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**Difficulties facing EFL teachers in improving students'
critical thinking, case of third year students.**

Dissertation submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in
Didactics.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

Date:.....

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my mother, my family, and to my kind friends.

Acknowledgement

I thank Allah (SWT) for giving me the strength to finish this work.

I would like to give my gratitude to all the teachers who were always there to provide guidance and counseling.

I would also like to thank the members of the jury, Dr. Sellam, and Dr. Hichour.

To all my classmates, thank you very much for being the kindest and the most helpful.

Abstract

Critical thinking is a very important skill to be obtained for foreign language learners in particular. For decades, higher education has prioritized the development of critical thinking abilities for students. EFL teachers on the other hand, have found difficulties in improving CTS (critical thinking skills). This research paper is an attempt to find solutions for the present dilemma, exploring along the way the broad phenomenon of CT in relation to the EFL (English as a foreign language) context. To conduct a thorough investigation, a proper methodology was carefully chosen to carry out an exploratory research based on a research problem, data collection and analysis. Three tools were designed to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The three tools being; a questionnaire for students, an interview for the teachers, and an observation task that took place in the classroom. The population selected for study are 3rd year English language students. The results of this investigation have met the expectations, providing and highlighting the challenges encountered in the process of enhancing the learners' CTS, which were found to be linked to the instructors' methods of teaching, and the capabilities of the learners. In addition, counter measures were suggested for further contributions in academic research in general and for the current topic in particular.

Key words: Critical thinking, EFL teachers, Skills, Improving, Education.

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List of Abbreviations:

CT: Critical Thinking.

CTS: Critical Thinking Skills.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ACER: Australian Council for Educational Research.

CAOOC : Canadian Academy of Oriental and Occidental Culture.

General introduction

Critical thinking is considered a very important skill to wield in a world full of ideologies with deceptive fronts. It emerged due to the fact humans became more self-aware, with the realization that our reality is not easily explainable, and we do not know much about it as we thought we did. This idea changed the human history forever. Humans started to think deeply and ask questions about the nature of things, and their original beliefs, which led them into organizing their thinking and developing their cognitive abilities.

In the early human history, it was not something very common to question reality and belief. Only bright and trained minds could do it, but eventually humans had to evolve and learn more about themselves and the reality with all its aspects; historical, religious, scientific... etc.

Critical thinking became an essential thinking skill that must be taught and passed on to the next generation of scholars, scientists, and world leaders. CT had to be integrated within the curriculum of TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language), though the teachers faced difficulties and challenges in the process of improving their students' critical thinking skills.

This research aims to dive into the realm of the cognitive processes and have a closer look to hopefully draw relevance to the EFL context. Moreover, it focuses on finding the main challenges that the EFL teachers are facing with intent to gather enough information that could help bring positive and constructive change into the situation. Therefore, in an attempt to tackle the subject, the following questions were raised:

- What critical thinking sub skills are required/used within the EFL classroom context?
- What are the difficulties facing EFL teachers in improving students' critical thinking ?
- How can EFL teachers go up against obstacles that they face in the process of improving students' CT?

In response to these questions, hypothetically speaking :

- CT skills that should be used in the EFL classroom are analysis, evaluation, problem solving, and reasoning.

- Some of the challenges that EFL teachers encounter when improving students' CT are the student's poor ability to acquire such skill, the classroom structure, as well as the teaching methods.
- In order to overcome any obstacle in improving CT, strategic plans and optimum solutions should be applied in the classroom.

In order to conduct this research, a population and a methodology were selected properly to meet the desired objectives. The chosen population include 3rd year students from the university of Dr. Moulay Tahar, English language department. In addition, 4 teachers from the same department were part of the study. Furthermore, the methodology used in this research paper is a mixed methods one, which is suitable for a topic with that much depth, for it includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures. For better in-depth researching, three tools were chosen; a questionnaire for the 3rd year students was distributed for the purpose of getting an idea about their perspective on the topic, an interview for the teachers in hopes of pinpointing the major obstacles that EFL teachers are faced with, and an observation that took place in the classroom to draw some conclusions about the process of improving CT.

The research at hand is composed of three chapters. The first chapter talks about the main topic, and provides a theoretical overview with precise definitions. It also deals with the different aspects and components of the topic as well as its relation and benefits to the EFL context. The second chapter gives an overall look at the methodology used to investigate the elements of the research. Finally, the last chapter includes the analysis and discussion of the collected data with some recommendations and suggestions.

Chapter One: Literature Review

1.Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction

Critical thinking is a complex concept yet a very useful feature in moderation and information optimization. In today's' knowledge-driven world, the advantage lies with those who can think critically and keep improving their knowledge, that is why foreign language learners need to develop such a skill. Critical thinking or CT, is not only about thinking clearly and rationally, it also involves thinking independently, which strengthens and shapes the student's thought process for the sake of achieving near optimum level problem solving. According to Mason (2007), CT became a fundamental element in the educated community, therefore might as well teach it properly to the next generation of thinking minds. Which brings us to the aim of this research paper that is to tackle this concept's emergence, essence, significance and the challenges that come with passing it over to the upcoming leaders of the society.

