvement?

Familiarizing students with in-class tests' activities and instructions may help students achieve better results. One of the techniques used to realize this objective is to give students take-home tests. The latter aims at giving the students an idea of what types of task the test may include and the way instructions are set. Surprisingly, some of the interviewed teachers have no idea about such technique, and some others do not use it for two reasons: they state one is that first year classes are not yet ready and prepared for such kind of tasks, and another is for the sake of reliability and validity of the test when given for the first time. Also, they prefer to explain briefly the instructions the day of the test since it does not take a long time.

Some other teachers, however, believe that it is necessary that test takers know the format of the test they undertake. They go on to add that familiarizing students with tests' instructions is recommended by test experts for test developers/ writers. Unfortunately, even if take-home tests are used by some teachers, they show little improvement.

T5 advocated that:

Take-home exam is workable especially with good students; however, in most cases and sadly, students do not make efforts to achieve the work. They take ready-made answers from the internet or reproduce their classmates' work.

To help our students do well in tests, we have to find the appropriate techniques. If take-home tests are not so helpful for first year classes, both students and teachers should be introduced to this test form; eventually these tests can be gradually in subsequent years.

Q7: Have you noticed any difference in your students' motivation after giving tests?

Please, describe briefly.

No one could deny the importance of motivation and its impact on students' achievements; however, motivation itself could be affected by some factors as the students' tests results. It is important to think about motivation as the essence of language teaching and learning. (Gilakjani, Leong, & Sabouri, 2012, p.10). The participant teachers have observed a low level of motivation especially of those students who obtain poor grades. They stated that students "are more passive showing their anger instead of showing their interest for improving their level".

In this connection, Winke (2005, p.1) points out:

Motivated students are every teacher's dream---they are willing to work hard, and their own goals to those of the classroom, focus their attention on the tasks at hand, persevere through challenges, don't need continuous encouragement, and may even stimulate others in the classroom, promoting collaborative learning.

Motivated students are simply those who recognize their responsibility for their own learning. In our case, classrooms are still teacher-centered classrooms where the teacher is the main if not the only knowledge provider. Most of the students keep

motivated only if they obtain good results in their tests. In other words, their motivation is conditioned.

The answers to this question confirm that students' motivation is primarily a matter of will to achieve certain goal(s). Taguchi (2006, p. 561) asserts that: "The importance of high motivation, which all educators wish to create in their students, has been closely linked with the need for achievement".

Poor marks leads the students to believe that good achievement in Linguistics is an unattainable. According to Crump (1995), motivation has four main constituents which are: excitement, interest, keenness and enthusiasm towards learning. (Cited in Jafari & Tengku Mahadi, 2012, p.232). Unfortunately, most of our students getting poor marks do not show enthusiasm and interest towards the course.

Q8: What do you do to regain their attention?

This follow-up question aims to discover to what extent the teachers are successful to keep their students' motivated along the teaching learning process. It is commonly known that it is the teacher's responsibility to help his/her students to sustain their motivation in a number of ways. (Harmer, 2007). All the interviewed teachers seem to share the same idea with Harmer in that they feel responsible and attempt different techniques in order to motivate their students.

Some of the teachers discuss the tests' outcomes with the students as they believe it may help increase their motivation. Some other teachers rely on group work strategy believing that it creates a competition spirit among students, i.e., motivated students influence the unmotivated ones. Other teachers try to simplify the course content to enhance students' understanding of the lessons. Besides, they usually recapitulate the

points of previous sessions at the beginning of each new session to help students move from the known to the unknown.

Still another group of teachers give advice to students, attract their attention to the Linguistics course, ask them to put the question of grades aside, and give priority to progress and achievement. From the answers reported above, we recognize that EFL teachers are aware of the importance of sustaining their students' motivation. They all work hard to achieve this goal using different techniques.

Q9: How do you evaluate the reliability and validity of your tests in Linguistics?

Question 9 aims to examine the Linguistics' tests as far as reliability and validity are concerned as the two most important qualities of good tests. All the interviewed teachers agree on the point that to make a test useful, it must be reliable and valid. They consider their tests in Linguistics reliable and valid since "the test covers all what is covered in the classroom".

T3 pointed out, for instance that:

To make a test valid, the teacher should adapt its content to the content of what has been taught, and to make it reliable, the teacher should be quite sure, if the test is scored by another teacher, the students will get the same scores.

Other teachers find it difficult to evaluate their own tests in terms of reliability and validity, taking into consideration two major principles: first, a test should not comprise any ambiguities or contradictions, and second, a test should be assigned very precise points to be treated.

From what is said above, we can say that the participants are aware that reliability and validity are two major qualities of useful tests. It is a necessity, therefore, for teachers, to understand these two qualities and their importance in test design.

Saville (2003, p.65) asserts that:

Validity is generally considered to be the most important examination quality; it concerns the appropriateness and meaningfulness of an examination in a specific educational context and the specific inferences made from examination results.

Reliability is “a key concept in any form of measurement and contributes to overall validity”. (*ibid*, 68). It is a necessity for test developers (namely, teachers) to take these two qualities into account whenever they are about to design a test.

T8 stated that:

It is a must for test developers (namely, teachers) to take these two qualities into account whenever they are about to design a test.

Q10: Under which type of test do you classify your tests in Linguistics?

As described in Chapter Two (Section 2.4.4), there are different types of tests. Each type has its name and its own purpose(s). Some of the interviewed teachers classify their test in Linguistics as an achievement test because their main objective is to follow the students’ progress throughout the course. In this context, we can say that the participants are in line with Perrone (n. d, p. 1) who points out that “Achievement tests are primarily used in making classroom-level decisions and are designed with particular reference to the course objectives/ learning goals of a specific class”. But, when it comes to labeling the test itself, we find that most of the participants use the terms: exam, examination, written test and not “achievement test”. Only few of them use the term “achievement test” when talking about their tests; and most of our participants suggest that we should rethink the naming of our tests even if this does not matter to the students.

Still a minority of the participants answered this question with reference to reliability and validity.

We find it necessary to attract our colleagues' attention to the importance of naming tests according to their purposes. Besides, we have to raise our students' awareness of the different types of tests and their objectives.

Q11: Are you satisfied with your students' level in Linguistics in particular and in English in general?

Our objective behind this question is to explore the impact of the students' level in English on their achievements in Linguistics. To start with, our participants' common point of view concerning the students' level in English is 'total dissatisfaction'.

T1 claimed that:

Most of the students come to university with a low proficiency level in English.

T2 added that:

The students' poor level in Linguistics too is affected by the poor background knowledge in English.

T3 explained that:

For instance, even if the students have the required information to answer the test questions, most of them fail to transmit this knowledge because they lack the appropriate language (vocabulary and grammar).

Some other teachers have a different point of view in that they relate the students' poor level in English as well as in Linguistics with other factors.

T4 stated that:

I think the problem is not in tests, but it is elsewhere.

T5 said that:

I do link their low level to other causes outside the university.

To sum up, one could say that having a good mastery of the target language (*viz.*, a good command of both spoken and written English) is required for students to be specialized in the English Branch. Besides, those students should have a strong will to learn and make the necessary efforts to achieve success.

Q12: What do you suggest as far as Linguistics tests are concerned to make your students achieve better results?

One of our major concerns in this investigation is to find out the obstacles standing behind our first year students' poor results in Linguistics. The focus goes to tests precisely, that is why this question comes to explore what may be done at the level of tests their design, their tasks, their instructions, and their administration, to help our students obtain good marks.

Almost all the interviewed teachers agree with the idea that there is a need for a systematic reform of the testing system.

T2 advocated that:

The students should prepare well for their tests ask for their teachers' help where necessary and look for more information in extra sources to enrich their knowledge; in addition, they should not be restricted to what has been provided in the classroom.

T4 claims that:

Teachers should encourage them to be self-reliant, hence, to improve their level.

Still other teachers point out that when preparing a test, the teacher should pay attention to three crucial elements: the accuracy of the questions to be tackled, the questions'

objectives, along with the necessary balance between the number and nature of the questions, the time allotted and the grades granted to each question.

As far as tests are concerned, we conclude that we should prepare the students for the test in advance. In other words, we have to ask some questions in the classroom to see to what extent both form and content of the questions are understood. Based on those interviews discussions, we may design a test that is useful for almost every student taking into consideration the differences in their learning needs, styles and abilities which is almost not feasible in our case for the large class size.

Q13: How do you think the administration can help students and teachers realize their testing objectives?

As for this question, we aim to examine the relationship between the realization of the teachers' and students' objectives and the administration decisions. The researcher aims to know how the decisions made by the administration may affect the teaching learning process in general and testing in particular.

The first suggestion comes to urge the administration to reduce the class size (30 students per group) and to allocate more time to Linguistics (2 sessions per week = 3 hours a week). Second, the participants request the administration to rethink the testing conditions suggesting that allocating 2 hours instead of 1 hour and half would be more suitable, and providing more classrooms and lecture halls in order to avoid the crowdedness which may help decrease cheating opportunities. Third, students should be guided to know how to use the internet appropriately to help them obtain additional and useful information, and improve their level in Linguistics. Another suggestion is that teachers should provide the students with readings which meet their needs.

The last suggestion is to revise the content of the Linguistics syllabus so as to give a special importance to the testing process that is an integral part of the teaching/ learning process and not a mere operation of grading.

Q14: Have you ever discussed the results of exams/ tests with your students?

Whatever your answer, please say why.

Our objective behind the inclusion of this question is to discover to what extent the discussion of exam results with students is beneficial. Some of the participants believe discussion of the results of tests with students has its impact on the students' future achievements. It helps involve students in their own self-assessment. Furthermore, it raises the students' awareness of their different weaknesses through providing them with appropriate ways to answer certain types of questions.

T6 claimed that:

Discussing the exam results with the students helps them draw their students' attention towards their most recurrent flaws and deficiencies; hence, to guide them to overcome such problems in the future.

T7, for instance asserted that:

Discussion of exam results is required especially when the test outcomes are disappointing.

In other words, if the results are satisfactory, discussion is not that necessary. We can say that discussion of tests' results is a necessity in all cases whether the results are disappointing or satisfactory. Discussion of the results of tests with test takers is recommended by testing experts. Therefore, proceeding in such a way is a step forward to remedy what is wrong, and both teachers and students may get profit from that step.

Conclusion

In this chapter, both the questionnaire and the interview have been to a great extent informative in that they reported the attitudes, assessment, beliefs, perceptions, and values that teachers of Linguistics harbor vis-à-vis their students, their subject, their socio-professional, and their contextual environment. Despite the overriding nature of the module, Linguistics is not seriously taken into consideration which may in the long run compromise the effectiveness of learning English at university level. We have noted that teachers of Linguistics are meaningfully engaged in the teaching/learning process in spite of a plethora of grievances and challenges.

CHAPTER FIVE:
FINDINGS OF THE STUDENTS'
VIEWS ON THE TESTING OF
LINGUISTICS

Chapter Five: Findings of the Students' Views on the Testing of Linguistics

Introduction

The aim of the current chapter is to identify the students' views on the testing of linguistics. The chapter begins with a description of the piloting phase and the main study of the present research. The chapter begins with a detailed description of the students' questionnaire in its piloting study 1, its piloting study 2, and its main study and presents the analysis and interpretation of the results. It then describes and analyses the focus group discussion.

5.1 Piloting Phase

It should be mentioned from the very onset that every academic research calls for pilot study to ensure the maximum of credibility. Besides, pilot studies are quite crucial because they allow the researcher to make his/her final decision about what to use as data gathering tools from the results obtained in this phase. Thabane *et al.* (2010, p.2) define the pilot study as: "A smaller version of a study [is] carried out before the actual investigation is done. Researchers use information gathered in pilot studies to refine or modify the research methodology for a study and to develop large scale studies."

Moreover, to achieve reliable and valid results, a research should rely at least on two to three data gathering tools; in our case one of those data collection methods has been the questionnaire. The latter was administered to both teachers of Linguistics as well as first year students of the English Branch at MKU of Biskra of the academic year 2011/2012.

For the students, we have piloted the questionnaire twice before administering the final version. The first pilot group includes two doctorate students who were asked to

provide their comments and suggestions with respect to wording, order, number of question items, and their relevancy to the topic in question (see appendix 5). Taking their first comments into consideration, we have designed the second version of the questionnaire to be piloted for the second time with the same group in addition to two other doctorate students (see appendix 6). The provided comments were about suggesting alternatives as in Q24, clarifying some notions as for MCQ in Q25, and reformulating some questions as Q7, Q19, Q31 and Q32 for the sake of clarity. Besides, the second piloting revealed that most of the questions are clear for three questions: Q13 (providing choices in a table is better), Q16 ('easy' instead of 'not difficult'), and Q19 ('time allotted' may be unclear for students).

5.2 Description of the Questionnaire: Piloting Study 1 and 2

Our main objective behind the use of the questionnaire as our primary data collection source is to obtain the students' own perceptions and attitudes towards their grievances in Linguistics. The first version of the questionnaire was designed as summarized in table 45. (See Appendices 5&6).

Pilot 1		Pilot 2	
Number of sections	4	Number of sections	4
Number of questions	35	Number of questions	45
Type of questions	Close-ended +Open-ended questions	Type of questions	Close-ended +Open-ended questions
Nature of questions	Direct	Nature of questions	Direct
Number of students	30	Number of students	50

Table 5.45: Students' Questionnaire (Piloting study 1&2)

As demonstrated in table 45, there are some differences between the first and the second version of the questionnaire (namely in the number of questions as well as the

number of students). In the questionnaire of the first pilot study, we included Q1 about the name as the first question in section I; however, in the questionnaire of the second pilot study, we included the name in the top of the first page for the sake of anonymity, keeping in mind that this part will be detached before access to the provided information. Initially, we looked for the final lists of students which can help us put codes for the students before we start the analysis and interpretation of the students' answers; hence, we ensure anonymity. Unfortunately, it did not work as expected because the final lists of students were not ready at the level of the administration.

The second difference is that at the level of Q4 in which we judged it essential to include a follow-up Q5 in the questionnaire of the second pilot study so that we obtain more details about the students' choice of studying English. The next difference concerns Q13 that did not fulfill its objective in the first version (namely to identify the most difficult courses for 1st year classes); therefore, we found it necessary to state Q13 differently providing alternatives which may guide the students in their classification. Besides, we added a follow-up question to Q14 in the first version hoping to obtain more details from the students. Furthermore, we decided to split Q15 (pilot study 1) up into two different questions seeking different answers for each (Q18 in pilot study 2) because it was not understood as expected.

As far as Section III is concerned, for the sake of obtaining more details, we found it necessary to add two follow-up questions (Q25&Q27 in pilot study 2) to Q18 and Q19 respectively (pilot study 1). Moreover, another difference concerns shifting Q29 (pilot study 1) from Section III to be part of Section II (Q21 in pilot study 2), as we found it essential to add three more questions to Section III. Piloting the questionnaire twice was quite useful and helpful to design the final version (see appendix 7).

5.3 Students' Questionnaire Analysis

As already mentioned in earlier sections of chapter III, this questionnaire is composed of 4 sections with a total number of 36 question-items of different natures. The analysis and interpretation of the collected data deal with each section separately. The questionnaire seeks the students' attitudes towards English in general and the Linguistics course and its tests in particular. It starts with a section in which we aim at gathering general information about our respondents including 10 question-items.

From this section, we move to the second section which goes to target the students' attitudes towards the linguistics course particularly comprising 8 question-items. Next, the third section targets the core of this research which is testing and tests including 17 question-items. Then, we finish the questionnaire analysis with a section in which we look for our informants' suggestions concerning linguistics' tests setting and activities.

Section I: General Information

Q1: Age:

- a. 18-20
- b. 26-40
- c. Over 40

Options	N	%
A	123	95.34%
B	04	3.10%
C	01	0.77%
NA	01	0.77%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.46: Students' Age

In second and foreign language learning, age appears to be an important factor; some researchers speak about critical age and/or optimal age. Research attests that the younger, the better in mastering second and foreign languages.

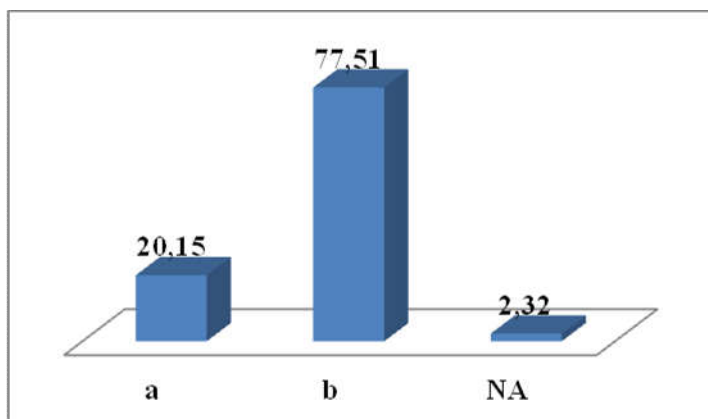
The first QI in this section is about the students' age. The aim behind this QI is to know who our respondents are. The results as shown in both table 46 and the graph reveal that the vast majority (95.34%) of our participants are between 18-25 years old, 3.10% are between 26-40 years old and only 0.77% are aged over 40 years old. These results confirm that the majority of first year students are from the young generation who are really freshmen coming to university without any previous experience.

Q2: Gender:

- a. Male
- b. Female

Options	N	%
A	26	20.15%
B	100	77.51%
NA	03	2.32%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.47: Students' Gender



Graph 5.10: Students' Gender

Some believe that gender is revealing as far as the readiness and motivation to learn second and foreign languages. The second question seeks the gender of our respondents. The results in table 47 reveal that more than half of our sample (77.51%) is females, and only 20.15% of them are males. This confirms the strong tendency of females towards language studies, even though the 20.15% of males is a considerable percentage when compared to the first promotions of the English department at MKU of Biskra where the number of males was so limited (For instance, 2001/2002 promotion includes 6 males and 90 females). This example leads us to draw the conclusion that there is a noticeable increase in the male's interest towards language classrooms.

Q3: Choice of studying English:

- a. Free
- b. Imposed

In either case, explain.

Options	N	%
A	114	88.37%
B	15	11.62%
NA	00	00.00%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.48: Students' Choice of English Studies

The third question is about the students' choice of studying English. The results show that the great majority of our respondents (88. 37%) chose to study English freely, and only for 11.62% of them the English study was imposed. Each of the two categories justified their choice as follows:

Free	Imposed
✓ Love of the English language itself	✓ Administrative orientation “good mark in English BAC Exam”
✓ Simplicity and easiness of English when compared to French	✓ The family choice “international language “
✓ Language of technology	
✓ dream of being teachers of English	✓ Because of the job market
✓ It is the international language	✓ no possibility for getting another branch
✓ passion to master its rules and speak it fluently	✓ One of the secondary choices.
✓ It has a very important position in Algeria nowadays.	

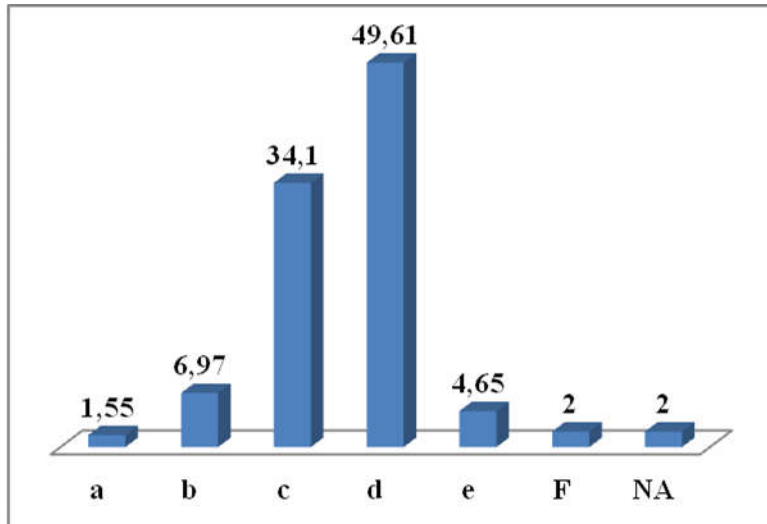
However, 18.42% among the 88.37% did not state the reasons behind their free choice of studying English.

Q4: How do you describe your level in English?

- a. Very poor
- b. Poor
- c. Average
- d. Good
- e. Very good
- f. Excellent

Options	N	%
A	02	1.55%
B	09	11.62%
C	44	34.10%
D	64	49.61%
E	06	4.65%
F	02	1.55%
NA	02	1.55%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.49:Students’Level in English



Graph 5.11: Students' Level in English

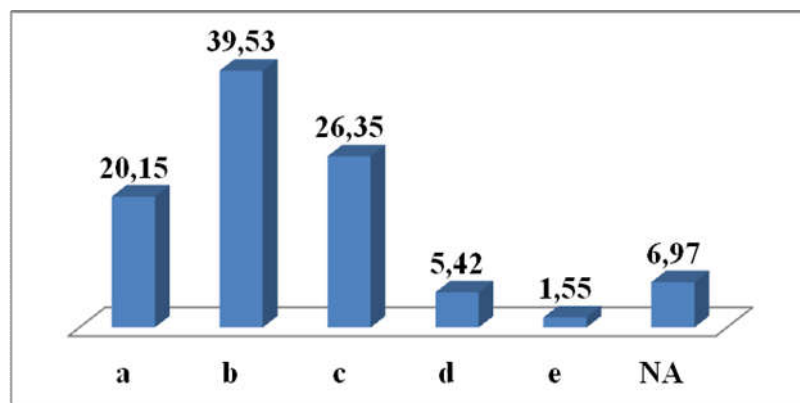
With a view of evaluating the aptitude in English, we included the fourth QI. The latter seeks the students' own impression and evaluation of their level in English. The results demonstrate that the majority (49.61%) has a good level, 34.10% with an average level, 6.97% with a poor level, 4.65% with a very good level, and the lowest percentage goes to the extremes "very poor" and "excellent" with 1.55% for each and still 1.55% of the students did not provide us with their evaluation. So these results reveal that the students' level in English is from average to good.

Q5: Your will to study English is...

- a. Very strong
- b. Strong
- c. Uncertain
- d. Weak
- e. Very weak

Options	N	%
A	26	20.15%
B	51	39.53%
C	34	26.35%
D	07	5.42%
E	02	1.55%
NA	09	6.97%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.50: Students' Will to Study English



Graph 5.12: Students' Will to Study English

From the students' own evaluation of their level in English, we have moved to their self-evaluation of their will to study that language. The aim of this question is to find the link between the students' level in the target language "English" and their will to study it. In other words, we strongly believe that if the students' will is strong to study English, they will do their best to reach a good level. The results as shown in table 50 above confirm our belief. They reveal that the students' will to study English is "strong" with 39. 53% and "very strong" with 20. 15%, whereas 26.35% of the students' are uncertain about their real will to study English, 5. 42% have a weak will and only 1. 55%

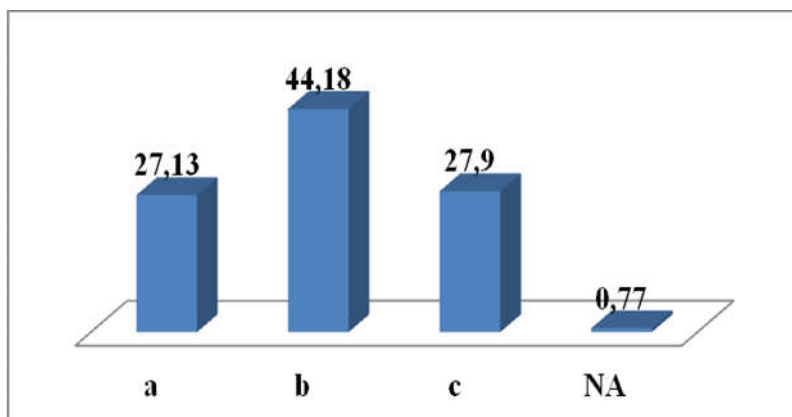
of the students whose will is very weak and still 6.97% did not provide an answer at all for unknown reasons.

Q6: Your BAC Stream is ...

- a. Scientific
- b. Literary
- c. Foreign Languages

Options	N	%
A	35	27.13%
B	57	44.18%
C	36	27.90%
NA	01	0.77%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.51: Students' BAC Stream



Graph 5.13: Students' BAC Stream

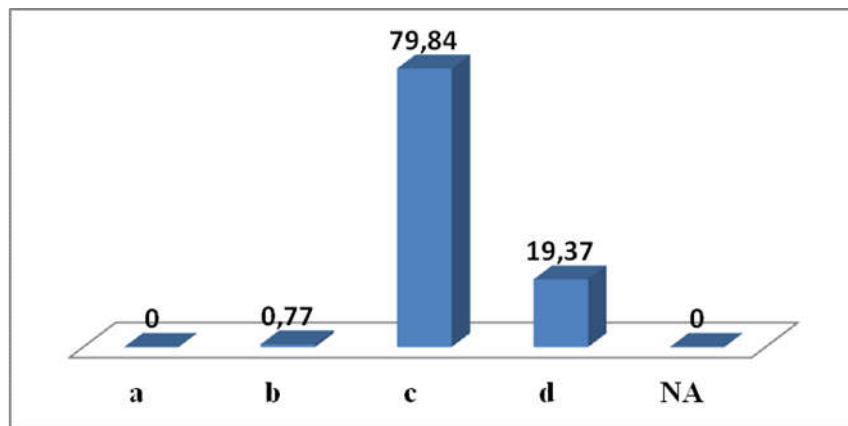
The objective behind this QI is to find out if or not the students' BAC streaming has an impact on their English studies. The results indicate that the majority (44.18%) of the informants was in literary stream, 27.90% were in foreign language classes, and 27.13% were in scientific stream; only 0.77% who did not reply this QI. These results reveal that the interest in studying English does not concern only one specific category.

Q7: What is your English BAC Exam Mark?

- a. 0-5
- b. 6-10
- c. 11-15
- d. 16-20

Options	N	%
A	00	00.00%
B	01	0.77%
C	103	79.84%
D	25	19.37%
NA	00	00.00%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.52: Students' BAC Exam Marks



Graph 5.14: Students' BAC Exam Marks

Q7 is a follow-up to Q 6 where we seek the students' English BAC exam mark. The aim is to know whether or not this mark is taken into consideration when it comes to enroll in the English branch. From table 52, we notice that the vast majority (79.84%) got between 11-15/20, 19.37% between 16-20/20, only 0.77% between 6-10/20 and none of our respondents got between 0-5/20. These results show that the average mark is

between 11-20/20; hence it proves that the English BAC exam mark is one of the important variables taken into consideration when enrolling in the English branch.

Q8: Are you first year for the first time in English?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Options	N	%
A	124	96.12%
B	05	3.87%
NA	00	00.00%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.53: Students' First Experience as EFL Learners

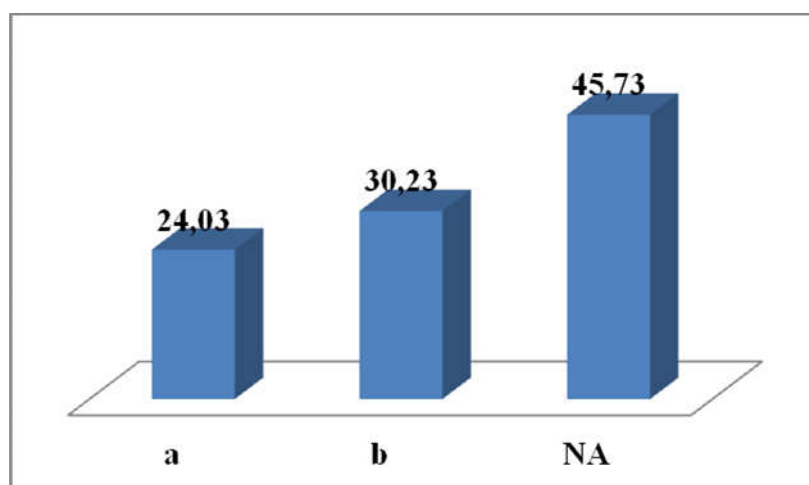
With Q8, we move to a different angle which concerns the students and their first year at university, i.e., we seek whether our respondents are new comers to university or they have already lived the experience as first year students. The results reveal that the great majority (96. 12%) of our participants are freshmen; only 3. 87% of them have already studied at university as first year students. Unfortunately these results show disconnection with the results obtained in Q 9 which is a follow-up. Q 9 seeks the number of students who suffer from debts in their first year in case they are studying first year for the second time.

Q9: If you study first year for the second time, do you suffer from debts?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Options	N	%
A	31	24.03%
B	39	30.23%
NA	59	45.73%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.54: Students and First Year Debts



Graph 5.15: Students and First Year Debts

The answers collected from both Q8 and Q9 show a sort of contradiction concerning the students' understanding of what is meant by success with debts in the LMD system. Stated differently, table 54 demonstrates that 30.23% of our informants state that they do not suffer from debts, 24.03% of them state that they suffer from debts in their first year level, while a significant number of the participants 45.73% did not provide an answer to this question item showing that the majority of our first year students are not aware enough about the rules governing the LMD system and how it works exactly.

Q10: If yes, in which course(s)?

- a. Grammar
- b. Oral Expression
- c. Phonetics
- d. ESP
- e. Literary Texts
- f. Linguistics
- g. Written Expression
- h. Culture of the Language
- i. Methodology
- j. Computing
- k. Foreign Language

Options	N	%
A	08	6.20%
B	04	3.10%
C	18	13.95%
D	10	7.75%
E	09	6.97%
F	22	17.05%
G	03	2.32%
H	13	10.07%
I	26	20.15%
J	04	3.10%
K	04	3.10%
NA	92	71.31%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.55: Students' Debts in First Year Courses

Q10 is a follow-up question. It attempts to examine the courses which stand as obstacles in the students' way to success. 71.31% did not answer the question. 20.15% of the respondents suffer from debts in the Methodology course in the first place, and then Linguistics goes to the second position with 17.05% followed by phonetics with 13.95%

in the third position. As shown in table 55, these three courses take the lion-share of the students' debts as far as their first year is concerned, whereas the other courses go from 10.07% for Culture of the language to 2.32% for written expression. The results of this question prove that Linguistics is one of the major obstacles facing first year students.

Section II: About Linguistics Course

Q11: Rank the following first year courses in terms of their difficulty.

1: very easy 2: easy 3: difficult 4: very difficult

Courses	1	2	3	4
Grammar				
Oral Expression				
Phonetics				
ESP				
Literary Texts				
Linguistics				
Written Expression				
Culture of the Language				
Methodology				
Computing				
Foreign Language				

Options	Rank+ N				Rank+ %			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
A	29	72	26	03	22.48	55.81	20.15	2.32
B	35	64	26	01	27.13	49.61	20.15	0.77
C	/	24	65	40	/	18.60	50.38	31.00
D	04	54	55	33	3.10	41.86	42.63	25.58
E	08	75	28	19	6.20	58.13	21.70	14.72
F	02	17	53	57	1.55	13.17	41.08	44.18
G	23	64	36	03	17.82	49.61	27.90	2.32
H	09	69	36	17	6.97	53.48	27.90	13.17
I	04	11	51	64	3.10	8.52	39.53	49.61
J	79	38	04	/	61.24	29.45	3.10	/
K	79	45	02	03	61.24	34.88	1.55	2.32
Total	129				100%			

Table 5.56: First Year Courses and their Classification in Terms of Difficulty

This section targets topic the Linguistics course and first year students' attitudes towards it. Q11 seeks the students' classification of the first year courses in terms of their difficulty. This question aims to find out whether or not linguistics is among the difficult or very difficult courses. Table 56 shows that linguistics is classified as difficult with a third position with 41.08% after phonetics with 50.38%, and ESP with 42.63%), while it comes in a secondary position as a very difficult course with 44.18%, after methodology with 49.61%, and before phonetics with 31.00%. The participants' replies reveal that linguistics is not an easy topic as far as first year classes are concerned.

