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**An Exploratory Study of Teachers' Professional Knowledge  
in Practice: Case of EFL Experienced Teachers in the  
Department of English at Batna University**

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the Degree of 'Doctorat Science' in Didactics of Foreign Languages

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to:

My parents, my wife and kids, Amel and Samer, who are the source of success and happiness in my life and to whom I wish all the best.

The same wish goes for my extended family and the many friends, who have been so supportive and encouraged the fulfillment of this work. I would also like to dedicate it to all those who believed in me and provided sustenance.

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## **Abstract**

The present study deals with EFL experienced teachers' knowledge, its sources and the effects of context on the realisation of teacher knowledge in classroom practice. As such, the study becomes a response to the call made for the reconceptualization of the teaching basics to emphasize teaching as a knowledge act based on reason, consciousness and common sense and stressing the pedagogical framework and context in which teaching is held. Data gathering tools are the teacher knowledge questionnaire, interviewing and classroom observation and on the basis of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis six areas of teacher knowledge were revealed and confirmed through the teachers' views and accounts. The areas are: subject matter, pedagogy, students, learning environment, curriculum and the self. Many sources were also found to outline teacher professional knowledge when it is put into practice. These sources include experience, teacher education and training, past studies at the university, teacher and learner feedback, expert advice, learners' knowledge and advanced scientific research. The relation between teacher knowledge and practice was demonstrated in two ways. The first way relates to the fact that teacher knowledge represents a working model which underpins practice. The second way relates to the fact that classroom decisions are made on the basis of teacher reasoning. Many challenging factors are found to hinder the realization of teacher knowledge in practice such as time limitation, EFL examination policy, lack of resources and sustenance, the gap between the teaching objectives and the learning needs as well as the excessive classroom size. Finally, the findings gave us the opportunity to draw upon significant implications, research recommendations and suggestions to conduct further research on teacher professional knowledge.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **Introduction**

The introductory chapter aims at providing the rationale for conducting our study, the models being explored, research aims and questions as well as its significance. It starts by accounting for the need to develop studies in teacher cognition in general and EFL teacher knowledge in particular where a gap in literature is clearly observed. This chapter also represents a depiction of teacher knowledge in relation to classroom practice and, thus, its conceptualization is made. Furthermore, teacher knowledge is generally viewed as practical, experiential, personal, situational and contextual, yet in our study it is conceived of in connection with teacher reasoning. The aims and research questions were then provided and the chapter closes by demonstrating the significance of this study for beginner EFL teachers.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The problem of the present study is twofold: On the one hand, it attempts to explore the professional knowledge from the perspective of experienced teachers and how it is actualised in classroom practice. On the other hand, it attempts to provide implications for the continuing professional development of the teacher as well as the teaching curricula.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

This research work attempted to answer three interrelated questions:

- 1- What could be the components and sources of EFL experienced teachers' knowledge in an Algerian university context?
- 2- In what way(s) does teacher knowledge inform the EFL classroom practice?
- 3- How does context affect the realization of teacher knowledge in practice?

The set of questions are corresponding with the nature of research on teacher knowledge and practice. These questions were discussed by Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999) who admit:

*The “what” is practical knowledge, craft knowledge, or knowing-in-action- that is, the knowledge that is generated by competent teachers as they deal with classroom situations that are inherently indeterminate...The “how” is deliberation and consideration/ reconsideration - that is, consciously reflecting on the flow of classroom action and invention of knowledge in action in order to take note of new situations, intentionally and introspectively examining those situations, and consciously enhancing and articulating what is tacit or implicit (268)*

Furthermore, teacher knowledge and practice need to be understood on the basis of context, which clarifies the challenges teachers face when trying to transform their knowledge into classroom practice.

Following that, this study was carried out to develop understanding of three broad areas rather than focusing on particular aspects of teacher knowledge and practice. These areas are:

- The areas constituting the professional practical knowledge of experienced EFL teachers, in Algeria, as well as the sources which contribute to the shaping of this knowledge;
- The relationship between teacher knowledge and practice;
- The contextual factors affecting the realization of teacher knowledge in action.

An important reason for covering these broad areas is their interrelatedness. For example, in order to understand the relevance of teachers’ knowledge, it is important to consider how this knowledge is put into practice. In addition, studying the sources of teacher knowledge helps us understand how this knowledge is built up. This, in turn, will be shaped by the context in which the practice is held.

The fact that teaching is an applied and interdisciplinary domain, we find that a broad research framework helps identify the multiplicity of the factors which affect it. This approach is in agreement with the existing analytical frameworks (e.g. Shulman, 1987;

Turner-Bisset, 1999; Hegarty, 2000) which combine the various materials and fields that inform the teacher's profession.

A possibly alternative approach would be focusing on specific aspects of both knowledge and practice, and this could be done by only adopting a broader and holistic image of how the various knowledge areas, constructed by teachers, relate to one another and to the context in which teaching takes place.

### **1.3 Background and Significance of the Study**

It should be pointed out that understanding the professional knowledge of the teacher and how it is realized in practice could result in producing capable teachers. The idea is valued by Shulman (1987) believing that *“a proper understanding of the knowledge base of teaching, the sources for that knowledge, and the complexities of the pedagogical process will make the emergence of such teachers more likely”* (20).

Furthermore, exploring teacher knowledge does also have a positive contribution in the understanding of the teacher's role. It is stressed by Elbaz (1983) that *“the single factor which seems to have the greatest power to carry forward our understanding of the teacher's role is the idea of teacher's knowledge”* (10).

Besides, the teacher could be made conscious of what he knows and how his knowledge is linked to practice, if these are clearly articulated. Such awareness is at the center of teacher development. This articulation is referred to in research literature as meta-cognition, i.e. knowledge about knowledge. It is made clear by Berthoff (1987), cited in Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), that what teachers need is to check and double-check the rich experiences they have by articulating them. In so doing, they are making mutual benefits to themselves by revealing the hidden side of their work, exchanging their experiences and displaying them for public scrutiny. This goes with what is highlighted by Golombek (1998) about the value of



constructing teacher knowledge, providing a context for how and why that knowledge is acquired and employed.

Research on teacher knowledge has significance not only for experienced teachers' development, but also for novice teachers' learning. A further benefit of research on teacher knowledge is teacher education curricula.

This is supported by Johnston & Goettsch (2000) who think that teachers and curriculum designers could benefit from an enhanced awareness of the complexity and the process-oriented nature of the knowledge base of teachers. Thus, the research findings about what constitutes the knowledge of the EFL teacher and how it is drawn upon in practice have relevant implications for planning, designing curricula and programs, particularly in the context of our study and the EFL context in general. This approach to curriculum design is consistent with the theoretical social constructivist approach suggested by Roberts (1998).

It also corresponds with the framework for re-conceptualizing the knowledge base of language teacher education called for by Freeman and Johnson (1998) which cherishes the three important dimensions of the language teacher education, namely, the teacher, the context, and the pedagogy. Therefore, it is believed that experienced and novice teachers may find the actual data, resulting from this study, a useful source of reflection that can be used as a basis for teaching and continuing professional development.

It remains also important to hold that documenting teacher knowledge is useful for newly-practicing teachers. It provides a practical background to fellow teachers to consult whatever is suitable for their teaching situations. Researchers, like Shulman (1987), lament the lack of such documentation. According to him *“one of the frustrations of teaching as an occupation and profession is its extensive individual and collective amnesia, the consistency with which the best creations of its practitioners are lost to both contemporary and future peers”* (7).

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

It should be pointed out that our study does not seek to generalize facts about EFL teachers' knowledge in an Algerian context, and does not also stand for an evaluation or judgment of these teachers. These objectives are difficult to achieve for the fact that our study has a specific focus and is exposed to the complex nature of teaching, with numerous variables emerging in the process. Besides, the difficulty is due to the lack of a common agreement about the standards which make good teaching as well as the knowledge necessary for the conduct of this contextualized fieldwork. Instead, this present study attempts to construct the content of the EFL teachers' knowledge and how it informs practice from their own perspectives.

In accordance with that, our objective is to make this study contribute to the continuing discussion about what should constitute the core knowledge of teaching, in general, and of EFL teaching, in particular. Also, our study is meant to fill the gap in literature about the EFL teacher knowledge and its relationship to classroom practice in an Algerian university context. Again, we hope that the present study makes a step forward in understanding teaching in general and EFL teaching in particular.

## **1.5 Bridging the Gap**

The domain of research in teacher cognition has been popular starting from the mid-1990s (Freeman, 2002). It is also held by researchers, such as Borg (2006), that understanding language teacher cognition is a foundation of research activity and growing more to become a world phenomenon. It is maintained by Borg (2003) that:

*While the study of teacher cognition has established itself on the research agenda in the field of language teaching and provided valuable insight into the mental lives of language teachers...there are several major issues in language teaching which have yet to be explored from the perspective of teacher cognition (81).*

In order for research, however, to introduce a good understanding of the sophisticated nature of teaching, this research needs to be conducted in relation to practice. It is also believed by Borg (2006) that such researches “*entail the study of actual classroom practices and of the relationships between cognitions and these practices*” (50). Just a few studies related to this issue are found in the context of EFL teaching. It is held by Borg (2003) that:

*There is also a need for more research in contexts which, globally speaking, are more representative of language classrooms. I am thinking here of classrooms in state schools, taught by non-native teachers, and where syllabuses are to various degrees prescribed. Hardly any of the settings studied in research I have reviewed here reflect these characteristics* (98).

He further believes that “*minimal insight into state school settings (primary and secondary) where languages are taught by non-native teachers to large classes of learners who, particularly in the case of English, may not be studying the language voluntarily*” (106). The implication is that researches on teacher cognition, similar to the one in our study, are scarce and less available. It follows that our interest in exploring teacher knowledge is justified as one integral aspect of studies and research attempts about teacher cognition.

We also emphasized the need for a continuous research investigation of the language teachers’ knowledge. It was pointed out by Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999) that:

*There has been a shift in thinking about teacher learning over the last several decades from an emphasis on what teachers do to what they know, what their sources of knowledge are, and how those sources influence their work in classrooms* (267).

Thus, teacher knowledge, as a field, has to be explored in connection with classroom practice. Research belief, according to Xu & Liu (2009), holds that teachers’ knowledge usually passes without scrutiny or examination. An assumption about the nature of teacher knowledge, and the ways of its exploration in authentic settings was made by Elbaz (1983).

Her assumption is that, *“the most basic assumption, of course, is simply that practical knowledge exists and that a direct examination of the thinking of teachers at work will make apparent to us the nature, defining characteristics and criteria of this knowledge”* (13).

The role of experience is also valued and clarified by Clandinin (1989), who also maintains that experienced teachers carry a unique sort of knowledge which is experiential, practical and modeled by the teachers’ set of values and objectives. This becomes clear in the course of teaching performance. Thus, when teachers perform a teaching act, they take decisions and make structured choices which are all informed by the knowledge they possess about the variety of teaching areas. Researchers, namely Kumaravadivelu (2006), reinforced such an idea believing that teachers adopt a pragmatic and structured (principled) approach when teaching. Similarly, Freeman and Johnson (1998) favored this idea, holding that teacher knowledge has to reside and be underpinned in teachers' real classroom practices. Teacher knowledge, therefore, is well founded or rather “anchored in classroom situations”; Munby, Russell & Martin, 2001, (880). It follows that when investigating teacher knowledge, one has to understand the relationship between this knowledge and classroom practice. It is maintained by Richards (1994) that “if we are to understand what teachers know we need to be with them in their places of work” (403). Two assumptions about teacher knowledge, in the field of research, are made by Johnston & Goettsch (2000), who emphasize the connection between knowledge and practice. They assume first that there is a base of knowledge regarding the various elements of language teaching. The other assumption is that the various components of teacher knowledge are intertwined in sophisticated ways as the knowledge platform is utilized and becomes selective in the classroom settings. It is believed, likewise, by Gathbonton (1999) and Mullock (2006) that there is a relationship between what teachers think about learning and teaching and the knowledge they possess about them,

shaping their classroom practices accordingly. Thus, it is held that exploring the processes of thought helps in showing the knowledge underpinning these thought processes.

Our study could also be carried in the context of other studies, such as Freeman and Johnson's, who call for redefining the knowledge core of teachers' education. This demands a thorough understanding of the structure and content of the language education of teachers in which practice is rudimentary. These researchers hold saying: "*we argue that the core of the new knowledge-base must focus on the activity of teaching itself; it should center on the teacher who does it, the contexts in which it is done, and the pedagogy by which it is done*" (397).

The idea also meets the statement held by Troudi (2005) who believes: "*if any element is to be the core of a teacher education program, it should be the teacher's view(s) of what language education is about and what he/she considers teaching to be*" (118).

Many attempts and admittances are held in favor of the need to tackle teacher knowledge and practice in contexts similar to that of the present study (e.g. Borg, 2003), yet no real and serious attempts on this issue are made in Algeria.

Most available research is actually related to EFL teachers focusing on teaching methods and their use, mostly through interventions and quantitative research traditions. This might be due to the confined role of the teacher in contributing to the creation of knowledge as well as curriculum design in Algeria. This echoes the tendency of Gahin (2001), who believes that the "*paucity of research on teacher cognition... might have been epistemologically-based in terms of what constitutes valid knowledge and how teachers are viewed*" (17). He further adds "*teachers' experiential knowledge is not acknowledged. They are seen as agents fulfilling others' intentions and conduits of externally recommended knowledge*" (ibid).

The present study attempts to address this gap of research on teaching in an Algerian university context. Furthermore, research on teaching in general and teachers' knowledge in

particular is our utmost interest because it reflects who we are as teachers, working at the university for several years. We always reckoned that knowledge is power. The more we know about what we do, the more successful we are.

Reflecting on classroom practice has usually been our favorite strategy to deal with wrongly-going classes. Our failure in presenting courses is usually taken as an incentive for change and improvement. However, we gradually started feeling that something is not right and there is like a gap in our knowledge. We posed many questions such as: what could be the problem? Haven't we got enough knowledge about the subject matter? Was the problem related to the teaching style? Were we unable to use didactic materials efficiently? Do we really listen to our students' concerns and wishes? It all became nuisance to us. We could not stop thinking, then, we took action on the basis of the information gathered and the reflection we did. We tried bit by bit new ideas; still things were not going up to the right level. We ultimately came to realize, on the basis of our humble field experience, that all had to do with knowledge to achieve success and appropriateness in actual classroom actions. Thus, we decided to conduct this research study.

### **1.6 Conceptualization of Teacher Knowledge in the Present Study**

Teacher knowledge, in the present study, is perceived at many layers; as experiential, practical, personal, situational and contextual. It is experiential in a sense that it is acquired through the accumulation of experience of the individual teacher as a person, a practicing doer, and as a continuing learner. It is also practical because it influences and is influenced by the practice of the teaching profession. It could shape what the teacher does in the classroom and it could be modeled on the basis of the interaction with the different areas of the teaching process. It also makes sense for the teacher as a person who cannot be but a professional. Teacher knowledge is situational in that it is employed to respond to the various teaching situations and is built through them. Besides, it is viewed as contextual as long as it is

applicable to various contexts and is modeled by them. Such a conceptualization meets the definition given by Munby et al. (2001) holding that teachers' practical knowledge *"is based on the personal understandings that teachers have of the practical circumstances in which they work and classroom knowledge that is situated in classroom events"* (880).

Also, teacher knowledge is generated depending on reflection on experiences and is therefore experiential. It is seen by Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard (1999) that teacher knowledge is generated by teachers themselves resulting from their experiences as well as their reflections on these experiences. It is also defined by Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999) as knowledge expressed or embedded in the artistry of practice, in teachers' reflections on practice, in teachers' practical inquiries, and in teachers' typical views of practice.

It is maintained that practical knowledge is shown in teachers' actions and in the decisions and judgments they make in a continuous manner. Other researchers, like Xu & Liu (2009), consider this conception as a resulting summary of teaching experiences. They think that *"teachers' past experiences, present actions and future plans all constitute the bulk of teacher knowledge"* (505).

Besides being presented as practical and experiential, teacher knowledge is also described as situational and contextual. According to Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler (2002) teacher knowledge *"is grounded in the context in which teachers work"* (6). It is also believed to be situational as long as novel understandings develop when teachers respond to specific situational requirements (Elbaz, 1981; Clandinin and Connelly, 1987).

Furthermore, some researchers, such as Schon (1983), believe that putting teacher knowledge in classroom practice depends on context and largely shaped by the circumstances of the teaching-learning context.

Teachers' knowledge is also described as personal. It is maintained by Elbaz (1981) that teacher knowledge has a personal dimension, in that teachers use their knowledge to become

able enough to work in personally meaningful ways. The element of teacher knowledge, as being personal, is considered important and according to Turner-Bisset (1999) this importance is due to the teacher self-reflection in teacher development and the tolerance guaranteed by the significance of self-image.

In our study, teacher knowledge is also understood in relation to teacher reasoning. The current study works along the assumption that teachers' knowledge is a truly justified view or belief (Fenstermacher, 1994). These views concern any aspect of the teaching process reported by the EFL experienced teacher and are held in the teaching practice. To justify the knowledge claims is something dependent on teacher reasoning as well as the epistemological guarantees provided by the teacher.

Although it is difficult to split off knowledge and beliefs (Kagan, 1990; Calderhead, 1996), teacher knowledge is conceived of as having to do with more factual suggestions, whereas beliefs refer to personal values, attitudes, and ideologies (Pajares, 1992; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Meijer et al., 1999). It is viewed by Woods (1996) that beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge represent a continuum in which assumptions are based on beliefs and knowledge is based on assumptions and beliefs. Knowledge is also defined by Alexander, Schallert, & Hare (1991) as *“all that a person knows or believes to be true, whether or not it is verified as true in some sort of objective or external way”* (317).

Generally speaking, the concept of knowledge, “knowledge in practice”, is sometimes used as a broad term to cover a broad construct of teacher cognitions, as supported by a group of researchers interested in teacher knowledge. Our study endorses such a tendency for the fact that our investigation of knowledge incorporates some aspects of beliefs and values. Thus, we join other researchers who view the notion of “knowledge” in this way. For example, Fenstermacher (1994) uses the term “knowledge” as an inclusive term to include insights, imaginings, musings, awareness, understanding, recollections, predictions,



anticipations, and a host of other activities. Similarly, Verloop, Van-Driel & Meijer (2001) report: “it is important to realize that in the label “teacher knowledge”, the concept “knowledge” is used as an overarching, inclusive concept, summarizing a large variety of cognitions, from conscious and well-balanced opinions to unconscious and unreflected intuitions” (446).

According to them, using knowledge in this way is easier to the researcher who is dealing with the teacher because the differences among the terms: knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions may not be clear in the mind of the teachers who could use them interchangeably and they are inextricably intertwined in the teacher’s mind.

It is claimed by these researchers that this conceptualization is relevant to research on teacher knowledge. They mention:

*This is particularly relevant with respect to research on teacher knowledge. In investigating teacher knowledge, the main focus of attention is on the complex totality of cognitions, the ways this develops, and the way this interacts with teacher behavior in the classroom (ibid).*

Apart from research considerations, however, it is worth noting that a claim to know is different from a claim to believe. If teachers consider a knowledge claim to be verifiable, they need to make it justifiable. This goes in agreement with the argued proposition made by Fenstermacher’s (1994) holding that teachers could produce knowledge in the course of experienced acting and through the generation of ideas, conceptions, images or perspectives when performing as teachers or that they are justified in performing as they do for reasons or evidence they are able to provide.

It follows that being able, as teachers, to make their classroom actions sound; they become also able to provide knowledge about the teaching profession.

## **Conclusion**

In what preceded, we highlighted the need to conduct a study on professional practical knowledge of EFL teachers as well its relationship to classroom practice. It started by setting the platform for the main problem and concern of the present research, then three main questions which guide the research were addressed along with a clear statement of the objectives. Besides, a gap between theory and practice was also accounted for and was followed by a background and significant framework for the present study. Also, an appeal was made to teacher knowledge by conceptualizing it as being practical, experiential, personal, situational and contextual; incorporating some aspects of values and beliefs. Teacher knowledge was also perceived in relation to teacher reasoning and the term “knowledge” was introduced as an inclusive concept to include insights, imaginings, musings, awareness, understanding, recollections, predictions, anticipations, and a host of other activities.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **HIGHLIGHTING THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

#### **Introduction**

In order to gain a thorough understanding of practical knowledge in a broad sense, as a conception with a close relationship to classroom practice, it is very important to understand the educational context in which teachers work and the fieldwork in which our study was carried out. Therefore, this chapter sets the context of the present study and gives factual and background information about the nature of the Algerian educational system, an overview of structure and organization of the school system in Algeria, the teaching of English in the Algerian context and the status of English in Algeria. It also provides an overview of the LMD educational system as well as its features and objectives. The chapter closes with an overview of the department of English and the content of the EFL curriculum.

#### **2.1 Overviewing the Educational System in Algeria**

The improvement of education is the key to reforming society at a larger scale. Algeria has started development late after it got its independence in 1962. This independence brought about a new philosophy and approach to education. The socialist regime cherished uniformity, equity, equal opportunities, and access for everybody at all levels of education. Some key criteria had been initiated:

- Education is free within the limits of the law and public decency.
- Education is a right to all Algerians, guaranteed by the state which will gradually establish all types of schools and educational institutions.
- Education is free at the primary cycle in all public schools.

Through many decades, the government guaranteed equality of educational opportunities to all Algerians and stipulated education to be free at all cycles.

## **2.2 Overviewing the Structure of Education in Algeria**

There are three stages of pre-university public education provided by the state for all citizens. These are the primary, middle and secondary stages. The primary stage accepts children at the age of six and comprises five years. The aim of this stage is to provide the pupils with basic literacy and numeracy skills. English is not part of this teaching stage. At the end of primary education, pupils can join the second stage of pre-university education, which is the middle stage. This stage lasts for four grades (grade six through grade nine). The main aim of this stage is to prepare learners emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually to take part in modern citizenship and advanced levels of education. The teaching of English is initiated through the first grade of this stage.

By completing the middle school, learners move to the secondary education level, which aims at preparing students for practical life and for higher and university education. Based on their exam results, students who get higher marks are allowed to join the general secondary school. Those who get lower marks could repeat the year or be oriented to practical life.

Most of the students in the second group finish their education at this stage because of the fewer chances available for them to join university education which only accepts students holding a Baccalaureate degree. The general secondary school consists of three grades (grade ten through grade twelve). School subjects at grade ten are common to all students. At grades eleven and twelve, students choose streams to be prepared for joining either the Science or the Human Sciences Faculties at the university. English language is taught throughout the three levels of this stage.

### **2.3 The Teaching of English in the Algerian Context**

As concerns the teaching of English in Algerian schools, many approaches and methods have been adopted by educationalists and psychologists. Two approaches have been, however, adopted ever since. The first one was the Communicative Approach to language teaching, where curriculum designers agreed that language is to be taught principally as communication.

Actually, the intent and arguments were all in favor of putting the learner in the native speaker's body and make him communicate. This tendency was not really practical, considering time and space constraints. Although the linguistic influence of advertising on people is undeniable, the culture and the thought of the people influence advertising. Foreign language learners must not only be aware of this interdependence, but must be taught its nature in order to make them grasp the necessity of including culture in the study of a foreign language.

The second approach adapted from the first one was the competency-based approach, helping the learners acquire a communicative competency by considering the learner as the target in the teaching-learning process. The focus, in this approach, was on the meaning conveyed by the context rather than the grammatical patterns employed in it. This approach has been an answer to the requirements of the 21st century which dictated certain measures to the teachers who are better considered in the United States as facilitators of knowledge and instruction. Good teachers and good institutions where they work may differ in a variety of ways.

In Algeria, the teachers' experience, training, the level of English proficiency, class size, weekly allotted time and the methodology used may interfere in the teaching-learning process. However, successful teachers might be characterized by these common things:

- a. Have a practical command of English, not only a mastery of its grammatical rules and patterns;
- b. Use a lot of English in all classes, including beginner classes;
- c. Think mostly in terms of learner practice, not teacher explanations;
- d. Devote enough time for communicative activities, not just practice of language forms;
- e. Prioritizing the learners' needs and not just finishing the syllabus or course book.

Nevertheless, students should be aware of the importance of studying English, not only as a subject matter, but as a source of constructing knowledge in order to feel success in English language learning. Besides, no long-term objectives are made explicit in the designed syllabuses. In Algeria, there's no such compatibility between the general teaching objectives and the pedagogical methods of instruction. The aim of most English teaching courses is to ideally develop a general command of genuine English for real use in external and authentic settings. In many Algerian contexts, however, factors such as lack of time and excessive class size make this aim difficult to attain. It is obvious that using English as the main language of instruction can be a positive, but demanding experience for both non-native teachers and their students.

#### **2.4 The English Language in Algeria: Status and Legacy**

The English language has a high status in Algeria especially among the well-educated people and in the field of tourism, which has become in vogue in recent years.

Kachru (1992) – cited in Schaub (2000) – highlights that the status of English in Third World countries indicates that though Algeria is not in the “Expanding Circle” of countries in which English is becoming a universal second language, there are a number of fields, such as medicine, higher education or tourism where English serves as a first language of communication between natives of the country.

A variety of groups in Algeria are highly motivated to learn English today. These groups study English as a school subject or take courses in English language centers which are found all over the country in the hope of finding good jobs in foreign firms or banks operating in Algeria. These institutions hold similar conditions for applicants, i.e., are good in English language. Good English learners also find it easy to get a job in the tourism industry both locally and abroad. At a public level, English is largely used in hotels, restaurants, museums, tourist sites and the tourism industry. Such a growing zeal to learn English reflects a deep concern about the importance and popularity of English in Algeria as well as the positive attitudes towards English in our country. Again, in pre-university education, English is taught in seven grades. At all grades, students receive six lessons per week, one hour a lesson. English is a requirement to join or pass, based on local university policy, any post-graduate university course. In addition, all PhD dissertations, if not written in English, should devote a chapter of the research work in English.

In the private sector, English is gaining more popularity. In most private schools and developing institutions, English is the means of instruction. Besides, English courses are offered to the public through university community service centers, the British council, the British Embassy, the American Embassy and authorized English language centers, private tuition and other organisms. Actually, the English language serves various purposes in Algeria. It was maintained by Schaub (2000) that the English language in Third World countries has several functions including instrumental and regulative functions. As far as the instrumental function is concerned, most faculties in the Algerian universities demand some English and it is the means of instruction in some professional schools of science, medicine, engineering and the like. English has also some regulative functions in international conferences such as the annual CDELT (Centre for Developing English Language Teaching)

and the conference on the teaching of English in Africa and the Middle East which is introduced and organized in the English language.

## **2.5 Overview of the 'LMD' Educational System**

An immense quantitative development of higher education in Algeria has been witnessed the last few decades. This development was important in both human and material resources and was followed by a series of problems which led to a gradual decadence of the teaching-learning quality at universities. Besides, there was a serious gap between the university products, the demands of the market and the social expectations. This fact indicated the inefficiency of the old educational system implemented in the Algerian universities since the independence. The classical system, i.e., four years bachelor, two years magister - four years doctorate, did not seem to respond to the main challenges imposed by the new economy, of politics and society in Algeria, an important partner of many European countries. The changing situation led the Algerian government and education policy makers to reconsider the educational system and try to integrate a new system that may respond to socio-economic demands, necessary for progress and development. In fact, an attempt was made to implement the European educational system known as LMD – Licence-Master-Doctorat in 2004.

The adoption of this system was meant to provide possibilities and real opportunities for both teachers and learners to become involved in the training process. Teachers and learners have the chance to training on an active pedagogical basis and can effectively take part in this training. Thus, extra work and training have taken place in the form of supplementary activities and intensive research projects.

Reflecting upon this system, one may understand that the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education had to rely on the innovative methods of the linguistic competence. In order to make the LMD system more efficient, several measures should be taken at the level of



curriculum design and integration. Within this process, achievement may rely on the following perspectives:

- Planning and evaluation of the students' needs in connection with the socioeconomic market;
- The development of multimedia when learning or teaching oral expression and vocabulary;
- The encouragement of learners' mobility;
- Building cooperative ties between universities, sharing the same objectives and interests;
- Registering students' propositions by creating special cells and audits;
- Implementing within students a love of the English language and learning.

From another perspective, The LMD system attempts to attain a set of objectives set by the Ministry of Higher Education (2003). These essential principles underline the vision of the task, and they can be summarized as follows:

- Ensuring a high teaching quality according to the social demand; in terms of access to higher education;
- Creating a harmony with the socio-economic development in all possible interactions between the university and the world;
- Enhancing openness to the global developments, particularly in science and technology;
- Fostering and tolerating international cooperation and diversity;
- Setting the platform and rudiments of good ruling based on participation and consultation.

Contrastively, however, other teachers and experts do not seem to admit the suitability of the LMD regime in the Algerian settings. They believe that there is no such a harmony between the ideals of the regime and its applicability in the socio-economic life. Thus, the limitations of the system can be summed up in the following points:

- The educational programs no longer meet the new socio-economic demands;
- The failure rate is due primarily to uncertainty about the future among learners;

- Learning and teaching demotivation among teachers and students;
- Centralized management of the university.

On a contrary basis, all these claims were met by an official response by Mr Haraoubia (2013), Minister of Higher Education, confirming that those stating that the LMD system has failed did not understand the real content of this system until today.

## **2.6 Overview of Features and Objectives of the LMD System**

It remains salient to consider the objectives of this newly adopted system and present the three constituent elements of the system. The LMD system is composed of the Licence degree, the equivalence of the BA (Bachelor Degree), with 6 semesters (three years of study) and then a Master degree for two years (4 semesters) and finally, the Doctorate degree for three years of research (6 semesters).

In the “Licence” degree, students need to attend 400 hours within six semesters. New modular courses have been added in this stage to give students much choice when moving to the second phase of the system (i.e., the Master Degree).

The LMD system is based on “Teaching Units” which students should accumulate at the end of each semester. Furthermore, “Credits” are elements which mean that if students do not get the needed credits for the first semester, they may pass to the second semester with the credits got in the first. Nonetheless, they remain indebted even if they pass to the second year, thus, they should gather these lacking credits at the end. From another angle, this system is based on a number of new elements as put in the table below.

**Table 2.1 The LMD system features and objectives (taken from “Guide d’Information sur le Système LMD, 2005”.**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Aim</b>
Semestrialisation	For a better organization and more flexibility in the system, the division is based on semesters rather than years of training
The Teaching Units	The teaching process is based on units:
	Fundamental Unit: where the basic subjects are grouped;
	Methodological Unit: which is primarily destined to prepare learners to acquire skills in methodology;
	Discovery Unit: where students can get acquainted with new subjects in new fields;
	Transversal Unit: it aims at the mastery of French, as a first foreign language, for communication purposes.
Credits	Each Teaching unit corresponds to a number of credits that can be capitalized and transferred.
Domains	They cover many coherent disciplines including other subjects that lead to other specialties and particular options proposed to the students.
	continued
Tutoring	This is a new pedagogical activity for the teacher, introduced in LMD system. This element permits direct relation between the teacher and the student outside the academic sessions, i.e., the teacher-learner interaction becomes easier and closer.

As mentioned above, the aim behind modifying teaching in our educational system, at the university level, is to create an overall innovation within the Algerian universities and to permit learners follow the flow of technological growth to keep pace with the world’s rapid changes in education and other fields of social life. Now, with reference to language teaching, it is meant to be one of the foundations of the global enterprise of higher educational programs in the coming times.

## **2.7 Overview of the English Department and EFL Curriculum**

The department of English is located at the faculty of Letters and Languages, University of Batna. Historically, the National Institute of Foreign Languages and Letters was founded in 1988, and in 1995, the Institute of Foreign Languages became autonomous comprising two sections: French & English. In 1998, an endeavor was held to adopt faculties, thus, the faculty of Letters and Human Sciences was established. However, in 2010, a decision was

made to split the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences into two sub-faculties, namely, the faculty of Human and Social Sciences and the faculty of Letters and Languages to where the department of English belongs. The faculty of Letters and Languages consists of three sections, notably English, French, and Arabic Letters. As far as the application of the LMD system, it was till 2007, that it was introduced in the French department. Subsequently, in 2008, it was the turn of the English department to launch it.

Enrolled students come from different parts of the country and also from abroad, and they are Baccalaureate holders from three different streams; Life and Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Humanities and foreign Languages. The task of the English department is to prepare students for the 'Licence degree', equivalent to the 'B.A' in the Anglo-Saxon system of education. The time spent for this purpose in the LMD system is three years, during which the learners are presented with the necessary knowledge needed, consolidating their linguistic knowledge already acquired before.

During the three years, students are intended to gain complete knowledge in courses of Grammar, Written Production (TPE), Oral Production (TPO), Phonetics/Phonology and other subject matters such as Linguistics, Literature, Anglo-Saxon Civilization and Culture, ICT, TEFL, Research Methodology, Pragmatics, Psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics as compulsory areas. The following tables- in French version- show the modules taught during the three years of instruction, i.e., six training semesters along with credits, coefficient, time allotted as well as the mode of evaluation.

**Table 2.2 First year instruction modules in EFL (Semester one)**

Unités d'enseignements	Matières			Volume horaire hebdomadaire			VHS (15 semaines)	Autre	Mode d'évaluation	
	Intitulé			cours	TD	TP			C C	Examen
UE Fondamentale Crédits : 10 Coefficients : 06	Compréhension et expression écrite 1	6	4		4h30		67h30	45h00	50%	50%
	Compréhension et expression orale 1	4	2		3h00		45h00	45h00	50%	50%
UE Fondamentale Crédits : 08 Coefficients : 04	Grammaire de la langue d'étude 1	4	2		3h00		45h00	45h00	50%	50%
	Phonétique corrective et articulatoire 1	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%
	Initiation à la linguistique 1 (concepts)	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%
UE Fondamentale Crédits : 04 Coefficients : 02	Initiation aux textes littéraires	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%
	Culture/civilisation de la langue 1	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%
U E Méthodologique Crédits : 04 Coefficients : 01	Technique du travail universitaire 1	4	1		3h00		45h00	45h00	100%	
U E Découverte Crédits : 02 Coefficients : 01	Sciences sociales et humaines 1	2	1	1h30			22h30	45h00		100%
UE Transversale Crédits : 02 Coefficients : 01	Langues étrangères 1	2	1		1h30		22h30	45h00	50%	50%
Total semestre 1		30	51	1h30	21h00		337h30	450h00		

**Table 2.3 First year instruction modules in EFL (Semester two)**

Unités d'enseignements	Matières			Volume horaire hebdomadaire			VHS (15 semaines)	Autre	Mode d'évaluation	
	Intitulé			cours	TD	TP			C C	Examen
UE Fondamentale Crédits : 10 Coefficients : 06	Compréhension et expression écrite 2	6	4		4h30		67h30	45h00	50%	50%
	Compréhension et expression orale 2	4	2		3h00		45h00	45h00	50%	50%
UE Fondamentale Crédits : 08 Coefficients : 04	Grammaire de la langue d'étude 2	4	2		3h00		45h00	45h00	50%	50%
	Phonétique corrective et articulatoire 2	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%
	Initiation à la linguistique 2 (concepts)	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%

UE Fondamentale Crédits : 04 Coefficients : 02	Littérature de la langue d'étude 1	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%
	Culture/civilisation de la langue 2	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%
U E Méthodologique Crédits : 04 Coefficients : 01	Technique du travail universitaire 2	4	1		3h00		45h00	45h00	100%	
U E Découverte Crédits : 02 Coefficients : 01	Sciences sociales et humaines 2	2	1	1h30			22h30	45h00		100%
UE Transversale Crédits : 02 Coefficients : 01	Langues étrangères <sup>2</sup>	2	1		1h30		22h30	45h00	50%	50%
Total semestre 2		30	15	1h30	21h00		337h30	450h00		

**Table 2.4 Second year instruction modules in EFL (Semester three)**

Unités d'enseignements	Matières Intitulé			Volume horaire hebdomadaire			VHS (15 semaines)	Autre	Mode d'évaluation	
				cours	TD	TP			C C	Examen
UE Fondamentale Crédits : 10 Coefficients : 06	Compréhension et expression écrite 3	6	4		4h30		67h30	45h00	50%	50%
	Compréhension et expression orale 3	4	2		3h00		45h00	45h00	50%	50%
UE Fondamentale Crédits : 08 Coefficients : 04	Grammaire de la langue d'étude 3	4	2		3h00		45h00	45h00	50%	50%
	Phonétique corrective et articulatoire 3	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%
	Introduction à la linguistique 1	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%
UE Fondamentale Crédits : 04 Coefficients : 02	Littérature de la langue d'étude 2	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%
	Culture/civilisation de la langue 3	2	1		1h30		22h00	45h00	50%	50%

U E Méthodologique Crédits : 02 Coefficients : 01	Technique du travail universitaire 3	2	1		1h30		45h00	45h00	100%	
U E Découverte Crédits : 04 Coefficients : 01	Initiation à la traduction 1	4	1		3h00		22h30	45h00	50%	50%
UE Transversale Crédits : 02 Coefficients : 01	Langues étrangères3	2	1		1h30		22h30	45h00	50%	50%
Total semestre 3		30	15		22h30		315h00	450h00		

**Table 2.5 Second year instruction modules in EFL (Semester four)**

Unités d'enseignements	Matières Intitulé			Volume horaire hebdomadaire			VHS (15 semaines)	Autre	Mode d'évaluation	
				cours	TD	TP			C C	Examen
UE Fondamentale Crédits : 10 Coefficients : 06	Compréhension et expression écrite 4	6	4		4h30		67h30	45h00	50%	50%
	Compréhension et expression orale 4	4	2		3h00		45h00	45h00	50%	50%
UE Fondamentale Crédits : 08 Coefficients : 04	Grammaire de la langue d'étude 4	4	2		3h00		45h00	45h00	50%	50%
	Phonétique corrective et articulatoire 4	2	1		1h30		22h30	45h00	50%	50%
	Introduction à la linguistique 2	2	1		1h30		22h30	45h00	50%	50%
UE Fondamentale Crédits : 04 Coefficients : 02	Littérature de la langue d'étude 2	2	1		1h30		22h30	45h00	50%	50%
	Culture/civilisation de la langue 4	2	1		1h30		22h30	45h00	50%	50%
U E Méthodologique Crédits : 02 Coefficients : 01	Technique du travail universitaire 4	2	1		1h30		22h30	45h00	100%	
U E Découverte Crédits : 04	Initiation à la traduction 2	4	1		3h00		45h00	45h00	50%	50%

Coefficients : 01										
UE Transversale Crédits : 02 Coefficients : 02	Langues étrangères <sup>4</sup>	1	1		1h30		22h30	45h00	50%	50%
	Technologies de l'information et de la communication 1	1	1		1h30		22h30	45h00	50%	50%
Total semestre 4		30	16		22h30		360h00	450h00		

**Table 2.6 Third year instruction modules in EFL (Semester five and six)**

Unité d'Enseignement	VHS	V.H hebdomadaire				Coeff	Crédits	Mode d'évaluation	
	14-16 sem	C	TD	TP	Autres			CC	Examen
UE fondamentales									
UEF1 (O/P)									
Matière 1	Linguistique	1h30	1h30	/	/	3	4	50%	50%
Matière2	Etude de textes littéraires	1h30	1h30	/	/	3	4	50%	50%
Matière 3	Etude de textes de civilisation	1h30	1h30	/	/	3	4	50%	50%
UEF2 (O/P)									
Matière 1	Compréhension et production écrite	/	1h30	/	/	2	2	100%	/
Matière2	Compréhension et production orale	/	1h30	/	/	2	2	100%	/
Matière 3	Traduction et interprétariat	/	1h30	/	/	2	2	100%	/
UEF3 (O/P)									
Matière 1	Introduction à la didactique	1h30	/	/	/	1	2	/	100%
Matière2	Introduction aux langues de spécialités	/	1h30	/	/	1	2	100%	/
UE méthodologie									
UEM1 (O/P)									
Matière 1	Techniques de recherche	/	1h30	/	/	2	4	100%	/
UE découverte									
UED1 (O/P)									



Matière 1	Psychologie cognitive / Sciences de la communication	1h30	/	/	/	1	2	/	100%
UE transversales									
UET1 (O/P)									
Matière 1	Langue(s) nationale(s) / Langues étrangères	1h30	/	/	/	1	2		100%
Total Semestre 5		09h0 0	12h0 0	/	/	21	30		

Throughout the third year, students are meant to be focused on language studies as a single, available type of Licence degree. Besides, they are expected to write an extended essay ‘memoir’ or undergo teacher training sessions which are complemented by a pedagogical training report. The Licence degree opens door for students to move to the degree of ‘Master’ within two years and ‘Doctorate’ within three years.

Concerning the curriculum, each teacher is provided with specific pedagogical guidelines for each module, and it is up to him to sketch out the content of the modular course according to his students’ needs and contextual requirements.

First-year English syllabus seems to be mostly based on a fundamental skill-based programme, i.e., the focus is on the language skills. As far as the role of teachers is concerned, one can notice that another contribution the LMD system makes in the universities is the new roles of teachers and students in the teaching-learning process. In this respect, the recent pedagogical procedures, resulting from the many reflections, tend to transform the student, the docile and passive object into a principal and active agent in the learning process.

Consequently, the role of teachers has been modified for the expedient that it meets the freedom given and prescribed for the learner. Thus, teachers need to accept now their role as mediators, facilitators of the knowledge as well as the learning processes. It follows that teachers are no longer the only exclusive holders of knowledge. They are meant to master not

only the discipline they teach, but also the methodological competencies that allow them to clearly define the objectives of the learning process as well as the referential of the competence on which the control of the learning process is based. What is more troubling, at this level, is the reaction of teachers, who display a considerable effort in making innovations and constructing formation proposals, but they seldom worry about the questions related to pedagogical practices, particularly those related to the evaluation of their learners.

In spite of the necessity to innovate the contents of formation and teaching, the demand of a new vision of the pedagogical act is essential and indispensable. This vision has to integrate the actual realities into the considerable increasing of knowledge. Strictly speaking, here there appears the concern of this study.

## **Conclusion**

This second chapter introduced the context of the study. It started by giving background information about the philosophy of the Algerian educational system. This was followed by a description of the structure and organization of the school system in Algeria. Then, the teaching of English in the Algerian context was outlined. The status of English language in Algeria was also presented. This was accompanied by an overview of the LMD educational system, its features and objectives. The chapter ends by providing background information about the English department as well as the content of EFL curriculum and its related material.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews relevant research literature. It starts with a theoretical framework about two models of teacher knowledge: the technical rationality model and the professional practical model. A review of related literature on teacher knowledge suggests that relevant studies focus on main issues: the content of teacher knowledge as well as the sources which contributed in shaping it, its relationship to classroom practice and how it is influenced by context. After establishing the conceptual framework of our study and defining related constructs, analytical frameworks to categorize the domains of teacher knowledge are presented and commented on, followed by research studies which explored the constituent areas of teacher knowledge. We have drawn insights from these works and related them to our study. We then reviewed the sources of teacher knowledge. This is followed by a part on the relationship between teacher knowledge and classroom practice.

We have presented a model which views teaching as a knowledge-based activity and as an act of common sense. This conscious act focuses on the moment of teaching and considers it as a smart behavior informed by a variety of inputs. This is accompanied by research works which explored the relationship between knowledge and practice in accordance with the notions of classroom decisions and practice as a physical proof of knowledge. We then reviewed evidence about the role of context in the actualisation of teacher knowledge in practice. The chapter concluded by presenting various theoretical impacts which frame the area of research on teacher cognition and how it is related to teacher knowledge.

### **3.1 Background Studies on the Teaching Profession**

Studies and research attempts on teaching have passed through a paradigmatic shift coupled with the cognitive movement. An intensive research on teacher knowledge, in the Canadian context, was done by Verloop et al. (2001), holding that the cognitive shift in research on student learning is followed by a shift in research on teaching. They reported saying: “*research on teaching changed from studying teacher behavior into studying teacher cognitions and beliefs underlying that behavior, based on ideas about the interaction between them*” (442). They also indicate the effect of this shift on the re-conceptualization of the research concern with teaching. They further add:

*The most challenging question with respect to teacher professionalism is no longer how we can best provide teachers with insights developed elsewhere, but how the process of “dialogue with the situation” takes place in a teaching context, which insights are developed in this context, and how these insights relate to insights from other sources (442-443).*

The shift in concentration on learning, teaching, and teacher knowledge took place after grasping the limitations of the behaviorist movement which was very influential throughout the first part of the twentieth century, and the resulting technical rationality model of teaching and teacher education and development.

It is stressed by Johnson (1999) that despite the fact that much of teacher knowledge about teaching comes from their real life experiences inside and outside the classroom, this knowledge is considered, by the long dominating view in educational research, as something that was almost external to the teacher.

### **3.2 Accounting for the Technical Rationalistic Model**

This model is viewed as the product of behaviorism. It is maintained by Hiebert et al. (2002) that viewing teacher knowledge in terms of technical rationality goes back to the behaviorist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. They further indicate that

proponents of the behaviorist movement viewed that scientific research evidence should guide practice. The movement borrowed methods from physical sciences, with an emphasis on objective methods to measure and isolate variables, and to compare quantitative results. However, as believed by Biesta (2007), the introduction of the technical model from other domains, such as medicine in which research evidence-based practice was initially developed, to be used and applied to education overlooks the different meanings of evidence in these domains and their differing nature from that of education.

The fact is that the reliance on research evidence alone to guide educational practice neglects educational professionals the right to provide judgments. Evidence could be useful to guide a teacher to alternative courses of action. However, the choice of the most appropriate alternative remains the domain of the professional who needs to make an informed decision based on an awareness of the context and various motives underlying the teaching moment. This argument sounds compatible with what is suggested by Hiebert et al. (2002) who argue for a knowledge base for teaching, which is underpinned in practice. They highlight two negative consequences of the technical rationalistic model on education. First, many teachers found the knowledge produced through this model difficult to apply in their particular contexts. Second, the construction of professional knowledge became the province of researchers whereas applying the knowledge was left to practitioners.

Thus, the technical rationality model has reduced the role of teachers as practical theorizers. This idea is supported by Kumaravadivelu (2003) who wrote about macro-strategies for language teachers, especially in the EFL contexts. He holds that the technical view of teaching and teacher education diminishes the role of teachers who have to carry on their mission with what they are given, regardless of context, experience or reflection issues.

Besides, the technical rationalistic model could also be criticized for being too simplistic. This approach considers teaching as a craft that can be broken down into a set of skills by

which teachers could be educated. However, one cannot look upon all teaching as skills or competencies.

This approach is criticized by Hegarty (2000) believing that it *“leads to an impoverished notion of teaching which reduces it to the unreflective application of rules devoid of insight and creativity”* (456).

In adopting such a view, the particularity of the teaching situation is denied. It is argued by Schon (1983) that teachers carry on their packages in *“swampy lowland where situations are confusing messes incapable of technical solution”* (42).

So, the technical rationality model does not only undervalue the context-specific nature of teaching, but also its practicality. Researchers like Hegarty (2000) send warning as to the great care which must be taken in using formal knowledge resulting from research studies and the claims made for it because of the limited utility on their own to the work of practitioners.

On a similar basis, Hiebert et al. (2002) indicate how research on teaching, which splits off certain features of teaching, is of limited use to the work of teachers. They hold: *“the knowledge produced by these studies often is not immediately useful for teachers because it is the interaction among the features of teaching, not their effects in isolation that give teaching its meaning and character”* (8). The lack of relevance of research knowledge to real classroom practice is also criticized by these researchers. They admit: *“in spite of the continuing efforts of researchers, archived research knowledge has had little effect on the improvement of practice in the average classroom”* (3).

This same view is also supported by Verloop et al. (2001) saying that *“the research led to very few generalizable results”* (442). It is also maintained that looking for effective variables, which contain teaching behavior, might result in a loss of sight of the interdependence and complexity of the teacher’s behavior as a whole.

Educational theory has a role to play in the work of teachers. Nevertheless, one cannot think of the relationship between theory and practice as being always straightforward. Besides, theory is often generated in a specific context and cannot be merely overgeneralized to all teaching settings.

Clearly enough, the technicist approach to teacher knowledge does not admit the multiplicity of dimensions of the teaching profession and thus overlooks the process by confining to teachers the course of action they are supposed to take. This goes in agreement with what Hegarty (2000) believes, saying:

*Teaching draws on a multiplicity of cognitive, affective and interpersonal elements. To appreciate fully the challenge of teaching excellence, we have to bear in mind not only the extraordinary diversity of these elements but also the many different ways that teachers can draw on them to construct teaching behavior (451).*

However, the adoption of the technical approach makes teaching, as Doyle (1990) believes, no more than a monotonous practice done by teachers with no significant value for teachers' wisdom of practice. Besides, the key to professional development and wisdom is through talk, discussion and reflection on what teachers do. Therefore, teachers do not really need to be told what to do, but they are the ones able to decide for themselves according to their own situations, conditions and context of work. By granting such options, teachers can transform their thoughts into planned actions.

In practical terms, these working plans can prove their success or failure within a repeated cycle, thus, new insights can be generated, and teachers can become creative professionals. According to Hargreaves (1998), telling teachers what to do and apply theories and insights provided by others is a challenge to their intellectual status as creative professionals.

A further criticism of technical knowledge, when informing the teacher's work, is that it is not potentially transferable. This idea is emphasized by Troudi (2005) believing that it is not

always clear how the technical knowledge can be transferred into practical knowledge that teachers can employ in their classes. This is in addition to the limitation that technical knowledge, yielded by research studies, is not easily accessible to all teachers.

Researchers like Hiebert et al. (2002) point out that *“teachers rarely draw from a shared knowledge base to improve their practice. They do not routinely locate and translate research-based knowledge to inform their efforts”* (3).

Similarly, it is maintained by Tsui (2003) that teachers cannot simply apply research-based theories to solve problematic issues because practical problems are evasive and context-based. Besides, teachers need to identify the problem by making sense of situations that are ill-defined, messy, and full of expectations. Problems are generally seen as unique in nature, so teachers cannot solve them by relying on established strategies and theories, though these might be helpful.

Overall, the technical rationality model of teacher knowledge is extremely criticized for diminishing the experiential, practical, contextual, situational and idiosyncratic layers of teaching. It fails to consider teachers as active agents in the profession. In addition, it underestimates the practicality and particularity of teaching as well as the teachers' potentials of practice. This is in addition to the nature of the technicist knowledge as being not readily transferrable. What we also notice about the technical model of teacher knowledge is that it fails to account for teacher knowledge as constructed by the teacher through dependency on experience.

Teacher knowledge could not be readily transferrable in the sense described by the technical model. Before formal knowledge is schematized by the teacher, it has to be cognitively filtered by this individual teacher. Therefore, it may be constructed differently since individuals possess different interpretive faculties and lens by which they see the world.

In addition, formal or propositional knowledge about teaching represents only a part of



what a teacher knows because many other teaching aspects are contextual and remain to be discovered. It follows that providing teachers with dictated knowledge deprives them of the chance to build their own realm of knowledge and practice, forming, thus, new visions from the interaction with the teaching settings. An alternative paradigm or model which gives rise to the practicality of the teaching situation is discussed hereafter.

### **3.3 Accounting for the Professional, Practical Knowledge Model**

The part that follows reinforces the argument made earlier about the sophistication of teaching as well as what it informs. This adopted model provides an opposing argument for the criticisms addressed to the technical rationalistic model. The main argument here is that the knowledge underlying the teachers' work is not what "works" or will "work", but what "worked" in a specific context from the viewpoint of expert and novice teachers. Besides, the professional practical model of teacher knowledge emphasizes knowledge which is built by the practicing teacher and resulting from the interaction with the teaching context. It is worth noting that this knowledge incorporates some aspects of beliefs and values. This knowledge is mainly built through experience and is modeled by the context of teaching. This model is required to avoid the separation between the generation and application of knowledge held by the technical rationalistic model. This argument is theoretically-grounded. It is articulated by researchers like Gibbens, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott, Trow (1994) and others that the practical knowledge of teaching is trans-disciplinary and is forged ahead by the problem to be solved with the social context as an integral part of the problem conception.

Following this, the model of professional practical knowledge gives rise to teaching as being context-specific. It is argued by Hegarty (2000) that educational *"research which is concerned with knowledge produced and valued in a practical classroom context as opposed to theoretical knowledge associated with child development and psychology is more likely to commend itself to educators"* (455-456). He further holds that:

*Defining and pursuing inquiries in a trans-disciplinary way, where the key driver is the underlying problem and disciplinary inputs have a place only to the extent that they illuminate the problem, stand a better chance of producing knowledge that can be used by the classroom teacher than university-based, discipline bound research (456).*

This indicates that experiencing with the teaching situation could result in insights which are intrinsic to the conduct of teaching. Hegarty (2000) calls for a model of practical knowledge from which teachers generate the insights which shape their teaching behavior, and consequently empower teachers as professionals. He admits that *“if the model is accepted, researchers' contribution to teachers' professional development is conceptualized in terms of enhancing the knowledge base from which teachers generate the insights which shape their teaching behavior” (464).*

Such a view to teacher knowledge supports teachers as knowledge producers, which is a core and distinctive purpose of education (Hegarty, 2000). It overcomes the limitation of the technical, rationalistic model of viewing teachers as consumers of knowledge. In a similar way, Schon (1983) holds that teachers, through their informed involvement in the principles, practices, and processes of classroom instruction, can bring about fresh and fruitful perspectives to the complexities of teaching that cannot be matched by experts who are far removed from classroom realities. He argues that the most suitable methods teachers rely on to manage the problems of everyday teaching are *“experience, trial and error, intuition, and muddling through” (43)*. Teachers deal with human beings not machines. They are acquainted, based on their experience, with their students and the context in which they work. This knowledge, which is practical, could inform their practice and justifies their judgment. Schon adds that it is the teachers' own reflection in and on action, and not total reliance on professional experts that will help them to identify and meet the challenges they face in their everyday teaching practice.

When accounting for the practical, contextual and experiential dimensions of teaching, it is made clear that professional, practical knowledge is different from technical knowledge. It is clarified by Hiebert et al. (2002) that teachers have a special form of knowledge different from that produced by educationalists and researchers, in that the former being detailed, concrete, and specific as a result of being generated from and oriented towards practice, whereas the latter is more abstract because it is intended to be applied to a wider variety of potential problems.

Such a model of professional practical knowledge, instead of focusing on technical notions of teacher knowledge, gives rise to the trans-disciplinary nature of teacher knowledge. It acknowledges teaching as a context-based activity. It also recognizes the experiential nature of the teacher's work. It is through experience with the teaching situations that teachers could yield insights which shape their teaching behavior. Thus, this model empowers teachers as producers rather than consumers of knowledge. The role of research with regard to teacher knowledge becomes the enhancement of the knowledge produced through dialogic engagement with practicing teachers to reveal the hidden side of the work and how it shapes practice.

This model is going to serve as the conceptual framework for the current study. This is because of its emphasis on understanding and enhancing the role of the teacher. It also acknowledges the role of context and experience in shaping the teacher's knowledge and practice. The model is also suitable because teachers in Algeria, especially EFL experienced ones; construct most of their professional knowledge from experience and interaction with the context in which they work.

This is supported by Gahin (2001). Based on his study of EFL teachers in the Third World context, he believes that *“teachers do not count on the theoretical knowledge they were exposed to in their education programs. Rather, they believe in what is workable in their*

*classrooms*” (282). This indicates that the professional knowledge of EFL experienced teachers in Algeria is practically-shaped.

### **3.4 Definition of Concepts as Employed in the Study**

#### **3.4.1 The Concept of Knowledge**

The term knowledge in the current study is viewed broadly to incorporate aspects of beliefs and values. This definition is similar to BAK (Beliefs, Assumptions & Knowledge). These three concepts represent a continuum in which assumptions are based on beliefs and knowledge is based on both assumptions and beliefs.

The term “knowledge” is used in this particular way to allow teachers to talk about a broad range of ideas, views, intuitions, memories, awareness, insights, understanding, beliefs and values. It is appropriate to use the term “knowledge” in this broad way because the differences among the terms “knowledge”, “beliefs”, “conceptions” and “intuitions” may not be clear in the minds of teachers who might use them interchangeably.

A great deal of literature, concerned with teacher knowledge, uses this broad conceptualization of the term “knowledge”. For example, Verloop et al. (2001) use the label “teacher knowledge” as an encompassing, inclusive concept of a bunch of teacher cognitions. The term is also used by Johnson (1999) to include experiential and professional knowledge that shapes teacher reasoning and is embedded in classroom practice. Other researchers, such as Elbaz (1981), Turner-Bisset (1997), Mayer & Marland (1997), Golombek (1998), Meijer et al. (1999, 2001), Gatbonton (1999), Johnston & Goettsch( 2000),Tsang (2004), Mullock (2006) and Xu & Liu (2009), use the term “knowledge” in relation to the cognitive bases underlying teachers’ work.