1.1 Brief History of critical thinking

According to Paul et al, (1997), the origins of the concept of critical thinking can be traced back to more than 2400 years ago. Thanks to the visions of Socrates, CT is a widely and deeply studied phenomenon nowadays as it is proven beneficial and effective. Socrates made it clear that one can not trust those in charge to have perfect insight and completely flawless knowledge. Therefore, he emphasized that everything should be questioned because even those in higher positions of power could be deeply confused and irrational. He asserted the fact that we should ask profound and deep questions and reason with fact before embracing an idea or a philosophy to be believed.

Paul et al, (1997) claim that Socrates developed a method of thinking called the "The Socratic questioning" which is based on gathering evidence, examining it closely, analyzing basic concepts and tracing meanings of what is told and done. The Soctratic questioning method has been used countless times throughout history, while other writers and philosophers began to perceive CT in their own ways. Scholars who adopted critical thinking after Socrates, such as Plato, Aristotle and the Greek skeptics believed and established the fact that things are not the same as they look on the surface level. Thus, only a trained mind can see through the surface of any idea or notion abstract or not. Based upon this Greek conception, it was settled that anyone

who seeks the profound understanding of any given situation is required to probe deeply into them in a systematic, comprehensive, deducted way of thinking for it is the only way to reach beyond the surface.

Later in the middle ages came Thomas Aquinas, a very important scholar who believes that the criticism of his own ideas is a necessary step of developing them. He also shows that to think critically is not reject all previous beliefs, but the ones that lack valid and reasonable base.

From then on, researchers and scholars from Europe adopted CT to apply on the everyday matters such as religion, law, nature, human nature, freedom, reality...etc.

Following up on the vision of the ancients, the European scholars believed that most human domains and ideologies need to be deeply looked into, searching analysis and criticism. (Paul et al, 1997).

1.2 Definition Of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a method of probing and asking questions about deeper aspects of realities and ideas, it is the active thinking that allows the mind to reach profound understandings.

CT is explained by Sternberg (1986) as mental processes, methods and representations that humans employ to resolve issues, decide and acquire new concepts. the curiosity in humans is what makes them resort to thinking critically, thus developing and training the mind to ask questions about things and ideas, analyzing them, reasoning their credibility with evidence, searching for flaws and finding answers.

1.2.1 General Approach

Critical thinking is a vast concept and a lifestyle that is applied on mostly all the fields in human history because it is a proof of the evolution of the human brain.

According to Scriven & Paul (1987), CT is the rational and systematic process of conceptualizing, analyzing, evaluating a given or generated information. It is mainly composed of and based on the intellectual values that reach beyond the conceptual sphere: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.

1.2.2 Educational Approach

Critical thinking according to the ACER framework (Australian Council for Educational Research), is described as the cognitive processes that are objective and purpose motivated. The purpose could mean solving a problematic, standing with a theory, conducting an experiment, drawing up an argument, suggesting an interpretation, undertaking a critique, better understand a topic or decide on a course of action. Heard et al, (2020).

1.3 The importance of critical thinking

The advantage of critical thinking consists of individualizing input, talent, and conscience ability to reason, meaning it triggers the independency in thinking, creativity and the rational tendency. The fundamental interest of thinking elements is to abolish any kind of mentality barriers (Doane University, n.d.). Also, the advantage of good critical thinkers must pose a series of characteristics utilized to support their mental process and judgment. Jones (2016) posited the attributes of a critical thinker are: self-confidence, knowledge of all information, open-mindedness to alternative perspective, remaining unbiased to own belief, ability to make sound judgments , and questioning any risks. Hence, these distinctive traits unleash the potential of being efficacious throughout the mental process. eventually, being able to solve complicated problems and treat difficult matters. Optimally, reinforcing critical thinking in all disciplines' is fundamental to the methods used developing ideologies and notions.

1.3.1 Critical Thinking in the classroom

Critical thinking is an often-used phrase in classroom settings. Adult learners are encouraged to develop CT skills and practice them situationally. Critical thinking means reviewing the ideas produced, making a tentative decision about what action will best solve the problem or what belief about the issue is most reasonable, and then evaluating and refining that solution or belief. The effects of developing keen problem solving skills cannot be understated. Problem solving skills have the potential to impact individuals more immediately and often with ramifications for the future. (Ruggiero, 2012).

1.3.2 Benefits of Critical Thinking for the Classroom

Today it is important that students learn critical thinking skills, so they can be both the inventors and the critics of the new information. Edward de Bono (2004) in de Bono's Thinking Course writes, "*Knowledge is not enough. The creative, constructive, design and operating aspects of thinking are just as important as knowledge*" (p.6).

Students who are taught critical thinking have the chance to comprehend and control their own learning. Students that use critical thinking abilities take a more considered and effective approach to the courseware, ask more difficult questions, and engage more fully in the learning process. (Murawski, 2014).

1.4 Critical Thinking skills

To be able to think critically is not something achievable instantly, instead it is through mastering a set of skills for the learner to reach the higher purpose of critical thinking, that is to develop and create in a world that is continuously and constantly changing, ideology and information-wise. The most repeatedly appearing to be common skills associated with CT are: analysis, evaluation, decision-making, reasoning, and problem solving.

1.4.1 Analysis

This skill encompasses raising vital questions and problematics, formulating them clearly and precisely. According to Edward Glaser (1941), the ability to think critically involves having an attitude of being in a position to contemplate thoughtfully the problems and concepts that are within one's field of experience. Students when asked to analyse a given situation, will eventually be able to provide details, discuss the distinctions and come up with suggestions.