Q12: If you consider linguistics as difficult or very difficult, please say why.

Q12 looks for the students' reasons behind their beliefs that linguistics is a difficult or a very difficult course. 28. 68% of the informants did not answer this question, while 71. 32% provided the reasons listed below:

- Linguistics is difficult because:
 - ✓ It contains a lot of new terms.
 - ✓ It needs a lot of efforts and concentration.
 - ✓ It needs previous knowledge and mastery of the language.
 - ✓ It is like philosophy
 - ✓ It needs motivation
 - ✓ It is abstract
- Linguistics is very difficult because of :
 - ✓ Its newness as a topic
 - ✓ Its unfamiliar vocabulary and new concepts.
 - ✓ The teacher's way of explanation
 - ✓ The ambiguity of its exam questions
 - ✓ The lack of practice
 - ✓ The quantity of information compared to the time allotted
 - ✓ The level of the teacher compared to students level "beginners".
 - ✓ The complexity of the ideas.

Q13: How would you describe your attitude towards each course?

Courses	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Grammar			
Oral Expression			
Phonetics			
ESP			
Literary Texts			
Linguistics			
Written Expression			
Culture of the Language			
Methodology			
Computing			
Foreign Language			

Options	Rank+ N			Rank+ %		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
A	53	25	01	41.08	19.37	0.77
B	52	19	09	40.31	14.72	6.97
C	21	32	24	16.27	24.80	18.60
D	19	35	25	14.72	27.13	19.37
E	26	38	15	20.15	29.45	11.62
F	33	27	19	25.58	20.93	14.72
G	47	27	04	36.43	20.93	3.10
H	26	36	17	20.15	27.90	13.17
I	09	24	45	6.97	18.60	34.88
J	56	18	05	43.41	13.95	3.87
K	60	14	05	46.51	10.85	3.87

Table 5.57: Students' Attitudes towards First Year Courses

Table 57 shows that 97.68% of the students have described their attitudes towards their first year courses whereas 2.32% did not provide any reply. The positive attitude

goes from 43.51% towards Computing to 6.97% towards Methodology. The neutral attitude goes from 29.45% towards Literary Texts to 10.85% towards the Foreign Language. The negative attitude goes from 34.88% towards Methodology to 0.77% towards the Grammar course. As far as the Linguistics course is concerned, the results reveal that the students' attitude towards this particular course is positive with 25.58%, neutral with 20.93%, and negative with 14.72%. Therefore, we can conclude that the students' failure in Linguistics has no relation with their attitude.

Q14: As far as Linguistics is concerned, how would you describe your level of comprehension?

- a. Very low
- b. Low
- c. Medium
- d. High
- e. Very high
- f. Not sure

Options	N	%
A	05	3.87%
B	17	13.17%
C	79	61.24%
D	10	7.75%
E	01	0.77%
F	15	11.62%
NA	02	1.55%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.58: Students' Level of Comprehension

Q14 seeks for the students' level of comprehension in linguistics. As mentioned in table 58, the highest score goes to the third option "medium" with 61.24%, the average score goes to the second option "low" with 13.17%, and the least score goes to the fifth

option “very high” with 0.77%. Those 61.24% of the informants view their level of comprehension medium providing the following reasons:

- ✓ They find difficulties when revising.
- ✓ They find difficulties with vocabulary
- ✓ They lack practice
- ✓ They lack concentration
- ✓ They find difficulties when sitting for exams
- ✓ They find difficulties with some ambiguous ideas.

In addition, those 13.17% with the low level justified their answer as follows:

- ✓ They feel unable to understand all the courses
- ✓ They feel confused when following the teacher’s explanation
- ✓ They cannot follow the teacher’s pace
- ✓ They miss many classes
- ✓ They understand what the teacher says but they feel unable to answer in the exams.

Whereas those 0.77% with a very high level did not provide their reasons behind their evaluation of their linguistics’ comprehension level.

Q15: Are you motivated to study Linguistics?

- a.** Yes
- b.** No

Options	N	%
A	67	51.93%
B	50	38.75%
NA	12	9.30%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.59: Students' Motivation to Study Linguistics

Moving from Q13 asking about the students' attitude towards their first year courses to their evaluation of their comprehension level in Q14, Q15 is included seeking the students' motivation to study linguistics. The majority (51.93%) view that they are motivated, while 38.75% state that they are not motivated to study linguistics and still 9.30% of the sample did not answer the question. In fact, Q15 is followed by another question which asked the participants to justify their answer. 58.91% of the respondents did not provide any justification, while those who answered either with yes or no provided the following justifications as listed below:

Yes:

We feel motivated to study linguistics because:

- ✓ Linguistics is a very important course
- ✓ It is a challenge
- ✓ It is an interesting course which helps in learning English.
- ✓ The teacher is our motivator.
- ✓ Our teacher is very good, he/she explain everything in a simple way
- ✓ The course is varied and related to different domains and sciences
- ✓ We have the will to master it even if it is difficult
- ✓ The only reason is that we love our teacher of linguistics.

No:

We do not feel motivated to study linguistics because:

- ✓ The linguistics' session is inanimate, no activities, no participation, etc.
- ✓ Linguistics by nature is boring even if the teacher is doing his/her best to motivate the students.
- ✓ We feel unable to understand this module.
- ✓ It contains a lot of new concepts.
- ✓ We find it a very difficult course.
- ✓ We do not have the opportunity to participate, our teacher does everything.
- ✓ The scheduling is not good; it makes all students lose concentration.

In other words, we can say that the students' motivation to study linguistics is mainly due to the importance, the nature, and the content of the course as well as the teacher's presentation of the course. On the other hand, those who are not motivated to study linguistics associate this lack of motivation to the nature of the session, its scheduling, and the unfamiliarity with the content.

Q16: Do you think that the time allotted to Linguistics course is sufficient?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Options	N	%
A	62	48.06%
B	63	48.83%
NA	04	3.10%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.60: Linguistics and Time Allotment

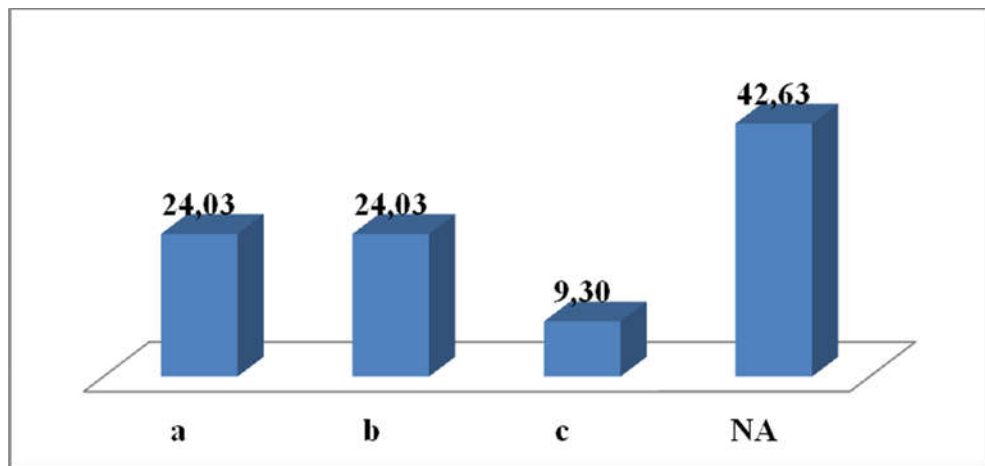
Q16 is another yes/no question aiming to find out the students' point of view about the time allotted to linguistics. In other words, to find a remedy in case the time allotted is not sufficient. Table 60 shows that 48.83% think that the session of one hour and a half per week allotted to linguistics is insufficient, while 48.06% think the opposite, and only 3.10% of the respondents did not answer this question.

Q17: If “No”, how many sessions per week do you need?

- a. Two
- b. Three
- c. More

Options	N	%
A	31	24.03%
B	31	24.03%
C	12	9.30
NA	55	42.63%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.61: Students' Needs of Sessions per Week



Graph 5.16: Students' Needs of Sessions per Week

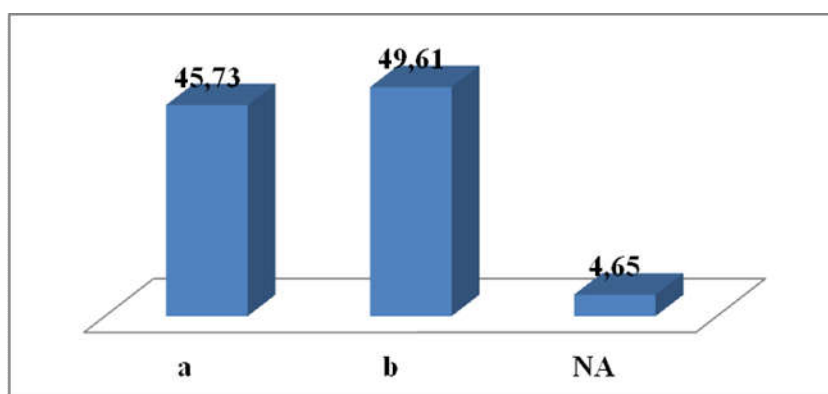
Q17 looks for the suggestions of those 48. 83% of our participants who seek more time to be allotted to the linguistics course. Q17 provides three choices to the participants regarding the number of sessions they need per week. The choices include two sessions weekly (=3 hours), three sessions weekly (=4 hours and half), or more. The results reveal that an equal percentage is given to the two first provided choices (24.03%) while 9.30% is given to the third choice, and still 42.63% had no choice.

Q18: Does the number of students per group affect your level of Linguistics' comprehension?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Options	N	%
A	59	45.73%
B	64	49.61%
NA	06	4.65%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.62: Class Size Impact on Linguistics' Comprehension



Graph 5.17: Class Size Impact on Linguistics' Comprehension

From the number of hours allotted to linguistics, we move to the number of students per group and whether or not it affects the students' level of linguistics comprehension. As far as this question is concerned, we strongly believe that the smaller the class size is, the better achievements will be realized. Behind the inclusion of this question, we aim at exploring the students' attitude towards the class size "large or small" and its impact on their level of understanding. The answers provided were not as expected because 49.61% of our participants view that the number of students per group does not affect their level of comprehension, while 45.73% of them believe the opposite, and still

4. 65% of the students did not answer the question. Besides, within the same QI, we have requested the respondents to explain their answer in both cases. The explanation of both groups can be summarized in the following list:

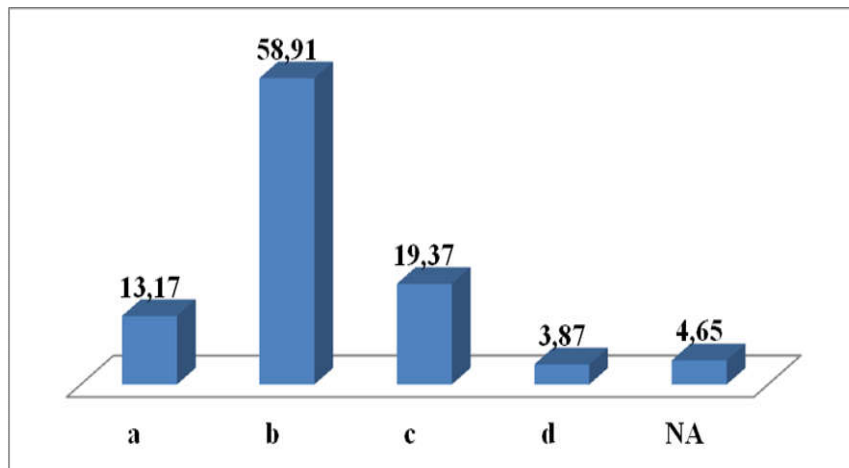
- Class size affects the students' level of comprehension because :
 - The big number of students prevents concentration.
 - The smaller the class size is, the better comprehension will be.
 - The small number of students allows the teacher to interact with each student, hence to explain better.
 - The large number of students leads to too much noise, so it is hard to hear the teacher well.
 - The small number of students is the best for good comprehension not only in linguistics.
 - The lazy and noisy students affect the active and motivated ones.
 - They ask for class size reduction.
 - They ask studying linguistics in the laboratory as physics and biology.
 - Some students waste time by asking silly questions, while others feel ashamed to ask for the teacher's help in front of such a huge number of students.
 - The large number of students per group does not match the classroom size itself.
- Class size does not affect the students' level of comprehension because :
 - If the group members are calm whatever their number is, there will be no problem.
 - A good comprehension needs a strong will; it has no relation with the class size.
 - The problem is with the module itself.
 - It is up to the students' ability to learn.
 - Most of the students are very polite; they do not make noise and want to study.
 - The teacher has control over the classroom, so the environment is motivating to study.
 - We benefit from each other's knowledge when discussing and exchanging ideas.

Q19: How do you feel when taking tests in general?

- a. Anxious
- b. Worried
- c. At ease
- d. Others please specify.

Options	N	%
A	17	13.17%
B	76	58.91%
C	25	19.37%
D	05	3.87%
NA	06	4.65%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.63: Students' Feelings when Taking Tests in General



Graph 5.18: Students' Feelings when Taking Tests in General

With Q19, we move to the third section of this questionnaire. The latter is about testing and tests. Q19 is a general question which seeks the students' feeling about test taking. The objective of this question is to know about the impact of those feelings on the students' achievements, i.e., to see whether those feelings affect the students' outcomes negatively or positively. As demonstrated in graph 38 above, the vast majority of students (58.91%) feel worried when taking tests in general, 19.37% feel at ease, 13.17% feel rather anxious, 3.87% feel differently without any specification, and still 4.65% did not provide any answer. Each group of the respondents links their feeling to different factors summarized below:

a) Anxious because of :

- ✓ Unfamiliarity with the test questions
- ✓ Lack of preparation
- ✓ Lack of understanding
- ✓ Fear of failure
- ✓ Fear of taking tests in general
- ✓ Thinking about how to get good marks

b)_worried because of :

- ✓ Complexity of the questions.
- ✓ Prejudgement of the test to be difficult
- ✓ Stress and lack of self-confidence
- ✓ Ill-expression of ideas
- ✓ Thinking about the teacher's evaluation and the marks

c) At ease : because of :

- ✓ The importance of tests.
- ✓ The good preparation and readiness
- ✓ The opportunity we have to evaluate our progress
- ✓ Self-confidence in one's abilities

d) Others : because of :

- ✓ Lack of concentration
- ✓ Lack of confidence
- ✓ Feeling anxious at the beginning of each test, then relaxed

Q20: How do you consider Linguistics' Tests in terms of difficulty?

- a. Very easy
- b. Easy
- c. Medium
- d. Difficult
- e. Very difficult

Options	N	%
A	00	00.00%
B	06	4.65%
C	44	34.10%
D	47	36.43%
E	30	23.25%
NA	02	1.55%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.64: Students' Classification of Linguistics' Tests in terms of Difficulty

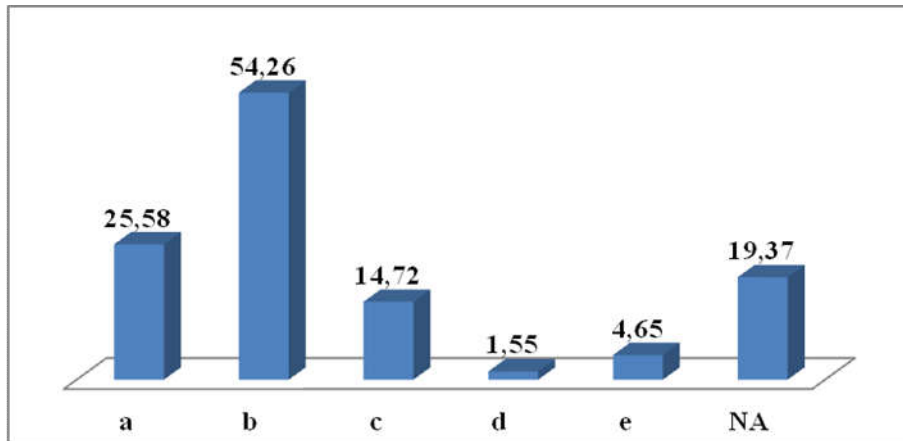
The second question in the third section (Q20) is about the students' own evaluation of the linguistics' tests in terms of difficulty. The results (table 64) reveal that only 4.65% of the participants find the linguistics' tests easy. 36.43% of them believe they are difficult, 23.25% very difficult and 34.10% think that the level of difficulty of the linguistics' test is medium; a minority of 1.55% did not provide an answer. From those percentages, we can categorize the level of difficulty of the linguistics' tests, according to the participants, from medium to very difficult.

Q21: In case they are difficult or very difficult, is due to:

- a. Types of activities
- b. Forms of questions and instructions
- c. Time allotted
- d. Grades schedule
- e. Others please specify.

Options	N	%
A	33	25.58%
B	70	54.26%
C	19	14.72%
D	02	1.55%
E	06	4.65%
NA	25	19.37%

Table 5.65: Reasons behind Linguistics' Tests Difficulty



Graph 5.19: Reasons behind Linguistics' Tests Difficulty

After confirming that the linguistics' tests are difficult, we have raised a follow-up question (Q21) which looks for the factors leading to such difficulty. Graph 19 above shows that 54.26% of the participants link the difficulty of the linguistics' tests to the form of questions and instructions. 25.58% of them link it to the type of activities.

14.72% of the respondents view that the problem is with the time allotted, while only 1.55% view that it is due to the grades schedule, and still 19.37% did not reply. From these results, we find out that the form of questions and instructions is the factor number one behind the linguistics' tests difficulty, and the least affecting factor is the grades schedule.

Q22: How do you describe Linguistics' Tests?

- a. Short
- b. Medium
- c. Long

Options	N	%
A	10	7.75%
B	80	62.01%
C	36	27.90%
NA	03	2.32%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.66: Students' Description of Linguistics' Tests

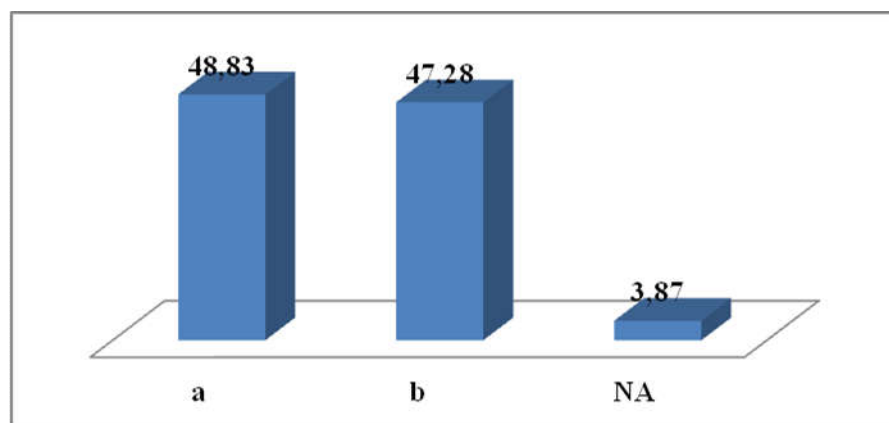
Dealing with linguistics' tests but with Q22, we shift to the students' description of linguistics' tests in terms of length. We aim to view whether the tests' length has its impact on the students' outcomes or not. The results as stated in table 66 show that there is a strong agreement of the vast majority of students (62. 01%) that the linguistics' tests are of medium length. Besides, 27. 90% of the participants view the tests as long, only 7. 75% describe the tests as short, and 2. 32% did not provide an answer.

Q23: Is the time allotted to Linguistics' Tests sufficient?

- a.** Yes
- b.** No

Options	N	%
A	63	48.83%
B	61	47.28%
NA	05	3.87%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.67: Linguistics' Tests and Time Allotment



Graph 5.20: Linguistics' Tests and Time Allotment

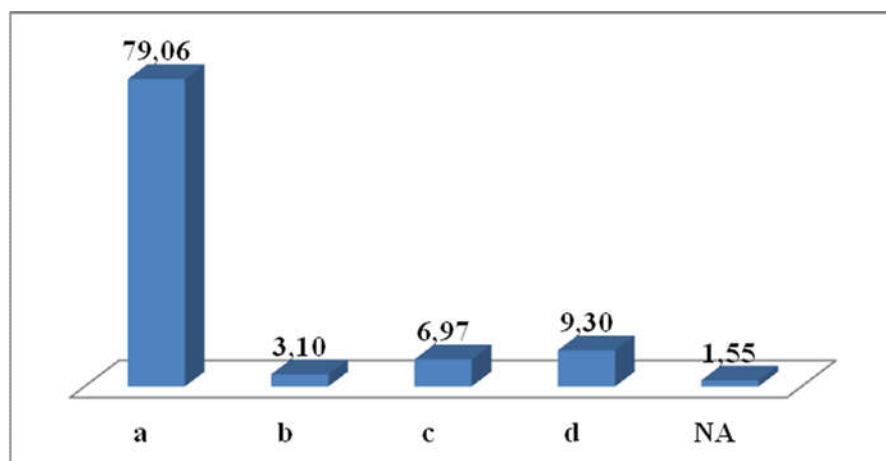
From Q22, we included Q23 in which we seek the students' opinion about the time allotted to the linguistics' tests. Since they have described the tests as medium in length, we would like to see whether one hour and half is sufficient or not. The majority of the participants (48. 83%) answered with yes, while 47. 28% answered with no, and 3. 87 % of them did not answer the question at all. Those results show that the time allotted (1 hour and a half) is sufficient for a test of medium length according to most of the respondents.

Q24: When do you prefer taking Linguistics' Tests?

- a. Morning
- b. Midday
- c. Afternoon
- d. At any time

Options	N	%
A	102	79.06%
B	04	3.10%
C	09	6.97%
D	12	9.30%
NA	02	1.55%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.68: Linguistics' Tests Best Time



Graph 5.21: Linguistics' Tests Best Time

In the same context, we move with Q24 to ask about the students' preferable time of taking linguistics' tests, in addition to the reasons behind such timing in the follow-up question (Q25). For Q24, table 68 demonstrates that the great majority (79.06%) of the informants prefer taking tests in the morning, 9.30% of them have no problem with tests scheduling stating that they prefer taking the tests at any time, 6.97% of the students prefer the afternoon, and still 3.10% of them prefer the midday and obviously each category has its own reasons, whereas only 1.55% did not answer this question.

Q25: Please, state your reason(s):

The reasons behind each group's answer are listed below:

a) - The morning is the best time to concentrate well.

- Linguistics is very complicated and needs fresh minds, appropriate weather, readiness, comfortable environment and no stress which are all available in the morning.

- In the morning, the students are full of energy, feel active, and motivated to work well and achieve considerable results.

b) - In the midday: - First because we hate to get up in the morning.

- Second, we benefit from the morning for final revision.

c) - In the afternoon : simply because we think it is not too early not too late, so it is a good time for taking tests.

d) - At any time : - because we believe that time has no relation, it does not affect the test.

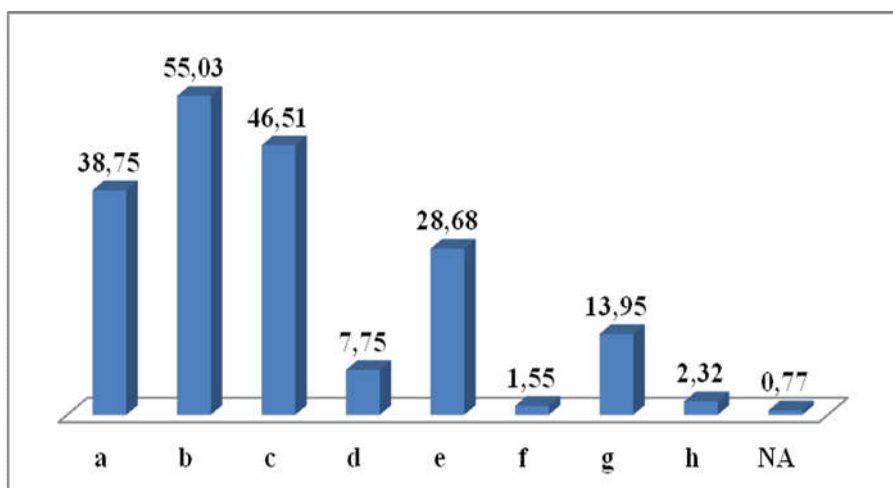
- If we are well prepared, time does not matter.

Q26: Which kind of activities do you prefer?

- a. Yes/no
- b. True/false
- c. Definitions
- d. MCQ
- e. Fill-in-gaps
- f. Open-ended questions
- g. Paragraphs
- h. Others please specify.

Options	N	%
A	50	38.75%
B	71	55.03%
C	60	46.51%
D	10	7.75%
E	37	28.68%
F	02	1.55%
G	18	13.90%
H	03	2.32%
NA	01	0.77%

Table 5.69: Tests' Tasks and Students' Preferences



Graph 5.22: Tests' Tasks and Students' Preferences

From the students' preferable time of taking Linguistics' tests, with Q26 we move to ask about the students' preferable kind of activities. The aim behind the inclusion of such a question is to take their preferences into consideration when designing the linguistics' tests and see if there will be any difference as far as the students' grades are concerned. The results as stated in table 69 reveal that True/ False activities are the most preferable activities by almost 55.03% of the respondents, Definitions activities come in the second position with 46.51% and Yes/No activities take the third position with 38.75%. On the other hand, Fill-in-Gaps activities take the fourth position with 28.68%, the fifth position goes to Paragraphs with 13.95%, the sixth position for MCQ activities with 7.75%, still 2.32% of the students prefer other types of activities without any precision, and finally only 1.55% of the students prefer Open-Ended questions, and only 0.77% who did not provide an answer.

Q27: Justify your choice.

Undoubtedly, the students' preferences in Q26 are bases on some reasons. For this aim, we have asked Q27 in which our respondents are requested to justify their answers

providing the main reasons which make them prefer one kind of activities rather than the other.

In this question, we have 59.68% of the participants who did not justify their answers of the previous Q26, while the other 40.31% provide the following justifications:

- a) Short questions, help in getting good marks, test our understanding, and help us to concentrate well so we can answer freely.
- b) Easy to answer, varied and include different lessons, help to remember the information, all students can work and get good marks easily.
- c) Easy to understand, direct, give a chance to express our ideas using our own words do not take too much time and test our understanding of the concepts.
- d) Improve our comprehension, test our intelligence even if it can be a little tricky, and give more chance to get good marks, make us check our information because the answer is already there, so there is a high chance to answer correctly.
- e) Take more memorization, give the time for good concentration, and help the students who hate indirect question to get good marks.
- f) No justifications.
- g) Skill showing, give the chance to write in English, give the students time to think well and get the point, give them the opportunity to express their ideas freely, so to evaluate their understanding level.
- h) No specification.

Q28: Is your Linguistics' Test composed of a variety of activities?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Options	N	%
A	78	60.46%
B	43	33.33%
NA	08	6.20%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.70: Linguistics' Test and Tasks' Composition

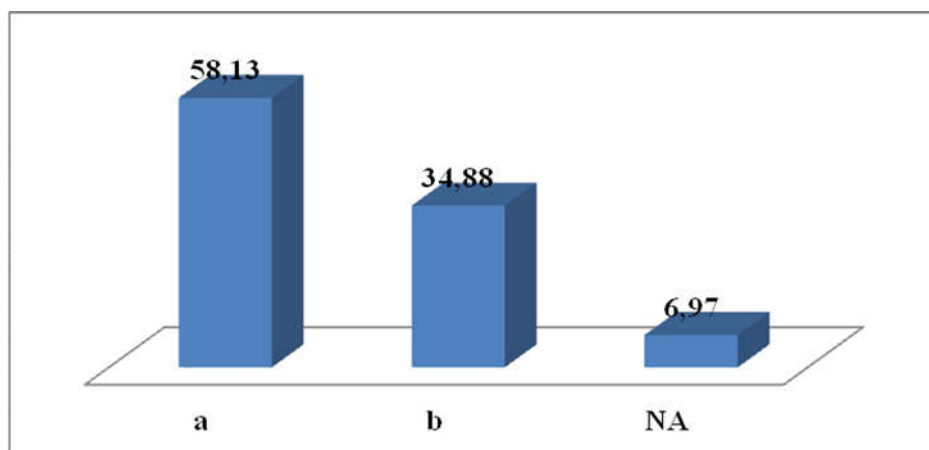
Moreover, Q28 is raised to detect the content of the linguistics' test in terms of tasks' variety. Since our respondents belong to different groups and taught by different teachers, we seek their answer to see the impact of varying the tasks on the students' achievements. A second part is added to the question in order to specify the kind of activities included in the linguistics' test if it is composed of a variety of tasks. The results clearly show that the majority of the participants (60.46%) agree that their linguistics' test consists of a variety of tasks, 33.33% of them view just the opposite, and 6.20% did not provide an answer at all. Those 60.46% of the students state their test tasks include the following types: yes/no questions, definitions, paragraphs, MCQ, fill-in-gaps and true/false questions.

Q29: Are you satisfied with the marks devoted to each activity?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Options	N	%
A	75	58.13%
B	45	34.88%
NA	09	6.97%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.71: Linguistics' Tests Marks Division and Students' Satisfaction



Graph 5.23: Linguistics' Tests Marks Division and Students' Satisfaction

With Q29, we shift to the tests' activities and the scoring scheme. We seek the students' point of view concerning the marks devoted to each activity in the test. Table 71 demonstrates that there is a dissatisfaction from only 34.88%, while the other 58.13% of the students are satisfied with the marks devoted to each activity in the test, and still 6.97% of the participants leave the question unanswered.

Q30: If no, justify your choice.

As a follow-up, Q30 is included looking for the students' reasons behind their dissatisfaction of the marks' division on the test's activities. This question concerns mainly those 34.88% of the respondents. The latter link their dissatisfaction to the three following reasons:

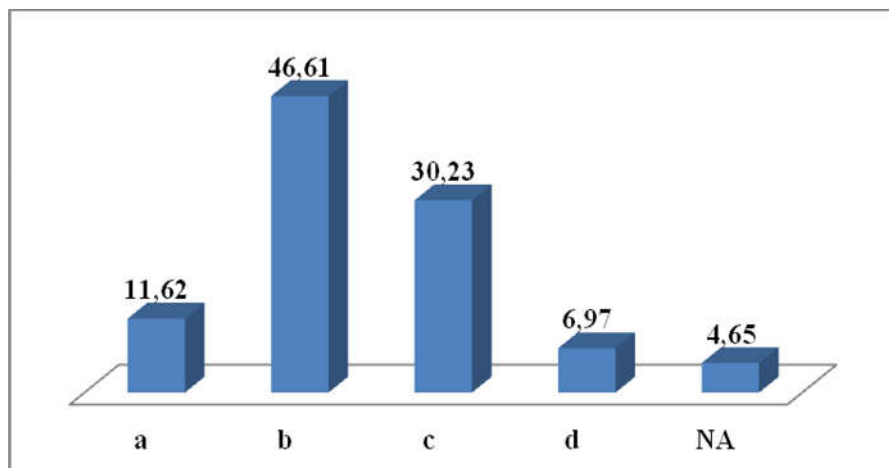
- 1- The division of marks is unfair.
- 2- The marks do not match the activities' level of difficulty.
- 3- Most of the time, the highest proportion of marks go to the activities in which the students generally fail to answer.