#### **3.4.2 The Concept of Belief**

In our study, beliefs are considered part of knowledge because of the interrelatedness of

the two concepts and the difficulty to trace where knowledge ends and beliefs begin. Existential presuming and evaluative and emotional weight are referred to by Pajares (1992) as two features characterizing beliefs. Existential presumptions are perceived as unalterable entities that exist beyond individual control or knowledge. People have belief in them because they are omnipresent. In addition, beliefs have stronger affective and evaluative components than knowledge and this feeling is typical and operates independently of cognition associated with knowledge. Again it is argued by Pajares (1992) that what is missing from these conceptualizations is that cognitive knowledge must also have its own affective and evaluative component because knowledge cannot exist in the absence of assessment or judgment. Due to these complications, beliefs, which could be equivalent to values, judgments, axioms, opinions, perceptions, conceptions, personal theories, internal mental processes, practical principles, perspectives and repertoires of understanding are all inclusive in the term “knowledge” in our study.

### **3.4.3 The Concept of Expertise**

If teacher knowledge, in our study, is viewed in its broadest sense to include knowledge, skills, processes and readiness essential for good teaching, it becomes salient to adopt a knowledge-based paradigm of expertise. Expert teachers, according to Turner-Bisset (2001), are those who work towards a state of expertise, towards mastery of all sorts of knowledge, skills and processes needed for expert teaching.

Some of the most common criteria used in identifying expert teachers include their reputation (amongst peers and administrators) and their performance as observed in the classroom, such a view is supported by Mullock (2003) and other researchers. Experience is another factor used in the identification of expert teachers. Five years of experience, according to Westerman (1991), are considered as the demarcating time by which expertise may develop. Although experience and expertise may not always go together, experience is

seen as the most important prerequisite for the development of expertise (Gage & Berliner, 1998). All these parameters were observed in the present study, which acknowledges the role of teacher knowledge in the development of expertise.

### **3.5 Comprehensible Frameworks for Assorting Teacher Knowledge**

Despite the fact that various areas of teacher knowledge are interwoven in practice, some categorizing parameters are used to draw a picture of the various domains of teacher knowledge informing the teacher's work. This part reviews three analytical frameworks, which are commented on and related to the current study.

One way to categorize the domains of teacher knowledge is to do it in relation to the disciplines of knowledge thought to be relevant to the teachers' work. An example is given by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) about the content of this knowledge for teaching provided to novice teachers of English as a second language. It consists primarily of the general theories and research-based findings on a wide range of foundational and applied topics that together constitute the basic domains of knowledge about teaching. By this, they refer to formal knowledge. They propose eight domains as constituents of a knowledge base for the teaching profession. These include:

1. Knowledge about subject matter or content;
2. Knowledge about the disciplinary foundations of education;
3. Human development and learners;
4. Classroom management;
5. Pedagogy;
6. Assessment;
7. The cultural and social contexts of teaching and learning; and
8. Knowledge about teaching as a profession.

Such a classification is based on the structural divisions of teacher education institutions

providing teacher education training. However, this categorization of teacher knowledge yields serious preoccupations. The components of this disciplinary structure are not intrinsic to the conduct of teaching as they exist and develop in their own right and their relationship to education is necessarily indirect. It is believed by Hegarty (2000) that these domains are separate from each other and each of them provides valuable insights that inform the practice of teaching, yet they tend to do so in an atomistic and partial way with no systematic means of combining different understandings within a common framework. Similarly, Tsui (2003) maintains that the discipline approach to categorizing teacher knowledge results in a hierarchical separation between the underlying principles of teaching and teaching practice although this separation is not so discernible in the work of teachers.

It is thought that instead of viewing teacher knowledge in relation to the disciplinary structures, other models suggest classifications related to the practice of teaching. Two models which have informed our study will be thus reviewed. The first is the pioneer work of Lee Shulman (1987) which has been followed by several studies in the area of teacher knowledge for more than thirty years. The second model is an adaptation of the original list provided by Shulman. It was initiated by Turner-Bisset (1997) and elaborated in her subsequent model (1999) and (2001). The act of putting teacher knowledge into categories was based on the belief that there exists a knowledge base for teaching or, as Shulman (1987) holds - a codified aggregation of knowledge. Shulman (1987) suggests a least number of seven categories to teacher knowledge. These are:

- 1- Knowledge about content;
- 2- General pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization which appear to go beyond subject matter;

- 3- Knowledge about curriculum, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as means of the profession for teachers;
- 4- Knowledge about pedagogical content, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding;
- 5- Knowing about learners and their characteristic features;
- 6- Knowing about educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of institutions, to the character of communities and cultures; and finally,
- 7- Knowledge about educational ends, purposes, values, and their philosophical and historical grounds.

Indeed, the work of Shulman motivated several researchers to conduct research studies attempting to set the content of teachers' knowledge either in general education or in the EFL context. The authentic model suggested by Shulman (1987) was then adapted and elaborated. Turner-Bisset (1999), in the British context, has developed a model of teacher knowledge bases (1999) from analyzing interview and observation data of post graduate primary teachers in training. The model she provides is more comprehensive than Shulman's original list of knowledge bases for teaching. She added knowledge of self as a significant domain, which is not included in the model provided by Shulman. She also added knowledge of models of teaching as a component domain. She also specified which areas of knowledge are included under each domain. Thus, her model is expanded to nine instead of seven domains. These are: subject matter knowledge, curriculum knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of models of teaching, knowledge of learners, knowledge of self, knowledge of educational contexts, knowledge of educational ends, and pedagogical content knowledge. Thus, according to her model, knowledge about subject matter was divided into three sub-domains: substantive subject matter, syntactic subject matter, and beliefs about subject



matter.

These are all aspects of content knowledge. The substantive structure of a discipline consists of the facts and concepts of that discipline and its organizing frameworks, whereas syntactical knowledge is the ways and means by which the propositional knowledge can be generated and established. Beliefs about the subject were strictly considered as an aspect of knowledge about the subject matter itself. Regarding knowledge about curriculum, a broad conception of it, going beyond the materials and syllabi prescribed by the official authority, was adopted. According to Turner-Bisset, teachers should be able to evaluate curricular materials critically. Her argument is that it was inadequate for teachers to just rely on prescribed materials without judging whether they were really suitable for their purposes or meet the needs of their students.

As concerns knowledge of teaching models, it was viewed as visions and beliefs about the teaching job. What teachers hold as views and perceptions about the education processes affects the what and the how of their classroom practices. Thus, teacher knowledge is viewed by Turner-Bisset (1999), when this component is added to her model, as a broad conception that incorporates knowledge, beliefs, values and perceptions.

Regarding knowledge about students, two elements were emphasized: social knowledge and cognitive knowledge of learners. Social knowledge of learners included characteristics of age, classroom behavior, interests and preoccupations, social orientations, the effect of context on work and attitudes, and emphatically the nature of teacher-learners relationship. By considering cognitive knowledge of learners, it was found by Turner-Bisset that teachers could adjust what they know as well as the curriculum knowledge to meet the needs of specific learners, in specific situations. In addition, knowledge about the self was found to be a significant constituent which contributes to the development of self-image, leading to familiarity with the needs and requirements of the teaching profession. Knowledge

was also held to be an important indicator of self-reflection, which in turn influences the development and growth of teachers.

Again, the original list of Shulman did not include knowledge about the self, however, Turner-Bisset and other researchers, like Elbaz, (1981); Clandinin, (1989); and Richards (1996), considered it a significant basis for teaching.

Likewise, it is admitted by Richards (1996) that knowledge about the self is a determiner of the teacher's personal philosophy of teaching and also his view of what makes a good teacher. Also, knowledge about educational culminations, aims and values was considered a vital characteristic of teaching. Teaching is also seen as a purposeful activity both at the individual and societal levels.

Knowledge about content pedagogy is the ninth and last domain in the model developed by Turner-Bisset. For her, this knowledge domain was not just an amalgam of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge in the way conceptualized by Shulman (1987), but an overall knowledge base comprising all of the knowledge bases already described.

Conceptualizing pedagogical content knowledge in this broad way presents pedagogy in general terms to include, as indicated by Richards, Schmidt, Kendricks & Kim (2002), teaching theories, curriculum and material as well as the ways of planning and executing formal teaching and learning in educational institutions.

Now, regarding the knowledge model of expert teachers, provided by Turner-Bisset, we can draw some concluding points. This model helps a lot in understanding the complex and multi-layered act of teaching. However, we cannot consider the relationship between knowledge and practice as linear, in that a teaching situation is generally described as specific and practical in nature. Besides, this model presented domains of knowledge provided by Turner-Bisset (1999) in a study that dealt with a specific group of training teachers, teaching a given subject, in a specific context, which provides a comprehensive set of knowledge

domains for teaching, these emerged from her study (1997) of a particular group of student teachers in a particular context teaching a particular subject. Thus, her model cannot be adopted unless all these issues are considered. A further point is that her model dealt with training teachers, who were still training and learning about the teaching rudiments, thus, their articulated views about practice are not well founded and not experiential to the point of stating what good teaching requires.

However, the positive thing about the model presented by Turner-Bisset (1999) is that it is an empirical account of the teacher knowledge areas which are associated to what teachers do. The model also recognizes the knowledge brought by teachers as a result of their interaction with situation and teaching settings. This point has some implications to our study as we gain some insights of professional, practical knowledge and its construction.

The areas of subject matter, pedagogy, learners, learning context, curriculum and self were constructed as important areas of teacher knowledge. Therefore, these aspects could represent focal points in our study which is concerned with constructing the areas of teacher knowledge necessary for the realization of teaching.

The context of Bisset's is different from ours, in that her model relates to the UK context. Nonetheless, the areas revealed could represent a general framework for exploring the areas of teacher knowledge with a special concern about the particularity of the context of our work.

A further insight into the model of Turner-Bisset (1999) is the provision of justifications to view the knowledge areas as essential for the teacher's work. This lies at the core of reasoning which is, according to Fenstermacher (1994), a necessary notion in any research on teacher knowledge and practice. Therefore, her model does present the areas of teacher knowledge and a justification for their necessity. The model justifies also the significance of exploring teacher knowledge in accordance to teacher reasoning which is a striking aspect of

the teacher's professional life.

The view of Johnson (1999) holds that teacher knowledge combines a set of experiential and professional knowledge that shapes teachers' reasoning and is tacitly embodied in their classroom practices. This implies its importance when investigating teacher knowledge from the perspective of novice teachers who are in a position to reveal the knowledge underlying and informing their actions. Finally, the model highlights the role of experience in building up teacher knowledge. This implies the practical and experiential features of teacher knowledge; it has to be both experientially and practically guided and directed. Therefore, it could be anticipated that by studying teacher knowledge, we quickly associate it with teachers' practice which remains important in shaping and reshaping their knowledge.

### **3.6 Background Studies on Domains of Teacher Knowledge**

The models reviewed so far are useful, as general frameworks for the domains of teacher knowledge and the findings of research studies conducted in similar contexts to our study could generate useful insights into the content of teacher knowledge. This is the aim of reviewing studies which discuss ESL/EFL contexts that focus on the domains of teacher knowledge, showing the way they could inform our study.

Many attempts have been made to investigate the content of teacher knowledge from the experienced teachers' perspectives. The study of Golombek (1998) is one of these L2 attempts in education. Making use of reports and data drawn from classroom observations, interviews, and stimulated observations of two ESL secondary school teachers in the USA, the teachers' personal practical knowledge has been investigated. The two participants had extensive learning experiences in their secondary and postsecondary education and in natural settings outside the United States. They were teaching the second course in a series of three speaking and listening courses for international ESL students. She created four categories representing the content of the teachers' personal practical knowledge: knowledge about the

self, knowledge about subject matter, knowledge of instruction, and knowledge about context.

According to her, knowledge about the self could be viewed in terms of the identities to which the teachers referred when they rebuilt their experience, as, for example, a language learner, a teacher and a spouse. As concerns knowledge about subject matter, it holds the disciplinary knowledge that a teacher uses in the classroom. It is, in other terms, background information from readings, classes, peer teachers and other experiences that the teachers had filtered through their interpretive abilities to shape their understandings of ESL learning and teaching.

Furthermore, the established third domain of personal practical knowledge was knowledge about instruction, which represented the pedagogical knowledge her participants drew upon to teach and make sense of their teaching, such as lesson planning and interaction with learners.

The fourth knowledge domain concerned knowledge about context including institutional and socio-political setting along with the time, place, and actors within the settings. It is worth noting that Golombek (1998) admits that although the four categories described above help illustrate the personal practical knowledge of her subjects, they are neither a comprehensive nor a prescriptive view of what teachers really know.

Admittedly, the study of Golombek is insightful in many respects. It is inspiring in terms of the construct dealt with. Besides, referring to knowledge as both personal and practical indicates that teacher knowledge is unique and exceptional. It is viewed as idiosyncratic for the fact it is influenced by the individual teacher who builds it up. It is also created out of practice, hence, it is referred to as practical. The study is also insightful in terms of the methods used. Constructing teacher knowledge using classroom observation, interviews and stimulated recall data meets the personal and practical elements of teacher knowledge. This

means that these methods are suitable for studying the knowledge areas that underlie the teacher's job. This also indicates the need to explore teacher knowledge in relation to actual practice.

A further point has to do with the sources which shaped the areas of knowledge.

Although some differences could be marked between the above study and our own work, we saw it convenient to exploit these elements and adapt them as to fit the context of our study.

The present study attempted to survey and explore the views of all full-time EFL teachers, working in the department of English, at Batna University. Notably, the subjects of the study are different because the target sample in the work is EFL university teachers, teaching EFL students in a public university, under the LMD regime. Therefore, it might be clear that knowledge about curriculum, which was not revealed in the study of Golombek, could be part of the EFL teacher knowledge in the present work. There are other important areas of teacher knowledge which did not appear in Golombek's study, such as knowledge about content pedagogy as well as knowledge about learners.

In a Canadian context, Elbaz (1981) provided a more comprehensive model about the areas of an experienced English language teacher knowledge. The subject in her study had a considerable teaching experience of about ten years.

She had been working abroad and at her present school, teaching English literature and writing. She had been involved for a year in the development of a course in reading and information-getting skills for grade 10 students. Elbaz (1981) conducted her study on the basis of classroom observation and interview data, and then the practical knowledge of her participant was set in terms of five categories: knowledge about subject matter, curriculum, instruction, self, and the school environment.

The teacher's knowledge about herself and her role as a teacher had many facets including three emerging aspects. First, because the teacher took herself and her individual contribution

to teaching seriously, she viewed herself as a source to be exploited in the best way, by relying on her skills and abilities. The second aspect concerned her view of the self in relation to others as well as the knowledge she had about her relationships with others. The third aspect related to her perception of herself as being a unique human being with needs, personality traits, talents, and limitations, which all certainly influenced her work as a teacher.

Concerning the teacher's knowledge of the school milieu, the focus was on the ways the teacher's beliefs about the milieu interacted with her actions in organizing her own social setting. Sub-categories included the basic setting of the classroom, the teacher's relation with other teachers and with the administration of the school, her view of the teaching context as well as the sort of situations she created for herself within the school.

Her knowledge about the subject matter, as with other areas of knowledge, was practical and modeled by the practical teaching situation. This view was clarified on the basis of the conceptions undergoing different facets of content, the selection and combination of appropriate content from a variety of areas, and also the transformation of this content when used in teaching.

At the level of knowledge about curriculum, many developments were experienced by the teacher and in many forms. She was reported to have participated for more than a year and a half in a course learning development. She was also shown to have been active in planning programs and reading materials in the English department attached to her school. In fact, the various tasks were found to be contributive to the growth of her potentials and her practical knowledge about curriculum. Besides, her knowledge about instructing was considerable and included her view about teaching and learning, in general, and her teaching style in particular. Other aspects included views about organization of instructions, how should teachers interact with their students, and how could teachers evaluate their learners. Although the context of

the study by Elbaz is different from our own it could be insightful and therefore, inform our work in many ways. One insight is that it focuses on the teacher's practical knowledge, shaped by and for the actual teaching situation. This could justify the use of classroom observation and interviews as suitable methods for exploring the practical knowledge of EFL experienced teachers.

Additionally, the role of context in affecting teacher knowledge was highlighted when presenting knowledge about the milieu of instruction. This could be an important element when exploring the teacher's practical knowledge. Knowledge about the self concerned the teacher's strong as well as limited self-view which could be another informative basis for our study.

Knowledge about instruction was highlighted, yet knowing how to teach the subject matter seemed to be a missing area in her study. Thus, there seemed to be no distinction between the teacher knowledge about general pedagogy or instruction and the knowledge about content pedagogy. A further point to be made about the study of Elbaz (1981) is that there is no consideration of knowledge about learners, though it is still viewed as an outstanding and significant area of teacher knowledge as discussed below.

### **3.6.1 Knowledge about Learners**

Knowing one's learners is a key element of teacher knowledge, found in the model provided by Shulman (1987) and that of Turner-Bisset (1999). It is also discussed by Mayer & Marland (1997). The latter examined the knowledge of five highly experienced teachers in Georgia. Analysis of deep interviews showed that teachers had profound knowledge about their classes, groups and individual students. Knowledge of the classroom was expressed by all teachers predominantly in terms of ability levels and previous schooling. Many teachers also discussed work habits, student personalities and attributes as related categories to knowledge about classes. As for knowledge about learner groups, it was presented in terms of



a number of categories, such as ability levels, work habits and shared personality traits within groups, interests and behavior of groups. This indicates that this knowledge area could be an important parameter in exploring the component domains of teacher knowledge. Knowledge about students' ability levels, learning habits and particular groups of students could help the teacher manage his teaching accordingly, prepare material that fits individual differences among students, vary the teaching styles to meet individual preferences of the students, and exploit their features to help them learn better.

Knowing about students was also found by Meijer et al. (1999) to be a core area of the practical knowledge of 13 language teachers in the Netherlands. It was made distinct at the level of three categories: knowledge about students' characteristics, knowledge about their environment, and knowledge about their motivation. In the study, teachers had different views about students in general. Their opinions ranged from very negative (they are not motivated to go to school, they are passive, irresponsible, and demotivated) to very positive (they are kind, smart and motivated). The teachers' views were related to the ideas they had about the students' environment. They were also related to their knowledge about the possible ways to motivate their learners.

For teachers, who generally had negative opinions about students, they tended to use external motivation strategies whereas teachers, who generally thought positively about their learners, they used motivational strategies intrinsic to the instructional task or materials to achieve student motivation and satisfaction. So, based on the teachers' views about learners, many paths and strategies could be adopted differently.

### **3.6.2 Knowledge about Content**

Still with literature review, and besides knowledge about learners, other areas of teacher knowledge were also highlighted. The knowledge about subject matter is an important requirement for the teacher. It is admitted by Norrish (1997) that teachers need to develop

and rely on linguistic awareness of the elements of knowledge as well aspects of language use. According to Hegarty (2000), it is not easy for teachers to present a content which they have not really mastered. It is also argued by Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999) that knowledge is basic and essential to conduct the teaching profession. They maintain that: *“the assumption is that it is impossible for teachers at any level to teach students effectively and/or to meet the standards of the various subject matter professions without fundamental knowledge of the disciplines they teach”* (258).

To have a thorough idea of what constitutes the content knowledge of the EFL teacher has long been a critical issue. It was, for instance, revealed by Borg (2006) that the content of language teaching is more versified and complex compared to other subjects, noting also the difficulty to define the subject matter of language teaching. This idea was similarly maintained by Johnston & Goettsch (2000) admitting the open-ending of the subject matter of teaching. It is argued:

*In a skill-focused field such as language learning, it is even harder to picture the 'body of knowledge' that might constitute the field. Do we mean procedural knowledge - the teacher's ability to speak the language - or declarative knowledge - the teacher's knowledge about the language, for example, the ability to articulate the rules of the language?* (446).

Their argument is that being aware of the grammatical patterns is a good part of the knowledge base and skill of teachers in using them. In a similar way, the notion *“language awareness”* was used by Andrews (2001) to imply knowledge about subject matter or what is known as language proficiency or what we refer to as knowledge of language.

His view was directed to the point of considering teachers' language awareness as a meta-cognitive faculty because it includes a mental dimension in the form of reflections on both knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of language proficiency, which creates a platform for acts such as teaching and planning.

It is believed by researchers that knowledge about subject matter is a moving entity and is open to development and improvement. Actually, much of the knowledge base of teachers lies at the bottom of the iceberg and needs to be unveiled. This fact has been supported by Shulman (1987) who included some aspects under the area of content knowledge of EFL teachers. He reported saying:

*The teacher of English should know English and American prose and poetry, written and spoken language use and comprehension, and grammar. In addition, he or she should be familiar with the critical literature that applies to particular novels or epics that are under discussion in class. Moreover, the teacher should understand alternative theories of interpretation and criticism, and how these might relate to issues of curriculum and of teaching (9).*

What could be noticed here is an element which relates to the ways of being knowledgeable about the subject matter. Knowing about the subject matter cannot be sufficient for the language teacher. Thus, a language teacher has a significant role in relating his knowledge about subject matter. He needs to be well informed about the ways and methods of delivering material according to the already set objectives; namely, pedagogical and educational. Such a teacher's role was significantly perceived by researchers, and it was put by Shulman (1987) as follows:

*The teacher has special responsibilities in relation to content knowledge, serving as the primary source of student understanding of subject matter. The manner in which that understanding is communicated conveys to students what is essential about a subject and what is peripheral (ibid).*

Besides, a language teacher could make his role successful through his thorough understanding and vision about the subject matter, and also through his attitude which determines his position as a good teacher. This point was further stated by Shulman (1987)

saying:

*This responsibility places special demands on the teacher's own depth of understanding of the structures of the subject matter, as well as on the teacher's attitudes toward and enthusiasms for what is being taught and learned. These many aspects of content knowledge, therefore, are properly understood as a central feature of the knowledge base of teaching (ibid).*

In addition, the teacher's role regarding knowledge about subject matter is characterized by a sense of criticism. Such a critical parameter has been emphasized by researchers, such as Troudi (2005), who provided an argument on the basis of the teacher's duty to go beyond the transmission of material and knowledge to the point of becoming aware of the various elements of teaching; namely, meta-discourse, other related domains of knowledge and emphatically a mastery of the socio-political and cultural issues that surround the English language teaching. It follows that ESL and EFL teachers need to have a working and updated knowledge about the English language, and need also to develop an awareness of the changing role and power of English, in practically all domains of life. Again, EFL teachers need to be aware of the different perceptions of their students and the public vis-à-vis English, so that this sort of content knowledge could assert a profitable exposition to English through reflection on its living nature as well as the ethnic and cultural background of its speakers.

The improvement of critical abilities vis-à-vis English subject matters seems to result into a multi-functional perspective. It has been argued by researchers, such as Troudi (2005), that the adoption of a critical approach to content knowledge of language is likely to help teachers review continuously their knowledge base about critical issues related to their knowledge about subject matters, the English language, as well as its role at the largest scale. As such, EFL or ESL teachers might raise an awareness within their learners in order to constitute an

insight into the economic, socio-political and cultural dimensions about the learning of English. This sounds to be true about our study since English serves as the clue to get a better job and gain access to professional life. It follows that critical knowledge might constitute a new component of the teacher's professional practical knowledge. The ideas discussed so far relate basically to TESOL teachers, nonetheless, the criticality motive could also be applicable to other sorts of knowledge such as knowledge about pedagogy and knowledge about curriculum.

### **3.6.3 Knowledge about Pedagogy**

Generally speaking, the pedagogical knowledge is formed up of general pedagogy and content pedagogy as two main aspects of knowledge. Concerning general pedagogy, as viewed by Shulman (1987), it comprises strategies, principles and techniques used generally in teaching.

Now, with the pedagogical content knowledge, we find that it holds, according to Shulman (1986), "*the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others*" (9).

In the field of research, knowledge about pedagogy, with its both aspects, has been dealt with as an integral part of teacher knowledge. In another study by Gatbonton (1999) the pedagogical knowledge of seven experienced ESL teachers was explored, and the participants worked in a Canadian context with adult learners. The classroom observation method was followed by a stimulated recall and revealed six general domains of pedagogical knowledge: handling language items, management of student contribution, determining the contents of teaching, simplifying instructional flow, building connection and checking learners' progress.

The act of handling language items represented knowledge of how to manipulate specific language items so students could learn them. Pedagogical knowledge related to this domain was found to be the most frequently consulted by the teachers.

Regarding learners' contribution, it was found to include knowledge about learners and what they come with into the classroom such as their personality character, abilities, needs, attitudes and reactions, backgrounds, and learning styles. Despite the fact that these sub-areas of knowledge could be seen as components of knowledge about learners, they are included here under one area of pedagogical knowledge. This indicates that knowledge about pedagogy in the context of Gatbonton (1999) is used as a broad term to include a variety of aspects of teacher knowledge.

The content of teaching was found to incorporate knowledge about the subject matter as well as the aims and objectives behind teaching. The simplification of the instructional flow implied experienced teachers' knowledge about techniques and procedures to be used in teaching. As to the building of connections, it implied knowledge about teacher-learner relationships, and represented the teachers' awareness of the need to make a good rapport with their students to make them feel comfortable, to reduce the amount of anxiety and to motivate them towards better achievement.

Within the same area, we find also knowledge about the conditions of the good learning atmosphere. Furthermore, having a follow-up concern about learners' progress and development is reflective of the teachers' abilities to evaluate their learners' level of involvement in courses and tasks. Although the ESL context in this study and the type of learners are not similar to the ones in our work, there are still some similarities and insights which could be drawn from it.

In Gatbonton's (1999) study, communicative language teaching experience, held by ESL experienced teachers, could relate to the interest in communicative language teaching adopted in the EFL Algerian context since the 1990's. Thus, the practical knowledge, drawn from the teachers in the reviewed study, highlights what teachers, working with the same methods, could construct. Also, the above study clarified the sub-areas of the teacher's practical

knowledge such as language items, student contribution and contents of teaching which could all be part of curricular knowledge. Now, with the instructional flow, it could be a main aspect to know about pedagogy. In addition, establishing rapport with learners was considered vital in creating a sound learning environment.

However, the study of Gatbonton (1999) had been reproduced by Mullock (2006) in an Australian setting. It was a qualitative study meant to investigate the pedagogical knowledge base of four TESOL teachers as a partial reproduction of Gatbonton's study (1999). The researcher obtained her data from classes of low intermediate to advanced level students in general English and also in ESP classes. What could be noticed, as a main difference between the two studies, was the frequency of the domains of pedagogical knowledge.

Whereas Gatbonton showed that "handling language items" was rather a pedagogical knowledge domain, consulted frequently by her teachers, Mullock revealed that "factoring in student contribution" was the most frequently consulted domain. Besides, it was found by Mullock (2003) that knowing about learners and visualizing their needs, strengths and weaknesses was all seen as an essential aspect of the TESOL teacher's profession. Then, it was found that "facilitating the instructional flow" was another second frequently consulted area of knowledge. Regarding the "Handling language items" in this study, it was ranked third in position, not a primary position, like we found it in Gatbonton's (1999).

Based on the results of her study, Mullock (2003) developed a vision to incorporate the element of knowing about language skills in the content domain developed by Gatbonton (1999). Within the same context of Mullock (2003), "monitoring student progress" was the fourth consulted domain, followed by "determining the goals and content of instruction". The knowledge about curriculum, developed by Mullock (2003), was meant to include curricular materials as well as the enhancement of specific learning techniques and strategies. The other subsequent domains; namely, "building rapport" and "institutional factors" were the least

consulted among others. As concerns the last domain, it was not actually part of the original six domains initiated by Gatbonton (1999). Knowing about the institutional policy was made by Mullock (2003) part of this domain along with facilitations, seating rows and easy management. The conclusive statement to be made about Mullock (2006) is concerned with the knowledge about learners as a significant domain of teacher knowledge. So, knowing about learners appeared to be a core element in such studies and researchers considered knowledge about learners as an integral element in the general pedagogical knowledge of teachers. Therefore, both researchers considered knowledge about pedagogy as an inclusive term which includes a variety of aspects of teacher knowledge tackled in the above reviewed literature.

The point to be made, at this level, is that there is an overlapping body of literature which classifies the domains of teacher knowledge accordingly. The overlapping attitude of literature *via-a-vis* teacher knowledge could also be traced in Borg (1998) who investigated an ESL teacher's system of pedagogy while teaching grammar to adult learners in Malta.

The pedagogical and complex framework comprised a variety of issues, including: learners, the self, the subject matter being taught, teaching and learning acts, curricula, schools, the teacher's role, materials, classroom management, and instructional activities. All the issues were actually considered as components of the teacher's system of knowing about pedagogy. In Borg's study, the teacher revealed a bunch of opposing and interacting views related to L2 teaching, in particular, and teaching-learning in general. One exemplary view was concerned with the teaching of ESL grammar. It was mentioned by the teacher that grammar teaching had no real contribution to the communicative potential of learners; still it was part of the teachers' work for a variety of reasons.

It follows that the above study highlighted the need to explore teacher knowledge in the light of teacher reasoning and perception. The teacher's views related in the above study were



made on the basis of some reasons which justified the foundations of his thinking. Such underlying justifications are both practical and contextual. The reasons were considered practical because they were used to justify the views relevant to the teaching practice. The teacher's views were also contextually justified because they were specific to the practical teaching situation. Besides, had the situation been different in terms of subjects, context and setting, a teacher would report different or possibly similar set of reasons, on the basis of his teaching awareness. Thus, when exploring teacher knowledge, the relation between knowledge and reasoning needs to be taken into consideration.

Moreover, the pedagogical knowledge of teaching grammar had also been the concern of Johnston & Goettsch (2000) in one of their studies. Aspects of the knowledge base were examined with four experienced ESL teachers in the USA, and researchers drew upon their teaching, basically with grammar instruction and other language points. The researchers' analysis of classroom observation and subsequent interviews showed a number of categories related to the teachers' pedagogical knowledge when giving grammar explanations and instructions. The strategy adopted by these teachers included giving examples instead of teaching grammar rules or using meta-language. Although grammar rules were not rejected by any of the teachers, these rules were not favored neither as a priority nor as primary tools for grammatical instruction. Regarding the convenient degree of using meta-language, the teachers gave deferring opinions which were basically attributed to the levels of complexity and ease of the material that was being taught.

Despite the differentness between the context of our study and that of the study above, a similarity at the level of the population taught was noticed, given that learners in both studies were exposed to English as a second or foreign language, with practically the same background knowledge. Another insight was drawn from the above study and was concerned with the investigation of practical knowledge of ESL experienced teachers. It is worth noting

that when presenting two aspects of the teachers' views, regarding the teaching of ESL grammar; it was done on the basis of teacher reasoning faculty. This echoes the previously highlighted remark about the need to explore teacher knowledge in relation to teacher reasoning.

In addition, the pedagogical knowledge about teaching reading comprehension is also evoked in reviewed literature. For example, in a study by Meijer et al. (1999) knowledge about teaching reading comprehension was explored with 16- to 18-year-old students of 13 experienced language teachers in the Netherlands. Based on the analysis of the interviews, the researchers could describe many areas of teacher knowledge related to the teaching of the reading skill.

The described areas concerned: the reading content, learning and understanding of students, reading objectives, curriculum about reading, and techniques to instruct and teach the reading skill. The teachers' views were different with regards to areas of their practical knowledge, and teachers themselves provided some reasons for that difference.

Nevertheless, the above study could yield two main remarks which were contributive to our work. First, the study was in favor of exploring teacher knowledge in accordance with the area of reasoning. The other remark, however, had to do with the teachers' perception of the pedagogical knowledge in the above study; in that it was not considered as one area, like many others, but was instead viewed as a more inclusive term that included all other areas of teacher knowledge. Furthermore, such a common concern of research studies brings also about the contribution of Shulman (1987) who highlighted the way areas of teacher knowledge could overlap with areas of general knowledge at the level of parallelism between representative tools of teaching and tools of a particular subject matter.

Investigating the similarities and differences in teachers' knowledge about reading comprehension was also the focus of another study by Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard (2001)

who worked with 16- to 18-year-old students. They used a questionnaire, with close-ended items, and which was drawn from their qualitative study conducted two years earlier. It was revealed in the above study that 13.1 % of the questionnaire items were fixed as shared knowledge whereas other views were made different regarding the rest of the items.

One important point concerned the low percentage of knowledge shared among the participants. This could be attributed to the nature of the items included in the questionnaire, which were explained by the authors of the study (1999) to have been reformulated on a qualitative basis. Besides, it was mentioned that these items were included in both the interviews and the questionnaire, as the main data gathering tools. It remains important here to admit the individual nature of the items which met the qualitative nature of the investigation, in that qualitative enquiries are not forcefully meant to yield generalizable facts about teacher knowledge, but rather work on an individual basis.

Therefore, constructing a questionnaire on the basis of qualitative results resulted into a low percentage of shared knowledge in the quantitative investigation. It was admitted by the researchers, however, that *“it might have been better if we had not based the questionnaire on all the teachers’ responses in the qualitative study”* (183).

Still with other implications to be drawn from the above study, one could admit that the use of surveys might provide an insight into the kind of knowledge to be shared or not by a given group of teachers. This might constitute a platform for research works trying to explore teachers’ practical knowledge.

It follows that designing a survey study does not need to be informed by a qualitative study that precedes it. However, the opposite of the situation could work in the sense that a qualitative investigation is informed by a general quantitative survey; hence, a quantitative survey could be followed by a qualitative research. Clearly enough, the above study aimed at obtaining explanations and justifications from the participants’ views vis-à-vis the component

areas of teacher knowledge. As such, its aim seems in agreement with the former remark, holding that teacher knowledge could better be approached on the basis of teacher reasoning and perception. It was through motives and explanations given by the teachers that their knowledge could be made explicit, and their tacit views could be revealed.

In exploring the teachers' views, it could not be sufficient to admit, as revealed by the above study, that multiplicity of activities and tasks or the provision of a favorable learning environment is taken for granted. The most important thing, however, is to provide and try to justify the reasons behind these views, with specific appeal to the practices, perceptions and contexts wherein teachers work.

A further general comment, as reviewed above, can be made of the various areas of teacher knowledge as being integrated and not isolated; in order for the teacher to materialize his teaching effectively. A crucial instance might come to mind when a teacher possesses a good content knowledge, but lacks knowledge about pedagogy, hence, his knowledge might not be shared with other members of his learning community. Thus, for the teacher to become effective, he needs to master his knowledge base along with the best strategies to materialize it. As such, we conceive of the importance of knowledge quantity, yet the teaching quality remains another precious matter of concern.

From a research perspective, each knowledge domain is to be dealt with separately, though these knowledge domains work in a dynamic and associative manner, which made it a supported standpoint by researchers like Johnston & Goettsch (2000), arguing that teachers' knowledge is characterized by complexity to the same extent of teaching itself. These researchers reported saying: "*while the 'categories' of teacher knowledge are a useful analytic concept, in reality these categories are melded together in complex and indeed inextricable ways to produce multifaceted, holistic accounts of, and actions in, language teaching*" (461).

The possibility to combine more than one knowledge domain constituted the main case of Golombek's study (1998). This scholar perceived the teacher's practical knowledge as an ethical, emotional and artistic way to form up a life's vision of education. In fact, the researcher used the exact notion of personal practical knowledge to pave up the way to scrutiny of two ESL teachers' practices. The work of Golombek (1998) demonstrated the way teachers' work was shaped by four overlapping and interactive parameters or categories; namely, knowledge about the self, subject matter, instruction and context, which the teachers evoked and employed in a holistic manner. Therefore, the common belief is that when talking about teacher knowledge, quite a number of areas might interact and overlap. According to Craig (2007), a great relation exists among what teachers report about their knowledge and their views represent a contribution of meanings which embody their knowledge.

### **3.7 On Teacher Knowledge: Its main Sources**

It has become a common phenomenon that studying teacher knowledge requires an understanding of the possible sources which contribute to its shaping and, in our study, aspects of beliefs and values are part of it. Many scholars, such as Tsui (2003), emphasized the importance of understanding the sources which govern and guide teachers' knowledge and practice.

It has been shown that the factor of experience is a vital source of influence on the development of practical knowledge. It was maintained by Verloop et al. (2001) that the core material of the knowledge base is often fed by the teaching practice, and similarly, we find a suggestion made by Hegarty (2000) that the knowledge base is developed by the teaching experience as well as interaction with learners in the field.

The element of experience acts as a mediator between the teaching content and the growth of teacher knowledge, which was taken by Watzke (2007) as a concern of his study. The researcher explored, in a longitudinal research, the representativeness and changes at the level

of teachers' pedagogical knowledge at a high school level in Turkey. Data were gathered by means of reflection on journals, classroom observation and interviews with study groups. The important thing about this study is that it adopted a grounded theory analysis, by which four basic categories, explaining the change in pedagogical content knowledge, were identified by the researcher. The categories were: background knowledge which guided practical decisions, perception of teacher's control in the classroom, instructional aims of regular courses, and teacher-student affective relations.

The first significant point had to do with the role of prior learning knowledge in shaping the teachers' working experience and shaping their instructional decisions and practices. It was also revealed through the study that the attitudes of teachers, regarding classroom control, changed from being firm to less demanding. Now, concerning the aims of regular courses, there had been a significant development, through experience, towards performance and language communicative abilities.

Ultimately, the experienced teachers' primary concern shifted from the general and academic vision to more language-oriented goals, and all this was considered within the framework of teacher-student affective relations. Many insights could be drawn from the above study; namely, the contribution of experience to the growth of basic aspects of pedagogical knowledge of EFL teachers. As such, our study could be informed in terms of understanding how experience shapes the knowledge of teachers in the field. However, it is not experience alone that matters here. To be well educated, as a teacher, helps in shaping the knowledge base of teaching. In another study context by Johnston and Goettsch (2000), the sources of English grammar knowledge, of ESL experienced teachers, were examined. Their study participants emphasized that their education and their experience were the two main factors which shaped their content knowledge. Thus, it was the teachers' personal education, ranging from middle and high school level to graduate course level, and practice of teaching

disciplines such as linguistics, which formed up valuable and consistent sources of content knowledge.

In addition, the participants reported other sources of teacher knowledge, which were classified by the researchers into three categories. These were: the establishment of a knowledge database, the working within the knowledge process, and the drawing from external resources. The two first sources were considered by Johnston and Goettsch (2000) as internal, whereas the last one was considered external.

As concerns the establishment of a knowledge database, each participant made reference to his mental faculties, such as data storing and processing, filtering, and having access to knowledge segments. The teachers' knowledge, in working within the knowledge process, was developing into a more sophisticated, holistic and process-oriented base.

For the external sources, the teachers showed reliance on a variety of sources, such as assigned textbooks and teacher manuals, other grammar references, contact with other colleagues and native speakers, and computer-mediated communication,...etc. Actually, these reviewed sources, both internal and external, might represent a solid basis for the present study to investigate the potential sources of teacher knowledge.

It was Gahin (2001) who brought forward the categorization of internal and external sources of teacher knowledge. In an Arab EFL context, he managed to elaborate a set of sources that shaped the beliefs, learning and the roles of teachers in the language classroom.

According to the researcher, internal sources implied the teachers' acts taking place in formal education, and they refer to formal learning and teaching experiences, namely; initial learning experience, formal education at the university, in-field training, and presently-ongoing teaching experience.

The teachers' beliefs were found to be particularly shaped by initial learning experience, in that the teaching approach used by the past teachers might be influential to a great extent.

In addition, most of the study participants gave examples of their past teachers who had influenced them either negatively or positively. Another internal source of influence reported by the teachers, in Gahin's study, was related to teacher education. Besides, the influence of ongoing teaching experience, such as mobility and working abroad, had a similar significance and contribution. As for the teachers' beliefs, interpersonal contacts and relations were again found to be greatly influential.

Now, for the external sources, these represented the teachers' acts taking place outside the formal schooling context, such as whole life experience, travelling abroad, formal and informal relations with people abroad, ethics, family impact and mass media which were all found to shape up the EFL teachers' beliefs. These mentioned sources, found by Gahin (2001), namely; long-life experience, teacher education and training as well social connections could inform our study through the identification of sources that can potentially influence the teachers' knowledge. Thus, the above study is characteristic of a particular relevance of context to our own work. However, our study has bits of difference from Gahin's work (2001), in that the latter emphasized the sources of teachers' beliefs about language and language learning whereas the emphasis of our study is on the various areas of professional practical knowledge of experienced EFL teachers. Furthermore, the interest of the above study was in investigating the sources of beliefs of specialized and non-specialized teachers, regardless of being experienced or not.

Also, the participants in our study, unlike those in Gahin's, are all experienced EFL teachers, holding at least a Magister degree in EFL. Thus, these two extra variables could contribute to the overall sources of professional practical knowledge. This is to be said for the simple expedient that the more experienced teachers are, the more reliable are the sources they utilize.

In another study by Crookes and Arakaki (1999), 20 ESL teachers' beliefs and



circumstances were examined in the course of conducting an ESL program. It was found that the teaching sources were represented in terms of six categories. These were: sets of teaching experience, intimate discussions with colleagues, and pedagogically-oriented resources such as books, spontaneous self-capacities, pre-service training, and regular workshops. Long teaching experience was revealed to be the most mentioned source of teaching ideas. A good deal of participants viewed their teaching experience as a personal feature and self-contained entity and not a melting pot of stuff recollected from various corners. They also viewed their personal experience as solid history of knowledge and acquaintance, obtained through attempts and involvement.

It was also noted that the higher learning stages of the teachers were, the wider their knowledge sources could be. In fact, the sources referred to content material that the teachers themselves had modified. This is in addition to their knowledge about the world, gathered through the media. However, the participants who lacked such background knowledge were likely to rely on conventional and limited sources, such as textbooks, dictionaries and teaching manuals.

Peer discussion was reported as a significant source of teaching by ESL teachers, who declared that informal discussions with their colleagues were more favorable than formal talks which might take the form of workshops and research conferences. Besides, informal chats with colleagues were seen as a more convenient means to share ideas and exchange viewpoints. As such, the role of feedback from community was seen as a significant source that contributes to the shaping of teachers' knowledge.

Knowing about learners has also been identified as a useful source of teacher knowledge. Yet, knowledge about learners could be itself drawn from a variety of sources, as reported by Mayer and Marland (1997), identifying four main sources related to teacher knowledge about learners. These were: classroom observation, interactions with learners, parents or relatives

and teacher-colleagues. The researchers found that the participants in their study resorted to classroom observation and teacher-learner interactions extensively. It was also noted that the teachers' identification of groups and the sorts of knowledge held about each group was done on the basis of their values, beliefs and perceptions of good teaching as well as the teacher's role. With contextual differences and acquaintance with these broad categories, teachers might develop differing knowledge about their learners.

Additional sources were also believed to influence other areas of knowledge. In another study by Mullock (2006), initial education of teachers, in-field training, work experience and self-study were identified as the core areas of the pedagogical knowledge of four ESL participants. It was found that all her participants attributed their pedagogical knowledge to their initial teacher training as a major source. Besides, teacher knowledge was viewed to result from in-field practice through training and reinforcement. Another related source had to do with professional experience; this is in addition to the personal parameter of teacher knowledge which was identified as a core area.

The teacher's personal and practical knowledge was viewed by Clandinin (1989) to have its origins in social and professional experiences. Therefore, this knowledge was found to emerge from the private and professional spheres of the teacher's life. Besides, teacher knowledge could be perceived as propositional and experiential, originating from the teacher's continuing experience as well as his long-life vision. A further source, according to her, was the teacher's in-service training as part-time teacher. Thus, classifying the sources of teacher knowledge according to its areas draws many insights to our study.

Despite the overlapping nature of these sources, affecting the development of more than one area of teacher knowledge, such classification could be a useful analytical tool to explore thoroughly the sources of impact as well as the way they shape the areas of knowledge.

Generally speaking, many insights could be drawn from the above reviewed literature on

the sources of teacher knowledge. One insight is that there are various sources which could contribute to the development of teacher knowledge, mainly; teaching experience, initial learning experience, in-field training, acquaintance with subject matter, feedback and social connections. Another important insight concerns the usefulness of understanding the various sources of teacher knowledge and how these sources could help improve this knowledge. An additional insight, however, relates to the classification of possible sources according to the teacher knowledge areas. As such, a clear view could be formed up about the specific features of each knowledge area. Hence, all these insights could be evoked and utilized in our study.

### **3.8 On the Aspects of Knowledge and Practice**

Researchers and scholars have long asserted that the best way to understand the relationship between teacher knowledge and practice is through the lens of teaching as a knowledge-based activity. Thus, teachers' practical actions in the classroom are informed and justified by their knowledge. Besides, teachers' behavior in their classrooms could always be informed by their underlying knowledge, as it was explicitly accounted for by Hegarty (2000). His emphasis was on the teaching moment when interaction between the two parties is channeled towards learning stimulation.

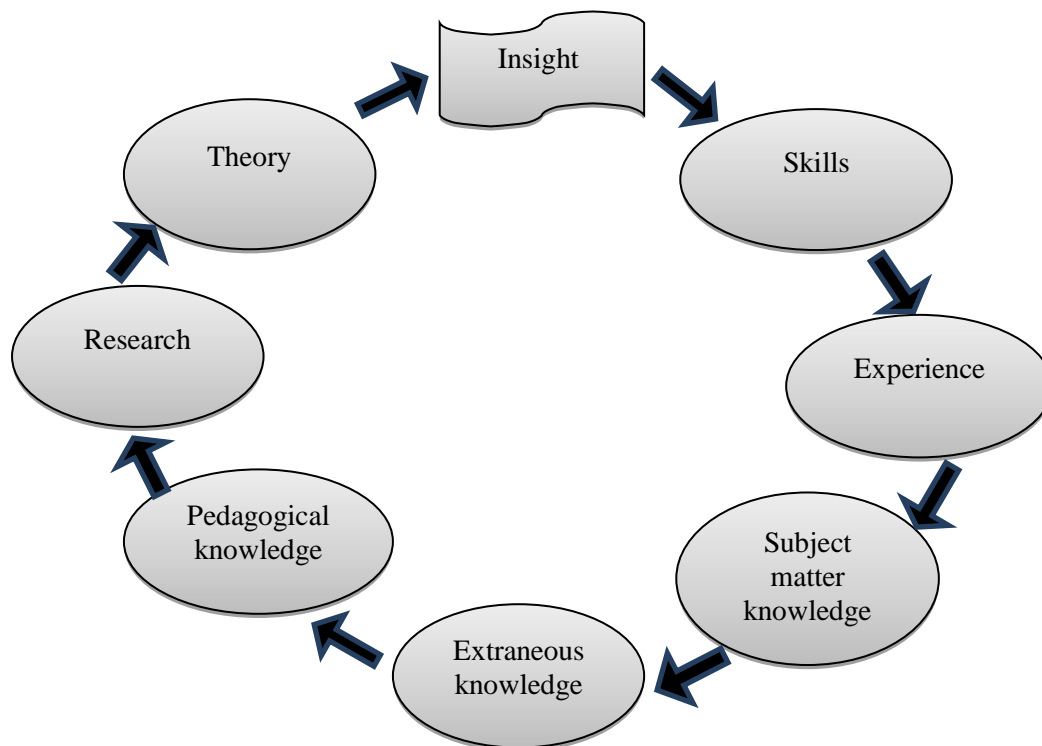
The researcher's account was based on his consideration of teaching as a smart behavior, open to analysis and brings to mind Lonergan's (1957) notion of common sense. According to Lonergan (1957), an individual with a common sense is characterized by willingness to move on, sharp vision to receive, see and grasp acquired knowledge. Additionally, common sense was seen by Hargreaves (1998) as a criterion of the creative application of knowledge.

Moreover, the premise held about common sense is that it is grounded on a grasp of the underlying principles of practice as well as the necessary skills. Accordingly, a teacher who confronts a critical situation is likely to rely on common sense and filter through his stock of knowledge bases to cope with that situation. This adaptation and knowingness about situations and circumstances would likely

provide new insights into the teacher's existing bulk of knowledge and could further inform him to act properly in different situations. This common sense interaction was highlighted by Hegarty (2000), who mentioned:

*It requires both a body of relevant, general understanding and the capacity to apply it in concrete situations. This entails making a selection of insights appropriate to the situation in question and generating further, situation-specific insights to enable an intelligent response to it. These latter insights are no longer relevant when that situation has passed-though they may of course enrich the individual's general store of knowledge- and the set of insights reverts to its original, incomplete state ready for the next situation, which may require a different closure (461).*

In the model below, Hegarty (2000) provided her view of the smart practical behavior, which guides the teaching moment, and postulates the existence of given sets of varied but related insights and abilities which might be met in classroom practice. These sets are presented below.



**Fig 3.1: A Model of Insights Guiding the Moment of Teaching.**

**Adapted from: Hegarty (2000)**

What could be noticed in the above scheme is that a good deal of complementary components is required. First, theory is required by the teacher to have a conceptual image of the encountered situation. Theory prepares a platform for general understanding and subsequent actions. In addition, teachers are required to master the subject matter to be taught, no matter how difficult is. However, if a teacher lacks pedagogic knowledge and the necessary skills, subject matter knowledge might not be transferred properly and positive learning would not take place. In fact, research knowledge implies all other knowledge inputs for the fact that teaching materials and techniques are always founded in research investigation and evaluation attempts.

In the model presented, experience is a significant requirement for a teacher's intelligent practical behavior. This teaching experience relies on a set of insights from which it draws and contributes to pedagogic knowledge, skills and subject matter knowledge. As concerns the element "extraneous knowledge", its inclusion suggests, as Golombek (1998) believes, that the cognitive tenets of teaching are neither fixed nor ultimate.

The model of Hegarty's (2000) seems very interesting in showing how teachers access the various knowledge bases of teaching and how the underlying knowledge bases affect their classroom teaching behavior. The main idea in her model is that teachers draw upon a large number of relevant inputs and develop them continuously. Teachers become responsive to particular situations through the adequate choice of input from their storage and skills as well as the ability to generate novel insights. Her model further shows how explicit knowledge is transformed into tacit knowledge and how the teaching competence is constructed through time.

Above all, the model acknowledges the quality of professionalism in teachers rather than technical passiveness. Also, the model yields important insights about teacher knowledge, which is the concern of our study. By relating teaching to an act of common sense, the

teacher's role gains significance in determining the basic mission and responding to the requirements of the teaching moments. It follows that adopting a conscious teaching approach is likely to render the teacher aware of what takes place in his class, makes him feel present and could help him become ready to act accordingly.

Appropriate classroom decision-making could be further enhanced by improving the knowledge inputs. It is also a matter of quantity; the more is known about the various elements of the teaching moment, the more appropriate are the decisions made by the teacher. Besides, the teaching moment itself could contribute to the improvement and enhancement of knowledge when teachers are apt to view teaching as both a common sense act and a knowledge-based activity.

Thus, Hegarty's scheme helps understand how teacher knowledge is put into practice and the way it could be modeled by classroom practice. As such, the idea was in agreement with Hiebert et al's (2002) argument, in that teacher knowledge is principally characteristic of teachers' work and has practical dimensions as it gets from and gives to practice. It was mentioned by Hiebert et al (2002) that "*practitioner knowledge is useful for practice precisely because it develops in response to specific problems of practice*" (6). They further add that

*Teachers create knowledge that is linked to practice in two ways: first, its creation is motivated by problems of practice; and second, each new bit of knowledge is connected to the processes of teaching and learning that actually occur in classrooms (ibid).*

Still with the relationship between teacher knowledge and classroom action, quite a number of studies have dealt with the issue in a comprehensive way.

However, if teachers want to give sense to their classroom practice, they need to rely on their knowledge which serves as a frame or guide to their actions. It was revealed in the study of Golombek (1998) that the personal practical knowledge of teachers informed their

classroom practice in an interpretive framework which was prepared for the realization of their knowledge in an explicit manner. Also, the relationship between knowledge and practice, in Golombek's study, was represented in the fact that knowledge informed practice through the shape it gives to it; to become knowledge in action. The role of context in shaping teacher knowledge was also highlighted by the researcher; in that teachers make use of their knowledge to respond to particular situations or issues. As such, she views the personal practical knowledge of L2 teachers as a fact which frames and be framed by their understanding of the teaching-learning process.

It follows that understanding the dual role of knowledge, as an interpretive framework and a physical form of classroom action, could serve and inform our study. The above study draws an insight of teachers' actions which need to be understood in relation to what is known since the latter justifies the actions taken by teachers. Again, this sounds to correspond with the two considerations of teaching as an act of common sense as well as a knowledge-based activity.

A further identification of teachers' knowledge and classroom behavior could be made through concordance and agreement between what is known and what is done. This concordance renders knowledge to be a physical form of classroom action.

In another study by Borg (1998), one can also identify this consistent relationship between teacher knowledge and classroom action. The study emphasized the cognitive bases of an experienced EFL teacher's instructional decisions while teaching a grammar course in Malta. The researcher investigated the teacher's personal pedagogical systems, such as beliefs, storing, knowledge, theories, attitudes and assumptions, which contributed significantly to the shaping of the teacher's instructional decisions. It was revealed through analysis that some teaching behaviors gave accessibility to teacher's cognitions at the level of six issues, which were: analysis of errors, making reference to students' L1, terminology of grammar, rules,

practice, and grammar and communicative ability. In addition, understanding the relationship between knowledge and practice could also be achieved via classroom decision-making and the latter could be informed by the underlying knowledge which guides the teacher and determines his particular actions.

In another study by Tsang (2004), results have shown that during classroom teaching, the participants did not gain full access to their personal practical knowledge (somewhat half of the interactive decisions made were oriented by that knowledge). Yet, a minimum of knowledge was to inform post-teaching decisions, and could nonetheless help to envision novel entities about teaching.

Furthermore, teachers' classroom decision, as a representation of the relationship between knowledge and practice, has been further tackled in a study by Mayer & Marland (1997) who held that teachers' knowledge about learners was relevant to classroom instruction as it informed their acts to support the individual and social development of learners. It was shown that knowledge about learners was used in practice in a variety of ways, making, thus, a significant contribution to the teachers' instructional decision making. The knowledge held about students was used exactly in five ways: in lesson planning, differing instruction, student interaction, classroom management and in meeting learners' needs. Moreover, the categories of knowledge about students were each identified, in the above study, to include learning habits, abilities, past schooling; personality traits, individual interests, family background and peer relations, and all these criteria informed the teaching act at the level of individuals, groups and whole classes. Again, these insights suggest the intrinsic role of knowledge in various teaching situations. Furthermore, understanding the role of context and its influence in materializing knowledge is another basis upon which the connection between teacher knowledge and practice is established. The part that follows draws an insight about the issue.



### 3.9 On Teacher Knowledge and Context-based Factors

Understanding the connection between teacher knowledge and practice could also be made possible through context. The teacher's behavior could be shaped by his in-class and out-of-class relationships, representing, thus, sets of values and beliefs that he attempts to put into practice. However, the realization of teacher knowledge might be confronted with authoritative prescriptions that stand against his vision and judgment of teaching. This situation could be experienced when, as admitted by Xu & Liu (2009), "*the authority tells sacred stories whereas teachers live their own secret stories*" (504). Thus, context has effects on the relationship between knowledge and practice. It was further believed by these researchers that the particularity of the place, in which practice occurs; could either simplify or hinder teacher knowledge as long as it affects the teacher's sense of security. Actually, not all the knowledge of teachers contributes to their actions. Verloop et al. (2001) supported this idea saying: "*teachers can, consciously or unconsciously, refrain from using certain insights during their teaching*" (445).

It is implied, therefore, that teachers may intentionally skip over some knowledge and not realizing it into classroom practice. Besides, contextual factors and eventualities could intervene in the teaching- learning situation. Alternatively, teachers might have the knowledge, but lack the awareness to actualize that knowledge in real practice.

EFL teachers in Algeria face a variety of challenges in their work, namely; excessive class size, the EFL examination policy and lack of teaching resources and materials. These constraints could hamper the teaching mission to achieve its objectives. In a study by Gahin (2001), factors affecting EFL teachers' beliefs about language, EFL learning as well as their role in practice, were examined. The study revealed quite a deal of contextual constraints reported by 120 EFL teachers. These challenging factors were shown as: large classes (69%), the difficulty to cover the officially-designed syllabus within the allocated time (67%), lack

of related materials and resources (66%), learners' individual differences (62%), the challenge of preparing students for the final examinations (53%), administrative and authoritative requirements (52%), focus of examinations and systematic assessment (46%), social expectations (44%), insufficient initial training in EFL at the university level (43%), and insufficient in-field training (40%).