1.4.2 Evaluation

This involves drawing conclusions about the information you collect and may require you to possess technical or industry-specific knowledge or experience. According to Richard & Elder, (2008), evaluation skill consists of collecting and evaluating relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively, and eventually coming to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, compare them with relevant criteria and standards. This skill allows the student to be self-reliant and independent with objective-based judgments.

1.4.3 Decision making

Decision making is a key skill that is fundamental to the next step of critical thinking. *“Effective decisions result from a systematic process, with clearly defined elements, that is handled in a distinct sequence of steps”* Drucker,(1967).

Harvey, (2007) stated that decision making is described as the process of selecting the most ultimately suitable, well-reasoned choice among other suggested choices based on the gathered information and objectives. The teachers can develop this technique in the classroom by creating a cooperative environment for the students.

1.4.4 Reasoning

The ability to reason is the most important feature that distinguishes individuals from other living things. Because, with the ability to think, it is possible to make sense out of events and rearrange conditions according to the logical objective. According to Paul et al, (1997), the thinking minds of the French Enlightenment (18th century) determined that the mind’s ability to gauge into the social and political aspects of the world, depends solely on the mind being governed by reason. More from these thinkers, is that reason must be self applied to determine the strengths and weaknesses of thought. By improving this thinking skill, students can be reliably given complex notions to deal with.

1.4.5 Problem Solving

The outcome of the problem solving skill is the outcome of a successful critical thinking process. This skill is integrated within the process but also can not be mastered without training the mind to think critically. Learners who can solve scientific, social, or practical problems effectively are the ones who think critically. Lisa & Mark Snyder, (2008).

1.5 Critical Thinking in the EFL context

The implementation of critical thinking in language learning nowadays, is considered vital, due to the significant positive impact on the learners’ ways of thinking. In many Western institutions, educators often consider enlightenment and truth research as their objectives, thus students’

critical thinking abilities are given adequate attention. In contrast, English instruction in most institutions has placed much too much emphasis on growing students' English language knowledge and abilities, while critical thinking development has lagged far behind. In reality, before entering the professional world, students should be prepared with critical comprehension and flexibility, which necessitates the ability to become a critical and autonomous learner. Correct thinking in the search of relevant and trustworthy knowledge is what critical thinking entails. A student who thinks critically can ask suitable questions, acquire relevant information, sort it effectively and imaginatively, reason logically, and arrive to dependable and trustworthy conclusions. As a result, it is vital to begin the development of critical thinking skills in pupils. CT knowledge may broaden students' perspectives, boost their self-esteem, and offer opportunities in their future jobs. Given the lack of critical thinking abilities among students, it is important for educators to provide pupils with critical thinking skills. Critical thinking may be taught in a variety of ways, including lectures, laboratories, assignments, term papers, and exams.

A study done by the Canadian Academy of Oriental and Occidental Culture (CAOOC, 2013) shows that EFL teachers need to adopt critical thinking by following the teaching principles, establish equal relationships with students and encourage the students to be active learners rather than passive recipients of knowledge. For instance, large group oral discussions in the classroom provide psychological exploration and beyond surface of thought extent. A probing and intriguing atmosphere is very necessary for students to reach a level of critical active speaking. Students must learn to question, make predictions, organize ideas, solve problems, and reason to be able to acquire critical thinking abilities. Furthermore, CT skills can be integrated effectively within the syllabus through assignments and classroom activities . Active learning strategies are very important to encourage EFL students to think critically and independently.

1.6 Developing/teaching critical thinking

The significance of critical thinking in college English learning was examined in literature and language studies by Qing (2013). In this regard, he claims that pupils who think critically are more self-assured, self-reliant, and arrive to more reliable judgments. CT may provide an opportunity to be objective, less emotional, and more open-minded in order to appreciate the views of others. Hader, (2005) argues that critical thinking improves creativity and time

management, as it does not only teaches logic and probability, but also how to apply these abilities to solve problems that occur in everyday life. Critical thinking will also aid in the development of effective arguments. This implies that the student will be able to present and defend assertions based on evidence. Critical thinking is a crucial talent for students to master. Bloom's taxonomy might help figure out what the learner is looking for. Critical thinking is important because it gives instructors a framework to represent complicated reasoning. It can assist pupils in becoming self-sufficient thinkers capable of developing their own ideas or views. Teachers may encourage learners to be critical thinkers by asking questions and giving assignments that closely connect with particular learning objectives at each level of the process, making the objectives obvious to the student. Critical thinking training can help students communicate their thoughts more effectively. Students can use critical thinking to break down texts or any type of material to increase understanding. This talent is required for learners to become more interested and to investigate farther in their learning process in order to reach the desired goals.

1.6.1 Bloom's Taxonomy

In 1956 Bloom developed a paradigm that included six key categories: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The categories after Knowledge were labeled "skills and abilities," with the assumption that knowledge was required before putting these skills and abilities into practice.

While each category had subcategories that ranged from simple to complicated and tangible to abstract, the taxonomy is best remembered in terms of the six primary categories.

Benjamin Bloom (1956) developed the Taxonomy to describe the degrees of reasoning skills that students employ for efficient learning. Bloom's Taxonomy has six levels: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and assessment. Each of the categories tries to build a more sophisticated level of abstraction than the previous one. Armstrong,(2010).



Bloom's Categorization 1965

Armstrong,(2010) states that in 2001, a consortium of cognitive psychologists, curriculum theorists, and instructional researchers released A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, a version of Bloom's Taxonomy. This revised version suggests a more dynamic view of categorization. Remember, comprehend, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create were structured and contained action words to identify cognitive processes via which students encounter and engage with knowledge.