Q31: How do you describe the Tests' classroom setting?

- a. Very comfortable
- b. Comfortable
- c. Uncomfortable
- d. Uncertain

Options	N	%
A	15	11.62%
B	60	46.61%
C	39	30.23%
D	09	4.65%
NA	06	4.65%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.72: Students' Description of Tests' Classroom Setting



Graph 5.24: Students' Description of Tests' Classroom Setting

With Q31, we move to another item seeking the students' description of the tests' classroom setting. We strongly believe that the classroom setting has its impact whether negative or positive on the students' achievements. The inclusion of this question aims at discovering such an impact. Most of the students (46.51%) describe the setting as comfortable, 30.23% of them describe it as uncomfortable. On the other hand, 11.62% consider the setting as very comfortable, and 6.97% are uncertain so they did not give it any description, while only 4.65% did not answer the question.

Q32: Please, justify your answer.

Q32 is the second half of Q31. It looks for the students' justifications of their answers. Those explanations are listed below :

- Those 46.51% of the students who describe the setting as comfortable state the following reasons : - No noise either inside or outside the classroom
 - A few number of students in a large classroom.
 - Peaceful environment for good concentration.
- Those 30.23% who view the setting as uncomfortable give the following reasons :
 - Invigilators are so severe and all the time controls the exam papers.
 - The students make noise sometimes so we lose concentration and we miss to answer some questions.
 - The classroom is overcrowded, ill-organized, and not clean with uncomfortable chair for sitting 1 hour and a half.
- Those 11.62% who regard the setting as very comfortable; the following are the reasons behind such a description.
 - A silent environment for good thinking and concentration except for the weather in summer.

- A small number of students in a large classroom where everything is well-prepared and organized in good conditions.
- Every student is sitting alone.

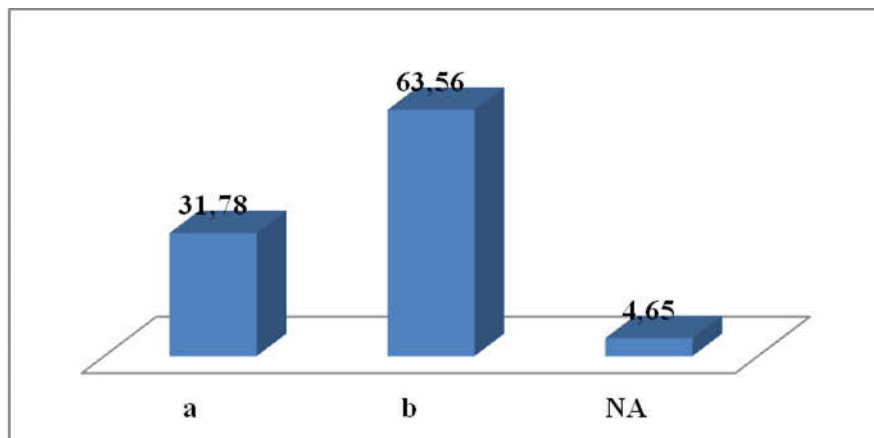
From the above listed reasons, we can notice that the students' description of the setting differs simply because they take the test in different settings under different conditions. This confirms that the setting has its impact on the students that is why we obtained different results.

Q33: Are you satisfied with your Linguistics' grades?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Options	N	%
A	41	31.78%
B	82	63.56%
NA	06	4.65%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.73: Students' Satisfaction of Linguistics 'Grades



Graph 5.25: Students' Satisfaction of Linguistics 'Grades

Q33 is another question which looks for the students' satisfaction as far as their grades in linguistics are concerned. The collected answers clearly demonstrate the dissatisfaction of most of the participants (63.56%), and only 31.48% of the students are satisfied with their grades, while 4.65% of them did not show either their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Obviously our focus is on those 63.56% of the students who are not satisfied with their grades in linguistics.

Q34: If “No”, do you link this to:

- a. Lack of concentration
- b. Lack of preparation
- c. Lack of Knowledge
- d. All of these
- e. Others please specify.

Options	N	%
A	17	13.17%
B	23	17.82%
C	32	24.80%
D	13	10.07%
E	04	3.10%
NA	48	37.20%

Table 5.74: Reasons behind Students' Dissatisfaction of Linguistics 'Grades

Such focus aims to detect the factors behind this dissatisfaction. The latter is raised in a separate Q34. The results reveal that 24.80% of the respondents link their dissatisfaction to the lack of knowledge, 17.82% view that the lack of preparation is the factor behind their low grades, and 13.17% of the participants regard the lack of concentration is the obstacle standing in their way to achieve satisfactory results.

Besides, 10.07% of the participants link their dissatisfaction to all the three factors mentioned previously (namely lack of knowledge, lack of preparation, and lack of

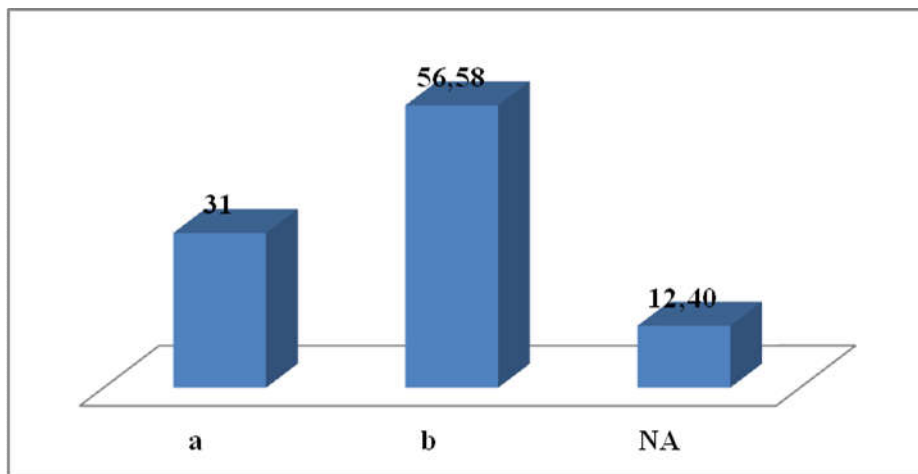
concentration). Still 3.10% of the students view that the problem is due to other factors as fear and dislike of activities, while a significant proportion (37. 20%) of our informants did not answer the question at all for unknown reasons.

Q35: Do you link your low grades in Linguistics to your teacher’s way of stating the test’s instructions?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Options	N	%
A	40	31.00%
B	73	56.58%
NA	16	12.40%
Total	129	100%

Table 5.75: Students’ Linguistics’ Grades and Teacher’s Instructions



Graph 5.26: Students’ Linguistics’ Grades and Teacher’s Instructions

Q35 also deals with the students’ low grades in linguistics, but this time in relation with the teacher’s way of stating the test’s instructions. As shown in graph 26, the majority of the participants (56.58%) do not think that the problem

is linked to the instructions of the test, 31.00% of the students believe in the opposite, while 12.40% provided no answer.

Q36: In both cases, please explain.

The last question in this questionnaire is a follow-up question (Q36) which looks for the respondents' justifications for their answers of Q35. Those 31.00% of the participants who link their low grades in linguistics to their teacher's way of stating the test's instructions justified their answer as follows:

- The teacher set too difficult questions.
- The teacher should specify and simplify the questions to meet the different levels of students.

Whereas those 56.58% of the respondents who view that the problem is not with the teacher's way of stating the test's instructions explained their point of view as follows:

- They blame themselves in the first place.
- They link their low grades to the nature of the course itself.
- They insist that the problem is with the students themselves, i.e., they miss many sessions, they do not prepare well for the tests, they consider the test as difficult in advance, and they do not work hard; otherwise how other students obtain good marks.
- They describe their teacher as skillful, knowledgeable, and competent, someone who is doing his duty as it should be done, and someone who knows how to organize the test and how to vary the activities according to the students' different levels.

Section Four: Suggestions

Section four is included at the end of the questionnaire leaving space for the students to feel free and supply us with their suggestions concerning linguistics' tests setting and activities. The aim is to benefit from those suggestions in finding out a remedy for their deficiencies in linguistics. Unfortunately and unexpectedly, the large majority (63.56%) of our respondents did not give enough importance to this section and did not provide any suggestion or comment at all. We may link the latter to either a lack of interest or a lack of time. Indeed most of their suggestions primarily concern the test's activities, and they can be listed in the following points:

- ✓ We need our teacher to slow down the pace and to change the way of presenting the course.
- ✓ We need our teacher to adjust the tests with the students' level.
- ✓ We need more tests within the semester to improve our level.
- ✓ We ask for taking linguistics' tests only in the morning.
- ✓ We ask for sessions for practice to raise the student-teacher interaction.
- ✓ We ask for large classrooms vis-à-vis the students' number per group.
- ✓ We ask for two or three sessions a week instead of one session.
- ✓ We ask to extend the time of the test to 2 hours and a half.
- ✓ We ask for research papers to be integrated in the preparation and presentation of the course.
- ✓ We ask for comfortable tables and less crowded rooms.
- ✓ We ask for more motivation, more activities and exercises, and further readings to enrich our vocabulary and be familiar with the linguistics' new concepts.

5.4 Focus Group Discussion Analysis

The present section deals with the analysis and interpretation of the focus group discussion, hereafter (FGD) with students. The FGD includes 8 questions (See appendix 9) divided into 5 sub-sections, dealing with:

1. Students' background knowledge
2. Teacher's help
3. Group work technique
4. Tests' tasks, instructions, and grading scale
5. Tests results, tests feedback, and students' level of motivation in connection to tests results and feedback.

As far as the students' background knowledge is concerned, the interviewees were asked about their beliefs of the impact of having good background knowledge on their language learning. Most of the participants believe that they do not have good background knowledge in English. They show their dissatisfaction of their level in English which might be the primary source of their deficiencies in Linguistics. Some expressions from their answers to the first question are displayed below in participants' words:

St1: *No, I think I do not have enough background to learn English because I think I do not do my best.*

St4: *I am not satisfied about my background knowledge.*

St5: *I think my knowledge is not sufficient, I am not sure it can help to achieve success. I hope I can improve my level by speaking and listening more to native speakers.*

St6: *Yes me too...I agree with my colleagues...we do not have enough background to study this language.*

Those students think that they have to make efforts to improve their level in English, therefore, to be successful language learners. Although they believe that their love of the English language was the first motive behind their choice of the English studies, it is not sufficient to achieve success in a foreign language. This result goes hand in hand with the students' replies in the questionnaire (see Appendix 7/ Q4) where 88.37% of the respondents whose choice of studying English was free stating that their love of the English language itself is their primary motive. The interviewees expressed their ideas in the following:

St1: *I think if we continue like this...we should try to learn if we want to succeed.*

St4: *We just need to...double our efforts.*

St5: *I need to learn more about English from native speakers and not to be satisfied with what the teacher gives us in the course.*

St6: *We need to look for more knowledge from books and from the internet.*

However, some students think differently. They believe that they have good background knowledge in English. They added that their grievances in Linguistics are related to other factors as lack of vocabulary, for instance. Their answers are reported in the following:

St2: *Personally yes...I think I have sufficient background about this language 'English' ...and I think that now I just try to improve my level...because I think that really I have fundamental base in this language. (Sic.)*

St3: *Me too...actually I have previous information about language...but now I just want to go deeply...and rise my level in English. (Sic.)*

St7: *I think I have a background but it is not enough.*

St8: *I think that I have sufficient background knowledge that helps me...but I have such...lack of ...about grammar... and what I am doing now ...I am pushing off...in grammar.*

St9: *As English first year university...I think that my knowledge in English is good...may be when I communicate with my classmates...or a person who speaks English I feel that I am good...but I am not satisfied about this...I want to improve and develop more and more...may be when I search in books or internet.*

To conclude, all the interviewees despite their different evaluation of their background knowledge, they all agree that they need to make efforts to improve their level as far as the English language is concerned by using the internet, books, and by communicating with native speakers. They added that relying on what the teacher provides in the classroom is insufficient for a foreign language learner.

When asked about the teacher's explanation in the classroom and their understanding of the course (see Appendix 9/ Q 2), the students' answers show a strong agreement that they understand the lessons in class thanks to the teacher's explanation and illustrations. They expressed themselves in the following words:

St1: *About me I understand the teacher...because the language ...the way of explaining is easy...and make easy to...make the student understand him.*

St2: *For me I think my teacher of Linguistics...means you...during the course I think everything is ok for me...I understand everything...but what happens in the exam...is our problem...that we deal just what's given in the handouts...we do not look for more information which may help us in the exam...that's why we fail always...we have a lack of concentration...*

St3: *in the class I understand the teacher what he said...but when I return my room and...check the paper I feel that I not understand.*

St4: *Yes, I do understand*

St5: *me too...you are a good teacher you have give us good explanation...and I understand.*

St6: *yes absolutely...I think that the way is help us more because she is give us examples from reality...from our daily life...so you can understand more.*

St7: *Yes I understand my teacher when he explains...and sometimes...I lost my concentration...that's why sometimes I didn't understand.*

St8: *I understand when the teacher try to explain the lessons...and I didn't find difficulties with learning besides I have difficulties after the courses when revising for example...this is my...main problem in Linguistics.*

The answers displayed above show that the students' problem with Linguistics lies mainly in their lack of concentration during the lectures and the ambiguities they find when revising their lessons after the lectures. All the interviewees, although being taught by different teachers, agree that their teachers succeeded to transmit the message that is why they blame themselves in the first place.

Concerning the follow-up question “*if you understand your teacher's explanation of the lesson, what is your problem when it comes to tests?*” According to their attitudes, the interviewed students can be split into two categories. For the first category thought that the problem is that of their lack of preparation for tests, lack of concentration during tests, and anxiety, while for the second category the problem is that of the amount of knowledge provided in the handouts. Some of their answers are listed below:

St1: *In class I understand but later on I forget everything...that is why I...have low marks in the exam.*

St4: *The problem is me myself...I cannot understand certain questions. May be because of the lack of concentration...in the exams...I feel worried.*

St6: *Sometimes I feel confused about how to answer. When I read the handouts I find some problems...because it is large information.*

St8: *Like he said...the problem is that we do not revise our lessons daily...we revise them only if we have a test.*

The FGD result comes to confirm what the students have said in their replies to Q 14 (see Appendix 7) in which 61.24% of the students view that their level of comprehension is medium because of:

- Lack of concentration,
- Lack of practice,
- Difficulties when revising for exams,
- Difficulties when sitting for exams,
- And difficulties with some ambiguous ideas.

From the students' answers we can say that most of them believe that a good preparation for tests may help them overcome their problems in Linguistics, therefore, to obtain good grades.

According to the interviewees, revision should take place systematically after each lecture to detect problems of understanding in advance, so that they may get clarification at the right moment.

Concerning whether or not the students ask for their teacher's help whenever they face problems, the interviewed students provided different answers. Some students showed their readiness to ask for their teacher's help during the lecture, and some others preferred to ask for their classmates' help. They stated that:

St2: *for the beginning no...later on yes*

St3: *for me, it depends on situation, if the word hard, difficult, or so difficult, I ask the teacher...*

St4: *Yes I do. I ask the teacher directly.*

St5: *at the moment...*

St7: *I am shy*

St8: *I take notes and try to understand the whole lesson...I do not have to ask questions.*

St9: *I ask my classmates...not teacher...I feel ashamed...*

This result reveals that most students are aware of the importance of the teacher's assistance except for those shy students who either prefer to understand the generalities of the lesson or to get help from their peers rather than the teacher. In addition to their shyness and their fear of making mistakes when asking questions in class, the students added that some teachers do not give them the opportunity to express themselves.

One of the students stated: *"sometimes he gives us the chance...just to give examples not to ask questions"*.

As far as group work is concerned, a great deal of the interviewees showed their willingness to work in collaboration with their peers. They believe that such a collaborative work spirit may enhance their motivation and improve their level in Linguistics. They added that group work is beneficial when the group is limited to five students which allows them to exchange ideas and share their concerns, so that to be able to make collective decisions. Besides, other students thought that group work is workable in some classes but not in linguistics. We have selected the following views from the students' answers:

St1: *Yes sometimes ...in linguistics...and in other ...courses.*

St2: *In other courses yes but in linguistics no...I do not know why.*

St3: *As they call it collective work. It's effective but I prefer to study alone.*

St4: *...I disagree, I prefer to work in group because each one of us has a different idea... and we may benefit from each other.*

St5: *In linguistics, we need to work in groups.*

St6: *Honestly, we do not work in groups.*

St7: *I prefer to study alone to be more comfortable and concentrate more...*

St8: *I always understand better after working in groups.*

St9: *I tried it once...I found it useful to gain more information so...I have a good mark.*

The students' answers indicate that working in groups is positive from one side and negative from another side. It is positive in the sense that students may gain more knowledge about some concepts, understand better some ambiguous ideas, and improve their test results; it is negative for students may feel uncomfortable and may get mixed information. Those students who prefer to work in groups feel satisfied after the group discussion and try to encourage their classmates to have such spirit of cooperative learning; while the others who prefer to work alone find group work a helpful strategy in courses as Oral Expression but not in Linguistics. We can say that group work is a useful and helpful strategy for some students and not profitable for others.

When asked about the clarity of test instructions, most of the interviewees opined that the Linguistics test instructions are clear. They stated that the problem may be related to their anxiety and fear of failing the test, to their shortage of vocabulary to express themselves appropriately, as well as their writing and organization of ideas in the answer

sheet. From the interviewees' responses, one can notice the lack of concentration when taking exams whether in Linguistics or any other course. Generally, students come to tests anxious, afraid, and confused about what should be an adequate answer even when the questions are clear and direct. Some of their answers are summarized below:

St1: *Yes...clearly stated but me...my answer is not clear.*

St2: *I feel confused and anxious...how I use this answer or may be the other answer...so I just try to answer and I pass it...*

St3: *I think somehow...it's a little bit difficult to understand exactly what the teacher wants us to answer...but in general I think it's not a problem.*

St4: *Personally I don't have a problem with time or even vocabulary... I just have a problem with lack of concentration...I always lose concentration in any test.*

St5: *Sometimes I read the question...may be I understand it ...but I don't know which the suitable answer is.*

St6: *My problem during tests ...always is lack of concentration, the time is enough to answer all the questions and when...we focus on attractive activity when you look to the time you find it running...that's why I feel confused, stressed...I lose my information...I feel blocked.*

St7: *I think there are two kinds of questions...some which are clear and others not ...and the matter is in how the teachers asks the question...in direct way I answer clearly...but in indirect way I cannot understand the question.*

St8: *I think that Linguistics is not something easy but it needs more concentration...more attention...I think this is the problem...because as I said before we are not familiar with this module and this kind of questions...but I think with time we will be able to overcome this problem.*

St9: *For me all of these factors, lack of vocabulary, how express ideas ...I am always scared for false and true answers.*

In sum, one can say that the students' deficiencies in Linguistics tests are related to a variety of factors. Though students believe that they are able to overcome their problem in Linguistics by working in groups, asking for the teacher's help, and make efforts to enrich their knowledge, hence, to be able to understand the questions and express their ideas adequately. They added that they suffer from the same problem in other classes as Phonetics and Research Methodology stating that the newness of such subjects comes in the first place.

Moreover, the class size is another crucial factor which stands behind their grievances in Linguistics particularly. All the interviewees believe that the large class size has its negative impact on their understanding in that it prevents them from asking questions. The same attitude was shared by 45.73% of the participants when asked about the class size impact on Linguistics lessons comprehension. (See appendix 7/ Q21). They pointed out that the large class size prevents concentration that is why they call for class size reduction believing that small classes lead to better lesson understanding. Besides, the interviewees thought that having an idea about how the questions will be stated in the test in advance helps them familiarize with the type of questions they will and the way to answer them through discussions with their teachers in class.

Concerning their low grades in Linguistics tests and the type of tasks they prefer, the interviewees provided a variety of answers. Some of the students prefer True/False, Yes/No, Definition and Filling Gaps activities. They stated that although their test in Linguistics is composed of a variety of activities, they fail to reach good results. They related this failure to their poor preparation and time management. In other words, they blame themselves for coming to tests unprepared and fail manage the time allotted to tests. The following are the most significant statements taken from their responses.

St1: *...variety in activities...I like to answer false and true...and giving definition with my own ...way.*

St2: *me too I prefer definitions...and paragraphs...I will be free to write or to explain and I prefer also true/false without tell us... why wrong.*

St3: *may be paragraph to express ...relation between something and another, or...to be more free to express the ideas or...*

St4: *I am always prefer yes or no questions rather than true or false, because in yes or no there is no justification. (Sic.)*

From the students' replies, we can draw the conclusion that teachers of linguistics purposefully take their students' preferences into consideration when designing their tests. They aim at helping the students to achieve good results by varying the test activities. Unexpectedly, the students fail to obtain good grades in Linguistics because of their poor preparation and shortage of technical vocabulary in the first place.

Most of the students requested that the test should be composed of 4-5 activities and the division of marks should be equal (i.e., the same mark to be given to each activity), so that every student will have the opportunity to obtain good grades. Besides, the interviewees added that their grievances in Linguistics may be attributed to the newness of topics in that they suffer from the same problems in Phonetics, Methodology, Culture of the Language and Literary Texts which are new courses as well. This was the case of 71.32% of the respondents in the questionnaire who have related the difficulty of Linguistics to its newness as a topic, its technical vocabulary and complex notions. Some of the students' answers are listed below:

St1: *I have a problem with...phonetics...because it's a new module.*

St3: *for me, I suffer from phonetics and methodology because I think that phonetics and methodology have to learnt by heart... (Sic.)*

St5: *Yes...and I hate learning by heart I just want to understand in my mind.*

St7: *especially linguistics and phonetics.*

St9: *in phonetics may be number of students.*

At the end of the FGD, we focused on the tests' results and their impact on the students' level of motivation. We received a mixture of answers sharing one major point that all the interviewees in one way or another and whatever their test result is, showed their desire to work hard to achieve better results. They believe that the grades obtained in the Linguistics test do not reflect their real level and will not stand as an obstacle in their way to achieve success.

They stated:

St2: *for me when I get bad mark...I motivate to get...good mark in another exam.*

St3: *for me also...I feel more motivated because I think ...and I am sure ...that the mark never reflect the level of student...yes...and our purpose now is not to get ...of course to get good marks...but more than that to ameliorate our level...to work hard and hard...to master the language ...to improve our skills...to be good in all the modules...this is our goal not just the good marks...because our goal is bigger ...than that...*

St5: *now...I feel more motivated than before... because I think that according to our experience...let's say ...about the first semester...as first experience in the university I think that I discover my...weaknesses and I will do well in the second exam.*

St7: *for me I got 11...but that encourage me to get more and to attend my session of course...this semester I try to get high marks.*

St8: *I get 10.5...this mark wasn't ...satisfying me and ...I promise myself that I work hard and do all my force ...my ambitions is to get...at least 14. (Sic.)*

The interviewees' replies revealed that they are aware of the importance of learning Linguistics at first year level even if they find difficulties to understand such a new course content. Besides, their problems in Linguistics are not limited only to the understanding of the course content but also to the tests. They find difficulties to answer certain kind of questions as multiple choice questions; they are convinced that answering such kind of activities ends up in wrong answers most of the time.

The students added that they need to have an idea about the test activities and the way to deal with the different instructions before the official tests so that they get familiar with the questions and the way to answer each type of activity. Furthermore, they believe that discussing the different types of activities with their teachers and peers is quite helpful to clarify ambiguities in advance. They call for the teacher's presence during tests because:

- ✓ it helps raising their self confidence,
- ✓ it helps decrease their anxiety, and
- ✓ it enables them to ask for clarification when f confused.

Finally, the interviewees promised to work hard in the second semester and do more efforts to achieve better test results in particular and success in their English Language Studies in general. In addition, they promised to take their weaknesses as a starting point towards success and to learn from their mistakes.

Conclusion

In the present chapter, we have described the two data gathering tools used for the study of first year students of the English Branch at MKU of Biskra and discussed the findings. The first tool described is the questionnaire which was administered face-to-face to 7 groups out of twelve groups which form the population of first year classes. The chapter provides the description of the questionnaire and the analysis and interpretation of

the results. The second tool is the focus group discussion which has been conducted with 13 first year students has also been described and the results discussed. The following chapter describes the classroom observation and presents the findings.

CHAPTER SIX:

FINDINGS OF CLASSROOM

OBSERVATION

Chapter Six: Findings of Classroom Observation

Introduction

The present chapter deals with the classroom observation which has been used for the sake of collecting live data. The observation aimed at collecting live data during the Linguistics tests in first year classes, hence, to discover the main factors standing behind their deficiencies in this course particularly. The observation went through three phases: before the test, during the test, and after the test.

6.1. Description of Classroom Observation

Throughout the current investigation, we have relied on classroom observation as one of our data gathering tools. We have opted for a non-participant classroom observation during a period of five months that spans from November 13th, 2011 to April 17th, 2012. We have attended 53 sessions with 7 different groups taught by 4 different teachers of linguistics. The 7 groups form the sample of our research out of 12 groups which form the whole population of first year classes of the English Branch at MKUB of the academic year 2011/2012.

Our main focus has been on the students' degree of motivation, concentration and attendance during the linguistics tests. The choice is based on the fact that these tripartite factors have a direct impact on the students' achievement and achievement gap. Our observation has been divided into three major phases: pre-testing, while testing, and post-testing. Besides, at the end of our observation period- exactly two sessions before the last- , we have distributed a course evaluation form (see appendix 10) to our participants (7 groups= 393 students) aiming at reinforcing our assumptions with their replies. It is worth noting that only 150 course evaluation forms were handed back.

The attended sessions have taken place in different settings, with different class size and different teaching aids. Most of the groups have been large in size composed of more than 45 students per group. The majority of the groups have been taught in small classrooms (*namely* Bettaibi Complex classrooms) where the class has seemed too crowded; therefore, the teacher is unable to move between rows, get in touch with his/her students, or even to supply them with handouts.

The other groups have taken the course in large classrooms (*viz.*, BC rooms). The former setting is quite uncomfortable due to noise especially as both the teacher and the students feel disturbed and interrupted to interact, hence to understand each other which eventually affected negatively the smooth running of the session. The latter setting is somehow comfortable as compared to the former with less noise and more space, although less lit.

It should be noted that the teaching style varies from reliance on handouts and/or blackboard. Differently stated, the teaching aids used in teaching linguistics vary between handouts and the blackboard. Besides, we have purposefully implemented ICTs (mainly the Data Show) in a different setting (*namely* the Language Laboratory) to teach such course to find out its impact on the students' achievements in this course particularly. This intervention concerns first year classes of the year 2012/2013. As a final note, we have undertaken to conduct a feedback interview, with the students we taught in the Language Laboratory, which is reported in later sections.

As far as tests are concerned, every teacher has opted for a different strategy to test his/her students (*viz.*, Formative Assessment 'FA'), whereas in the Summative Assessment (SA), they have opted for one common test for all the students taking into consideration the course content taught as planned in the official program. In other words,

it has been arranged that during FA, teachers have planned freely their measurement tools, but when it comes to SA, it has been agreed that one common measurement tool is to be planned for all on the basis that a common syllabus is taught to all first year classes.

As for FA-a major principle in the LMD system- each teacher has relied on a different kind of test: some teachers have divided their groups into two parts because of their large size, some others have relied on different test' content for the students of the same group, and still others change the order of the test activities to achieve the maximum of reliability and validity. The tests which have been designed during FA vary in length, time, and tasks. The tests included a variety of activities such as True/False, Multiple Choice, Definition, Classification, and paragraph writing activities. Moreover, these tests were different in terms of time. The time allotted for FA tests is from 10 to 40 minutes depending on the nature of the test questions. (See appendices 11 &12).

6.1.1 Pre-testing

During the attended sessions before tests, we have observed that some students were interested in the course, making efforts to understand, interact with their teachers and ask for clarification whenever they face difficulties. Some other students have shown no interest keeping silent the whole session. And still some other students have demonstrated their interest in the course interacting with the teacher occasionally. They use dictionaries looking for help so that they can participate. We may say that those students are active participants.

Concerning the course presentation, we have observed that most of the teachers make use of the blackboard to introduce the lesson. They focus on the key concepts to be tackled in the session, as they use it to illustrate and explain some ambiguous ideas through drawings, and to spell out some unfamiliar technical items. Besides, they rely on

handouts as consolidating material. The latter is regarded as a stimulus to raise the teacher-students interaction; this is done with the premise to increase the teacher- student and student-student talking time. Some teachers ask some of their students to read, ask them questions, and sometimes ask them to recapitulate the information in their own words.

Moreover, we have noticed that some teachers start the new lecture referring to the previous lesson to make the link between items and involve the students in the course. Generally, they ask the students to sum up what has been tackled in earlier sessions aiming at enhancing their motivation, and testing their understanding before introducing a new item, relying on cyclical-linear approach in the teaching of linguistics.

As for the students' attendance, the most salient thing is that girls have attested more seriousness than boys in most of the groups, as we have observed the opposite in only one group which seems to be the exception. The number of students attending the LC has been exponentially increasing from one session to the other. Furthermore, what is remarkable with some of the teachers is the oral feedback provided to students who participate in the classroom. For instance, they correct their students' mispronunciation as they enhance their motivation and improvement their performance. As stated by Black & William (1998:9 cited in Askew 2000) "Feedback to any pupil should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve, and should avoid comparisons with other pupils." Many researchers over the last decades have given a special interest to feedback for its impact on the learners' achievements.

Still another worth noting point is the teacher-students relationships. In almost all classes respect is the dominant feature of such a relationship. It has been noticed that it is a reciprocal relationship. Teachers face a challenge when it comes to students' names.

The huge number of students per group led teachers to opt for another technique that is to pass a paper in which the students have to write down their names and sign; otherwise, most of the session time will be consumed in roll call.

6.1.2. While Taking Tests

We have attended four sessions with 6 different groups while taking their first written test in linguistics. The tests have been constructed differently including a variety of tasks with different timing and settings. The common characteristic between all of those tests is that all the teachers have decided to divide their groups into two sub-groups due to the large size of the classes; hence, to supply a comfortable setting for the test-takers as well as to ensure test reliability and validity.

The tests instructions have been clearly stated. The tests were typed and the students were asked to answer in the same sheet. All the students were concentrating on the proposed task(s) with the aim of achieving satisfactory results. Unfortunately, both teachers and students were frustrated by the noise outside the classrooms. When the time allotted to the test is over, the first sub-group leaves the classroom, so that the second sub-group comes in to pass the test. Some of the teachers have opted for exactly the same test for all of their students even when testing those students who were absent. This has been done with the aim of testing the test reliability and validity.

Still other teachers have constructed different tests in terms of content; different test tasks even in their degree of difficulty. For instance, they have designed MCQ tasks for half of the group, and fill-in gaps for the second half. For other groups, teachers have used definition activities and paragraph writing activities in which students have been asked to define some linguistic concepts or to discuss and comment some quotations.