Naturally, such constraints could have a negative effect on the actualization of the various areas of teacher knowledge outlined earlier. For example, in the work of Borg (1998), factors which moderated the implementation of an EFL experienced teacher's pedagogical system, while teaching EFL grammar, were examined. However, the teacher's skepticism about factors, such as evidence of comprehension, seemed to have contributed to his pedagogical knowledge, hence finding ways to respond to the complications these factors might cause. Thus, the work of Borg (1998) reported the need to view teachers' decisions on the basis of contextual factors, emerging in the course of instruction. Such a finding is insightful to the present study as it does not only demonstrate a potential challenge an EFL teacher could face, when trying to realize his knowledge of content pedagogy in action, but also how this challenge affects the teacher's classroom decisions. It follows, then, that when studying teacher knowledge and practice, it is useful to examine the contextual factors which appear in the foreground of the knowledge realization.

Furthermore, quite a number of studies dealt with the concept of teacher cognition, with its various dimensions. In a study by Borg (2003), the main dimensions of language teacher cognition were identified to incorporate: *cognition and classroom practice* (exploring how cognition contributes in shaping what teachers do), *cognition and experience* (clarifying the role of experiences and other sources in shaping teachers' cognitions), *cognition and context* (showing how contextual factors influence teachers' actions and decisions) and *cognition and teacher education* (drawing the implications of research for professional preparation and

progressive teachers' development).

This current study on teacher knowledge, which incorporates some aspects of knowledge, belief, assumptions, and values, makes part of these studies on teacher cognition which explore what EFL teachers think, know or believe, in relation to various aspects of their work, and thus attempts to unveil the actual classroom practices and the relationships between cognitions and these practices.

By stating its focus as such, our work joins the many studies on teacher cognition which aim at better informing our understanding of teaching and providing a more sophisticated theoretical framework than the model of technical rationality. This latter model, which has been seen as a somewhat instrumentalist to teacher education, according to (Turner-Bisset, 1999), originated in American education research and was rooted in behaviorist psychology.

However, the dominance of the technical rationalistic model was attributed to the major themes of accountability and money value and sustained the model to become the theoretical foundation underlying teacher training and education. Contrastively, the interest of research in cognition appeared as a reaction to the above model, claiming that teachers are professionals who make sense of what they do and create new knowledge and insights by reflecting on their practice.

## **Conclusion**

In what preceded, we reviewed related literature, taking into consideration the interrelatedness of the various studies to our work and how these studies could enlighten it to be carried out. We began this chapter by introducing a theoretical basis for two models about teacher knowledge. These were: the technical model and the professional practical model. We then moved to the review of the many domains of teacher knowledge which took the greatest part of the reviewed literature, as these domains related to the main topic revolving around the potential constituents of the EFL teacher knowledge in practice. We further reviewed the

basic analytical skeleton for categorizing teacher knowledge with a particular focus on areas of teacher knowledge as conducted in ESL/EFL contexts. Besides, our review of literature included also a variety of sources underpinning teacher knowledge. The relation between knowledge and practice was further reviewed through a model which viewed teaching as a knowledge-based activity.

By the end of the chapter, we sketched a variety of factors which affect the realization of teacher knowledge, and ultimately concluded with the theoretical influences occurring in the field of research on teacher cognition. Actually, the whole body of reviewed literature informed our study in many ways as shown throughout the chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

This fourth chapter discusses the methodological framework which guided the research work. It begins by setting a platform for some ontology, epistemology and then methodology to yield assumptions for the study, and making specific appeal to those related to the exploration of teacher knowledge. Then, we highlight the aim and put justification of the methods used in our research study along with a description of the population and sampling. Then, the process of collecting data is described by which two types of data are presented: quantitative and qualitative. The way we constructed and administered the tools to collect evidence from the two research types is then described. This is followed by describing the analytical process of data which included both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Besides, some considerations guiding the research study are mentioned along with some difficulties met in the course of its conduct.

It remains important to remind that reviewing the related literature, earlier, helped in articulating the concern of the present study. Following that, we have managed to formulate three interrelated research questions:

- 1- What could be the components and sources of EFL experienced teachers' knowledge in an Algerian university context?
- 2- In what way(s) does this knowledge inform the EFL classroom practice?
- 3- How does context affect the realization of teacher knowledge in practice?

This set of questions was already mentioned in the first chapter and is stated again, at this level, to indicate the relevance of these questions to the field of literature as well as their significance in informing this particular chapter. Mention should also be made to the fact that teacher knowledge is approached in the present work as a broad concept which incorporates

certain aspects of beliefs and values of teachers.

#### **4.1 Assumptions Based on Ontology**

The concept of ontology has been frequently defined by scholars as something which relates to knowledge, meaning and being. It was defined, for example, by Crotty (1998) as the “*the study of being. It is concerned with what is, with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such*” (10). Besides, ontology is not similar to pure reality; hence, it is not based on experiments and definitive answers. However, our study sets its aim from an ontological perspective which is trying to understand how the multiple layers of knowledge and meaning are constructed.

In fact, the practical knowledge of teachers is not surface and is not an external imposition, it is rather the outcome of personal and conscious acts framed by experience and working situations. Thus, it is not a ready-made object delivered to teachers, but comes as a result of reasoning and teachers’ contact with the social milieu. Furthermore, teachers’ knowledge is mentally processed and is relative in nature which makes it realistically multiplied. In the case of teachers, however, the visions and realities linked to experiences are subjective and not identical. Even if the experiences seem to be similar, the way teachers build them differs accordingly.

Teacher knowledge cannot be considered the same with everybody, even though the conditions of work are provided on a similar basis. Thus, no unique vision is developed about the issue. The truth is that teachers interpret and filter through conditions and experiences differently. Their classroom action also differs on the basis of their individual, educational and professional ways of understanding and also vision. However, the knowledge of teachers might have a common basis about its structure, yet the views of teachers cannot be explained from one angle. The whole fact reflects separating lines between the deep and surface structures, transforming the deep into meaningful reality. It follows that the teachers’

practical knowledge is characterized by multiple realities in a similar way to the views which are built and justified in a multitude of ways. Therefore, teacher knowledge exists in dependency on teacher reasoning, and is also held and manifested with subjective effects.

From an ontological and relativist perspective, it is the individual consciousness which forms reality, and trying to investigate social issues is based on the understanding of how people build up their experiences on a subjective basis. Thus, having a thorough idea about teachers' reasoning of their various practices and views is pre-requisite to the investigation of teacher knowledge. What teachers reveal is, in fact, a set of subjective meanings that embody the many realities of the explored issues held in relativist ontology. Such ontology is, therefore, congruent with the interpretive and constructivist research stance informing our research work. Then, all what makes sense to our participants will be clarified for the purpose of justifying their articulated views and related actions.

#### **4.2 Assumptions Based on Epistemology**

In the field of research, the role of epistemology is very significant for the understanding and checking of the constructed knowledge. The concept of epistemology has been, for example, defined by Wellington (2000) as "*the study of the nature and validity of human knowledge*" (196).

It follows that our study adopts a mixed-methodology approach as well as an epistemological framework which makes use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and strategies that suitably fit the addressed research questions. Actually, a quantitative survey in this study suited our knowledge about the sets of agreement or disagreement with the participants' views of practical knowledge whereas qualitative methods; namely the interview and observation, were utilized to help us figure out the nature of teachers' views, how they are related to classroom practice as well as the impact of context on this relationship.

Therefore, we found ourselves inclined toward the pragmatic stance which is interested, as Snape & Spencer, (2003) admit, in assuring a positive correlation between the methods used in research and the research questions asked. This is in comparison with the limited interest in the degree of philosophical consistency of the epistemological views typically related to research methods. The adoption of this approach was due to many motives. First, we wanted to understand the practical realities of the epistemological stance from positivist and interpretive perspectives.

This alignment with positivism showed us the utility of using a survey in the research framework and reveal the viewpoints of teachers who could only be involved in the study through qualitative methods. The constructivist tendency was useful in answering the research questions, holding the variety of emerging views and introducing socio-cultural and individual opinions expressed by the participating teachers.

Second, the adoption of that approach allowed us to address both the nature and number of viewpoints, guided by the survey items and which could not be built from the qualitative evidence. In here, one would admit that quantitative and qualitative materials are not of the same caliber, yet using different types of evidence was meant to yield thorough understanding of a larger social milieu, compared to the use of a single approach. Roughly, our study could have been conducted by only using qualitative methods, yet it would not be possible for us to get informed about the views of the whole population number.

Third, we were given the opportunity to select and implement the suitable and economical design for this research. This was done by not limiting our self to one particular approach in a purist epistemological way. Besides, had we used only one epistemological approach, it would not be possible to incorporate a survey in our study. Hence, a mixed methodology approach, stemming from epistemology, was of a great help in solving this problematic and philosophical issue.



#### 4.2.1 The Constructivist Appeal to the Present Study

It has been suggested by researchers like Roberts (1998) that the constructivist approach, when used in research studies, provides the suitable body for the teaching of languages. The reason is that constructivism admits the mutual relation and dependency of personal as well as social parameters of teacher growth and development.

Knowledge, which is assumed to be valid, is embodied in the views that inform us about the components of the EFL experienced teachers' knowledge base. Researchers on the issue of teacher knowledge development, like Freeman & Johnson (1998), drew conclusions that *"a social constructivist view of language learning would seem to interface more directly with the nature of classroom language learning"* (411).

Hence, the constructivist approach puts emphasis on both the individual's constructed knowledge as well its surrounding context. The constructivist research provided many insights about education and its role in social change as well as the development of individuals within their cultural and social milieu. So, quite a deal of perspectives was revealed by constructivism, reversing the traditional views about the knowledge base characteristic of the experienced EFL teacher.

According to Crotty (1998), truth is not all the time found out, but rather built up, and it has been asserted that *"instead, such research invites us to approach the object in a radical spirit of openness to its potential for new or richer meaning. It is an invitation for reinterpretation"*(51). It follows that this work was informed by both interpretivist and constructivist stances from a theoretical viewpoint.

From an interpretivist standpoint, we could gain both inner and outer understanding of teacher knowledge and practice. This has been asserted by researchers like Pring (2004) who maintained that *"to understand particular events, one must see things from the point of view of the participants or the people who are involved – how they interpret events and thereby*

*constitute those events of a certain sort” (100).*

Besides, the reliance on an interpretive or explanatory way of investigation is likely to facilitate the understanding of practice and thinking of language teachers. This leads to the fact that the cognitive processes of individual experiences could increase the awareness of practice and the reasoning that shapes it when these are explicitly articulated. It is exactly this reasoning which counts much in getting the utmost from experiential practices, compared to the experience itself. As such, one’s experiential practice could be far from being monotonous.

Interpretivism, when linked specifically to qualitative research, was thought of by Snape & Spencer (2003) as a proposition of knowledge emerging from what occurs in the world and not limited to particular experiences. Therefore, clarifying the interpretive side of knowledge remains of a great importance on the part of both the researcher and the participating teachers because their interpretations and views about practice and its underlying knowledge are very significant to research studies, specifically our own work. In addition, the constructivist approach has also informed our study for the fact that a compatibility exists between the epistemological constructivism and ontological relativism. Dependently, Crotty (1998), for example, argued saying: *“we will obviously hold our understandings much more lightly and tentatively and far less dogmatically, seeing them as historically and culturally effected interpretations rather than eternal truths of some kind” (64).*

Talking about knowledge of teaching, however, it has usually been argued that it is the teachers’ viewpoints which construct it, and it is subject to various influences originating from the experiences of teachers as well as the context in which they work. As such, teachers create meanings and are guided by their experience and personal practice. Following this, one would figure out that the knowledge and practices of teachers are idiosyncratic, hence multiple realities are embodied in what they think and what they do.

Actually, it has been revealed by Vries & Beijaard (1999) that a good deal of the practical knowledge of teachers is experiential, situational and context-based. So, individual viewpoints matter a lot when trying to explore teacher practical knowledge.

Keeping the same track, however, one needs to be aware of the fact that exploring teacher knowledge requires the involvement of teachers as useful agents. Thus, teachers, according to Connelly and Clandinin (1997), are not simple mirrors reflecting other peoples' visions and wishes into practice, but they rather bring new inputs and insights into their situations, with valuable theoretical background. In addition, teachers' past knowledge and education, schooling and experience, all serve as refining parameters prior to the adoption of particular philosophies or tendencies. Despite the variety of views held about teachers, their words need to be heard, nonetheless. According to Fitzclarence (2003), schools and classrooms are the ideal corners to epitomize the teachers' visions and meanings to be exploited by others. Thus, teachers are not mere consumers of other people's knowledge, but they are active producers with their own potentialities and usually build upon what takes place in real classroom practice.

Teachers' work has many practical features which need not be devalued as teachers are effective agents and doers of classroom actions. With regards to educational reforms, it was emphasized by Rogers (2007) that teachers, as leaders and doers, need to be acknowledged and also involved in any attempt to improve, change or implement teaching methodologies, with respect and appraisal.

The above idea was similarly examined by Sen (2002) stressing the necessity to listen to teachers and consider their advices for the sake of improving education and innovating the ways of teaching.

Besides, acknowledging what teachers know and do is likely to create new horizons of understanding both theory and practice and, as Sonnevile (2007) believes, bring

transformation and change which are at the core of teacher learning and training. Also, the accounts produced by teachers about their knowledge were viewed by Husu (2004) as vital materials for highlighting the work and learning of teachers.

Investigating teacher knowledge could be considered as a response to the needs and words of the teachers and, thus, calls for a constructivist framework of research rather than following a positivistic tradition. In addition, studying teacher knowledge has led Richards (1994) to criticize the positivist approach and called for constructivism saying:

*A view of knowledge as an external body of information is likely to lead to a focus on imparting that information, on content; if the knower is not separated from the known, the focus is more likely to be on engagement and exploration. This rather crude formulation of a complex debate revolving around the rejection of positivism... provides a convenient distinction which applies as much to the investigation of teacher knowledge as to the knowledge itself (402).*

Constructivism was also called upon by Freeman (1995) when trying to explore teacher practice. He maintained that *“it is imperative to examine how participant-teachers, students, parents, and others involved in schools and classrooms-construct their worlds, the actions they take, and the ways in which they explain those actions to themselves and to others” (581).*

Similarly, it was argued by Golombek (1998) that the base of teacher knowledge need not be seen as an imposition, but rather formed up through experience. She mentioned that *“L2 teachers' knowledge is, in part, experiential and constructed by teachers themselves as they respond to the contexts of their classrooms” (447).*

From an epistemological perspective, experience and context could better be understood in drawing the connection between teacher knowledge and classroom actions.

Another basis upon which knowledge and its role in teaching could be figured out is the

transactional knowing theory of Dewey, which was considered by Biesta (2007) as the most practical and sophisticated theory ever since. It follows that the concept of knowledge was tackled within an action theoretical skeleton or framework which holds that the act of knowing is perceived as an act of doing.

In this respect, knowing is not a notion that refers to the external world, but it refers to what we do as actions as well as the possible results. As such, one could be guided in planning and orienting his actions more effectively, compared to mechanical attempts and errors. This sounds efficient for an individual with less experience, and who could not be certain of what to do in novel situations.

This fact could be applicable to teachers who face difficult teaching situations, and might not be sure about how to act. Besides, teachers or practitioners, in the view of Dewey's transactional knowing theory, do not have knowledge which implies that through their experiences they endure the consequences of their actions and changes. The practitioners' behavior could be adjusted through the acquisition of aptitude and habit to take action. This is to be said for the fact that habits are acquired with readiness toward modes of response, but not specific acts.

In addition, the clue to a smart action and the formation of new habits is the ability to define a problem. For a beginner teacher or practitioner, who faces a new challenging situation, he needs to respond properly in order to keep the transaction tight. Thus, problem definition is prerequisite to the provision of the suitable response.

The predisposition to determine the problem and provide the appropriate solution were viewed by Dewey as facets of the same coin. The justification of this is that the problem would better be identified after having provided the suitable solution. This adequate solution, in turn, could be best calculated through visualizing the possible competing parallels of an action.

Furthermore, attempts to resolve problems and provide relevant responses to situations cannot be based on deliberate thinking. This might add a smart quality to the selection process, compared to systematic ways of attempts and errors. This could be justified by the fact that solving issues experimentally is represented in symbolic acts like deliberate thinking and explanation in which an individual learns from both responses and habits as well as symbolic tools to be able to deal with problems in further occasions.

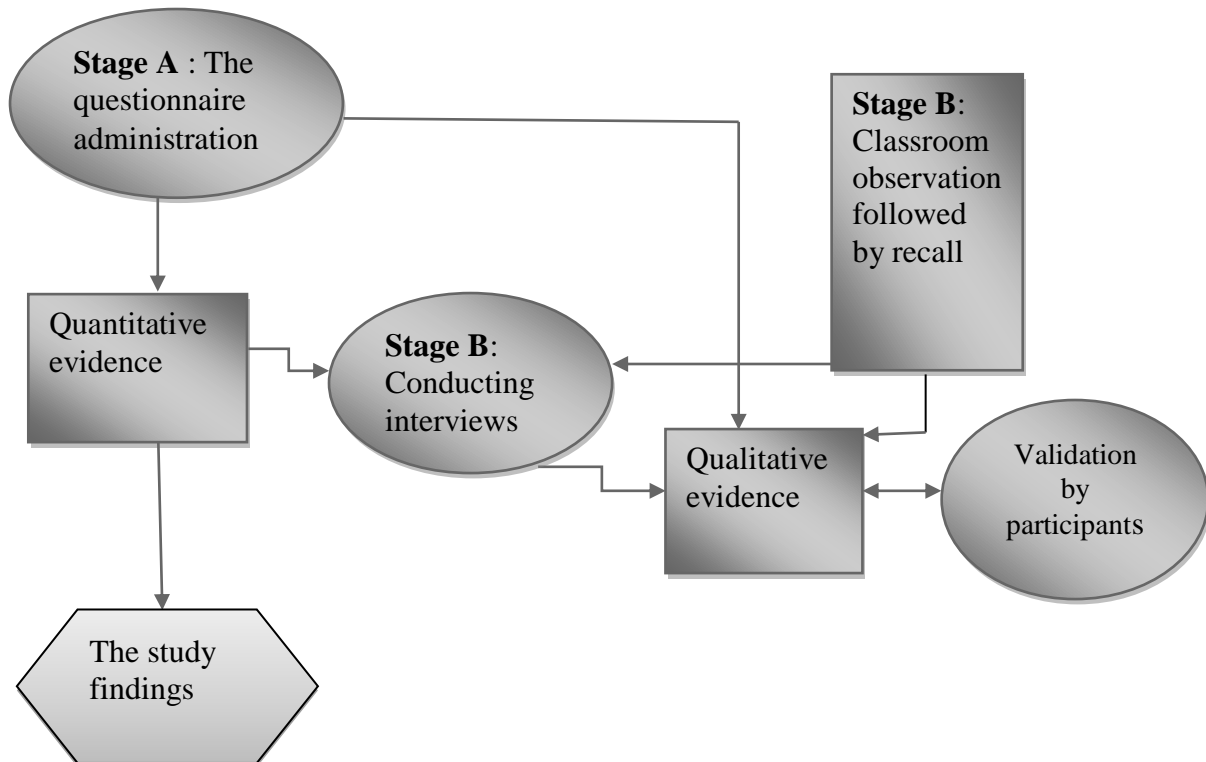
It follows that knowing about the world is not exactly the gained knowledge, but the intended knowledge is about the relations between acts and their results which are typical to a given situation. In fact, such a view could provide the enquiries on teacher knowledge with a good insight, and has been interpreted in exact words by Biesta (2007) saying: *“one of the main implications of this view is that inquiry, or research, does not provide us with information about a world out there, but only about possible relations between actions and consequences”* (15). Depending on the preceding information, one could admit that inquiry and investigation of teacher knowledge informs us about relations existing between action and result. However, this informative feature is confined to what worked in the past, not now, not in the future.

### **4.3 Assumptions Based on Methodology**

Quite a number of definitions were provided to the concept methodology in the last few decades. One famous definition is the one given by Wellington (2000), considering methodology as *“the study of the methods, design and procedures used in research”* (198). In our research case, we have opted for an exploratory methodology that was based on a multi-method approach. Worth noting is the view of Punch (2009), admitting that exploratory designs have a great, positive and applicable use in research and educational fields.

Thus, the present research method was based on a two-phase multi-method design in which we used qualitative data to explain and draw upon basic quantitative results. So, the

study design contained a quantitative stage and a qualitative one respectively. In the figure that follows, we schematized the study design.



**Fig 4.1: Scheme of the Study Design**

As shown in the above scheme, the use of multiple methods helped inform the findings of this study. Actually, our study started with the piloting and administration of the questionnaire, and then the quantitative evidence, obtained from the statistical analysis of the questionnaire, informed the scheduled interviews. Both research tools were also informed by the data obtained from the stimulated recall which followed the classroom observation.

As such, the qualitative evidence came from a variety of sources. i.e., the open-ended responses from the questionnaire and the analyses of the interviews and recalled observation data, all fed and poured into this evidence. The qualitative evidence was also reinforced by the participants' validation of the data interpreted. Furthermore, the quantitative and qualitative types of evidence formed the basis for the ultimate findings of the study.

Designing a study in this way is suitable for the exploration of teacher knowledge, in that trying to know about the participants' views on professional knowledge needs to be followed by an exploration of the variety of visions and interpretations that they bring to the given situation. In fact, researchers like Golombek (1994), believe that when exploring teacher knowledge, methodologies that integrate teachers' perspective need to be used.

In this present study, it should be noted that we opted for a multi-method approach because of the many benefits of combining methods for collecting different types of data. One benefit of using such approach is that it permits patterns emerging in the survey data to be confirmed by, and explored further through, individual learner portraits emerging through interview and observation data. As believed by Aldridge, Fraser & Huang (1999), multiple research methods, coming from different paradigms, could be used in an interpretive study.

They also emphasize the need for combining methods to collect quantitative data such as questionnaires, and other methods for collecting qualitative data such as interviews and classroom observation. The collected data, by means of the questionnaire, echoed background research and could be utilized as a basis for further data collection with multi-research methods based on observations and interviewing.

Despite the fact that it provides a clear and economical view, quantitative methods contribute greatly to the gathering of information obtained in the course of the study. Also, a more profound understanding could be gained from qualitative data based on interviewing and observation. Methods such as these explore the related causation factors, give insight into causes of actions, and show socio-cultural impacts and cause-effect relationships. As such, the interpretation of data could be rendered more meaningful. The collected data, by use of the questionnaire, classroom observation and interviewing feed into one another and constitute a thorough and integrated bulk. Additionally, a major advantage of using a multi-method approach is that it gives us the possibility to triangulate the research methods, hence



the possibility to cross-validate the data interpreted.

Knowing that teaching and learning a foreign language is a complex process, one should admit that using one method alone, when exploring what happens in a teaching situation, could not help a lot in clarifying the picture of what teachers do as well as the foundations of their knowledge and actions. Using questionnaires alone can reveal but a little about the participants' true motives. This fact was revealed by Pring (2004) stating that "*surveys which tot up similar responses to the same question might in fact give a much distorted picture of how the different people really felt about or understood a situation*" (54). To go beyond this confinement, respondents' interviewing was planned to gain deeper understanding and thorough insight. Yet, relying only on interviews could not create the complete image of the phenomenon. This was again held by Pring (2004) admitting that "*given the claimed uniqueness of each individual's understanding of an event or an activity, it would seem impossible for the interviewer to grasp the significance of what is said*" (40).

Such a tendency justifies the necessity and utility of mixed- methods in research. Again, using a multi-method approach has also a foundation rooted in research theory. People like Maxey (2003) argue that using multiple methods is suitable in exploring social issues from pragmatic perspectives, taking advantage, thus, of the various methods of investigation. The researcher puts it:

*What is needed is mixed or multiple methods of social science inquiry that interlace 'techne' or the technical skills of the research viewed as a craft (rather than routines of observation and enumeration where research is seen as a mechanical process); 'phronesis' or ethical know how in which human researchers seek to understand human subjects and their actions from a practical moral perspective; and 'praxis' or the mechanisms of deliberation, choice, and decision making regarding what ought to be done-all relative to the concrete problematic situations in which humans find themselves (85).*

Keeping the same track, the exploration of teacher knowledge necessitates the use of various methods because, as believed by Calderhead (1996), the main variables in such type of research are of a multi-dimensional nature. Alongside the same view, other researchers emphasized the advantages of using such an approach when investigating teacher knowledge. It was put by Verloop et al. (2001):

*By means of multi-method triangulation, it is possible to cover not only the well-considered aspects of teacher knowledge, which are relatively stable and can be put into words rather easily, but also the ephemeral aspects. The aim is to enhance the internal validity of the research (452).*

From this perspective, quantitative and qualitative modes of research are needed for a solid exploration. For instance, quantitative and qualitative methods were claimed by Ritchie (2003) to be used simultaneously for studying a phenomenon as long as the researcher needs to examine both the number and nature of that same phenomenon.

In addition, using both interviewing and classroom observation is justified by their suitability and sufficiency as research tools when exploring teacher knowledge and practice.

Studying teacher knowledge, according to Shulman (2000), requires from the researcher to look for good teachers and ask them to give him access to their classrooms wherein he watches them, talk to them, record them and make them engaged in a stimulated recall situation.

However, exploring teacher practical knowledge, according to Fenstermacher (1994), was based on two differentiated aspects. The first aspect relates to the inference of knowledge from the accounts provided by teachers, and the second aspect relates to the inference of knowledge from real actions emerging out of authentic teaching experience. Each constituting element, however, got differing proponents at the level of the significance attributed to the teachers' roles in the processes of research.

In this respect, supporters of the first strand consider all teacher statements as knowledge and argue that teachers naturally build and possess their own knowledge and potential. Yet, the second tendency proponents seem to be more cautious about attributing the quality of knowledge to what teachers say or do. For them, knowledge is a complex task and it is hard to externalize what exact knowledge implies in action and how this knowledge could be switched to subsequent action.

The ambiguity for Fenstermacher (1994) was felt in terms of *“whether the insights and understandings teachers express in narratives are accorded the status of knowledge merely because they are teacher-articulated insights and understandings or whether they must meet some categorical standard before being accorded the status of knowledge”* (13).

It was also held by the same researcher that: *“Given that both strands seek the explication of the same epistemological type and that each uses novel and provocative methods for eliciting and understanding teacher knowledge, the explication of the concept of practical knowledge has much to gain from more dialogue between them”* (14).

This presents a supporting motivation for the use of a mixed-method approach when exploring teacher professional knowledge and its connection to practice. We could add here that the answer to the research questions related to teacher knowledge can be obtained by collecting data both quantitatively and qualitatively. Such an approach could bring to terms the differentness of quantitative-qualitative use and application. This issue has been clarified by Punch (2009) admitting that: *“Rather than either-or thinking about the qualitative-quantitative distinction, or tired arguments about the superiority of one approach over the other...the methods and data used (qualitative, quantitative or both) should follow from and fit in with the question(s) being asked”* (4).

Researchers like Snape & Spencer (2003), Seale (1999), Verma & Mallick (1999), argue that rather than focusing much on the frequent philosophical arguments, which might weaken

the ability to select and employ the most suitable research design for providing an answer to the asked research questions, quantitative and qualitative methods are not perceived in competition or contradiction, but instead are seen as interchangeable strategies which fit through different types of studies, questions and situations.

Following the above argument, it becomes possible to use research instruments and tools such as the questionnaire, interviewing and classroom observations in a triangulated way. Despite the fact that some people might consider the use of the questionnaire as a positivistic manoeuvre on the part of the researcher, it is not, however, the case in our study. Instead of seeking generalizable truths out of the questionnaire, the collected data were meant to back up the next qualitative stage of the study and to help in the process of interpretation.

As such, our position was in agreement with the view of Troudi (2010) holding that the use of a particular research method should not be perceived as an indication of an epistemological position, but should rather be viewed as a researcher's choice and calculation to deal with a particular issue and treat data in a particular way, hence, the paradigmatic nature of his study could be reflected. Furthermore, there is compatibility between the use of interviews and the epistemological assumptions previously held clarifying that meaning is connectedly built up between the research object and subject. Thus, the presupposition at the level of using an interview is that there is no one objective truth to be found out. It was emphasized by researchers, such as Wellington (2000), that interviews are designed to provide opinions and implicit perspectives, hence, their objective is not to create some kind of inherent truth in an educational setting.

In multi-methods research, interviewing is an important stage that naturally follows classroom observation. Many experts such as Wallen & Fraenkel (2001) believe that interviewing is a significant way for the researcher to verify the accuracy of, to accept or doubt, the impressions constituted in the course of observation. Designing interviews with the

observed teachers provides them with an opportunity to reveal their thoughts and generate various visions about their teaching acts and qualities. Many advantages emerge out of the use of such a procedure, among which the possibility of having access to various insights, excluding the possibility of bias, and form a triangulation at the level of the different perspectives of the main study subjects. As concerns this point, we should say that our purpose behind triangulation is to get coordinated quantitative and qualitative data by, as believed by Punch (2009), jointly combining the various strengths of the two methods.

Similarly, it was emphasized by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) that using a multi-method approach as a unified triangular technique is really efficient in explaining thoroughly the richness and complexity of the human behavior from different perspectives, and this can be done by simply utilizing both types of data; quantitative and qualitative. Thus, the use of this technique is evident in the present study.

At this level, it is a reminder that a questionnaire, classroom observation, and an interviewing were all used to explore the knowledge of experienced EFL teachers in practice. Triangulation has, actually, enlightened us in a variety of ways. The questionnaire yielded results which were taken as a platform for revealing the viewpoints of the participants which, in turn, were dealt with deeply through interviewing. We add here that some practical accounts were introduced during the interview sessions, but these were not completely understood until some lessons were observed and practices were highlighted by the observed teachers. Furthermore, recall that followed classroom observation provided the evidence to support the consistency or inconsistency among knowledge, practice and the knowledge underlying the teachers' practice.

Besides, this relationship was explained via the interview evidence which also provided accounts of the different views and practices held by the teachers. Consequently, the aspects of the phenomenon under investigation are explored by use of multiple methods which could

not be the case when a single method was utilized.

#### **4.4 Research Instrumentation**

The following part is devoted to the presentation of the instruments used in collecting data in order to assure the reliability of both the collection process as well as its evidence. Many researchers, like Lewis & Ritchie, believe that written documents need to explain how the research was piloted and why given approaches and methods were chosen to meet the aims of that research.

In our study, we used three research instruments to collect quantitative and qualitative data in an attempt to answer the already stated research questions. These were: teachers' questionnaire, an interview and a classroom observation followed by recall. In what follows, we present the purpose and the attempted justification for each instrument.

##### **4.4.1 The Teacher Questionnaire Instrument**

The aim of the teacher questionnaire was to reveal the views of EFL teachers about the constituents of both their knowledge and practice and the possible difficulties encountered from their own viewpoints. Emphatically, this study is basically qualitative, though the questionnaire was meant to serve as a main basis for the other data collection instruments.

We thought that using a teacher questionnaire was vital and proved to be necessary. We used it for many reasons, among which we mention the frequency of surveys used in the Algerian context of educational research. Besides, using qualitative research based on interviews is actually a challenging experience for both the participants and us. With these contextual factors, it appeared significant to use the questionnaire at the primary stage of data collection for a natural move from what is overt to what is covert.

A questionnaire is, generally speaking, easy and palpable to start with and could be completed in a short span of time compared to an interview, which is often complex and not easy to handle. The necessity of making use of the questionnaire at an early stage was

intended to help us know about the subjects; namely, those wishing to participate willingly in the next phases of the study, and particularly those who could best fit in providing responses to the already stated questions. Besides, a questionnaire could be utilized to know about the views of a good number of participants even if they are not interviewed for potential reasons or constraints.

Although the participants' views were not detailed or profound, still they reflected an amalgam of viewpoints in a way that could validate what was to be revealed in another way. The questionnaire was, above all, an instrument meant to triangulate the findings resulting from other methods used in the process of data collection.

The review of related literature rendered evident the use of a questionnaire to explore teacher knowledge. A striking example is found in Meijer et al. (2001) who used a five Likert scaled format questionnaire to detect the similarities and differences at the level of 69 language teachers' knowledge when teaching reading comprehension to high school students. The case implied the possibility for questionnaires to be used as an integral part in quantitative surveys when exploring teacher knowledge.

#### **4.4.2 Classroom Observation Instrument Followed by Recall**

In our study, a classroom observation was used to gather data and gain knowledge about teachers' practices and their underlying knowledge. Such a research tool is often used in research on teacher knowledge and practice. The classroom observation was, as suggested by Farrell and Kun (2007), a two-sided technique. First, it suggests the role of both researchers and teachers to pilot, based on former views of teachers and classroom activities, and see if these views are actualized and evidenced in classroom practices (deductive perspective).

Second, observation relates to teachers who first look at their teaching and then go back and check what views are being held through real classroom practices (inductive perspective). This second stance was actually the one taken in the present study. We adopted

the inductive approach because of its suitability to the open-ended type of observation used in this study. By visiting the teachers in their classes, we did not want to focus on specific practices and take note of them in a checklist. We were simply interested in what really happened in the classroom as well as the teachers' attitudes towards some events, how teachers perceived these events, why they acted in some ways and more importantly the kind of knowledge that informed their practice. We first recorded the teachers' sessions, and then moved to follow-up interviews with the teachers, the aim of this stimulated recall was to discuss them in the context of the lessons observed.

Norrish (1996) pointed out that discussion which follows classroom observation is advantageous in that research takes place in parallel lines with the teaching act and is located in the immediate setting. The recorded materials, notes and interpretive observation of the classroom events were all utilized in further recalled observation.

What happened was that the construction of the knowledge base of the classroom events, against the accounts given by the observed teachers in action, were paralleled stories which resulted from the stimulated recall. Researchers, like Craig (1999), referred to this element by evoking the possibility of juxtaposing the teacher's versions of their stories with the researcher's ones. Hence, parallelism emerges in the study both in the common responses received and the juxtaposed accounts of teachers.

Furthermore, it was believed by Mullock (2006) that a recalled classroom observation is a vital tool for exploring teacher knowledge as a foundation of practice, presenting thus an attempt to solve the striking methodological problem of questing teacher thinking. We would admit that it's not easy to unveil what teachers mentally process in teaching; hence the difficulty to uncover the implicit nature of knowledge within the teaching process. Despite the fact that stimulated recall cannot depict the whole thinking and knowledge taking place while recording the lessons, it can though indicate the knowledge areas used and relied on by



the teachers.

One of the main objectives in this study is to draw a connection between what an EFL teacher knows and what he/she does in classroom practice. Dependently, part of the methodology used is based on the presence with teachers in their classrooms and observe them. Vasey (1996) considers classroom observation as a cornerstone in exploring teacher knowledge by unfolding what a teacher knows and how he/she realizes his/her knowledge in real classroom practice. However, teacher knowledge is not always drawn upon in practice because, as believed by Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver & Thwaite (2001), teaching is a complex act with many intruding factors and elements.

To observe teachers in their natural environment might also depict the gap between what is said in theory and what is done in practice. What we could add here is that the teachers' contribution during the stimulated recall sessions, after classroom observation, helped in showing the knowledge base of their practices and the emerging problems they face when teaching (A recalled observation sample is found in appendix 5).

#### **4.4.3 The Interview Instrument**

Our study was principally based on interviewing as the main research instrument. It was considered vital because it aimed at exploring how the participating teachers built their views of the world and shape their experiences in a sensible and meaningful way.

In Algeria, however, the interview is of seldom use in educational settings; this is compared to questionnaires and experimental accounts. Nonetheless, interviews are widely accepted and used as means of instrumentation, especially when studying teacher knowledge and practice in both general education and other related domains. We had a number of purposes in mind when we opted for the use of interviewing. It helped us transcend the interviewees' thoughts and possibly read their minds in an attempt to explore their views. Actually, the scheduled interviews provided us with insights about the respondents' reactions

to the questionnaire, highlighting, thus, the findings shown by the questionnaire. Besides, using the interview helped us grasp some contextual factors affecting the realization of teacher knowledge in practice.

Researchers like Snape & Spencer (2003) made it clear that an interview, like other qualitative methods, guarantees a holistic view of the participants' thoughts and actions in a variety of real- life situations.

We should also emphasize that we sought explanations for the views of the majority as well as the minority of participants, the aim of which was to achieve a double-edged argument of the ideas presented in the chapter devoted to the study findings.

The use of the questionnaire and classroom observation helped us a lot in highlighting most of the issues which were also highlighted in the interviews. The interview, therefore, had the function of a triangulation technique in which many comparisons were made in the course of data presentation as revealed by the various methods. The participants' views as well as their practices were stated and developed by the interviewed teachers. Therefore, using the interview was a great and fruitful method which helped investigating deeply the issues evoked in other methods.

#### **4.5 Population and Sampling of the Study**

In this study, we've opted for purposive sampling by selecting a number of EFL experienced teachers in the department of English at Batna university.

Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003) believe that in purposive sampling; the subjects of a sample are selected on a purpose which is representing a type in relation to a key criterion.

We've made our choice carefully at the level of sampling to avoid any potential bias. Researchers like Ritchie et al. (2003) explain the necessity to make purposive sampling objective so that it can be scrutinized independently.

We've chosen a sample of 40 EFL teachers from the department of English, at Batna

university, to take part in the study. It should be acknowledged that the number of teachers meets the requirements of purposive sampling and besides, not all of them participated equally in the process of data collection. We should also mention that all teachers participated in answering the questionnaire, three of them were chosen for the recalled classroom observation, and four were selected for interviewing.

The participants in our study were selected on the basis of the years of experience, knowing that the study focuses on experience and its role in constructing a basis for knowledge. The purposive choice of experienced teachers was also based on the concept of teacher knowledge as an experiential and practical process which models the teachers' practice and is remodeled by experience. The more experience there is, the more knowledge could be gained from the teacher. Experienced teachers are well disposed to do the job than novice teachers do.

It was emphasized by Reynolds (1995) that *“expert teachers have established procedural knowledge for solving discipline problems than do novices, experts can divert more of their attention to problem definition, representation and strategy evaluation”* (214).

Again, years of experience are different from expertise in that the former do not guarantee the latter, and could be considered as one of its indicators. Another tendency by Gage and Berliner (1992) holds that experience is an important prerequisite for the development of expertise. It has been suggested by researchers, like Westerman (1991), that five years of teaching experience might be the time span by which expertise may develop.

To achieve this, the sample of this study was limited to permanent EFL teachers in the department of English, for almost all teachers were experienced, except for a few of them who were recently recruited and were still considered novices. Therefore, we decided to distribute the questionnaire to the whole population for the simple fact that all teachers were permanent teachers and all showed good will to participate. Teachers who were newly

recruited had a certain teaching experience as they used to work before as part-time teachers in the same department. By doing this, we guarantee that all teachers, who took part in the study, had a good deal of teaching experience. It is worthy saying that (70%) of the teachers had more than five years of teaching experience. Such a period of teaching experience is compatible with Westerman's (1991) identified span of time.

The distribution of the questionnaire to a heterogeneous group of teachers provided maximum variation of participants; hence the heterogeneity of their accounts based on their varied experiences and backgrounds was targeted.

The stage at which we distributed the questionnaire helped us decide upon both the sample for the interviews as well as the classroom observation stages. Actually, it was helpful to gain knowledge about the collective of teachers, especially through group discussions in the course of the questionnaire administration. We should add here that beginning with the questionnaire made it easy for us to know about teachers who wished to participate in the other stages of the field study. About (70%) of them agreed to be interviewed and about the same percentage accepted to be observed and recalled while teaching.

Due to some constraints such as time limitation of the field study (only eight weeks), it was not possible for us to observe and interview all teachers. Consequently, we made up our mind to proceed with only the most experienced teachers in classroom observation and interviewing. Thus, the selection was principally based upon the number of teaching years and secondarily on the subject matter being taught.

Observation was carried out with three teachers throughout a period of eight weeks, followed by semi-structured interviewing with four experienced teachers, all of whom work in the department of English at Batna University.

The observed teachers were experienced in the field with an average of twenty years of teaching experience. Actually, we chose these three teachers because they were distinguished

in many ways such as their ability and potential to teach a variety of subject matters, tutoring, supervision and some of them also taught us in the past.

#### 4.6 The Process of Collecting Data

The types of data collected were both quantitative and qualitative. We collected quantitative data by making use of a teacher knowledge questionnaire. As for the qualitative data, these were gathered by means of classroom observation, followed by recall, semi-structured interviewing and an open-ended section in the questionnaire.

The following part is devoted to presenting a thorough account of the data collection strategies in order to ensure their trustworthiness. The field study was conducted over a period of eight weeks; October and November 2016, as shown below.

**Table 4.1: The Time Span of the Study**

Stages in weeks	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
First week	<i>(first to fourth week) :</i> Administration and analysis of the questionnaire data	<i>(Second to sixth week) :</i> Classroom observation followed by recall	
Second week			
Third week			
Fourth week			
Fifth week			<i>(Fifth to eighth week) :</i> Semi-structured interviewing
Sixth week			
Seventh week			
Eighth week			

##### 4.6.1 Quantitative Data Collection

Actually, quantitative data collection represented the first stage of the study design. The data were collected through a knowledge questionnaire designed for teachers and which was

piloted at first hand by distributing it, so that some items, with low reliability, could be omitted and others could be added on the basis of teachers' advices, recommendations and professional guidance.

The procedure of piloting the questionnaire was significant in many ways: (a) It helped us in contacting the respondents and invite them to take part in the interviews and classroom observation; (b) we were able to fix irrelevant words and potential ambiguities resulting into unreliable items; (c) detecting unreliable items and deciding whether to delete or reformulate them, (d) we were able to ascertain and organize the timing for both the field study and the the questionnaire; (e) we were able to reckon the compatibility of the study with the target research environment; (f) Accounting for the suitability of the sampling procedure; (g) rendering the items more adequate; (h) verifying the instrument reliability and above all ( i ) having access to the initial views maintained by the respondents.

#### **4.6.1.1 The Teachers' Questionnaire Construction**

The research questionnaire consists of three parts.

In the first part, teachers were meant to provide personal information about themselves including name (optional), gender, qualifications, years of teaching experience, and the university level being taught. Part two represents seven areas to be explored: knowledge about subject matter, knowledge about pedagogy, knowledge about curriculum, knowledge about learners, knowledge about the self, knowledge about contextual factors, and more importantly sources of teacher knowledge. We included in the third part of the questionnaire an open-ended part to get additional comments and viewpoints from the respondents. We also asked the respondents to show their will in case they wanted to participate in other stages of the study. We ended the questionnaire by thanking the respondents for their help (A sample of the teachers' questionnaire is found in appendix 1).

The review of literature, the contact with EFL teacher colleagues, and our personal

experience as an EFL teacher for 15 years, were all factors that informed the construction of the questionnaire. Again, we really became familiar with issues related to teacher knowledge and practice by reviewing the related literature.

In order to guarantee the validity of the statements, the questionnaire was shown to and consulted with the supervisor in the department to which we belong. The supervisor who holds an MC degree showed consent and helped in the refinement of the questionnaire before its distribution. The various questionnaire items were also refined throughout the responses given by teachers in the interviews in which many issues of the questionnaire were covered.

In addition to external validity, we were able to check the questionnaire findings by drawing parallels with either common sense or the respondents' justifications of their views. We also checked our findings in relation to relevant literature. We should admit here that not all the findings were likely to meet positive expectations of the existing body of literature. If this happens, the research authenticity might be at risk. Furthermore, we made an attempt to compare the findings of the questionnaire with similar findings existing in reviewed literature. Therefore, we partially came to assure the validity of the questionnaire items.

We designed the questionnaire on the basis of the five-item Likert Scale which is widely used by researchers in research works similar to ours. The items presented various areas of teacher knowledge, sources of this knowledge and other factors related to this context. Also, this type of design provided us with exact information about the participants' degree of agreement or disagreement, and all this gives the interpretive quality to our study.

#### **4.6.1.2 The Questionnaire Administration**

To overcome the problem of wasting time in distributing the questionnaire, we seized the opportunity of official meetings (CP'S) in which all permanent teachers gather with the administrative staff to discuss and debate various pedagogical issues. We were informed about their willingness and consent to respond to the various items of the questionnaire. It has

been distributed to teachers in person and collected back two up to four weeks later.

A number of informal discussions took place between the researcher and other teachers, and they were fruitful in providing an insight into the visions teachers held. The usefulness of those discussions lied in the ability to choose subjects fitting into classroom observation and interviews.

#### **4.6.2 Qualitative Data Collection**

The responses given to the open-ended items of the questionnaire, recalled classroom observation and interviewing were the three main sources utilized in collecting qualitative data. We included a part at the end of the questionnaire, in which we expected the participating teachers to bring about further dimensions of teacher knowledge and other issues of interest to them.

##### **4.6.2.1 Data Obtained from the Classroom Observation**

The classroom observation was meant to be a realistic embodiment of an authentic classroom context. With this purpose in mind, we arranged with three of the teachers, the most experienced ones, for being present in their classes and observe them once a week over a period of eight weeks. We found it easy and suitable to choose one period and record it each week. Such a procedure was followed by a recalled and audio-recorded discussion with the observed teacher. It was to be done the same day when the teacher was free of other preoccupations. Many insights emerged out of the discussion and these covered interesting areas of performance and knowledge foundations. (A recalled observation script is found in appendix 5).

We should remind here that the timing of the classroom observation was done in parallel lines with the use of either the questionnaire or the interviews. We observed three teachers in their natural classroom context, and these classes were chosen on the basis of the learning skills and the subject matter being taught. The chosen teachers taught second and third year



classes in different subject matters; namely culture and civilization, linguistics, grammar and TEFL. We have recorded all the classes using a portable digital device, and then we downloaded the recorded material on a computer for further revision. We were able to deal with the recorded material and stop at certain points with reasoning and thinking, trying to understand motives behind some actions. We dealt with recall in a way that made the interval between teacher thinking, in the course of teaching, and the reporting act as brief as possible, and sometimes during the same day of recording, the aim of which was to ensure the recall reliability.

What followed classroom observation were stimulated recall discussions, which in turn presented a solid basis to explore teachers' knowledge which underlain their actions. In addition, we added a lesson script which was sent to the teacher and the written version contained specific parts of the lesson with a few comments to investigate teacher knowledge in relation to certain areas of teaching. Teachers completed the scripts and then gave them back to us.

It remains important to add that the scripts were useful as a source of recalled material. Then, we qualitatively dealt with and analyzed the audio-recorded material and the scripts together.

#### **4.6.2.2 The Interview Data**

Actually, we found it helpful to fix the interview plan on the basis of the preceding phases. Interviewing was meant to incorporate the new understandings gained from the initial analysis of data gathered from the questionnaire and the recalled observation. We'd like to remind that the interview was not strictly based on the questionnaire items, yet there were many common views and practices reflected on by the participants in both means of instrumentation.

We took these opportunities as a solid ground to discuss the teachers' way of reasoning by

which we justified that some findings are based on the questionnaire items that represented them. Thus, integration was made between some of the findings obtained from the questionnaire and the corresponding ones obtained from the interviews.

The distribution and collection of the questionnaire appeared to be of great importance to the latter qualitative phase. Our position of responsibility in the department of English (assistant of the head of the department) made us to be permanently present and this was a good chance to gain knowledge about the participating teachers and the EFL context.

Talking with teachers and meeting them for a period of eight weeks was a way to provide us with rich and clear insights about the diverse areas of the teachers' job. Moreover, we held individual and group meetings with teachers, so that we could form an idea about their work. These occasions helped us revisit the focus of the study; hence conducting informed and backed up interviews. It follows that qualitative evidence, obtained from interviewing, was informed by the findings of the questionnaire as well as the various discussions that followed classroom observation. The usefulness of the discussions resides in the fact that the relationship between knowledge and practice was made clear and understandable. The context where EFL experienced teachers work was also made clear and had set the basis for exploration and discussion.

Most importantly, three of the interviewees were the observed teachers themselves. While we interviewed teachers, we noticed that they made connections between their views and real events which happened in the observed lessons. This proved to be a justification of the teachers' views to be based on actual classroom practice.

As mentioned before, the interview of this study was structured in a way based on a set of themes meant to be covered. Many issues emerged in the course of interviewing and were not previously assumed, though they presented a solid background for teachers in practical contexts.

Being a teacher- researcher in the field, we had familiarity with the context of the interviewees and this helped a lot in relating practical context to theory and thus becoming able to identify major themes to talk about with the interviewees. The worthy experience of the interviewed teachers gave rise to worthy issues to be explored and discussed.

Researchers, such as Kvale (2007), believe that semi-structured interviews provide solid and reliable data by not only exploring the stances of the participants' experiences and their fieldwork, but also providing a deep insight into their real world, activities and opinions.

Using a semi-structured interview provides coherence with epistemological and ontological assumptions raised in the present study. In other terms, many realities exist in the minds of EFL experienced teachers, and these realities, however, could not be fully grasped or approached unless the holders reveal them from a variety of perspectives.

This format of interviewing allowed for the inclusion of emerging issues. So, we managed to create a balance between the issue under investigation and what is raised from the teachers' own viewpoints as a mental processing. Accordingly, a well-balanced framework of connection and discussion was established between the interviewer and the interviewee, and the general tendency of the discussion was natural and spontaneous as long as it revolved around the themes relevant to the study. (An interview script sample is found in appendix 4).

The interview plan, found in Appendix 2, was principally based on the research questions. We dealt carefully with background studies before we decided upon the final version of the interview plan. Actually, the interview plan had been left open-ended till its last version, the aim of which was to include emerging issues that could be raised by the participants.

The questionnaire items were also taken into consideration when scheduling the interview. Thus, many items in the questionnaire were intentionally discussed in the interview so that the resulting data could enlighten the variety of perspectives made by the responding teachers in the questionnaire.

Again, it has been claimed by Punch (2009) that the semi-structured interview should be characterized by a flexible nature. According to him, this kind of interviewing is more important and palpable and can accommodate questions or issues for discussion, communication skills, listening and follow-up questioning as well.

Admittedly, we would say that after becoming familiar with the interview procedures, we only then used the schedule to guarantee the full preoccupation with an area to be explored. We also showed flexibility when wording and ordering the questions. The interview plan had been improved many times by means of checking results as well as the questionnaire findings comprising the quantitative evidence. Such evidence was obtained from the teachers' responses to the open-ended part of the questionnaire. The process of refinement was also based on the informal discussions we made with EFL teachers in the course of administering the questionnaire and recalled observation sessions.

Roughly speaking, the planning and design of the interviews was largely fed by the accumulated ideas, themes and experiences shown throughout the whole process of data collection. Again, we did not conduct the interviews till somehow the last stages of data collection to intentionally include all possible field data which added strength to the whole interviewing process.

It was claimed by Legard, Keegan & Ward, (2003) that it is not an easy task to conduct a thoroughly-successful interview because interviewers are themselves instruments of research and have to rely on their personal and professional qualities as interviewers.

The interviewed teachers presented a rich source of knowledge and were positive in sharing their knowledge. Our flexible exploration of the knowledge foundations did not render us arrogant in recognizing the interviewees' knowledge. In other words, we were ready to listen, learn and understand rather than to test or judge their knowledge.

According to Legard et al. (2003), a qualitative interviewer is expected to be: (1) a positive

listener who can proceed further with probation, (2) eager to know more about what was said, (3) able to draw good relations with human subjects, (4) showing calm and openness during the interview, and (5) being apt to accept the participants 'power and efficacy without a need for competitive attitudes.

Accordingly, the four interviewed teachers were chosen from the department of English at Batna university, and this was done while implementing the questionnaire and classroom observation, followed by recall. At this level, we point out that three out of the four teachers were already subjects in the recall sessions which followed the classroom observation. We did not, however, interview the same teachers for the purpose of recalling observation, though some appeals to the observed lessons were made by them.

To conduct the interviews, we arranged for appointments with the selected interviewees via phone contact and these interviews were conducted in the same department. We were flexible in letting the interviewees select the place they preferred in order to create a normal and relaxed atmosphere for the interview.

At the start of the interview, both the aims of the research and the interview were briefed. We assured the interviewees that the recorded material will be confidentially used for research purposes only, and we then took their permission to proceed. A digital device was used to record the interviews.

A positive feature about the device was its digital quality in filtering any surrounding noise as well as its automatic recording of the date, time and duration of the interview.

Data were transferred from the audio recorder to a personal computer for back-up and further checking. It was the interviewee who set the time of the interview and generally lasted for one hour. We managed to handle the time of the interview in a way that all areas and issues are covered at organized intervals.

All the interviewees were EFL experts and had been teaching English for more than twenty years, with rich and diversified teaching profiles and also had opportunities to visit the UK or the USA and spent sufficient time for training purposes.

The process of interviewing was conducted directly to create rapport with the interviewed teachers. We also tried to remain within the limitation of the interview schedule to a great level. When proceeding with the interviews, we gradually became acquainted with the consecutive questions that formed the basis of the interview and resulted into a normal flow of experience. The schedule was, nonetheless, maintained to make sure that all the areas were highlighted during the interview.

To this end, researchers like Arthur & Nazroo (2003) report some ways to make use of an interview plan as: First, a positive reminder to enhance the consistency of data collection.

Second, an aid to check the systematic coverage of relevant issues and with some uniformity and the third way as a fluid procedure to consider the discussion not as an exact prescription of coverage. We found these ways relevant while working throughout the general interview process.

We were careful about all the interviewees' utterances along with the way they uttered things (the tone of voice). Also, areas that were made emphatic by the interviewees were further discussed with them for the simple fact that they represent their own realities, hence their emphasis could be justified. Remarks and comments were sometimes made as elicitation techniques to obtain more data from the interviewees.

#### **4.7 The Process of Analyzing Data**

The following part presents the analytical framework by which quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed. We should remind that a few parts of the analysis like the initial analysis of the questionnaire and classroom observation were simultaneously conducted with the field study. Besides, we analyzed the responses to the close-ended part of the questionnaire

electronically and the remaining analyses were manually carried out.

#### **4.7.1 Analyzing Quantitative Data**

A statistical package, known as SPSS, was used to carry out descriptive statistics. Despite the fact that this study is principally qualitative, we found it useful to rely on statistical analysis to detect through the percentage and frequency of positive and negative views, with regards to various thematic issues and topics included in the questionnaire. What we got as responses were integrated in and informed the subsequent qualitative analysis.

#### **4.7.2 Analyzing Qualitative Data**

The data obtained from observation, interviewing and the responses to the open-ended part of the questionnaire were treated and analysed from qualitative perspectives. In what follows, we provide a clear description of the procedure.

The analytical process was done manually for the simple expedient that it met our research purpose. We felt comfortable to deal with data manually and we were really engaged with the data transcripts. However, Gibbs (2007), for example, believes that no easy formula is given to provide a perfect analysis of data; still the goal could be achieved through comprehensive analysis and carefulness.

Through the frequent reading of the data scripts, we managed to refine the analysis of data a few times. This was based on quite a number of things such as: the successive refinement of data on the basis of the respondents' feedback, consulting with experienced teachers about the relevance of certain issues in given circumstances...etc. Some issues were omitted as they were practically irrelevant. In the following table we summed up the amount of data collected as well as the data refined for final analysis.

**Table 4.2: Qualitatively Gathered and Analyzed Data Amount**

Data type			Time spent (by hr & min)	Amount of words collected (Wds)	Amount of words analysed (Wds)	Percentage of analysed words to collected words (%)
<b>Data Obtained from Interviewing</b>	Interviewee -1-		2 hrs.10 ms	8200 w.	1400 w.	17.0 %
	Interviewee -2-		2 hrs.20 ms	9000 w.	1560 w.	17.3 %
	Interviewee -3-		1 h. 45 ms	7900 w.	1200 w.	15.1 %
	Interviewee -4-		1 h. 30 ms	7000 w.	900 w.	12.8 %
<b>Overall amount of interviewing</b>			7 hours & 45 minutes.	32100 words.	3872 words.	12.0 %
<b>Data Obtained from Classroom Observation</b>	Observed classrooms	Class -1-	1 h.	2400 w	450 w	18.7 %
		Class -2-	1 h. 33 ms	2800 w	320 w	11.4 %
		Class -3-	1 h. 15 ms	3900 w	1100 w	28.2 %
	Recalled data	Class -1-	1 h. 20 ms	2000 w	205 w	10.2 %
		Class -2-	1 h. 10 ms.	2300 w.	426 w.	18.5 %
		Class -3-	50 ms.	1400 w.	336 w.	24. %
<b>Overall Observation Data Amount</b>			7 hours & 08 minutes	14800 words	2837 words	19.1 %
<b>Amount of Open-ended Questionnaire Data</b>			No applicability	401 words	81 words	20.1 %
<b>Overall Qualitative Data Amount</b>			14 hours & 53 minutes	46900 words	6709 words	14.3 %

#### 4.7.2.1 Analysis of Data Obtained from Interviewing

The data obtained from the interviews were qualitatively analyzed. The analysis followed three processes which were management of data, attributing codes and then providing descriptive and explanatory accounts.