In general, both instructors and students should avoid tests and assessments that just seek to recollect knowledge and instead integrate higher levels to become true critical thinkers. Armstrong (2010)



Revised Categorization 2001

The six elements of the revised taxonomy explained by Armstrong (2010):

Remembering: include recalling and retrieving pertinent information from long-term memory.

Understanding: Assemble meaning from instructional messages, which may include oral, written, or graphic communication.

Applying: In a particular scenario, carry out or apply a method.

Analyzing: a methodical and in-depth investigation into a situation in order to comprehend, analyze, distinguish, and assign it.

Evaluating: coming up with decisions based on a set of criteria and standards.

Creating: Reorganize into a new pattern or structure by putting parts together to produce a cohesive whole.

1.7 Critical thinking impact on learner's performance

For countless reasons, the cultivation of critical thinking in EFL classrooms is very important. CT helps the learner become autonomous in which he can keep track and assess his own learning techniques more successfully. It also increases students' learning experience. Zhou et al., (2013),

suggest that correct thinking in search of relevant and trustworthy knowledge is what critical thinking entails. A critical thinker can ask suitable questions, acquire relevant information, go through it effectively and creatively, reason logically, and reach dependable and trustworthy conclusions. Critical thinking ability may widen students' horizons, boost their self-confidence, and open doors to good possibilities in their future careers.

1.7.1 Characteristics of a good critical thinker

Wade (1995) suggests that good qualities of a critical thinker involve mastering all of the main skills while avoiding emotional reasoning and oversimplification. A good critical thinker considers other interpretations and tolerates ambiguity which is a productive, necessary part of the process. Metacognition is another feature of critical thinking that has been recognized by several authors. Metacognition is the process of thinking about one's own thinking. Wade (1995)

According to Beyer (1995), a critical thinker is the one who is; open-minded, skeptical, looks at things from different perspectives, works with reason and values evidence. In addition, criteria from the same field must be applied in order to achieve thinking critically. There must be requirements that must be satisfied for anything to be considered credible.

1.7.2 Critical Thinking Sub skills

Thinking abilities, which revolve around assessing, evaluating, reasoning, and problem solving, are incorporated in all specified ideas. The term "skills" refers to tangible instructions that may be utilized to direct one's logical reasoning. In general, skills as tools are broadly recognized in academics. Facione (1990) attempting to include both mental dispositions, referred to as "habits of mind," and cognitive abilities and sub-skills:

Skills	Sub-skills
1. interpretation	categorization, decoding significance, clarifying meaning
2. Analysis	examining ideas, identifying arguments, analysing arguments
3. Evaluation	Assessing claims, assessing arguments

4. Inference	querying evidence, conjecturing alternatives, drawing conclusions.
5. Explanation	stating results, justifying procedures, presenting arguments
6. Self-regulation	self-examination, self-correction

CRITICAL THINKING COGNITIVE SKILLS AND SUB-SKILLS (FACIONE, 1990, P. 6)

Scholars and researchers focus on critical thinking's different formulation processes and skill-based activities, as well as its ultimate aims to attain, while highlighting its influential underpinnings, such as skills and relevant information. There is little doubt that knowing what we think and how we think may lead to a more explicit outcome in critical thinking; however, whether the functions and features of critical thinking can improve a competent thinker's reasoning and logic following classroom teachings is debatable. Zheng & Wang (2016).

1.8 Conclusion

Briefly, this chapter was an attempt to conceptualize and define critical thinking, by peaking on its historical emergence, while also dissecting its characteristics to the core, and figuring out the major aspects and approaches that are of relevance to our topic. In addition, the importance of critical thinking was highlighted in general as well as particularly in relation to the context of this study. We tried to answer some of our questions by diving into the skills of CT, its implementation, and its relation to the EFL context.

Chapter Two: Methodology

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will discuss the methods used in the research. The type of the research will be explained as well as the process of data collection. The procedure of data analysis will also be thoroughly elaborated. the process of data collection was conducted using research tools that we will explain in this section along with the factors that affected the rationale choice of our whole methodology.

2.2 Methodology

The investigation of this research was held for the sake of finding the difficulties that EFL teachers face in improving students' CT. To reach our objective an appropriate method to be conducted is something crucial. Rationalizing the choice of the method depends largely on the topic, its aims and the samples which are under our investigation. A mixed methods research that involves collecting, analyzing, and integrating quantitative and qualitative data was designed. Presenting both the population and the gathered data tools. Primarily collected, quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed and dissected properly. In addition, data was gathered by directly interacting with the sample study. While also conducting an observation task. The methodology used in our research aspired to answer our research questions, due to the intensive tool material for mining valuable information, which is also a standard methodology in our context field.

2.3 The purpose of the study

The study focuses on the difficulties and obstacles that face EFL teachers when improving students' critical thinking skills which can be a real challenge. Therefore, our objective is to determine, through a questionnaire, to what extent students are familiar with the concept of CT and how difficult it is for them to try and improve the CT skills. Additionally, the teachers interview and the observation task, are for the sole purpose of pinpointing the main challenges that the EFL teachers face during classroom CT implementation, for it has a very significant impact not only on the way we do things in the academic life, but also in the everyday life.