6.1.3 Post-testing

It can be seen that in some groups the students' degree of motivation has increased remarkably. The latter demonstrates that the students' interest in the course has not been affected by their tests' results (*viz.*, grades). On the one hand, the active students maintain the same level of interest asking questions and interacting with their teacher. On the other hand, the passive students' level of motivation has changed considerably. Those students have shown their interest through their replies to the teachers' questions, their serious attendance and full concentration.

Another worth noting point is that we have remarked that female students were more involved than male students. Besides, they have demonstrated their strong will to achieve better results seeking their teachers' guidance. Moreover, females have recognized their deficiencies as far as tests are concerned. In other words, the discussion of the test results in the classroom was of a great help for the students to discover their weaknesses, hence, to work more to strengthen them and achieve satisfactory results.

To conclude, it can be pointed out that the tests results have their positive impact on the majority of students, except for some students who have shown their unwillingness to study Linguistics. The latter was observed through the students' passive attendance or absence due to the low grades they have obtained in the tests.

6.2 Description of the Course Evaluation Form Layout

The course evaluation form used in the present study is composed of 5 sections comprising 33 statements. The 5 sections target the students' point of view about different elements including Teaching Evaluation (15 statements), Classroom Environment (3 statements), Tests (7 statements), Students' Attitudes (5 statements), and

General Observations (3 statements). Students were asked to choose the number that corresponds to their opinion. The rating system of the 5 sections is based on Likert scale in which students choose from 1 to 5 the view representing their degree of agreement with each of the statements. The course evaluation form was distributed and collected with the help of some colleagues. Out of 393, 150 students have filled in the form.

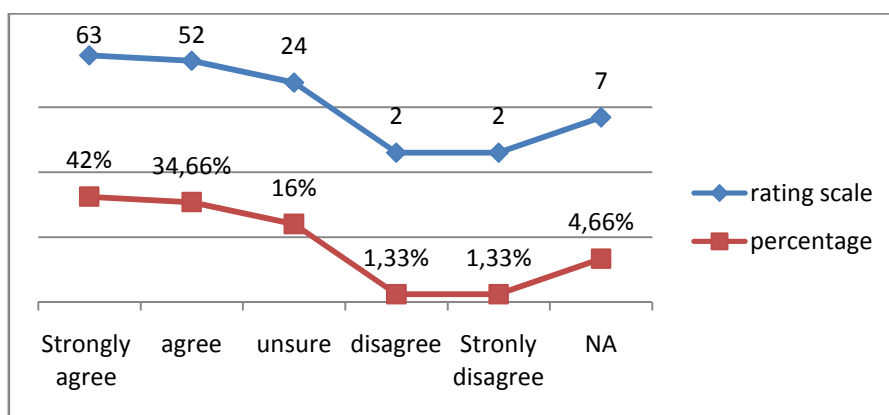
6.3 Interpretation of the Results

This section is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the results we have obtained from the 150 forms handed back. The results are statistically portrayed through tables (See appendix I) which are represented as graphs. Section one aims mainly to evaluate the instructor' knowledge, preparation, enthusiasm, time management, behavior in class and other elements. Section two deals with the classroom environment including the sitting arrangement and students' comfort. Section three targets tests in terms of design, variety of activities' and level of difficulty, grading scale, instructions' clarity, and time allotment. Section four examines the students' attitudes towards the nature of the Linguistics course and background knowledge in English. Section five concerns some general observations about the students' needs and the Linguistics course objectives.

6.3.1 Teaching Evaluation

The goal of this section is to evaluate the teachers of Linguistics knowledge about the subject, their preparation and preparedness, their behavior in the classroom, their attitudes towards teaching, and their relationship with students.

Statement 1: Teacher is knowledgeable about the subject.



Graph 6.27: Teacher's Knowledge

Statistically speaking, graph 27 demonstrates that 63 out of 150 (42%) participants strongly agree that their teacher is knowledgeable about the subject (namely, Linguistics), 52 (34.66%) agree, 24 (16%) are unsure, 7 (4.66%) did not provide their opinion, 2 (1.33%) disagree, and an equal percentage 2 (1.33%) strongly disagree with the statement. As mentioned in earlier sections that Linguistics is a demanding course that --- requires an experienced and knowledgeable teacher, the results above come to confirm this belief by more than two thirds of our participants who agree with Statement 1 about the teacher's knowledge.

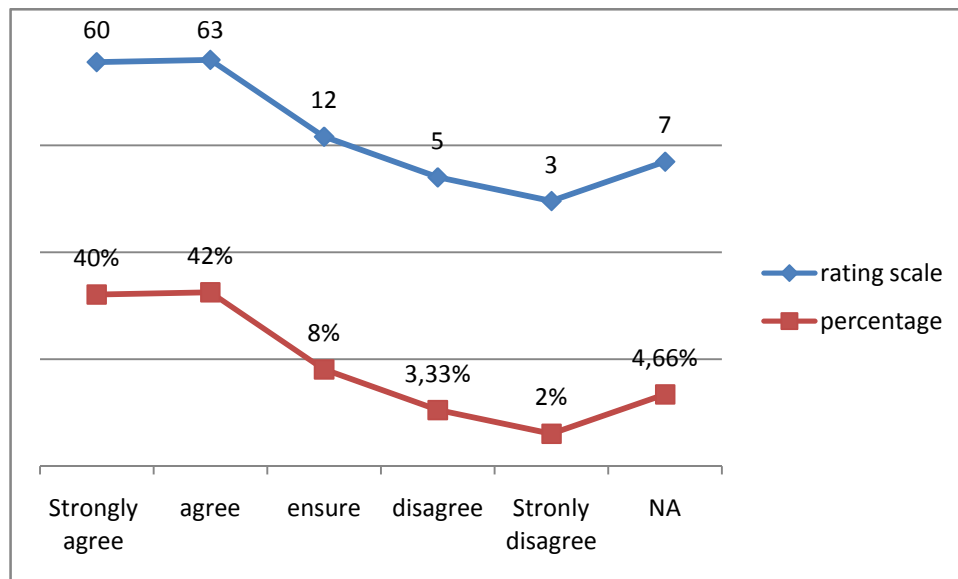
Most Algerian teachers teach different modules, hence, they are not knowledgeable in all the modules, which accentuates the challenging nature of teaching a discipline-related course. It is an established fact that the teacher's knowledge about the subject is a crucial element in the teaching learning process. The teacher in most cases is knowledge provider that is why if he/she comes to the classroom lacking the adequate knowledge, there will be relatively little learning. Bachmann (1984, p.32) argues that:

It would be odd to expect a teacher to plan a lesson on, for instance, writing reports in science, and to evaluate related student assignments, if that teacher is ignorant of writing about science, and

does not understand what student progress in writing science reports might mean.

In the same vein, Spear-Swerling *et al.* (2005) assert that “the teacher who has command over the subject matter gives him/her the opportunity to provide his/her students with more information”. (Cited in Ghazi *et al.* 2013, pp.453-454). Linguistics teachers have shown their knowledge of the subject through their interaction with their students answering their questions and providing clarifications where necessary. They have tried to relate the content taught to real life situations for the benefit of the students’ understanding.

Statement 02: Teacher is prepared.



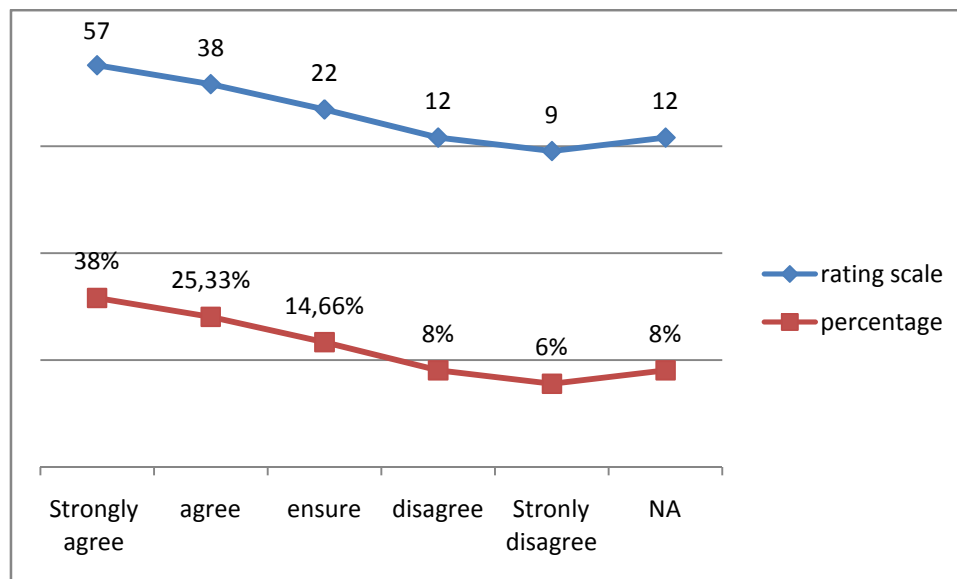
Graph 6.28: Teacher’ Preparation

Besides being knowledgeable, Linguistics teachers need to diligently prepare their lessons. Well prepared and well delivered lessons prove that the teacher is effective and efficient. The graph above demonstrates that the solid majority of our participants 63 (42%) agree that their teacher of Linguistics is prepared, 60 (40%)

students strongly agree, 12 (8%) are undecided, 7 (4.66%) have not provided any answer, 5 (3.33%) disagree and 3 (2%) strongly disagree.

These results reveal that the teachers of Linguistics come to class well prepared since they satisfy their students' needs. In the same vein, Hammond (2006) asserts that teacher preparations in addition to some other qualifications are leading factors in teacher effectiveness. Furthermore, Moreno Rubio (2009, p.37) advocates that "Good planning facilitates clear explanations, and it provides a wide range of resources suitable to students needs". To end with, teachers' preparation is a pre-requisite since it leads to teaching learning success.

Statement 03: Teacher encourages participation.



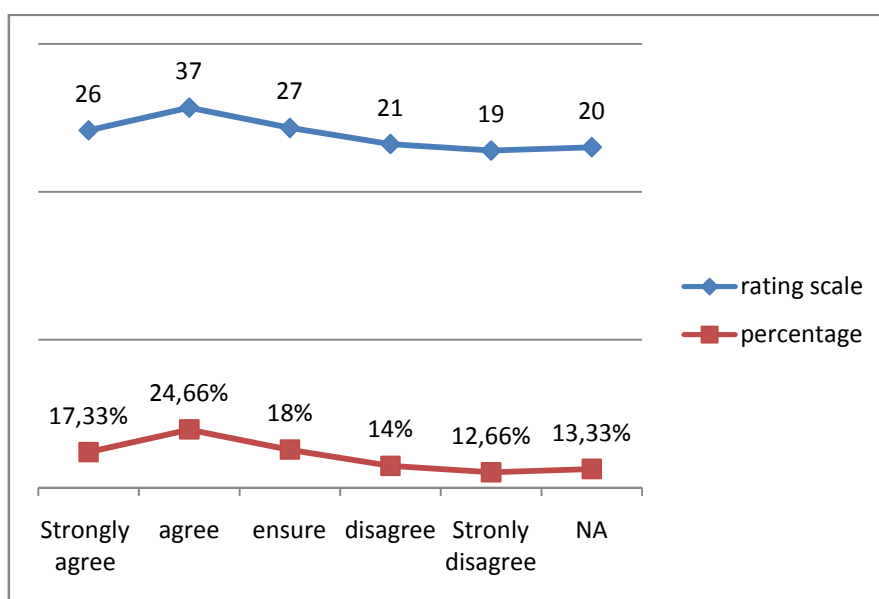
Graph 6.29: Teacher and Students' Participation

Graph 29 shows the instructor's encouragement of participation in class. 57 (38%) of our participants strongly agree that the instructor encourages participation. 38 (25.33%) agree, 22 (14.66%) are unsure about the statement, 12 (8%) disagree, 9 (6%)

strongly disagree, and 12 (8%) did not provide any answer. It can be seen from the graph that teachers of Linguistics are aware of the importance of class participation and its impact on students' outcomes.

Different scholars have written about the influence of class participation on the students' academic achievements. Cohen (1991, p.699) considers participation as “*a way to bring ‘students actively into the educational process’ and to assist in ‘enhancing our teaching and bringing life to the classroom’*”. (Cited in Rocca, 2010, p.188). According to Heyman & Sailors (2011, p.1), “class participation is a form of active learning in which students publicly discuss the course material”. In the same vein, Wade (1994) asserts that “most students can obtain the benefits such as the enjoyment of sharing ideas with others and learn more if they are active to contribute in class discussion.” (Cited in Yusof Abdullah, Abu Bakar & Haizan Mahbob, 2012, p.516). The major objective of class participation is to enhance students' engagement in the learning process.

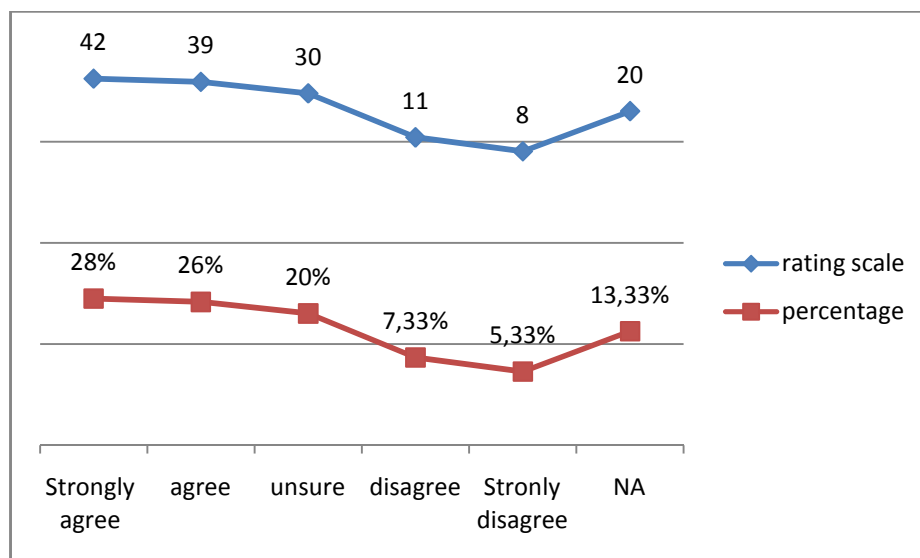
Statement 04: The teacher never intimidated or embarrassed students.



Graph 6.30: Students' Attitudes towards Teacher's Behaviour

Graph 30 indicates that 37 (24.66%) of the students agree that the instructor never intimidated or embarrassed students. 26 (17.33%) of the students strongly agree, 27 (18%) are unsure, 21 (14%) disagree, 19 (12.66%) strongly disagree, and 20 (13.33%) did not provide any answer. From the statistics above, we have noticed that a considerable number of students (40 students=26.66%) disagree with the statement; hence, we draw the conclusion that some teachers intimidate their students and this affects the students negatively. It may decrease their motivation as it may lead them to miss the course at all.

Statement 05: Teacher is enthusiastic about teaching

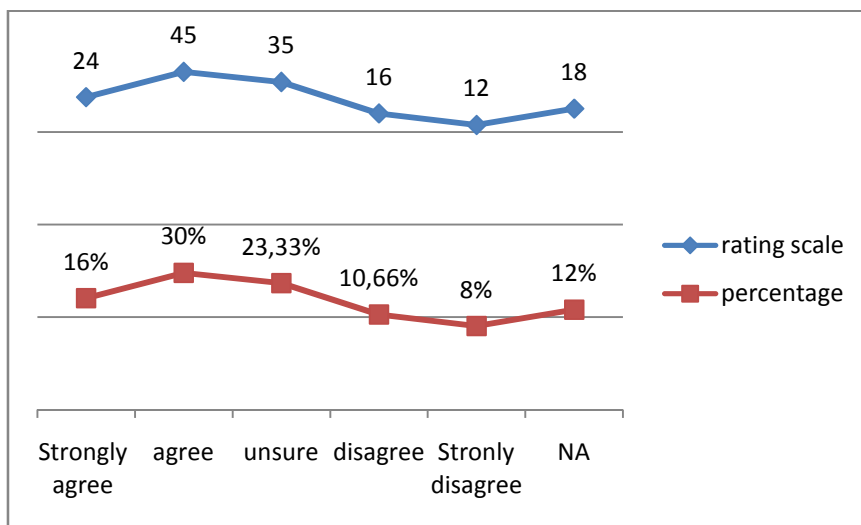


Graph 6.31: Teacher’s Enthusiasm

As far as teachers’ enthusiasm about teaching is concerned, 28% the students strongly agree that the teacher is enthusiastic about teaching, 26% agree, 20% are unsure about the statement, 7.33% of the students disagree, 5.33% strongly disagree, and still 13.33% did not provide any answer. The results reveal that the solid majority (81 participants) with 54% of the students considering their teacher(s) of Linguistics enthusiastic proves that the teacher may raise his/her students’ engagement in their learning; therefore, increase their motivation and improve their achievements.

According to Sanders & Gosenpud (1986, p.52), “an enthusiastic classroom environment is a more interesting and stimulating place to be than in a dull or stolid environment.” Similarly, Cruichshank (1980, cited in Sanders & Gosenpud, 1986, p.52) claims that “... a teacher who presents material in an animated and stimulating manner will have students who achieve better on tests than a teacher who does not”. Besides, Moreno Rubio (2009) advocates that a teacher has to be open, understanding and above all *enthusiastic*. (Researcher’s emphasis). This leads to the conclusion that an enthusiastic environment boosts students’ motivation and raises their interest in the course, therefore, drives them to make more efforts to achieve better test results.

Statement 06: The pace of the lesson is just right.



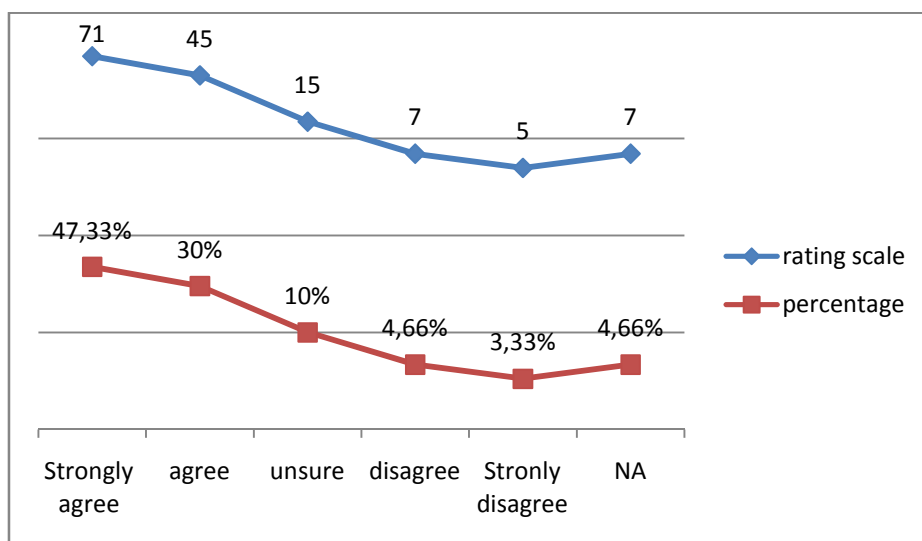
Graph 6.32: The Lesson Pace

Statement 6 aims to explore the students’ attitudes towards the pace of the lesson. We strongly believe that the pace of the lesson has its immediate impact on the students’ understanding in the classroom. If the pace of the lesson is fast, many students may fail to follow the teacher’s explanation, hence, fail to understand the lesson; if the pace of the lesson is just ‘right’, this would give the opportunity to every student to

follow with the teacher, and ask for clarification whenever needed. 45 of the participants (30%) agree that the pace of the lesson is just ‘right’, 16% of the students strongly agree, 23.33% are uncertain about the ‘right’ pace, 10.66% disagree, 8% strongly disagree, and 12% did not provide any answer.

Having nearly half of the participants (69=46%) considering that the pace of the lesson is just ‘right’ confirms our belief that the students’ understanding is affected by the pace of the lesson. In the same breath, Kyriacou (2007, p.59) reported that “Indeed, an important aspect of maintaining the correct pace during exposition involves having a sense of how long to dwell on each point for understanding to occur”. That is to say, the management of pace of the lesson is the responsibility of the teacher in the first place. Besides, it is worth noting that the considerable number of students (35=23.33%) who are unsure about the statement reveal those students fail to grasp what *the pace of the lesson* may mean. (Emphasis of the author).

Statement 07: The teacher made me feel free to ask questions.

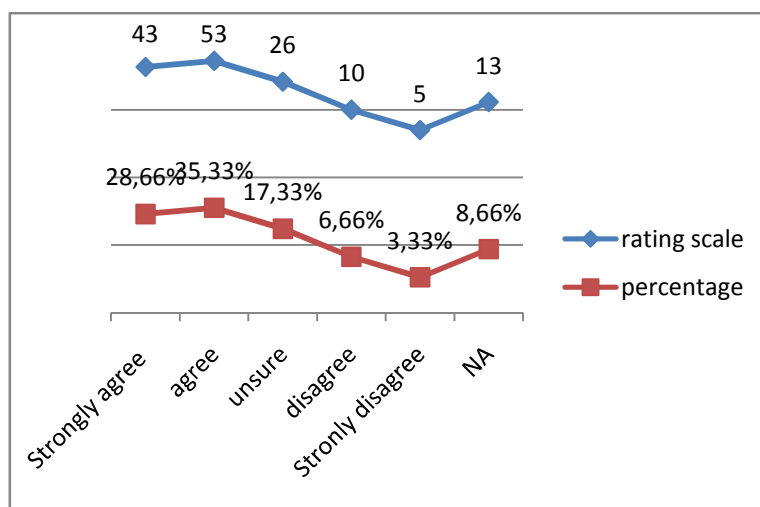


Graph 6.33: Teacher and Students’ Questions

As can be seen from graph 33, a significant percentage (47.33%) of the informants strongly agree that the teacher made them free to ask questions. 30% of the students agree, 10% are undecided, 4.66% disagree, 3.33% strongly disagree, and still 4.66% of the participants did not provide any answer. Having the majority of the students (116=77.33%) agreed with statement 7 indicates that teachers of linguistics of the EB at MKU of Biskra are aware of the importance of the students' questions in the teaching/learning process.

According to Chin (2002, p.59), "The act of asking questions and the consequent search for answers is key to active learning", and "...students should be encouraged to ask questions as this facilitates learning". In other words, it is the teacher's mission in the first place to motivate students to ask questions as it helps understanding and thus enhance learning. In the same vein, Menegale (n.d., p.108) asserts that "Students are more encouraged to talk when they feel the teacher is attentive and interested in what they say. Hence, the use of open questions promotes a collaborative mode of discussion, the development of new ideas and the common pursuit of a solution". Moreover, it is highly important to help students develop their questioning skills rather than focusing on how teachers ask questions and how students answer them. (Bowker, 2010).

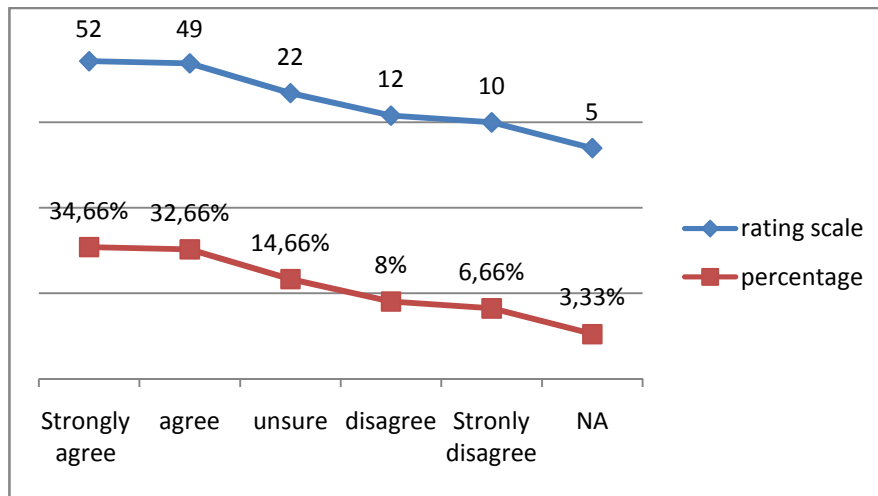
Statement 08: The teacher grasped and responded to students' questions and comments.



Graph 6.34: Teacher Understanding of Students' Questions

Graph 34 indicates that a high percentage (35.33%) of the students agree that the teacher grasped and responded to their questions and comments. Still another large number of students (43=28.66%) strongly agree, 17.33% are unsure about the statement, 6.66% disagree, 3.33% strongly disagree, and 8.66% of the participants did not provide any answer. Statistically speaking, a great number of students (96=63.99%) agreed with statement 8 which proves that teachers of linguistics give the opportunity to students to ask questions and comment on the discussion elements.

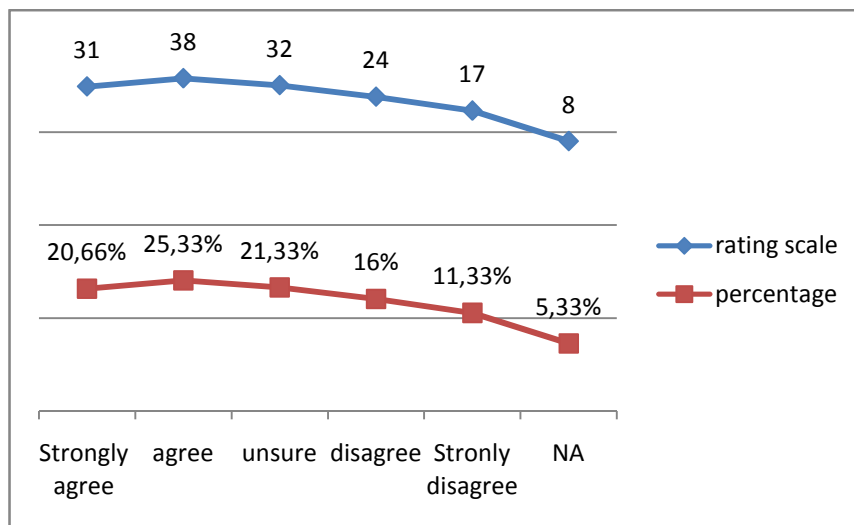
Statement 09: The teacher’s English was clear (e.g., good pronunciation, speed, vocabulary).



Graph 6.35: Teacher’s English and Students’ Understanding

The graph shows that a great number of students (49=32.66%) agree that the teacher’s English is clear. 34.66% strongly agree, 14.66% of the participants are unsure about the statement, 8% strongly disagree, 6.66% disagree, and 3.33% did not provide any answer. Having the vast majority of students (101=67.32%) considering the teacher’s English as clear indicates that the students’ deficiencies in linguistics are not related to their teacher’s language, but related to other factors.

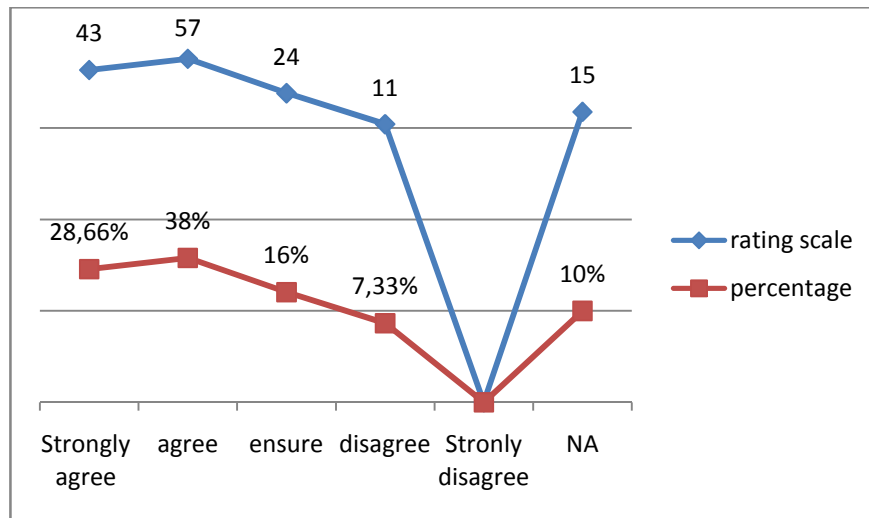
Statement 10: The teacher tried to learn students' names.



Graph 6.36: Teacher and Learning Student Names

Graph 36 shows that 25.33% of the participants agree that the teacher tried to learn their names. 20.66% strongly agree, 21.33% are unsure about the statement, 16% disagree, 11.33% strongly disagree, and 5.33% of the students did not provide any answer. Indeed, calling students by name helps shy students to be involved in the course as it leads students to positively evaluate their teacher as interested and approachable. (Glenz, 2014). In sum, learning student names is an essential task for the teacher to enhance students' engagement.

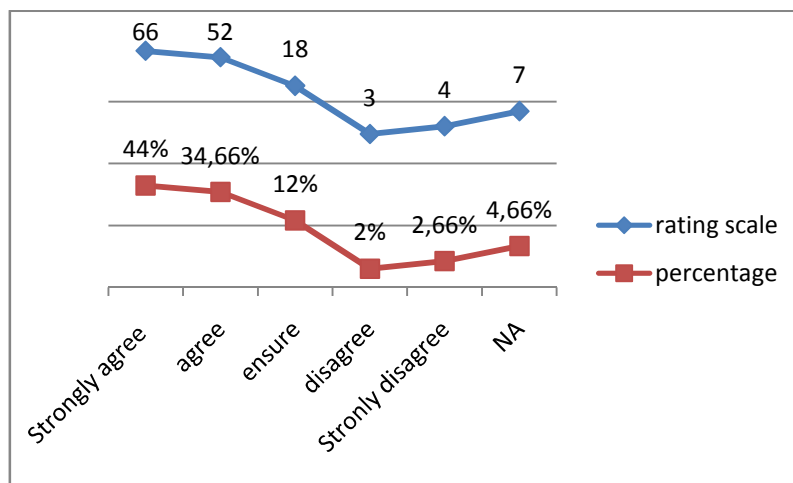
Statement 11: The teacher’s examples and illustrations were clear and concise.



Graph 6.37: Teacher’s Illustrations

It is clear from the graph that a significant number of students (57=38%) agree that the teacher’s examples and illustrations were clear and concise. 28.66% strongly agree, 16% are undecided, 7.33% disagree, 0% strongly disagree, and 10% of the students did not provide any answer. The considerable number of students (100) who agree with statement 11 demonstrates that teachers of linguistics are able to supply their students with useful clarifications which help increase their understanding.

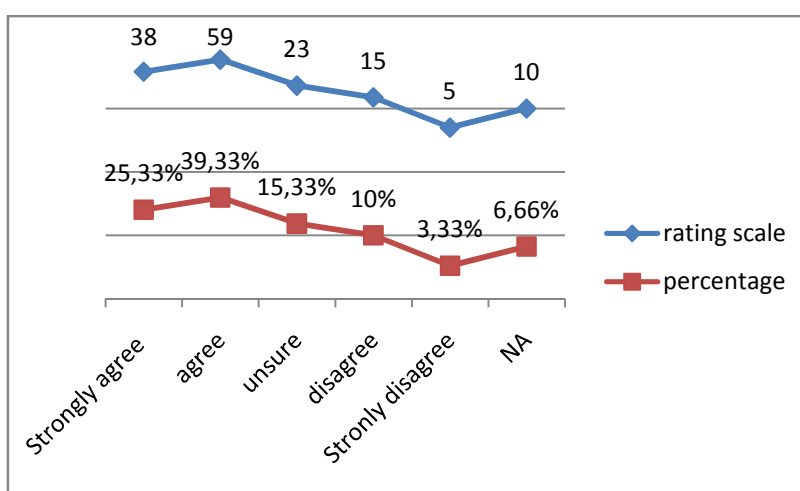
Statement 12: The teacher was able to give alternative explanations when needed.