Due to the great amount of information and qualitative data obtained, which meets the view of Ritchie & O'Connor (2003), we naturally started with data management, then data were coded, and passing ultimately to basic descriptions and explanations. Actually, this reductive procedure had been followed throughout the whole analytical process. In other words, reduction took place at all stages of data analysis; the beginning, middle and ending of the process. When we started reducing the amount of data, we were careful about the omission of any useful information and also about the removal of issues from their proper



context. After the transcription of data obtained from interviewing, we then coded all the transcripts.

We should add here that the obtained data were put into meaningful parts with categories and sub-categories which were synthesized on the basis of these meaningful parts. We gave codes to the categories and sub-categories of the first interviews with which we started the analysis. We, then, attributed codes to the remaining interviews altogether. We point here that other codes emerged in the course of the analytical process. (Codes of analysis are listed in appendix 3).

The reduction of data was also made possible by avoiding repetition of the same information; thus avoiding the same coding. Data were then classified on the basis of both types of codes; pre-determined and emergent. In fact, we manually conducted this operation by use of envelopes that contained pieces of data which were cut off from the transcripts symbolizing a specific code. From a thematic perspective, we gathered envelopes together in a way that represents topics and sub-topics. The envelopes, with codes written on them and the contents inside them, constituted the reduced material for data classification. We then dealt with envelopes and their contents independently.

A further reduction of data was made at this level by omitting similar quotations and issues which were not relevant to the idea being studied.

#### **4.7.2.2 On the Management of Data Obtained from Interviewing**

We decided upon the themes and concepts by management of data which were symbolized, classified and compared. We initially managed to develop a view about how to cover the bulky data. This was achieved by becoming familiar with data, identifying recurrent themes and creating then a code list. Of course, the thematic skeleton was refined at regular intervals by dropping some categories and maintaining others. Also, some data pieces were coded more than once because they included referential ties with more than one category.

In the step that followed, we were meant to sort data in order to detect through topics with similar content or characteristics so that they could be located together. At this particular step, we found it helpful to concentrate on each topic and its related categories and thus distinctive and detailed issues found within could be dissociated. The ultimate phase in data management implied a synthesis and reduction of the original data to unveil evidence for later representation. We were careful throughout this phase by probing words and properties of the original material so that both meaning and relevance to the object under investigation are maintained. While reducing the data, and in order for us to stick to the original material during this phase, we opted for three criteria proposed by Ritchie & O'Connor (2003).

At the start, we did our best to keep words, concepts and expressions as they were originally uttered by the participating teachers. Then, we did not deal with data in a deep interpretive way but rather a surface interpretation took place. This particular stage implied a possibility to check and double check the utterances as analysis was proceeding on. Besides, we did not judge material as being irrelevant as long as it had inclusion which was not clear at the start.

#### **4.7.2.3 Attributing Codes to Qualitative Data**

It should be noted that giving codes to data is vital to externalize qualitative data and, as Gibbs (2007) believes, simplifying the quick interference and assimilation of data which take the same code. Data were coded by putting labels against pieces of the data and through this, we could attribute meaning to data pieces. The labeling worked in many ways; it helped us index data, storing and restoring them, also grouping topics together and specifying patterns.

Therefore, we utilized two sorts of codes: low inference codes and higher conceptual codes. We note here that codes were brought from various corners; some codes were brought to the data and others were found in them. The questionnaire issues and the theoretical framework of the study guided the pre-specified codes. Other categories were, however,

suggested by the data.

In the manuscripts, natural breaks were used as cutting-off points which denoted changes in topics, but not all the time. The sections were then examined in a profound way at the first stages of analysis; this brought us close enough to the data and thus made it easy for us to carry on analysis in later stages.

Corbin & Strauss (2008) believe that although a detailed approach is monotonous and not simply a general reading of scripts and pulling out themes, it is, however, this initially detailed work which conducts to richness and density of description.

We should also admit that some of the inferred topics were already part of the conceptual study framework and others emerged from interviews. Again, we tended to create a chart for topics which included all the coded parts from all interviews organized in terms of sub-topics and categories. The purpose behind this analysis was to reflect the realities expressed by the interviewees and not applying the conceptual framework to what they said.

Naturally, we were able to anticipate some of the interviewees' utterances as long as their sayings revolved around a concept, which is the case in all types of interviews, including the unstructured ones. A careful establishment of a positive orientation and coherence between the framework of the study and the interviewees' utterances was also made. The point was that we avoided forcing data to serve the framework of the study. Again, by avoiding this way, we naturally avoided confusion between the research methodological steps in general, and the research ontological assumptions, in particular. It follows that when presenting the findings, some categories were guided by the questionnaire responses and others were constructed from emerging issues.

We have used both the inductive and deductive methods to analyze the data obtained from the interviews; hence these methods were of great importance in qualitative analysis such as our own.

Researchers like Lewis (2003) frequently claim the need to establish a balance between the researcher's practical intentions and ends, fostered by the research questions, and the necessity to keep flexible and open to emergent themes and concepts.

It is worthy saying that the questions posed earlier in the research, the interview as well as the questionnaire items all formed an accessible basis to some issues and categories with which we could start. Some other topics and categories were formed up in the course of analysis.

At first, we manually transcribed the interviews and then separately revised them to stick to the resulting topics and categories in order to detect through the possibly emerging categories. The wordy transcription of each interview was broken into parts to synthesize the categories. In case an initial category, resulting from the transcription stage, was not applicable to an interview part, then it was meant to construct a new category. At the end of each interview analysis, we prepared a list of all categories and sub-categories which resulted from the analysis the interview. We then used the lists to combine similar categories and moved to the preparation of thematic charts. Each thematic chart represented a category or sub-category held by all the interviewees. When all thematic charts were ready, we then classified the coded scripts in accordance with the thematic categories. As concerns categories which were similar, we grouped them together into topics and sub-topics.

In our study, we used topical and analytical coding described by Richards (2005). What happened exactly was that whenever we carried out a topic coding, we naturally put labels against text pieces in accordance with its topic, and analytic coding involved interpretation, conceptualization and theorizing of data. What could be added here is that analytical coding implied an act of gathering data and reflecting upon them to achieve overall concepts and patterns. These embodied the general domains or areas of teacher knowledge which in turn was used as an analytical framework to analyse qualitative data obtained from recalled

classroom observation.

It follows that topic and analytic coding are also identical with the descriptive and explanatory accounts, put forward by Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor (2003), and other researchers.

#### **4.7.2.4 Accounts: Description and Explanation**

Our descriptive accounts implied three acts: detection, categorization and classification. Starting with detection, we were meant to look into a theme, with all the participants in our study, and take note of the views and issues which were labeled as belonging to that theme. This operation was applicable to the study by checking data, in the form of cut segments, in all envelopes symbolized by a specific category.

The aim was to make sure that the participants' ideas are relevant within a category along with the views that can be included under it. Now, with categorization we were concerned with a refinement of the initial categories and then attributing data to the new refined ones.

In so doing, we valued some categories to be relabeled to become part of other categories. As for the process of classification, we further refined the categories and also specified some classes to help us externalize, condense and introduce our data. Such a step was taken when the whole category was connected with another theme. In general, this operation also implied an achievement of the detailed analytical skeleton to expose the data.

In the present study, we introduced some categories on the basis of the questionnaire results. In fact, we were meant to go beyond the descriptive data analysis by noting relationships, similarities and differences in the great amount of data. Occasionally, we found similar views of the participants in relation to certain ideas included in the questionnaire; this was in addition to some differences in their viewpoints.

The explanatory considerations implied the detection of models of association, checking these associations and then forming explanations. The detection of models implied tracing

connections and interrelations among the data, which was the outcome of both quantitative and qualitative analysis of data in the present study. Furthermore, the questionnaire results shed light on different patterns of accordance and discordance among the participating teachers. In a similar way, we found agreements and disagreements among the interviewed teachers about some issues that were introduced in the findings report.

The act of checking connections and associations among data implied the detection of the distributed level of association throughout the whole data bulk. This was revealed by showing those who agreed or disagreed by means of percentages. A further step was to provide reasons for the occurrence of association patterns.

The search for explanations was based on the clear reasons provided by the participants within their responses as well as the inferences we drew from their accounts, by means of implied logic and common sense. We also made an appeal to other related studies to draw upon explanations or concepts to see how positively they served our findings.

#### **4.7.2.5 Analyzing Data of the Recalled Classroom Observation**

At this level, we qualitatively analyzed verbal recall resulting from the discussions, which followed the observations and the lesson scripts presented early in the process. Actually, the analysis of recalled data followed almost the same procedures adopted in analyzing the interview data. Besides, analysis of the recalled observation data was also informed by the analysis of the interview data.

The general framework of analysis, obtained from the interviews, was broadly applied to data obtained from the recalled observation. Thus, we opted at this stage for selective coding. Furthermore, the initial analysis of the interviews, while collecting data, was a basis that backed up and informed comments and issues found in the recorded lesson script data.

We should note here that the knowledge areas emerging from the analysis of both the interviews and the questionnaires were utilized in the analysis of data obtained from

classroom observation.

A framework of analysis comprising six broad areas came out from these analyses. We used this analytical framework as guidance to find out practical issues that might reflect views and accounts of teachers and their underlying choices and decisions. The meant areas were: (a) *knowing about the subject matter in practice* (this implies any moment when teachers demonstrate EFL knowledge and its related culture and the impact this knowledge might have on their pedagogical choices), (b) *knowing about pedagogy in practice* (this concerns any teaching moment at which views about general and content-related pedagogy or related decisions are reflected), (c) *knowing about students in practice* (here we refer to any teaching moment in which practices are highlighted on the basis of knowledge about students or practices), (d) *knowledge about the classroom atmosphere in practice* (we mean by this any teaching episode which reflects or being guided by this knowledge), (e) *knowing about curriculum in practice* (any teaching moment which reflects curricular knowledge or related decisions), and (f) *knowing about the self in practice* (this has to do with reflections of the teacher's personality in the field and its appeal to the teaching performance).

Again, we manually analyzed the classroom observation data resulting from the act of transcribing the recorded lessons. We then gave the transcripts, which were added to our questions and remarks, to the observed teachers to answer them. In other terms, the observed teachers were informed about the recorded lessons and we tried to explore their thinking and reasoning about specific points in the lessons. This audio-recorded material, as well as the obtained answers and comments to the transcripts, were also analysed manually by making use of the above mentioned analytical framework.

One concrete example from the data is provided here to show how we used this framework to analyze observation data. It represents curricular knowledge in practice, and concerned a teacher's practical use of exam questions to reflect upon purposive teaching to get students

prepared for exams. In fact, we used this general framework, in our classroom observation analysis, to triangulate the accounts and views that represented topics and sub-topics, which were the result of the questionnaires and interviewing analyses.

The teachers' accounts of practice and their views in the survey identified their practical knowledge. Subsequent and related viewpoints were also obtained from the teachers' insights of their observed behavior. Some of these instances could be traced in the classroom observation findings which we broadly presented and in a corresponding way to those of the questionnaire and interview. It follows that the results obtained from the survey and interviews became really significant when becoming evident in episodes of classroom teaching. At this particular level of triangulation, it becomes evident that classroom observation data clarified the role of interviewing in setting the qualitative evidence and also assuring the quantitative data role.

#### **4.7.2.6 Analyzing Data of the Open-ended Questionnaire**

The data obtained from interviewing, recalled classroom observation as well as the responses given to the open-ended part of the questionnaire, were all analyzed qualitatively.

In order to include evidence in analyzing the open-ended items of the questionnaire, we found it relevant to rely on two criteria; the first concerned the case when these responses carried new ideas that were not found throughout the analysis of the interviews, the second criterion was when the quotes from the questionnaire were more adequate in developing a category than the ones obtained from the interviews.

#### **4.7.3 The Quantitative Evidence: Reporting and Presentation**

The presentation of answers to the questions, particularly the ones related to the areas which constitute the practical knowledge of teachers, made us introduce the quantitative evidence in the form of tables with percentages holding certain opinions about the topics. The purpose behind the use of this format was to combine themes and issues relevant to each



other, and through the combination of many questionnaire items, we managed to minimize the number of topics to be covered. Besides, the use of such format was meant to integrate both quantitative and qualitative evidence together. The tables presenting statistical information are useful as they informed the subsequent qualitative discussion. The statistical information was a basis to stretch the argument by means of presenting the number and reinforcing it by means of discussing the nature of the raised issues. Furthermore, this used format was useful to serve as a triangulation technique to bring about quantitative and qualitative evidence.

We should add here that relying on numbers only was not enough to completely perceive the teachers' viewpoints. In a similar way, it was normal for qualitative information to express the reality of the person giving it. Thus, by using tables of quantitative evidence, we shed light on and clarified the role of the interview data, and in a corresponding way, the presentation of the interview evidence after the tables guaranteed the role of quantitative data.

#### **4.7.4 The Qualitative Evidence: Reporting and Presentation**

We could argue that a good report and presentation of qualitative evidence is necessary for an easy reflection on social reality of the phenomenon under study.

This is a necessary step, according to Holliday (2002), to remain within the limits of social reality. Holliday (2002) also believes that conducting research requires an organization of data as well the development of a strategy in writing for the fact that the written document of the study could greatly be removed from reality and relatively sustained by both the social milieu and the data as we initially collect them. Four ways to develop reporting and presentation of qualitative evidence are referred to by White, Woodfield, and Ritchie (2003), and are shown as: (a) showing the integrity of the findings, (b) demonstrating diversity, (c) reflecting coherence, and (d) rational use of literal passages.

In this study, we have taken into consideration these strategies when reporting the

qualitative evidence. For the sake of integrity in reporting, we managed to make explanations and conclusions generated from and carried through the sets of data. Besides, we were careful about working and proceeding on the basis of coherence for it is a guiding propeller to the reader to track the unveiled story. The element of diversity, in the form of presenting, explaining and unfolding recurrent themes and issues, was also taken into consideration.

In order to avoid research monotony, we were meant to opt for a rational usage of integral passages which could provide enough room for remarks and comments on the sets of data. We have also done our best to stick to the original data we obtained from the interviewed teachers. The language used in various utterances was sometimes modified in the written form; still the original meaning was kept intact.

We should also remind that this study is basically qualitative; hence its findings could not be made generalizable on a statistical ground, but rather generalizable in representation. The latter refers, as Lewis & Ritchie (2003) admit, to the degree to which findings can be attributed to the sampled population. They also hold that generalization does not take place at the level of isolated circumstances, experiences or viewpoints, but rather at the level of categories, concepts and explanations. Therefore, it would be the content of the sets of views, experiences and phenomena under investigation, as well as the surrounding conditions which impact them, that could be inferred to the sampled population of the study.

#### **4.8 On the Difficulties and Obstacles Faced in the Study**

In this research work, the distribution of the questionnaire to the teachers did not really pose a problem. Being a teacher in the same department, and holding an administrative duty, made it easy for us to meet with all permanent teachers, not only to distribute the questionnaire, but also to talk about issues related to the topic under study. However, the challenge we faced was related to methodology. In fact, such a methodological challenge facing all researchers, who wish to explore teacher knowledge, concerns the language used

by teachers when describing their knowledge and how they draw upon it in practice.

Contextually speaking, teachers were not really accustomed with the use of language to describe their own knowledge in practice. This obstacle goes with the idea of Gahin (2001), who believes that language might hinder the discussion of issues related to teacher knowledge and practice as well as explicitness about the teaching-learning experiences and reflections. In here, we were bound to overcome this problem by, as Loughran (1999) admits; minimizing the number of categories used when we started collecting data.

Again, the other data gathering tool, that is interviewing, gave rise to emergent issues in the course of interaction, and this went with, as proposed by Loughran (1999), the consistency of the approach.

The bit of difficulty experienced, when interviewing teachers, was related to the articulation of their practical knowledge as well as theorizing their classroom practices. It was evident for some teachers to reflect on deep thinking than others. The cause behind this might be the absence of sufficient awareness, on the part of some participants, of some aspects of practice. The population sample in the study helped us skip over this difficulty, for the fact that all interviewees were expert teachers with a teaching experience that exceeded twenty years. Besides, some of them hold a PhD degree in education and TEFL, except one who holds an MA degree in educational psychology. Their long experience in the field made it easy for them to articulate their knowledge, most of the time, with the adequate language, and comment on their classroom practice and events.

## **Conclusion**

We should remind, at this level, that this chapter began with the discussion of the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that guided the study. Then, we tried to justify the methods used when collecting data. After that, we managed to describe the sample and population of the study. We then presented in detail the general framework for

data collection. Furthermore, a description and justification for the use of research methods was provided. Following that, we described both types of analyses, quantitative and qualitative, as utilized in the study. Ultimately, we moved to the discussion of some difficulties and obstacles faced in the study context.

## **CHAPTER V: GENERIC POINTS, FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AND DISCUSSION**

### **SECTION I: GENERIC POINTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

#### **Introduction**

What is presented in the first section of this chapter are the findings which are meant to cover a broad scope of themes and issues related to teachers' professional knowledge in practice. Also, we included generic points about the sources of teachers' knowledge in connection with practice as well as the context in which it occurs. In the second section of the chapter, we discussed the findings of the study in accordance to context and evident research information found in different studies. We managed to frame four thematic issues, in which the first one dealt with the main areas of teacher knowledge, and explaining the professional, practical components of these areas. In the second thematic issue, we accounted for the variety of channels through which teacher knowledge develops. We moved, then, to the clarification of the various ways of comprehending teacher knowledge on the basis of practical accounts presented in the sets of data. Ultimately, we presented the fourth thematic area which covered the contextual factors influencing the realization of teacher knowledge in practice.

Despite the fact that the emphasis is particularly on EFL teaching in the department of English, at Batna University, some of the findings seem to belong more to teaching in general. This is because the knowledge foundations of teaching (e.g. knowing about students, knowledge about general pedagogy and knowledge about the classroom learning atmosphere) are considered as generic teaching areas.

Specific aspects that are connected with EFL context imply discussion of learners' motivation in connection with EFL learning in Algeria. Also, the act of giving instruction is another element of knowledge about general pedagogy and evokes the use of the mother tongue in the EFL setting. In fact, these instances reveal the implicit connection between

generic areas of teacher knowledge and the specific EFL teachers' work.

The scope of thematic issues was enlarged via the various influential sources as well as the contextual entities that are likely to affect all teachers. The general as well as subject-specific types of knowledge are shaped and sustained by a variety of factors such as experience, basic teacher education, in- field training, and feedback from the university community. Thus, when talking about these sources, the expectation is that EFL teachers relate them not only to EFL teaching, but also to teaching in general.

In a similar way, factors related to context such as large class size and lack of means might negatively impact many aspects of the teacher's job, in that a teacher can't easily manage his class and is unable to cover the curriculum content, hence the misachievement of the teaching aims and purposes.

We have organized our findings in terms of three parts. In the first part, we showed the participants' viewpoints about the areas that form the knowledge of the EFL experienced teachers as well as the sources of this knowledge; all these from the teachers' own perspective. Such knowledge included some values and aspects of beliefs. Emphatically, we managed to identify six domains or areas of teacher knowledge; these were drawn from quantitative analysis of the questionnaire and qualitative data analysis of the interviews as well as the responses to the open-ended part of the questionnaire. The meant areas of knowledge were: subject matter, pedagogy, students, classroom learning environment, curriculum, and the self. The act of introducing the participants' views about each knowledge area is followed by the sources responsible for the shaping of these views. Our attempt to answer such a research question represents the great part of this chapter. This is due to the fact that exploring teacher knowledge, its main areas, and the sources which shape it constitute the main preoccupation of the present study.

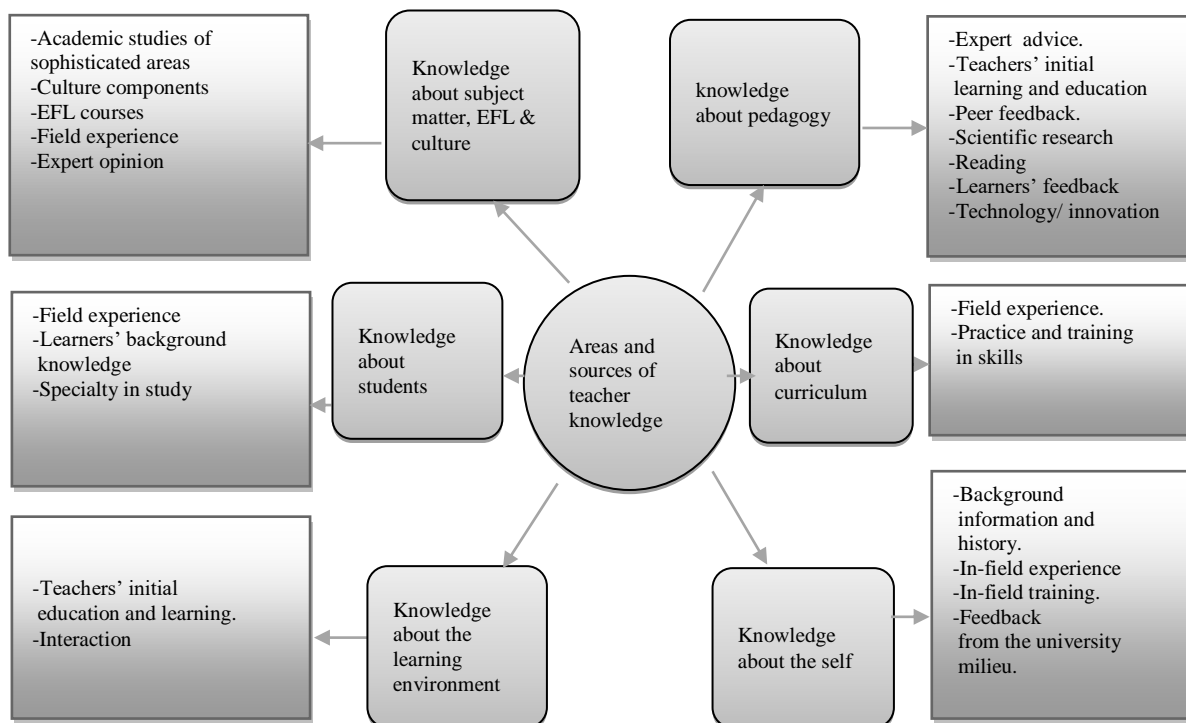
In the second part of this section, we tried to show how each of the six areas of teacher

knowledge could contribute to classroom decisions made by the teachers, as evidenced in the accounts of practice, classroom teaching experiences and comments made on them by the teachers. In the third part of the section, we could find how teachers' knowledge, actualised in practice, is influenced by context. Ultimately, this part brings about evidence from the main sources of data gathering; the questionnaire and the interviews.

### 5.1 Teacher Knowledge: Its Areas and Sources

In this opening part, we attempted to answer the research question already set: what are the components and sources of EFL experienced teachers' knowledge in an Algerien university context?

The collected data revealed six components as the core fields or domains of the EFL teacher knowledge. In fact, the domains of teacher knowledge could be made explicit by talking about the teaching practices. The following figure shows the meant areas.



*Fig 5.1: Teacher Knowledge: Areas and Sources*

#### 5.1.1 Knowing about Subject Matter

The knowledge gained about a subject matter was perceived as an integral part of the

knowledge of EFL teachers. This is based on the fact that the lack of proficiency in the target language makes the teacher unable to help students learn and make use of his knowledge.

This point was highlighted by a participant who reported saying:

*Talking about the teacher's proficiency in English, I think it has a great effect on the profession. If, for instance, a teacher is really competent and proficient in the use of the four linguistic skills, it allows him quick understanding of the learners' needs as well as the identification of weak spots in their learning. Hence a transfer of knowledge is made possible (Interviewee 3).*

A further benefit of being proficient in a subject matter was concerned with the teacher as a continuing learner. The example was given by one participant saying: *"proficiency in English enables the teacher to know better about the profession; learning both inside and outside the classroom"* (Interviewee 1).

Talking about knowledge of subject matter, it was believed to have an important aspect that relates to the knowledge about the origin of language which the teacher should have.

We've asked our participants about their agreement or disagreement on the necessity to know about the origins of language, and such an aspect could reflect communication and cultural exchange and how it impacts language. The idea is salient for the fact that EFL teaching in the Algerian context exists and functions with at least another language in the classroom.

A good number of respondents emphasized the need for EFL knowledge about the origin of the target language. An instance was introduced by one participant reporting: *"to know about the origin of the language is significant for us all, in that it creates a sense of appreciation of EFL learning and teaching"* (A questionnaire respondent).

A second contribution relates to the fact that knowing about EFL origin could reinforce the teaching proficiency. Therefore, the teacher can handle the teaching classroom by



providing answers to difficult questions. One participant reported: *“how do you expect a teacher, who doesn't know about the origin of language, to respond whenever an intricate question is asked in the classroom”?* (Interviewee 1).

A further cause for the same issue concerned the development of learning awareness of the interconnected mechanisms of EFL and the mother tongue language. To respond to this thematic issue, one participant said:

*Well, it remains salient for all teachers to know about the origin of words and locutions. The instance is found in the word chemistry, which is stemmed in Arabic, and by this other links could be made to reflect the inter-relatedness of languages. So, one would admit that languages have their own identity, still they borrow from other languages* (Interviewee 2).

It follows that an EFL teacher's work could be limited due to the lack of this sort of knowledge, i.e., not knowing about the origin of culturally-built expressions and idioms, for example, could negatively affect comprehension in the classroom. A participant confirmed this by saying: *“When this knowledge is absent, it becomes difficult to deal with expressions that are idiomatic in nature. No meaning is drawn until the expression is contextually understood, and thus it can be authentically conveyed to learners”* (Interviewee 1).

Similarly, the knowledge about EFL culture is another crucial aspect relevant to EFL knowledge. Actually, English might imply a variety of cultures worldwide, yet, the British and American ones remain the most culturally-dominant and influential ones in Algeria.

Again, we asked our participants about their agreement or disagreement with the idea that EFL teaching presupposes knowledge about its cultural varieties. The majority of participants admitted the necessity of knowing about the target culture. For them, culture informs EFL teaching by creating a context of imitation and analogy with native institutions and drawing assimilations with native cultures. One participant provided an example saying: *“the knowledge process and EFL culture teaching are closely related to the social conditions*

*which differ from one context to another” (A questionnaire respondent).*

Another participant emphasized the significance of EFL culture and said that *“cultural awareness is extremely important for us as EFL teachers and even for our learners, who are keen of the role of the target culture in developing a universal, knowledgeable individual” (Interviewee 4).*

#### **5.1.1.1 Subject Matter Knowledge and its Sources**

We’ve come to the point of identifying four sources of subject matter knowledge which included: Study of the subject at an advanced and academic level, taking back up courses, working experience, and profitable relations with experienced teachers.

Studying in the language department at the university was related as one useful source. It remains important to add that all participants – opening information in the questionnaire – had at least an MA degree in EFL teaching which is a propeller for building the EFL teacher’s proficiency. Therefore, Studying at an advanced academic level is an intrinsic ingredient of proficiency and helps in the foundation of knowledge about the subject matter, gained by teachers. This was reported in one participant’s words: *“the learning and teaching experience at the university is advantageous in many ways: we practice a lot of reading; novels, magazines, articles and this could help us become fluent and handle the English language” (Interviewee 2).*

The participants also mentioned the great significance of the courses being taught in the department of English. Linguistics, for instance, was considered as a solid platform for proficiency in English and has a direct effect on the teaching profession.

Post-graduate studies and research were also considered as a rich source in building EFL proficiency. The example was given by a participant saying: *“my doctoral research enlightened my teaching career, in that my linguistic and communicative abilities had much better improved” (Interviewee 3).*

Past experience in the field also helps improve the EFL knowledge and its use. For instance, one participant stated: “*my teaching experience in middle schools and high schools proved beneficial in speaking English correctly and with ease, at a university level*” (Interviewee 2).

In a similar way, a second teacher stated: “*I’ve been to Britain last year and had a chance to meet groups of tourists from European countries, and that was a good chance for me to practice my English for communicative purposes*” (Interviewee 1).

It was evident for many interviewed teachers that communication and interaction with English speakers and authentic exposure to English as well as the exchange of knowledge and expertise, between novice teachers and experts, are all important parameters in the development of EFL proficiency. One participating teacher talked about peer consultation saying: “*we, as experienced teachers, usually give advice to one another and also instruct and guide other beginners, and by doing this, we find ourselves in a continuous process of learning and development*” (Interviewee 4).

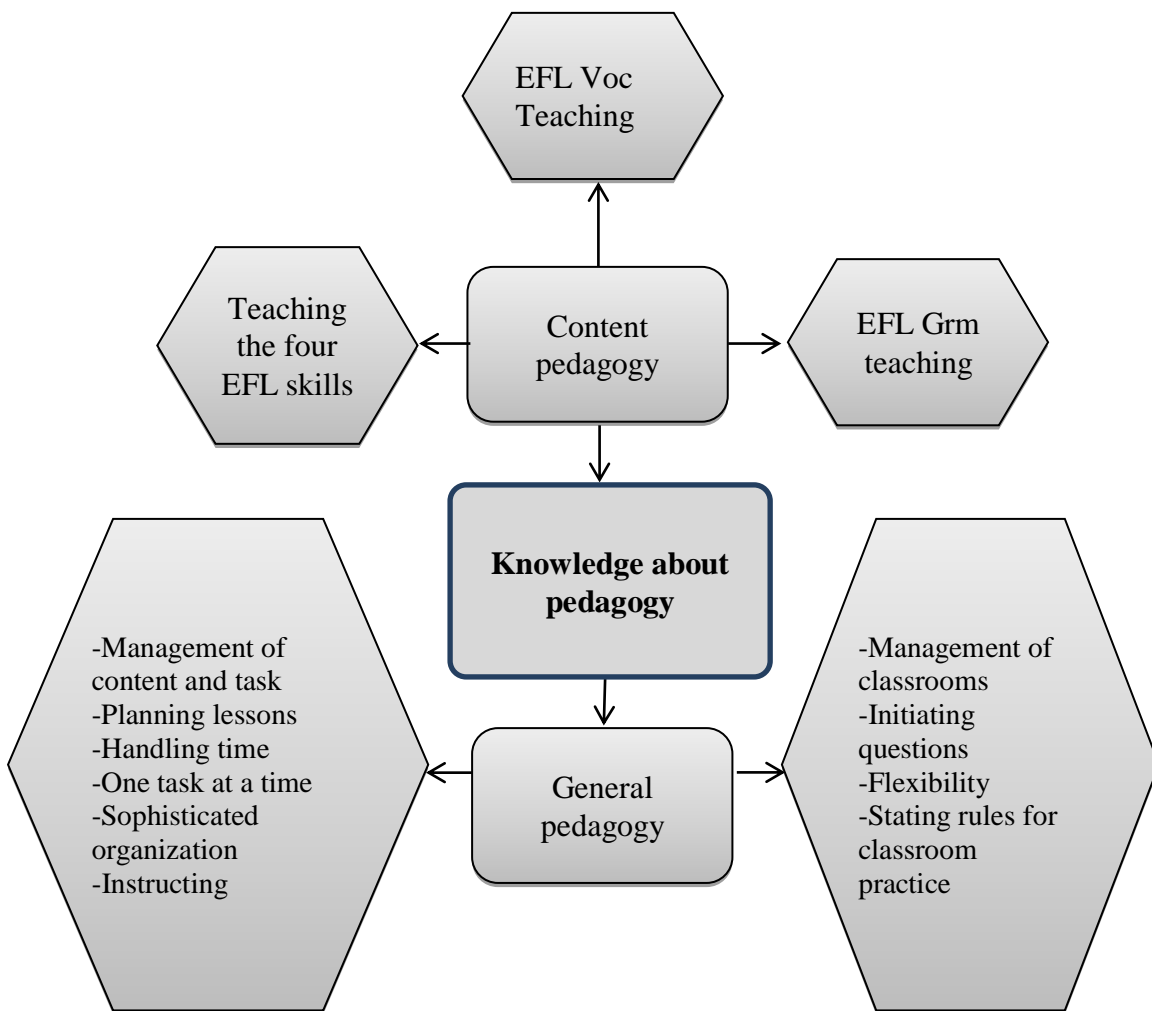
### **5.1.2 Knowing about Pedagogy**

The pedagogical knowledge gained by teachers relates to the understanding of the teaching rudiments and skills. Knowledge about pedagogy, as an area, is twofold: content and general pedagogy.

As concerns content pedagogy, it is related to knowledge of the teaching principles and skills of the subject area. Its primary focus is on knowing how to teach a subject matter. It follows thus that much of this knowledge is based on procedures that concern the teaching of EFL content. Now with general pedagogy, we found that it was rather related to general teaching abilities and strategies. This type includes sub-categories such as task and classroom management. Below, we show the two constructed categories, and we point out that the survey items guided some of the sub-categories and the latter were used to check and

reinforce the survey data.

In fact, we aimed at finding clarification from the perspective of the interviewed teachers, regarding the ideas and issues included in the questionnaire. Besides, other sub-categories were aspects drawn from the accounts of the respondents themselves. The main components of pedagogical knowledge are provided in the figure below.



**Fig 5.2: The Pedagogical Knowledge Constituents**

### 5.1.2.1 Knowing about Content Pedagogy

Knowledge of the subject matter was not the sole and vital element of teacher knowledge. The majority of our participants emphasized the know-how teaching of the subject matter as an intrinsic element in teacher knowledge. In fact, we formed three sub-categories in a way that embodies the participants' viewpoints in connection with three EFL teaching areas: the

four EFL skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), grammar and vocabulary.

### 5.1.2.1.1 On the Four EFL Skills Teaching

The issue about which language skills to emphasize most, in EFL settings, has long been debated. However, this issue is dealt with, in the Algerian context, as an important aspect of the teachers' knowledge about pedagogy and practice. Besides, the teachers' views about this issue could have been influenced by the series of reforms held in the Algerian context, and which all call for an integration of the linguistic skills within an interactive and communicative framework. To explore this issue, we asked our participants whether they stand with or against six issues about teaching EFL skills as pillars of their subject matter knowledge and its related pedagogy. Below, we present their views about the issue.

**Table 5.1: Viewpoints about EFL Skills Teaching**

Item	Case totality	Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
The teaching of speaking and listening skills is as vital as the teaching of writing and reading.	40	80 %	20 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
The integration of the four skills helps EFL students learn better.	40	90 %	5 %	2 %	1 %	2 %
Teaching language communicatively fosters students' learning potential.	40	60 %	30 %	7 %	2 %	1 %
Both mechanical and communicative strategies are needed in the EFL classroom.	40	40 %	45 %	9 %	5 %	1 %
Fluency should be more emphasized, by EFL teachers, than accuracy	40	60 %	30 %	2.5 %	7 %	0.5 %
EFL students should be encouraged to use English extensively.	40	72 %	19.2 %	8.5 %	0.3 %	0 %

It remains important to add that some of the items were not answered by the teachers; still the percentages are considered the valid representations of the participants' responses. Most of the participants emphasized the teaching of the four language skills on an equal footing of

importance. To them, learning a language is justified by the learning of all its skills. Besides, the modern communication means have brought great opportunities for generations of learners to rehearse with all skills. One participant said: *“the four linguistic skills are given the same opportunities. Students at all levels make use of sophisticated tools of communication which actually creates a context for skill practice and skill integration”* (Interviewee 2).

Again, the teaching of EFL skills need not lead to language fragmentation; it is important for the EFL teacher to trade his teaching of skills, not for the short run, but for the long-run and further education. This view was reported by an interviewee saying: *“to talk about skills is not to talk about exams. We, as EFL teachers, are meant to teach language as an integrated whole, allowing our learners to use it further in a variety of situations.”* (Interviewee 3). Similarly, another teacher added: *“all the skills are equally important and should not be taught in isolation; the aim of which is to create a balance between written and oral aspects of communication* (Interviewee 1).

Thus, integration of the four language skills has been the focus of the majority of our participants for the simple fact that integration eases the complexity of the teaching-learning process and reinforces learning. A participating teacher clarified this point saying: *“students’ learning needs could be met through integrating all the language skills, in that skills represent a variety of learning styles and preferences”* (Interviewee 3).

A striking and significant idea has also been the focus of many participants. This was related to pedagogy 3.0 which refers to the attitudes, competencies and skills required by teachers and educators working in a Web 3.0 enabled world. This innovative tendency was explained in one participant words:

*Web 3.0 is considered to extend the social aspects of Web 2.0, through its use of internet-enabled mobile devices, cloud computing, social networking, and cloud-based collaborative*

*working tools (e.g. Google Apps), which facilitate real-time and asynchronous collaborations. Besides, Web 3.0 will extend the Web 1.0 capabilities of information searching through personalization of information delivery through its use of semantic web algorithms, and search engines (A questionnaire respondent).*

The participants provided many reasons for its use, namely its relation to attempts of designing a teaching curriculum. One participant said:

*The HP Catalyst Pedagogy 3.0 consortium considers that pedagogy 3.0 facilitates collaborative, open-ended involvement between students, with the teacher adopting the roles of facilitator and mentor. Open-ended activities may run alongside other, more teacher-directed, activities in a versatile pedagogy that is an extension of blended learning pedagogic models. Learning in such scenarios is constructivist and has similarities with project-based, inquiry and problem-based approaches, although extended to exploit the collaborative features emerging in Web 3.0 tools (Interviewee 1).*

There has long been an attempt to clarify the balance between curriculum knowledge and the teaching of language as communication. The different reforms brought to the syllabus have placed students' positive learning at the core of communicative language teaching. Besides, it serves the development of thinking and helps EFL students become fluent. Another teacher clarified: *"teaching language communicatively prepares a platform for students to become fluent users of language and develop a general sense of thinking"* (Interviewee 1).

The need to diversify activities in the EFL classroom has been stressed by a good number of teachers. Such diversity sets a variety of objectives to be attained. The idea was highlighted by a participant saying: *"within communicative classroom teaching, the intent is usually to create activities and tasks which develop both accuracy and fluency within learners"* (Interviewee 3).

In fact, both communicative and mechanical activities, when emphasized, set equilibrium in both types of activities and also reflect a balance between the learners' accurate acquisition of knowledge and the development of their fluency. However, it might be a challenge to achieve simultaneous goals at the level of both accuracy and fluency; still the connection between them is tight. This point was commented on by one participating teacher saying: *"we, as EFL teachers, always believe that fluency precedes accuracy in terms of emphasis. After all, a student who spontaneously produces something is better than another one who brings about nothing for fear of being wrong"* (Interviewee 4).

What is implied here is that some learners might not care about accuracy while others might be afraid of not being accurate at all. Here comes the teacher's duty in fostering the learners ahead to participate as much as possible in the classroom, for the sake of helping them attain either fluency or accuracy. Again, a characteristic feature, implied in the balanced framework of the transmission view of language learning and communicative language teaching, concerned the EFL versus the mother tongue use in the classroom. Practically, all the participating teachers were in favor of using the target language intensively in communication and whenever possible. One participant said: *"an EFL teacher has to serve as a model for his learners, by using too much English to communicate with his students in a variety of contexts"* (Interviewee 1).

Most of the participants stood for the intensive use of EFL, yet few of them did not neglect the importance of using the mother tongue language. One participating teacher explained: *"dealing with adult learners at a university level paves up the way for using the mother tongue when giving instructions, making jokes or even plan riddles and other teaching material"* (Interviewee 3).

Similarly, grammatical assimilations can also be made between the two languages for the sake of clarity and grammatical awareness.



With regard to culture, a view was adopted to combine both the target and native cultures, leading thus to significant and equivalent entities. One participant said: *“making appeal to Arabic is sometimes useful, but it has to take a secondary position. Furthermore, talking about Arabic culture can help understand similarities and differences between the native culture and western cultures in general”* (Interviewee 2).

Following this view, we deduce that the mother culture is cautiously used in the classroom not for the sake of mechanical translation, but to serve specific teaching-learning purposes. Thus, EFL teachers are not encouraged to over-use Arabic culture when teaching, but rather draw limitations to this use. One teacher reported this fact saying: *“literal translation of cultural issues and situations into Arabic is rather a drawback in that it generates analytical thinking but in Arabic”* (Interviewee 4). So, continuous thinking in Arabic draws many limitations to EFL learners and yields a mechanical thinking process. This idea was maintained by a participant who said: *“it remains salient to provide students with advice about the negative effects of pure thinking in Arabic. The teacher’s duty is to create a context of practice that evokes thinking in English, and helps students communicate with it”* (Interviewee 1).

We understand here that instead of using the mother-tongue language excessively, it would be preferable to use simple English. So, the use of Arabic in EFL classes has to be reduced to the maximum by finding other alternatives to convey meaning accordingly. This view was reported by a teacher saying: *“university students come from a variety of settings with a variety of background knowledge, thus the EFL teacher has to rely on procedures that work out meaning such as non-verbal communication, with all its aspects and strategies”* (Interviewee 3).

It remains important to remind that the interviewees’ accounts on EFL skills formed a basis for the construction of some categories, which we develop hereafter.

#### 5.1.2.1.1.1 Accounting for the Teaching of EFL Writing

It is commonly accepted that writing occupies a primary position in the Algerian educational system. Syllabus designers give it a great importance in tests and official examinations. Dependently, we were interested in the participants' focus on the foundations of teaching this EFL productive skill. The participants clarified four steps or levels for the teaching of this skill. This was clearly conveyed by one participating teacher saying: "*when teaching EFL writing, the teacher usually starts with a warming-up, then he prepares his students for the writing task, followed by practice, and ultimately consolidated by a follow-up activity*" (Interviewee 4). So, it is apparent that the teaching of writing is a systematically-done process, moving across natural stages, namely; pre-writing, writing, and post-writing.

Many participants referred to techniques to be used in teaching EFL writing. One of them said: "*the teaching of writing is usually initiated by a discussion of the topic, followed by devised questions, and ultimately generating ideas in pairs or small groups*" (Interviewee 3).

Brainstorming was also considered as an effective strategy by most of the participants when teaching EFL writing to university students. This view was expressed by a teacher saying: "*the teaching of writing is usually based on brainstorming, in that we let learners bring about statements freely, squeeze their minds, and generate ideas related to the main topic*" (Interviewee 1).

Correspondingly, the same participant accounted for the use of multiple techniques when teaching writing. He declared:

*Students would better be encouraged to produce written materials based on their prior reading. They should equally be encouraged to organize their written compositions, by integrating the necessary stuff such as the introduction, the body and the conclusion, choosing tenses, using function and content words, and making use of drafts to minimize the number of writing mistakes* (Interviewee 1).

In addition to the knowledge reflected by teachers about writing, there were also other reflections which concerned writing mechanisms as well as awareness about the English phonological properties. With regard to learners' written productions, a problematic issue emerged and it concerned the learners' difficulty to think in English. A female participant expressed this saying: *"in situations of integral translation from Arabic to English, the students' written productions are distorted at both form and meaning, which we consider as collocation problems"* (Interviewee 3).

#### **5.1.2.1.1.2 Accounting for the Teaching of EFL Reading**

In the present study context, the reading skill has usually been associated with literary and cultural disciplines. The participants showed a sense of professionalism in understanding the nature of this receptive skill at the university level.

The practical perspectives of the reading skill were based on the study of literary texts, and through which our participants accounted for the natural stages followed when teaching EFL reading. Therefore, we managed to fix three stages in this respect, based on the variety of views: pre-reading, reading and post-reading.

The significance of the first stage resides in its initiation and simplification of the reading stages to follow. This was evidenced in one participant's words: *"the pre-reading stage is vital to prepare readers for the main bulk to come, thus problems are diminished"* (Interviewee 4).

The same teacher added: *"when students read a novel, for example, they need to draw a mental picture of the story by relying on the natural reading stages"* (Interviewee 4).

Actually, all reading stages were important, according to the participants. However, some of them were well informed about possible techniques that frame the pre-reading stage such as initial questions, key literary terms and vocabulary, and creating a discussion on the basis of the thematic situation and its guiding title. The example is presented by a female teacher

saying: *“reading materials are rich and diversified, and some of them require pre-reading questions while others demand vocabulary teaching examples and situations to recollect meaning” (Interviewee 3).*

The female interviewee also gave importance to vocabulary items, in that they provide learners with an insight about what is to be read. In a similar way, another teacher valued the explanation of vocabulary words beforehand to facilitate reading comprehension. He said: *“vocabulary items have to be explained at the pre-reading stage through examples and practice, which could pave up the way for the reading act itself” (Interviewee 2).*

The same participant also favored general and personal questions which create a platform for reading comprehension.

The participants have also valued the role of pre-reading questions in evoking the students' background knowledge. One teacher said: *“Learners' topical knowledge can be brought about and refreshed by asking questions related to the topic at hand.”(Interviewee1).*

Examples of this were stated by the same teacher saying: *“a literary topic about, for instance, the Congo River makes us generate questions about whether students have visited some African countries, or at least read some African writers” (Interviewee 1).*

Guideline questions as well as warm-up questions were also favored by our participants.

A participating teacher declared: *“these strategies elucidate students' views about the reading topic, and compare them with the writer's own ideas. Thus, brainstorming could be useful to draw similarities and differences in comprehension” (Interviewee 3).*

The use of pre-reading questions, and generating a thematic discussion are considered as functional and metacognitive strategies by one of our participants, who said: *“in a reading context, the initial knowledge of students develops and requires more sophisticated knowledge to build a framework for comprehension and discussion” (Interviewee 4).*

Generally speaking, the reading act should be practiced with an already set objective. Thus, the reading purpose has to be defined. One of the participants remarked:

*It's part of the teacher's duty to set his objective for the reading act; this can be initiated by writing guideline questions on the board. Silent and reflective reading can be, then, practiced, leading in turn to open discussion of thematic issues and considerations, which are all done purposefully (Interviewee 1).*

Setting objectives for reading literary texts and extracts is vital in the EFL classroom. It helps readers become focused and participative, and by this it is considered as a metacognitive strategy. Furthermore, scanning and skimming a literary text is a useful strategy that helps readers get the meaning of the text and draw textual inferences.

It is significant, at this level, to recognize the utility of setting clear objectives for EFL reading, as long as the ultimate purpose is to achieve comprehension. This idea was clearly stated by the above participant, saying: *“any reading act should have a clearly-set objective which guides students in their attempt to visualize the core of the reading material” (Interviewee 1).*

The EFL reading skill presents difficulties and challenges, such as vocabulary items that are not easy to understand, however, our participants were conscious about such circumstances, and could adopt treatment procedures accordingly. A teacher highlighted this point saying: *“we usually inform our students not to stop at the level of difficult words, but doing their utmost to figure out the meaning of the whole passage by making inferences” (Interviewee 4).*

The same reading principle was adopted in EFL tests and exams, which was the case of a female participant, who said:

*The EFL teacher is responsible for training his students to be patient when reading texts and answering questions in exams. They have to learn knowledge side to side with*

*tolerance and patience, and what could seem difficult at the start, become accessible in a while (Interviewee 3).*

Reading silently and reading aloud were also valued positively by the participants. It was agreed upon that reading silently could help students concentrate and figure out meaning. However, the reading attention of students might deter from the expected objective. One teacher explained: *“there are occasions in which students look at the reading material, but are absent-minded. As such, the teacher can have them focused through comprehension questions” (Interviewee 1).*

Furthermore, the participants gave importance to the post-reading stage, in that it holds the comprehensive points of the reading act. One of the interviewed teachers favored the use of follow-up activities which is considered as a basis for students to develop their critical abilities and communicative skills as well. She said: *“we usually, after the reading stage, ask our learners extra comprehension questions to achieve creative and critical aims” (Interviewee 3).*

In a similar way, another teacher talked about encouraging students to read confidently and with a critical eye, saying: *“In a literature class, we always instruct our students not to stick to the authorial visions and inclusions only, but to be able to make solitary judgments, on a general critical basis” (Interviewee 4).*

The practice of the reading skill should also be learner-oriented. The purpose of the post-reading stage was positively reflected by the participants. One of them said: *“we frequently prompt our students to go beyond the literary text itself. They need to bring about as many ideas as possible, and form up a critical background knowledge” (Interviewee 1).*

#### **5.1.2.1.1.3 Accounting for the Teaching of EFL Listening and Speaking**

Listening, as an EFL skill, is considered in our study as a receptive skill which is based on comprehension. It has been categorized by the participants as an element of pedagogical

knowledge. The example is reported by one participating teacher, who stated:

*Naturally, as EFL teachers, we do not expect our students to be native speakers. When we make them listen to a passage in authentic English, we need to clarify that they are not meant to catch up with every single word in the passage, but rather become acquainted with the native accent and thus grasp the general meaning. As such, the teacher can rely on top-down listening to achieve his goals (Interviewee 1).*

Most of the participants gave importance to listening comprehension, by training students regularly in listening to English performed by native speakers. One participant stated: *“students need to rehearse with listening passages and extracts; the teacher can play the audio material many times till the properties of the native speakers’ accent are fathomed with” (Interviewee 4).*

It follows that training EFL students to develop a good listening habit remains a primary objective. Besides, teachers have to tolerate their students’ inability when listening to complex material and encourage them to practice listening at home. In this respect, another teacher said: *“I usually encourage students to listen to the whole as well as parts of a passage or extract. I also inform them to catch up with the maximum number of words, and not every word independently” (Interviewee 2).*

As concerns the teaching of speaking, it often aims at making students able to express themselves freely rather than being limited to the strict requirements of the designed syllabus. Teachers can devise a lot of activities that can engage EFL learners to freely talk about things that matter to them, and gain fluency. In this respect one teacher stated: *“we always give students a chance to talk freely; in conversations and improvised role-plays, to meet their needs and make sense of classroom learning” (Interviewee 2).*

The same participant equally considered strategies, based on verbal exchange, comments and remarks of students, as well as negotiation of meaning as motivating strategies to practice

speaking. He stated: *“verbal exchange of ideas and meaning negotiation can all serve as a warming-up basis for a genuine practice of speaking”* (Interviewee 2).

Again, listening, like speaking, is also based on sets of activities which aim at facilitating comprehension. For example, one teacher considered the explanation of vocabulary items as essential for the understanding of passages and recorded material. This same teacher said: *“when it comes to listening, students always show a problem with difficult words that hinder their comprehension of the whole material being listened to”* (Interviewee 2).

Topic initiation was also considered important by many participants. One of them reported: *“the EFL teacher has to set a clear statement about the topic to be taught, so that students would not be hindered in their attempt of listening to native speakers”* (Interviewee 4).

Therefore, the initiation of the listening topic helps in guiding and drawing students' attention throughout the listening practice. What could also be added is that each listening session should have its clear objective. Two purposes, related to listeners' training their ears at first hand, then doing a listening activity, were provided by the same participating-teacher, saying: *“EFL listeners need to understand, at first hand, the general meaning of a passage. Then, they can listen twice and answer questions, and moving further to an act of listening and doing by role-playing and negotiating the meaning of the passage”* (Interviewee 4).

We should add that the need for warm-up activities is significant, in that using pre-listening questions helps getting students involved in the whole activity. Besides, EFL teachers should not push their students to answer questions unless a platform of comprehension and readiness is provided. Using such a strategy could facilitate students' learning as well as making them confident to deal with challenging questions. This was justified by one participating teacher, saying:

*In a listening comprehension class, I always avoid urging my learners to provide instant*



*answers. Instead, I make them listen many times to the passage, and then they are gradually initiated to answer questions about comprehension, such as simple wh questions, until a conclusive statement about the passage is made (Interviewee 4).*

Furthermore, our participants argued that timing is important when asking questions in an EFL listening session. It was said by one teacher: *“marking pauses at regular intervals is helpful to check whether or not students grasp the material being taught so far. Hence, teaching could be tailored accordingly” (Interviewee 2).*

#### **5.1.2.1.2 Accounting for the Teaching of EFL Vocabulary**

EFL vocabulary teaching and learning is vital for the learning process. In fact, vocabulary is an integral part of all aspects and skills of language. However, the learning of new vocabulary items is based on how good or bad the instructional methods are. Yet, when teaching vocabulary to EFL students, teachers often make use of code-switching in a way that makes it controversial. For instance, teaching through learner-centered approach in Algerian contexts presupposes the active participation of students in lesson preparation and teaching. Consequently, the various techniques used in teaching EFL vocabulary were part of the EFL teachers' knowledge of content pedagogy. We, in our turn, asked the participating teachers about their views, regarding EFL vocabulary teaching.

Actually, EFL vocabulary teaching was given importance by a great number of participants. The participants emphasized the need for tasks which reinforce learning and make students involved in the communication process. An example was given by a teacher, who put it: *“doing an effort to learn something assures its storage for the long run, i.e., one has to work with the saying, tell me I forget, teach me I remember, and get me involved, so I learn” (Interviewee 4).*

A variety of techniques, based on classroom action, were valued by our participants.

Therefore, giving examples, referring to context, acting and mimicry, using visual materials and the overall non-verbal aspects of communication were all considered as effective strategies to teach EFL vocabulary. One participant's given example was related to drawing meaning from context, and how this could help retain learning in the long-term memory. She stated:

*EFL students, who bring themselves to the apex of guessing the meaning, from a teaching context, is something motivating and very promising. Thus, the understanding of language and its function in context could be kept in their minds for the long run (Interviewee 4).*

The same teacher added an idea about the usefulness of this strategy in helping students become independent and self-reliant. She put it: *“students, who become able to decipher meaning from a given context, can naturally become autonomous learners, and can deal with a variety of situations” (Interviewee 2).*

It becomes clear, at this level, that all these strategies endorse the importance of involving EFL students when teaching EFL vocabulary. Another technique to consider is translation. Some of the participants didn't favor such an option, in that it removes the language from its natural context and hinders the learners' autonomy. One participant seemed to be aware of the situation and said: *“translating things from English to Arabic is not really efficient and doesn't contribute to students' freedom of learning. Besides, using translation in a listening setting leads to dependency and use of the mother-tongue language in other fields of study” (Interviewee 4).*

However, one could admit that, at least, two languages coexist in an EFL classroom. Dependently, some participants argued that translation is a useful strategy that contributes to students' understanding. This was put by one participant: *“translation can be used in EFL classes to meet the needs of unmotivated and slow pace learners. Giving, for instance, the equivalent meaning in Arabic would elicit meaning of English words, and ideas could be*

*better explained*” (Interviewee 2).

It follows that adopting such a stance suggests an implied equilibrium between the transmission view of language learning and communicative language teaching. After all, this balanced perspective seems to meet the EFL learners’ needs and readiness for better communicative circumstances.

### 5.1.2.1.3 Accounting for the Teaching of EFL Grammar

In the Algerian context, grammar teaching is not strictly based on traditional methods, such as translation and instruction. Instead, there has been a growing emphasis on inductive methods and learner involvement in grammar teaching. In fact, these ideas were clarified by our participants and were considered as aspects of their pedagogical knowledge. The participants’ responses to three items are presented below.

**Table 5.2: Viewpoints about EFL Grammar Teaching**

Item	Case totality	Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
The inductive method to teaching EFL grammar assures students' learning.	40	60 %	20 %	10 %	6 %	4 %
Learning EFL grammar can be simplified through metalanguage use.	40	20 %	50 %	10 %	15 %	5 %
EFL grammar can also be simplified through comparison with the mother language grammar.	40	10 %	40 %	6 %	35 %	9 %

The participants showed an interest in the inductive teaching of grammar, in that they did not favor the direct teaching of grammatical rules, but rather letting learners find out the rules and externalize them on their own. EFL students could detect grammatical patterns if the teacher makes use of inductive situations, which in turn make students active in their learning.

One of our participants revealed: *“the teaching of grammar should not be done in a mechanical way, but rules and patterns have to be inductively presented, so that grammar*

*makes sense to EFL general learning” (Interviewee 2).*

Moreover, our participants preferred the inductive teaching of grammar over the use of translation. The same participant said about this point: *“as EFL teachers, one should avoid translation in grammar, and replace it by more inductive procedures that provide students with practice and involvement” (Interviewee 2).*

When teaching grammar, EFL teachers could properly use terminology that simplifies EFL learning. Besides, metalanguage use also helps students to use the correct terminology needed in comprehension. As for using grammatical terminology, the majority of participants supported using it because of its facilitative role for students’ learning English as a foreign language. For example, one participant believed that using metalanguage could have a facilitative function for students *“to be familiarized with the language” (Interviewee 4).*

Using metalanguage could also simplify learners’ use of the correct terminology. For example, one participant stated: *“providing students with the exact grammatical terms, about parts of speech, is helpful in making students acquainted with the language” (Interviewee 4).*

Nevertheless, a bit of doubt might appear at the level of its use. This was reflected in one participant’s words: *“in class, one can start with structure presentation, and then the habit of using it is naturally obtained, and there follows the naming of the structures. After all, knowing the How is more important than the What” (Interviewee 3).*

#### **5.1.2.1.4 Content Pedagogy: On the Sources of its Knowledge**

Talking about the knowledge sources of content pedagogy, we managed to reveal three sources. The first concerns basic education of teachers, the second relates to reading in the context of EFL teaching, and the third one relates to seeking expert advice.