2.4 The Population

The target population is from the English language department at the university of Moulay Tahar. It includes both teachers and students for an intensive data collection and clear results about the topic at hand. About 25 students and 4 teachers have contributed in this research with their knowledge, providing us with useful information about different aspects in our topic.

2.5 The tools

- **Questionnaire For Students:** The questionnaire for students was distributed to the students of 3rd year English language department at the university of Dr. Moulay Tahar, during the academic year of 2020-2021. It was designed with 9 questions that consist of multiple choice ones and open ended ones. The participants were selected using a non-probability sampling method for an easy and smooth data collection process. The questionnaire was handed in person and shared online and the answers were well received in the course of a 3 days process. 25 total responses were considered to be accountable interactions. It was designed for the purpose of determining to what extent students are familiar with the concept of CT and their perspective of it. Other aims of the questionnaire were to have an idea about how is CT being implemented in the classroom.

- **Interview For Teachers:** The interview was conducted at the English language department in Dr. Moulay Tahar university, during the academic year of 2020-2021. The interviews were recorded when possible and transcribed. The participants were selected based on their specialty of teaching (Oral expression, didactics, written expression, psycho-pedagogy), taking into consideration the specialties that are of relevance to our topic in terms of content, activities, and structure. Furthermore, they were contacted via email for holding a meeting at campus to proceed with the interview in a suitable environment and conditions. Four teachers have taken part in this interview which consisted of 10 structured questions which took the average time of 10 minutes each. The interview questions were designed to get more insight on critical thinking, and to see from a teacher perspective how is it implemented and what kind of challenges do professional EFL teachers face when trying to improve student's critical thinking skills.

- **The Observation:** An observation has taken place at the university of Dr. Moulay Tahar in the English language department during the academic year of 2020-2021. It was a form of in-class attendance among the students in three different 3rd year curriculum modules in consent with the teachers. six sessions were attended during the whole process for a clear observation of the elements needed to be observed. Data was recorded by taking notes. The observation was held passively for the sake of having more insight on the difficulties that face EFL teachers in improving their students' critical thinking skills.

2.6 Method of Analysis

- **Quantitative data:** After the data was collected, it was treated and checked for missing elements. Outliers were crossed out after transforming variables and analyzing the given data using the suitable and reliable computer software (Microsoft Excel) for precised results. Data was calculated and presented on graphs to determine the statistical relationships between different variables.
- **Qualitative data:** Content analysis was done by discussing the gathered data and information from the interviews and the other tool material. In addition, we ran thematic analysis as we closely examined the data to identify any common themes, patterns, and topics from the qualitative content found in the feedback of our tool materials. Each feedback was examined to gain an understanding of the participants' perspectives and motives.

2.7 Rationalization

The choices of our methods were standard in terms of what the standard approach in our academic institutions entails. The choice of our methodology and tools, depends solely on the fact that experimental activities and tests do not always simulate real life situations as the direct interaction with the subjects do. Moreover, they typically yield data that can't be extrapolated beyond the sample group, as well as giving a better insight of the participants' perceptions, motivations, and emotions.

2.8 Limitations

During the process of investigation we encountered some hurdles, that resulted in the procedures of data collection to run inconveniently. Due to the worldwide outbreak that obliged institutions and individuals to take on strict protocols and social distancing policies, it was very difficult to conduct and execute the tasks needed to gather the data. Some teachers and participants were running late for their appointments because of the constant stopping and resuming of their work, which caused them to have tight schedules and very little time, making it nearly impossible to hold any meetings that were not of any significance to them.

The lack of enthusiasm among students whom were our case study was an obstacle, as it was difficult to find students with the right criteria for the questionnaire whom are also interested in contributing in the research.

Finally, the limitations were not very significant as the research investigations was completed successfully, although there could have been more to gain from the efforts done on the researcher's behalf.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed and explained the methodology, with an in-depth elaboration of the type of the research, the way of collecting the data, the way of analyzing the data, the tools and materials used for gathering the data, and the rationale for choosing the methods that were used. This part is crucial because it helps the reader to assess the research's reliability and validity.

Chapter Three: Data Analysis

Chapter Three : Data Analysis

Introduction

In this chapter we will go through all the data and feedback that was gathered from an intensive field work. Three tools were conducted in this research and considered to be sufficient for an overall insight on the main problematic. The three tools being; a questionnaire for 3rd year students whom are the target population for this investigation, an interview for the teachers, and an observation task that took place within the classroom. Using a proper data analysis method, we aim to briefly analyse the collected data, in hopes of benefiting from the findings to answer our questions about critical thinking and the challenges that accompany in the process of implementing and improving it.

3.1 The Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed for students, for the purpose of determining to what extent students are familiar with the concept of CT. It has 9 questions that by answering them, we can figure out more about students' awareness of critical thinking and its challenges. A variety of questions are open-ended, close-ended, and multiple choices questions.