Graph 6.38: Teacher’s Alternative Explanations

As illustrated by the graph, the solid majority of students (44%) strongly agree that the teacher was able to give alternative explanations when needed. Besides, 34.66% agree, 12% are uncertain about the statement, 2.66% strongly disagree, 2% disagree, and 4.66% did not provide any answer. Having a high percentage (78.66%) of students agree with statement 12 confirms that teachers of linguistics are knowledgeable about the subject and able to provide students with the adequate explanation whenever required. From a personal experience, the researcher has observed that teachers of linguistics explain concepts using different techniques such as: giving examples from the surrounding environment, as they use miming and sometimes use even their mother tongue if the students fail to understand (namely, writing the concept in Arabic on the blackboard).

Statement 13: The teacher managed class time effectively.

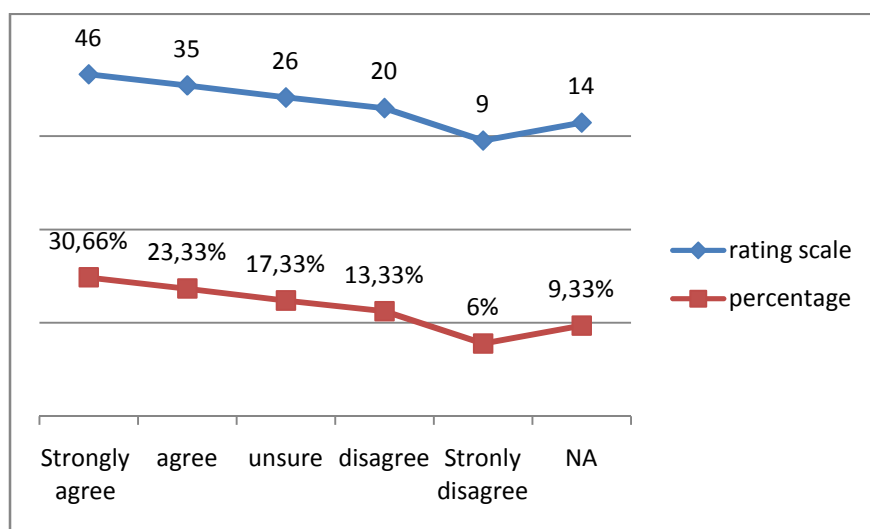


Graph 6.39: Teacher and Time management

The graph demonstrates that a considerable number of students (59=39.33%) agree that the teacher managed class time effectively. 25.33% of students strongly agree, 15.33% are unsure about the statement, 10% disagree, 3.33% strongly disagree, and 6.66% of the participants did not provide any answer. The results reveal that teachers of

linguistics, according to 97 students, manage class time effectively. That is to say, teachers of linguistics come to class with some readiness to divide time according to the number of items to be covered within the session (one hour and a half).

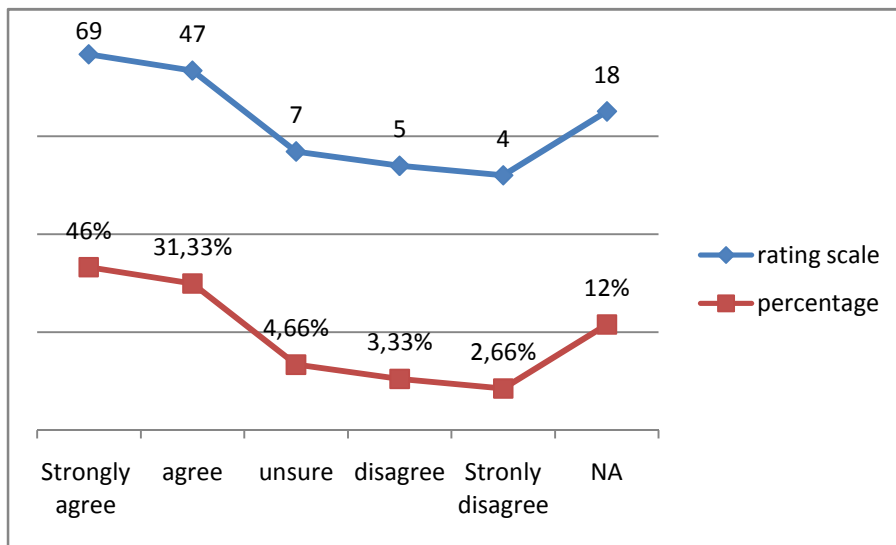
Statement 14: The teacher is fair in examination.



Graph 6.40: Teacher and Fairness in Examinations

As shown by the graph, 30.66% of the participants strongly agree that the teacher is fair in examination. 23.33% agree, 17.33% are uncertain, 13.33% disagree, 6% strongly disagree with the statement, and still 9.33% of students did not provide any answer. Having more than half of the participants agree with statement 14 proves that teachers of linguistics scoring of exams meet the students' expectations even when they obtain low grades.

Statement 15: The teacher shows respect towards students.

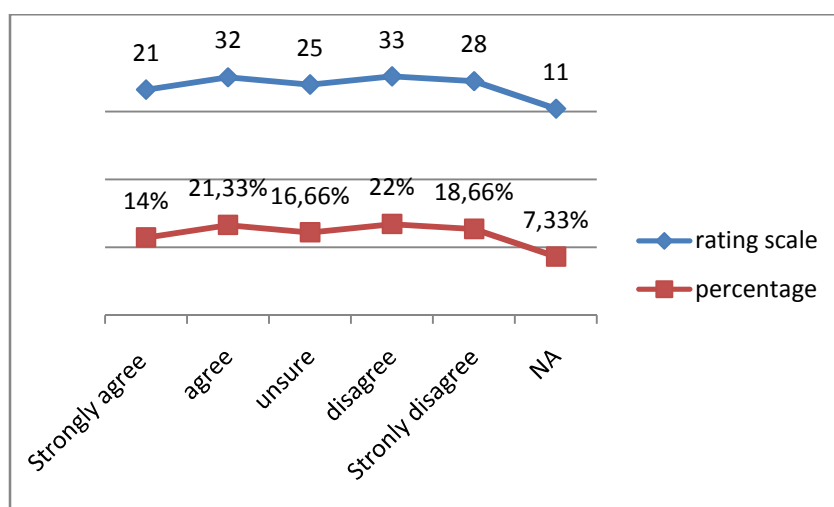


Graph 6.41: Teacher's Respect towards Students

The graph shows that a large number of students (69=46%) strongly agree that the teacher shows respect towards students. 31.33% agree, 4.66% are unsure about the statement, 3.33% disagree, 2.66% strongly disagree, and 12% of the participants, and for unknown reasons, did not provide any answer. The high percentage (77.33%) of students who agree with statement 15 confirms what the researcher has observed in real classroom situations. It is mentioned in previous sections (namely, classroom observation description) that respect is the dominant feature of teacher- student relationships.

6.3.2 Classroom Environment

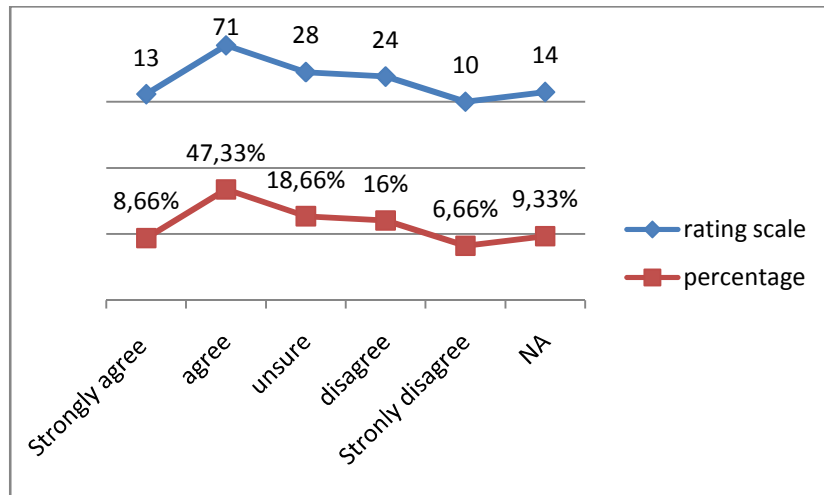
Statement 16: The classroom is comfortable and inviting.



Graph 6.42: Classroom Comfort

The graph shows that 21.33% of the participants agree that the classroom is comfortable and inviting. 14% strongly agree, 16.66% are unsure about the statement, 22% disagree, and 18.66% strongly disagree; besides 7.33% of students did not provide any answer. Expectedly, a large number of students (61=40.66%) disagree with statement 16. This result confirms what the researcher has observed in reality: the classroom is not inviting because of the large class size when compared to classroom size and availability of furniture, i.e., chairs and tables.

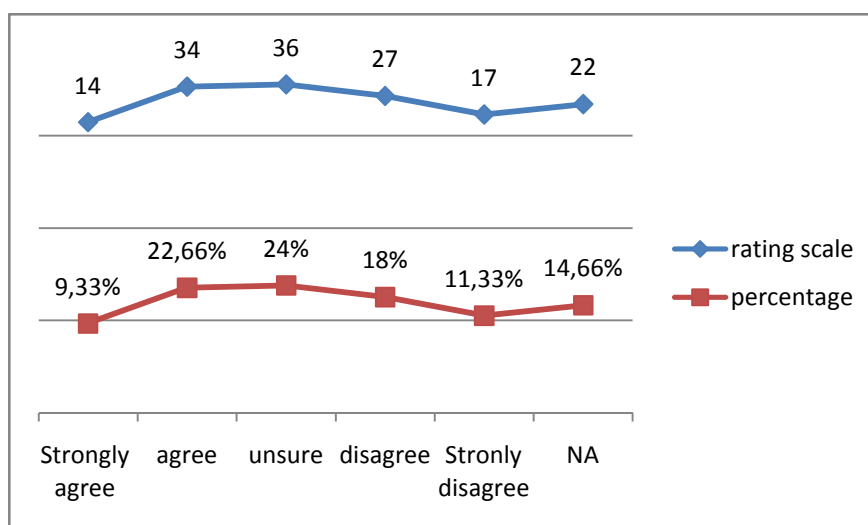
Statement 17: The classroom presents few distractions.



Graph 6.43: Classroom Distractions

It is clear from the graph that the vast majority of students (47.33%) agree that the classroom presents few distractions. 8.66% strongly agree, 18.66% are unsure about the statement, 16% disagree, 6.66% strongly disagree, and 9.33% did not provide any answer. Having more than half of the participants (81 out of 150) agree with statement 17 is evidence that the classroom is uncomfortable.

Statement 18: The tables provide adequate work space.

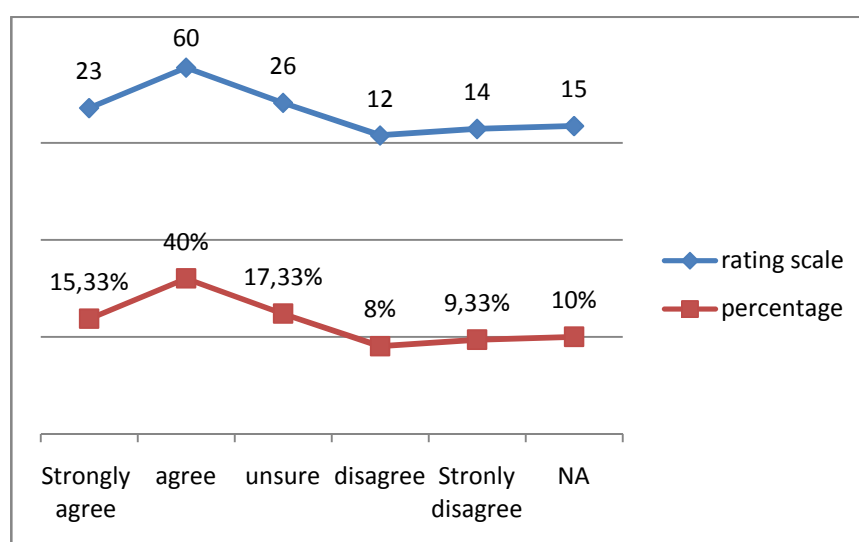


Graph 6.44: Classroom Work Space

Graph 44 indicates that 22.66% of students agree that tables provide adequate work space. 9.33% strongly agree, 24% are uncertain about the statement, 18% disagree, 11.33% strongly disagree, and 14.66% did not provide any answer. Statistically speaking, the results reveal that statement 18 is rejected. For instance, the teacher is unable to move in the class whether to explain to students who need help and sitting in the back of the classroom or even to distribute the lecture’s handouts because of the over crowdedness.

6.3.3 Tests

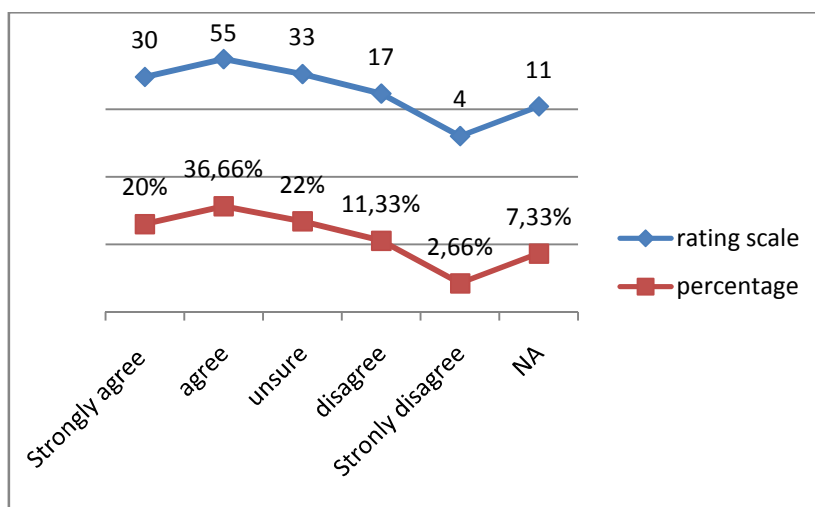
Statement 19: The level of tests is just ‘right’.



Graph 6.45: The Level of Tests

It is clear from the graph that a large number of students (60=40%) agree that the level of tests is just right. 15.33% strongly agree, 17.33% are uncertain about the statement, 9.33% strongly disagree, 8% disagree, and still 10% of students did not provide any answer. Having more than half of the participants (83 out of 150) agree with statement 19 demonstrates that teachers of linguistics, when designing tests, they take into consideration the students’ level; hence, to develop tests which work with level of the majority of the students.

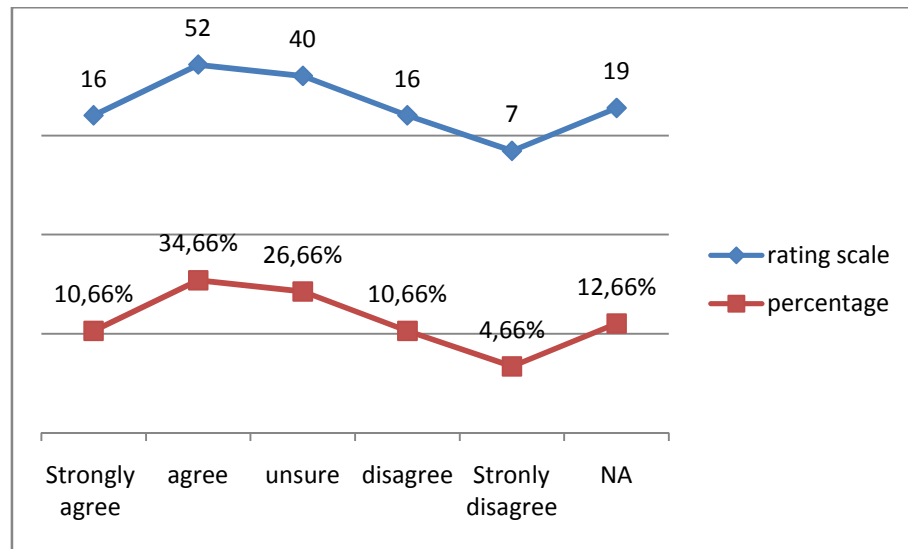
Statement 20: The tests cover all the learning points.



Graph 6.46: Tests and the Learning Points

The graph shows that a considerable number of students (55=36.66%) agree that the tests cover all the learning points. 20% strongly agree, 22% are undecided about the statement, 11.33% disagree, 2.66% strongly disagree, and 7.33% of the participants did not provide any answer. Statement 20 is accepted by the solid majority of students (56.66%). This indicates that teachers of linguistics of first year classes, when preparing the tests, include all the learning points purposefully to give the opportunity to all the students to achieve satisfactory results.

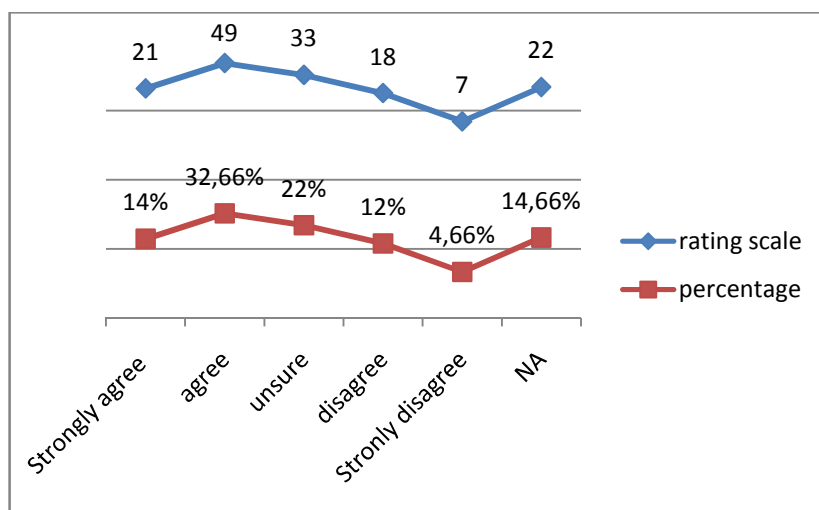
Statement 21: The tests' grading scale is acceptable.



Graph 6.47: Tests Grading Scale

As the graph illustrates, 34.66% of the students agree that the tests grading scale is acceptable. 10.66% strongly agree, 26.66% are unsure about the statement, 10.66% disagree, 4.66% strongly disagree, and 12.66% did not provide any answer. Although statement 21 is accepted by 68 students, the significant number of students (40) who are unsure about the statement reveals that this group of students is either unsatisfied of the grading scale.

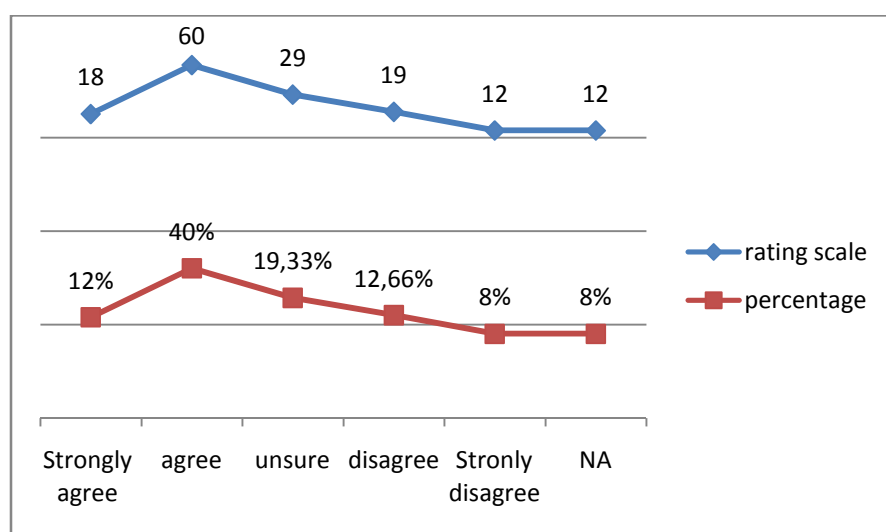
Statement 22: The tests' instructions were clearly stated.



Graph 6.48: Tests Instructions Clarity

As shown by the graph, 32.66% of the participants agree that the tests instructions were clearly stated. 14% strongly agree, 22% are unsure, 12% disagree, 4.66% strongly disagree with the statement, and 14.66% did not provide any answer. Having 70 students considering the tests instructions as being clearly stated proves that the students' deficiencies in linguistics may be the results of some other factors.

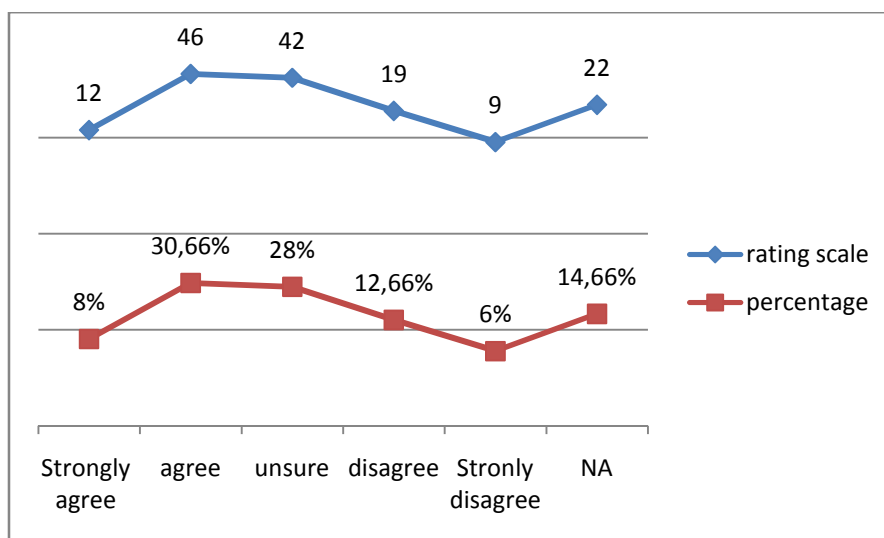
Statement 23: The tests included types of activities which you like to find.



Graph 6.49: Tests activities and Students Preferences

Graph 49 shows that 40% of the students agree that the tests included types of activities which they like to find. 12% strongly agree, 19.33% are uncertain, 12.66% disagree with the statement, 8% strongly disagree, and equally 8% of the students did not provide any answer. Statement 23 is accepted by 78 students proving that teachers of linguistics, when preparing their tests, take into consideration their students' preferences as far as types of tasks are concerned. This means that the tests in linguistics are prepared to meet the students' needs and wants, so that to enable most of the students to reach good test results.

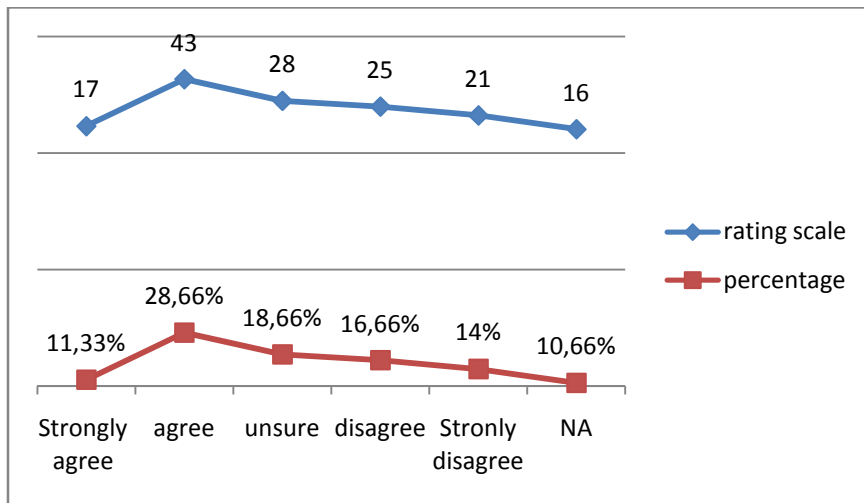
Statement 24: The grades are convenient.



Graph 6.50: Tests Grades

The graph shows that 30.66% of the participants agree that the grades are convenient. 8% strongly agree, 28% are unsure about the statement, 12.66% disagree, 6% strongly disagree, and 14.66% did not provide any answer. Having less than half of the students (60 out of 150) agree with statement 24 indicate that the majority of the students are not convinced of their grades in linguistics. We can deduce that the students are not satisfied of their results in the linguistics tests which may refer to different factors such as the grading scale that is not convenient, the severe correction ...etc

Statement 25: The time allotted to the tests is quite sufficient.

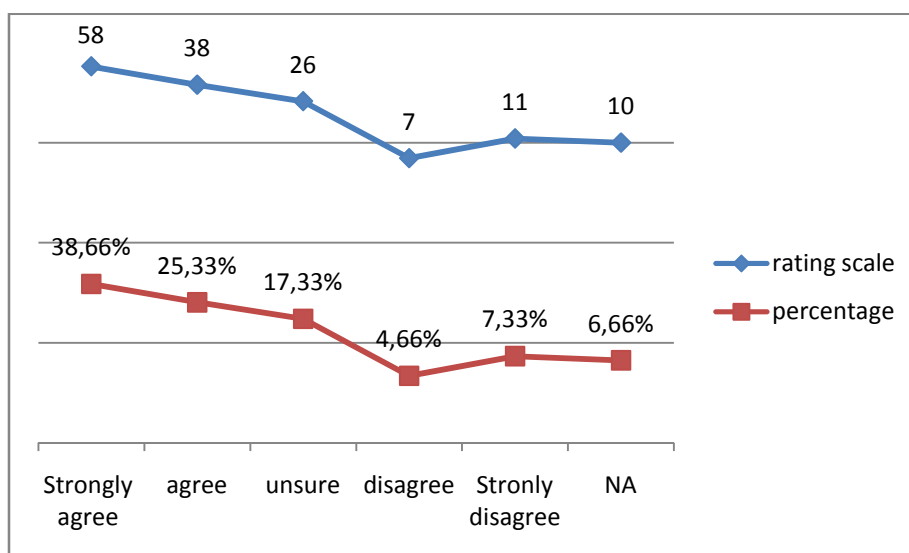


Graph 6.51: Tests and Time Allotment

The graph indicates that 28.66% of the participants agree that the time allotted to the tests is quite sufficient. 11.33% strongly agree, 18.66% are uncertain about the statement, 16.66% disagree, 14% strongly disagree, and 10.66% did not provide an answer. The significant percentage of students (39.99%) who agree with statement 25 demonstrates that the students' unsatisfactory results in linguistics tests have no relation with the time allotted to the tests.

6.3.4 Students' Attitudes

Statement 26: Students' background knowledge in English helps them a lot in learning linguistics.

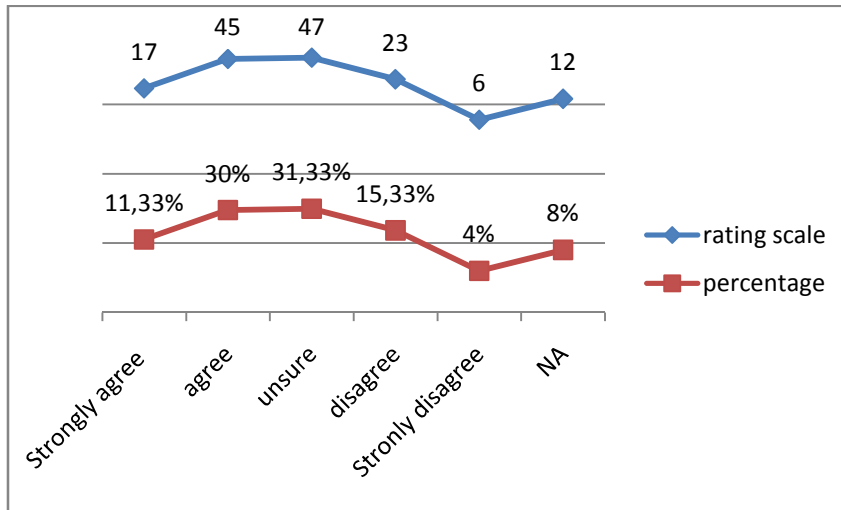


Graph 6.52: Students Background Knowledge and Understanding of Linguistics

It is clear from the graph that a large number of students (58=38.66%) strongly agree that the students' background knowledge in English helps them a lot in learning linguistics. 25.33% agree, 17.33% are unsure about the statement, 7.33% strongly disagree, 4.66% disagree, and 6.66% did not provide an answer. Having the solid majority of the participants (96=63.99%) agree with statement 26 shows the students' strong belief that their deficiencies in linguistics may be due to their poor background knowledge in English. For instance, Svinicki (1993-94) advocated that the prior knowledge has its impact on the perception and organization of new information. She added that this impact may be either positive or negative. In our case, if the students have a good background knowledge in English (rich vocabulary, a good mastery of the English grammar rules, etc), this will certainly help them concentrating on the new information of

the linguistics course; hence, to understand better and overcome their difficulties in such a course.

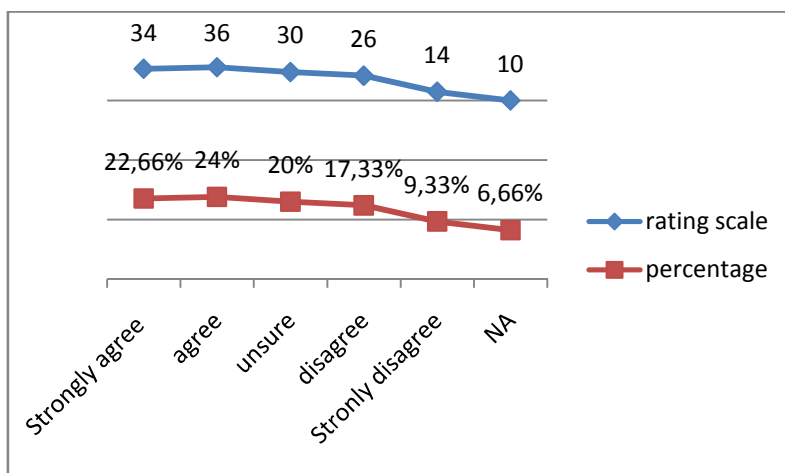
Statement 27: Students prepared thoroughly for each class.



Graph 6.53: Students Preparation

The graph shows that 30% of the participants agree that students prepared thoroughly for each class. 11.33% strongly agree, 31.33% are undecided about the statement, 15.33% disagree, 4% strongly disagree, and 8% did not provide an answer. Having 41.33% of the participants agree with statement 27 shows the students' awareness of the importance of the good preparation for each class.