With regard to learners’ teaching experience, our participants were formerly student teachers; hence they expressed their views about whether or not their initial teaching experience is a knowledge source. This issue was positively viewed by some participants.

One of them put it: *“we learnt a lot from our initial experience as student-teachers, which I personally think that it constitutes a good source of knowledge for the whole career”* (Interviewee 1).

However, participants who did not favor this stance justified their view by the set of problems surrounding the practicum of education as well as the lack of supporting feedback from expert-teachers and supervisors, in general. One participant-teacher said:

*The truth is that we faced many challenges at the start. As a part-time teacher and a student at the same time, you won't find it easy to invest in knowledge. Expert teachers do not give help or advice, and are also careless about supervision. So, one can say that, as a novice teacher, you are on your own in your teaching practice* (Interviewee 3).

Moreover, most of the participants emphasized the significance of the knowledge gained in the field, as practitioners, more than what could be gained as teacher students.

The logic behind this was reported by the same teacher, saying: *“to embark on EFL teaching, in the department of English, gives you much practice, and you can consider it a useful source of knowledge, but not your initial training as a student, which has no effective contribution to your professional, practical knowledge”* (Interviewee 1).

Some of the participants started working as part-time teachers with various levels. Therefore, the quantitative data analysis showed a difference related to the teaching stage. EFL teachers, who worked in secondary schools, reflected similar views as those worked in other stages. Both viewed their teaching experience as somehow loose and unproductive source of knowledge compared to teaching at the university. An example was given by one interviewee, who admitted that *“a novice teacher, in a university context, is at the stake of managing his classrooms. Having already worked at a middle or secondary stage, does not always yield fruitful results. Besides, such a teacher's knowledge is often judged as being shallow and unreliable. Hence, the knowledge base is not valid”* (Interviewee 4).

Nevertheless, the practicum component is important, still initial education of teachers, fed by extra courses, was regarded as another contributive source to the knowledge base. For instance, one participant said: *“in the whole EFL syllabus, the methodology course is the most useful component for teachers, which is meant to guide them later in their way of teaching” (Interviewee 3).*

Reading was also considered as an important source of knowledge needed in the EFL teaching profession. It is, therefore, a subject-related pedagogy component upon which one participant said: *“an EFL teacher has to read many books in English. His classroom methods, no matter how different are, all serve communicative purposes” (Interviewee 3).*

It becomes clear that our participants valued reading and viewed it as a good source of knowledge. Teachers, in turn, can enlarge their knowledge base and become efficient in their EFL classrooms.

As concerns advice from experts, it was considered as a contributive source to EFL knowledge. One respondent said: *“expert opinion and advice is always significant to the novice teacher because getting in touch with expert teachers broadens your horizons, and provides you with confidence to overcome teaching challenges” (A questionnaire respondent).*

### **5.1.2.2 On General Pedagogy Knowledge**

With regard to this issue, we fixed two categories: classroom management and content and task management.

#### **5.1.2.2.1 The Constructed Approaches in EFL Classes**

With reference to classroom management, three approaches have been constructed. These were: Posing challenging questions, tolerance, and fixing rules for contextual practice. Starting with the act of asking questions, most participants were in favor of it. The instance is given by a female participant, who opted for asking difficult questions to students, who make

trouble, saying: *“in a classroom context, trouble makers can be easily controlled and settled down by asking them questions which they hardly can answer. By doing this, other students become more cautious and try to become involved in the classroom activities”* (Interviewee 3).

As opposed to the former teaching procedure, a teacher can deal with his learners in a soft and easy-going manner. Controlling one’s emotions and being smart could be effective in a variety of EFL settings. Another participant advocated the idea, saying:

*A smart teacher can move like a wave; the more it approaches the shore, the more it becomes soft and flat, so that no confrontation or harassment is generated. Besides, creating good relations with all students is likely to help control them in a framework of respect, sympathy and humility* (Interviewee 4).

With classroom management, fixing rules for practice is another important procedure. Such a way could be based on practical respect between the two parties; the teacher and his students. A fair and democratic agreement or convention is likely to yield positive classroom instruction. A questionnaire respondent put it:

*Imposing rules or dictating behavior is not always welcome by learners. On the contrary, students could be consulted in setting the suitable rules for a good classroom management. If you make them feel they are something, you can easily move them to your own ends* (A questionnaire respondent).

It becomes apparent that students’ involvement in stating rules for classroom behavior could lead to their awareness and responsibility. Hence, classroom management is the concern of both parties.

#### **5.1.2.2.2 On the Management of Content and Task**

We have included in this part some issues, on the basis of their significance, which relate to EFL teachers’ task and content management. The planning of lessons and the handling of

time are key components of teaching.

As concerns task management, its importance resides in the facilitation of the instructional flow, being able to cover the designed material, meet the students' needs and getting them involved in the teaching-learning process. It follows that these elements are considered as the constituents of the pedagogical knowledge that teachers possess. We asked our participants to give their views about six issues, related to instruction. Actually, the participants considered most of these issues as facilitators in the instruction process. Besides, qualitative evidence provided by the participating interviewees helped us understand the motives behind their agreement or disagreement on five issues: the planning of lessons, time handling, emphasizing a single task at a time, stating the objective of a task in advance, and instructing in the mother tongue language. In what follows, we consider all these issues.

#### **5.1.2.2.1 The Craft of Planning Lessons**

EFL teaching can be made simple by good planning of lessons, and generates an instructional flow. The participants emphasized that classroom instruction is best simplified by good lesson planning. Thus, effective teaching is dependent on good lesson planning.

Moreover, preparing lessons beforehand clarifies the objective for the EFL teacher. One participant, for instance, highly valued lesson planning and considered it very important by saying: *“an EFL teacher should think carefully about what he has to give to his students.*

*Mastering the content of your lesson would place in a good position of maintaining an effective instructional flow.” (Interviewee 1).*

The same participant argued for the necessity of lesson preparation saying that *“an EFL teacher expects a lot of classroom challenges, however, being well prepared in advance, makes him self-confident and can avoid any sense of perplexity in front of his students” (Interviewee 1).*

It follows that planning lessons would yield self-confidence and provide readiness to deal



with problematic issues in various situations. If a teacher lacks good preparation, he will feel at a loss and his status becomes at stake. EFL teachers need to rely on lesson planning, but they also need to be pliable with the way they put their plans into practice. One of our participants put it:

*An EFL teacher should be aware of his lesson planning; he may decide upon things to keep, things to modify, and possibly things to omit. He might work with more than one plan in mind; this could be done for the sake of creating an interesting learning environment (Interviewee 4).*

Evidently, teachers need to establish a balance between the planned material and potential issues that might emerge in the course of teaching. This was declared by one interviewee believing that *“in a teaching act, a teacher has to save some time for emerging issues, which he thinks are worthy evoking” (Interviewee 2).*

Such a devoted time could alternatively take place at the end of a teaching session. One participating teacher said: *“a lesson planned on a good basis always helps the teacher to save some time, at the end of the sessions, which could be devoted to free discussions about a variety of internal or even external issues” (Interviewee 4).*

#### **5.1.2.2.2 The Handling of Time**

As concerns the handling of time, almost all the participants regarded it as a key aspect of classroom management. EFL teachers have to be skillful in planning and distributing time allocated to their teaching content. One participant believed that *“thinking about time, in a distributive and measured way, enables the teacher to generate a set of activities successfully” (Interviewee 1).*

This issue remains important for the fact that time is valuable, and many EFL teachers, who assure basic subject-matters, reported the challenges they faced in their profession due to time constraints. One teacher believed that *“time management is dependent on good lesson*

*planning; if the teacher does not plan well his lesson, he will find himself wasting time doing extraneous, may be irrelevant things” (Interviewee 4).*

Evidently, therefore, the normal coverage of EFL syllabus depends largely on time management. One participant confirmed this idea saying that *“when a teacher does not have a clear and structured course plan, he is likely to face fragments at the level of linguistic and semantic components of his course. Therefore, his time flies and can’t make up for it” (Interviewee 1).*

It follows that having one’s lesson well-planned and prepared is likely to meet the requirements of the teaching syllabus.

#### **5.1.2.2.3 Emphasizing One Task at a Time**

Devising a single task at a time was positively admitted by our participants. The general view was that learners’ attentiveness could better be raised through this strategy. One interviewee declared the way he dealt with his students’ mistakes, saying:

*When a teacher emphasizes only one aspect in, for example, student’ written productions, he will find that they become concerned more and more with other types of mistakes. In other words, if he draws his learners’ attention to one grammatical mistake, students become themselves cautious about other parts of speech, and so on, ... (Interviewee 2).*

The importance of doing one task at a time was also revealed in our quantitative data analysis. Younger teachers showed a strong agreement with this strategy, which, in fact, reflects their similar way of perception with that of their learners, regarding students’ aptitude and ability to learn. Besides, younger teachers could recall the utility of single tasking when they were themselves students, and how it presented a challenge to their learning. However, another different view was presented by proficient teachers with good teaching experience. These teachers attributed the development of students’ thinking abilities to the planning of more than one task at a time. The argument, which relates to students’ level of proficiency,

was provided by an interviewed teacher, who said:

*The whole strategy is dependent on the level you teach. For example, with an advanced level class, the teacher can plan a variety of activities to be dealt with at a single time, including the integration of many skills that would result into sophisticated ability of learning (Interviewee 4).*

Thus, we can argue here that the issue of single tasking could essentially be attributed to learners' EFL proficiency level.

#### **5.1.2.2.2.4 Setting the Objective of a Task in Advance**

Most of the participants favored the act of declaring openly the purpose of any task in advance. According to this tendency, the interest is in the meta-cognitive effect this strategy could have. A clarification was provided by one participant, saying:

*Informing students about the objective of a task beforehand is likely to create interest and guidance. Besides, when students know about what they do in class, they start preparing themselves for better classroom involvement. The strategy is like an initiation activity that fosters the working effort with both fluency and accuracy. However, the case would be different, if the teacher does not announce the aim of his teaching task or lesson (Interviewee 2).*

#### **5.1.2.2.2.5 Instructing in EFL Classes**

It was revealed, throughout the analysis, that most of the participants were not in favor of single classroom instruction. The tradition is that both teachers and students are inclined toward the repetition of instructions more than twice, which could be the reason for their claim.

Contrastively, one of the participants, for example, said: *“EFL teachers need to establish the habit, with their learners, of giving instructions just once. Through time, learners would become attentive and careful about instructions in the course of their articulation”*

(Interviewee 4).

Nevertheless, classroom instructions are normally relative, in that not all instructions are the same, and there are situations in which the teacher needs to repeat what has been delivered. Another factor which could lead the teacher to repeat instructions was the students' level. Another participant stated: *"Giving classroom instructions is again related to students' level of proficiency. Good students are in a position of deciphering the core of the matter whereas the low level ones need a few times repetition to come to terms with the instructions"* (Interviewee 3).

Moreover, and still with classroom instruction, most of the participants did not appreciate instructing in Arabic. However, a few of them were in its favor. This latter stance is probably due to the fact that the instructional flow is made much easier in Arabic. One advocating interviewee said: *"What counts much about classroom instructions is how to deliver them to students in a comprehensible way, even in Arabic. Besides, instructing in Arabic can occasionally eradicate learners' confusion and surprise, and helps the teacher hit his target"* (Interviewee 2).

The participants also gave another reason for instructing in Arabic. One participant said: *"Giving instruction to learners, in their mother-tongue language, is supposed to simplify instruction itself. The EFL teacher can explain a task or expression in English and provide its equivalent in Arabic. As such, a balance of intelligibility is assured with the whole class, including good and weak students"* (Interviewee 1).

#### **5.1.2.2.3 On General Pedagogy and its Sources of Knowledge**

Still with instruction, we managed to reveal three knowledge sources. The first relates to conducting research, the second to teacher-teacher feedback and the third one is concerned with learners' feedback.

Conducting academic research was seen as the very source contributive to the general

pedagogical knowledge of EFL teachers. One participating teacher declared:

*Each time I do a research work, I discover that its findings contribute a lot to my knowledge base. For instance, I recently did a research on types of teachers and classroom instruction through comparisons, and I came to the conclusion that the teacher, who imposes himself firmly in the classroom, is likely to gain his students' respect and trust (Interviewee1).*

As concerns peer-teaching feedback, the participants viewed it as another useful source of knowledge, which functions as a corrective element in practical situations.

One teacher admitted: *“Teachers' awareness of irrelevant practice could be raised through peer- teaching. Besides, classroom management and teachers' behavior could also be oriented through other teachers' remarks and guidance” (Interviewee 3).*

Similarly, our participants considered learners' feedback as a remarkable source of knowledge, in that teachers could be sustained, via this knowledge, to draw limitations to their classroom instruction. One teacher said:

*A good teacher always takes his learners' comments and remarks with appreciation. Learners might, for example, remind their teacher of some habits, such as loud pitch voice, his quick pace of explanation, or even using complex utterances, which might be challenging for low level students (Interviewee 1).*

It follows that learners' feedback is of a dual function; it constitutes a sustaining knowledge source and equally holds a sense of improvement and change.

### **5.1.3 Knowing about Students**

In the context of the present work, students were viewed by their teachers through some parameters; namely, their learning abilities, learning modes or styles as well as their social background.

To begin with, the students' learning potentials were presented in terms of whether or not students need to learn at different paces. The majority of the respondents (90%) strongly

agreed with this view.

As concerns students' learning styles, the participants viewed it as varying from one learner to another. This reflected the idea that while some learners show more aptitude in learning with audio-visual materials, others do well through traditional modes, whereas other learners opted for supporting actions and mimicry in the classroom. One female participant described this issue saying:

*Generally speaking, three types of learners are met in the classroom; learners who prefer visual materials, others who favor listening, and the ones who like aspects of non-verbal communication. A smart EFL teacher needs to diversify his teaching strategies in a way that meets his students' learning styles, preferences and expectations (Interviewee 4).*

The use of audio-visual materials in teaching was largely supported by the participants. Eighty five (85%) percent of them agreed on its effectiveness in meeting the students' learning styles and preferences. Moreover, knowledge about learners was also viewed in terms of the social background of students, including their parents' educational status. One participant, for instance, distinguished students coming from urban settings from those with a countryside background. He said:

*It has always been a fact that students with an urban background reflect a solid and developed knowledge of foreign languages with an exceptional way of thinking and sophisticated behavior. The image is different with students coming from rural and countryside areas. The latter reflect the truth about how social conditions might affect the learning motivation and achievement (Interviewee 1).*

Following this issue, one can admit that students with low social rank tend to lose interest in listening and speaking, and focus rather on general literacy. One teacher declared:

*Learners with poor social background are likely to focus on the passing of examination to get diploma as quick as possible. This is certainly a negative attitude, in that these students*

*believe that the mark counts much more than learning to become a fluent speaker of English (Interviewee 2).*

### **5.1.3.1 Sources of Knowledge about Students**

Three sources were revealed in relation to knowledge about students. These were: experience, students' knowledge and specialization as sources of knowledge in this respect.

The element of experience was recurrent in our study, in that it was frequently considered as a source in various fields of knowledge. This suggests its importance in informing the teaching acts. The idea was briefed by one participant saying: *"it's all about experience; it is the core of the profession"* (Interviewee 3). Another participant added saying that *"an experienced teacher is likely to know better about his learners. He can easily manage his classroom output, improvise, distinguish and meets his learners' needs"* Interviewee 1).

Now, referring to learners' knowledge, it was seen as a clue to knowing about these learners. The idea was conveyed by a participating teacher, who said:

*If my interest is to know about a student, I simply devise tasks in both writing and speaking. Through these productive skills, students' learning potentialities can be freely revealed. Thus, I can understand the flow of their intellectual and emotional output (Interviewee 4).*

The respondents also considered learners' mistakes as a means to know about their knowledge and learning abilities. One participant put it: *"in an EFL classroom, learners' errors should be perceived positively; when students make mistakes, the teacher can detect through points of strength and points of weakness, thus, students can be treated accordingly"* (Interviewee 4).

Dependently, errors could help identify learners and serve as a determiner of teacher's classroom actions.

With regard to specific areas of study, or specialties, it was considered as another source

that makes the teachers informed about their students' views and feelings. One teacher stated in this context: *"in my particular experience of teaching the literature course, I started exploring the human side of my learners; prompt their creative thoughts and encouraging them to rely on their imagination, so that they can expand their learning horizons"* (Interviewee 1).

It follows that specific areas of study are likely to deepen the teachers' awareness of their students' emotions and, thus, a better treatment is followed.

#### **5.1.4 Knowledge about the EFL Learning Environment**

Referring to the classroom environment, it was already known to all teachers that motivation, in the department of English, at Batna University, is a challenging concept. However, it remains an important parameter for the culmination and success of the teaching-learning process, and teachers are supposed by all means to create a motivating learning environment.

The common concern of students is with exams and tests at the expense of enjoyment and improvement of learning. Here appears the role of teachers as craftsmen and architects of the human soul. They need to be aware of the mechanisms of teaching to provide healthy and pleasurable learning classrooms. Such awareness paves up the way for learning for other purposes, beyond tests and exams. On the basis of all this, we tended, in the following part, to explore the knowledge about the learning settings in a way that fits our study.

We managed to ask our participants about their views concerning knowledge of the learning atmosphere. Their answers presented a total agreement with the given issues. We note here that all the participants stood for the idea that letting learners ask questions, create a vision of the classroom as a small community, and the creation of a healthy learning atmosphere are duties which need to be accomplished by teachers.

It was clear to admit that most of the participants gave importance to the effect of the



learning conditions on learning itself. Besides, these participants argued that a learning atmosphere, leading to positive learning, has to be based on intrinsic features, namely; acceptance, tolerance, emotive sustenance, sense of communion and appraisal or reinforcement. As such, the teacher could be sustained in his attempt to provide an adequate classroom environment.

#### **5.1.4.1 Appraising and Reinforcing Students' Learning**

This element gained a wide support from our participants, and they considered it vital in enhancing students' attempts to learn. For instance, a participating teacher believed that *"learners, as human beings, need to be appraised, encouraged and reinforced. When a teacher rewards his students' efforts, even via simple words, students are likely to make more effort and appreciate the classroom atmosphere, which leads in turn to positive learning outcomes"*(Interviewee 1).

The same teacher cherished the stimulating effect of reinforcement on learning and said that *"EFL learners can sort out the best of what they know, if only their teacher prompts and praises their effort. Therefore, the teacher can simply provide the stimulus and learners' initiatives are to follow accordingly"* (Interviewee 1).

#### **5.1.4.2 Emotive Support and Intimacy**

Our participants viewed the emotive side of learners as a propeller to forge ahead learning and create a good learning environment. This issue was perceived in terms of internal and external relationships that should be established between teachers and their students. Through such intimacy, students' problems could be heard, their issues and challenges handled, and a relaxing classroom environment is provided.

According to most of the participants, a good relation between the teacher and his students tends to create a typical classroom rapport. It has been argued that a teacher, who socializes with his learners, is likely to build an intimate and respectful relationship with these learners,

and this could make his job easier. One teacher believed that *“when the teacher shows concern and feeling to his students, they will like him and start doing their best in class. Such a mutual and sympathetic connection is meant to yield respect and initiates motivation in learning”* (Interviewee 3).

Similarly, outside-the-classroom socialization was also highly valued by the participants. One teacher, for example, referred to the issue, saying:

*External socialization is valuable and leads to better relations between the different parties. Besides, certain matters cannot be talked about or settled in class, thus, teachers and students would feel much at ease, outside the classroom, to discuss things freely, which in turn helps in the betterment of internal classroom environment* (Interviewee 2).

As concerns the aspect of emotive sustenance, it had to do with sharing learners' problems and issues. Our participants believed that by listening to students' problems, their negative feelings could be eradicated. A participating teacher admitted:

*I always care about my students' problems and feelings. By establishing a sympathetic relation with my students, I can make them express themselves freely, and make them understand that they can resort to me whenever they wish. By this, a sense of reliance and trust is generated in the whole teaching-learning sessions* (Interviewee 1).

In addition to the above, our participants also believed that listening to learners' problems gives the teacher an idea about how these learners feel, thus, he can provide solutions to their problems. One teacher stated:

*Knowing about the origin of a problem clarifies its proper resolution. Students' social and familial problems could have a negative impact on their learning. However, a smart teacher does his best to avoid reminding students of their problems, and tries instead to give them hope and consolation* (Interviewee 1).

Furthermore, creating a good learning context is also dependent on the initiation of a

comfortable and safe environment. Teachers need, thus, to avoid conflicting situations or any sense of threat in their classroom settings.

One participant put it: *“it remains salient for the teacher to promote students’ feelings and guarantee a secure learning context, in which students become relaxed and achieve better outcomes” (Interviewee 2).*

#### **5.1.4.3 On the Sense of Classroom as Community**

Most of the participants favored the issue of a classroom as a unified community, the objective of which was to follow the spirit of team work, and establish a sense of being a part of the whole. One participant believed that: *“a teacher can invest in his students’ awareness of a classroom as being a family, a community, and all individuals have their own role to play. They need to develop a sense of working in harmony with each other to achieve integration at all levels” (Interviewee 1).*

By installing, thus, the tradition of mutual cooperation and a unified sense of belonging, students can easily exchange knowledge and share communicative data. For example, one teacher said:

*We find, in a classroom context, students with a variety of backgrounds, and each one is an embodiment of a certain idiosyncrasy. However, with the instilment of classroom as community, learners get a big chance to approximate visions and coordinate efforts. Accordingly, a model student, who is open-minded, smart, communicatively competent and interculturally skilled, could be achieved, as an ultimate objective (Interviewee 3).*

#### **5.1.4.4 On Classroom Tolerance**

It remains important for teachers to find ways to reduce the amount of stress and intensity, in a learning context. One way is through tolerating students’ errors. Tolerating learners’ errors was, in fact, perceived as a vital means of instruction, which might affect students learning and their psychological level. Making errors is actually a normal behavior in the

teaching-learning context, and learners should not be blamed for their mistakes, but rather encouraged to take errors as a platform for better learning. One of the participants said:

*Teachers need to make their learners see mistakes as useful tools, not barricades. Besides, even in a mechanical way of learning, a student who commits errors, in a given subject-matter, can be oriented by the teacher saying, for example, well, make mistakes, it's no problem. You know, we were not native speakers of English; we are here to learn (Interviewee 1).*

#### **5.1.4.5 On Classroom Acceptance**

Getting learners involved in classroom activities, consulting with them, sharing their opinion and giving them opportunities to raise questions were all favorable strategies which help in the creation of a good learning atmosphere. The idea was reported by one teacher saying that “*EFL students need to be allowed time to present their issues and concerns. The teacher, in turn, has to make them feel at ease by exchanging knowledge through questions, and so on....*” (Interviewee 2).

Furthermore, a classroom in which things are debated freely is likely to result in lessening the amount of stress. One teacher admitted: “*through students' questions, the teacher himself can be guided and corrected which is an effective way to clarify issues and eradicate confusion*” (Interviewee 4).

Similarly, another teacher believed that being free in the classroom creates stability which results in a motivating classroom atmosphere. This was put by one teacher in these words:

*In my particular experience, I can say that a teacher, who makes his learners believe that their views matter a lot for him, as well as for the whole class, will raise their interest in the subject-matter, and these learners will be highly curious and eager to attend his class. However, the situation can be different with other subject-matter in which teachers do not value their learners' opinions. Hence, interest and motivation to attend can be lost, and*

*where could be the point, then?” (Interviewee 3).*

Accepting students’ views and suggestions could also be indicative of their growing personalities as conscious individuals. One participant declared:

*By giving students freedom, we are giving them a chance to speak and reveal what they have in mind. What students say, believe or criticize is always beneficial for the teacher because the promotion of the teaching-learning process relies on mutual cooperation between all parties (Interviewee 1).*

#### **5.1.4.6 On the Learning Environment: Its Sources of Knowledge**

Most of the participants considered initial education of teachers as a source of knowledge about the learning atmosphere. Besides, classroom sympathetic relations are useful in determining the orientation of learning. One teacher reported saying:

*In my initial training as a teacher, I was sustained a lot by an experienced teacher, who kept reminding me of the importance of instilling a sympathetic relation with students, if one wishes his teaching material to be shared and gaps are bridged (Interviewee 3).*

In addition, initial teaching experience was also seen as a source of knowledge about the components of a healthy learning atmosphere. A participating teacher reported saying:

*“I recall, from my initial teaching experience, that I was used to point at students by their names; I used to call them by their names, and I discovered that they appreciated it a lot, which helped me create a relaxed and pleasant learning atmosphere” (Interviewee 2).*

#### **5.1.5 Knowing about the Curriculum**

The teaching of EFL, in Algerian universities, has usually been guided by a designed syllabus, set by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. EFL teachers always innovate and improvise teaching materials in concordance with the broad lines of the syllabus. Later on, EFL teachers have started introducing modern technological means in their teaching as well as the use of modern teaching methods, such as ICT and networking.

So, this open space to improve the syllabus content started giving rise to better productive initiatives on the part of both teachers and learners. Some of these issues, related to curriculum, are shown in the table below.

**Table 5.3: Viewpoints about Knowledge of Curriculum**

Item	Case totality	Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
To meet the students' needs is more significant than sticking to the syllabus content.	40	50 %	30 %	5 %	13 %	2 %
Knowing about the What and the How, in a syllabus, is a reflection of the teacher's critical awareness.	40	52 %	33 %	12.4 %	0.6 %	2 %
Knowing how to use technological means, such as ICT, is necessary for the teacher.	40	84 %	10 %	6 %	0 %	0 %
Home assignments are meant to strengthen students' learning.	40	52 %	43 %	2.7 %	1.7 %	0.6 %

Under this significant issue, we managed to discern five categories which were presented in terms of coverage of the teaching material, assessment of the syllabus, reliance on modern technology, assigning homework and setting teaching objectives.

#### **5.1.5.1 On the Teaching of EFL Curriculum**

By convention, EFL teachers are supposed to stick to the designed syllabus, and cover its different parts, so that students' learning needs could be met positively. Such an idea implies that learners' needs are intertwined, in a balanced way, with various curricular areas. This was the view of a questionnaire respondent. However, the critical issue lies in the fact that EFL teachers are not in favor of covering the syllabus content unless it meets the students' learning needs, in that these needs are prerequisite to the implementation of the curriculum content. Such a concern was reported by a respondent saying: *"if a learner needs, for example, to know about the relation between grammatical patterns and intonation patterns, and the teacher skips the matter, then, students will not be able to draw parallels between the two and the thing remains clumsy"* (A questionnaire respondent).

### **5.1.5.2 On the Assessment of the Curriculum**

Most of our participants shed light on the importance of dealing critically with the syllabus content. The motive behind this was to adapt the bulky material to the students' levels and learning needs. One participant commented saying: *“a smart teacher always proceeds with the idea of adjusting the teaching material on the basis of his learners' level of understanding and interpretive abilities” (A questionnaire respondent).*

An additional motive, for the utility of teachers' critical vision, was the expectation of difficult and challenging situations that might happen in the classroom. Dependently, teachers need to be apt and ready all the time to mold thoughts and fix problematic issues from a conscious and critical perspective. This situation was commented on by a participant saying:

*Being critical and aware of my profession helps me a lot in forecasting challenges and unexpected issues to happen. I always need to be equipped with necessary knowledge and information to cope with climactic situations and not being at loss or perplexed (Interviewee4).*

### **5.1.5.3 On EFL Curriculum: Its Sources of Knowledge**

In this study, we managed to reveal technology-based skill and experience as two main sources of knowledge about the curriculum.

As concerns skill development, it was related to the frequent use of technological software to promote learning, and present the syllabus content in a motivating way. One participant put it:

*Nowadays, students are becoming more and more reliant on sophisticated media in their learning. So, teachers are no longer in need of traditional methods and procedures, but their duty is to provide updated knowledge, based on ICT and other related materials (Interviewee 3).*

Now, referring to teaching experience, it was considered, by the participants, as a reliable

source of acquaintance with the objectives of the designed syllabus. A participating teacher admitted: *“a teacher’s long experience in the field makes him aware of the advantages and deficits at the level of the teaching syllabus. Experience can also put teachers in a position to negotiate, modify and improve the whole teaching policy”* (Interviewee 1).

#### **5.1.5.4 On the Knowledgeable Use of Technology**

In a globalized world, where technology holds a dominant posture, EFL teaching is becoming more and more challenging and sophisticated. Teachers are always expected to devise ways and means to create interest for their learners, among which media and technology are paramount. The fusion of technology and education yields efficient and sophisticated strategies to foster the teaching-learning process. One participant was aware of the issue and reported saying: *“a teacher can better deliver his material, transmit his message and make an impression on students, if he competently makes use of sophisticated technological means within the framework of pedagogy 3.0”* (Interviewee 1).

The creation of a good and healthy learning atmosphere also necessitates the utilization of modern technology. One participant reported: *“EFL teachers need to rely on audio-visual materials, and other didactic means, such as charts, pictures, acting, miming and use of power-point to engage students in learning and provide a motivating learning atmosphere”* (Interviewee 3).

#### **5.1.5.5 On the Assignment of Homework**

Experts in EFL teaching often value the significance of learners’ ability to transform the teaching input into learning output. This issue was highly regarded, by the participants, in relation to home assignments given to learners for individual fulfillment. One interviewee said: *“The attribution of home assignments is usually important for the student, in that he recollects his ideas to build an integrated body of knowledge. Information need to be processed by students for better learning feedback”* (Interviewee 2).



The encouragement of learners' autonomy was also considered as a reason in the above issue. The example was reported by a participant who said:

*One can admit that the best way to learn something is to work on it by yourself. The LMD regime, as you know, expects students to be self-reliant; a good deal of the learning duty lies on students' shoulders, and they have to work all the way long on an autonomous basis (Interviewee 1).*

#### **5.1.5.6 Setting Objectives for Teaching**

Within this thematic issue, we managed to reveal four objectives, which we present hereafter.

The first objective has to do with the coverage of the teaching material, and was highly valued by most of our participants. One participant commented: *"It has always been a necessity for teachers to cover most, if not all the parts of the teaching curriculum. Besides, the more the covered teaching material is, the more consistent is the learners' knowledge"* (Interviewee 1).

In the teaching profession, covering the syllabus content is always a common objective, which stands on a variety of motives such as avoiding trouble with students, sticking to time schedule of the course and also meeting the administrative requirements. One participating teacher stated:

*EFL teachers' aspiration is to avoid stigmatizations and negative criticism by doing their best to finish the whole designed program of teaching. Covering the syllabus content is, therefore, perceived as a reflection of the teachers' efficacy in their working environment. Moreover, the teacher's ability to finish the full program is likely to provide him with relief and consolation, which adds in turn to his professional stability (Interviewee 2).*

It was also admitted by the participants that the exams' policy requires a good deal of students' preparation, at a variety of levels, for tests and exams to get better results; the latter

are viewed as a realistic embodiment of the teachers' efforts and commitment.

The participants also showed an awareness of the LMD teaching requirements in terms of preparing students for practical life. This implies a conscious treatment of learners as efficient agents in the socio-economic life. It follows that English is no longer taught with confined strategies, but rather openly and on a functional basis. This intentional shift was put by a teacher, saying:

*EFL teachers face many challenges from a variety of perspectives. They are considered as traders and rather producers of knowledge. This knowledge has to be effective in that it serves students to find their ways through life and reality. Emphatically, it's not a question of getting degrees, but how these degrees justify themselves in students' real lives (Interviewee 1).*

It was also maintained by our participants that another teacher's role is to serve as a model, both inside and outside the classroom. However, such a demand could be hard for teachers, especially in modern times in which communication and rapport between teachers and their students becomes a necessity. Nonetheless, teachers should act and behave according to the requirements of their working milieu. One teacher, for example, admitted saying: *"teachers are considered as model citizens, not only in classrooms, but also outside, and any abnormal behavior by teachers is likely to receive critique and social stigmatization"* (Interviewee 1).

#### **5.1.6 On Knowledge about the Self**

This issue was perceived by the participants in terms of the unity of the self with the teaching abilities. There is compatibility between the teacher, as a person, and the teacher as a professional. Besides, our participating teachers perceived themselves, in relation to their work, on the basis of two categories; self-reflection and self-constructed image. The two qualities are accounted for in what follows.

### **5.1.6.1 Self-Reflection**

Most of the participants believed that teachers need to question frequently themselves about their character, their efficacy and self-satisfaction. As such, they can contribute to the evaluation of their personal growth and professional development. The idea was stated by a participant saying:

*As EFL teachers, we need to put our person and character under scrutiny. We have to ask ourselves constant questions about our progress, growth and professional development. It is vital for a teacher to fuel and refuel his personality every day through self-reflection (Interviewee 2).*

It follows that teachers can detect through their positive and negative sides by self-evaluation. Once a teacher is admitted as being good, he can, then, consider his professional knowledge as trustworthy and reliable to be transmitted to students. Furthermore, teachers' reflection was also seen as a trigger to the spirit of change and newness. Hence, monotony and demotivation to learning could be lessened.

### **5.1.6.2 Self-Constructed Image**

The image constructed by our participants was in connection with both the field of work and their perception of the teaching profession itself. Some of their personal characteristic features were evoked several times. Among these qualities, they provided, for example, humor and flexibility, punctuality and perseverance, confidence and sense of positivism. Thus, these components of self-image are intrinsic features which would fit into the requirements of the teaching profession, of course as viewed by the participants.

In what follows, an account of these significant features is provided. The quality of humor in teaching was largely accepted by our participants; (90%) of them considered it as a means to lessen stress and anxiety in the classroom context. This feature was clarified by a participant saying: *“a teacher who acts with a good sense of humor is likely to change his*

*students' vision, and becomes lovely and tolerable. Besides, a humorous rapport between the two parties eradicates fear, and paves the way for learners to achieve better results"* (Interviewee 3).

Punctuality and perseverance were again viewed as good characteristic features, which help in the development of teachers' professional knowledge. Actually, teachers' punctuality and perseverance were seen as contributive to both success and self-confidence. For instance, one teacher stated: *"being punctual and perseverant in work provides me with comfort as well as confidence in my working abilities. Even judgments in the surrounding milieu can positively function in my favour"* (Interviewee 2).

Similarly, teachers' perseverance was viewed as an indication of hard work and working commitment. It was considered by teachers as a contributive ingredient to the professional image in front of learners. One of the participants, for example, said: *"students might be aware of the teachers' motives and intentions; if the teacher works with perseverance and commitment, he will gain his students' respect and cooperation"* (Interviewee 2).

Being humorous and flexible was also seen as a further quality that teachers need. It was viewed as a sign of change and adjustment. Again, this quality was meant to contribute to the growth and development of the teacher's personality. This was reported by one participant, saying:

*In the teaching profession, the teacher's personality is meant to be flexible and open to change and improvement. This can always be achieved through adaptation and attempts to make a change. This latter is better detected by making comparisons between old states of being and new ones* (Interviewee 1).

It follows that a flexible teacher is likely to meet his learners' needs and fulfill their learning aspirations. The situation was justified by a participating teacher:

*Classroom flexibility is vital and serves a variety of purposes. For example, teachers*

*usually prefer to work with students in small groups, but whenever a student does not feel at ease, in a given group, his teacher moves him smoothly to another group. The aim of which is to motivate students to learn and provide a healthy learning environment (Interviewee 3).*

Having self-confidence and a sense of positivism was viewed necessary for the teacher to be in a good psychological state. Furthermore, our participants considered teaching as a fascinating journey full of opportunities for development, and teachers need to create a positive context of competition to move forward and emulate one another in matters of success. One participant admitted: *“as a teacher, it makes me happy to see my colleagues prosper and achieve higher stages of knowledge. I could be encouraged by their achievements and do my best to be like them, but not envy them” (Interviewee 2).*

It follows that confidence was viewed as significant in having a positive impact on students’ learning. This idea was evoked by the same participant: *“students, as classroom agents, can easily figure out traits of confidence within a teacher, thus, their acts of learning take place accordingly” (Interviewee 2).*

The love of one’s profession was also seen as a quality needed by the teacher. It could be a criterion of performance as noted by a participant believing that *“the more we love what we do, the more we produce, and the more we are happy” (Interviewee 1).*

### **5.1.6.3 Knowing about the Self: The Revealed Sources**

In this respect, three sources of knowledge about the self were revealed.

#### **5.1.6.3.1 Background and Past Learning**

An EFL learner, with a solid learning history, could have his personality influenced and shaped by this part of learning history. Our participants evoked the impact of such ideas in retaining in mind the image of some teachers and how these images shape their teaching career. One participating teacher said:

*Through the passing of time, I couldn’t forget the image of being taught by severe*

*teachers, who did not care about our treatment, age, and learning aspirations. Growing up with such images in mind is likely to affect your job, unless you decide to overcome such history and manage to be a different person, who is not stiff and ugly (Interviewee 1).*

By contrast, one's past learning experience can positively shape his personality, by retaining positive impressions about his past teachers. This was admitted by one participant who put it:

*It has always been true that loving a person generates a love of what he does. If your past teacher serves as a model in your life, and lets good impressions on you, you'll find yourself in total harmony with his character and you tend to follow his track in your teaching profession (Interviewee 4).*

Additionally, one's past learning experience was also seen as a source of impact on the teaching perceptions. For instance, one teacher admitted: *"if a teacher develops a positive opinion about teaching, he will start loving his job gradually and then brings about his background experience to employ it in his own teaching career"* (Interviewee 3).

#### **5.1.6.3.2 Professional Experience**

As concerns the element of experience, it was also seen as a source to develop knowledge about the self as well as the zeal for the teaching profession. This view was accounted for by a teacher as follows:

*You know, we can't love what we do all the time. However, experience teaches you how to change your vision and think about the positive side of your job. So, with experience you can adapt and love your job. In a while, both you and your profession become united as one (Interviewee 2).*

Similarly, another participating teacher reported: *"one would better work with the principle: if you don't find what you love, you should love what you find. This can really be motivating to the teacher doing his job"* (Interviewee 1).

Again, the element of experience was considered very significant in helping teachers to draw parallels between flexibility and change. This was admitted by a participant: *“experience helps teachers a lot; they can adapt to changes occurring frequently, and find no difficulty in teaching a variety of subject matters to students at different levels”* (Interviewee3).

Furthermore, having an experience, which results from teaching abroad, was also seen as a means to help teachers filter through teaching materials and related problems. One of the participants, who used to study abroad and exchange knowledge, put it:

*Experience in terms of working abroad and getting EFL knowledge from its native context is really efficient to the teacher. There are problematic situations which can only be resolved via this type of experience; the situation can be hard and demotivating for a teacher who lacks knowledge gained from the experience of working abroad* (Interviewee 2).

It was also believed that experience could facilitate working reflection; hence, the teachers' growth and development follow consequently. One interviewee, for example, said:

*Every teacher learns from his experience, and tries to make changes and achieve better results. A potential failure teaches you success and perseverance, so that you find new ways to solve your problems, and become efficient inside and outside the classroom settings* (Interviewee 1).

In a like manner, one more participant considered useful his twenty years of teaching experience, in that he acquired a solid bulk of knowledge and could develop a set of skills necessary for the profession. She said: *“throughout one's teaching career, it becomes apparent to experience change; the state of change is vital and has to be dealt with at free will. So, the more you spend time in teaching, the more you grow and develop professionally”* (Interviewee 3).

### 5.1.6.3.3 Constructive Feedback from the University Environment

It has been shown by the participants that teachers could be sustained, in both their learning and teaching, by external and surrounding factors in their university environment. Actually, receiving feedback from students, administrators as well as colleagues was an important source of knowing about the self and potentially self-development.

The majority of our participants (90%) supported feedback from learners, in that it serves as a corrective impetus during the presentation of lessons and lectures. Students' feedback was seen to have many benefits, as viewed by a teacher:

*Students' feedback informs our teaching decisions in many ways. Asking, for example, students by the end of the sessions about comprehension can be made possible through their feedback, no matter how positive or negative it is. The learners' responsive evaluation can lead the teacher to model, shape and improve his teaching strategies in accordance with the learning requirements (Interviewee 1).*

The participants also admitted the value of students' feedback in learning and teaching contexts. It was seen as a valid source for both the self and the profession. This was put by another participant, as follows:

*In a teaching classroom, you know, psychological factors count a lot; a teacher has to be cheerful and should avoid bad temper or mood when dealing with students. Whenever a teacher is in bad mood or ill-tempered, his students can sustain him to overcome this state of mind, and create a healthy learning environment (Interviewee 4).*

Furthermore, our participants viewed feedback from the administration as useful, but with some reserves regarding the implied, authoritative relationship between the two parties. One participant pointed out:

*We, as teachers, usually receive orders, advices and directives from the administrative staff, including the head of the department and other assistants. We often accept what they*



*tell us, but cautiously, in that teachers are more concerned about their students; they know what to do and how to do it at the right time apart from all administrative requirements (Interviewee 1).*

In addition, getting feedback from colleagues was highly supported and was seen as a knowledge source, which leads to teachers' development. For instance, one teacher evoked the significance of having a good image in one's professional milieu. He put it:

*It is useful for the teacher to view himself through the lens of other teachers' eyes. Sharing other teachers' point of view helps one to check his exploits and achievements. Besides, a teacher needs to accept peer remarks and critique because nobody is perfect or ideal, thus, such a teacher can experience professional development (Interviewee 3).*

In a similar way, another interviewee valued peer feedback with the lens of his teaching experience. He said:

*Teachers always need each other. In a university milieu we enlarge our leaning potential, expand our research horizons and develop our sense of professionalism. Sitting with each other and talk, debate and exchange ideas is a contributive source of knowledge to our profession ( Interviewee 1).*

Teachers observing other teachers was also valued positively by the participants. One participant put it: *"peer observation is useful and beneficial to all teachers; when somebody watches you, he will tell you about your points of strength and points of weakness as well, and this provides a corrective evaluation"* (Interviewee 2). Besides, when a teacher is corrected and evaluated by his colleague, he is likely to reflect on his own practice. This was reported by a questionnaire respondent, saying:

*EFL teachers need to attend each other's sessions. If this becomes a tradition, many opportunities for learning take place and teachers take a lot of profit from their mutual evaluation. Therefore, an updated and advanced context for learning can be instilled to serve*

*the whole professional milieu (Interviewee 4).*

## **5.2 On Teacher Knowledge and Classroom Practice**

It has always been admitted that what teachers know facilitates and helps them in their classroom practice. In the following part of our study, we attempted to respond to the following question: In what way(s) does teacher knowledge inform EFL classroom practice?

In what follows, we revealed two main findings. To begin with, most of the participants' views, held in the previous part, were compatible with their accounts of knowledge in practice. The implication of this is that teachers are positively viewed with regards to their classroom actions. It follows that the reasons given by teachers, either differing or similar, to justify their actions would meet the motives behind their views.

Such a resemblance reinforces the assumption that attempting to justify one's motives behind a given action is part of the teacher's profession. The other finding is related to the fact that classroom decisions are always informed by the knowledge and views of teachers.

This idea embodies the interconnectedness of what teachers know and what they do. Emphatically, these two findings highlighted the interrelatedness of theory to classroom practice. Again, for analytical purposes, the issues or topics included in this part are independently presented to broadly correspond to the areas of teacher knowledge, discussed in the former part. Therefore, we'd like to point that this full part is devoted to the observed and interviewed teachers' practices in their classrooms. In fact, the teachers' practical actions are approached in connection with their knowledge in both ways mentioned above.

### **5.2.1 Knowing about Subject Matter in Practice**

The need to be aware of the EFL culture was highly emphasized by almost all the participants. It was highlighted that cultural awareness implies knowledge about the varieties

of this culture and how they are put into practice. The example could be found in major differences between British and American Englishes, at the level of aspects such as spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary. One participant gave an example, saying:

*EFL teachers need to be aware of the cultural as well as the linguistic varieties of the English language. By teaching, for example, the major differences between British and American Englishes, such a subject matter has to reflect a good mastery of quite a number of components necessary for the demarcation of parallel lines between the native standard languages (Interviewee 2).*

The same participant believed that culture is an integral part of EFL teaching, and should be valued within EFL settings. This participant said:

*As EFL teachers, we think that teaching language devoid of its culture can never be set as an objective. To teach linguistic skills is not enough in producing culturally competent learners. Therefore, aspects of EFL culture need to be integrated in the teaching syllabus (Interviewee 2).* This participant's vision of culture was backed up by the universal status of English and the wish to prepare communicatively competent learners at the largest scale. Thus, culture should be favored and valued in the teaching learning process. The same participant went on saying:

*EFL teachers need to take advantage of every cultural point in their classes. It's already known to us that our learners' main benefit is to gain knowledge which is culturally justified; they need to know about the English modes of life, including attitudes, ways of thinking, verbal and non-verbal communications, ...etc., especially in a time when English has become a lingua franca (Interviewee 2).*

It becomes clear that cultural awareness and cultural transfer are contributive to the teachers' professional knowledge. Also, knowing about EFL culture paves up the way for teachers to compare and contrast the target culture with the mother-tongue culture. In this

respect, another participant said:

*The teacher's cultural practice enriches his knowledge as well as the knowledge of his students. Reflection on practice enables us to reveal cultural traits of different societies. In western culture, an example of a secular ritual is a birthday party. The candles on a cake are symbolic, each representing a year. The blowing out of the candles is symbolic of the successful passage of time and, if completed successfully, supposedly foretells the granting of a birthday wish. The giving of presents, singing of the birthday song, wearing of ritualistic costume are all ritual elements (Interviewee 1).*

So, the point is not about teaching language for the sake of teaching, but teaching language to achieve other goals. Another participant considered language and culture as inseparable

*EFL teachers need to help their learners understand the nature of the target culture by making assimilations and draw upon authentic situations. Using literary texts, of a diverse cultural background, is considered efficient in providing authentic knowledge about linguistic and cultural phenomena. Thus, our teaching would make sense (Interviewee 4).*

### **5.2.2 Content Pedagogy: Knowledge in Practice**

It should be admitted here that our participants' practice was informed by their views about the teaching of EFL skills. They highlighted the need of EFL students to enhance their fluency and use English as much as possible in their daily communication. Such a view has an important effect on what the teacher uses as teaching materials, related to content pedagogy.

In an oral expression course, for instance, one participating teacher made a positive decision by engaging his students in a motivating debate about the use of didactic aids and technological means in the classroom. Students were naturally encouraged to talk and exchange ideas, and the following episode embodies this classroom event.

*T. What do you think of using modern technology in the classroom?*

*S1. Great idea.*

*T. How?*

*S1. We like technological tools because they attract us.*

*T. Any other idea?*

*S2. Yes, using didactic means breaks the classroom routine.*

*T. What else?*

*S2. We can learn about the native accent as well as features of connected speech through audio-visual materials. It's good for us to use in research studies.*

*T. I thank you all. It was well said.*

The teacher attempted, in the above episode, to initiate speech and encourage his students to express their views freely. Besides, the teaching of oral skills is considered very important in the LMD system, and teachers are expected to adopt strategies to get students involved in the process of communication. One participant put it:

*You know, in the context of modern pedagogies, namely; pedagogy 3.0, the teaching of EFL requires the teaching of its skills as well. You know, EFL teaching is a complex process and the productive and receptive skills need not be taught in isolation. Students should be trained to plan, interact and evaluate their communication in various settings. Furthermore, learning to speak makes the student knowledgeable and confident about his abilities in an attempt to make learners act in a learner-centred framework (Interviewee 3, recalled observation).*

In a similar way, the same teacher preferred teaching EFL through authentic contexts. The following material embodied this preference:

*T. Please, if you think about someone who wants to claim something. How can he do that?*  
*SS. Well, we don't understand.*  
*T. Good, just imagine that you want to ask for your right, how can you do that?*  
*S1. I do it in a legal way.*  
*T. Well,,are there other ways to do it?*  
*S2 We, as students, can ask for something by not attending lectures.*  
*T. What do you mean?*  
*S2. Sometimes, we feel the best way to claim something is to go on strike.*  
*T. That's interesting. So, going on strike is your way to ask for your rights.*  
*S3. I prefer to call it standing for our rights.*  
*T. How?*  
*SS. We can peacefully protest against anything inadequate.*  
*T. Wonderful! So we say, so, we understand that the best way to claim your right is through peaceful protests. Good!*

From the above episode, we understand that the teacher tried to create authentic situations for language learning. Accordingly, this participant stated:

*EFL teachers need to rely on real-like situations in their classrooms. Such a method is characterized by authenticity of practice which leads to language learning. By devising real situations, students become more involved in classroom practice and could eventually inform classroom decisions (Interviewee 3, recalled observation).*

Now, the teaching of vocabulary received many supporting and diversified strategies by teachers. In fact, the teacher's knowledge about his/her teaching material and the learners'

potentialities can help decide upon the use of one technique over another. This was evidenced in one participant's words: *"the teacher's classroom decision can be informed by a variety of strategies and techniques such as the use of verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication, providing definitions and illustrations, and possibly reinforcing students' learning"* (Interviewee 02).

The following classroom event is based on the use of more than one technique.

*T. Imagine a boss checking his employees and coincidentally hears one saying to his mate, 'our boss is churlish'.*

*S1. Could you say the meaning in French, please?*

*T. Ok. Can you give a synonym in English? Check your dictionaries, please.*

*S2. Ill-mannered.*

*T. Good. So churlish is synonymous with ill-mannered. What do you think of your teachers? Are they churlish?*

*SS. No, of course not.*

*T. Well, I can guess why you say that.*

*SS. Laughing out loud.*

We asked, in fact, the teacher about the motive behind the adoption of this strategy and he responded: *"it's simple; I had the intention of reinforcing students' learning by providing a multi-layered context for vocabulary use. In this way, I could meet their different comprehension levels"* (Interviewee 4, recalled observation).

It follows that vocabulary teaching is based on the suitable and effective techniques and strategies chosen by the teacher. This implies also the learners' pace of comprehension, nature of the curricular material as well as the teacher's individual sense of humour. In this respect, another participant said: *"I usually teach vocabulary items in use by incorporating*

*strategies based on aspects of non-verbal communication. After all, we are dealing with humans and the teacher's behavior is symbolic of his professional character"* (Interviewee 2).

As concerns the teaching of grammar, the participants viewed the inductive method as an efficient way to do it. The aim of this method is to reinforce learning and teach grammatical forms in use instead of the excessive focus on explicit teaching. One participant reported saying: *"teaching grammar inductively can inform the teacher's practice and consolidate learning through contextual presentation of grammatical patterns"* (Interviewee 1).

Therefore, the indirect way to teaching grammar helps students grasp the pattern as long as they are in need of using the grammatical structure in an appropriate way. The same participating teacher justified this point saying: *"it would be efficient to teach students something about grammatical sensitivity. We make them detect the pattern and be able to use it"* (Interviewee 1).

Using such an approach to teach grammar fosters learners to go beyond mechanical recall and achieve instead concrete levels of understanding and practice, thus, their learning and intellectual capacities could be enhanced accordingly.

In addition, the integration of EFL skills could be achieved through the fusion of aspects of one skill into another. For example, grammatical rules and structures can be best taught through reading passages. One participant said about this point: *"EFL grammar has always been taught in use. Grammatical patterns are best retained when presented in concrete situations. As such, learners could understand structures and patterns while reading extracts and passages"* (Interviewee 2).

By using this method to grammar instruction, students can feel language use and develop profound understanding of the underlying patterns themselves. They can also become active informants of the teaching-learning context. This view was held by a teacher justifying his



practice as follows: *“when teaching, for example and activities, grammatical tenses to students, we tend to let students detect the patterns from the context; this is for the sake of their awareness and conscious learning” (Interviewee 4).*

Many participants valued the inductive grammar teaching with its focus on context and examples. One participant admitted: *“grammar should no longer be taught in the traditional ways of teaching the rule, then giving examples, but quite the opposite. Students need to become able enough, through rehearsal, to elicit the rules by themselves” (Interviewee 2).*

This inductive method to grammar teaching suggests that students could learn actively by doing efforts to identify the grammatical structure. Language in turn might become functional because students not only understand the patterns, but also grasp how to use them in a meaningful way. It follows that teachers need to use their knowledge about how to teach grammar (pedagogy). Hence, their practice is backed up and justified by their knowledge about content pedagogy.

### **5.2.3 General Pedagogy: Knowledge in Practice**

Teachers’ practices could be informed by their knowledge of how to manage classrooms, how to deal with contents as well as how to manage tasks and activities. In what follows, two sub-categories are meant to develop this topic.

#### **5.2.3.1 Knowing about Classroom Management in Practice**

Classroom management is an important aspect of teachers’ knowledge about general pedagogy. Besides, when implementing a classroom management approach in teaching, rules are set for classroom practice. We should add that the participants believed that this approach informs the teaching practice. The following episode captures the idea of letting students tell free stories to encourage participation and keep classroom order.

*T. Well, how do you evaluate your learning today?*

*SS. Good, progressive [loudly].*

*T. So, you are satisfied? What can we do, then?*

*SI. [Stands up.] I can tell a free story.*

*T. What for?*

*SI. To make my friends participate.*

*T. Good, go ahead, please.*

The teacher was asked about the use of this strategy and its effectiveness in classroom settings. He replied saying:

*Teachers need to improvise and find ways to manage their classrooms. Besides, working with adult learners is a challenging duty and the teacher has to motivate his learners to achieve positive learning. One of my devised strategies was to select two students at the end of every session and give them freedom to tell free stories. It has become a tradition in my classroom. However, when students are lazy and noisy they are deprived of such an opportunity, which through time led to full control of individuals in the classroom (Teacher 1, recalled observation).*

### **5.2.3.2 Knowing about Content and Management of Tasks**

Knowing about content and task management is a second aspect of general pedagogy knowledge. Task management could be realized through the announcement of the task beforehand. This strategy fits best the context of reading literary texts and passages. One participant commented on this point saying:

*Students can be given a text to read silently, after being guided by questions that state the aim of reading. Then, they might move to a discussion and debate of the whole text on a*

*comprehensive basis. The outcome would be reading for a purpose which yields mastery of both form and content (Interviewee 4).*

Similarly, another teacher emphasized the importance of comprehension questions in clarifying the objective behind reading. He stated:

*Writing questions on the board, in the pre-reading stage, would make readers more focused and prepare them to move to the reading stage itself. Therefore, analytical questions will not pose a problem for students and they can grasp the purpose of their reading activities (Interviewee 1).*

The teachers' decisions were informed by these practices which they justified through the announcement of a task in advance and its regulatory function. It becomes clear that stating the objective of a task in advance would enhance the teachers' meta-cognitive awareness, which can be interpreted in terms of orienting students' understanding and helping them achieve the predefined objectives. In what follows, we provide an example of a task with a predefined objective.

*T. Hello everybody! I'd like you to have a look at the text in front of you. Read it again and give it a title. Do you remember the difference between title and theme?*

*S1. A title implies a theme.*

*T. Or?*

*SS. A title captures the main idea and the whole spirit of the work.*

*T. Good. So, what could be the title for this text? Could it be Huck Finn and his friend?*

*The funeral service or something else?*

*SS. I think that I choose the combination of both ones which is They attend their own funeral service.*

*T. Excellent!*

What we get from this episode is that the teacher clarified the reading objective. (i.e., marking the difference between a theme and a title) beforehand. A further possibility is that a teacher could ask about a related title after the reading stage. In all cases, the decision is sustained by the regulative function of the reading purpose set in advance, along with the nature of the task as well as the time allotted for this. In a situation like this, learners need to be directed on the basis of the task aim to enhance the benefit of classroom learning. The same teacher said:

*An EFL teacher, in particular, needs to fix a goal for his classroom tasks. If the teacher clarifies the objective of tasks in the classroom, students are likely to engage with the nature of the task, do their best to respond and pay attention to possible details which relate to the task (Interviewee 1, recalled classroom observation).*

Furthermore, in an oral expression course, the teacher gave importance to content and used some instructions as indicated in the following fragment:

*T. Correct! Yes, No?*

*SS. No, Sir.*

*T. Is it?*

*SI. Yes.*

*T. You repeat once again.*

*SI. Capricious, circumspect, personable, punctilious.*

*T& SS. word one, two and four pronounced incorrectly.*

*SI. Capricious, circumspect, punctilious, [pronounced incorrectly].*

*T. & S. Capricious, circumspect, punctilious, [in correct pronunciation].*

*T. A further mistake and it's over.*

*Continued*

*SI. Capricious, circumspect, punctilious [pronounced incorrectly].*

*T. Please, sit down. Someone else?*

We notice in the above that the student was asked to pronounce the new vocabulary items, twice at most. Yet, after being given a second chance to pronounce the words correctly, the student was no longer admitted as successful and was asked to sit down.

