

through the textbook. Relying on the overall findings, some recommendations were provided. **Keywords:** Educational reform; CBA; Learners autonomy; EFL Textbooks

I. Introduction

Change is an integral part of human development with many domains. Undoubtedly, education has always been at its core. In this respect, Torres (1996) states that developing and developed countries alike acknowledge the necessity for a thorough educational reform (p. 447). As for the Algerian case, Amziane (2015) reports that between 1962 and 2000, the Algerian educational system has gone through three considerable changes at the primary, middle and secondary levels. Amziane adds that the reform of 2003, which was grounded in the Competency-Based Approach, resulted in a great emphasis on learner autonomy (p. 15). This is what Idri (2012) calls for when she writes about educational reform. The researcher states the following: "the student's place in education is also to change and he/she will eventually be the core factor and actor in any educational system. All instruction then should turn around the student and his/her needs" (p. 2175).

Blandford & Welton (1999), however, argue that there is no "best way in which restructuring can be achieved" (p. 46). Reforming, the writers go on, is the process of identifying the status of the current program in order to make enhancements upon it. In a similar vein, the Algerian Ministry of National

The Algerian Second Generation Program Consequences on the Learner-Centred Approach: A Comparative Textbooks Analysis

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Abstract:

In order to make learners at the centre of teaching/learning process, curricula designers are required to replace more weight on the role of students. Accordingly, this paper reports on the consequences that the Algerian Second Generation EFL program has had on the Learner-Centred Approach at the middle school level. This approach was implemented with the educational reform initiated in 2003. Based on the statement "les réformes de 2eme génération apportent des améliorations aux programmes actuels" issued by Farid Benramdane, a member of the national commission of programs, it was hypothesized that the reform of 2016 is aimed at fostering autonomous learning. To test this hypothesis, the old and new middle school 1st year EFL textbooks analysis then comparison as a method was followed. The tackled textbooks were scrutinized on the basis of an evaluative framework rests on Nunan's (2003) paradigm which includes nine steps from dependence to autonomy. The obtained results indicated that both textbooks fail to encourage learner autonomy. This suggests that the new EFL program has brought no change upon the Learner-Centred Approach

that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning" (p.4). Another close definition of learner autonomy is also put forward by Little (1999) who views it as "a capacity for a certain range of highly explicit (that is, conscious) behavior that embraces both the process and the content of learning" (p. 11). Jacobs and Farell (2001), for their part, regard learner autonomy as a concept that transforms the process from teaching into learning. That is, from being teacher-centred into learner-centred (p. 5).

The given definitions, however, do not mean that learner autonomy aims at marginalizing the teacher; on the contrary, the teacher's role is essential in setting a suitable environment that encourages learners to gradually develop a spirit of autonomous learning. In this very sense, Little (1991) points to the misassumption that "in the classroom context learner autonomy somehow requires the teacher to relinquish all initiative and control" (p.3). Accordingly, Thanasoulas (2001) claims the following: "learner autonomy does not mean that the teacher becomes redundant, abdicating his/her control over what is transpiring in the language learning process" (p. 1). Hence, the question that should be raised here is: what role does the teacher have to play in promoting learner autonomy? We will try to answer to this question in the following sub-section.

Education launched a new educational program in 2016 known as the Second Generation Program (SGP, henceforth). This change resulted in designing new textbooks. Farid Benramdane, a pedagogical advisor to the Ministry of National Education, proclaims that the programs of the Second Generation aim at bringing improvements upon the First Generation Program (FGP, henceforth), which were launched in 2003. (The Algerian Press Services). The aim of the present paper, therefore, is to evaluate the new produced textbook namely, My Book of English Book One, and find out the consequences brought by the renewed program on the Learner-Centred Approach. In order to achieve the precise results a comparison between the new and old textbook is required.

Before then, it seems quite pertinent to review the theoretical framework that underlies the concept of learner autonomy and highlight the objectives set through it for the Algerian school. The review would serve to see to which extent the designed EFL textbooks are in line with learner autonomy objectives.