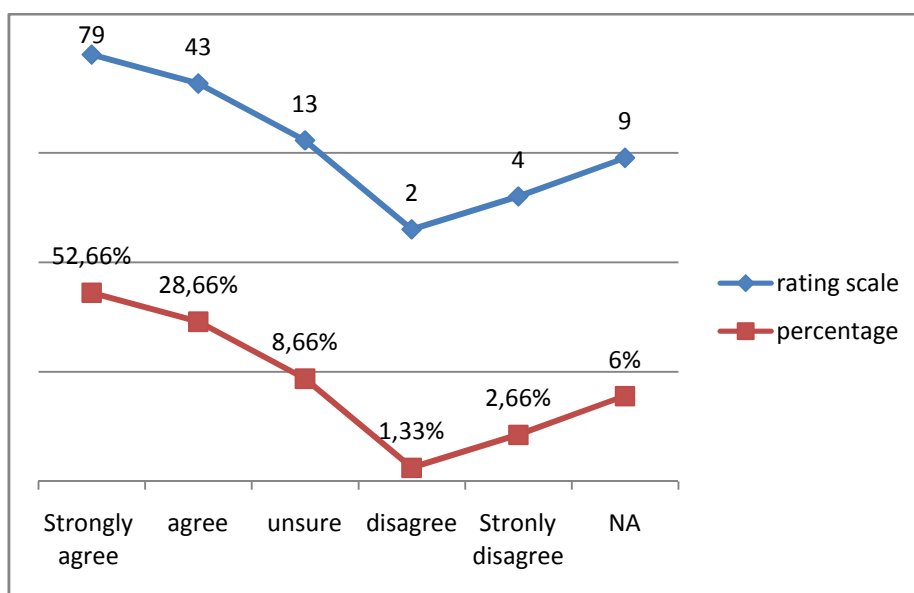
Statement 28: Students feel that Linguistics should not be taught at first year level.



Graph 6.54: Linguistics and First Year Classes

It can be seen from the graph that 24% of the participants agree that the students feel that linguistics should not be taught at first year level. 22.66% strongly agree, 20% are unsure about the statement, 17.33% disagree, 9.33% strongly disagree, and 6.66% did not provide any answer. Having 46.66% of the participants agree with statement 28 shows the students' strong belief in linguistics' difficulty, that is why they show their want to delay linguistics' teaching to another level (2nd year level). In other words, the students believe that, at first year level, they are not yet able to grasp the linguistics concepts.

Statement 29: Students need more time to help them understand the linguistics course.

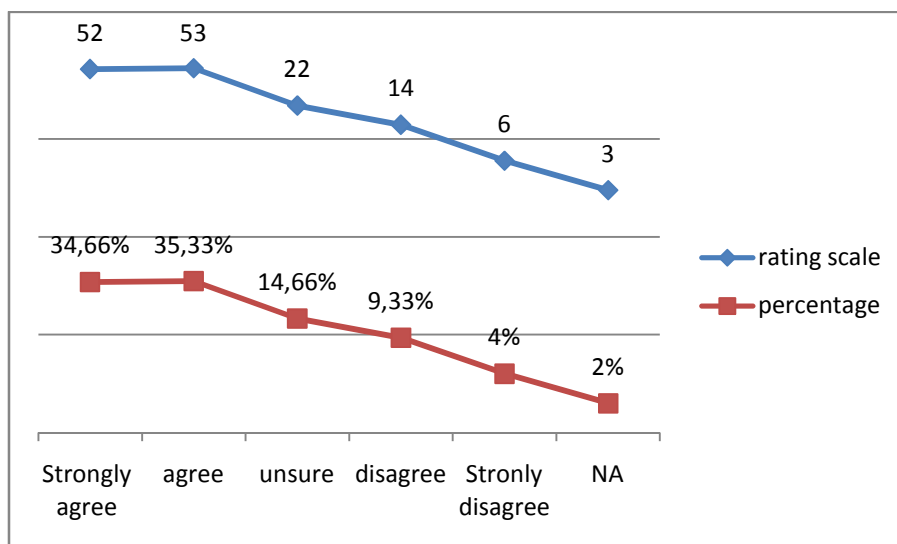


Graph 6.55: Students Understanding and Linguistics Time Allotment

It is clear from the graph that a considerable number of students (79=52.66%) strongly agree that students need more time to help them understand the linguistics course. 28.66% agree, 8.66% are unsure about the statement, 1.33% disagree, 2.66% strongly disagree, and 6% did not provide any answer. Having the vast majority of students (122=81.32%) agree with statement 29 leads the researcher to conclude that the time allotted to the linguistics course is not sufficient to help the students understand well.

In other terms, the students ask for more time (two or more sessions= three or four hours and a half per week).

Statement 30: First year students claim that the Linguistics course is too difficult.

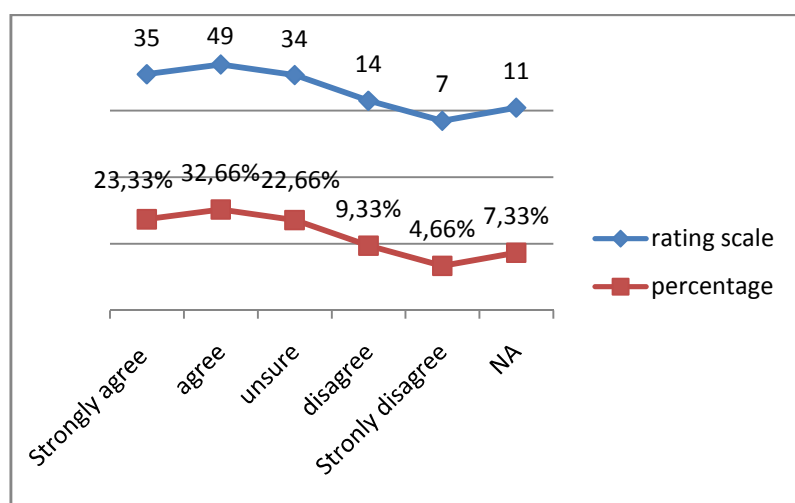


Graph 6.56: Students and Difficulty of Linguistics

Graph 56 shows that 35.33% of the students agree that first year students claim that the linguistics course is too difficult. 34.66% strongly agree, 14.66% are uncertain about the statement, 9.33% disagree, 4% strongly disagree, and only 2% did not provide an answer. Statement 30 is positively accepted since the solid majority of students (105=69.99%) admit the difficulty of linguistics.

6.3.5 General Observations

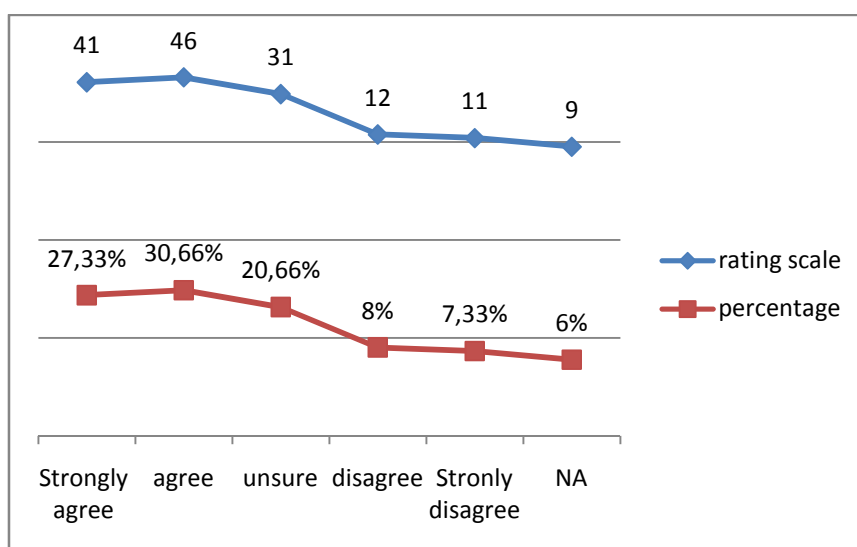
Statement 31: The course meets my needs.



Graph 6.57: Linguistics and Students Needs

The graph shows that 32.66% of the participants agree that the course meets their needs. 25.33% strongly agree, 22.66% are unsure about the statement, 9.33% disagree, 4.66% strongly disagree, and 7.33% did not provide any answer. Having more than half (84 out of 150) of the participants agree that the course meets their needs demonstrates that they are aware of the importance of learning linguistics even if they have shown their want to delay its teaching to another level (statement 28).

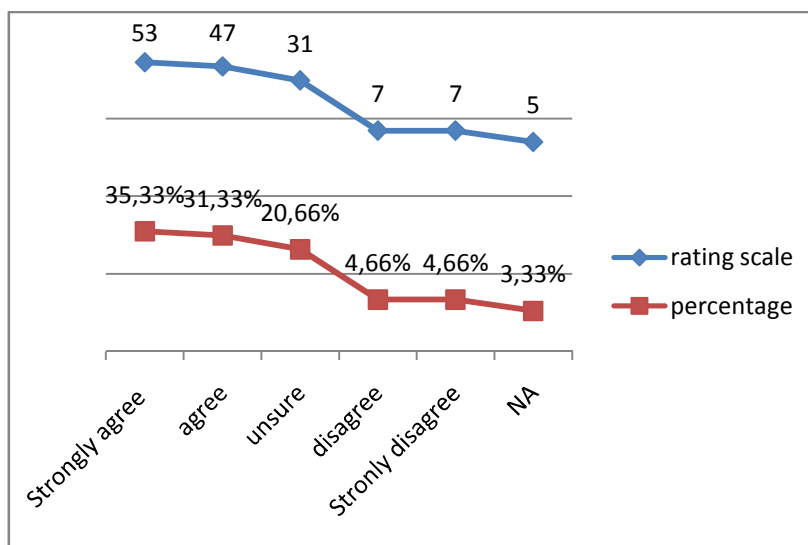
Statement 32: I like this course.



Graph 6.58: Students Feelings towards Linguistics

It can be seen from the graph that 30.66% of the students agree that they like this course (i.e., the linguistics course). 27.33% strongly agree, 20.66% are unsure about the statement, 8% disagree, 7.33% strongly disagree, and 6% did not provide an answer. Statement 32 is also positively accepted. Once more, having 87 students out of 150 like the linguistics course proves that the students benefit from learning linguistics in one way or another although they have some difficulties when it comes to tests.

Statement 33: The course improved my language skills.



Graph 6.59: Linguistics and Students Language Skills

The graph shows that 35.33% of the participants strongly agree that the course improved their language skills. 31.33% agree, 20.66% are uncertain about the statement, 4.66% strongly disagree, 4.66% disagree, and 3.33% did not provide an answer. Having two thirds of the participants agree with statement 33 demonstrates the positive impact of linguistics on the students' language skills.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have described and discussed live data gathered in three different phases involving the participants before taking tests, while taking tests, and after tests in addition to participants' evaluation of the classroom environment, and the tests, their background knowledge in English, Linguistics course, and other learning points.

**PEDAGOGICAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
AND SUGGESTIONS FOR
FUTURE RESEARCH**

Pedagogical Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Research

On the basis of the limitations of the study, some suggestions are made in the present section. The findings of the current investigation have led to some suggestions for instructors of the module of Linguistics, and for first year students of the English Branch at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra.

On the one hand, teachers need

✓ To trained to understand and meet the triad (reliability, validity, and practicality) of tests. It is widely acknowledged that teachers teach the way that they have been taught, which means that they replicate their tertiary teachers' methods of lecturing. Lecturing to a large population turns out to be boring because of its one-way (Teacher to Student) orientation and where teacher talk (TT) clearly exceeds student talk (ST). Moreover, teachers need to judiciously use multimedia and ~~the~~ other visual aids available in the institution. Thanks to quality teacher training, teachers will be efficient.

✓ To attempt take-home exam strategy to familiarize students with the test form and content. As a strategy, take-home exams may reduce student anxiety, and cheating in the exams.

✓ To plan feedback sessions following testing sessions to help students discover their grievances, and therefore, to work hard to achieve better results. Feedback is as important as instruction, and evaluation; thus, it needs to be well prepared and its aim well understood by the students.

✓ To call for class size reduction to help enhance the students' achievement level. In other terms, the current classroom size in terms of space does not fit the number of students, i.e., classrooms which are suitable for 30 students cannot receive 60 students. Small classes seem to be more motivating to teachers and prove to engender better teacher-student interaction.

✓ To ask for more ICTs to help change the way of teaching Linguistics which in fact has its positive impact on students' test results. Multimedia means have proved to be part and parcel of modern-day classes. They assist teachers in presenting effectively their lessons in a combination of different forms of content and students in understanding the gist of the input.

✓ To revise the linguistics syllabus and shed light on the testing techniques and forms. Regular 'check-ups' of the syllabus may lead to improve the gradability, and teachability of the contents of the Linguistics course creating thus a thorough course program.

On the other hand, first year students should:

✓ Work in groups to benefit from their peers. It is worth noting that group work is a helpful strategy in language classrooms. Many researchers have shown the effectiveness of such strategy in enhancing language learners' competences through interacting with their peers and teachers. This strategy helps students to clarify the unclear points they may face when preparing for tests

- ✓ Read more to enrich their vocabulary, particularly vocabulary proper to linguistics, so that they can express their ideas when answering definition questions in tests. Students' 'bête-noire' is reading for classroom purposes; most students avoid reading, which distances them from current and past theories and concepts, and dramatically reduces their experience and limits their knowledge.
- ✓ Prepare for tests. It is unfortunate that students are not trained to sit exams and answer properly and efficiently exam papers. This leads them to alternative methods, like giving superficial answers or engaging in cheating, to compensate their lack of knowledge.
- ✓ Attempt to engage in take home exams in order to be familiar with test instructions and test tasks. Take home exams are not popular in Algeria because they are very rarely used. In case they are adequately implemented, they will significantly contribute to the reduction of student anxiety and cheating in the exams and back up student skills such as researching.

In sum, we find it necessary to draw our colleagues' attention to the importance of referring to tests tests according to their purposes. Besides, we have to raise our students' awareness of the different types of tests, their format and their objectives.

No one can deny the importance of motivation and its impacts on students' achievements; however, motivation itself could be affected by some factors such as the students' tests results. As EFL teachers, it is important to think about motivation as the essence of language teaching.

Motivated students are those who recognize their responsibility for their own learning. In our case, most of our classrooms are still teacher-centered classrooms where the teacher is the main if not the only knowledge-provider. Most students keep motivated only if they obtain good scores in their tests. In other words, their motivation is conditioned the test grade(s).

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

The present investigation was set out to explore the Linguistics testing models for first year classes of the English Branch at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra with focus on two major qualities of good tests: reliability and validity. The study attempted to answer the following questions:

- To what extent can a test reliability and validity affect the achievement gap?
- Is the students' failure in Linguistics influenced by their target language proficiency level?
- Can students' understanding of tests contribute to closing the achievement gap?

In line with these questions and in order to find out whether or not the two major test qualities are accounted by the teachers for when designing first year linguistics tests, the following two hypotheses served as a basis for the study:

- If teachers of Linguistics take into consideration the criteria of reliability and validity when designing the tests, the students' results will be satisfactory.
- If students' understanding of tests increases, their engagement will significantly increase.

To reach the objectives of the study, a triangulated research method including questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation was used to collect the data about the issue under investigation, and following the results some suggestions and recommendations have been made.

It is worth mentioning that this study is of great importance to both teachers of Linguistics and first year students of the English Branch at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra for it tackles issues, often unclear to teachers and students, about the assessment

procedures and the test qualities. Furthermore, it helps test takers change their attitudes towards tests in general and Linguistics tests in particular. Thus, the significance of the study lies in its contribution to strengthen the students' weaknesses in Linguistics and to change the negative image they have about the testing experience.

The thesis was divided into six chapters. In the first chapter, we attempted to provide a comprehensive overview on the EFL context in Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. Our discussion concentrated on the impact of globalization on higher education worldwide in general and in Algeria in particular. We described the working conditions that the teachers of Linguistics face, and we drew the conclusion that more than any other module, Linguistics courses need to be rethought in terms of class size, staff, time allotted, pedagogical aids, and assessment models.

Chapter two clarified the distinction between assessment, evaluation and testing in education in general, and in the context of testing Linguistics in the English Branch at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. It also dealt with the criteria of reliability and validity in educational measurements with reference to Linguistics testing models designed for first year students. In the third chapter, we described the research methodology utilized in the present study in terms of the data gathering tools and their objectives. The premise has been to elicit the motivation of the adoption of the different procedures to attain our goal in studying the intertwined variables that affect the teaching and learning of Linguistics, examination tasks, assessment of linguistics examination papers, and reliability and validity thereof.

The fourth chapter provided the statistical analysis of the data obtained from both the teachers' and the students' questionnaire. Following this, the fifth chapter, reported on the data collected from the teachers' interviews and the focus group discussion with first year students with respect to their views on Linguistics testing. In the sixth chapter, we

discussed the results derived from the classroom observation. Finally, the statistical results of the course evaluation are discussed in the sixth chapter.

The findings of the present study were summarized within the respective chapters: (the questionnaire's analysis, the interviews analysis, and the classroom observation analysis). The analysis of the teachers' questionnaire revealed that the teachers (full-time and part-time) are highly motivated to teach Linguistics. They are convinced that the module helps improve language proficiency. However, they reported their dissatisfaction of time allotment (1 session weekly).

The questionnaires analysis revealed that class size has its negative impact on the students' outcomes; in other words, overcrowded classes are not suitable for good achievement. Teachers consider their Linguistics tests reliable and valid for "they design their tests" in accordance with time and situation. Moreover, teachers reported that Linguistics tests should best be taken in the morning when students are physically and psychologically fit for test taking.

The analysis of the students' questionnaire revealed that a considerable number of students (88.37% of the participants) choice of the English studies was free; and the reasons behind such choice encompass their love of the language, their will to speak English fluently, their wish to be teachers of English. Besides, they reported that English is the language of technology. As far as Linguistics is concerned, a lot of respondents describe it as a very difficult course because of the new concepts and terminology it contains, its unfamiliar vocabulary, and the teacher's teaching methods and techniques.

However, although the students showed their positive attitude towards linguistics, the majority of them (63.56%) expressed their dissatisfaction in relation with their grades in the linguistics test. They mentioned that their inadequate knowledge comes in the first

place, in addition to their lack of preparation and lack of concentration. When it comes to time allotment and linguistics test taking time, they join their voice to that of the teachers in that one weekly sessions is insufficient and taking tests in the morning is the best time. Regarding class size the participants' report their views on the negative side of large classes. According to the students, large classes affect their achievement negatively and hinder concentration.

Additionally, the interviews with teachers of linguistics revealed that there is a strong agreement among teachers that first year students come to university studies with poor background knowledge in English which hinder their assimilation of linguistics. Besides, they think that the students' grievances in linguistics have relation to the teachers' way of writing the test instructions. They believe in the positive impact of group work on students' outcomes. They view it as a necessary and beneficial technique to discuss the test results with students to help them discover their weaknesses.

Concerning the focus group discussion with students, the results showed that students believe that their poor language proficiency level is the first factor standing behind their poor achievement in linguistics. Moreover, in the discussions, the students expressed their awareness of the importance of their teachers' clarifications whenever they do not understand. They also reiterate the fact that studying in large groups hinders concentration.

The classroom observation results showed that the students' degree of motivation has increased noticeably after experiencing test taking at university level. In addition, students believe that their teachers of linguistics are knowledgeable and prepared. They showed their awareness of the positive impact of linguistics on the improvement of their language skills. Moreover, worth noting that the students' interest in the course has not

been affected by their test results. The students' grades in the formative assessment stand as a motivating factor for the students to reach better outcomes in the official exams. The analysis of the course evaluation form revealed that the students are aware of the importance of Linguistics in improving their language proficiency.

Although the current study has achieved its goals, the limitations of the study need to be considered. The present research is limited both in time and a number of issues. First and foremost it is conducted at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. Second, it centers on seven groups out of twelve all of which are first year classes of the academic year 2011/2012. Third, nine teachers out of twenty-eight have been requested to complete the questionnaires and to participate in the interviews. Last but not least the construct of *Practicality* is not an issue in the current investigation because the printing and the format of tests prove to be addressed by test designers.

The results may have been influenced by the limitations and shortcomings of the study. First, the study was limited to first year level; hence, it could be extended to other levels, i.e., second and third year classes. Second, the study dealt only with the subject of Linguistics, whereas the findings revealed that in terms of new subjects being studied at the university level, the students' deficiencies do not concern only Linguistics but also other subjects such as phonetics and research methodology. Therefore, owing to this limitation, further studies could be to about other subjects. Third, limiting the investigation to Mohamed Khider University of Biskra does not allow for the generalization of results to other universities; so similar studies on similar or different cases should be attempted in other Algerian universities. Fourth, the intervention with the implementation of ICTs we attempted with one Linguistics group could be extended to the remaining 11 groups to ensure the validity of the results and to reinforce the positive impact of the new setting on the students' test results.

Questionnaire's Limitations

1. The length of the questionnaire may have caused boredom, and hence the participants may have completed the questionnaire only to avoid further embarrassment
2. Some terms may have hindered the participants' full understanding of the question items
3. The debriefing phase could have been longer in order to clarify certain terms that proved to be ambiguous.
4. Some question items have been unintentionally repeated in different terms; this may have created feeling of the repletion in the participants' mind.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 11
First Semester

Quiz № 01 (allotted time: 20 minutes)

1. Put the right term next to the corresponding definition in the box below: *arbitrariness*, *behaviourism*, *onomatopoeia*, *displacement*, *cultural transmission*, and *duality*.

Term	definition
<i>displacement</i> (01 point)	The ability to refer to things far removed in time and place. You can talk about what you did last summer or where you'll live next year, but your cat can only communicate that it wants to be fed <i>right now</i> .
<i>arbitrariness</i> (01 point)	There is no logical connection between the word and the meaning that it stands for.
<i>cultural transmission</i> (01 point)	Language is passed on from one generation to another. We all learn the language of our parents and of the people around us, regardless of our genetic origin.
<i>duality</i> (01 point)	In language, a limited repertoire of sounds (vowels and consonants) makes an infinite number of words.
<i>onomatopoeia</i> (01 point)	words that imitate the sound that they have as a meaning
<i>behaviourism</i> (01 point)	School in psychology and linguistics that is based on stimulus-response theory

2. Define briefly the terms below:

- a. **Pragmatics:** The branch of linguistics that is concerned with the study of meaning in context. (01.50 point)
- b. **Morphology:** The branch of linguistics that is concerned with the study of words and that there internal structure. (01 point)

Quiz № 02 (allotted time: 20 minutes)

1. Put each of the following words/phrases in the right column in the table below: *primary medium*, *less automatic*, *secondary*, *the solely medium in some communities*, *spontaneous*, *artificial*, *phonological level*, *often used*

Speech	Writing
<i>primary medium</i> (00.75 point)	<i>less automatic</i> (00.75 point)
<i>the solely medium in some communities</i> (00.75 point)	<i>Secondary</i> (00.75 point)
<i>spontaneous</i> (00.75 point)	<i>Artificial</i> (00.75 point)
<i>phonological level</i> (00.75 point)	
<i>often used</i> (00.75 point)	

2. Write **true** or **false** next to each of the following statements. Correct the wrong statements.

a. Bees, like humans, have the ability of displacement. **false** (00.50 point)

Bees, like humans, have the ability of displacement, **but it very limited because it lacks variety.** (01.50 point)

b. Animals acquire their systems of communication from their cultural environment whereas languages are genetically passed on from one generation to the next. **false** (00.50 point)

Humans acquire their language from their cultural environment whereas Animals' communication system is genetically passed on from one generation to the next. (01.50 point)

Quiz № 03 (allotted time: 40 minutes)

Question: In his *essay on language*, R. A. Hall tells us that language is "the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols". Write a composition in which you single out and explain the main strong points and flaws in Hall's definition of language.

Answer:

The above definition of language contains a number of strong points as well as flaws. Among the points to notice here are, first of all, the fact that both communication and interaction are introduced into the definition ('interaction' being broader than and, in this respect, better than 'co-operation') (02 points). Second, that the term 'oral-auditory' can be taken to be roughly equivalent to 'vocal', differing from it only in that 'oral-auditory' makes reference to the hearer as well as to the speaker (i.e. to the receiver as well the sender of the vocal signals that we identify as language-utterances) (02 points). Hall, like Sapir, treats language as a purely human institution; and the term 'institution' makes explicit the view that the language that is used by a particular society is part of that society's culture (02 points).. What is most noteworthy in Hall's definition, however, is his employment of the term 'habitually used'; and there are historical reasons for this. Linguistics and psychology were strongly influenced, for about thirty years ago or so, especially in America, by the stimulus-response theories of the behaviourists. One of the most important facts about language is that there is, in general, no connection between words and situations in which they are used such that occurrence of particular words is predictable, as habitual behaviour is predictable, from situations themselves. For example, we do not habitually produce an utterance containing the word 'bird' whenever we happen to find ourselves in a situation in which we see a bird. Language is stimulus-free (04 points).

Quiz № 04 (allotted time: 20 minutes)

Question: Single out and explain the main defects in Chomsky's definition of language: “From now on I will consider a language to be a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements.”

Answer: (10 points)

Chomsky's definition of 'language' says nothing about the communicative function of language; it says nothing about the symbolic nature of the elements or sequences of them (03 points). Its purpose is to focus attention upon the purely structural properties of languages and to suggest that these properties can be investigated from a mathematically precise point of view (03 points). It is Chomsky's major contribution to linguistics to have given particular emphasis to what he calls the structure-dependence of the process by which sentences are constructed in natural languages and to have formulated a general theory of grammar which is based upon a particular definition of this property (04 points).

Quiz № 05 (allotted time: 15 minutes)

1. Put the right word or phrase next to the corresponding definition in the table below: *arbitrary, genetically transmitted, culturally transmitted, discrete, displacement, duality, rule governed, species-specific.*

Definition	Word/phrase
From a finite set of units, we can form infinite combinations of larger units.	<i>duality (00.75 point)</i>
The ability to talk about things that are not in the proximity (near in space or time), do not exist, that happened in the past, or will happen in the future.	<i>displacement (00.75 point)</i>
Animal communication systems are biologically inherited; animals are born with the language of their parents.	<i>genetically transmitted (00.75 point)</i>
no logical relationship between the word and what it means	<i>Arbitrary (00.75 point)</i>
Language is uniquely human.	<i>species-specific (00.75 point)</i>
Every language has rules. Language consists of units: sounds, words, phrases, and sentences. Units can be combined into larger units following a set of rules involving word order and agreement.	<i>rule governed (00.75 point)</i>
Continuous stream of speech sounds are perceived as consisting of distinct units.	<i>Discrete (00.75 point)</i>
Human infants are not born with language, but acquire language interactions with language speakers.	<i>culturally transmitted (00.75 point)</i>

2. Define briefly the terms below:

- a. Medium:** *The concrete realization of the abstract system of language through speech and writing. (02 points)*
- b. Exhaustiveness:** *The linguistic study of language should be complete and thorough. (02 points)*

Quiz № 06 (allotted time: 25 minutes)

Answer briefly the following questions:

I. Give the definition of linguistics.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. (02 points)

II. What is the difference between dialect and accent?

Dialect is the variety of language in terms of grammar and spelling whereas accent is the variety of language in terms pronunciation. (02 points)

III. What is the historical event that led to the beginning of Middle English?

Middle English began as result of the Norman invasion of England in 1066. (02 points)

IV. Give one example (a language) for each of the word orders below:

1. Verb Object Subject: Aneityan / Baure (01 point)

2. Subject Object Verb: Hindi / Japanese / Kurdish / Latin / Persian / Turkish (01 point)

V. Give two examples of onomatopoeic words:

1. first example (01 point)

2. second example (01 point)

Quiz № 07 (allotted time: 10 minutes)

Circle the option that best answers/completes each of the questions/statements below.

<p>1. Which one is not an onomatopoeic word</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. hissb. meowc. write (01 point)d. knock	<p>6. For de Saussure, grammar includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. phonology, morphology, and syntax (01 point)b. semantics, phonology, and morphologyc. phonology, morphology, and pragmaticsd. morphology, syntax, and semantics
<p>2. What would happen if there is a logical relationship between the form of the word and its meaning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. words would be easy to pronounce.b. words would be easy to write.c. Only one language would exist in the world. (01 point)d. Translation from one language to another would become very easy.	<p>7. Chomsky viewed language from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. a social angleb. a mathematical angle (01 point)c. a cultural angled. a religious angle
<p>3. The language of Shakespeare corresponds to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Modern Englishb. Middle Englishc. Early Modern English (01 point)d. Old English	<p>8. Speech is primary to writing because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. All of us speak a great deal more than we write.b. Thousands of speech communities rely solely on speech.c. Speech is easier to learn than writingd. Children acquire speech before they learn writing (01 point)
<p>4. Which language follows the word order Subject Object Verb?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Mandarinb. Hebrewc. Latin (01 point)d. Baure	<p>9. The vocal tract of humans is more elaborated than the one of animals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. so as to allow animals to produce more sounds than humans dob. so as to allow humans to produce more distinct sounds than animals do (01 point)c. so as to allow humans to be fluentd. because animals do not speak different languages
<p>5. Which term does not correspond to language use?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Slangb. Structuralism (01 point)c. Jargond. Standard language	<p>10. The fact that the cock produces some sounds that the hen could not do is in contrast to the language design feature of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. interchangeability (01 point)b. cultural transmissionc. arbitrarinessd. duality

Quiz № 08 (allotted time: 25 minutes)

Answer briefly the following questions:

I. What are the major objectives of linguistics?

The major objectives of linguistics are language structure, language use, and language change. (02 points)

II. What is the difference between language and standard language?

Standard language is sum of all varieties of a language whereas standard language is the variety that is used in formal and educational contexts. (02 points)

III. Which one is more difficult to understand by a modern English speaker Old English or Middle English? Why?

A modern speaker finds it more difficult to understand Old English because it is very different from the English that we use nowadays. (02 points)

IV. Give one example for each of the terms below:

3. **Jargon:** example (01 point)

4. **slang:** example (01 point)

V. Give two examples of two events that could cause language change:

3. **Political event:** example (01 point)

4. **Social event:** example (01 point)

Quiz № 09 (allotted time: 10 minutes)

Circle the option that best answers/completes each of the questions/statements below.

<p>1. Sound Loss is a process in which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. final [h] of Old English words was lostb. initial [h] of Middle English words was lostc. initial [h] of Old English words was lost (01 point)d. final [h] of Middle English words was lost	<p>6. Which of the historical events below caused the emergence of Middle English? (01 point)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The invasion of England by French Normansb. The death of Queen Elizabeth Ic. The birth of Shakespeared. the discovery of America
<p>2. The word order of Persian sentences corresponds to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Subject Object Verb (01 point)b. Subject Verb Objectc. Object Verb Subjectd. Verb Object Subject	<p>7. Which of the following languages constitute one family?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Spanish, English, Portuguese, and Italianb. English, German, French, and Irishc. French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese (01 point)d. English, German, Portuguese, and Italian
<p>3. The language of Chaucer corresponds to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Early Modern Englishb. Middle English (01 point)c. Modern Englishd. Old English	<p>8. Sound change is hard to document because (01 point)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. recording devices did not exist in the far pastb. of the big number of accentsc. Speech is more difficult than writingd. there are more sounds than letters
<p>4. A Slangs are words which are used by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Middle-class speakersb. Very educated speakersc. lower-status speakers (01 point)d. doctors	<p>9. Language use is a matter of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. rulesb. grammarc. variation (01 point)d. semantic change
<p>5. Register is a conventional way of using language in terms of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. situation, sex, and occupationb. age, topic, and occupationc. topic, race, and situationd. situation, topic, and occupation (01 point)	<p>10. Standard language is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. a variety of language used in formal and educational contexts (01 point)b. a variety of language in terms of grammarc. a variety of language in terms of spelling and syntaxd. a variety of language in terms of pronunciation

Appendix 12

Second Semester

Quiz № 01 (allotted time: 10 minutes)

Circle the option that best answers/completes each of the questions/statements below.