The teacher justified later the motive behind this decision, which was his intent to deliver the task on the basis of its nature as well as time limitation. This participant responded:

*It is clear that such rehearsal demands an effort and a good deal of performance. It is governed by the parameters of time as well as the fixed number of repetitions. A student is given two chances at most to remedy his mistakes and get back to the right thing. Through this kind of practice the learning pace could be made faster and students become more alert to the task requirements (Interviewee 3, recalled observation).*

The teacher's vision of getting the student sitted, after expiring his chances, was based on the management of classroom interaction in due time. Besides, the teacher considered the act of blaming students as a bad way to raise their attentiveness. In this way, the teacher strives to foster students ahead and create interest in the classroom activities. The same participant added:

*Vocabulary items were practiced in isolation, but pronouncing the words was done more than once. We are already aware of students who do not make effort to improve and remain disinterested. By asking a student to sit down, after making a mistake twice, he is likely to become vigilant and more involved; this is on the one side. On the other side, we often tend to save some time to give other students a chance to participate in the coverage of the task elements. (Interviewee 3, recalled observation).*

#### 5.2.4 Knowing about Students in Practice

Knowing about students' learning potentiality was seen as an integral area of teacher knowledge. In fact, learners were believed to learn at different rates and paces. With this fact in mind, an oral expression teacher used to work with students in terms of small groups, containing learners with various levels and abilities. The participant commented on his informed practice saying:

*In a single group of learners, you can find a variety of learning abilities. Whenever a weak student feels upset within a group of good students, he can simply ask for a group change. The teacher understands the situation and provides him with sustenance through follow-up activities in another group of students (Interviewee 4).*

Furthermore, students themselves can motivate each other through mutual help and shared knowledge. In so doing, they overcome psychological and linguistic problems and reduce the amount of stress and frustration that might be felt by low-level students. Working in groups of varied ability was also valued positively by another participant, who admitted:

*In an oral expression lab, group work is useful to the teacher when the training of these groups addresses both good and weak students. You know, we are always teaching with the principle of skill integration, thus, we need to rely on smart students to assure the normal flow of task-based activities. In brief, bright students are meant to enlighten their group members and facilitate their comprehension (Interviewee 2).*

It is also understood that teachers need to have knowledge about the various learning styles of their students. Accordingly, classroom decisions should be made with the intent to serve the interest of students as well as their learning style. One participant clarified the idea saying:

*In an EFL classroom, the teacher meets students with a different background knowledge. Their needs also vary in many ways; some are interested in the technical side of learning and*

*skills of reception, others show more concern about communication, hence they show an interest in productive skills. The teacher's role remains by all means significant in establishing equilibrium between tasks and objectives, and provides help at an individual level to review weaknesses (Interviewee 3).*

The participating teacher adopted instruction to teaching in a moderate way and did not wish to limit his awareness to one particular group's need. The teacher clarified his view about this strategy saying:

*It's not beneficial to devote whole teaching sessions to rehearsal on one particular aspect of teaching. Time has to be carefully distributed to the activities which most interest students. Speaking, for example, has to be always encouraged and whenever less speaking students appear, the teacher can devote extra time and effort to speaking, and students are likely to become habituated to talk about a variety of issues (Interviewee 3).*

Knowing about learners' preferences was also another important aspect in this respect. The teachers' practice was informed by this type of knowledge through adaptation of teaching, in a way that responds to learners' preferences. In classrooms, teachers might have students with a variety of learning preferences; there are audio, visual and perhaps kinesthetic students, and teachers need to have a command of the learning pace of these students to assure comprehension. One of our participants referred to the use of strategies and tools that serve the learning preferences of his students by saying:

*The EFL teacher has to exploit his knowledge and model it in favor of his learners. The diversity of teaching tools and strategies provides a chance to meet the students' learning preferences and aspirations. Using pictures or games and puzzles is an effective means to render things auditory, visible and palpable. By seeing and touching things and objects, learning is more concrete and inspiring (Interviewee 2).*

It was clear that the teacher was trying to exploit his knowledge and find suitable ways to

meet the learning demands of his students. The course was, however, stressing the kinesthetic type of learners, but other students could gain benefit from it, and an appeal was made to their preferences and expectations. The same teacher, however, made the point more pertinent, saying:

*Learners always need to deal with something different in a different way. Any teaching material which is heard and seen is likely to meet a variety of styles and preferences; you hear a word, then you see it in a picture, and later you can touch it. This sounds good for the learners to experience a novel type of learning (Interviewee 2).*

Having knowledge about learners' motivation also informed the teachers' practice. The participants already knew that students lacked motivation in EFL classrooms. They exploited their knowledge to ensure good teaching in an attempt to raise students' motivation and make learning more active. In so doing, teachers relied on their knowledge about learners, which informed them about the use of various devices and strategies. Among the strategies and devices used, we can mention; peer error correction, cooperative work, using riddles and games and encouraging students' free debate and participation.

Again, the use of a variety of activities was positively viewed, in that it renders students more active, and thus, the level of their motivation could be raised. One participating teacher commented on the use of varied techniques such as classroom acting as beneficial tools to enhance students' motivation. He said:

*Varying classroom techniques is meant to break monotony and enhance motivation. A teacher can also raise his students' motivation by giving them a chance to act and perform scenes from famous plays. Acting is likely to render classroom learning enjoyable and enthusiastic. Besides, when acting in the classroom, students are psychologically reinforced and become more conscious about their personal development as learners (Interviewee 1).*

Similarly, another teacher valued the usefulness of using literary works in his oral



expression course, saying:

*Using literary extracts, of all genres, is very useful in my laboratory course. It's factual that learners retain 10% of what they hear, 40% of what they say, and about 50% of what they do. Dependently, classroom acting is an opportunity for students to combine all these facets together (Interviewee 2).*

Letting learners find out their mistakes and correct themselves was considered as a useful practice, meant to motivate learners and make them conscious. One teacher, for example, put it:

*It would be motivational not to correct a student on the spot. The smart teacher needs to find indirect ways to signal the mistake and does not correct his student directly. Personally, I give the learner a chance to know about the mistake and correct it on his own. Our intent here is to create autonomous learners (Interviewee 4).*

The participants also favored the idea of not interfering right after the student's commitment of a mistake. He doesn't need to be discouraged, but to be free to produce utterances, even if they are wrong, which is likely to encourage further participation. What could be retained here is that the ability to correct oneself is supposed to increase the learning motivation. Such an idea was put into practice as evidenced in the following literary practice.

*T. You are supposed to read the excerpt again and try to figure out the three main themes. What could be these themes?*

*SS. Stability, present and past.*

*T. This is good. An alternative possibility could be?*

*Continued*

*S1. Denial and contradiction and order and disorder.*

*T. What is the conjunction?*

*S1. And.*

*T. What about it? Think.*

*S1. It has to be replaced.*

*T. Or?*

*S1. Skip it.*

*T. How?*

*S1. I can say Denial, contradiction, and the quest for order versus disorder.*

*T. Excellent! That would be better as a thematic formula.*

It becomes clear from the above that an emphasis was made on student self-correction. The teacher admired the benefits of this strategy and saw the situation as a basis that informed his knowledge. Among the benefits of self-correction he mentioned:

*Students could be helped to learn actively by reflecting on the teacher's answer, they are encouraged to become autonomous, they might overcome feelings of disappointment and weakness and, thus, participate effectively. Besides, when a student is given a chance to identify the error by himself, he's likely to improve his ability in finding the correct answer, which leads to the supreme teaching objective of self-learning. Hence, the principle of self-learning leads to better understanding and creates room for learner centered analysis (Interviewee 3, recalled observation).*

What we get from this situation is that the participant did not favor peer correction, in that

it might not help the student to learn from his own errors. Besides, if a student corrects his classmate, a feeling of distraction and embarrassment occurs and the purpose of the strategy could not be achieved. Another drawback of peer correction was seen by the same teacher in terms of the negative impact on student's learning and achievement. Therefore, neither involvement, nor participation are expected. Some of the reasons, in this respect, were stated by the same participant:

*If you imagine yourself being corrected by your classmate, you are likely to experience the following points: (a) You feel embarrassed and you lose concentration on utterances; (b) You can't perceive the pattern and its application; (c) You might be disappointed and not participate any further; (d) You become exposed to the repetition of the same mistake often and often (Interviewee 1, recalled observation).*

The participants also held that learning motivation is dependent on classroom management, and the latter implies the division of learners into pairs and groups to ensure cooperative work and increase involvement. One participant talked about this issue saying:

*In my lab session, I always organize my students in pairs or small groups, and then I provide them with a skill-based activity along with a span of time to fulfill it. I used to notice that weak students get knowledge from the group, they tend to contribute more and more and mostly overcome their feeling of weakness and inferiority and become motivated (Interviewee 3).*

It is also important to add that cooperative learning was valued by our participants for the simple fact that it served as a way to contain learners, especially those with bad behavior. This was reported by a participant saying:

*It has usually been our preference to adopt the strategy of cooperation in our classrooms. Working in pairs or small groups is efficient in engaging noisy students or trouble makers. These learners are more involved in the process with an opportunity to think, share, and give*

*to others (Interviewee 4).*

Therefore, having students work and participate, in pairs or small groups, cooperatively remains a good strategy to be used in favor of students' learning. Furthermore, bad behavior could be transformed into good involvement as well as a feeling of responsibility that leads to the attainment of the learning objective. Another motivating strategy was the increase of student talk in the classroom.

The implication of this is that teachers cared about the type and encouragement of interaction among their students, and how to make learners active producers and not passive consumers of knowledge. Thus, more opportunities to speak and more involvement were valuable parameters in the view of our participants. The idea was briefly accounted for by a participant: *“an EFL teacher has to remember all the time that learner-centered learning implies more chances of talk by students, more guidance by the teacher, but less teacher talk and interference” (Interviewee 3).*

In the previous parts, it was quantitatively evidenced that increasing students' talk was compatible with the participants' views and that this approach prompts learners to deal actively and positively with classroom activities. This congruence resides in the teachers' views about the learners' need to use English as much as they can for the development of fluency as well as the usefulness of teaching language communicatively.

Encouraging learners' self-correction was also supported by our participants, in that it could minimize the teacher's amount of speech in the classroom. Besides, the non-repetition of instructions was also favored by the participants. Such views indicate the participants' awareness of giving students a chance to talk as much as possible, and minimize teacher talk and interference.

### 5.2.5 Knowing about the Learning Environment in Practice

The majority of our participants favored a learning atmosphere characteristic of respect, reinforcement, acceptance and tolerance. For instance, providing a healthy learning environment was made evident in the accounts of teachers about their practice.

The reinforcement of students' learning was an important aspect of practical knowledge needed in EFL classrooms. One participant, for example, believed that *"EFL students need to be reinforced in many ways, through appraisal, rewarding or other forms of encouragement. It is also significant to create competition among learners and make them eager to know about the final results"* (Interviewee 02).

Socializing with learners was also seen as a way to provide emotional sustenance to learners, understanding their problems, and creating a sense of security, which were all evident in practice. One participant valued the need to socialize with students outside the classroom setting. He admitted:

*I always ask my students to get in touch with me. I explain to them that we are all members of the university community, thus, we need to talk to each other; we share our problems, we help each other and we all have to act responsibly to overcome potential issues* (Interviewee 1).

EFL learners also prefer teachers who provide a safe and secure learning atmosphere because it has an effect on classroom actions and practices. Thus, respecting the learners' feelings was highlighted by a participant saying:

*In an EFL classroom, the teacher should be smart, especially when it comes to pointing at students with words that are descriptive of their personality traits. He has to avoid using words which might be viewed as mocking or sarcastic. He can instead change the order of things and use appraising qualities such as the smart student, the polite student, the fluent student. So, it's all about respect.* (Interviewee 3).

It follows that teachers need to be aware of the use of words when calling upon their students. Making use of favorable words is meant to exclude any feeling of intimidation and frustration.

The teachers' attempts to encourage unity among learners were seen as another aspect of a good learning environment. Informed by their practice, teachers developed an awareness of the utility to consider the classroom as a community. To achieve this purpose, one participant valued his students' recitation of their own poems. He said:

*In EFL settings, there are various teaching devices and didactic means which help students make a move and learn better. For example, I used to devote some time, at the end of my oral expression sessions, to the recitation of free poems created by students themselves. Such a strategy proved profitable enough to the rest of the classroom; engagement, harmony and a sense of union were instilled in my teaching sessions (Interviewee 3).*

Working in such a way proved powerful in creating unity among students, no matter their learning abilities were. Besides, these techniques were seen as an emotional sustenance to learners, so that they can be prepared to learn at ease and in favorable conditions. This was, however, justified by a participating teacher as follows:

*In a classroom setting, the teacher has to treat his students on an equal basis. Besides, if a weak student fails in understanding one thing, he may succeed in understanding another. It's not a matter of being good or bad, but how to cooperate and participate in a unified context. After all, learners should not feel a difference between them and need to be convinced that each one has an important role to play in the classroom (Interviewee 1).*

The provision of a healthy learning environment was also associated with the tolerance of learners' errors. This association was made practical in the teachers' accounts, among which one said:

*A good teacher does not interfere directly with his students errors and should rather*

*tolerate them. He can focus on the mistake in a way that does not embarrass his learners. As such, learners will not lose self-confidence and are likely to participate without constraints of fear or demotivation (Interviewee 2).*

In addition to the above, teachers need to accept openly their learners' initiatives and comments. This was seen as a good aspect in creating a suitable learning atmosphere. This idea was made evident in practice by a participant saying:

*I usually receive opinions and comments from my students. At the end of my sessions, they come and provide me with suggestions related to classroom management like, for example, the organization of tasks and activities in small groups as well as the use of entertaining strategies. I make myself responsive to their wishes and everybody in the classroom is happy (interviewee 3).*

### **5.2.6 Knowing about Curriculum in Practice**

Regarding this element, our participants highlighted the teachers' need to have a critical awareness of the curriculum materials and the way it needs to be taught. Thus, it was viewed that critical awareness informs the teachers' decisions about curricular areas in significant ways, such as: filtering through the teaching material, incorporating additional material, reordering the curriculum material, and constructing on learners' prior knowledge.

Among the many choices made, by the participants, to serve the practical needs of teaching, we can mention the act of skipping over some curricular material which was seen as a necessity dictated by the lack of time, as revealed by a participating teacher:

*Frankly speaking, a teacher cannot conform to the strict requirements of the teaching syllabus. He needs to be flexible in abridging the teaching content and sometimes skip over repeated stuff. By so doing, he might save time for other aspects worthy studying (Interviewee 3).*

Obviously, this participant's option was taken on the basis of creating equilibrium between

time limitation and the requirements of the teaching syllabus. Besides, the repetition of some material informed the teacher to skip it over. This strategy was applied to both theoretical and practical issues, especially if we know that teaching at the university level is based on research more than being fully limited to the syllabus content. A teacher commented: *“you know, the regime of the LMD system doesn’t draw boundaries to the teacher, instead it encourages research, modifications and ramifications. The teacher is well placed to assess the nature of the teaching material and can even omit unnecessary data”* (Interviewee 1).

It follows that the teachers’ persuasion to delete some content from the designed syllabus was based on their awareness that some parts would be compensated for by other aspects as long as they keep innovating their teaching methods. A further decision was made by a teacher to skip over curricular issues. This decision was informed by his understanding of the time allotted to some activities, which could be rather exploited in more practical issues. The teacher said:

*We always do our best to invest the allocated time in doing concrete and productive work. We provide our students with the core or heart of the matter, and more consolidating tasks are to be accomplished by students at home. You know, consolidation itself is useful in strengthening the amount of classroom learning* (Interviewee 4).

The assignment of extra work or additional activities was also another choice opted for by our participants. Their decision was informed by their experience in understanding their students’ needs, wishes and aspirations. The motive behind this choice was reported, for example, by one participant saying:

*The syllabus needs originally to be designed in a way that lets learners easily digest its content. If the teacher reckons that a warm up activity is needed, he can freely and confidently do that. If he thinks that more back up activities are needed, he can suggest reading materials, form up groups or even assign oral presentations to be prepared at home*



*for further study (Interviewee 1).*

Furthermore, we can admit that the LMD system is flexible and curricular areas reflect a balance between its teaching requirements and the expectations of learners. Thus, it partially responds to the needs of students through such flexibility as well as its awareness of time limitations.

Reorganization of the curriculum material was another choice made, by our participants, to bring to terms the two requirements; covering the syllabus content and responding to the students' learning needs. One of the participants said:

*In this system, our duty is not only finishing the content material, but also find ways to complete it without jeopardizing the students' learning process. Strictly speaking, the teacher is a researcher and he can; accordingly, draw upon stuff that meets his students' needs within time limitation (Interviewee 1).*

The teacher's decision to present his course was also informed by his critical knowledge about curricular areas and materials. The following classroom episode embodies this decision:

*T. For the time being, we carry on reading. O.k? How do you read the title of the short story?*

*S1. Eveline.*

*T. Does it bring something to your mind? Who wrote the text? And from which collection was it taken? Yes.*

*SS. It's about a trapped girl and the story was written by J. Joyce, and belongs to the collection Dubliners.*

*T. Excellent. This is one of the well-known works written by James Joyce. You know, the strategy is to read the story divided into three parts, by three groups. Before you read, you'll be given handouts containing questions, related to the three parts, to be answered.*

*Continued*

*Second group, what are you supposed to do?*

*SS. Read part 2.*

*T. What for?*

*S1. To respond to the set of questions.*

*T. Right. Take about fifteen minutes to skim through the text and respond to the questions*

*(The teacher kept moving between the ranks, watching the groups' involvement).*

*SS. (Embarked on reading)*

*T. you finished? Time is up.*

*SS. Yes.*

*T. Well, each group is meant to follow what other groups say to reconstruct the events of the whole story.*

From the above representation, we understand that a decision was made by the teacher to adopt a particular reading strategy, based on a number of motives. Students did not follow the conventional way of reading a text individually, but were divided into groups to concentrate on particular reading segments. They were also limited in time and their focus, as a group, was dependent on what other groups managed to do. This was, in fact, a coordinated effort to accomplish the task and it implies that the teacher's decision was based on his knowledge of the teaching material, time constraints as well as the level of students. The teacher admitted saying:

*Students were divided into groups according to their competence. The text was also split up into parts and when it comes to questions, good students were expected to answer difficult questions, and weak students would only respond to the easiest. As such, our intent was to simplify the reading task for students by making them understand the events of the story and probably save time. Besides, such a procedure allows for learning from each other which yields a better grasp of the reading material (interviewee 1, recalled observation).*

The syllabus content was also dealt with differently by another teacher. She made a decision to teach the content of the syllabus on the basis of the difficulty of the material as well as the students' weak level. She did not only attempt to help her students learn, but also provide learning amusement. She mentioned:

*In the creative writing course, the content is a bit challenging for students. It demands mastery of language, serious work and continuous preparation. We sometimes feel obliged to devote special time and effort to students with somewhat low level. We tend to use didactic materials, such as power-point, pictures, handouts and team work, the aim of which is to make the material more interesting and amusing. You know, adult learners always expect something cool, brief and comprehensive (Interviewee 3).*

The adoption of that strategy implied that the teacher compromised between content teaching and students' understanding. She also managed to provide learning excitement and enriched the students' learning experiences. This initiative reflects that the syllabus is not confined to the official requirements and teachers could always go beyond the formal conventions as long as the teaching-learning process at the university incorporates research, self-devotion and innovation. It follows that learners are an integral part in the process and teachers can make an appeal and draw upon their students' prior knowledge.

The view to build on students' past knowledge was adopted by (80%) of our participants. Such a tendency was greatly supported in practical classroom contexts.

One of the participants encouraged his students to draw upon their background knowledge, as shown in the episode below.

*T. What do you think the lesson is about? It is about...?*

*SS. pronunciation.*

*T. Good. Something else? Can you add anything in this respect?*

*S1. Aspects of pronunciation.*

*T. Aspects of pronunciation. Great. That's true.*

*S2. Elements.*

*T. Elements, or aspects. Good. like what?*

*S3. Intonation.*

*T. Intonation. Excellent. What about other elements? Yes?*

*S4. Stress and rhythm.*

*T. Very good. That's the point. Is there anything related to sounds? Well?*

*SS. Yes, Phonology.*

*T. Good Job and thank you.*

The participant accounted for the significance of building on background knowledge, stating:

*Students' background knowledge is useful to the EFL teacher in a variety of ways: the teacher can rely on what his learners already know and gradually build upon that knowledge till he makes his learners form up new knowledge, in relation to a given subject. In fact, students' prior knowledge is a stimulus to more learning and more involvement in lesson teaching. Again, by making use of this typical learners' knowledge, they are given a chance to connect old sets of knowledge with new ones, and this is likely to ease recall, activates prediction of content and creates interest (interviewee 3, recalled observation)*

It follows that students' background knowledge sustains input that might be more interesting than what is originally implied in the syllabus. Therefore, an input coming from learners themselves is likely to make sense and reinforce their learning. Strictly speaking, research, flexibility and innovation remain all necessary parameters that teachers need when dealing with the content of the syllabus.

The participants also made evident some teaching aims in practice. Among the teaching aims they stated the preparation of learners for tests and examinations. Such an objective was believed to tackle questions and issues that might be faced by students in exams. One participant provided his students with tests that would likely appear in exams. The following episode reflects such a practice.

*T. We're going to rewrite some compound sentences into complex sentences. Remember, this is very important for you in exams. We always subordinate one of the clauses and not use the subordinator twice. Take this example: Many women in Third World countries want to work, for they are educated. Here, you can use it with "who"*

*SS. The pronoun.*

*T. Relative pronoun. What does this mean?*

*SS. It means we have relative clauses.*

*T. Very good. What happens when we use it with "who"?*

*SS. The relative clause is separated by commas.*

*T. Why is that?*

*S1. Because it conveys a bit of additional information.*

*T. Excellent. So, how can we say?*

*Continued*

*S2. Many women, who are educated, in Third World countries, want to work.*

*T. That's great. This is the way you should respond in exams.*

It becomes clear from the above that the teacher attempted to engage his learners in the process of learning by making them ready and able to answer the potential exam questions, based on the model he used in the classroom. The teacher argued for his practice saying:

*EFL teachers need to reinforce their primary role of teaching through the preparation of their learners for exams. The teacher feels good when his learners do well in exams and get high grades. Besides, exams themselves are a good chance for students to discover their mistakes and weakness, which can be remedied in further occasions (interviewee 2, recalled observation).*

One additional practice was related to the preparation of learners for real-like contexts. This was evidenced in a classroom practice as follows:

*T. What happened to Susan Henchard?*

*SS. She died.*

*T. Well, when she died she was buried, and the four pennies were buried in the garden after the laying out. According to you, why do we bury people with pennies put on their eyelids?*

*Can you tell? It might be a sign of duty, maybe, respectability...Ok.*

The teacher defined the objective of his activity saying: *“You know, there are quite a number of things to practice in a post-reading stage. Students need to materialize their acquired knowledge, speak freely and produce written material that fits the original text”* (interviewee 3, recalled observation).

The ideas drawn from this practice were associated with real-life situations, no matter how sad the moments were. The teacher dealt with the situation in a smart way by adding release and amusement as stated below:

*Referring to this literary extract, our intent is to make readers know about Christianity and some established facts and rituals. Not only this. Students get an idea about the shift and transformation which took place in 19- th century England, especially the materialistic spirit resulting from the Industrial Revolution. Students seemed to appreciate a lot what they learnt from the text* (interviewee 1, recalled observation).

### **5.2.7 Knowing about the Self in Practice**

The participants considered the act of reflection as an important facilitator of the teacher’s development. Reflecting on the self could influence practice by guiding the teacher’s actions in the classroom practice. One participant talked about his students’ output and how it helped him envision the success of his job. The teacher reported: *“an EFL Teacher is actually a reflection of himself. You know, he might, as Shakespeare said: “hold the mirror up to nature. Within classroom practice the teacher can reveal aspects about his skill, personality and commitment”* (Interviewee 3).

Knowing about the teaching actions was also emphasized by the participants. Reflecting on classroom actions was considered as a means of self-development. Besides, reflection on teaching acts, for the participants, could be carried out regularly to get feedback about the teaching circumstances. One participant highlighted the contribution of reflecting on actions to the learning outcomes saying: *“in the act of checking one’s teaching performance, a*

*teacher can check his relationship with his students at regular intervals. This continuing assessment is likely to orient the whole practice and leads to better outcomes” (Interviewee 2).*

In addition to reflection, our participants viewed the teachers’ individual features as elements affecting classroom practice. Not only this; the teachers’ qualities could provide them with support to endure the teaching harshness. Among the featured qualities mentioned by the participants, there was the sense of humor. This quality was seen as a tool to appease agitation and reduce the sense of anxiety. One participant said:

*EFL teachers need to create a healthy learning environment. This can be achieved by adding a sense of humor to the teaching context. You know, the provision of entertaining and relaxing moments is efficient in space learning, which marks a pause for learners to reflect on the learning input (Interviewee 2).*

Contextually speaking, a teacher can devote moments to a guided humour which might result from the classroom actions and serve a variety of teaching purposes. A further participant accounted for the usefulness of humor and how it could be based on educational goals. He said: *“actually, we have a multitude of possibilities to use instructional and didactic materials such as jokes, funny tricks and humorous anecdotes. Learners are always inclined towards special things which imply a spirit of change and involvement” (Interviewee 1).*

According to this participant, such a practice could be justified on the basis of students’ learning rate and enjoyment as well as its contribution to the teacher’s knowledge about his practice. The following is a representation of how humor informs the teacher’s practice:



*T. "How about if I sleep a little bit longer and forget all this nonsense"? To which part or chapter does it belong? [The teacher asked his students with a smile].*

*S1. Chapter one. The introductory paragraphs.*

*T. Good. The 'I' refers to whom? Is it to 'Kafka', 'me', 'Samsa' or somebody else?*

*S2. Kafka.*

*T. It refers to me. No, no. To my grand-father [The whole class laughs at this].*

*S3. It refers to Gregor Samsa.*

*T. Excellent. We shall applaud her... [With students clapping their hands].*

What we get from this is that the teacher opted for humor, and the humorous action informed his practice. The participating teacher commented on this procedure saying:

*Teaching at the university is a different matter which depends on good relationships between teachers and students. Again, dealing with adult learners is a sensitive issue, in that teachers need to create rapport with learners and devote spans of time to distraction, fun and amusement. After all, as humans we need to refuel ourselves to keep moving on (interviewee 1, recalled observation).*

Among the other criteria evident in practice, the participants mentioned flexibility. This criterion was stated by a participant as follows:

*EFL teachers, in particular, need to accept their learners' views, suggestions and comments whenever initiated. If students, for instance, suggest group work instead of individual assignments, the teacher needs to respond positively to their wish for the sake of establishing rapport, provide newness and attain mutual understanding (Interviewee 2).*

A further criterion was related to hard work. It was viewed that the tendency to hard working is a reflection of good character as well as the person's love of his job. One

participant talked about hard work and how it could shape her general practice. She said:

*For me, it's part of my duty to come early in the morning. You know, I always save considerable time for my course preparation and have an opportunity to do extra research work. So, when I enter my classroom, I feel confident and well equipped to enlighten my students (Interviewee 3).*

The participants also made evident in their practice another criterion, which had to do with the positive inclination toward the subject matter as well as the teaching profession. One participant commented:

*As teachers, we are conscious of the need to present a good image of our job. One has to start, of course, with what he teaches as subject matter in the classroom. Then, and the professional image of the teacher could be best mirrored by making students grasp the objectives of the learning process, not in the short run, but rather in the long-term memory terms (Interviewee 4).*

### **5.3 On Teacher Knowledge and Context**

The attempt in this part is to provide a response to this already asked research question: How does context affect the realization of teacher knowledge in practice?

It remains significant, at this level, to admit that both quantitative and qualitative evidence demonstrated a number of factors and obstacles which faced our participants when putting their knowledge into practice.

An analytical account follows by which we clarify the impact of these factors and challenges on the actualization of teacher knowledge in classroom practice. Thus, we managed to discern a few contextual factors in an attempt to clarify the challenge between teacher knowledge and classroom practice. The meant factors or reasons were: the policy adopted in EFL exams, time limitation, resources and sustenance, learners' expectations and needs, and excessive class size. Below, we gradually account for these motives as viewed by

the participants, and inferred from the bulky data.

### **5.3.1 The Policy Adopted in EFL Exams**

The examination policy was considered as a significant contextual element influencing the embodiment of teacher knowledge in classroom practice. Thus, there was an interference between the policy of exams and the will to materialize content pedagogy in classrooms. The fact was that most of the participants emphasized the need to teach EFL aural-oral skills on an equal footing with reading and writing. However, what is taught in reality does not meet the claims raised by the participants and remains bound by this policy adopted in EFL examinations.

One participant, for instance, commented: *“what we notice is that all exam subjects are strongly based on writing and reading, and only a slight value is reserved to speaking and listening” (Interviewee 1).*

The process of examination reflects disequilibrium in teaching EFL skills, which results in a disparity between productive and receptive skills. Accordingly, another teacher mentioned:

*The listening skill is really marginalized to the point that EFL students do not really care about listening activities. This has always been justified by learners, believing that this skill does not really have a great importance and that they would better focus on written subjects to get good marks in tests and exams (Interviewee 4).*

In addition, the teaching of the writing skill was significantly viewed due to its relation with exams. One participant noted: *“writing skills are of immeasurable importance and you can’t imagine taking exams and tests without being skilled in writing” (A questionnaire respondent).*

It follows that the teaching of language skills is bound by the system of examination. Besides, this system was viewed as a justifying cause for the learners’ pragmatic attitude towards EFL learning. This was explained by an interviewee saying:

*There's a shift in students' learning tendencies. The majority of EFL students are not really inclined towards listening or pronunciation. Their belief is that all exams are dependent on writing, so that the effort has to be directed to the written word to assure a good mark (Interviewee 4).*

The exam policy was also seen as another cause for the learners' disinterest in communication. A participating teacher described his students saying:

*Practically, all my students care only about written subjects and exams. I noticed through time that they show no willingness to improve their pronunciation or listening through the sets of communicative activities I use in my classroom. That's a problem! You know,...* (Interviewee 2).

Now, fluency was highly valued by our participants, compared to accuracy. According to this view, EFL learners need to be helped and encouraged to improve their speech fluency more than being trained in accuracy. Such a view was also subject to resistance by the examination process. A participant noted:

*The teacher's duty is hard. He has to double the effort in his attempt to teach the spoken and communicative English on the one hand, and conform to the norms, by emphasizing the written skills required in the exam system, on the other hand (Interviewee 2).*

### **5.3.2 On the Limitation of Time, Resources and Support**

Our participants believed that the lack of time, sustenance and resources hindered the realization of most knowledge areas in practice. Time limitation and lack of sustenance were seen as challenging factors for teachers when dealing with a subject matter in practice.

Besides, EFL teachers at the university level are supposed to have no problem with English proficiency. However, some of them highlighted the problem of proficiency when relating their knowledge to classroom practice. One participant declared:

*Honestly, I feel sometimes unable to explain ideas the way it should be. You know,*

*teaching a literary subject matter depends on language proficiency as well as a solid foundation of ideas and criticism. If you lack such proficiency, your mastery of what you teach is likely to diminish (Interviewee 1).*

Obviously, the participant attributed this lack of proficiency to competence caused mainly by the lack of support and innovation. It was further explained:

*No doubt that a university teacher has to keep his knowledge updated. Normally, a university context is characterized by flexibility, newness and innovation which all help the teacher to do a good job. However, the actual contextual factors seem to be barricades and are not in favor of doing research or expand one's horizons. Besides, teacher colleagues are not practicing English in their daily communication and not motivating one another to work hard for the sake of proficiency. So, we are experiencing such monotony at the level of knowledge about subject matter (Interviewee 1).*

Despite the fact that this teacher showed a will to improve and exploit her proficiency, the surrounding milieu was not in her favor. Also, her teaching commitments stood against her wish to develop critical abilities about the subject-matter she was teaching.

Referring to didactic resources, classroom seating was seen as another criterion that could affect the organization and the cooperative learning in EFL classrooms. Actually, most of the participants viewed cooperative learning as a favorable and supportive strategy, although students' seating and arrangement in rows presented a challenge to (60%) of them, particularly in the way teachers deal with instructional practice.

This was reported by a participant saying: *"as an EFL teacher, I always vary my teaching strategy, including team work, pair work or even interaction between whole ranks of students. My preference is to make students sit facing each other, though the task is not easy to handle"* (Interviewee 4).

Another participant pointed out the obstacle created by narrow classrooms. He stated: *"the*

*truth is that we work with improvisation, and we are not at ease in narrow classrooms. Whatever the type of the activity is, we feel constrained about how to move and give instruction” (Interviewee 1).*

Other challenging factors had to do with, for example, the availability of audio-visual materials, which was viewed as having an effect on the realization of teachers’ knowledge in relation to their students’ learning preferences and styles. While some of the participating teachers faced the challenging lack of resources, others did an effort to use them for the sake of their learners in an attempt to actualize knowledge in practice. A comment on this issue was made by a participant saying:

*Among the problems we frequently face is the absence of such didactic resources.*

*For example, each time you plan to teach content by using visual materials, you find that only one data show is available in the department. So, you can imagine the serious concern of EFL teachers about how to actualise their knowledge in classroom practice (Interviewee 2).*

Similarly, another participant commented on the deteriorated state of laboratories saying:

*Teaching EFL skills is largely dependent on the use of labs, in which the teacher plans listening, speaking and other important communicative activities. Here in our department, we didn’t use the labs for a long time though they are equipped with headphones and computers. This demotivating condition hinders us in doing our job properly (Interviewee 3).*

Time limitation was also considered as another challenging factor which had an effect on the teachers’ response to learners’ various styles, preferences and learning rates. The instance is found in the comment of one participant who said:

*You know, the LMD system is based on the follow-up of students as a teaching strategy. The question is how can you adopt a continuous assessment of students within a short span of time which is not even enough to finish your course? Well, it is really a challenging situation*

(Interviewee 3).

It follows that time constraints and resources also hindered the realisation of curriculum knowledge in practice. Our participants revealed the negative impact of time limitation on the completion of the syllabus content. One participant declared:

*The truth is that we barely cover the necessary components of the program. We are hindered by time and resources which yield an imbalance between theory and practice. Besides, it's hard for us to save time for extra activities to check our students' understanding and learning feedback (Interviewee 4).*

It follows that limitation of time could make the teaching conditions more challenging, and teachers would not be able to cover the already overloaded curriculum. In this respect, a participant commented:

*Within the LMD system, much importance is given to productive skills, namely; writing and creativity. However, the teacher always feels at odds with the allotted time as well as resources. The teacher needs to provide his students with a lot of practice to master the rudiments of the writing skill, knowing that other aspects of writing, such as grammar, vocabulary and instruction, all follow naturally. So, all the stuff can't be covered within one hour and a half session (Interviewee 4).*

From the above comment, it is clear there was a reference to the difficulty caused by lack of time to meet the teaching requirements. Besides, the nature of the subject matter presents another challenge to some learners; Some students can't understand the deep and critical analysis within one hour time and also do not have access to didactic aids and supports.

Furthermore, some participants did not appreciate some of the teaching material implied in an overloaded syllabus, though the greatest part of work lies on learners themselves. Such a challenge hinders teachers when putting their knowledge of teaching aims in action. Not only this, EFL teachers always have the intention to prepare their students for real life situations,

but how could such an aim be achieved when the teacher runs short of time and spends the rest of the session in controlling the largely-sized classes?

In addition, most of the participants are researchers and might not have time for learners' reinforcement and out-of-class guidance. This situation was reported by a participant saying:

*I believe that all EFL teachers are aware of the importance of preparing students for real and practical life. However, our will is controlled by many factors such as administrative procedures, limitation of time and above all the excessive number of students in our department. Honestly, things seem to proceed in a mechanical way and it's becoming hard to swim against the current (Interviewee 4).*

The participants also reflected their problems with supervision, in that novice teachers of English are not used to being supervised by expert teachers at a university level. Thus, the lack of efficient supervision and work pressure were factors which seriously affected the achievement of some teaching goals. One participant commented:

*EFL teachers, in the department of English, are overwhelmed by constraints, including guidance and cooperation. Novice teachers, in particular, could not find time and effort to cover the whole programme and prepare their students for authentic and real life situations. Here, comes the role of expert teachers to help novice teachers and show them the way to success and improvement (Interviewee 2).*

Thus, these difficulties might lead to a general lack of awareness of the teaching objectives and the various possibilities to achieve authentic teaching-learning outcomes. This issue was highlighted by a participating teacher saying:

*There are challenging curricular areas for the teacher to deal with. For example, literary texts are always based on the interpretation of moral lessons to be deciphered for students in a concrete and accessible way. Now, if the novice teacher is not well trained and not guided by experts, he's likely to teach simple content in a superficial and inefficient way. Therefore,*



*no clear objectives appear behind his teaching attempts (Interviewee 3).*

### **5.3.3 On Learners' Needs and Expectations**

Another challenge revealed in the study was related to the discrepancy between teachers' knowledge about the learners' needs and aspirations and what these learners should actually know in the course of learning. This challenge makes difficult the materialization of the various areas of teacher knowledge in the classroom. What could also hamper the actualization of teachers' knowledge of the subject matter was the students' disinterest in communicating in English. This could also happen despite the mastery of both English and its related subject matters. One participant talked about this fact saying: *"to my amazement, I frequently hear students, at different university levels, asking teachers to explain things in Arabic. Their greatest linguistic handicap becomes clear enough in literary practice and communication issues"* (Interviewee 2).

Depending on that, EFL teachers could really be at odds when trying to put their knowledge of both learners and subject matter in practice.

It has always been held that students' weak level negatively affect the teaching of any subject matter and its related pedagogy. What could be hindered in fact are teaching and practical areas such as the provision of communicative activities, using EFL vocabulary, teaching grammar inductively, and difficulty in using meta-language. Normally, these lost aspects are the ones needed, if the goals of EFL teaching, forming the context of our study, are to be achieved.

As concerns the teaching of EFL skills, most of the participants viewed the use of communicative activities as a necessity in this respect. Nevertheless, learners' weak mastery of English seemed to hinder the teachers' willingness to incorporate authentic material in teaching language and its various areas. One participant sadly reported:

*Normally, working with second or third year students is encouraging to the teacher,*

*especially in an oral expression course, where students are supposed to be efficient in using language for interaction and other communicative purposes. But, alas, they seem not at the level of such learning expectations (Interviewee 2).*

The teaching of EFL vocabulary presented another challenge for many EFL teachers. Translating the meaning of vocabulary items, into the native language, was not really favored by our participants. Still, the teaching obligations to make learners grasp the meaning of new items push the teacher towards the use of the mother tongue language. This challenge was made clear by a participant:

*We always face challenging situations at the level of interpretation and analysis. There are quite a number of words which cannot be deciphered by students. The teacher can help by asking students to provide an equivalent meaning in Arabic or French to one other, and occasionally he does it by himself (Interviewee 4).*

Another striking area, related to pedagogy, was the teaching of EFL grammar. Teaching grammar inductively was favored by almost all the participants although it was mismatched with the learners' poor level of proficiency. The example was stated by a participant saying:

*Grammar is the backbone of language and its teaching requires proficiency and accuracy. In teaching language as communication, you know, there are patterns and rules that can be understood inductively. Again, we discover that many students cannot bring themselves to the apex of grammatical manipulation. Thus, we need to make a transfer to other deductive ways to simplify comprehension (Interviewee 2).*

It follows that the inductive teaching of grammar was based on conditions, and teachers might avoid it for the fact that many students could not handle its use to achieve an identification of various grammatical patterns.

In a similar way, the use of meta-language when teaching grammar was not supported by some teachers although they were aware of its necessity, in practice, to provide clear

instruction to less achievers. This conflicting situation was stated by a participant saying: *“using meta-language is normally needed in the classroom to instruct explicitly and keep track of the low level students’ needs” (Interviewee 1).*

What was also noted by our participants was the interference between learners’ needs and the requirement to cover the syllabus content in due time. The EFL subject matters were prescribed by designers and planners in an attempt to unify the teaching content at a national level. However, some content with literary, cultural as well as methodological perspectives seemed to go beyond the reach of many students. This situation was commented by one participant stating:

*What is noticed recently is that disciplines of literature, civilization and methodology present a challenge to low proficient students and they are always complaining about the difficulty of the content material, hence their inability to understand efficiently what teachers give to them (Interviewee 3).*

Teachers wanted to reinforce students through certain material, but some learners’ low proficiency stood against their wish. The fact is that many students nowadays care only about exam grades at the expense of their general education and proficiency in English. An example was given by a participant as follows:

*As EFL teachers, we are sometimes in the obligation to mark a pause in our course and spend time in preparing students for exam answers, especially the low level students with poor language proficiency. Not only this. You devote time to revision; still translation of some material seems unavoidable (Interviewee 4).*

We notice here an existing discrepancy between exams’ requirements and the teaching material of the curriculum. Such a conflicting situation might lead to an imbalance between the learners’ needs and expectations in exams and the teaching of content that prepares them to become proficient EFL learners in the long run. This issue was briefly presented by a

participant saying: *“as expert EFL teachers, we always feel the mismatch and gap between what we do and what should be done, hence a mismatch between teaching English and giving tests about English” (Interviewee 2).*

So, it was not an easy thing for teachers to neglect the teaching of necessary aspects of the EFL curriculum, though they were obliged to sacrifice one side for another.

#### **5.3.4 On the Excessive Size of Classrooms**

Another factor which affected negatively the materialization of teacher knowledge was the excessive class size. Actually, the negative impact of large class size concerned the teachers' wasted time resulting from the difficulty in managing their classrooms effectively.

Eighty percent (80%) of our participants considered overcrowded classes as an obstacle in managing classrooms. Besides, teachers could find it difficult to create good relations with their students. Thus, the provision of a healthy learning environment could be hard to attain. In addition, within overcrowded classes, it was almost impossible for the teacher to let students ask their questions, or even listen to their concerns. One participant explained another strategy followed in his classes. He said:

*I'm always aware of students' needs and expectations. Many students want to ask questions at the end of the sessions, alas, no time is saved to give them such a chance at an individual level. I opt for another strategy by the end of each session, which is asking students to write an anonymous assessment report to be taken seriously into consideration. As such, things are revisited positively in favor of students' learning (Interviewee 1).*

Large class size created obstacles in interaction and teacher-student rapport, still doing one's best could develop such a significant knowledge about students. The same participant stated: *“I always do my best to save up an out-of-class time to meet my students in my office, listen to their problems, ask about their issues, provide them with sustenance and above all make them feel a sense of shared intimacy between us” (Interviewee 1).*

The issue of large class size had a negative impact on the completion of the various curricular areas as well as the disciplinary problems inside the classroom. One participant, for instance, expressed his dismay about students' bad behavior in the classroom which might result into a failure to fulfill the syllabus requirements. He explained saying:

*There's really a new generation of learners, a new type of individuals. Inside the class, a good number of students are trouble makers, who are not helpful to the teacher to carry on his mission. Thus, this learners' negative behavior affects our daily commitments and derails us from the expected practices (Interviewee 3).*

It follows that the phenomenon of large class size yielded many complications for teachers and their teaching acts. Working in a vicious circle resulted into a negative impact on the actualization of teacher knowledge in practice. The example for this was given by a participant saying:

*Frankly speaking, I have a passion for my job. However, there are many demotivating factors, including the large class size, which hinders us in keeping the same love of teaching we used to have in the past. Truly, it's no easy job to work with more than seventy students per group (Interviewee 4).*

## **SECTION II: DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY FINDINGS**

The purpose of this section is to provide a thorough insight into the study findings in connection with its proper context as well as its related research relevance. As such, we're meant to discuss three thematic issues. These are: The EFL teacher knowledge core and its development, having a clear idea about teacher knowledge in practice, and context contribution in the actualization of teacher knowledge. In what follows, we discuss these significant thematic issues.

### **5.4 The EFL Teacher Knowledge Core and its Development**

With reference to teacher knowledge in the present study, we found six component areas, which were: the subject matter, pedagogy, learners, classroom learning atmosphere, syllabus, and the self.

Knowing about the subject matter was found to be an important and intrinsic demand for the teacher. Our participants provided various reasons and motives to justify the significance of this area. A proficient EFL teacher could likely transfer his proficiency to his students and is also apt to bring change to his professional milieu.

The teacher's knowledge about the subject matter could render him more acquainted with his classes and makes him know about the English cultural dimensions.

The gained knowledge about EFL culture could help the teacher raise his students' awareness of the interconnections existing between EFL and the mother tongue, and possibly other languages.

Knowing about EFL culture could also help clarify the image of English and exclude possible clichés and stigmatizations that students might construct about it. The findings, in relation to the significance of subject matter as a basic area of teacher knowledge, are in agreement with the reviewed literature in the EFL teaching context, evoked by researchers like Norrish (1997); Toh et al. (2003); Mullock (2003) and others.

Knowing about how to teach a subject matter was another essential area of teacher knowledge, in the present study. This finding stands in agreement with the view of Shulman (1987) and Toh et al. (2003) holding that a solid knowledge about a subject matter and related pedagogy is a core area of teacher knowledge. It was revealed that teachers need to know about the general teaching principles in order to get students involved in the teaching-learning process. This type of knowledge is likely to provide more space and opportunity for learner-centered teaching. In this respect, two aspects are found significant. The first aspect has to do with the teacher's awareness to simplify instruction by means of good management of classrooms. The second aspect has to do with the teacher's ability to manage both content and task. Such areas appear in concordance with the domains reported by researchers, like Gatbonton (1999) and Mullock (2006), to constitute the teacher knowledge about pedagogy.

Knowing about students was revealed as another essential area of teacher knowledge. This finding converges with the existing literature that supports the usefulness of this element and views it as core component of teacher knowledge (Shulman, 1987; Turner-Bisset, 1999; Mayer and Marland, 1997; Meijer et al, 1999). Therefore, this knowledge is really contributive to the effective adaptation of the teaching material to the learners' needs and expectations.

It was also found that the knowledge about the dynamism of the classroom learning atmosphere was another core area of teacher knowledge, necessary for the establishment of relationships between the teacher and his students. This finding was in terms of five distinct features, externalized from the responses of our participants, and was grouped in the acronym ATESA (acceptance, tolerance, emotive support, sense of communion and appraisal or reinforcement). These features were justified by the participants for a variety of reasons.

Considering knowledge about the learning atmosphere as a key aspect in teacher knowledge is congruent with research evidence which holds that a healthy and supporting

learning environment is a key indicator of knowledge about teaching. Besides, another indicator of a healthy learning atmosphere is the tolerance of students' learning errors. Experts, like Norrish (1983), stress the efficiency of this characteristic in a teacher. He says: *"learners should be given encouragement in the situation where errors arise when they attempt to express what they have not yet been taught to say. Disapproval should on no account be shown"* (113-114).

Jennings and Greenberg (2009) also supported other factors which help create a healthy learning environment. Among which they highlighted teacher-learner relationships and their dependency on supportive classroom atmosphere. Similarly, Mullock (2003) holds that creating a good relationship with learners is vital in the teaching profession, in that a positive rapport and intimacy lead to trust between the two parties, which is essential for successful teaching. Furthermore, Troudi (2005) holds that EFL classrooms are not only a context for teaching language and its skills in isolation, but it is an integrated whole where individuals develop, meanings are shared and objectives are set.

knowledge about curricular areas was revealed as another basic area of teacher knowledge. Our participants viewed it as something needed by the teacher in order to help construct the learning input. EFL teachers also need to develop a critical ability vis a vis the curriculum content, its teaching ways, the adjustment of the teaching material to the learning abilities of students, and above all, they need to be ready to deal with problematic issues.

The knowledge about using modern technology was found to be necessary for the EFL teachers. The proper and efficient use of technological means fosters learning and creates exciting experiences. A further finding is related to the teachers' acquaintance with students' background knowledge, its role in informing practice as well as its reinforcement of students' learning.

For the sake of transforming teaching input into learning output, it was found that teachers



need to provide their students with home assignments, research works and extra tasks to achieve positive learning. In addition, teachers need to be aware about the objectives and purposes of teaching because it is found to be a salient area of curricular knowledge. For example, Shulman (1987), Elbaz (1981) and Turner-Bisset (1999) all consider this element as vital and contributive to teacher knowledge.

Another finding is related to knowledge about the self, which was found out to be an intrinsic component of teacher knowledge. This was supported by the fact that the teacher's personality could not be dissociated from the teacher's profession. It was highlighted by Leask & Moorhouse (2005) that the effectiveness of teachers may be influenced by the personality traits and personal style.

It is again revealed that self- knowledge contained two key aspects: reflection and image of the self. As concerns reflection, it is considered important for the teachers' development and construction of theory. As such, it goes in agreement with Norrish (1996), holding that a teacher needs to improve strategies and techniques of teaching and observes critically through reflection on his own practice. By doing so, the teacher is part of theory building which yields evaluation and questioning of issues as well as the understanding of problems.

It is pointed out by Barlett & Leask (2005) that critical evaluation and self-reflection develop effective judgment and build professional knowledge which improve the quality of the teaching-learning process. It is made evident that reflection mediates between experience and learning, leading, thus, to professional development. This idea is compatible with Shulman's (1987) account of reflection. He puts it as follows:

*This is what a teacher does when he or she looks back at the teaching and learning that has occurred, and reconstructs, re-enacts, and/or recaptures the events, the emotion and accomplishments. It is that set of processes through which a professional learns from experience (19).*

Individual qualities were also positively valued because they help the teacher tolerate and survive the teaching hardship as well as the development of his professional knowledge. This meets the conclusive account of Turner-Bisset (1999) and Hegarty (2000).

The above six areas of teacher knowledge are outlined to indicate the core knowledge of EFL teachers in the context of our study. These areas are representative of the contribution to the question about what composes the core knowledge of the teacher, specifically in the EFL context. Some of the outlined areas stimulate an already existing body of literature on teacher knowledge mainly the two pertinent models highlighted by Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset (1999). Nevertheless, some discrepancies exist between these two models and the findings of our study. If we consider the authentic list of Shulman (1987), we find knowledge about the self as a novel category of knowledge and it is constructed in our study. Besides, Shulman's model (1987) is basically theoretical, which presents another difference. Again, the areas of knowledge were built up from experienced teachers in the department of English whereas in the model constructed by Turner-Bisset (1999), it was constructed from teacher knowledge based on the context of History teachers.

Here lies the difference because in our study we are particularly concerned with the teaching of EFL, with its implications and characteristic features. It follows that our findings could contribute to the theoretical framework of teacher knowledge specific to the EFL case.

Furthermore, our study echoes research attempts made by Freeman and Johnson (1998) to channel the base of the language teacher knowledge and stress the elements of the teacher, pedagogy and the related context.

Despite the interaction of research and practice, the rationality model, which is technical, about teacher knowledge is not the suitable framework to address the knowledge issue (Biesta, 2007).

The fact is that the model lacks value in practice. Again, in our study, the teacher professional knowledge was the outcome of exchange, experience and classroom management which generates contextual and typical teaching situations. Therefore, the knowledge held by our participants was related to what contextually and existentially worked not present and not future workings. Furthermore, teacher knowledge, in the model known as technocratic, disregards the teachers' voices in the classroom and neglects the rights of teachers. When imposing what to do on teachers, the technical model of teacher knowledge becomes an embodiment of a democratic failure.

In education, it is frequently expected to have a value judgment from a teacher's professional perspective, for the fact that teaching is principally moral. This moral quality becomes real and clear when understanding the connection between the means and ends of education.

The argument presented by Biesta (2007) stands on the fact that means differ in their use and aim and contribute, thus, to their aims in a qualitative manner. It should be admitted that the means and ends of education are interrelated which means that their connection is internal rather than external. This clarifies the fact that education is at the center of ethical practice.

In addition, the findings of our study, supported by the literature review, reveal that the innermost of professional knowledge is reinforced through the teaching practice. This is explained by the fact that knowledge could be modeled and remodeled through practice. It follows that the practical teachers' knowledge, containing aspects of values and beliefs, is a representation of the use of symbolic means to deal with practical and problematic issues. Therefore, teacher knowledge is featured by experience, which assesses it as a success or failure, and needs to stress the teaching context and conditions.

With regards to professional knowledge, it is viewed as situational, in that there's always a result stemming from the interaction with situations. Furthermore, solutions could be found in

old cumulated knowledge, yet, no guarantee is given when dealing with problems in practical situations as the latter change through space and time. Accordingly, it is made evident that teacher professional knowledge is better understood on the basis of the teaching context.

In addition, the importance of discussing this issue is to account for the central components of teacher knowledge as a basis for teaching in a good and efficient way (Vries & Beijaard, 1999; Hegarty, 2000; Mullock, 2003; Abdelhafez, 2010).

Taking into consideration the fact that the sample population in our study is EFL experienced teachers, the views and practical accounts given can be conceptualized through the lens of the suggested model. Teaching is also considered as a professional activity which is sustained and developed by knowing deeply about the variety of mechanisms leading, thus, to a sophisticated comprehension of the teaching situations and circumstances, as believed by Vries & Beijaard (1999). These researchers also hold that teachers' knowledge in practice provides new highlights and ideas when discussing the subject of good teaching.

It was also found, in our study, that a good teacher is essentially characterized by knowledge about the subject matter. All the participating teachers, as evidenced both quantitatively and qualitatively, considered proficiency in English as a necessity to the teachers dealing with various EFL subject matters. It was equally shown that knowledge of EFL culture forms a solid basis for the teaching profession. To know about the subject matter is viewed as a basic area in EFL teaching, and researchers like Ethell and McMeniman (2000) presented arguments about the significance of knowing about the subject matter because the latter represents a basis for building up propositional and procedural knowledge needed in teaching.

In addition, the findings of the present study also revealed that experienced EFL teachers showed an ability to contextualize, locate and adapt the teaching content for their learners. Their teaching was monitored and adapted to meet the students' needs and expectations at a

university level. The participating teachers focused on providing clear instruction and explanations for the sake of students' understanding. This is supported by Clark and Peterson (1985), who argue that the primary focus of teachers should be on strategies and techniques as well the teaching procedures used.

The teachers' flexibility to prepare lesson plans was another pedagogical aspect which has the aim of making the linguistic communication of knowledge compatible with the learners' needs and expectations. The flexibility shown by some of our participants in the study is representative of another quality of a good teacher. Researchers, such as Mullock (2003) revealed that good and qualified teachers are the ones who can easily adapt to differing teaching situations. In her study, competent teachers are good architects who can draw upon plans that might fit further situations.

Creating good relations with learners is another positive quality characteristic of good EFL teachers. Such a characteristic was both quantitatively and qualitatively supported by most of the participants. They also accounted for the practical embodiment of this quality in classroom settings. It was found that creating an intimate relationship with students is likely to yield interest, involvement and encouragement in EFL learning. In general education, the issue is developed by, for instance, Mullock (2003) who came to the conclusion that good teaching is based on the key criterion of teacher-student good relationship.

Again, good management of classrooms is the key to maintain good teacher-student relationship. In our study, the participants viewed management positively and attributed it to the exchange of respect, the understanding of students' problems and the prevention of disciplinary issues.

One intrinsic component in being a good teacher is the personal qualities. Despite the variety and specification of these qualities, some of them were agreed upon by the participants as vital and necessary in making a good teacher.

A good deal of participants in the present study shows that having a sense of humor is a good quality of an EFL teacher. This was both quantitatively and qualitatively evidenced in this study. Such a finding is highlighted by researchers like Mullock (2003) in TESOL areas, Arnon & Reichel (2007) and Liu & Meng (2009) in general education.

The quality of patience was also supported by Mullock (2003) and is found evident in the present study. Some of the participants also revealed the importance of EFL teaching passion, which is positively valued by researchers such as Harmer (1998) and Mullock (2003).

In addition, one characteristic which was revealed by TESOL literature (e.g. Mullock, 2003), and was valued by our participants in the current study is the need for EFL teachers to have a cross-cultural knowledge about their learners. The value of this feature is attributed to the fact that many EFL students, in the department of English, come from various African as well as Arab countries. This multi-cultural framework of heterogeneous and ethnic background is presented as an important knowledge parameter.

Actually, a variety of sources were revealed by the findings of our study and highlighted teacher knowledge and its development. Experience was a crucial source in teacher knowledge and goes with what Grangeat (2008) believes, in that professional knowledge is molded by professional experience and many motives, valuing the contribution of experience to the development of teacher knowledge, were evident in the collected data.