3.2 Analysis of the questionnaire

Question 01: "Gender"

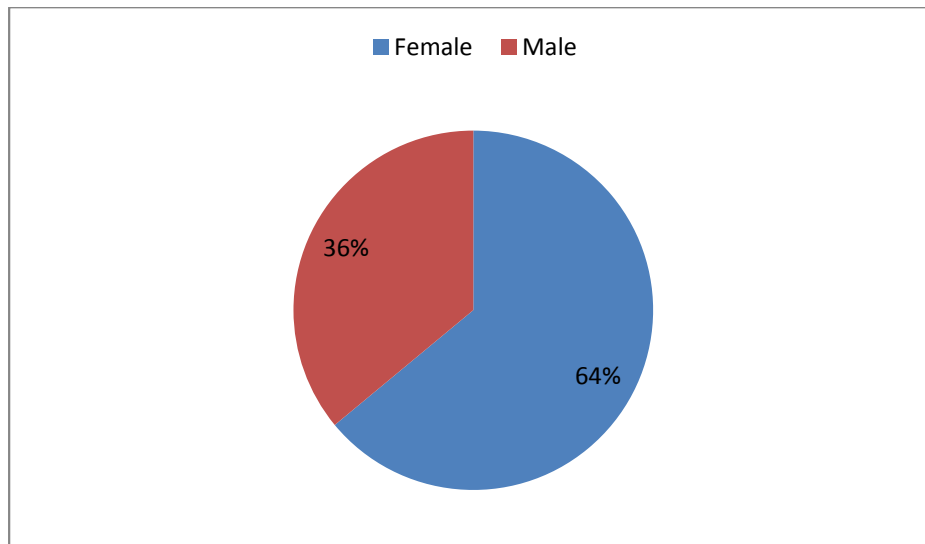


Figure 2.1 Gender

This figure shows that 64 % of our selected cluster of students are females while the other remaining 36 % are males.

Question 02: “How would you describe your English language proficiency ?“

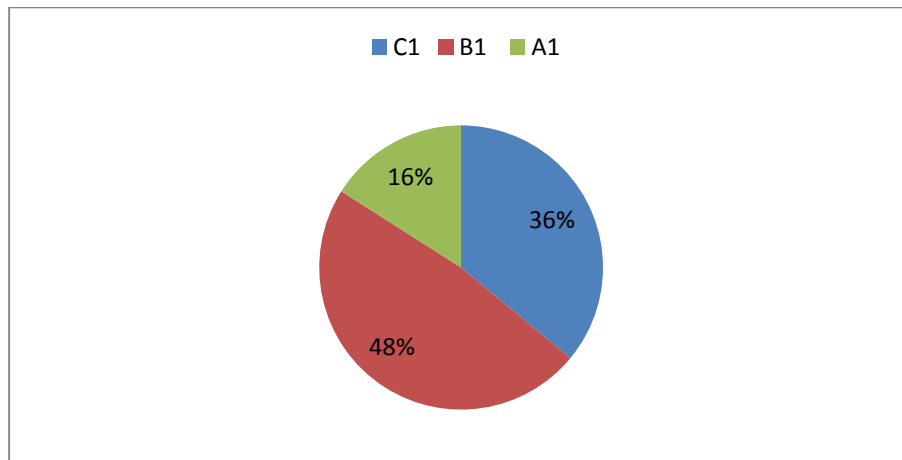


Figure 2.2: English Language Proficiency

Findings of the analysis of the 2nd question are showing that most of the respondents have B1 proficiency level of English, representing 48 % of our sample. 36 % are C1 proficient, and 16 % represent A1 level of proficiency which is limited to understanding and using everyday expressions.

Question 03: “Which language skill do you focus more on improving ?”

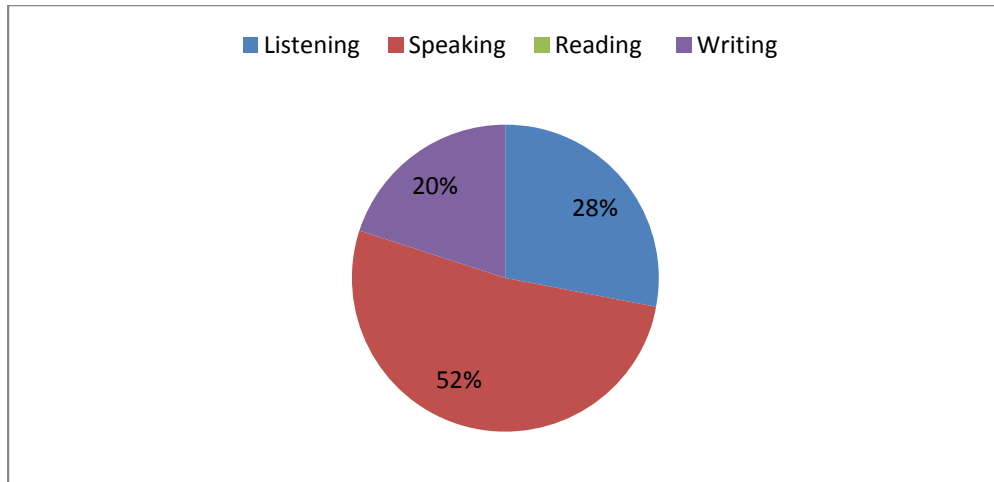


Figure 2.3: Language Skills Focus

The 3rd question being about what language skill to focus on, came out with interesting results as the chart above shows. 52 % of the respondents tend to focus more on the speaking skill. The listening skill comes in 2nd place with 28 % rate of improving tendency, whereas the remaining 20 % is for students who are focusing more on their writing skills.

Question 04: “How often do you work in groups/pairs in the classroom ?”