1. Defining Learner Autonomy

According to Djoub (2013), Henry Holec (1981) is the first researcher who gave a definition for learner autonomy. He defines it as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (as cited in Djoub, 2013, p. 197). Similarly, Little (1991) views autonomy as "a *capacity* - for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails,

The purpose of education remains the same as ever: to give learners access to the multifaceted culture into which they have been born. Learners cannot construct their knowledge out of nothing, neither can they know by instinct how to conduct focused and purposeful learning conversations that shape themselves to the ways of thinking characteristic of the subject in question. Teachers remain indispensable, both as pedagogues and as discipline experts. (p. 20)

3. Textbooks and Learner Autonomy

There seems to be a great debate among educators and researchers about whether language textbook has an influence on developing learner autonomy. On the one hand, many researchers highlight the extensive benefits of using FL textbooks. O'Neill (1988), for example, argues that textbooks can provide FL learners with a large portion of material that is not mentioned by the teacher and make it possible for them to look ahead and back, to prepare themselves for the new information and to revise past lessons (p. 105). Reinders & Balçikanli (2011) also maintain that language textbooks provide learners with a regular contact with the concept of autonomy. The researchers go as far as to claim that "Course textbooks may

2. Teacher's Role in Promoting Learner Autonomy

Regarded as knowledge facilitator rather than knowledge giver from a Learner-Centred perspective, teacher's role does not go beyond equipping "students with all the necessary life skills they will need in the real world." (Kirovska-Simjanoska, 2013, p. 56) Moreover, Little (2004 as cited in Kirovska-Simjanoska, 2013) argues that teachers are to acknowledge that it is their task to develop learner autonomy. In the same line of thought, Bajrami (2013) concludes that teachers are required to help learners to become autonomous (p. 86). To put it in Kirovska-Simjanoska's words: "It is clear that it is the responsibility of the teacher to promote autonomous" (p. 60). Taking the same line of thought, Han (2014) identifies three roles. Therefore, the teacher serves as:

1. Facilitator who initiates and supports decision-making process
2. Counsellor who responds to the ongoing needs of individuals
3. Source who makes his knowledge and expertise available to the learners when it is needed (p. 24).

As far as the Algerian EFL teacher is concerned, it is clearly stated in the 'Document d'accompagnement 2AM' that "the teacher must guide, help, and encourage the learner to take part in his own learning" (p. 80-81). Therefore, teacher's role is always essential. This is what Little (2007) refers to when he writes about learner autonomy:

has, in its own turn, certain goals and outcomes. It seems very agreeable that the primary outcome of autonomy is the "paradigm shift" (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001) in foreign language education marked by putting the learner at the centre of the process and this of course, contrary to the traditional teaching philosophies, considers students as active members who can take part in the process of teaching/learning.

According to Kirovska-Simjanoska (2013), the uppermost aim of learner autonomy is creating a life-long learner (p. 56). A similar idea can be seen in the aim identified by Vazquez (n.d.) who claims: "by gaining more autonomy, learners can develop as free and self-determining citizens of the community in which they live" (p.100). It means that autonomous learning goes beyond the individual learning goals to "arouse an increasing sense of awareness and liberation in man, and, in some cases, an instrument for changing the environment itself. From the idea of man 'product of his society', one moves to the idea of man 'producer of his society'" (Janne, 1977, p. 15 as cited in Little, 2007, p. 15-16). Having all this in mind, we can conclude by saying that the main purpose of autonomy, among many others, is to build a responsible individual through self-knowledge and self-reliance.

II. Statement of the Problem

Being indispensable for the teaching/learning process, a majority of research in the ELT field, in Algeria and abroad, has largely focused on the

include some deliberate focus on the learning process and encourage students to reflect on their progress and as such are likely to play an important potential role in the development of students' independent learning skills" (p. 265). Further, Nunan, Lai & Keobke (1999) state that "it is becoming increasingly common to find teaching materials containing tasks which focus learners on the learning process" (p. 69). This view is supported by Little (2007) who writes that due to the increasing academic attention received by the concept of learner autonomy by the end of 20th century, language textbooks designers became aware of the necessity of autonomy-oriented sections (p. 14).

On the other hand, there are also scholars who have a considerable doubt about the use of language textbooks for autonomous learning. Graves (2000), for instance, claims that textbooks may include boring or even out-dated materials which may demotivate learners (p. 175). Furthermore, the study conducted by Reinders & Balçikanli (2011) indicates that the examined language textbooks do not help learners develop autonomy. In this regard, Fenner (2000) confirms that using textbooks contradicts with the idea of learner autonomy (p. 78). Such a debate renders textbooks evaluation in terms of learner autonomy a task of great importance.