<p>1. The word unexpectedly consists of</p> <p>a. a lexical morpheme, two inflectional morphemes, and a functional morpheme.</p> <p>b. four derivational morphemes</p> <p>c. two derivational morphemes, an inflectional morpheme, and lexical morpheme (01 point)</p>	<p>6. Which of the following series of words contain allomorphs?</p> <p>a. speaks, witches, children</p> <p>b. irresistible, disagree, impossible (01 point)</p> <p>c. courageous, helpful, quickly</p>
<p>2. Acoustic phonetics deals with</p> <p>a. the physical properties of sounds in the air (01 point)</p> <p>b. the function of sounds</p> <p>c. the variation in the pronunciation of a sound</p>	<p>7. The <i>p</i> sound in the word /plæn/ (plan) is</p> <p>a. aspirated (01 point)</p> <p>b. unaspirated</p> <p>c. both</p>
<p>3. In Arabic, the sound [P] is</p> <p>a. a phone</p> <p>b. an allophone (01 point)</p> <p>c. a cluster</p>	<p>8. [himəsbi] (He must be) is an example of</p> <p>a. assimilation</p> <p>b. elision (01 point)</p> <p>c. liaison</p>
<p>4. The most important constituent of syllables in English is</p> <p>a. the onset</p> <p>b. the nucleus (01 point)</p> <p>c. the coda</p>	<p>9. The phoneme is the sound-type</p> <p>a. in the mouth</p> <p>b. in the ear</p> <p>c. in the mind (01 point)</p>
<p>5. The utterance <i>Mary is absent today for her mother died yesterday</i> is a sentence according to</p> <p>a. the logical definition</p> <p>b. Bloomfield (01 point)</p> <p>c. Aristotle</p>	<p>10. Scholars invented the IPA</p> <p>a. in order to transcribe words in American English</p> <p>b. because the letters in the English alphabet are larger in number than the sounds</p> <p>c. because the sounds are larger in number than the letters in the English alphabet (01 point)</p>

Quiz № 02 (allotted time: 25 minutes)

I. Complete the following statements by inserting the right words or phrases. (06 points)

1. Unlike Latin, the morphological system of the English language is characterized by **derivation**. (01 point)
2. /kæt/ is the **phonological** transcription of the word cat. (01 point)
3. In **phonetics**, researchers could deal with individual cases of pronunciation. (01 point)
4. In spoken English, there are **four** allomorphs which materialize the plurality morpheme. (01 point)
5. The consonants **str** in the word 'street' constitute a **cluster**. (01 point)
6. In American terminology of linguistics, **phonemics** stands for phonology in British terminology. (01 point)

II. Find out the types of the constituent morphemes in the words below. (04 points)

1. **connectedness**: **connect** (lexical morpheme), **ed** (inflectional morpheme), **ness** (derivational morpheme). (01.50 point)
2. **their**: **their** (functional morpheme). (00.50 point)
3. **mistreated**: **mis** (derivational morpheme), **treat** (lexical morpheme), **ed** (inflectional morpheme). (01.50 point)
4. **sad**: **sad** (lexical morpheme) (00.50 point)

Quiz № 03 (allotted time: 20 minutes)

I. Rewrite the text below, using British terminology of linguistics. (04 points)

1. Phonology is a branch of linguistics that studies speech sounds.

Phonology and phonetics are two branches of linguistics that study speech sounds. (02.00 points)

2. Whereas phonetics studies the production, transportation, and perception of the speech sounds, phonemics is more interested in the abstract, i.e. mental aspects of these sounds.

Whereas **phonetics** studies the production, transportation, and perception of the speech sounds, **phonology** is more interested in the abstract, i.e. mental aspects of these sounds. (02.00 points)

II. Circle the option that best answers/completes each of the questions/statements below. (06 points)

<p>1. Clusters are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. phonetic units.b. morphological unitsc. phonological units (01.00 point)	<p>6. The existence of Zero morphemes could be detected from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. the pronunciation of the wordb. the spelling of the wordc. the context (01.00 point)
<p>2. The 'er' in comparative adjectives is an example of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. a functional morphemeb. a derivational morphemec. an inflectional morpheme (01.00 point)	<p>7. Which of the following is not a sentence according to Aristotle?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. two orange juice, please. (01.00 point)b. Birds fly.c. She died yesterday.
<p>3. Assimilation is a process in which a certain sound</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. copies the characteristics of another sound (01.00 point)b. is omittedc. becomes aspirated	<p>8. The word 'football' consists of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. a lexical morpheme and a derivational morphemeb. two functional morphemesc. two lexical morphemes (01.00 point)

Quiz № 04 (allotted time: 25 minutes)

I. Put each of the following sentences in the right column. (04 points)

1. Birds fly. 2. Go out! 3. Oh! 4. A little labour, much health 5. No Smoking 6. I need a cup of coffee.
7. An Introduction to Linguistics 08. God's great.

Major Sentences	Minor Sentences
1. Birds fly. (00.50 point) 2. Go out! (00.50 point) 6. I need a cup of coffee. (00.50 point) 08. God's great. (00.50 point)	3. Oh! (00.50 point) 4. A little labour, much health (00.50 point) 5. No Smoking (00.50 point) 7. An Introduction to Linguistics (00.50 point)

II. Complete the statements below. (06 points)

1. The phoneme is a **phonological** unit. (01.00 point)
2. In morphology, different materializations of the same morpheme are called **allomorphs**. (01.00 point)
3. According to Chomsky, the active and passive forms of a sentence are considered as two **surface structures**. (01.00 point)
4. A cluster is a sequence of successive **consonants**. (01.00 point)
5. The pronunciation of the sentence *I miss you*. /aɪmɪʃju:/ is an example of **assimilation**. (01.00 point)
6. The abbreviation IPA stands for **International Phonetic Alphabet** and **International Phonetic Association**. (01.00 points)

Quiz № 05 (allotted time: 25 minutes)

1. Put each of the following pairs of antonyms in the right column: beautiful/ugly, male/female, strong/weak, old/young, married/single, true/false, short/tall, asleep/awake

Gradable antonyms	Non-gradable antonyms
strong/weak (01.00 point)	married/single (01.00 point)
old/young (01.00 point)	true/false (01.00 point)
short/tall (01.00 point)	asleep/awake (01.00 point)

2. Explain briefly in what way each of the two sentences below has two deep structures.

a) Yesterday, we met an English history teacher.

This sentence has two deep structures (possible meaning). The first deep structure is that yesterday we met a teacher who is from England and teaches history. The second deep structure denotes to the idea that yesterday we met a teacher who teaches English history. (02.00 points)

b) The parents of the bride and the groom were waiting outside.

This sentence has two deep structures (possible meaning). This ambiguity is due to the fact that we don't know whether the parents of both the bride and the groom were waiting outside or the groom and the parents of only the bride were waiting outside. (02.00 points)

Appendix 13
First-Semester Exam in Linguistics

Activity One: (06 points)

Put each of the following terms in right column in the table below: body language, behaviourism, traffic lights, Baure, dialect, pragmatics, syntactic level, meowing, language change, structuralism, the language of bees, register.

System of Communication	Language	Linguistics
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Activity Two: (03 points)

Cross out the irrelevant (wrong) word in the series below:

1. Kurdish, Persian, Hebrew, Japanese, Latin
2. arbitrariness, exhaustiveness, discreteness, learnability
3. suffix, prefix, morpheme, phoneme, word
4. pragmatics, context, semantics, situation, meaning
5. natural, sounds, primary, recent, speech
6. splash, bomb, explosion, tick-tock, cuckoo, pronunciation

Activity Three: (05.5 points)

Write **true** or **false** next to each of the statements below. Correct the wrong statements.

1. In studying language structure, linguists are interested in the investigation of variation.
.....
.....
2. Knowledge of linguistics and knowledge of language are the same.
.....
.....
3. The statement “استنوا يرحمني ويرحمكم الله، وسدوا الفرج، وسووا صفوفكم، إن الله لا ينظر إلى الصف الأعوج، ...” is an example of religious jargon that is relevant to topic.
.....
.....
4. Language change is mysterious because this language phenomenon could be perceived by educated and uneducated people.
.....
.....

Model Answer of First-Semester Exam

Activity One: (06 points)

Put each of the following terms in right column in the table below: body language, behaviourism, traffic lights, Baure, dialect, pragmatics, syntactic level, meowing, language change, structuralism, the language of bees, register.

System of Communication	Language	Linguistics
<i>body language</i> (0.5 point)	<i>Baure</i> (0.5 point)	<i>behaviourism</i> (0.5 point)
<i>traffic lights</i> (0.5 point)	<i>Dialect</i> (0.5 point)	<i>pragmatics</i> (0.5 point)
<i>Meowing</i> (0.5 point)	<i>syntactic level</i> (0.5 point)	<i>structuralism</i> (0.5 point)
<i>the language of bees</i> (0.5 point)	<i>language change</i> (0.5 point)	
	<i>Register</i> (0.5 point)	

Activity Two: (03 points)

Cross out the irrelevant (wrong) word in the series below:

- Kurdish, Persian, **Hebrew**, Japanese, Latin (0.5 point)
- arbitrariness, **exhaustiveness**, discreteness, learnability (0.5 point)
- suffix, prefix, morpheme, **phoneme**, word (0.5 point)
- pragmatics, context, **semantics**, situation, meaning (0.5 point)
- natural, sounds, primary, **recent**, speech (0.5 point)
- splash, bomb, **explosion**, tick-tock, cuckoo, pronunciation (0.5 point)

Activity Three: (05.5 points)

Write **true** or **false** next to each of the statements below. Correct the wrong statements.

- In studying language structure, linguists are interested in the investigation of variation. **False** (0.5 point)

Correction: *In studying language structure, linguists are interested in discovering the rules that govern language at the five levels.* (0.75 point)

- Knowledge of linguistics and knowledge of language are the same. **False** (0.5)

Correction: *Knowledge of linguistics is the ability to describe the system of language; knowledge of language is the ability to speak a language.* (0.75 point)

- The statement “استوتوا يرحمني ويرحمكم الله، وسدوا الفرج، وسوا صفوفكم، إن الله لا ينظر إلى الصف الأعوج، ...” is an example of religious jargon that is relevant to topic. **False** (0.5 point)

Correction: *The statement “استوتوا يرحمني ويرحمكم الله، وسدوا الفرج، وسوا صفوفكم، إن الله لا ينظر إلى الصف الأعوج، ...” is an example of religious register that is relevant to situation.* (0.75 point)

- Language change is mysterious because this language phenomenon could be perceived by educated and uneducated people. **False** (0.5 point)

Correction: *Language change is mysterious because the causes that lead to language change are very complicated and usually not clear.* (0.75 point)

5. Standard languages are learned in schools. **True (0.5 point)**

Activity Four: (05.5 points)

Write a composition in which you explain the following quotation: “Linguists study language change by addressing the following questions: Can we trace the evolutionary path of a language? How do language changes spread through communities? How do historical circumstances influence language change?”

One of the major objectives of linguistics is the study of language change. Historical linguistics is a branch of linguistics that is concerned with the study of language change. In order to do so, the linguist has to deal with three main issues. First, s/he wonders whether it is possible to cover in his/her study all the stages of the development of this language and put them in order. This is because it is not always possible to do so because of the lack of information about language during a specific historical period. For example, it is very difficult to find out evidence about aspects of the pronunciation of a language a long time ago before the invention of recording devices. Second, it is of vital importance to the linguist to find out the factor or factors that contribute to the spread of any type of language change. Among the most notorious factors are immigration, media, education, marriage, etc. The spread of language changes do not happen overnight, it is a very slow process that takes place during a long period of time. A good example is marriage between members of speakers of different languages; mothers spread aspects of their languages to their children. The latter when they grew up spread language changes to their future children, and so on. Third, since language change takes place during a long period in history, the linguist should find out the historical events that influenced this change. These events could be political, religious, economic, social, etc. For instance, the shift from Old English to Middle English was influenced by the invasion of England by French Normans in 1066 AD. In a nutshell, dealing with these topics could make the phenomenon of language change less mysterious.

Criteria of assesement:

1. the explanation of each question **(01.50 point)**
2. grammar, punctuation, and capitalization **(01 point)**

Appendix 14
Catch-up Exam in Linguistics

Activity One: (08 points)

Find out whether the following statements are **true** or **false**. Correct the wrong statements.

1. According to linguistic determinism, a people's world view is shaped by their language.
.....
.....
2. The period of time that a child takes to acquire his mother language is usually longer than the period that an adult takes in order to learn a foreign language.
.....
.....
3. According to mentalists, children are genetically pre-programmed to acquire languages without having to be exposed to language.
.....
.....
4. The Great Vowel Shift was a change that affected the pronunciation of vowels in Middle English and Modern English.
.....
.....
5. The ancestral language of Arabic was Indo-European.
.....
.....
6. Behaviourists viewed children learning language the same way as animals being trained to do something.
.....
.....
.....
7. English and French are Germanic languages.
.....
.....
8. The vocal tract of humans is more developed than the one of monkeys.
.....
.....

Activity Two: (06 points)

Define briefly only THREE of the following terms: *Broca's aphasia*, *lingua franca*, *medium*, *jargon*, *linguistic relativity*, and *Old English*.

Model Answer of Catch-up Exam in Linguistics

Activity One: (08 points)

Find out whether the following statements are **true** or **false**. Correct the wrong statements.

1. According to linguistic determinism, a people's world view is shaped by their language. **True (00.50 point)**

2. The period of time that a child takes to acquire his mother language is usually longer than the period that an adult takes in order to learn a foreign language. **False (00.50 point)**

Correction: The period of time that a child takes to acquire his mother language is usually *shorter* than the period that an adult takes in order to learn a foreign language. **(01 point)**

3. According to mentalists, children are genetically pre-programmed to acquire languages without having to be exposed to language. **False (00.50 point)**

Correction: According to mentalists, children are genetically pre-programmed to acquire languages on condition that they have to be exposed to language. **(01 point)**

4. The Great Vowel Shift was a change that affected the pronunciation of vowels in Middle English and Modern English. **True (00.50 point)**

5. The ancestral language of Arabic was Indo-European. **False (00.50 point)**

Correction: The ancestral language of Arabic was Semitic. **(01 point)**

6. Behaviourists viewed children learning language the same way as animals being trained to do something. **True (00.50 point)**

7. English and French are Germanic languages. **False (00.50 point)**

Correction: English is a Germanic language, but French is a Romance (Italic) language. **(01 point)**

8. The vocal tract of humans is more developed than the one of monkeys. **True (00.50 point)**

Activity Two: (06 points)

Define briefly only **THREE** of the following terms: *Broca's aphasia*, *lingua franca*, *medium*, *jargon*, *linguistic relativity*, and *Old English*.

1. *Broca's aphasia* is a disordered language resulting from the damage of Broca's area. Patients of Broca's aphasia could not produce correct utterances. The language of Broca's aphasics is characterized by disordered words, more nouns than verbs are used, hesitant speech, and poor articulation. **(02 points)**

2. *Lingua franca* is a language which is widely used in some region for communication among people speaking a variety of languages. **(02 points)**

3. *Medium* is the realization of language as an abstract system; there are two types of medium speech and writing. **(02 points)**

4. *Jargon* is a special technical vocabulary associated with a specific area of work or interest such as medicine, religion, literature, pilotage, military, etc. **(02 points)**

5. **Linguistic relativity** is the idea that a people's world view and cultural values shape their language. For example, the fact that North American English speakers value money highly has shaped their language in that they use many words which mean money. (02 points)

6. **Old English** is the earliest period in the development of the English language, which existed roughly from 450 to 1100. (02 points)

Activity Three: (06 points)

Discuss the following statement in a paragraph: "Language and culture are closely related in the sense that they mutually influence each other."

Language and culture are closely related in the sense that they mutually influence each other. Anthropological linguists came up with two hypotheses: linguistic relativity and linguistic determinism. The former refers to the idea that linguistic differences represent differences in the way that different speakers of different languages view the world. For instance, in North American English, there are many slang words which stand for money. This reflects how North American English speakers view money in the sense that they consider it very important. The importance of money, moreover, is reflected in metaphorical statements in which important things are associated with money such as *time is money*, *spend some time*, etc. Linguistic determinism, on the other hand, is the reverse of linguistic relativity. In other words, linguistic determinism refers to the hypothesis which suggests that language shapes how people view the world around them. The example given by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf is could clarify this hypothesis. According to Sapir and Whorf, in Hopi, a North American Indian language, words such as *cloud* and *stone* are animate items. Therefore, this shapes the Hopi speakers as they develop the world view that *clouds* and *stones* are living things. However, this is not the case of English speakers because their language allows them to view the aforementioned items as inanimate things. In the light of what has been discussed, there is an agreement over the idea that there is close connection between language and culture.

Criteria of assesement:

1. Content

a. the explanation of linguistic relativity (02.50 points)

b. the explanation of linguistic determinism (02.50 points)

2. grammar, punctuation, and capitalization (01 point)

Appendix 15

First-Semester Makeup Exam

Activity Two: (05 points)

Circle the correct option that completes the relevant statement below.

<p>1. In Belgium, the function of Flemish is</p> <p>a. to maintain cultural relations</p> <p>b. to fulfill educational purposes</p> <p>c. to determine gender variation</p>	<p>6. The Great Vowel Shift changed the pronunciation of</p> <p>a. Old English and Middle English Vowels</p> <p>b. Early Modern English and Modern English Vowels</p> <p>c. Middle English and Early Modern English Vowels</p>
<p>2. Which one refers to casual and very informal expressions, usually used by lower-status groups?</p> <p>a. slang</p> <p>b. register</p> <p>c. dialect</p>	<p>7. Standard English is</p> <p>a. an accent</p> <p>b. a language</p> <p>c. a set of rules for correct usage</p>
<p>3. The Old English word 'mete' which meant any type of food and which is now spelt 'meat' and means animal meat. This phenomenon is called</p> <p>a. sound loss</p> <p>b. narrowing</p> <p>c. broadening</p>	<p>8. Modern linguistics is</p> <p>a. a prescriptive science</p> <p>b. a descriptive science</p> <p>c. a descriptive and prescriptive science</p>
<p>4. Although Breton and French are two languages spoken in France,</p> <p>a. Breton is a Semitic language whereas French is a Romance language</p> <p>b. Breton is a Celtic language whereas French is a Latinian language</p> <p>c. Breton is the language of art whereas French is the language of education</p>	<p>9. Suffixes and prefixes are</p> <p>a. morphological units</p> <p>b. phonological units</p> <p>c. syntactic units</p>
<p>5. The ability to produce the words <i>safe</i> /seɪf/ and <i>face</i> /feɪs/ from the same sounds /s/, /f/, and /eɪ/ is called</p> <p>a. duality</p> <p>b. arbitrariness</p> <p>c. displacement</p>	<p>10. Black English Vernacular is</p> <p>a. a regional variation</p> <p>b. a social variation</p> <p>c. an ethnic variation</p>

Activity One: (08 points)

Complete the statements below.

1. All languages through time.
2. In Nigeria, English is a
3. French and Spanish developed into two different languages because
4. The words *knife* /naɪf/ and *gnat* /næt/ are examples of
5. Speakers of all languages are capable of and an infinite set of sentences.
6. Some animals may seem to have languages (in particular, the cries of birds, dolphins, and monkeys) but studies have shown that the sounds and patterns used lack

Model Answer of First-Semester Makeup Exam

Activity One: (05 points)

Circle the correct option that completes the relevant statement below.

1. In Belgium, the function of Flemish is a. to maintain cultural relations (00.50 point)	6. The Great Vowel Shift changed the pronunciation of c. Middle English and Early Modern English Vowels (00.50 point)
2. Which one refers to casual and very informal expressions, usually used by lower-status groups? a. slang (00.50 point)	7. Standard English is c. a set of rules for correct usage (00.50 point)
3. The Old English word 'mete' which meant any type of food and which is now spelt 'meat' and means animal meat. This phenomenon is called b. narrowing (00.50 point)	8. Modern linguistics is b. a descriptive science (00.50 point)
4. Although Breton and French are two languages spoken in France, b. Breton is a Celtic language whereas French is a Latinian language (00.50 point)	9. Suffixes and prefixes are a. morphological units (00.50 point)
5. The ability to produce the words <i>safe</i> /seɪf/ and <i>face</i> /feɪs/ from the same sounds /s/, /f/, and /eɪ/ is called a. duality (00.50 point)	10. Black English Vernacular is c. an ethnic variation (00.50 point)

Activity Two: (08 points)

Complete the statements below.

- All languages **changes** through time. (01 point)
- In Nigeria, English is a **lingua franca**. (01 point)
- French and Spanish developed into two different languages because **of the existence of a geographical separation, i.e. the Pyrenees Mountains, between the two countries**. (01 point)
- The words *knife* /naɪf/ and *gnat* /næt/ are examples of **sound loss**. (01 point)
- Speakers of all languages are capable of **understanding** and **producing** an infinite set of sentences. (01 point)
- Some animals may seem to have languages (in particular, the cries of birds, dolphins, and monkeys) but studies have shown that the sounds and patterns used lack **variation**. (01 point)
- Language can be studied from different angles such as **the psychological, social, and cultural angles**. (01 point)
- The word 'language' in the phrase 'the language of bees' means **system of communication**. (01 point)

Activity Three: (07 points)

Find out and explain the main similarities and differences between the following definitions of language:

- "Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols."

- “[Language is] the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols.”

The writers of the above definitions tried to define language in similar and different ways. As far as similarities are concerned, both writers believed that language is a human property, which means that other creatures do not possess the ability to use language. They, moreover, referred to communication as the objective of our use of language. In addition, they mentioned symbols as the means by which language is used. However, in spite of the existence of many common details in both definitions, the writers of these definitions differ in many respects. First, the writer of the first definition stressed upon the non-instinctiveness of language, whereas the writer of the second definition considered language as part of society's culture. Second, although both linguists stressed upon the communicative function of language, they differed in the scope of communication. That is, in the first definition, communication is limited to only ideas, emotions and desires, which is a narrow view of communication, while it is broader in the second definition. Third, despite the fact that both linguists referred to symbols as a linguistic means, the second definition determines their nature, i.e. oral-auditory arbitrary symbols. Fourth, the first linguist believed that production of these symbols does not need a stimulus, whereas the second viewed it from a behaviourist angle, i.e. the production of symbols is governed by stimulus-response. To sum up, both linguists attempted to anatomize language, but they came up with similar and different details.

Criteria of Assessment

1. Content

a) Similarities: **(02.25 points)**

b) Differences: **(03.00 points)**

1. **Form** (grammar, punctuation, and capitalization): **(01.75 point)**

Appendix 16

Second-Semester Exam in Linguistics

Activity One: (04 points)

Fill in each of the gaps in the statements below with one the following: **lexical, IPA, mind, cluster, idiolect, vowels, context, connotation, polysemy, mouth, inflectional, syllable, dialect.**

1. Thesymbols are used for representing the speech sounds of particular languages.
2. The study of how affects meaning is called pragmatics.
3. The morpheme is a type of morpheme required by the grammatical rules.
4. The coda is one or more phonological segments that follow the nucleus of a
5. is an individual's way of speaking.
6. Phones are sounds in the while phonemes are sounds in the
7. The emotional meaning associated with a word is called

Activity Two: (04 points)

Explain briefly the structural ambiguity of meaning (deep structure) in the two sentences below:

1. Small boys and girls are not allowed to enter the cinema.

.....
.....
.....

2. Hilary is waiting for you to sing.

.....
.....
.....

Activity Three: (05.5 points)

Write **true** or **false** next to each of the statements below. Correct the wrong statements (Do not rewrite the wrong statements in the negative!).

1. The logical definition of the sentence focuses on its grammatical structure.

.....
.....

2. The meaning of deictic expressions depends on linguistic context.

.....
.....

3. In direct speech acts, the grammatical structure of the utterance corresponds to its function.

.....
.....

4. Combinations of consonants in clusters differ from one language to another.

Model Answer of the Second-Semester Exam in Linguistics

Activity One: (04 points)

Fill in each of the gaps in the statements below with one of the following: **lexical, IPA, mind, cluster, idiolect, vowels, context, connotation, polysemy, mouth, inflectional, syllable, dialect.**

1. The **IPA** symbols are used for representing the speech sounds of particular languages. **(00.50 point)**
2. The study of how **context** affects meaning is called pragmatics. **(00.50 point)**
3. The **inflectional** morpheme is a type of morpheme required by the grammatical rules. **(00.50 point)**
4. The coda is one or more phonological segments that follow the nucleus of a **syllable**. **(00.50 point)**
5. **Idiolect** is an individual's way of speaking. **(00.50 point)**
6. Phones are sounds in the **mouth** while phonemes are sounds in the **mind**. **(00.50 point for each correct answer)**
7. The emotional meaning associated with a word is called **connotation**. **(00.50 point)**

Activity Two: (04 points)

Explain briefly the structural ambiguity of meaning (deep structure) in the two sentences below:

1. Small boys and girls are not allowed to enter the cinema.

This sentence has two possible meanings (deep structures), which is attributed to which item or items the adjective 'small' modifies. The first possible meaning is that small boys and small girls are not allowed to enter the cinema. The second meaning is that only small boys and girls of any age are not allowed to enter the cinema. **(02 points)**

2. Hilary is waiting for you to sing.

The ambiguity in meaning lies in whether Hilary is the one who is expected to sing or the person whom Hilary is waiting is expected to sing. There is also another possibility: both Hilary and the person are expected to sing. **(02 points)**

Activity Three: (05.5 points)

Write **true** or **false** next to each of the statements below. Correct the wrong statements (Do not rewrite the wrong statements in the negative!).

1. The logical definition of the sentence focuses on its grammatical structure. **false (00.50 point)**

Correction: The logical definition of the sentence focuses on its meaning (content). **(01 point)**

2. The meaning of deictic expressions depends on linguistic context. **false (00.50 point)**

Correction: The meaning of deictic expressions depends on physical context. **(01 point)**

3. In direct speech acts, the grammatical structure of the utterance corresponds to its function. **true (00.50 point)**

4. Combinations of consonants in clusters differ from one language to another. **true (00.50 point)**

5. The word 'ungentlemanliness' consists of a lexical morpheme, two functional morphemes, and three inflectional morphemes. **false (00.50 point)**

Correction: The word 'ungentlemanliness' consists of two lexical morphemes and three derivational morphemes.

(01 point)

Activity Four: (06.5 points)

Write a paragraph in which you discuss the following quotation: "According to de Saussure, although *langue* and *parole* are two essential aspects of language, linguistics should be concerned with the study of *langue*, not *parole*."

According to de Saussure, although *langue* and *parole* are two essential aspects of language, linguistics should be concerned with the study of *langue*, not *parole*. While *Langue* is the abstract system of language and it is the property of all members of a speech community, *parole* is the realization of the abstract system of language through speech and/or writing by an individual. De Saussure maintained that linguists should deal with only *langue*; this is because it is possible to explore the system of language as it is generalized throughout society as well as perfect and stable. In addition to this, de Saussure believed that it is quite impossible to deal with all individual cases of *parole*, especially in highly populated societies. Furthermore, what makes the study of *parole* an unpromising task and unlikely to bring about favourable results is that *parole* is unstable and imperfect due to a number of reasons such as limited knowledge, fatigue, or carelessness. Nevertheless, in reality, we tend to study individual cases of language use when, for instance, studying the literary style of a writer or examining the *parole* of a mentally disturbed patient. Indeed, a linguist could not discover the rules that govern the system of a language without the examination of individual cases. This means that there is a possibility to investigate *parole*, or what contemporary linguists call *idiolect*. All in all, In calling for an emphasis on only *langue*, de Saussure overlooked one of the principles of modern linguistics which is *the description* of how people use language, i.e. *parole*.

Criteria of Assessment

1. Format, paragraphing, and linguistic content: indentation, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, cohesion, and coherence **(01.50 point)**

2. Content: (05 points)

- a) definition of *langue* **(01 point)**
- b) definition of *parole* **(01 point)**
- c) differences between *langue* and *parole* **(01.50 point)**
- d) criticizing de Saussure's idea **(01.50 point)**

Appendix 17

Semester-Exam in Linguistics (2)

Activity One: (06 points)

Put each of the following utterances in the right column in the table below:

1. Birds fly. 2. Go out! 3. Oh! 4. A little labour, much health 5. No Smoking 6. I need a cup of coffee.
7. An Introduction to Linguistics 08. God is great.

Major Sentences	Minor Sentences
.....

Activity Two: (08 points)

Give satisfactory answers to the following questions:

1. Why did phoneticians decide to invent the IPA?

.....
.....
.....

2. What kinds of deictic expressions are used in the utterance “I’m busy now so you can’t stay here; come back later.”?

.....
.....
.....

3. Explain the deficiency in the sentence “Colourless green ideas sleep furiously.”

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Explain the semantic relation between the following lexical items: head (part of the body), head (foam on poured beer), head (chief person of an organization).

.....
.....

Model Answer of the Second-Semester Exam in Linguistics (2)

Activity One: (06 points)

Major Sentences	Minor Sentences
1. Birds fly. (01.5 point)	3. Oh! (01.5 point)
2. Go out! (01.5 point)	4. A little labour, much health (01.5 point)
6. I need a cup of coffee. (01.5 point)	5. No Smoking (01.5 point)
8. God is great. (01.5 point)	7. An Introduction to Linguistics (01.5 point)

Activity Two: (08 points)

Give satisfactory answers to the following questions:

1. Why did phoneticians decide to invent the IPA?

Answer: Phoneticians decided to invent the IPA in order to create new characters that stand for all the sounds of the English language. This is because the alphabetic characters of the English language do not suffice to represent all the sounds of the latter. (02 points)

2. What kinds of deictic expressions are used in the utterance “I’m busy now so you can’t stay here; come back later.”?

Answer: There are three main deictic expressions in the above utterance: 'I' and 'you' are person deixis; 'now' and 'later' are temporal deixis; 'here' is spatial deixis. (02 points)

3. Explain the deficiency in the sentence “Colourless green ideas sleep furiously.”

Answer: The deficiency in the above sentence is that it lacks acceptability in terms of meaning, i.e. it sounds meaningless: the expression "colourless green" is paradoxical; one could not image ideas sleeping furiously. (02 points)

4. Explain the semantic relation between the following lexical items: head (part of the body), head (foam on poured beer), head (chief person of an organization).

Answer: The semantic relation between the three above words is called polysemy. Although each of them has a different meaning, they are related by some sort of meaning which is 'situated at the top': head is situated at top of the body, head at top of liquid, and head at top of an organization. (02 points)

Activity Three: (06 points)

“Semantics is concerned with what language means; however, pragmatics deals with situations in which more is communicated than is said.” Comment on this statement in the light of previous class discussions.

Paragraph

Semantics is concerned with what language means; however, pragmatics deals with situations in which more is communicated than is said. The study of the linguistic meaning of words, phrases, and sentences is called semantics. A subfield of semantics is lexical semantics, which is concerned with the meanings of words, and the meaning relationships among words. In semantics, there is always an attempt to focus on what the words conventionally mean, rather than on what an individual speaker might want them to mean on a particular occasion. Doing semantics is attempting to specify in detail what it is we all know when we use words, phrases, or sentences as if we share knowledge of the meaning of a word, a phrase, or a sentence in a language. For example, the semantic meaning of the utterance “Jane is a heavy smoker” is that Jane usually smokes large quantity of cigarettes. However, this utterance could mean many things in different contexts. The study of how context affects meaning; for example, how the sentence “It’s cold in here” comes to be interpreted as “close the windows” in certain situations is called pragmatics. Pragmatics is concerned with our understanding of language in context. Two kinds of contexts are relevant. The first is linguistic context or co-text—the expression(s) that surround(s) the phrase or sentence to be interpreted. For example, in the sentence “Mary went to the Bank to withdraw some money”, the words *withdraw* and *money* determine the word meaning of the word *bank*, which means a financial institution. The second is physical context which means virtually everything nonlinguistic in the environment of the speaker. Physical context includes, for example, the physical environment and the time of day, and so on. Almost any imaginable extralinguistic factor may, under appropriate circumstances, influence the way language is interpreted. In nutshell, although semantics and pragmatics deal investigate meaning in language, they differ in terms of the scope of their investigation.