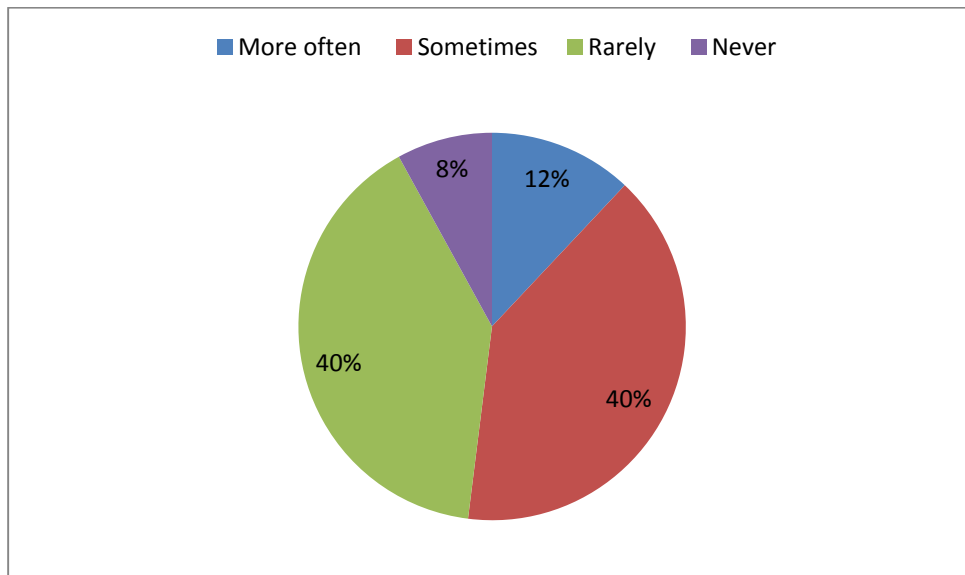


Figure 2.4: Group Work Rate

The chart displays that 40 % of respondents claim to be sometimes working in groups/pairs. The exact same amount claim that they rarely do, whereas 12% of respondents more often work in groups. The remaining 8% answered with “never”.

Question 05: “What type of classroom activities do you like more ? “

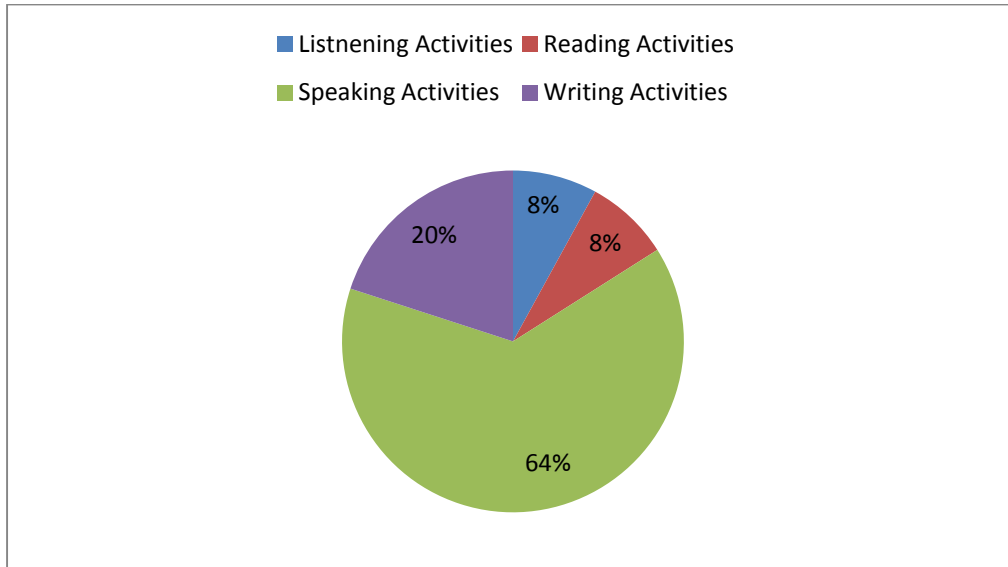


Figure 2.5: Classroom Activities Tendency

The chart above tells us that 64% of students prefer speaking activities, while 20% of them like writing activities the remaining 16% split in half between reading activities and listening activities.

Question 06: “Critical thinking is mainly the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment. Are you familiar with this concept ? -If yes, please provide a brief definition in your own words.

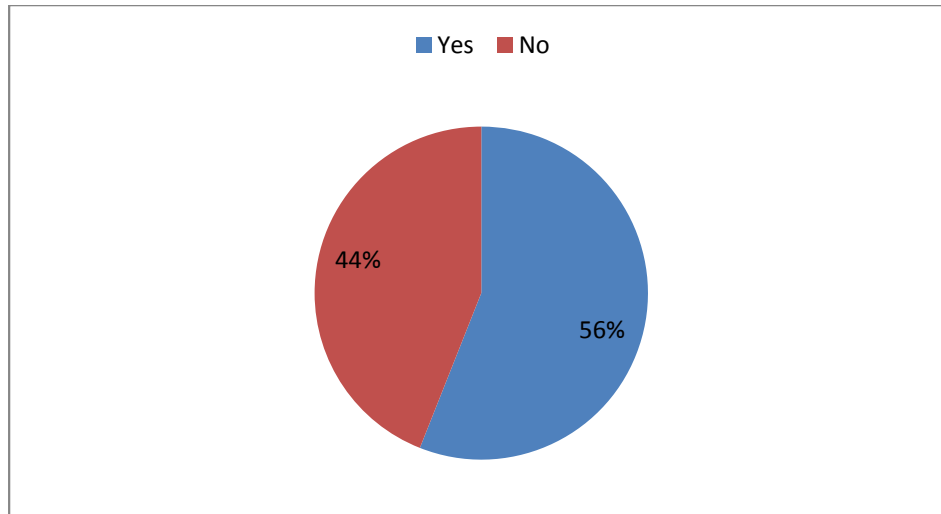


Figure 2.6: Critical Thinking Familiarity Rate

The figure above shows that 56% of the respondents are familiar with the concept of CT, whilst 44% do not seem to know what is it about.