Besides, our participants supported the factor of experience and praised its role in developing knowledge about the subject matter. Experienced teachers can also be helpful in demarcating learners' individual differences and respond thus to their needs. Besides, teacher experience serves as a filter by which to reflect on novel and accumulated experiences, helping, thus, the teacher to grow and develop a body of knowledge with related values, beliefs and practical skills.

A convergence of views exists in both related literature and the findings of the present

study. This concerns, of course, the role of experience in shaping teacher knowledge and its role in teacher growth and development. The instance is found in Verloop et al. (2001), who believe that data for the knowledge teaching base emerge from practical experiences. In a similar way, Hegarty (2000) conveys the idea that experience is the platform for teacher knowledge development. Furthermore, Golombek (1998) shows that teachers' experience, in ESL contexts, models their view of EFL teaching and learning.

According to Gahin (2001), EFL teachers' beliefs and views about language could be shaped by the teaching experience. Other researchers like Mayer and Marland (1997) revealed that teacher knowledge can be drawn from interaction with students in classrooms. Again, the pedagogical knowledge of TESOL teachers is identified as a crucial area of teacher knowledge by Mullock (2006) and Clandinin (1989), viewing the teacher's personal practical knowledge as having social origins in personal and professional experiences. It is also viewed by Clandinin (1989) that personal and practical experiences of teachers are intrinsic elements in their professional expertise.

Despite the negative criticism it received, the LMD curriculum, designed for EFL students, is viewed as contributive to teacher knowledge. Its particular importance has been directed towards the improvement of pedagogy related-subjects.

It was also found that embarking on EFL methodology courses is very important to all teachers as they develop an awareness of theory and actual classroom practice.

The lack of guidance and supervision was, however, the concern of many novice EFL teachers. This is evidenced in our study findings in terms of poor feedback from the university milieu, excessive number of students per class, doctoral research requirements as well as difficulties in classroom management.

It follows that getting feedback from the university milieu, including colleagues and students, is an important source for the growth of teachers and the development of their

knowledge as well as its materialization. The instance is that teacher-teacher-student feedbacks were considered as significant sources to develop knowledge about teaching. This was made evident by a number of reasons in the data which considered feedback as a useful element in the development of teacher knowledge.

It was found that peer feedback propels the teacher's awareness of irrelevant practice and instruction, and student feedback also provides the teacher with an insight about the teaching development and commitments. Therefore, both types of feedback contribute to the development of the teacher's individual knowledge. Besides, teacher-teacher exchange of ideas and assessment keeps the knowledge of teachers, in both theory and practice, reflective and updated. This view meets Sonnevile (2007) who believes that teachers need to engage in communicative debates and discussions if they wish to develop their knowledge and personality. Correspondingly, other researchers worked on the same track. For example, Bartlett & Leask (2005) report:

*Whilst continuing to cast a critical eye over what they do, it is important that teachers also share and discuss their findings with fellow professionals. It is by doing this that they can refine their teaching methods, discover new approaches and compare how others have tackled similar situations. Thus, evaluation and reflection is central to the development of good teaching (292).*

Other sources were also judged to be contributive to the progress and improvement of teacher knowledge explored in the present study. Among these sources, the participants mentioned expert opinion and advice, extra work in English and academic research at the university, all of which contribute to the development of EFL teacher knowledge. As concerns teaching at the university level, it was revealed as an effective source which constitutes the EFL teaching proficiency in terms of grammar, vocabulary, culture and productive as well as receptive skills. Post-graduate studies of teacher researchers were



shown to provide real opportunities for teachers to expand their horizons, visit western countries and certainly communicate in the target language. What was also revealed in our study was the expert opinions and the practical advices given to novice EFL teachers. Thus, teacher knowledge about pedagogical content could be enhanced via professional educational advice and support. Besides, EFL knowledge development could be fostered through the effective use of technological aids and supports such as the internet, intranet and other sophisticated media that teach about teaching in practice.

The development of teacher knowledge was also revealed to be based on students' output and post-graduate studies. What is meant by students' output is the linguistic production including errors and mistakes which provide teachers with an insight into students' feelings, aspirations and their real proficiency level. Besides, the study of some disciplines such as cognitive psychology helps a lot in constructing knowledge about the psychology of EFL learners, in that the teacher is given an insight into the emotional needs of learners and could positively reflect on the adequate treatment. Actually, a good deal of the sources, tackled so far, is compatible with what already exists in literature on the subject of the sources that form up teacher knowledge, particularly formal and past education (Verloop et al., 2001); peer conversation, reading habits and formal development in the profession (Hegarty, 2000); input from background reading, classroom practice and expert teachers (Golombek, 1998); and novice teacher training and self-study (Mullock, 2006).

It should be admitted, at this level, that these findings contribute to our study not only in terms of enumerating the sources that form up teacher knowledge, but also in terms of knowing how these sources could be utilized to improve that knowledge. Furthermore, these sources contribute to our study by making references and implications to multiple areas of teacher knowledge, which could ultimately draw a framework for interpretation and analysis.

## **5.5 On the Understanding of Teacher Knowledge in Practice**

Teacher knowledge is related to classroom practice in two discernible ways. The first one concerns the fact that teachers' practices depend on intrinsic principles which could be detected through the analysis of the teaching behavior. Researchers like, for example, Grangeat (2008) indicate that professional knowledge forms a working model which underlies practices. Similarly, Xu & Liu (2009) hold that teachers make their knowledge as a platform for their judgment. This relationship might be evidenced through the harmony between what a teacher knows and what he does. The participating teachers followed practices and provided accounts to justify them which justifies, in fact, the interrelatedness of knowledge about the areas related to the teachers' work and what they actually do in their classrooms. This kind of interrelatedness was evoked by Bull & McEwan (1991) claiming that what distinguishes teachers from scholars is not what they know, but what they effectively do in the classroom context.

A further understanding of the connection between what teachers know and what they do is to highlight how their knowledge informs their classroom practice. This is to be said for the simple expedient that making classroom decisions is backed up by a variety of teacher knowledge criteria. Thus, such decisions could be better clarified by understanding why teachers justify one particular choice over another in due time. Calderhead (1987), for instance, favored this approach holding that knowledge about teacher knowledge is necessary to grasp the teachers' decisions and the related conditions. In a similar way, Eraut (2000) stresses the importance of knowledge in the building of artifacts and faculties that yield reasoning and decision making.

With these two ways, we devote this part to the discussion of the sophisticated interrelatedness of teachers' classroom practice with the multiple areas of teacher knowledge. The purpose behind this is to give a thorough account of teacher knowledge and its role in

practice. As such, the teacher's classroom practice was found to be informed by knowledge about the subject matter. Besides, the teacher's knowledge about EFL culture can positively inform his own practice and makes him acquainted with the varieties and standardizations of English in cosmopolitan and metropolitan contexts. Emphatically, Norrish (1997) holds that British and American Englishes are the two generally accepted varieties of English in Britain and the United States.

Two motives were given by him regarding the dominance of these two Englishes in African countries. First, he suggests that there are no limitations on accessing these two varieties due to social mobility as well as the widespread use of materials about the native accent and its teaching ways. The second motive is related to the fact that Algeria is not Anglophone in its linguistic profile and has no local variety of English. Our participating teachers also reflected on ideas about the cultural models conveyed by these two standard varieties.

The teachers were conscious about the duty of preparing their students for global communication, especially in the age of globalization, in which students need to learn and use English, as *lingua franca*, to achieve worldwide linguistic and cultural integrity. Besides, one's knowledge about EFL culture was viewed as a solid platform upon which cultures are compared and assimilated by learners to attain intercultural competencies and create opportunities for global communication. It follows that knowing about the subject matter generates good teaching actions such as management of classroom learning, execution of teaching acts as well as efficacy in approaching curricular areas (Tsui, 2003; Andrews, 2003).

In a corresponding way to the subject matter knowledge, expert opinions about pedagogy were informative of classroom behavior and practice. When it comes to the teaching of language aspects, such as EFL vocabulary and other skills, it is revealed that the strategies and techniques which fit the curricular requirements are based on the students' proficiency

level, their learning needs and the teacher's personal orientation in taking classroom decisions. In this respect, teacher knowledge is revealed to contain four types of knowledge. These are: knowledge about the teaching techniques of EFL vocabulary, knowledge about the curriculum, knowledge about learners and the knowledge about the self. As such, teacher knowledge is revealed to be characteristic of depth and complexity. Researchers like Golombek, (1998); Johnston & Goettsch, (2000); and Craig, (2007) believe that these teacher knowledge types might interact in practice and present a dialogic working model rather than a linear one.

Teacher's knowledge about his students also informed the teaching practice in a considerable way. To know about students is to know about their learning potentialities, which is a significant component of this knowledge. It was revealed also that students tend naturally to follow different learning rates, and once the teacher has this knowledge, his practice is likely to be informed to become strategic by working, for example, with small groups of learners with diverse learning abilities and skills.

In addition, knowing about the learners' needs also had an effect on the teachers' decisions to instruct their students accordingly. This aspect goes with what Lowe (2005) holds, in that differentiated instruction is attainable by means of activities selected and given to the learners. Knowing about the learning style preferences of students was another aspect related to knowledge about students. The teacher's practice could be informed by his adaptation to the variety of students' learning preferences.

It was also found that one striking aspect, characterizing the relation between knowledge and practice, was the knowledge about learners' lack of motivation. Our participants' knowledge informed their practice and reflected an awareness of utilizing motivational strategies and procedures such as using riddles and quizzes, supporting the learners' auto correction of errors, encouraging classroom cooperation and reinforcing learners' amount of

talking. All this was adopted to enhance motivation learning which results into students' positive learning.

The participants gave many reasons to justify these favored techniques and strategies. The fact is that encouraging students to become active participants was considered as an indication for the teacher's pedagogical knowledge, which creates a context for learning, involvement and an established sense of classroom responsibility. This feature goes with the view of Andreou et al. (2008) holding that EFL teachers need to create a space for learners to have a command over their learning orientation and improvement.

In a similar way, it is stressed by Garner (2005) that the teachers' abilities to engage their students in the learning process is likely to generate meaning, clarify positions, and make students autonomous. Thus, motivational learning is advantageous in terms of learning satisfaction, peer interaction, cooperative work, negotiation of meaning and acceptance of the other. (Allen, Taylor and Turner, 2005).

In fact, autonomous learning is the outcome of students' feeling of responsibility, leading in turn to the development of motivation. The idea is highlighted by Spratt, Humphries and Chan (2002) who studied the connection between autonomy and motivation. It was held that autonomy is reinforced by motivation. If learners are not motivated, they are likely to be inhibited in their learning autonomy. Correspondingly, the data we obtained from the interviews evoked a strong dependency of positive classroom engagement on the positive levels of motivation.

By setting the objective of getting learners involved in classroom events, the teacher creates more learning opportunities and activates an exchange of students' background knowledge. This is viewed, in the present study, as an aspect of teachers' practical knowledge as well as their awareness of the learners' lack of motivation.

Besides, our participating teachers emphasized the act of maximizing students' speech and oral contribution in the classrooms. This reveals the promoted sorts of interaction by EFL teachers. The thing depends on the involvement of students as active participants in the classroom, instead of viewing them as passive consumers of knowledge. When teachers invest in their students' engagement through debates and discussions, they are likely to obtain efficient results in their teaching classrooms.

Another efficient way that serves student-student interaction and reinforces classroom learning was via cooperative work. It was evidenced from the accounts of our participants that group and pair works recollect the effort of different learners' proficiency levels. This strategy was valued for the chance it gives to low level students to exchange knowledge with the advanced students.

Actually, it is suggested by McCormick & Leask (2005) that efficient learning takes place whenever interaction takes place. So, peer-student learning evokes the value and contribution of ethos and cooperation. In a like manner, researchers like Shulman (2000) point out that group-based strategies, namely; classroom cooperation, provide a healthy atmosphere in which students have the advantage to exchange ideas, share knowledge and, above all else, negotiate meaning with each other. In the context of our study, the non-dependency on the teacher all the way long is also revealed. EFL students in the LMD system, with reference to their excessive number per class, need to rely on group cooperation to achieve positive learning. As such, the teacher is released from the duty of instructing and might follow up students at an individual level. It follows that making learners feel responsible in classes consolidates their learning and yields self-control and orientation, as suggested by Crabbe (2003).

The findings of the present study provide evidence that teachers' knowledge about students monitors teaching in a way that meets learners' needs and leads to the attainment of

their learning objectives. Eventually, the teachers' knowledge about their students relies on their field experience and becomes part of the professional and social context.

Classroom practice in our study was also informed by knowledge about curricular areas. Such knowledge is found to have an important aspect that relates to the critical awareness of the curriculum content as well as the effective ways to cover it. Having this awareness, decisions about the syllabus content are informed in specific ways, namely; filtering through the curriculum material, incorporating extra material, putting the curriculum content into priority order, and making use of students' background knowledge. Therefore, taking a classroom decision is one way to pinpoint the crucial relation between teacher knowledge and practice. This idea is evoked in Tsang (2004) who revealed that her participants had access to their knowledge in practice, and their classroom decisions were, thus, guided.

In the present study, knowledge about the self also informed the teaching practice. One aspect of this knowledge is self-reflection, which was revealed to be influential in practical classroom settings such as classroom orientation, the creation of balance between input and intake and reflecting on the outcomes of the teaching-learning process. In a similar way, the teacher's personal qualities were found to be both reflected in practice and have an influence on it. The issue is concurrent with what Elbaz (1981) believes, saying that "*teachers have self-knowledge and they work toward personally meaningful goals in their teaching*" (47).

In our study, the means to represent teacher knowledge in real practice is congruent with the related research evidence, highlighting the interrelatedness of teacher knowledge and classroom practice. The practical rationale evidenced in the study is in agreement with the account of Hegarty (2000) who sees teaching as a sort of smart behavior; subject to analysis and yields a common sense, which Hargreaves (1998) considers as the creative materialization of knowledge. It is also maintained by Hegarty (2000) that common sense is devised by an understanding of the underpinning principles of practice and a grasp of the

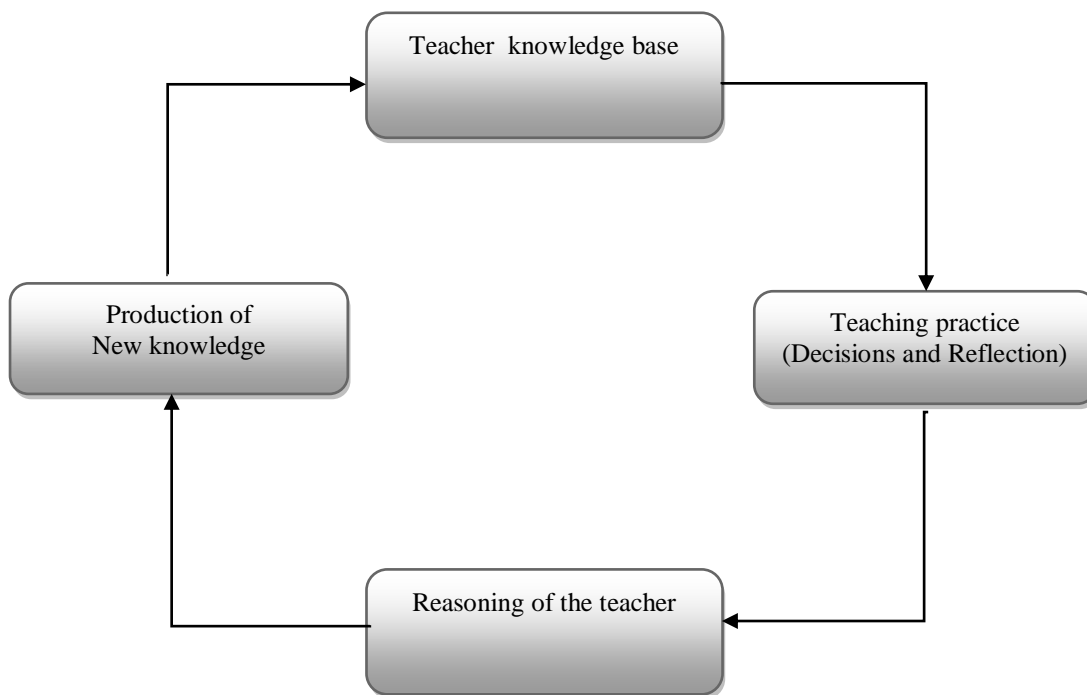
necessary language skills.

Teachers possess a knowledge base which provides them with suitable and practical solutions to deal with different problematic issues. It was also pointed out by Page (2001) that common sense knowledge is meant to provide a significant framework by which teacher knowledge can be investigated empirically for the fact that the commonplace aspects of teaching are basic in grasping the practice and locating the knowledge underlying this practice contextually as an inter-personally produced, cultural process.

It was also found by Golombek (1998) that the knowledge of L2 teachers informed their practice at two levels. The first one has to do with the teachers' processes of sense-making, as an aspect of the interpretive ability, to filter through experiences and rebuild knowledge in a way that meets the particular requirements of a given teaching situation. The second level refers to the fact that this knowledge could inform practice by physically shaping this practice which is presented as practical knowledge. The same researcher also maintained that context has an important role in giving form to teachers' knowledge for the fact that their knowledge can be used to respond to specific contexts. This tendency is consistent with our study findings.

With the previous ideas in mind, one can admit that teacher knowledge informs the decisive and practical acts of teachers, and could be taken as a platform for reasoning. Besides, teachers' reasoning is the outcome of teachers' reflection on informed practices, and could further lead to a multitude of insights and innovations. The cyclical representation of teacher knowledge, its practice, teacher reasoning as well as the generalized production of new knowledge is shown in the figure hereafter.





**Fig 5.3: Teacher Knowledge and Practice: The Revolving Cycle**

We could mention that the role of active teacher knowledge is to suggest to the teacher what to do and not merely drawing prescriptions. This is because knowledge is not flat or static, but cyclical and developmental, as demonstrated in the above figure. This meets the view of Biesta (2007) who holds that the individual's past and situational knowledge is not presented as a prescription or rule, when reflecting on the process of problem solving. In other terms, teachers' past knowledge helps understand what worked, but not exactly what works in future situations. However, this past or previous knowledge cannot tell a practitioner what should be done because situations change and differ. It can, instead, serve as a guide to get close enough to the problem and attempt to solve it in a smart way.

### **5.6 On the Role of Context in the Actualization of Teacher Knowledge**

We mentioned in the previous part a good deal about the dependency and agreement between teacher knowledge and classroom practice. However, our findings did not reveal the

same thing all the way through. Strictly speaking, some aspects of teacher knowledge could not be materialized and were hindered by contextual factors, which is the concern of this element. In here, the role of context is discussed, in three sub-sections, regarding the materialization of teacher knowledge. The role of context is primarily reviewed in connection with code switching and our participants valued this aspect for the paradoxical utilization of the mother tongue in EFL settings. Discussing this sub-topic is purposeful in having a contribution to the knowledge-practice framework.

Besides, the issue of class management is significant in the context of our study due to many challenging factors which might have an impact on such classroom management. The discussion of this specific area will be made on the basis of closely-related literature.

As concerns the third element of context, we discuss its role in implementing curricular materials in the light of the pedagogic relations implied in Bernstein's theory (2000).

### **5.6.1 On Code-Switching and Context**

In our study, the findings showed that almost all the participants thought that translating English vocabulary items into Arabic was not an effective technique in instructional practice. This view is recurrent and was made evident in L2 related research. For example, it was maintained by McCafferty, Roebuck, and Wayland (2001) that learning new vocabulary items has to be consciously processed by learners to give it meaning and purpose. This strategy might generate positive outcomes through the assignment of tasks which incorporate word meanings, their use in sentences, creating authentic examples for them and then moving to larger compositions (Laufer, 2001). In a similar way, other researchers, like Laufer and Hulstijn (2001), tackled the notion of task-oriented involvement and provided a cognitive and motivational model to reinforce the effectiveness of tasks. The model refers to high involvement tasks which yield better vocabulary learning compared to low involvement tasks which generate but a slight learning. Besides, by controlling complex factors surrounding

vocabulary, new words could be easily retained. It follows that mere translation of new vocabulary items is not helpful to students' learning. Nevertheless, the findings of our study, in real classroom practice, proved somewhat the opposite. Whenever weak learners could not understand the meaning of new words through available means, teachers opt for the provision of equivalent meanings in Arabic and sometimes French. As such, some participating teachers felt obliged to improvise by getting the equivalent meanings in Arabic from the more informed students, and attempted to clarify the meaning for the rest of students.

Now, some of our participants believed that EFL should be used at the largest scale, and learners should be trained to use it as the only language of instruction. However, this view was not favored by all the participants for the simple fact that students' learning needs, their background knowledge, the exam demands as well as the poor focus on communicative skills were all factors which presented a challenge to EFL teachers.

Also, research evidence showed that some students could not cope with the complex use of English by their teachers and asked for a simple flow of explanation in Arabic.

The participants' practical accounts also made evident the difficulty and oddness in using Arabic to relate particular issues. Not all EFL teachers favored the dependency on the mother tongue language. For those who are inclined toward its use, they select adequate contexts to teach some aspects of language such as vocabulary, grammar, literary and intercultural issues.

The reviewed literature provided support in this respect. It was held, for example, that learners' dependency on the mother language, when learning, might lead to both linguistic and cultural assimilations. Yet, such a frequent dependency, at a university level, might be reasonable as students develop and become more proficient in L2 (Upton and Lee-Thompson, 2001). In a like manner, researchers such as Hu (2003) managed to draw a positive relation between EFL proficiency and the learners use of the mother tongue language.

It becomes obvious, at this point, that many contextual motives emerge in the process and have an impact on the actualization of teacher knowledge in real classroom practice. This situation embodies the reality about the different challenges which relate to the use of EFL in many Algerian educational settings. Among the challenges, we can mention the intensive use of English in a variety of contexts. Besides, a continuity should be made between the LMD cycles and the different but complementary subject matters.

Another revealed challenge concerns freshmen learners, who come from high schools with a low proficiency level and by starting to learn, at an advanced level, they become disappointed. Thus, their learning condition turns to be one of mismatch and conflict. Actually, conflicting situations occur when expert teachers, at a university level, use advanced English to teach sophisticated subject matters, such as linguistics, cognitive psychology, TEFL and literature. Lack of allocated time renders the situation more challenging to EFL learners, who are expected to learn at normal rates of proficiency and dispose of old learning habits and ways.

The teacher's profession is very hard in trying to develop the learners' ability to master the language skills and the communicative use of language. It is held, however, that establishing a transition between successive levels is of considerable importance to sustain learning. The issue was pointed out by Johnstone (2003), believing that the teaching of a foreign language is a continuous investment, particularly at the early stages, and support should be provided to learners for the sake of making transitions from one level to another.

Learners' attitudes is another challenge which faces EFL teachers when trying to materialize their knowledge about EFL use. Many learners, especially at first year level, are not really interested in using English in various contexts. Their belief is based on a pragmatic perspective, holding that communication in English is not a priority compared to exams and grades which guarantee success and admittance to further study stages. This issue is reflective

of a gap between teachers' practices and students' expectations and needs. Nevertheless, teachers could not be right all the time because using the first language sounds at times more convenient and suitable than the foreign language. This view is supported by researchers like Cook (2001) holding that a foreign language classroom is the context for the existence of at least two languages. This means that the mother language and foreign languages are omnipresent and the purpose behind EFL teaching is to prepare students with a developed system of communication and a sophisticated; a system which allows them to make both languages operational. Cook (2001) puts it:

*Treating the L1 as a classroom resource opens up several ways to use it, such as for teachers to convey meaning, explain grammar, and organize the class, and for students to use as part of their collaborative learning and individual strategy use. The first language can be a useful element in creating authentic L2 users rather than something to be shunned at all costs (402).*

Students should be helped by their teachers to use both languages for their own learning advantage and not considering the situation as a source of conflict. The reason for this is the fact that EFL teachers work with mixed-ability learners and they need to switch the code to simplify instruction and adapt teaching to the students' level of proficiency. The issue goes in agreement with what is held by Norrish (1997), admitting that language-alteration occurs in difficult teaching situations and teachers are compelled to adapt their material to the learners' ability to access it. Furthermore, L1 could also be utilized to instruct and clarify procedures in a way that gives EFL learners great profit and teachers in turn could achieve good classroom management. This idea is in consistency with the view of Macaro (2001), believing that it would be preferable, sometimes, to use the first language to instruct and keep control over the classroom, especially in the case of novice teachers.

Similarly, learning French as a second language is actually very helpful to EFL learners in

Algeria. French could be exploited as an alternative language to provide EFL students with an insight about the cultural orientation of the Western society, in general. By making cultural assimilations between languages, students gain knowledge and could get access to idiomatic and intercultural schemata. It follows, nonetheless, that there's always room for a judicious use of more than one language in an EFL setting. This tendency meets the view of Lamb (2007), in which EFL teachers could strategically make use of a mother language or second language to initiate, consolidate or test the knowledge of EFL learners.

### **5.6.2 On the Teaching Management and Context**

It was reported by Jennings & Greenberg (2009) that a shift has been witnessed in moving toward a more active and professional attitude to classroom management. Cooperative behaviors between different parties are needed to generate a feeling of trust, guidance and also the use of remedial strategies rather than wasting time in controlling bad behaviors or punishing students. The shift in classroom management was the culmination of self-determination theory, advocated by Deci & Ryan (2000), and which holds that striving to attain superficial and extrinsic objectives, such as appraisal and reward, is reflective of a poor state of being compared to the fixation of intrinsic objectives such as social relations, mutual understanding and intimacy.

In the case of EFL teachers, however, many emotionally-stressful situations urge teachers to create healthy conditions, support their learners and even have command over their students in a permissive way. The case, in our study, is similar to the one held by Jennings & Greenberg (2009), in that many EFL teachers suffer from classroom management and the learners' mean behavior. The rude learners are difficult to control, and are viewed in the present study as low-achievers with disciplinary problems, economically and socially back dropped, which adds to the emotional tiredness and exhaustion of teachers. Nonetheless, a tiresome classroom context is likely to render teachers act in a harsh and probably

irresponsible manner which yields, as maintained by Jennings & Greenberg (2009), negative effects on students' learning.

With reference to disciplinary problems, some of the teachers declared to have opted for severe classroom measures such as; depriving this type of students from good grades, taking administrative measures, and at most transferring these students to the disciplinary council in the department of English. Such measures, however, lead to a complex relation between teachers and students in the sense that these measures provide circumstantial solutions to the problems as a run-away strategy, and are not really efficient remedies to the everlasting problems. Besides, when teachers turn to be tough with their students, their relationship becomes loose and the classroom atmosphere turns to be dull and authoritarian. On the contrary, researchers, like Jennings and Greenberg (2009), hold that a positive relation between teachers and their students as well as a positive classroom management creates a healthy learning atmosphere. Learning is handled by good management of the classroom, as suggested by Williams & Burden (1997), who believe that promoting students' learning is associated with the teachers' ability to impose respect and spirit of cooperation in their classrooms.

As concerns classroom management, the findings of our study reveal that most of the participants are in favor of adopting strategies and principles for better management of classrooms. It was believed that teachers should prevent problems from issuing first hand, and in case a problem occurs, it has to be treated in a smart way. It is also maintained by our participants that effective classroom management is dependent on cheerful and sympathetic relationships with students.

This can be attained by simply engaging trouble-makers in interesting activities, showing them respect and give them freedom to express their views in private, whenever necessary. Similarly, smart teachers can opt for another strategy, according to our participants. This

strategy is represented in classroom cooperation between teachers and students to create democratic values and respect them, which generates a feeling of responsibility for learners, leading thus to better classroom stability and learning. This idea meets the view of Leask (2005), holding that the setting of rules is efficient in proceeding with courses and postponing disciplinary measures for further occasions. In addition, generating a sense of threat to the whole classroom is not really favored by the participants in the current study. The participating teachers support, instead, the provision of a secure and pleasant atmosphere for the sake of students' learning.

Both quantitative and qualitative evidences in our study show the participants' views of creating pleasant and emotional learning atmosphere as the clue to better learning results. According to the participants, this state could be achieved by encouraging students to contribute in lesson preparation, creating rapport with them, listening to their views and concerns, socializing with them and establishing a sense of classroom as community. Some participating teachers found that the use of amusing and relaxing materials, such as quizzes, riddles, and jokes, could also be effective in getting students involved and have a control over them.

A good deal of the findings, regarding classroom management, is compatible with the view of teachers' emotional and social competence, advocated by some researchers like Zins, Weissberg, Wang & Walberg (2004) – cited in Jennings & Greenberg (2009). Their general framework includes five major cognitive, behavioral and emotional competencies which are: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, self-management, and relationship management. It is argued that emotionally and socially competent teachers are the ones who reflect knowledge of exploiting enthusiasm, joy...etc., to fuel their own teaching as well as their students' learning. This knowledge also covers an awareness of how their particular emotions influence the interaction with others to create an exchange of



emotions and mutual understanding, which leads to a common discussion of problematic issues. Actually, teachers, who establish good relationships with students, colleagues and the external environment, are emotionally and socially talented and represent a professional sensitivity by listening to others and not underestimate peoples' views and initiatives. Teachers, in this way, are social professionals with a sense of responsibility, when taking decisions, and the related effects these decisions might generate.

The fact of being an emotionally and socially talented teacher implies knowledge about the management of social relations and personal behavior. However, competent teachers show control of their behavior regardless of the potential challenges aroused by other people. Their feelings, thus, need to be adjusted in pure ways to achieve positive classroom outcomes, taking care of their health condition at the same time. Respect and classroom discipline need to be instilled, accordingly. Besides, these teachers need to act smart in any ambiguous or uncertain circumstance that might take place in the classroom.

Now, regarding the EFL teachers' realisation of their views in real classroom practice, the findings of our study showed that many teachers found it challenging due to the excessive number of students per class, the number of which exceeds 70 students in a single classroom. This situation is beyond the teachers' control and calls upon political and administrative measures to alleviate the teaching-learning conditions and prepare a solid platform for a prosocial learning, especially if we know that the actual orientation of the LMD regime is to create competent learners, in all domains, yet the gap still exists between this expectation and what is really witnessed in the field.

The challenge of excessive class size yielded many disciplinary problems, reducing, thus, the amount of instruction and learning. It is stressed by Rahmah (1997) that a classroom with a great number of students is becoming a common issue in many Arab countries. This issue is attributed to the swift demography in the Arab countries as well as the free education systems

which guarantee schooling and education to all citizens. As such, the problematic situation could generate negative effects on teachers in their classrooms. Therefore, in such typical classes, teachers cannot transmit their knowledge about subject matter, find it difficult to manage classrooms, cannot meet their learners' needs and are hindered in the provision of a healthy and secure learning environment.

### **5.6.3 On the Implementation of EFL Curriculum and Context**

Our participants revealed, according to the findings of the study, different ideas regarding the syllabus objectives and showed differing views about its implementation; this was in comparison with the objectives set by the official organisms. The EFL curriculum materials were viewed, however, by many teachers as not exactly compatible with the learners' needs and expectations.

Teachers' accounts of practice consolidated these views as some of the teaching material was not taught to students and was preferably replaced by other improvisations to meet the learners' needs and preferences.

In the view of our participants, the LMD syllabus content is sometimes vague, redundant and inaccessible. Some curricular areas are also viewed as irrelevant to the educational tenets of the LMD regime. This view is not far from Jones's (2007) who holds that a curriculum is usually characterized by odds and unevenness. Similarly, additional material could be used by teachers to achieve a balance at the students' learning level. Teachers could also hierarchically reorder the material in terms of easiness and difficulty, the aim of which is to make it understandable and flexible for learners.

Principally, all teachers favored the provision of purposeful and innovative content to reinforce students' learning. Yet, the practical realization of this finding was challenged by contextual and educational requirements. It is made evident in the participants' accounts that there is not always such interconnection between the syllabus requirements and the issues set

in tests and exams. This problem might be due to the mismatch between theory and practice, i.e., expert syllabus designers talk about ideal objectives behind the application of the LMD system in Algeria, whereas the content introduced does not meet the intended objectives.

The explanation provided by Olson & Craig (2005) embodies this problematic situation. They believe that institutional models imposed on teachers make them feel bound in expressing and revealing what they know, and they should instead conform to the dictated norms.

Despite the fact that all the participants, in the present study, were experienced teachers with good knowledge base, still they are challenged by large class-size, administrative and pedagogic load as well as other curricular constraints. Paradoxically, the teachers' performance is usually assessed, by other fellows, in terms of grades, peace and stability, which teachers should bring to their teaching setting, but not in terms of innovation or the quality of their teaching.

Such factors contribute to the complexity of the teachers' mission and hinder them from the attainment of real teaching and learning aims. This relationship can be further pointed out through the area of language as communication. Most of the teachers favored communicative strategies such as working with pairs or groups of students, but the excessive number of students per group made it impossible. This conflicting situation meets the view of Nolasco & Arthur (1988), in that classrooms with a great number of students and a good deal of equipment create management problems and widens the gap between the requirements of communicative methodology and the teachers' actual classroom practice.

In addition, the theory of pedagogic relations set by Bernstein (2000) is a significant basis to understand the realization of the teaching curriculum. His theory is a representation of a pedagogic relations model meant to clarify the sophisticated relations between higher education, classroom context and the national authority. His argument is that via these

relations, knowledge of the discipline transforms into an educational body of knowledge, in that designers produce the syllabus and teachers have to meet its requirements.

In this respect, knowledge about the syllabus is identified in terms of three stances. The first one refers to the production of knowledge. People working in this space, such as researchers, maintain knowledge, control its access and transfer this curriculum knowledge to other people. As such, we have individuals who transform discipline knowledge into educational knowledge and other individuals who are meant to materialize the syllabus content, such as teachers.

Authorities, which re-shape discipline-based knowledge into curriculum knowledge, represent the second stance. This stance represents the dominance of syllabus-designers, but not teachers in practical fields. At this level, and specialized knowledge and discourse are reconstructed as official texts and in which the syllabus, for instance, should be based on pedagogic perspectives that guide the choice, rate and hierarchy of the teaching material.

In connection with Bernstein's theory of pedagogic relations and the inferred evidence from research studies, such as Kirk & McDonald (2001), it can be argued that many teachers do not act as efficient agents in the field of reconstruction and adaptation of syllabi according to the teaching context. This is despite the many chances and occasions given to them as well as their skill and potentiality to bring change to their teaching content and material (Kirk & McDonald, 2001).

It is made evident, in the present study, that teachers work with objectives in mind which they attempt to achieve when implementing the curriculum. It is maintained by Haydon (2005) that many aspects of a curriculum are already set in a framework that teachers need to follow. However, teachers can still contribute to the adjustment, discussion and enrichment of the teaching curriculum.

Likewise, it is emphasized by Xu & Liu (2009) that teachers, as effective agents and

producers of knowledge, need to be recognized and consulted when trying to implement plans, policies or research achievements. This policy yields many results in favor of the teaching-learning process and higher education. Again, the teachers' contribution could be made at the level of their constructive feedback, leading to improvements, newness as well as the adaptation of content materials. This view is held by Troudi & Alwan (2010), who also believe that such a strategy improves the conditions and lifts the morale of teachers to transform the state of curricula from being rigid to being flexible.

The classroom, in which the pedagogic discourse is manifested and materialized, embodies the third stance suggested by Bernstein. He holds, in this respect, that evaluative rules govern and adjust pedagogic classroom acts in a precarious way vis- à- vis the realization of curricular materials. It follows that teachers' practices are shaped and influenced by their views about the curriculum and the working context. Therefore, some of the curriculum requirements might not be met when denying the teachers' views or the contextual factors.

In our study, some teachers' practices did not always meet the objectives held by the LMD system. This mismatch, regarding the implementation of the curriculum, provides the different parties with an insight into the necessity to reconstruct, reconceptualise and adapt the knowledge base.

## **Conclusion**

We discussed, in the above section, the findings of the present study in accordance with context and evident research information held in different studies. We managed to frame four thematic issues, in which the first one dealt with the central parts and areas of teacher knowledge, and explaining the professional, practical components of these areas. In the second thematic issue, we accounted for the variety of channels through which teacher knowledge develops. We moved, then, to the clarification of the various ways of

comprehending teacher knowledge on the basis of practical accounts and views presented in the bulky set of data. Ultimately, we presented the fourth thematic area which covered the motives and factors influencing and hindering the actualisation of teacher knowledge in practice.

## CHAPTER VI

### IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

#### Introduction

The purpose behind this chapter is to draw upon some significant implications held in the present study, along with possible suggestions and recommendations for further research in the area of teacher knowledge. We start with significant implications regarding teacher education, the development of the curriculum and its actualization, the professional development of teachers as well as the educational research setting. Research recommendations are then provided for an attempt to achieve strategic policy construction, on the basis of our study findings. We naturally end our chapter with a conclusive and recapitulative statement.

#### 6.1 Implications of the Study

The present study dealt in focus with the Algerian experienced EFL teachers' knowledge which comprised some aspects of values and beliefs. It also emphasized the construction and development of this knowledge within contextual and practical settings. Informed by the research works on teacher knowledge, our study holds some implications for novice teachers' learning.

First, the data in our study could be taken as a basis, by new practicing EFL teachers, to design tasks and reflect on practice. It is maintained by Johannesson (2006) that research evidence on teacher knowledge is contributive to educators and teachers for reinforcement purposes. The idea is also supported by Borg (1998), who values the significant role of teacher cognition in second and foreign languages, and how it shapes classroom practical acts. Thus, it is admitted that the teaching curricula have to give novice teachers clear instruction, providing them with practices of experienced teachers as well as the knowledge underlying them. Thus, it is admitted by Borg (2006) that:

*Teacher education activities based on data which document both teachers' classroom behaviors and the rationale behind these behaviors are particularly valuable in sensitizing participants on teacher education courses to the role cognition plays in teaching and in prompting them to explore the cognitive bases of their own work (184).*

From the above, we understand that Borg (1998) claims a dialogic connection between research information and teacher training in which designers of tasks can create in teachers some sort of analytical thinking about their work which underpins the real development of teachers. Some design principles were provided by him to devise data-based materials. The outlined principles are stated as: creating enough space for teachers to respond by themselves to data to guarantee the adequacy of data inspired from other teachers, and adapt them to their own use. As such, a move is made from a mere description of teaching to a thorough understanding of its foundations, helping, thus, teachers to deal with data openly and welcome initiatives, processing data inductively and motivate them to set objectives as well as fostering continuous development. It follows that Borg (1998) supports an approach that serves teacher education by being responsive to the teachers' needs, approved by teachers, and should be motivating enough to reflect on practice.

It is also highlighted by Golombek (1998) that there is a need for the consideration of teacher knowledge and its role in teacher education. She aspires for a connection between individual practical knowledge and empirical knowledge to foster teachers ahead in making theory meaningful, and taking profit from the knowledge gained from their experience; being both teachers and learners. This researcher also calls for reflection that shapes teacher knowledge and acknowledges the importance of the teachers' views about knowledge and practice in their fieldwork. What can be drawn from this evidence is that there is a need to exploit research findings, when trying to probe teacher knowledge. With reference to our study, the obtained data could be utilized to design materials and tasks that inform novice



teachers' learning as long as this learning is revealed to be a solid source of teacher knowledge, in general.

It was also revealed, nonetheless, that a gap exists between the theoretical knowledge, teachers gain from the curriculum, and the practical knowledge, which is constructed from experience, and such a gap was attributed basically to contextual problems. Findings such as these raise implications for novice EFL teachers. In addition, teachers need to be acquainted with the knowledge rudiments necessary for their teaching profession.

Strictly speaking, EFL teachers need to be aware of the various contexts of practice and should adjust these contexts to meet their own teaching acts. As such, a solid and complementary basis is established between teaching theory and authentic classroom practice.

Experienced teachers could also make novice teachers envision the possible and expected problems they might encounter in the field of work. This is to be said for the fact that the expectation of problematic issues stimulates thinking and reflection on resolutions, or at least making teachers ready beforehand. It follows that EFL experienced teachers have the responsibility, as well as the chance, to bridge the gap between theory, practice and the professional knowledge in context.

### **6.1.1 On the Understanding of Professional Knowledge**

Experienced teachers are capable of making their knowledge accessible to beginners and teacher trainees in higher education settings. This can be achieved through framing, guidance and cooperation. In addition, experiential feedback is very significant to the teaching community because it highlights both knowledge and practice about the teaching profession. Experienced teachers are people of the profession, so they are professionals and their task goes further to the point of rendering their knowledge simple, flexible and contributive to make other teachers aware of how to link theory to classroom practice.

It is stressed by Hiebert et al. (2002) that the impossibility to gain a thorough understanding of practical knowledge is a crucial loss of the teaching knowledge foundations. They commented on this issue saying:

*Most teachers who continually develop knowledge about their own practice have seldom accumulated and shared their knowledge. They have learned from each other only in the most haphazard way. As much as they might benefit from the knowledge of their colleagues, most teachers have not accessed what others know and must start over, creating this knowledge anew (11).*

Therefore, our study holds a significant implication for research on teacher knowledge, and it is about making the knowledge of EFL experienced teachers flexible, understandable and sharable with novice teachers and learners in the workplace, when teaching the EFL curriculum. This implication is compatible with the body of related literature, in which productive curricula should help new teachers and learners alike clarify the means to access the proficient knowledge of experienced teachers (Hedgcock, 2002). However, this goal is not easy to achieve for the fact that some teachers find it hard to reproduce knowledge or practice taking place in their classrooms. This is depicted in the words of Brown & McIntyre (1993) who state:

*To them, most of what has happened in their lessons, and especially almost everything which they themselves have done in the classroom, is so ordinary and so obvious as not to merit any comment. ... They are seldom asked to articulate and elaborate on what they do in their ordinary, everyday teaching. For such reasons, this part of the professional knowledge of experienced teachers is communicated to beginning teachers only to a very limited extent, and the wheels of teaching have to be reinvented by each new generation (13).*

The difficulty to make teachers relate their practice and its underlying knowledge is commonplace. Nonetheless, some opportunities, regarding the clarification and explicitness

of the teaching knowledge, can still be made possible. In the context of our study, the teachers' practice has a special relevance to the difficulty of actualizing their knowledge about the subject matter in practice. However, the university and classroom contexts also provide EFL teachers with insights and new ideas about teaching to reinforce their already acquired knowledge about the teaching profession.

Again, a good will to exploit teacher knowledge is needed along with a strategy to provide suitable contexts that bridge the gap between theory and practice; this is on the one hand. On the other hand, the knowledge of experienced teachers need to be realized in practice to reflect upon the rich and diversified teaching experiences. Accordingly, EFL subject matters and curricular areas need to be framed and filtered by expert teachers to devise ways and methodologies that serve as models for other fellow and novice teachers.

### **6.1.2 The Need for Implementing Teacher Knowledge**

The findings of the present study reveal such a need to utilize teacher knowledge and make it an integral part of the EFL curriculum at a largest scale.

Again, another need appears to actualize the expert teachers' knowledge in a formal and practical way, by understanding the contextual factors as well as the practical concerns of the EFL teachers. In addition, the actualization of teacher theories and instructional materials in practice empowers the teaching-learning process and generates an understanding of when and how to make decisions that best fit the variety of situations. In the LMD system, taking decisions is at the core of the teaching process which implies a regular assessment of the stream of things like, for example, the teachers' ability to choose between two situations, and how to be successful in opting for the informative one. It is made evident that informed decisions are the product of the teaching practice as well as the ability to make this practice reflective and purposive.

It is also made evident that through speech and discussion, EFL experienced teachers

could state their views and reflect on the contextual sensitivity of teaching, and could also actualize their knowledge and relate it to the problematic issues which might be faced by fellow teachers. It follows that experienced teachers, in the department of English, need to help novice teachers to develop an awareness of their knowledge at a meta-instructional level, the issue of which was supported by Haim (2004) and other researchers. Such an awareness is, accordingly, viewed in connection with knowledge about the subject matter which lies at the core of teaching and the knowledge about teaching. Thus, the role of experienced teachers goes to the point of becoming efficient in designing syllabi and curricular materials, and provide a thorough and useful content of various subject matters in a way that informs classroom practices. In addition, novice EFL teachers should be made conscious about the possibility in which the instructional dimensions of a subject matter are manifested. The analysis of data, in our study, provides less experienced teachers with an insight into the mechanisms of teaching and how teaching is perceived by EFL experienced teachers. The discussion and analytical framework of this study could partly help novice teachers develop an idea about the practices, cognitions and the difficulties faced by experienced teachers.

Experienced teachers can guide the less experienced ones to set a theoretical basis to their practice and possibly write about their own experiences as teacher-students. This procedure could be achieved, as a problem-based, through individual or group assignments or rather as an action research project. Thus, communication and mutual understanding between the experienced and less experienced teachers could take place. The expert opinion about teaching, as a life-long learning experience, could also be transmitted to fellow EFL teachers at a university level. Besides, all teachers need to be aware that teaching and learning are cyclical and based on innovation and newness of knowledge. The latter is fundamental for the mastery of and accessibility to various curricular areas and subject matters. A further benefit resides in this approach which unites theory and practice and serves as a positive framework

which incorporates experiences and practical initiatives. It follows that the EFL curriculum need to be improved, by all parties, in a commonly- constructed and dialogical way, which implies a constructivist view to teacher knowledge, open to debate and interpretation.

## **6.2 A suggested knowledge-based model for novice and practicing teachers**

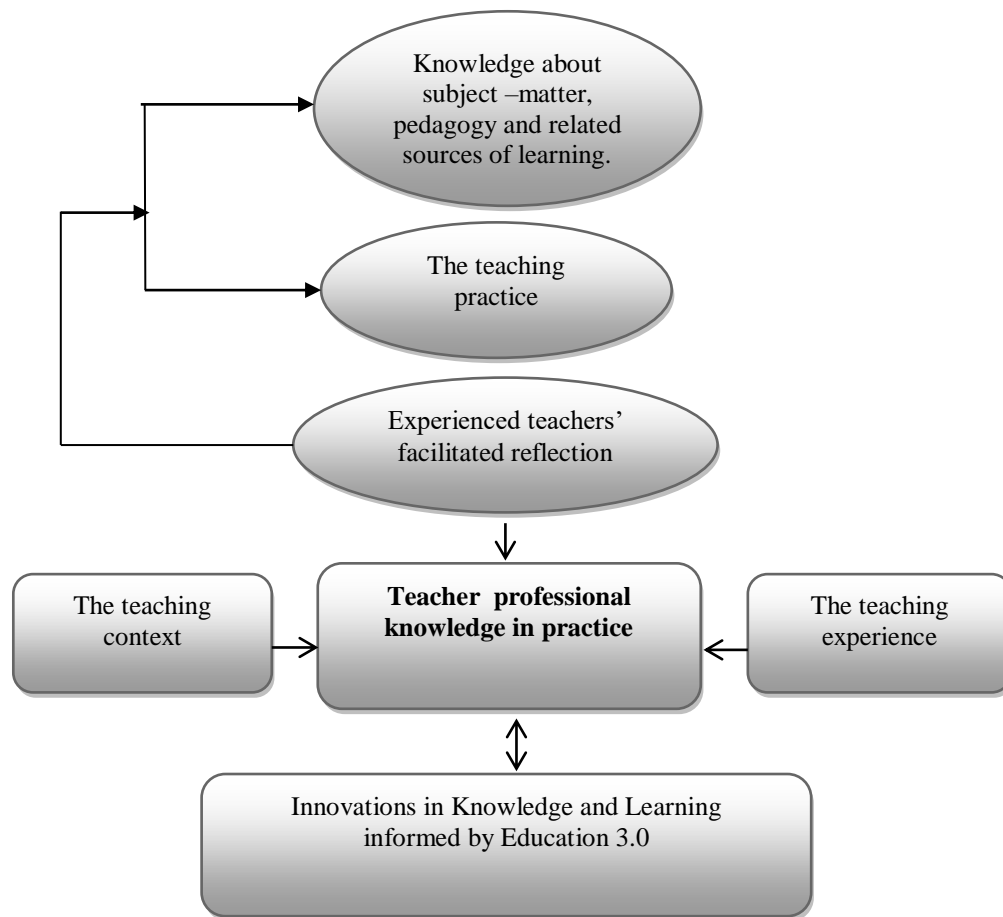
It has been revealed, throughout this study, that there is a great need to innovate and devise a flexible paradigm to EFL teaching and learning. This new tendency would help shorten the distance between educational theory and classroom practice. The knowledge-based model gives importance to a variety of teaching areas such as cognitive psychology and research methodology. These areas, for example, are of great utility to novice EFL teachers, as they make them aware of the teaching strategies and pedagogical parameters necessary for practice. Besides, the professional development and growth of EFL teachers is another opportunity, especially for teachers who start newly their teaching career. By being trained reflectively, teachers could develop their abilities as practical theorizers. The traditional models for the EFL education have been in use for many years without real change or improvement. The suggested model is underlined by a practical approach to professionalism rather than a technical model. Theriot & Tice (2009) believe that presenting simply ideas for teachers to take does not make knowledge about teaching productive.

Actually, the concept of teacher competency appears to be an important parameter in teacher knowledge and practice. Therefore, this concept holds importance for the fact that it is the true indicator, according to EFL experts, which helps determine readiness of teachers as well as learners for individual development and active involvement in the socio-economic life. It is made evident in our study that EFL teachers need to be equipped with necessary knowledge; skills and competence which help them interact harmoniously with the modern technological world. Besides, teacher professional knowledge implies competency to communicate new ideas and understand analogies, frameworks and classified patterns.

Therefore, the knowledge-based model is synonymous with the competency-based paradigm, which is viewed as a basis for innovating the educational goals in EFL settings. Besides, knowing that the LMD regime is subject to changes, occurring continuously, EFL teachers need to be competent to use a variety of tools to interact with their environment: both physical tools such as ICT and socio-cultural ones such as the use of language as global citizens. Besides, EFL teachers and learners need to be able to engage with other partners in the framework of social mobility and manage and situate their lives in larger social contexts.

Despite the fact that the LMD system is shown to be flexible and learner-centered, it still has to recognize the teachers' individual styles, views and experiences that bring newness and innovation to the teaching-learning process. In addition, the findings of this study are in agreement with the view of Hyde and other commentators, who inform us that teaching in a subject area involves invention and construction of new ideas, which suggests the relevance of the constructivist theory to EFL curriculum, leading thus to the creation of productive learning environments. Again, the professional practical knowledge of EFL teachers implies an implementation within the call for reforms and innovations in the teaching-learning process.

It follows that the implementation of the model, with reference to the competency-based approach, as the latter is based on socio-constructivist perspectives, prompts the growth of independent skills, critical thinking and self-orientation in teaching and learning. The following figure embodies these ideas.



***Fig 6.1: Teacher Professional Knowledge in Practice***

From the above figure, we can deduce the role of the professional knowledge in teaching and learning. The basic input for teaching is training in subject matter, innovative pedagogy and other sources of teacher learning. This input is put to use when teachers start practising teaching. Reflection facilitated by experienced teachers provides insights into the relationship between teaching inputs and teaching practice. Thus, the basic input for teaching is revised. New insights are added to the revised input through experience and awareness of the teaching context. The inputs for teaching gained from reflection on practice in addition to the new insights constitute the professional practical knowledge of the teacher. Teacher knowledge informs practice and is also informed by it. As such, the knowledge base of teachers becomes interactive, flexible and open to innovations in knowledge and learning informed by

education 3.0 which is likely to enlarge the scope of the knowledge base needed in the teaching-learning process. Besides, it is made evident that teacher knowledge constitutes the basis for practice and is also informed by practice.

### **6.3 Implications for the Development of the Curriculum**

In this study, it was shown that EFL teachers worked with individual objectives, set for their teaching acts and modeled by contextual factors. Such a point was made evident in some of the responses given by the participants. Thus, the implication of this knowledge is the necessity to involve all EFL teachers in the process of curriculum design.

The EFL syllabus, within the LMD system, is designed by other educationalists and scholars which makes its content somehow hard to implement. Thus, researchers like Brown & McIntyre (1993), believe that teachers do not conceive of impositions as practical change or improvement. Accordingly, Verloop et al. (2001) believe that teacher knowledge “*must be the starting point for any successful intervention or innovation*” (453). It is also reported by them that “*to identify their authentic beliefs with respect to the basic ideas behind the innovation, a thorough investigation into the knowledge of the teachers themselves is required*” (*ibid*).

These views yield research implications on teacher knowledge and its positive contribution to educational improvement. By understanding teacher knowledge thoroughly, it becomes an initial basis for innovation and practice as long as this knowledge is well-informed and meets the expectations of all the parties. Teacher knowledge, according to, for instance, Pajares (1992); Putnam & Borko (1997) and Golombek (1998) serves as a filter through which new experiences are interpreted and the selection of information are made possible. It follows that teachers’ views are vital and need to be taken into consideration as they form up an effective basis for practice. It is argued, in this respect, by Verloop et al. (2001) that “*before every major change or innovation, it makes sense to at least examine the*



*filters or lenses of the teachers concerned” (454).*

In addition, the modification and improvement of the curriculum has to take into consideration the practical stance of experienced teachers as a solid platform upon which one starts new curricula design.

Designing a curriculum has to be actually based on good perceptions of the teaching-learning realities and also on the grasp of the various needs, requirements and aspirations of both teachers and learners involved in the process. What is implied here is that a free dialogue is needed between teachers and theorist designers, and this could be made possible through regular meetings and conferences to be held at regular intervals. Furthermore, syllabus designers need to take into consideration the work circumstances of EFL teachers, including the variety of challenges and constraints teachers face in the daily accomplishment of their duties, and suggest solutions to improve the conditions of work.

It follows that experienced teachers, in particular, need to be consulted when designing syllabi, which was our attempt in the present study. Besides, EFL teaching and learning is a complex process which is associated with its proper context and cannot be split off from a variety of influential factors; both internal and external. Basically, teachers are people of the profession and are well placed to design suitable and relevant materials which could meet the students' needs, and this tends to create a sense of harmony between the theoretical frameworks and classroom practices.

A further implication is that many educators are doing Education 1.0; talking about doing Education 2.0; when they should be planning and implementing Education 3.0. The analogy is made between the developments of the Internet-Web to those of education. The Internet has become an integral thread of the tapestries of most societies throughout the globe. The web influences people's way of thinking, doing and being; and people influence the development and content of the web. The Internet of today has become a huge picture

window and portal into human perceptions, thinking, and behavior. Logically, then, it would seem that educational institutions would follow what happens in the world via the Internet to assist learners to act, learn and work in a healthy, interactive, and pro-social manner in their societies-at-large.

The truth is that many universities still live within and function through an Education 1.0 paradigm. They are focusing on an essentialist-based curriculum with conventional ways of teaching and testing. Similar to Web 2.0, Education 2.0 includes more interaction between the teacher and student; student to student; and student to content. A move has been made by some educators into a more connected, creative Education 2.0 through the use of cooperative learning, global learning projects, blogs and other social networking in classrooms. Emphatically, pedagogy 3.0 is a connectivist approach to teaching and learning. The teachers, learners, networks, connections, media, resources and tools create a unique entity that has the potential to meet the needs of teachers, students and society at the largest scale.

From another perspective, the shift from Education 1.0 to Education 3.0 is like moving from essentialism/instructivism to constructivism/connectivism. This translates into moving from an education approach driven by essentialism or instructivism to one that is based on constructivism and connectivism.

Teacher knowledge should not be limited to one orientation, but rather adapts to one teaching orientation over another. EFL teachers need to examine what they teach along with the learners they work with. For instance, procedural knowledge such as how to fix a car; or a fixed body of knowledge such as human anatomy or even the study of law is typically best taught through a more teacher oriented, pedagogical style. It becomes teaching with intentionality and strategically using the teaching and learning philosophies and approaches to attain the intended goals.

#### **6.4 Implications for Professional Growth**

It is implied in the present study that there is a foundation of belief, concerning the transferability of teacher knowledge, which meets the evidence conveyed through the research literature about the opportunity to explore professional knowledge in teaching contexts.

Trying to understand teacher knowledge generates an interest in exploring and enhancing, in the view of Curtis & Szestay (2005), the transmission and distribution of professional development and reflection. What EFL teachers need, locally and nationally, is a proper condition to reveal their knowledge and explore their potentials in practice. As such, reflection on teacher knowledge, as thought by Corrie (1997), could be made possible and leads to an assessment of goals and procedures set for effective teaching.

Researchers always value findings on teacher knowledge as these serve beginners to have a handle on the knowledge base which is made possible through materials and activities on professional development. Such a view is provided by Verloop et al. (2001) and indicates that the findings of our study present teacher feedback as an important source for the development of professional knowledge, hence the improvement of the teaching practice.

Other researchers, such as Norrish (1996), view observation among colleagues as an efficient and productive way in realizing the weight and depth of the knowledge possessed by teachers.