Criteria of Evaluation

1. **Form** (indentation, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization): **02 points**
2. **Content** (the development and relevance of ideas): **04 points**

Lecturer: Mr A. Boulegroune

N.B.

This exam was exclusively taken by Diab Manel (group 04)

Appendix 18

Second-Semester Make-Up Exam

Activity One: (07.5 points)

Circle the option that best answers/completes each of the questions/statements below.

<p>1. The word unexpectedly consists of</p> <p>a. a lexical morpheme, two inflectional morphemes, and a functional morpheme.</p> <p>b. four derivational morphemes</p> <p>c. two derivational morphemes, an inflectional morpheme, and lexical morpheme</p>	<p>6. Which of the following series of words contain allomorphs?</p> <p>a. speaks, witches, children</p> <p>b. irresistible, disagree, impossible</p> <p>c. courageous, helpful, quickly</p>
<p>2. Acoustic phonetics deals with</p> <p>a. the physical properties of sounds in the air</p> <p>b. the function of sounds</p> <p>c. the variation in the pronunciation of a sound</p>	<p>7. The p sound in the word /plæn/ (plan) is</p> <p>a. aspirated</p> <p>b. unaspirated</p> <p>c. both</p>
<p>3. In Arabic, the sound [P] is</p> <p>a. a phone</p> <p>b. an allophone</p> <p>c. a cluster</p>	<p>8. [himəsbi] (He must be) is an example of</p> <p>a. assimilation</p> <p>b. elision</p> <p>c. liaison</p>
<p>4. The most important constituent of syllables in English is</p> <p>a. the onset</p> <p>b. the nucleus</p> <p>c. the coda</p>	<p>9. Phoneme is a sound-type</p> <p>a. in the mouth</p> <p>b. in the ear</p> <p>c. in the mind</p>
<p>5. Which of the following is not a sentence according to Aristotle?</p> <p>a. two cups of coffee, please.</p> <p>b. Birds fly.</p> <p>c. She died yesterday.</p>	<p>10. Scholars invented the IPA</p> <p>a. in order to transcribe words in American English</p> <p>b. because the letters in the English alphabet are larger in number than the sounds</p> <p>c. because the sounds are larger in number than the letters in the English alphabet</p>

Activity Two: (06 points)

Give an example of each of the following linguistic terms:

1. **two allophones:**
2. **one lexical morpheme:**
3. **one deictic expression:**
4. **one minor sentence:**
5. **one indirect speech act:**
6. **two hyponyms:**

Model Answer of the Second-Semester Make-Up Exam

Activity One: (06 points)

A. Circle any deictic expression in the sentences below.

1. Yesterday, John saw her standing there. (01.5 point)
2. We are busy now so you can't stay here; come back later. (02.5 points)

B.

Direct Speech Acts	Indirect Speech Acts
(1) Move! (00.5 point)	(2) You're in the way. (00.5 point)
(4) Please get out of the way. (00.5 point)	(3) Could you please sit down? (00.5 point)

Activity Two: (04.5 points)

1. beautiful/ ugly, husband/ wife, pass/ fail: **antonymy** (00.5 point)
2. flour /flaʊə/, flower /flaʊə/: **homophony** (00.5 point)
3. disease/ cancer, literature/ novel, religion/ Islam, language/ Hebrew: **hyponymy** (00.5 point)
4. ing, ed, s, 's, est, er: **inflectional morphemes** (00.5 point)
5. [t^h] and [t]: **allophones** (00.5 point)
6. /str/, /spr/, /skr/: **clusters** (00.5 point)
7. lion: courageous, strong, famous: **connotation** (00.5 point)
8. the, it, they, on: **functional morphemes** (00.5 point)
9. /p/ and /b/: **phonemes** (00.5 point)

Activity Three: (03 points)

Phonology and phonetics study speech sounds. Whereas phonetics studies the production, transportation, and perception of the speech sounds, phonology is more interested in the abstract, i.e. mental, aspects of these sounds. **One point for each correct answer**

Activity Four: (06.5 points)

Human communication depends mainly on linguistic signs, yet they are not the only ones that characterize our communication. This means that there are two main types of communication that allow humans to communicate successfully: linguistic and non-linguistic communication. The former is a type of communication that involves the use of linguistic signs, i.e. words in phrases and sentences, which serve the purpose of sending a certain message. It is generally acknowledged that language is a human property, and a great deal of human communication occurs through language. Accordingly, linguistic signs, whether oral or written, are placed to the forefront of and central to human communication in the sense that perfectly normal humans usually communicate through language in their daily life interactions. We can cite such examples as oral telephone calls, written cell-phone messages, bargains at the market, lectures at university, Friday sermons in the mosque, political speeches, weather forecasts, etc. Nevertheless, humans do not only communicate via linguistic signs; we also use non-linguistic signs in non-linguistic communication. Non-linguistic signs are not uncommon in our daily life. There are a variety of non-linguistic signs that are frequently used by human beings such as colours, gestures, tears, and sounds. For example, we may whistle when we are very excited, we may lift our eyebrows to threaten someone, the red light signals that we should stop the car immediately, we wear black clothes to express sorrow over the death a loved one, etc. It is worth noting at this point that non-linguistic signs do not always occur independently of linguistic signs; they occasionally occur with non-linguistic signs simultaneously. A good example of this is the situation when we explain something and make gestures at the same time. In a nutshell, although various signs are usually used in human communication, it is language which gives it its distinguishing peculiarity.

Criteria of Evaluation

1. **Form** (indentation, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization): **01.5 points**
2. **Content** (the development and relevance of ideas): **05 points**
 - a) definition of linguistic communication + examples (02 points)
 - b) definition of non-linguistic communication + examples (02 points)
 - c) the superiority of linguistic communication (01 point)

Appendix 1: Linguistics Syllabus Map (L1)

Level	Time allotted	Locals	Teaching materials	Syllabi content
L1	1h30	Classrooms	<p>Hand outs</p> <p>Note taking</p> <p>Board</p>	<p><u>I/ First Semester</u></p> <p><u>A.</u> Introduction and Definitions: Language and Linguistics</p> <p>1. Language</p> <p>a/ What is Language?</p> <p>b/ Features of Human Language</p> <p>c/ Human Language vs. Animal Communication System</p> <p>d/ Language and Medium</p> <p>e/ Why do we study Language?</p> <p>2. Linguistics</p> <p>a/ What is Linguistics?</p> <p>b/ Is Linguistics a Science?</p> <p>c/ A Short Historical Overview of Linguistics</p> <p><u>B.</u> Major Objectives of Linguistics</p> <p>1. Language Structure</p> <p>2. Language Use</p> <p>3. Language Change</p> <p><u>C.</u> Linguistics and Other Human Sciences</p> <p>1. Linguistics and Psychology</p> <p>2. Linguistics and Sociology</p> <p>3. Linguistics and Anthropology</p> <p><u>II/ Second Semester</u></p> <p><u>A.</u> Domains of Linguistics</p> <p>1. Phonetics and Phonology</p> <p>2. Morphology and Syntax</p> <p>3. Semantics and Pragmatics</p> <p><u>B.</u> Basic Linguistic Concepts</p> <p>1. Language and Communication</p> <p>2. Linguistic sign and Semiology</p> <p>3. Langue and parole</p> <p>4. Synchrony and Diachrony</p> <p>5. Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Relationships</p>

Appendix 2: Linguistics Syllabus Map (L2)

Level	Time allotted	Locals	Teaching materials	Syllabi content
L2	1h30	Halls	<p>Hand outs</p> <p>Books</p> <p>Note taking</p> <p>Data Show</p> <p>Board</p>	<p><u>I/ A General Review:</u></p> <p>1/Language(1):Origin & History 2/Language(2):Features & Functions 3/Traditional Grammar: a- Prescriptivism b- Descriptivism</p> <p><u>II/ The European Tradition in Linguistics:</u></p> <p>1/<u>The European Structural Linguistics</u></p> <p>2/<u>Ferdinand De Saussure (Dichotomies):</u> a- Semiology/Semiotics b- Langue and Parole c-Synchronic/Diachronic approaches to language d-Syntagmatic/Paradigmatic analyses of language e-The linguistic sign: signifier/signified</p> <p>3/<u>The three Classical Schools of (Structural) Linguistics:</u> a-The Prague School b-The Copenhagen School c-The American School</p> <p><u>III/ American Structuralism:</u></p> <p>1/ Introduction 2/ Bloomfield's Approach to Structuralism 3/Harris's Approach to Structuralism 4/ Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar</p> <p><u>IV/Additional information and Generalities:</u></p> <p>1/The Arab Tradition in Linguistics 2/Family Relationships Among Languages 3/The Discovery of Sanskrit</p>

Appendix 3 : Linguistics Syllabus Map (L3)

Level	Time allotted	Locals	Teaching materials	Syllabi content
L3	1h30	Halls	<p>Hand outs</p> <p>Books</p> <p>Note taking</p> <p>Data Show</p> <p>Board</p>	<p><u>Branches of Linguistics</u></p> <p><u>I/ Sociolinguistics:</u></p> <p>1/Definition(s) and Scope of Study 2/Language and Dialect 3/Language Relativity 4/ Speech Act Theory 5/ Pidgins and Creoles</p> <p><u>II/ Psycholinguistics:</u></p> <p>1/Definition(s) and Scope of Study 2/ Language Acquisition and Language Learning: a- Behaviourism (The Inductive Theory) b- Mentalism (The Deductive Theory) c- L.A.D and Language Universals</p> <p><u>III/ Applied Linguistics:</u></p> <p>1/ Definition(s) and Areas of Interest 2/ A.L and Language Teaching: a. Discourse Analysis b. Contrastive Analysis c. Error Analysis</p> <p><u>IV/Approaches to (Foreign) Language Teaching:</u></p> <p>1/What is an approach? 2/The Audio-lingual Approach (with examples of classroom activities) 3/The Communicative Approach (with examples of classroom activities) 4/ The Competency-Based Approach (with examples of classroom activities)</p> <p><u>V/ Extra Information:</u></p> <p>1/ Bilingualism and the Teaching of English 2/ Syllabus Design in Third World Countries</p>

Appendix 4

Teachers' Questionnaire

You are kindly invited to fill in the following questionnaire as part in our Doctorate research that is entitled :

“An Investigation into the Relevancy/Validity of Linguistics’ Testing Models. Case Study: 1st Year Students of the English Language Department at Mohamed Khider University. Biskra”. Your contribution is of a great help for us to spot light on the deficiencies of Tests as far as students’ achievement is concerned. Thank you.

Section One: General information

Q1: Name: T

Q2 : Degree:

- a- Licence ()
 b- Magistère ()
 c- Doctorate ()

Q3 : Length of experience :

Teaching English	
Teaching Linguistics to 1st Year Classes	
Teaching Linguistics to other classes	

Q4: Is your will to teach English

Strong ?	
Weak ?	

Q5: Is your will to teach Linguistics

Strong ?	
Weak ?	

Q6: Please state your reasons:

.....

Section Two: About Linguistics

Q7: Is your motivation of teaching Linguistics

High?	Medium?	Low?

Q8: Please, justify your choice.

.....

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Q9: What do you think about Linguistics first year course current syllabus?

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.....

Q10: Do you think that the structure and the grading of the syllabus content suit first year students' level?

Yes (...)

No (...)

Q11: If No, what changes do you suggest?

.....

.....

.....

Q12: Are you satisfied with the number of hours devoted to First years Linguistics classes?

Yes ()

No ()

Q13: Please justify your answer.

.....
.....
.....

Section Three: About First Year Students

Q14: Do you think that your students are motivated to study English in general and Linguistics in particular?

YES (.....)

NO (.....)

Q15: Please explain:

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Q16: Do you think that your students have a negative attitude towards Linguistics?

YES (.....)

NO (.....)

Q17: Please say why:

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Q18: What do you think about your students' background knowledge in English?

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Q19: Do you notice any difference(s) between your students' level of motivation, concentration, understanding, participation, etc.

Yes () No ()

Q20: Please explain.

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Q21: Q21: Do you think that class size has a negative impact on your students' outcomes/ understanding? Please, explain.

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Section Four: About Testing and Tests

Q22: Do you take into consideration your students' differences in English and in Linguistics when preparing tests in Linguistics?

YES () NO ()

Q23: If Yes, for what reason(s)?

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Q24: If No, please say why.

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Q25: What do you think about the setting of testing?

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Q26: Do you think that one hour and a half is sufficient for a test in Linguistics?

YES () NO ()

Q27: Please justify your answer and make suggestions if necessary?

.....

Q28: Do you think that Linguistics' Tests are better taken in:

The morning	The midday	The afternoon
08h00/10h00	12h00	14h00/16h00

Q29: Please, justify your choice.

.....

Q30: When preparing a test in Linguistics, what criteria of test design do you take into account?

.....

Q31: As far as the length of the test is concerned, do you take into consideration the time allotted?

YES () NO ()

Q32: Explain your choice:

.....

Q33: What kind of activities do you include in your Linguistics' tests as far as first year students are concerned?

M C Q activities	Yes/No activities	Open ended Questions	True/False Activities	In form of essays

Q34: According to your experience in teaching Linguistics, which type(s) of activities do your students prefer? Explain.

.....

Q35: When giving scores to each activity, what do you take into account in the first place (form, content, meaning, etc)?

.....

Q36: How many activities does your test in Linguistics generally include? Why?

.....

Section Five: About Tests' Reliability and Validity

Q37: Do you think your Linguistics' tests particularly are reliable and valid?
Yes () No ()

Q38: Please justify your answer.

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Q39: Do you take into account Reliability and Validity as characteristics of good tests when designing a test in Linguistics? Why?

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Q40: According to you, what is a reliable and valid test?

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Q 41: what type of test is your test in Linguistics?

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Q42: Please explain:

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Q43: In your opinion, is there any relation between your students' level and their grades in Linguistics?

Yes () No ()

Q44: Please explain:

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Q44: Do you think that your students are satisfied with their level in Linguistics?
YES () NO ()

Q45: Please, justify your answer.

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Section Six: Comments and Suggestions

You are kindly invited in this section to supply us with any comment(s) if any about the items included in this questionnaire, as we welcome all of your suggestions. Thank you.

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Thank you for your contribution
Mrs S. RABEHI
Doctorate Researcher
Dept of English
UMKBiskra
2011-2012

Appendix 5

Students' Questionnaire : Piloting Study 1

Dear Students,

You are kindly invited to fill in the following questionnaire as part in our Doctorate research that is entitled :

“An Investigation into the Reliability/Validity of Linguistics' Testing Models. Case Study: 1st Year Students of the English Language Department at Mohamed Khider University. Biskra”. Your contribution is of a great help for us to spot light on the deficiencies of Linguistics' Tests as far as your achievement level is concerned. Thank you.

Section One : General information

Q1 : Name : S

Q2 : Age :

18-25	
26-40	
More than 40	

Q3 : Sex :

Male	
Female	

Q4: Choice of studying English:

Free	
Imposed	

Q5: Your level in English is

Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Q6: Your will to study English is ...

Strong	Weak	Don't know

Q7: BAC stream:

Scientific	Literary	Foreign Languages

Q8: English BAC Exam Mark:

0-5/20	6-10/20	11-15/20	16-20/20

Q9: Are you first year student for the first time () the second time ()

Q10: Do you suffer from debts in your first year?
Yes () No ()

Q11: If YES, in which course(s)

.....

Section Two: About Linguistics

Q12: How could you classify the courses you have at first year from the most difficult to the least difficult?

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	////////////////////////////////////

Q13: As far as Linguistics is concerned, your degree of comprehension is

High	Medium	Low

Q14: Do you think that Linguistics is

Not difficult	Difficult	Too difficult

Q15: Do you feel motivated to study English and Linguistics? Justify your answer.

.....

Q16: Do you think that the time allotted to Linguistics courses is sufficient?

Yes () No ()

Q17: If “No” how many hours do you ask for?

.....

Section Three: About Testing

Q18: How do you feel when taking Exams in general

Anxious	Worried	At ease

Q19: Do you consider Linguistics Tests:

Accessibl e	Eas y	Difficul t	Very difficul t

Q20: Do you describe Linguistics test:

Short	Long

Q21: Is the time allotted to Linguistics Tests sufficient?

Yes () No ()

Q22: Please say why?

.....

Q23: Do you prefer taking Linguistics Tests:

Early in the morning	In midday	In the afternoon

Q24: Please state your reason(s):

.....

Q25: Which kind of activities do you prefer?

Yes/No	True/False	Definitions	MCQ

Q26: Justify your choice.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Q27: Do you think that the Tests' Setting is:

Comfortable	Uncomfortable

Q28: Please justify your answer.

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Q29: Do you think that the number of students per group has relation to your level of Linguistics' comprehension?

Yes () No ()

Q30: Please explain.

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Q31: Are you satisfied with your Linguistics' grades?

Yes () No ()

Q32: Do you link your low grades to your teacher's way of stating the test's instructions?

Yes () No ()

Q33: Whatever your answer, please explain:

.....

.....

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.....

Q34: Are you satisfied with the marks devoted to each activity in the Linguistics' tests?

Yes () No ()

Q35: Please, justify your choice:

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Section Four: Suggestions

You are kindly invited to supply us with your suggestions concerning, linguistics' tests setting and activities.

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Thank you for your contribution
Mrs S. RABEHI
Doctorate Researcher
Dept of English
UMKBiskra
2011-2012

Appendix 6

Students' Questionnaire : Piloting Study 2

Student's Name:

Group N°:

Dear Students,

You are kindly invited to fill in the following questionnaire as part in our Doctorate research that is entitled :

"An Investigation into the Reliability/Validity of Linguistics' Testing Models. Case Study: 1st Year Students of the English Language Department at Mohamed Khider University. Biskra". Your contribution is of a great help for us to spot light on the deficiencies of Linguistics' Tests as far as your achievement level is concerned. Thank you.

Section One : General information**Q1 : Name : S****Q2 : Age :**

18-25	
26-40	
More than 40	

Q3 : Sex :

Male	
Female	

Q4: Choice of studying English:

Free	
Imposed	

Q5:Explain:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Q6: Your level in English is

Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Q7: Your will to study English is...

Strong	Weak	Don't know

Q8: BAC stream:

Scientific	Literary	Foreign Languages

Q9: English BAC Exam Mark:

0-5/20	6-10/20	11-15/20	16-20/20

Q10: Are you first year student for the first time () the second time ()

Q11: Do you suffer from debts in your first year? Yes () No ()

Q12: If YES, in which course(s)

.....

.....

.....

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.....

Section Two: About Linguistics

Q13: Classify the courses you have at first year from the most difficult to the least difficult?

a- Not difficult
difficult

b- Difficult

c- Very

-
-
-
-

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-
-
-

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-
-
-

Q14: As far as Linguistics is concerned, your degree of comprehension is

High	Medium	Low

Q15: Explain:

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Q16: Do you think that Linguistics is

Not difficult	Difficult	Too difficult

Q17: Why and why not?

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Q18: Do you feel motivated to study English? Justify your answer.

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• Do you feel motivated to study Linguistics? Justify your answer.

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Q19: Do you think that the time allotted to Linguistics courses is sufficient?

Yes () No ()

Q20: If “No” how many hours do you ask for?

.....

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Q21: Do you think that the number of students per group has relation to your level of Linguistics’ comprehension?

Yes () No ()

Q22: Please explain.

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Section Three: About Testing

Q23: How do you feel when taking Exams in general?

Anxious	Worried	At ease

Q24: Please justify your choice.

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Q25: Do you consider Linguistics Tests:

Accessible	Easy	Difficult	Very difficult

Q26: Please justify your choice.

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Q27: Do you describe Linguistics test:

Short	Long

Q28: Is the time allotted to Linguistics Tests sufficient?

Yes () No ()

Q29: Please say why?

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.....

.....

Q30: Is the time allotted to Linguistics Exams sufficient?

Yes () No ()

Q31: Please say why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Q33: Do you prefer taking Linguistics Tests:

Early in the morning	In midday	In the afternoon

Q34: Please state your reason(s):

.....

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.....

.....

Q35: Which kind of activities do you prefer?

Yes/No	True/False	Definitions	MCQ

Q36: Justify your choice.

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Q37: Is your Linguistics' test composed of a variety of activities?

Yes () No ()

If yes, which ones does it include?

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.....

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Q38: Are you satisfied with the marks devoted to each activity in the Linguistics' tests?

Yes () No ()

Q39: Please, justify your choice:

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.....

.....

.....

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Q40: Do you think that the Tests' Setting is:

Comfortable	Uncomfortable

Q41: Please justify your answer.

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Q42: Are you satisfied with your Linguistics' grades?

Yes () No ()

Q43: If No, what are your weaknesses?

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Q44: Do you link your low grades to your teacher's way of stating the test's instructions?

Yes (...) No (...)

Q45: Whatever your answer, please explain:

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Section Four: Suggestions

You are kindly invited to supply us with your suggestions concerning, linguistics' tests setting and activities.

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Thank you for your contribution
Mrs S. RABEHI
Doctorate Researcher
Dept of English
UMKBiskra
2011-2012

Appendix 7

Students' Questionnaire : Final Version

Student's Name:

Group N°:

Dear Students,

You are kindly invited to fill in the following questionnaire as part in our Doctorate research that is entitled :

"An Investigation into the Reliability/Validity of Linguistics' Testing Models. Case Study: 1st Year Students of the English Language Department at Mohamed Khider University. Biskra". Your contribution is of a great help for us to spot light on the deficiencies of Linguistics' Tests as far as your achievement level is concerned. Thank you.

Section One : General information**Q1 : Name : S****Q2 : Age :**

18-25	
26-40	
More than 40	

Q3 : Sex :

Male	
Female	

Q4: Choice of studying English:

Free	
Imposed	

Q5:Explain:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Q6: Your level in English is

Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent

Q7: Your will to study English is...

Strong	Weak	Don't know

Q8: BAC stream:

Scientific	Literary	Foreign Languages

Q9: English BAC Exam Mark:

0-5/20	6-10/20	11-15/20	16-20/20

Q10: Are you first year student for the first time () the second time ()

Q11: Do you suffer from debts in your first year?

Yes () No ()

Q12: If YES, in which course(s)

.....

Section Two: About Linguistics

Q13: Classify the courses you have at first year from the most difficult to the least difficult?

**a- Not difficult
difficult**

b- Difficult

c- Very

-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

Q14: As far as Linguistics is concerned, your degree of comprehension is

High	Medium	Low

Q15: Explain:

.....

Q16: Do you think that Linguistics is

Not difficult	Difficult	Too difficult

Q17: Why and why not?

.....

Q18: Do you feel motivated to study English? Justify your answer.

.....

• Do you feel motivated to study Linguistics? Justify your answer.

.....

Q19: Do you think that the time allotted to Linguistics courses is sufficient?

Yes () No ()

Q20: If “No” how many hours do you ask for?

.....

Q21: Do you think that the number of students per group has relation to your level of Linguistics’ comprehension?

Yes () No ()

Q22: Please explain.

.....

Section Three: About Testing

Q23: How do you feel when taking Exams in general?

Anxious	Worried	At ease

Q24: Please justify your choice.

.....

Q25: Do you consider Linguistics Tests:

Accessible	Easy	Difficult	Very difficult

Q26: Please justify your choice.

.....

Q27: Do you describe Linguistics test:

Short	Long

Q28: Is the time allotted to Linguistics Tests sufficient?

Yes () No ()

Q29: Please say why?

.....

Q30: Is the time allotted to Linguistics Exams sufficient?

Yes () No ()

Q31: Please say why?

.....

Q33: Do you prefer taking Linguistics Tests:

Early in the morning	In midday	In the afternoon

Q34: Please state your reason(s):

.....

Q35: Which kind of activities do you prefer?

Yes/No	True/False	Definitions	MCQ

Q36: Justify your choice.

.....

Q37: Is your Linguistics' test composed of a variety of activities?

Yes () No ()

If yes, which ones does it include?

.....

Q38: Are you satisfied with the marks devoted to each activity in the Linguistics' tests?

Yes () No ()

Q39: Please, justify your choice:

.....

Q40: Do you think that the Tests' Setting is:

Comfortable	Uncomfortable

Q41: Please justify your answer.

.....

Q42: Are you satisfied with your Linguistics' grades?

Yes () No ()

Q43: If No, what are your weaknesses?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Q44: Do you link your low grades to your teacher’s way of stating the test’s instructions?

Yes () No ()

Q45: Whatever your answer, please explain:

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Section Four: Suggestions

You are kindly invited to supply us with your suggestions concerning, linguistics’ tests setting and activities.

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Thank you for your contribution
Mrs S. RABEHI
Doctorate Researcher
Dept of English
UMKBiskra
2011-2012

Appendix 8

Teachers' Interview Questions

Question 1: Do you consider the number of students per group as an influential factor on their understanding of the Linguistics Course? Explain.

Question 2: Do you link their low level in Linguistics to their poor level concerning the target language "English"? If not, to what other aspects you may link their low level in Linguistics?

Question 3: Do you think that the students' low grades in Linguistics have a direct link to the way you, as a teacher of Linguistics, state the instructions?

Question 4: Do you encourage your students to work in groups? Please, explain.

Question 5: Do you think that group work is helpful for your students to understand better?

Question 6: Since the majority of students obtain low grades when testing them (official exam, make-up exam, quiz, ...), have you ever given them take-home tests to get familiar with the activities, instructions, grades schedule, etc? If no, why? If yes, have you noticed any improvement?

Question 7: Have you noticed any difference as far as your students' level of motivation is concerned after taking tests? Is it positive or negative?

Question 8: What do you do to attract their attention again/ to get them involved more?

Question 9: How do you evaluate your tests in Linguistics in terms of Reliability and Validity?

Question 10: Under which type do you classify your tests in Linguistics?

Question 11: Are you satisfied with your students' level in Linguistics in particular and English in general?

Question 12: What do you suggest as far as Linguistics tests are concerned to make your students achieve better results?

Question 13: What would you recommend for first year classes as far as the administration is concerned to help students and teachers realize their objectives?

Question 14: Have you ever discussed the results of exams/ tests with your students? If yes, for what purpose? If not, explain why.

Appendix 9

Students' Interview Questions

Appendix 10

COURSE EVALUATION FORM

Dear students,
 Please complete this course evaluation by assigning each statement a number which corresponds to your opinion. Place an X in the column that corresponds to your choice.
DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS EVALUATION! I wish to get objective and anonymous responses from the class. By remaining anonymous, you can be honest and I can get a more accurate impression of how you feel about the course.

Rating system

1- Strongly Agree 2-Agree 3-Unsure 4-Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree

Teaching Evaluation	01	02	03	04	05
Teacher is knowledgeable about the subject					
Teacher is prepared					
Teacher encourages participation.					
The teacher never intimidated or embarrassed students.					
Teacher is enthusiastic about teaching.					
The pace of the lesson is just right.					
The teacher made me feel free to ask questions.					
The teacher grasped and responded to students' questions and comments.					
The teacher's English was understandable (e.g. , good pronunciation, speed, vocabulary).					
The teacher tried to learn students' names.					
The teacher's examples and illustrations were clear and concise.					
The teacher was able to give alternative explanations when needed.					
The teacher managed class time effectively.					
The teacher is fair in examination.					
The teacher shows respect towards students.					
Classroom Environment					
The classroom is comfortable and inviting.					
The classroom presents few distractions.					
The tables provide adequate work space.					
Tests					
The level of tests is just right					
The tests cover all the learning points					
The tests' grading scale is acceptable					
The tests' instructions were clearly stated.					
The tests included types of activities which you like to find.					
The grades are convenient					
The time allotted to the tests is quite sufficient.					
Students' attitudes					
Students' background knowledge in English helps them a lot in learning Linguistics.					
Students prepared thoroughly for each class.					
Students feel that Linguistics should not be taught at first year level.					
Students need more time to help them understand the linguistics course.					
First year students claim that the Linguistics course is too difficult.					
General observations					
The course meets my needs.					
I like this course.					
The course improved my language skills.					

**CLASSROOM
OBSERVATION
ANALYSIS**

Résumé

L'enseignement de la linguistique en 1^{ère} année - filière Anglais de l'Université Mohamed Khider de Biskra- est une tâche laborieuse pour beaucoup d'enseignants. La majorité des étudiants éprouvent des difficultés à arriver à des résultats satisfaisants aux tests d'évaluation de leurs connaissances en linguistique. La présente recherche a pour but d'étudier la fiabilité et la validité des modèles de tests d'évaluation en linguistique, en sur une étude de cas des étudiants de 1^{ère} année de licence d'Anglais de l'Université Mohamed Khider de Biskra. Cette recherche prend un échantillon constitué de sept des douze groupes de première année, et huit enseignants (sept titulaires et un vacataire). Elle repose sur une triangulation méthodologique de trois outils de collecte des données: des questionnaires administrés aux enseignants de linguistique et aux étudiants visés, une entrevue avec chaque enseignant, une discussion avec un groupe témoin d'étudiants, et une observation de classe. Les résultats de la recherche révèlent que la défaillance des étudiants en linguistique n'est pas liée à la fiabilité et/ou la validité des tests d'évaluation en eux-mêmes, mais plutôt dans l'environnement et le contexte d'enseignement/apprentissage, à savoir les effectifs des classes et les méthodes d'enseignement. Enfin, connaissant ce contexte de l'intérieur, et après avoir vécu l'expérience de l'enseignement de la linguistique avec l'utilisation des technologies de l'information et de communication (TICs), un laboratoire de langue et vidéoprojecteur, nous recommandons la réduction des effectifs des classes, ainsi que la mise à disposition d'outils des TICs, afin de permettre l'enseignement de la linguistique dans un nouvel environnement qui a prouvé son efficacité et son effet positif sur les résultats des tests d'évaluation des étudiants.

Mots Clés : Linguistique – Fiabilité – Tests d'évaluation - Validité

المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى التحقق من اعتمادية وصلاحية نماذج امتحانات اللسانيات الخاصة بالسنة الأولى بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة (2012/2011). العينة تضم 7 افواج من مجموع 12 فوجا من طلاب شعبة الإنجليزية و8 أساتذة (7 دائمون و1 مستخلف). استعملت الباحثة المنهج الثلاثي الذي يضم الاستبيان والمقابلة والملاحظة الميدانية. خلصت الدراسة الى أن قصور الطلبة في مقياس اللسانيات لا يكمن في اعتمادية وصلاحية نماذج الامتحانات بل بالظروف الموضوعية المحيطة بعملية التدريس كالاكتظاظ وطرق التدريس في المقام الأول. توصي الدراسة بضبط عدد الطلبة المنخرطين وكذا ادخال الوسائط التكنولوجية لتحسين أداء الأساتذة والطلبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية : اعتمادية/ صلاحية/ امتحانات/ اللسانيات