4. The Objective behind Autonomous Learning

Apart from being one of the CBA objectives, learner autonomy

commission of programs, “les réformes de 2eme génération apportent des améliorations aux programmes actuels” “the 2nd generation reforms bring improvements upon the current programmes” (my translation), we hypothesized that the Second Generation Program aims at fostering autonomous EFL learning context through the newly designed textbook.

III. Methodology

1. Corpus

The corpus of the present study consists of two EFL textbooks. In that, we will evaluate the textbook Spotlight on English Book One, developed under the light of the Second Generation Programme in 2016, and then compare it to My Book of English Middle School Year One, which is the result of launching the First Generation Programme in 2003. Both textbooks are locally produced. They have been designed for the Algerian learners at the middle school first year. The aim behind evaluating and comparing the new textbook to the old one is to identify the consequences of the Second Generation Programme on learner autonomy. The following table gives some more details about the textbooks.

Title	Number of unites	Number of pages
<u>Spotlight on English Book One</u>	7	189
<u>My Book of English Middle School Year One</u>	5	160

As shown in the above table, there is a noticeable difference between the tackled textbooks in terms of volume and number of

effectiveness of textbook in teaching such a number of abilities competences as the linguistic, the communicative and even the intellectual competences. However, little has been done, as far as we know, to analyse EFL textbooks in terms of fostering learner autonomy abilities at the Algerian middle school level. To fill this research gap, the present study attempts to evaluate the EFL textbook of the Second Generation Program in order to reveal the consequences brought by this program on learner autonomy.

Research Question: the research question is formulated as follows:

- What consequences has the Second Generation Program brought upon learner autonomy through the newly designed textbook?

Inherent to the above research question, the following sub-question may be raised:

- Is there difference between the old and the newly designed textbook in terms of developing learner autonomy?

The Hypothesis: The general hypothesis of the present research runs as follows:

Based on the statement issued by Farid Benramdane, a member of the national

Table 01: The Two EFL Textbooks Covered in this Study

• *Step 3:* Encourage learners to use their second language outside the classroom (encouraging the learners to think about activating their language outside the classroom).

• *Step 4:* Raise awareness of learning processes (making students aware of not only what, but also how they learn, in other words raising the awareness of the strategies needed to tackle an activity or a task).

• *Step 5:* Help learners identify their own preferred styles and strategies via questionnaires or lists of characteristics which helps the learners to recognize their learning styles or strategies (and providing them with options and activities to suit their styles and strategies).

• *Step 6:* Encourage learner choice (providing the learners with a variety of different activities and enabling them to choose the activity or their role in it).

• *Step 7:* Allow learners to generate their own tasks (enabling them to modify and adapt the activities)

• *Step 8:* Encourage learners to become teachers (activities which give the learners an opportunity to teach some of the content learned, which motivates the learner and facilitates learning).

• *Step 9:* Encourage learners to become researchers (activities which educate the learners to become language researchers, for instance writing field notes, interpreting patterns or discussions about the language) (Nunan, 2003 as cited in Spirovska, 2013, p. 67).

unites as well. As we can see, the first textbook includes seven (7) unites, while the second one contains only five (5) unites. Besides, the first textbook outnumbers the second one in the total number of pages one hundred eighty-nine (189) to one hundred-sixty (160). Such a difference should be taken into account in the course of analysis for it might have a consequence on the number of tasks on autonomous learning each textbook encompasses.

2. Data Collection Procedures

The present study is a content analysis. It follows a model presented by Nunan (2003). It includes nine (9) steps describing a "procedure for moving learners along the continuum from dependence to autonomy" (p. 193). It was applied, as criteria of analysis, on both textbooks in order to find which one facilitates the nine steps to learner autonomy. For the sake of obtaining precise results, it seemed quite practical to analyse the two textbooks and then draw a comparison between the findings. The model was used by Spirovska (2013) to analyze four textbooks used in ELT at the context of South Eastern European University. We modified the model to meet our research requirements. The nine steps encompassed by the model are:

• *Step 1:* Make instruction goals clear to learners (explaining the aims and objectives of the lesson and involving students).