The present study, in turn, dealt with teacher knowledge and emphasized the significance of sharing peer knowledge in various situations, and how this knowledge could be strengthened and developed. The implication here is that teachers are encouraged to exchange the practical achievements, share ideas and create learning communities. Opportunities to meet each other in meetings, video-conferences and online debates are all fruitful in updating teacher knowledge, which fosters ahead the professional growth of EFL teachers.

Furthermore, our study is in agreement with the research findings about teacher knowledge, in relation to mentoring and cooperation. It was suggested by many researchers that cooperation between teachers is useful in many ways, as admitted by Hiebert et al. (2002), who report saying:

*As teachers collaborate to assist each other in solving problems of practice, and as they mentor younger teachers, this kind of local theorizing can be useful, and even necessary. It provides a principled way to move what was learned in one context or classroom into another. Collaboration and mentoring provide settings in which representing knowledge in more general forms is genuinely beneficial (8).*

Accordingly, communication between teachers is positively evidenced and needs to be encouraged in university settings. Experienced teachers have a significant role to play in this respect. They can provide help and guidance to students and novice teachers and contribute to their professional development via continuous assessment, which lies at the heart of the LMD system. In addition, EFL syllabi need to encourage the acquisition of solid knowledge and experience and share them with others for the general profit. Researchers, like Hibbert, Heydon, & Rich (2007), believe that such a goal could be attained by rendering professional development reflective, critical and provides a chance for teachers to construct their own knowledge and draw upon it in practice.

EFL teachers, in particular, can create clubs for discussing language matters and also relate their own classroom stories which, according to Kooy (2006), provides an insight into the teaching profession and its contextual factors. As such, teachers are in a position of open and continuous learning from one another; they create a typical learning community with its capacities, figment of imagination, relate their life experiences and rebuild their professional knowledge. In the context of our study, the appeal is made to the transferability of knowledge which implies the need to incorporate activities that serve the professional development.

Also, the fact of sharing teacher knowledge is meant to enlarge and reinforce the knowledge base of teaching, leading thus to better informed practice.

### **6.5 Implications for Further Research**

With reference to educational research, some implications are discernible in this respect. A call is made to enhance qualitative investigations that are framed by constructivist, interpretive models within the educational research communities in Algeria. Emphatically, the recognition of the various realities of researchers and participants requires facilities to make them build their own knowledge and deal with their practice in a reflective way. Dependently, the use of research methods such as interviewing, classroom observation backed up with stimulated recall, as well as the open-ended items of the questionnaire, all help in the understanding of the relevance and adequacy of the qualitative method to explore such issues, and also help in understanding the complexity of the teaching-learning process in an Algerian university setting.

As concerns the need for research on teacher knowledge, the implication is that teacher knowledge was viewed, in our study, in a general sense to include various aspects of values, perceptions and beliefs. Besides, when these aspects were related by teachers, it was done in accordance to reasoning and practice. The fact is that the teaching act is characterized by an awareness of what could be faced in new teaching situations, and teachers need to take decisions about how to handle potential and problematic issues. Teachers tend to respond to situations in a different way from each other, which suggests that their actions are deliberate and produced through reasoning. The set of reasons provided is necessary in creating proof for the vitality of knowledge claimed by teachers. This tendency meets the view of some researchers like Fenstermacher (1994), who claims that the provision of solid reasons is a justification for the requirements for teacher epistemic necessity of knowledge. He reports saying:

*The provision of reasons, when done well, makes action sensible to the actor and the observer. That is a minimal form of warrant for practical action. Such reasoning may also show that an action is, for example, the reasonable thing to do, the obvious thing to do, or the only thing one could do under the circumstances. Each of these is, I believe, a contribution to the epistemic merit of a practical knowledge claim. Practical reasoning may also address the moral aspects of action, indicating that it was fair, right, or the best of a number of poor alternatives (45).*

Such an argument implies the significance of justifications of knowledge assertion called upon when exploring teacher knowledge. The same researcher maintains:

*If the potential of the notion of practical knowledge, knowledge-in-action, personal practical knowledge, or teacher knowledge is to be realized, all who would study it face an obligation to take seriously the fact that they are studying notions of knowledge and, as such, must work through matters of warrant and justification (49).*

It remains important, thus, to find underlying justifications for the knowledge claims called upon by teachers. Accordingly, any research attempt on teacher knowledge has to consider the participating teachers' views as well as the provided motives to justify these views. If researchers, therefore, wish to explore teacher knowledge, they would better consider this at the primary phases of their research, particularly when collecting data in this respect. Such a knowledge base, claimed by teachers, informs us about what teachers know, but above all else depicts a conscious knowledge of teachers about their own knowledge (meta-knowledge). As such, one can admit that the core or meta-knowledge of teachers represents the basis for teacher learning and continuing development.

## **6.6 Recommendations**

Foreign language teaching is by nature a complex process and EFL teachers were shown, throughout this study, to have faced a variety of challenges when trying to actualize their

knowledge in classroom practice. The contextual as well as other problems were viewed to be reflective of accumulated problems and challenges in our educational system. These problems and challenges were viewed, nonetheless, as signs of change and awareness of the teaching-learning process. Therefore, the teachers' views and actions to solve problematic issues reflect a cognitive and conscious response to the challenges encountered in the profession. For instance, excessive class size was shown to be a dominant challenge and could negatively affect most of the aspects of the teacher's job. Working with large classes is in discordance with the teaching expectations of the LMD system, which was found to hinder our participants in actualizing their knowledge in authentic classroom practice. This problematic issue is, of course, beyond the teachers' reach and calls for a policy to provide a healthy platform, based on the adequate means to achieve positive outcomes.

Another recommendation, in this study, concerns the role of authorities to supply the necessary stuff for EFL teachers to help them realize their knowledge in classroom settings. In EFL classrooms, strategic arrangement of learners enhances learner-learner interaction and reshapes the view vis-à-vis teachers as the only knowledge source in the classroom. However, the actual classroom conditions are not compatible with the teachers' expectations and also with the many claims made by the learner-centered approaches and theories. Accordingly, excessive class size remains a real problem to most EFL teachers which calls for an attempt to resolve it.

One practical solution has to do with checking the whole educational system in Algeria; from top to bottom. Emphatically, there must be a coordinated effort between the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Higher Education to find out practical solutions, with the Algerian authorities, to the yearly growing number of BAC holders. We say this for the fact that we always hear experts talking about the good qualities of the LMD system as well as its ideal conditions and objectives. If this is really ideal as such, then our educational

policy needs to be reconstructed because what happens in the EFL classrooms does not help all the parties in meeting the teaching and learning requirements.

Modern technology has also to be used profitably and efficiently in EFL classes; the aim of which is to create a motivating atmosphere that is likely to enhance learning and achievement.

A further recommendation relates to the improvement of the exam policy and the change of the loose belief that marks and tests are the ultimate goals of the teaching learning process. It follows that attitudes and mentalities need to be enlightened with regards to EFL teaching as well as the integration of its four skills. Thus, language has to be perceived as a unified system that requires an equal emphasis on all skills, and not stressing one or two skills at the expense of others.

Since the findings of our study are based on the experienced EFL teachers' views and accounts, in the Algerian context, other recommendations can be possibly drawn from their views. The truth is that EFL experienced teachers present a reliable source of guidance and knowledge; thus, their knowledge and practice significantly inform our understanding of the teaching profession and its requirements. In addition, the findings of our study reveal that there is a need to focus on communicative language teaching for the sake of developing the learners' fluency and interaction.

In oral production courses, vocabulary teaching needs to emphasize techniques that help learners construct a reliable mental lexicon.

Other recommendations for teachers are general and relate to classroom management under the LMD regime. In fact, the management of classrooms has to be preferably achieved on the basis of fixing rules for practice and in agreement between both parties; teachers and their students. Besides, it remains salient, for teachers, to be aware of the teaching mechanisms and strategies such as time management, giving one task at a time, using



technological media and embark on good lesson planning.

In a single classroom, however, teachers deal with learners who have different learning styles and abilities, and with various social backgrounds. Dependently, awareness is required when approaching these subjects for the sake of creating a healthy learning environment.

Learner reinforcement is another duty for teachers, in that they need to value the emotional side of their students by, for example, tolerating their learning errors. It is also important for teachers to be able to consider and evaluate the curriculum content as well as the implementation of the technological means in teaching. Besides, teachers need to value reflection on work and develop an awareness of the role of their personal qualities, required in developing their knowledge and practice.

Another conscious act, on the part of teachers, concerns their knowledge about the different strategies of self-improvement such as experience, training, background knowledge, skill development as well the reliance on evaluative feedback. The relationship, which is not linear, between knowledge and practice should also be clearly understood by teachers. However, teacher knowledge cannot all the time inform the classroom practice, and might be occasionally challenged in real practice and classroom decisions. Therefore, awareness is needed when approaching the many issues confronted in the actualization of teacher knowledge in practice.

### **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

Attempting to explore teacher knowledge requires an understanding of the teacher's role and thus the present study has to be understood in light of its context. This is due to the fact that both teacher knowledge and the various sources shaping it are dependent on the contextual factors that teachers undergo, when establishing a connection, between what they know and what they do, either successfully or with a bit of failure. Therefore, the role of teacher knowledge could better be understood in relation to the classroom practices.

Actually, experienced teachers are the ones able to provide explicit and thorough views about the teaching profession, and demonstrate how teaching can be modeled by their knowledge. They can also clarify the role of their knowledge in real practical contexts and state their views about the relation between what they know and what they do. Thus, these experienced teachers are really the ones who can help explore knowledge and practice. In addition, these teachers possess an awareness of the main issues and the terminology required in the field of research. Accordingly, all their provided accounts reflect a deep mastery of the knowledge sort needed in teaching and how it could be located in practice. It follows that exploring teacher knowledge, as well as its connection with classroom practice, demands a good understanding and use of the research methods which could allow accessibility to this knowledge along with the ways it is realized in practice. Besides, the good understanding of the hidden and implied facts about teacher knowledge could be possibly made through surveys, interviewing and classroom observations.

Concerning the findings of our study, they highlight the relationship between theory and classroom practice. Again, our study demonstrated the basic areas of teacher knowledge with a typical emphasis on the EFL context. Furthermore, the study findings represent a local, Algerian EFL context under the LMD regime and these findings are made accessible to the educational community to gain an understanding of the issues, which concerned the basic areas of knowledge necessary for the EFL teacher, the sources shaping this knowledge, the possible ways to realize teacher knowledge in classroom practice as well as the role of context in actualising teacher knowledge. Ultimately, we would like to close with some reflections about the general research experience.

It should be admitted that we opted for this area of research for its worthiness as well as our curiosity to gain an understanding about the knowledge of the teaching profession. After having collected and analyzed the data, we managed to feel the significance and richness of

the knowledge possessed by EFL teachers. This knowledge was evidently practical, palpable and reflective of the teachers' experiences and visions of the world. Furthermore, we were really motivated to explore the core areas of teacher knowledge and gain access to the deep knowledge of EFL teachers in the department of English, at Batna University. We were also interested in issues related to the nature of teaching, under the LMD system, along with the relevant scientific and interpretive methodologies that underlie educational research.

Actually, EFL teaching, under the LMD regime, provided us with an insight into the teaching tradition, requirements and improvements needed in the Algerian context. We should also add that this study gave us a chance to develop our qualitative research skills and gain knowledge about analytical and interpretive procedures. Like any other researcher, we felt a sense of improvement and development in skills and general knowledge. Concerning the development of our skills, it was at the level of setting priorities, handling time and task, acquiring tolerance, involvement into productive and intellectual debates, with experienced teachers, and learning how to solve problems in contextual situations. Data gathering tools, mainly the interview, were also profitable to us and helped us externalize thoughts and explore visions, and we also enhanced our writing and reading skills which are vital in conducting a research investigation.

What was felt, at the end of the work, was that the research journey is not over and remains open to further exploration. Such a work represents a starting experience into the wealthy realm of teacher knowledge, and make us think about and contribute to teacher knowledge in order to develop ourselves on a professional basis. Naturally, we cannot admit that our work is flawless and, like any other research attempt, it is meant to contribute to the general research agenda with the best we could. At the level of clarity, our work was gradually developing its picture, and bit by bit we became knowledgeable about its orientation. We felt a certain joy to see our work proceed on and develop till it became a

unified body. This is in spite of the many constraints and challenges encountered in the course of its fulfillment. The pleasurable time, thus, was to have our work set as a complete unity which reduced the amount of stress and anxiety felt throughout the tiresome exploratory journey.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Questionnaire on teacher knowledge

Dear colleague:

We've prepared this questionnaire to gain knowledge about your views regarding the many areas of your work. This is part of a research study we are conducting out to understand the constituting and various areas of the EFL teacher knowledge, what shapes it, how it is referred to in practice, and what factors are related to the embodiment of teacher knowledge in practice. Your contribution is highly appreciated.

#### Part 1: Personal information

Name (optional).....

Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

Qualification: .....

Teaching experience: 5 years ( ) 10 years ( ) more than 20 years ( )

The level you are teaching:

#### Part 2: (close-ended statements)

Would you please read the statements below and tick the column which best embodies your viewpoint.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
EFL teaching is based on knowledge of EFL culture.					
The EFL teacher should know about the English language origins.					

The teaching of speaking and listening skills is as vital as the teaching of reading and writing.					
The integration of the four skills helps EFL students learn better.					
Both mechanical and communicative strategies are needed in the EFL classroom.					
Fluency should be more emphasized, by EFL teachers, than accuracy					
EFL students should be encouraged to use English extensively.					
EFL vocabulary can be better taught through examples than meaning translation.					
Through actions, the meaning of EFL vocabulary could be best learnt.					

The inductive method to teaching EFL grammar assures students' learning.					
Learning EFL grammar can be simplified through metalanguage use.					
EFL grammar can also be simplified through comparison with the mother language grammar.					
A difference exists between the native language and the target language systems.					
A teacher's management of lessons becomes easy through planning.					
Handling time effectively would lead to completion of pre-planned activities.					
Emphasizing one task at a time helps achieve positive learning.					
Learning is well guided when the teacher states the					

objective of the task in advance.					
The non-repetition of instructions helps the students become attentive.					
Instructing is best facilitated in the native language.					
The learning act takes place at various paces.					
The use of audio-visual material consolidates learning.					
A productive learning environment could be provided, by the teacher, through appraisal.					
Socializing in the classroom creates a good relation between the teacher and his students.					
Relationships outside the classroom are important for					

the teacher and his students.					
A good teacher listens to his students and shares their problems.					
The creation of a learning environment, where students feel at ease, is a teacher's duty.					
Students need to develop a sense of being a community in the classroom.					
Students' errors are always tolerated in the classroom.					
A healthy learning environment could be created by the teacher when letting students ask questions.					
A more relaxing atmosphere is based on the teacher's acceptance of initiatives and opinions.					
To meet the students' needs is more significant than sticking to the syllabus					

content.					
Knowing about the What and the How, in a syllabus, is a reflection of the teacher's critical awareness.					
Knowing how to use technological means, such as ICT, is necessary for the teacher.					
Home assignments are meant to strengthen students' learning.					
The teaching material has to be based on students' background knowledge.					
Having a sense of humor is characteristic of a good teacher.					
Asking students, at the end of lessons, could help detecting the success or failure of these lessons.					
Initial teaching experience is a solid basis that informs professional teaching.					



<p>Initial teaching experience helps teachers draw connections between theory and classroom practice.</p>					
<p>Having students seated in rows hinders the organization of team-work.</p>					
<p>The large classroom size (more than 70 students per group) renders management difficult.</p>					

Part 3: (open-ended Items)

**1-**According to you, what could be essential as areas of knowledge for the EFL teacher? You can respond in the box below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the upper half of the page. It is intended for a student to write their response to the question below.

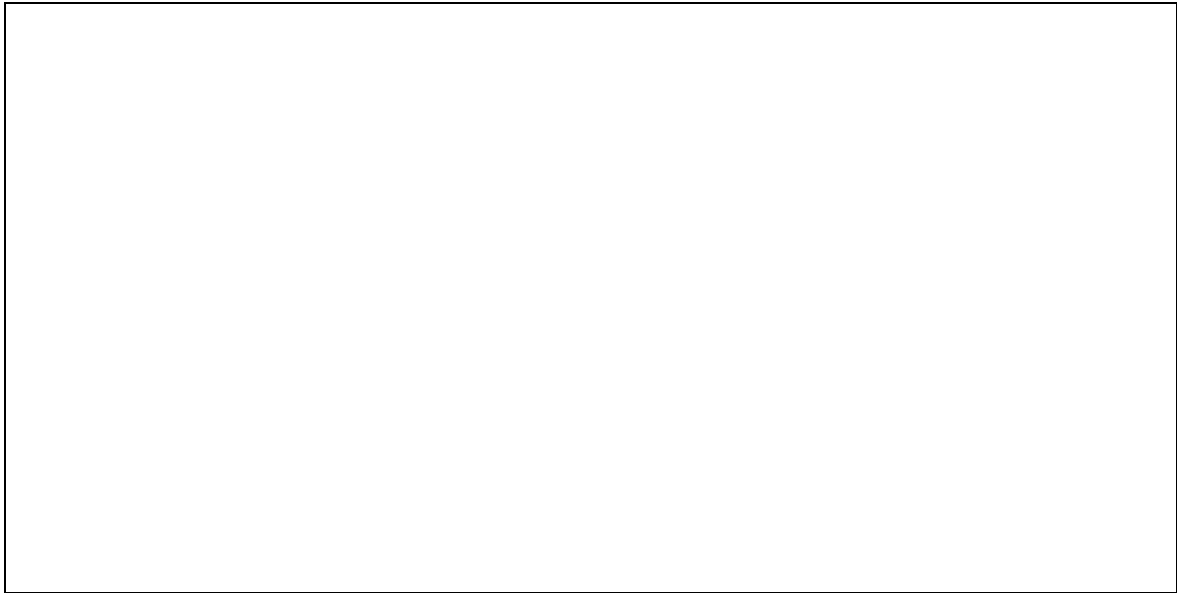
**2-What do you think are the sources that shape teacher knowledge?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the lower half of the page. It is intended for a student to write their response to the question above.

**3-**What sort of rapport do you make between teacher knowledge and practice?



**4-** What could you say about the view holding that educational pedagogy 3.0, in relation to Web 3.0, is more significant than other educational pedagogies?



Dear teacher,

We may be in need of your cooperation in another stage of this research, including a classroom observation and an interview. This is, of course, not a compulsion for you and you may at any stage stop your participation.

Be sure that all what you give as information will be exclusively used for the purposes of this study and will confidentially be treated. If you intend to participate in the interview, classroom observation or both, please provide us with your contact information below.

Name:.....

Mobile number:.....

E mail:.....

We appreciate your cooperation and thank you.

## Appendix 2: Plan of the Interview

At the beginning, we'd like to inform you that the aim of this investigation is to collect data related to different areas of your knowledge. Besides, we assure you that the recorded interview data will be used for research purposes only.

Intended Areas to be Explored	Exemplary Questions
Sources of Teacher Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What about your experience in studying EFL at the university?</li> <li>-What influence did your own education have on the way you teach? How?</li> <li>-Would you report any episode you think has had any effect on your work recently?</li> </ul>
Knowledge about the Subject Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-When you deal with a subject matter, what could be the sources of your knowledge?</li> <li>-Referring to areas of subject matter knowledge, what could be the most important ones for you? Why?</li> <li>-Does knowledge about subject matter affect your teaching? How?</li> </ul>
EFL Pedagogy Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What type of knowledge is vital for teaching EFL?</li> <li>-How do you perceive your knowledge about the teaching profession (EFL skills, vocabulary, and grammar)?</li> <li>-How important is this knowledge? And Why?</li> <li>-How often do you rely on this knowledge in your teaching?</li> <li>-Would you relate some examples for classroom teaching in which you highlight how you make use of your knowledge in teaching?</li> </ul>

<p>Pedagogical Knowledge</p>	<p>-Concerning classroom management, what approach do you adopt and why do you follow it?</p> <p>-In what ways does pedagogy relate to modern technology?</p> <p>-What could be the most important areas of knowledge about teaching in general? Why?</p>
<p>The Teaching-Learning Environment</p>	<p>-Via which means do you create a healthy learning atmosphere in your classroom?</p> <p>-Do you think creating a social relation between you and your students is a positive procedure? How?</p>
<p>Atmosphere or Context of Work/ Motives</p>	<p>-With relation to work environment/context, what kind of effect does it have on your profession?</p> <p>-How do you describe your socialization with the university community?</p> <p>-Do you face any problems or constraints in your job?</p> <p>-Do you think your knowledge about context influences your teaching? How?</p>
<p>Materialized Knowledge/ Knowledge in Practice</p>	<p>-Referring to the different knowledge domains in your classroom, how do you expose them?</p> <p>-How easy or difficult for you to materialize your knowledge of the various areas of your work?</p> <p>-As concerns classroom decisions, on which basis are they taken? Can you give actual teaching examples?</p>

*It's been a pleasure to meet you and thank you for your help.*

### Appendix 3: Pre-defined and Emerging Codes of Analysis

<b>Codes of analysis referring to areas of teacher knowledge</b>	
<b>Teacher Knowledge Areas</b>	<b>The Analytical Code</b>
<b>Knowing about the Subject Matter</b>	<b>S M</b>
English Proficiency	EFL- Pro
English Language Origin	EFL- Org
English Language Culture	EFL- Cult
<b>Knowing about content pedagogy</b>	<b>C P</b>
English language skills	EFL Skl
EFL Skills Integration	Int Skl
Language as Communication	L C
Fluency and Accuracy	Flu vs Acc
Using the Mother Tongue	L1
English as a Foreign Language Writing	EFL Wr
English as a Foreign Language Reading	EFL Rd
English as a Foreign Language Speaking and Listening	ELL S & L
English Language Vocabulary Teaching	EFL Voc
English Language Grammar Teaching	EFL Gra
<b>Knowing about General Pedagogy</b>	<b>G P</b>
Classroom Management	GP-C M
Lesson Planning	GP-L P
Time Handling	GP-T H
Single Tasking	GP-S T
Task Aim Statement	GP-T A S

Instructing	GP-Inst
<b>Knowing about Students</b>	<b>SS</b>
Students' Learning Styles	SS- L S
Learners' Background	SS- Bac
Learners' Motivation	SS- Mot
<b>Knowing about the Classroom Learning Atmosphere</b>	<b>KCLA</b>
Learners' Reinforcement	KCLA-R
Emotional Sustenance	KCLA-E
Sense of Communion	KCLA-S
Tolerance	KCLA-T
Acceptance	KCLA-A
<b>Knowing about the Curriculum</b>	<b>Curr</b>
The Teaching Material Coverage	Curr-TMC
Evaluation of the teaching Curriculum	Curr-TME
Using Modern Technology	Curr-MT
Giving Homework	Curr-GH
Setting Objectives for Teaching	Curr-SOT
<b>Knowing about the Self</b>	<b>Self</b>
Reflection	Self- Ref
Image of the Self	Self-Im
<b>Codes referring to Teacher Knowledge in Practice</b>	
<b>Knowledge about the Subject Matter in Practice</b>	<b>Sjt Mtt Knw</b>
Varieties of English	Eng Vrt



Comparison of EFL and L1 Cultures	EFL & L1 Cult
<b>Knowing about Content Pedagogy in Practice</b>	
Encouraging EFL Use	EFL Use
EFL Teaching Through Situations	EFL Sit
Vocabulary Techniques	Voc.Tech
Grammar in Context	Gra.Cxt
<b>Knowing about General Pedagogy in Practice</b>	
Classroom Management	CM
Stating the Aim of Tasks in Practice	SAT-P
Instructing in Practice	Inst-P
<b>Knowing about Students in Practice</b>	
Students with Different Learning Rates	Mis-SS
Innovative Teaching	Inn-EFL
Using Didactic Aids and Supports	Usg Didac Supp
Tolerance of Self Error Correction	Slf Err Tnce
Use of Cooperative Learning Strategies	Co Lrng
Appraising Learners' Amount of Speech	Appr Lrns Tlk
<b>Knowing about the Classroom Atmosphere in Practice</b>	
Appraisal and Reinforcement in Practice	Appr & Reinf-P
Emotional Sustenance in Practice	Emt S-P
Sense of Communion in Practice	S of Com-P
Acceptance and Tolerance in Practice	Acc & Tol-P
<b>Knowing about the Curriculum in Practice</b>	
Use of Additional Material	Curr-Add

Improving the Curriculum Material	Curr-Impr
Using learners' Background Knowledge.	Curr-Prior
Practicing Exam Issues	Curr-Exam
<b>Knowledge about the Self in Practice</b>	
Reflecting on Lessons	Less. Ref
Using Humorous Activities	H. Act
Teaching and Learning Passion	EFL-Pass
<b>Codes of Analysis referring to Contextual Factors</b>	
Examination Policy	
Listening and Speaking Devaluation	Exam-Dev
Learners' Views to EFL Learning	Exam-View
Learners' Disinterest in Communication	Exam-Disinterest
<b>Time Limitation, Resources and Support</b>	
Difficulty of developing Proficiency	Diff- Pro
Difficulty of Classroom Management	Diff- C M
Difficulty to Meet Different Learning Styles	Diff- L S
Difficulty to Utilize Modern Technology	Diff- M T
Difficulty to Meet Curriculum Requirements	Diff- C M
Difficulty to Attain a Variety of Teaching Objectives	Diff- Obj
<b>Disharmony of Learning Needs and Expectations</b>	
Difficulty to Teach Language as Communication	Dish- D in Lge Comm
Difficulty in Teaching Grammar Inductively	Dish- Gram

Difficulty in Meta-language Use	Dish- Meta
<b>Excessive Class Size</b>	
Inability to Control the Classroom	Size- C C
Difficulty to Socialize with the Learners	Size-Social
Difficulty to Cover the Full Program	Size- C M
Inability to Meet the Teaching Requirements	Size- Meet

#### **Appendix 4: Interviewing Script Sample**

R: First, I'd like to thank you for having warmly agreed to be part of our research study.

I start by trying to explore your teacher education. What can you say about yourself and your teaching and learning experience in the department of English?

T: Well, my name is X Y. I'm a teacher of English at the department of English, working here for more than twenty years. I chose to be a teacher because I like this profession as well the teaching of various subject matters.

R: What about the content of the teaching syllabus?

T: Well, if you mean the teaching program, then I can tell you that it helped me a lot in acquiring a good knowledge about its components and how to filter through the material accordingly.

R: What about the number of students per class?

T: Classrooms are overcrowded and teachers find it difficult to fulfill their duty.

R: So, how do you manage?

T: You know, I simply don't interrupt the lesson because we have a long curriculum to cover, and we are limited in time. Besides, I have recently devised a strategy based on students' freedom to write their views and suggestions about their problems, complaints and other concerns related to the program. Every week-end I consider these points and try to respond to them.

R: This sounds an interesting. I like that because it seems a good solution for understanding the nature of problems in the classroom. Besides, it might be an adequate solution to deal with excessive class size.

T: It is actually something like voting for what to do and what not to do.

R: This is very interesting, and could embody the dos and the don'ts in what resembles a constitution.

T: Yeah, I always prefer discussing the rules with my students, as many of these rules are put by them.

R: Do you think making them involved creates a sense of responsibility for their acts?

T: It serves as a reminder to them, in that you yourselves make these rules, so it'd be better to follow them. I think this is very interesting.

R: Now, let's move to subject matter knowledge. What can you say about it?

T: Well, this is an inclusive term and is likely to have two elements. The first one relates to proficiency as a teacher; to be proficient in speaking, as well as the ability to use different skills of English. The second element relates to the subject matter of the curriculum content and what is needed from the teacher to realize it. Besides, proficiency in English enables the teacher to know better about the profession; both inside and outside the classroom.

R: Tell me please about knowledge of EFL culture. What is it to you?

T: Well, culture informs EFL teaching by creating a context of imitation and analogy with native institutions and drawing assimilations with native cultures. In addition, the knowledge process and EFL culture teaching are closely related to the social conditions which differ from one context to another.

R: Now, how do you consider the teaching of EFL skills?

T: I think modern communication means have brought great opportunities for generations of learners to rehearse with all skills. Besides, all language skills are equally important and should not be taught in isolation; the aim of which is to create a balance between written and oral aspects of communication.

R: Very good. What about the teaching of EFL skills in relation to modern pedagogies?

T: Nowadays, there's a great shift in pedagogies and educational methods. This is due basically to the impact of modern technology on humanities, in general. Take, for example, the shift from pedagogy 1.0 to 3.0 which implies that pedagogy 3.0 facilitates collaborative,

open-ended involvement between students, with the teacher adopting the roles of facilitator and mentor. Open-ended activities may run alongside other, more teacher-directed, activities in a versatile pedagogy that is an extension of blended learning pedagogic models. Learning in such scenarios is constructivist and has similarities with project-based, inquiry and problem-based approaches, although extended to exploit the collaborative features emerging in Web 3.0 tools.

R: Very significant as an idea. Now, can an EFL teacher rely on translation from Arabic?

T: You know, translation can be used in EFL classes to meet the needs of unmotivated and slow pace learners. Giving, for instance, the equivalent meaning in Arabic would elicit meaning of English words, and ideas could be made clear.

R: With regards to knowledge as a teacher, what source of knowledge do you support?

T: You mean the source of knowledge?

R: Yes.

T: Well, the truth is that we faced many challenges at the start. As a practicing teacher and a student at the same time, you won't find it easy to invest in knowledge. Expert teachers do not give help or advice, and are also careless about supervision. So, one can say that, as a novice teacher, you are on your own in your teaching practice. Furthermore, embarking on EFL teaching, in the department of English, gives you much practice, and you can consider it a useful source of knowledge, but not your initial training in schools, which has no effective contribution to your professional, practical knowledge.

R: The teaching of EFL grammar is always a critical and controversial issue. How do you teach grammar yourself?

T: Grammar is the backbone of language. However, its teaching should not be made mechanical, but rules and patterns have to be taught in use, so that grammar makes sense to EFL skills learning.

Besides, As EFL teachers, one should avoid translation in grammar and replace it by more inductive procedures which provide students with practice and involvement.

R: It is usually believed that a good teacher knows what he does? What do you think?

T: The point has to do with lesson planning. An EFL teacher should think carefully about what he has to give to his students. Mastering the content of your lesson would place in a good position of maintaining an effective instructional flow in an EFL setting. Strictly speaking, An EFL teacher should be aware of his lesson planning; he may decide upon things to keep, things to modify, and possible things to omit. He might work with more than one plan in mind; this could be done for the sake of creating an interesting learning environment.

R: Now, let's talk about time allocated to teaching as well as the nature of tasks you give to your students.

T: Well, concerning time, you know... it presents a challenge vis a vis the lengthy teaching program.

However, thinking about time, in a distributive and measured way, enables the teacher to generate a set of activities successfully. As for tasks and activities, I can admit that when a teacher emphasizes only one aspect in, for example, student' written productions, he will find that they become concerned more and more with other types of mistakes. In other words, if a draws his learners' attention to on grammatical mistake, students become themselves cautious about other parts of speech, and so on...

R: So, single tasking is an efficient strategy to save time and reinforce learning?

T: Yeah, single tasking is dependent on learners' proficiency and the whole strategy is dependent on the teaching level. For example, with an advanced level class, the teacher can plan a variety of activities to be dealt with at a single time, including the integration of many skills that would result into sophisticated ability of learning.

R: Good thinking.

T: I'd like also to add that stating the aim of a task in advance is very helpful to students; in that informing students about the objective of a task is likely to create interest and guidance.

Besides, when students know about they do in class, they start preparing themselves at all levels, for better classroom involvement. The strategy is like an initiation activity that fosters the working effort with both fluency and accuracy. However, the case would be different, if the teacher does not announce the aim of his teaching task, or lesson.

R: What about doing scientific research? Is it a reliable source of teacher knowledge?

T: Absolutely. Teacher knowledge feeds from highly sophisticated processes of thinking, problem solving and other metacognitive faculties. For instance, each time I do a research work, I discover that its findings contribute a lot to my knowledge base. For instance, I recently did a research on types of teachers and classroom instruction through comparisons, and I came to the conclusion that the teacher, who imposes himself in the classroom, is likely to gain his students' respect and trust.

R: Good point. Within the same scope, what can you say about the learners' feedback in the classroom?

T: This is actually another crucial point. For me, a good teacher always takes his learners' comments and remarks with appreciation. Learners might, for example, remind their teacher of some habits, such as loud pitch voice, his quick pace of explanation, or even using complex utterances, which might be challenging for low level students. Besides, a teacher needs to know about his students' learning styles and rates. Generally speaking, three types of learners are met in the classroom; learners who prefer visual materials, others who favor listening, and the ones who like aspects of non-verbal communication. A smart EFL teacher needs to diversify his teaching strategies in a way that meets his students' learning styles, preferences and expectations.

R: This is very significant. Thanks. Don't you think that the teacher's experience remains



crucial here?

T: Sure, an experienced teacher is likely to know better about his learners. He can easily manage his classroom output, improvise, distinguish and meets his learners' needs.

R: Among the various techniques used in teaching, one can consider tolerance, acceptance and may be appraisal. What do you think?

T: Indeed, a little praise goes with everything. Learners, as human beings, need to be appraised, encouraged and reinforced. When a teacher rewards his students' efforts, even via simple words, students are likely to make more effort and appreciate the classroom action, which leads in turn to positive learning outcomes. I also wish to add that listening to your students' problems is likely to reinforce learning. Thus, knowing about the origin of a problem clarifies its proper resolution.

Students' social and familial problems could have a negative impact on their learning. However, a smart teacher does his best to avoid reminding students of their problems, and tries instead to give them hope and consolation.

R: I can say perhaps that listening to learners' problems is part of classroom cooperation. Isn't it?

T: Yes, it is. A teacher can invest in his students' awareness of a classroom as being a family, a community, and all individuals have their own role to play. They need to develop a sense of working in harmony with each other to achieve integration at all levels. Besides, accepting students' views provides them with a sense of encouragement and support to do more, and by giving students freedom, a chance to speak and reveal what they have in mind helps a lot.

What students say, believe and criticize is always beneficial for the teacher because the promotion of the teaching-learning process relies on mutual cooperation between all parties.

R: Now, regarding the teaching syllabus, do you always intend to fully cover it?

T: This issue needs to be carefully dealt with. The teacher is in position of filtering through

what is taught and drawing meaningful connections between the components of the teaching content. If a learner needs, for example, to know about the relation between grammatical patterns and intonation patterns, and the teacher skips this, then, students will not be able to draw parallels between the two and the thing remains clumsy.

R: This sounds challenging and adds to a difficulty to the teacher's job.

T: Yeah, you know, a teacher has to update his knowledge about changing methods, pedagogies and educational perspectives. It's all about pedagogy in the sense that a teacher can better deliver his material, transmit his message and make an impression on students, if he adequately makes use of sophisticated technological means within the framework of pedagogy 3.0.

R: So, this shift in educational pedagogies seems to be more learner-oriented?

T: That's right. You know, one can admit that the best way to learn something is to do it by yourself. The LMD regime, as you know, expects students to be self-reliant; a good deal of the learning duty lies on students' shoulders, and they have to work all the way long on an autonomous basis.

R: That's good. But, where could be the teacher's position in all that?

T: You know, teachers need to make knowledge accessible to their students. It has always been a necessity for teachers to cover most, if not all the parts of the teaching syllabus. Besides, the more the teaching material is covered, the more consistent is students' knowledge.

R: Talking about the nature of the LMD system. Do you relate your teaching content with real or practical life?

T: That's what should be done. Our students need to be prepared for practical life and take part in making decisions. Yet, EFL teachers face many challenges from a variety of perspectives. They are considered as traders and rather producers of knowledge. This

knowledge has to be effective in that it serves students to pave their ways through life and reality. Emphatically, it's not a question of getting degrees, but how these degrees justify themselves in students' real lives.

R: The generally held belief is that teacher knowledge is strongly based on teaching experience. Is that true?

T: No doubt. Experience is the source of all knowledge acquired either in the profession or in general life. Furthermore, a teacher's long experience in the field makes him aware of the advantages and deficits at the level of his teaching objectives. Experience can also put teachers in a position to negotiate, modify and improve the whole teaching policy.

R: Do you believe teachers need certain humor in the classrooms?

T: Sure. A teacher who acts with a good sense of humor is likely to change his students' vision, and becomes lovely and being tolerated. Besides, a humorous rapport between the two parties eradicates fear, and paves the way for learners to achieve better results. Above all else, being humorous and Flexible is part of the teacher's job because in the teaching profession, the teacher's personality is meant to be flexible and open to change and improvement. This can always be achieved through experiments and wishes to make a difference. This latter is better detected by making comparisons between old states of being and new ones.

R: This is interesting. Now, what about your learning history? Is it contributive to your professional knowledge?

T: Of course, everybody maintains good and bad images from his past and the set of images held are likely to affect his present teaching condition. You know, I, for instance, through the passing of time, couldn't forget the image of being taught by strict teachers, who did not care about our treatment, age, and learning aspirations. Growing up with such images in mind is likely to affect your job, unless you decide to overcome such history and manage to be a different teacher, who is not stiff and ugly.

R: Yeah, you're right.

T: By the way, I can also admit that field experience creates reflection on the teaching duty and contributes to teachers' growth and development. The truth is that every teacher learns from his long time experience, and tries to make changes and achieve better results. One failure is to teach you success and perseverance, so that you find new ways to solve your problems, and become efficient inside and outside the classroom settings.

R: Honestly speaking, do you get any benefit from your learners' knowledge of feedback?

T: Corrective feedback is particularly useful. You know...students' feedback informs our teaching decisions in many ways. Asking, for example, students by the end of sessions about comprehension can be made positive through their feedback, no matter how positive or negative is. The learners' responsive evaluation can lead the teacher to model, shape and improve his teaching strategies in accordance with the learning requirements. Not only this. Feedback from the administrative context is also significant, especially when the relationship between the administration and teachers is judged to be good and harmonious. We, as teachers, usually receive orders, advices and directives from the administrative staff, including the head of the department and other assistants. We often accept what they tell us, but cautiously, in that teachers are more concerned about their students; they know what to do and to do it at the right time apart from all administrative requirements.

R: Yeah, what you say really makes sense. Now, what about getting feedback from other teachers and colleagues?

T: This is again a crucial point. Actually, teachers always need each other. In a university milieu we enlarge our leaning potential, expand our research horizons and develop our sense of professionalism. Sitting with each other and talk, debate and exchange ideas is a contributive source of knowledge to our profession.

R: Do you think knowing about EFL culture is part of teacher knowledge?

T: It is an integral part. Strictly speaking, the teacher's cultural practice enriches his knowledge as well as the knowledge of his students. Reflection on practice enables us to reveal cultural traits of different societies. In western culture, an example of a secular ritual is a birthday party. The candles on a cake are symbolic, each representing a year. The blowing out of the candles is symbolic of the successful passage of time and, if completed successfully, supposedly foretells the granting of a birthday wish. The giving of presents, singing of the birthday song, wearing of ritualistic costume (in the form of party hats) are all ritual elements.

R: That's brilliant. Thanks. In a professional and work milieu, socialization seems to be vital. What do you think about that?

T: Socialization with students is, of course, very important in creating a passion for learning and an increasing interest in various subject matters. As far as I'm concerned, I always ask my students to get in touch with me. I explain to them that we are all members of the university community, thus, we need to talk to each other; we share our problems, we help each other and we all have to act responsibly to overcome problematic issues. Well, I'd like also to consider another point which is related to the teacher's attempt to make his students develop a sense of freedom, security and classroom as a unified community. Besides, in a classroom setting, the teacher has to treat his students on an equal basis. Besides, if a weak student fails in understanding one thing, he may succeed in understanding another. It's not a matter of being good or bad, but how to cooperate and participate in a unified context. After all, learners should not feel a difference between them and need to be convinced that they have each an important role to play in the classroom.

R: Very good thinking. I like that. Now, if we talk about the teaching syllabus under the LMD system, what can you say?

T: You know, there's always a duty to create equilibrium between the syllabus requirements

and time limitation. However, the regime of the LMD system doesn't draw boundaries to the teacher, instead it encourages research, modifications and ramifications. The teacher is well placed to assess the nature of the teaching materials and can even omit unnecessary data.

R: Yeah, you want to add something?

T: As teachers, we always take the learners' needs into consideration and this fact is informed by our teaching experience in the field. The designed syllabus is actually open to improvement and ramification and it needs originally to be designed in a way that lets learners easily digest its content. If the teacher reckons that a warm up activity is needed, he can freely and confidently do that. If he thinks that t more back up activities are needed, he can suggest reading materials, form groups or even assign oral presentations to be prepared at home.

R: That's reasonable enough, thanks. When you plan your exams, do you adopt any policy?

T: Well, this is another important point. Here we can relate the teaching and learning of the language skills to the nature of the exam questions. What we practically teach seems to be bound by the exam policy; in that what we notice is that all exam subjects are strongly based on writing and reading, and only a slight value is reserved to speaking and listening. In addition, the recent approaches to language teaching, as you know, are all learner-centered by which there's a shift in students' learning tendency. The majority of EFL students are not really inclined towards listening or pronunciation. Their belief is that all exams are dependent on writing, so that the effort has to be directed to the written word to assure an acceptable mark.

R: Well, don't you think that teaching the language skills is as challenging as attempting to cover the syllabus itself?

T: Sure, the truth is that within the LMD system, much importance is given to productive skills, including writing and creativity. However, the teacher always feels at odds with the

allotted time as well as resources. The teacher needs to provide his students with a lot of practice to master the rudiments of the skill, knowing that other aspects of writing, such as grammar, vocabulary and instruction, all follow naturally. So, all the stuff can't be covered within an hour and a half session.

R: Is it true that EFL students lack the linguistic proficiency? I'm asking this because we hear people talking about students who ask their teachers to explain different issues in Arabic.

T: Yes, this is partly true. To my amazement, I frequently hear students, at different university levels, asking teachers to explain things in Arabic. Their greatest linguistic handicap becomes clear enough in literary and communication issues. It follows that teaching EFL skills requires the teaching of communicative abilities through communicative materials.

R: Don't you think that EFL learners still have a great role to play in the context of communicative language teaching?

T: Yeah, this is the common expectation. You know,... normally, working with second or third year students is encouraging to the teacher, especially in an oral expression course, where students are supposed to be efficient in using language for interaction and other communicative purposes. But, alas, they seem not at the level of such learning expectations.

R: Frankly speaking, how do you meet your students' needs in overcrowded classes, within limited sessions?

T: As an EFL teacher, I'm always aware of students' needs and expectations. Many students want to ask questions at the end of sessions, alas, no time is allocated to give them such a chance at an individual level. I opt for another strategy by the end of each session, which is asking students to write an anonymous assessment report to be taken seriously into consideration. As such, things are considered positively in favor of students' learning.

R: I thank you for the chance you gave to me to make this interview possible and which is very necessary and vital to my work.

T: It has been my pleasure to give a hand and, please feel free to get in touch whenever you wish.

## Appendix 5: Recalled Observation Sample

(Teacher recalled input is presented in italics)

### Episode 1: Knowing about pedagogy in practice

T. T. What do you think of using modern technology in the EFL classroom?

S1. Great idea.

T. How?

S1. Technological means motivate us.

T. Any other idea?

S2. Yes, using didactic means breaks the classroom routine.

T. What else?

S2. We can learn about the native accent as well as features of connected speech through audio-visual materials. It's good for us to use in research studies.

T. Thank you all. It was well justified.

R. During the session, you seemed to relate your knowledge of pedagogy to technology and internet. What for?

*T. You know, in the context of modern pedagogies, namely; pedagogy 3.0, the teaching of EFL requires the teaching of its skills as well.*

R. That's brilliant. Do you think this strategy motivates your students?

*T. You know, FL teaching is a complex process and the productive and receptive skills need to be taught in isolation. Students should be trained to speak to get good grades in the exams and also communicate with English in various settings.*

R. I see. So, using the internet and other didactic supports fosters mastery of oral skills.

*T. Sure. Besides, speech training makes the student knowledgeable and confident about his abilities in communicative situations.*



## Episode 2: Building on students' background knowledge

T. What do you think the lesson is about? It is about...?

SS. pronunciation.

T. Good. Something else? Can you add anything in this context?

S1. Aspects of pronunciation.

T. Aspects of pronunciation. Great. That's true.

S2. Elements.

T. Elements, or aspects. Good. Such as what?

S3. Intonation.

T. Intonation. Excellent. What about other elements? Yes?

S4. Stress and rhythm.

T. Very good. That's the point. Is there anything related to sounds? Well?

SS. Yes, Phonology.

T. Good Job and thank you.

R. In class, you planned issues based on your learners' prior knowledge. Is that right?

T. *Indeed. Building on students' prior knowledge is useful to the EFL teacher in a variety of ways: the teacher can rely on what his learners already know and gradually build upon that knowledge till he makes his learners grasp new knowledge, in relation to a given subject. In fact, students' prior knowledge is a stimulus to more learning and more involvement in course delivery.*

R. So, learners' background knowledge is significant and contributive to the teacher's knowledge.

T. *Yeah, by making use of learners' knowledge, they are given a chance to connect old sets of*

*knowledge with new ones, and this is likely to ease recall, activates prediction of content and creates interest*

R. I see.

T. *In addition, students' prior knowledge generates input that might be more relevant than the syllabus-designed material.*

R. It's a rich and solid foundation of learning input. Great!

### **Episode 3: Preparing learners for practical life contexts**

T. What happened to Susan Henchard?

SS. She died.

T. Well, when she died she was buried, and the four pennies were buried in the garden after the laying out. According to you, why do we bury people with pennies put on their eyelids?

Can you tell? It might be a sign of duty, maybe, respectability...Ok.

R. You presented an extract from a literary text. Why was that?

T. *Actually, there are quite a number of things to practice in a post-reading stage. Students need to materialize their acquired knowledge, speak freely and produce written material that fits the original text.*

R. I see. But, how do you make a literary passage teach something about practical life situations?

T. *You know, referring to this literary extract, our intent is to make readers informed about Christianity and some established facts and rituals.*

R. Yeah, that's interesting!

T. *Not only this. Students get an idea about the shift and transformation which took place in 19<sup>th</sup> century England, especially the materialistic spirit resulting from the Industrial*

*Revolution. Students seemed to appreciate a lot what they learnt as knowledge*

R. So, the whole idea is clearly about realistic visions of literary practices.

#### **Episode 4: Vocabulary teaching strategies**

T. Correct! Yes, No?

SS. No, Sir.

T. Is it?

S1. Yes.

T. You repeat once again.

S1. Capricious, circumspect, personable, punctilious.

T&SS. word one, two and four pronounced incorrectly.

S1. Capricious, circumspect, punctilious, [pronounced incorrectly].

T. & S. Capricious, circumspect, punctilious, [in correct pronunciation].

T. A further mistake and it's over.

S1. Capricious, circumspect, punctilious [pronounced incorrectly].

T. Please, sit down. Someone else?

R. I noticed that you let your student pronounce the new vocabulary item just twice.

Why was that?

T. *A student is given two chances at most to remedy his mistakes and get back on the track.*

*Through this kind of practice the learning pace could be made faster and students become more alert to the task requirements.*

R. I see. You also asked the student to sit down after the second attempt. What for?

T. *By asking a student to sit down, after making twice a mistake, he will become*

*vigilant and more interested, this is on the one side. On the other side, we tend to save more time to give other students a chance to participate in the coverage of the task elements.*

R. Well, that's really a good strategy to teach vocabulary items and make them memorable.

### **Episode 5: Student's self error correction**

T. You are supposed to read the excerpt again and try to figure out the three main themes.

What could these themes?

SS. Stability, present and past.

T. This is good. An alternative possibility could be?

S1. Denial and contradiction and order and disorder.

T. What is the conjunction?

S1. And.

T. What about it? Think.

S1. It has to be replaced.

T. Or?

S1. Skip it.

T. How?

S1. I can say Denial, contradiction, and the quest for order versus disorder.

T. Excellent! That's the thematic formulae.

R. It is clear that you made an emphasis on student self-correction. What was the point?

T. *I really admire the benefits of this strategy simply because it informs one's knowledge.* R.

Would you please clarify this point?

T. *Well, Students could be helped to learn actively by reflecting on the teacher's answer, they are encouraged to become autonomous, they might overcome feelings of disappointment and weakness and, thus, participate effectively.*

R. That's interesting.

*T. Besides, when a student is given a chance to identify the error by himself, he's likely to improve his ability in finding the correct answer, which leads to the supreme teaching objective of self-learning. Hence, the principle of self-learning leads to continuous learning and creates room for learner centered analysis.*

### **Episode 6: Having a sense of humour**

T. "How about if I sleep a little bit longer and forget all this nonsense"? To which part or Chapter does it belong? [The teacher asked his students with a smile].

S1. Chapter One. The introductory paragraphs.

T. Good. The 'I' refers to whom? Is it to 'Kafka', 'me', 'Samsa' or somebody else?

S2. Kafka.

T. It refers to me... [The whole class laughs at this].

S3. It refers to Gregor Samsa.

T. Excellent. We shall applaud her... [With students clapping their hands].

R. I noticed that you worked on a literary extract from a famous literary book. What was your objective?

*T. The intention was to motivate students and create a sense of humor.*

R. How is that?

*T. You know, Teaching at the university is a different context which depends on good relationships between teachers and students. Again, dealing with adult learners is a sensitive issue, in that teachers need to create rapport with learners and devote spans of time to distraction, fun and amusement.*

R. So, it's about creating a good rapport and a sense of humor.

T. *Yeah. Besides, as humans we need to refuel our energy to keep moving on*

R. Yeah, you're right.

### **Episode 7: Knowing about curricular areas and materials**

T. For the time being, we carry on reading. O.k.

How do you read the title of the short story?

S1. Eveline.

T. Does it bring something to your mind? Who wrote the work? And from which collection was it taken? Yes.

SS. It's about a trapped girl and the story was written by J. Joyce, and belongs to the collection Dubliners.

T. Excellent. This is one of the well-known works written by James Joyce. You know, the strategy is to read the story divided into three parts, by three groups. Before you read, you'll be given handouts containing questions, related to the three parts, to be answered. Second group, what are you supposed to do?

SS. Read part 2.

T. What for?

S1. To respond to the set of questions.

T. Right. Take about fifteen minutes to skim through the text and respond to the questions (The teacher kept moving between the ranks, watching groups' involvement).

SS. (Embarked on reading)

T. you finished? Time is up.

SS. Yeah.

T. Well, each group is meant to follow what other groups say to reconstruct the events of the story.

R. In this episode you seemed to adopt a particular reading strategy? What was it exactly?

T. *Students were divided into groups according to their level. The text was also split up into parts and it comes to questions, good students were expected to answer difficult questions, and weak students would only respond to easy ones.*

R. Would you clarify this strategy?

T. *Well, my intent was to simplify the reading task for students by making them understand the events of the story and probably save time.*

R. I see. This means that you took a decision based on your knowledge of the teaching material, time limitation and the level of your students.

T. *Exactly. Besides, this reading procedure allows for learning from each other as well as the grasp of the reading material.*

R. So, this sounds like a coordinated effort to accomplish the task.

*Thank you very much for your cooperation*

## **Appendix 6: Key Participants' Profiles**

### **Interviewee 1 (Also a classroom observation participant)**

Interviewee 1 was a successful teacher in the department of English at Batna University. She used to teach courses of civilization and literature, creative writing and psychology. She had the chance to attend training programmes overseas and had 15 years of teaching experience. She holds a Magister degree and is currently a doctoral researcher and working in the same department.

### **Interviewee 2 (Also a classroom observation participant)**

Interviewee 2 was a devoted and inspiring teacher. She spent more than 10 years working in middle schools before being recruited in the department of English at Batna University ten years ago. She teaches oral expression, grammar and writing and has always proved to be efficient in her mission. She holds a Magister degree and is currently finishing her doctoral thesis to be defended soon.

### **Interviewee 3 (Also a classroom observation participant)**

Interviewee 3 holds a Doctorate degree and had been working in the department of English, at Batna University, for twenty years. He is known by his commitment and hard work that ranges between, teaching, tutoring, guidance and supervision of Master as well Doctoral researchers. He's long been teaching British civilization and culture, oral expression, linguistics and research methodology. His immense experience, sustained by training in the USA and the UK, was and still be of great utility to the teaching and learning community. He was currently striving to become an EFL professor.



#### **Interviewee 4**

Interviewee 4 is a senior lecturer in the department of English at Batna University. He spent five years working in the department of Translation and fifteen years in the department of English at Batna University. He was a very active participant in the scientific and educational manifestations which take place in different universities. He also visited some European countries which helped him a lot in consolidating his knowledge to carry on his doctoral research. He was currently teaching various subject matters such as speaking and listening, translation, writing and grammar.

## Résumé

La présente étude porte sur les connaissances des enseignants expérimentés de l'Anglais, langue étrangère (ALE), leurs sources possibles et leur relation avec le contexte pédagogique. Elle devient ainsi une réponse à l'appel à la reconceptualisation des bases de l'enseignement pour mettre l'accent sur l'enseignement comme un acte de connaissances basé sur la raison, la conscience et le bon sens, en mettant en exergue le cadre pédagogique et le contexte dans lequel l'enseignement est effectué. L'étude utilise différents outils de collecte de données, principalement le questionnaire, l'interview et l'observation en classe. Nous avons pu, en fonction de l'analyse quantitative et qualitative des données, construire six domaines rudimentaires de connaissances des enseignants qui ont également été confirmées à travers les explications et les réponses des enseignants. Les domaines sont : le sujet, la pédagogie, les étudiants, l'environnement d'apprentissage en classe, le programme d'études et le soi. De nombreuses sources ont également été trouvées pour décrire les connaissances professionnelles des enseignants lorsqu'elles sont mises en pratique. Ces sources comprenaient l'expérience, la formation et l'éducation des enseignants, les études passées à l'université, les réactions des enseignants et des apprenants, les conseils d'experts, les connaissances des apprenants et la recherche avancée. La relation entre les connaissances et la pratique des enseignants a été démontrée de deux façons. La première voie concerne le fait que les connaissances des enseignants représentent un modèle de travail qui détermine la pratique. La seconde représente le fait que les décisions en classe étaient liées aux connaissances des enseignants. De nombreux facteurs entravaient la réalisation des connaissances des enseignants dans la pratique telles que la limitation du temps, la politique d'examen d'ALE, le manque de ressources, l'écart entre les objectifs des enseignants et les besoins et aspirations des apprenants et aussi la surcharge des classe. Enfin, les résultats nous ont donné l'occasion de tirer parti des implications importantes, des recommandations de recherche et des suggestions pour mener d'autres recherches concernant l'ALE.

## ملخص

تعالج هذه الدراسة معارف أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية الذين لديهم خبرة وعلاقة تلك المعارف مهما كانت مصادرها المحتملة بالسياق البيداغوجي. وبالتالي تصبح استجابة للدعوة الموجهة لإعادة صياغة الأساسيات التعليمية للتأكيد على التدريس كفعل معرفي يقوم على العقل والوعي والحس السليم، وإبراز أيضا الإطار التربوي والسياق الذي يتحقق من خلاله التعليم. استعملت الدراسة عدة أدوات لجمع البيانات: الاستبيان والمقابلة والملاحظة في القسم. وقد استطعنا، على أساس التحليل الكمي والنوعي للبيانات، بناء ستة مجالات بسيطة لمعارف الأساتذة، والتي تم تعزيزها أيضا من خلال إجابات الأساتذة وردود أفعالهم. وكانت المجالات: الموضوع والبيداغوجيا، الطلاب، البيئة التعليمية للقسم، المناهج الدراسية والذات. وقد تم الكشف أيضا عن مجموعة من المصادر لوصف المعارف المهنية للأساتذة عند وضعها حيز التطبيق. وشملت هذه المصادر التكوين والمستوى التعليمي للأساتذة والدراسات السابقة في الجامعة وردود أفعال الأساتذة والمتعلمين ونصائح الخبراء ومعارف المتعلمين والبحوث المتقدمة. وقد تم توضيح العلاقة بين معارف الأساتذة والممارسة بطريقتين. الطريقة الأولى تتعلق بحقيقة أن معارف الأساتذة تجسد نموذج عمل الذي يحدد الممارسة. وتمثل الطريقة الثانية فكرة أن قرارات القسم يمكن أن تكون على أساس معارف الأساتذة. لقد تم الوقوف على العديد من العوامل الصعبة التي تعرقل تحقيق معارف الأساتذة في الممارسة مثل محدودية الوقت وسياسة امتحانات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، ونقص الموارد والفجوة بين أهداف الأساتذة واحتياجات المتعلمين وتطلعاتهم واكتظاظ الأقسام. وفي الأخير، أتاحت لنا النتائج الفرصة للاستفادة من بعض المضامين الهامة والتوصيات والاقتراحات لأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لإجراء المزيد من البحوث.