• *Step 2:* Allow learners to create their own goals (learners create their own goals, content and modify the course content).

following table. We opted to follow such a method in order to present the findings in a clear, systematic and comparable way

IV. Presentation of the Obtained Results
The findings sorted out from our examination of the two textbooks are displayed on the

Steps to learner autonomy	Spotlight on English Book One (FGP)	My Book of English Middle School Year One (SGP)
<i>Step 1: does the textbook make instruction goals clear to learner</i>	No. (this step is not included in the textbook)	Yes, the learning objectives of each sequence are listed right at the beginning of the textbook on 'My Book Map.'
<i>Step 2: does the textbook allow learners to create their own goals</i>	No. (this step is not included in the textbook)	No. (this step is not included in the textbook)
<i>Step 3: does the textbook encourage learners to use their second language outside the classroom</i>	Yes, through project works where learners are asked to work together on poster presentations, making questionnaires, borrowing books from the library ...	Yes, especially via writing tasks included in the project works.
<i>Step 4: does the textbook raise awareness of learning processes</i>	Yes, there is a table on the first pages (9-12) of the textbook to help learners be aware of learning strategies of each file.	No. (this step is not included in the textbook)
<i>Step 5: does the textbook help learners identify their own preferred styles and strategies</i>	No. (this step is not included in the textbook)	Yes, but not clearly via project where learners are free to choose the strategies of gathering information for their topic.
<i>Step 6: does the textbook encourage learner choice</i>	Yes, but only in the first part of each project work which is up to the learner to choose a task.	Yes, but only the project topics are optional.
<i>Step 7: does the textbook allow learners to generate their own tasks</i>	No. (this step is not included in the textbook)	No. (this step is not included in the textbook)
<i>Step 8: does the textbook encourage learners to become teachers</i>	No. (this step is not included in the textbook)	No. (this step is not included in the textbook)
<i>Step 9: does the textbook encourage learners to become researchers</i>	Yes, via project work which is instructed by the end of each file.	Yes, via project work which learners are asked to prepare at the beginning of each

		studying semester.
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First: both textbooks encourage learners to reflect on and assess their progress along each unit. By so doing, they indeed "play an important potential role in the development of students' independent learning skills". The second point has to do with the number and position of project work instructed in each textbook. We could notice that in the old textbook, learners are asked to do a project work at the end of each unit, so there are seven project works to be done. In the new textbook, however, learners are asked to prepare a project work at the beginning of each studying semester, so there are only three projects. Based on this last remark, two pertinent questions might be formulated as follows: what are the rationale and philosophy of reducing the number of project works and transferring them from the end of each unite through the old textbook into the beginning of each semester through the new textbook? What implications do these replacement and reduction have for the learning achievements in general and learner autonomy in particular?

Viewed as an essential integrative instrument of learning and enhancing autonomous learning, the project works are instructed in the textbook for encouraging learners to do tasks autonomously. Therefore, it can be assumed that Spotlight on English Book One provides EFL learners with more opportunities for autonomous learning in comparison with My Book of English Middle School Year One.

V. Discussion

Table 2: Results of Textbooks Analyses

As it is shown in table two, the textbooks we examined do not include all the nine steps towards autonomy as suggested by Nunan (2003). To illustrate, analysis results indicate that unlike the first textbook, the second one makes learning goals of each sequence clear to the learners. This is done through charts introduced at the beginning of the textbook. No textbook, however, encourages learners to create their own learning goals as this is the second learner autonomy step. As we can see, the third step, encouraging learners to use the target language outside the classroom, is promoted by the two textbooks. Raise awareness of learning processes, as the forth step, is introduced only by the first textbook. Concerning step five, helping learners identify their own preferred styles and strategies, is incorporated only in the second textbook. But, it is not introduced explicitly. Even though both textbooks encourage learner choice, as the sixth step, yet only via projects. Analysis findings indicate that the seventh and eight steps of allowing learners to generate their own tasks and then encouraging them to become teachers are not included in both textbooks. Finally, we can see that the two textbook encompass the ninth step where learners are encouraged to be researchers through doing project works. As a concluding remark, both textbooks do not incorporate all the nine steps.

There are two points to be made here out of the analysis.

textbook, it is skipped in the other and vice versa. This may suggest that both EFL programs developers and textbooks designers did not have learner-autonomy-oriented policy. In that, they did not construct a material with learner autonomy at its core. The inference might be that they left this task for educators. However, there is no guarantee that teachers will do this since most of them depend on textbooks. Research is therefore needed in this area of knowledge in order to reveal teachers' perceptions on promoting learner autonomy.

It can be clearly noticed, from the obtained results, that the enormous amount of attention is given to project works where learners are encouraged to carry out research about a given topic. Yet, learners for the most part are instructed to do so through the use of the Internet. This makes their work an act of 'copy and paste' patchwork that they have not read entirely. This, in turn, gives rise to an ethical problem and does not encourage learners to use their critical thinking skills (Amziane & Guendouzi, 2015, p. 71). Within this context, Marry (1999) also cautions that the overuse of Internet hinders learner's sense of responsibility to take part in the learning process. Having this in mind, we can say that both textbooks designers did not neglect to integrate some learner-focused project works into the textbooks for the purpose of predisposing pupils to be self-dependent learners. What should be noted, however, is that their interest in learner autonomy is limited to encouraging pupils to

Described as the teaching/learning materials through which the CBA is given "shape and substance", textbooks are expected to offer opportunities for language autonomous learning due to which the skills and knowledge acquired at classroom can be reinvested in real life situations. The fact that "learners need to be systematically educated in the skills and knowledge they will need in order to make informed choices about what they want to learn and how they want to learn" (Nunan, Lai & Keobke, 1999, p. 70), and that the concept of learner autonomy is a process that takes time to acquire encouraged researchers in the field of applied linguistics to suggest strategies and techniques to develop this concept. Nunan (2003), for instance, created a nine-step paradigm that comprises a continuum from least autonomous learner to most autonomous one. The nine steps can be integrated into the EFL textbooks in order to equip learners with necessary learning strategies, and finally, help them to become autonomous learners.

However, it is clear from the results presented in table two that such a focus on strategies of autonomous learning is not at all common in the two textbooks investigated. Out of the nine steps, three steps (three; allow learners to create their own goals, seven; allow learners to generate their own tasks and, eight; encourage learners to become teachers) are completely skipped in both textbooks. Moreover, the other steps are not concurrently included in the two textbooks: if a step is included in the first

approach, and 2) producing new textbooks.

Bringing ameliorations upon the current educational system has always been considered as a crucial act to achieve the desired teaching/learning outcomes. For this purpose, the Algerian Ministry of National Education launched a new program in 2016 called the Second Generation Program. The renewed program is aimed at making qualitative improvement upon the previous one which was brought by the school reform of 2003. Therefore, the main purpose behind conducting this research is to find out the consequences and changes that the new program has made upon the Learner-Centred Approach in an ELT context through the recently designed textbook. To this end, a comparative analytical study of both textbooks was carried out. The obtained results indicated that both textbooks fail to introduce Nunan's (2003) nine steps towards autonomy as a whole. This might be interpreted that learner autonomy is beyond the main teaching/learning objectives of the EFL Second Generation program designed for the 1st year middle school pupils which can be proved by the absence of autonomy-oriented activities that help in creating an autonomous leaning atmosphere. On the light of research findings, this paper provides some recommendations that could foster learner autonomy which include:

- Teachers who are used to the old teacher-centered classroom need a training course on how to gradually engage their

gather information from deferent sources. The integrated project works can be, in our view, more effective in promoting learner autonomy if they give pupils more opportunities for creative work, both inside and outside the classroom.

To sum up, let us quote Fenner (2000) who wrote: "the whole idea of developing autonomy may be difficult to reconcile with the use of a textbook in the foreign language classroom" (p. 78). The quotation is in line with the obtained results which suggest that the Second Generation EFL program has brought no improvement upon the Learner-Centred Approach through the newly designed textbook. This, in turn, does not confirm the hypothesis made so far in the introduction of the present research. Therefore, much more effort has to be made from the different stakeholders. More pertinent syllabuses and textbooks that develop students' autonomy should be designed to bring improvements upon the current situation.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

In order to construct an individual according to the world citizenship requirements, the Algerian school witnessed a reform in 2003, known as the First Generation Program, which established the Competency-Based Approach as an instructional framework for primary, middle and secondary education. This reform results in: 1) a focus on the notion of autonomy as an essential philosophy advocated by this

encouraging self-directed learning;

- Since this study is the first attempt to analyze and compare two textbooks which belong to different EFL programs, a further study at several levels is needed.

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learners in teaching/learning process;

- EFL teacher should look for an alternative sources rather than the instructional textbooks to help their learners develop autonomous learning;

- Textbooks designers should devote more tasks

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