Note: 20% of the whole cluster have provided us with some brief definitions from their own knowledge, having a surface level information about the topic.

Students defined the notion of CT as the process of understanding the nature of things, others described it as analysis for the sake of improvement, while others defined it as a method of the brain used to explain matters and solve problems.

Question 07: “Do you think that critical thinking should be taught ? -If yes then please clarify.”

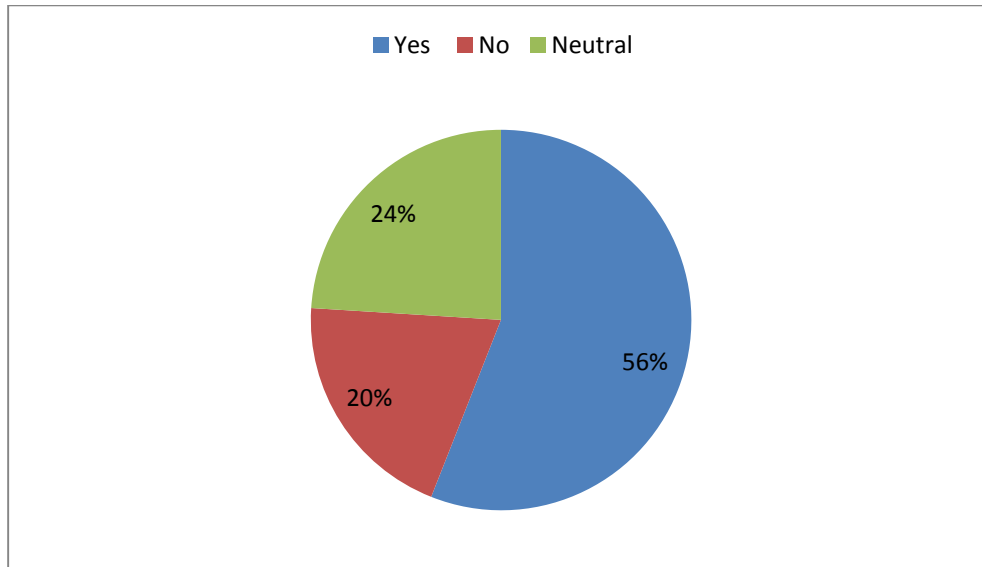


Figure 2.7: Students' Approval Rate of The Teaching of Critical thinking.

Diagram #7 displays that 56% of respondents were for the idea that CT should be taught, 20% choose to answer with “No”, and 24% were neutral in their opinion.

Note : 8% of students responded with “Yes” while also providing clarifications along for their answers.

Respondents have explained CT's importance, explaining how is it the ability to form their own judgments on matters.

Question 08: “Has critical thinking ever been introduced to you by your teachers ? If yes then how or in what form ?”

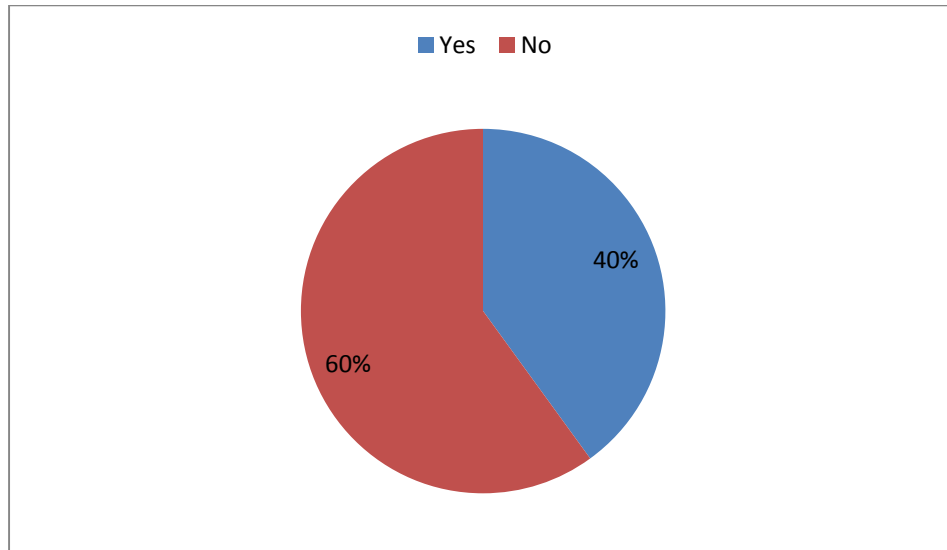


Figure 2.8: Introduction of Critical Thinking for The Students By the Teachers

The result of 7th question shows on the diagram that most of the respondents with 60% rate have never been introduced to critical thinking by their teachers, while 40 % claim that they have.

Note: 16% of the respondents claimed that they have been introduced to CT through; daily classroom discourse, simple explanations, advices...etc.

Question 09: “Do you think that critical thinking is a complex concept ? If you think it is complex then please elaborate.”

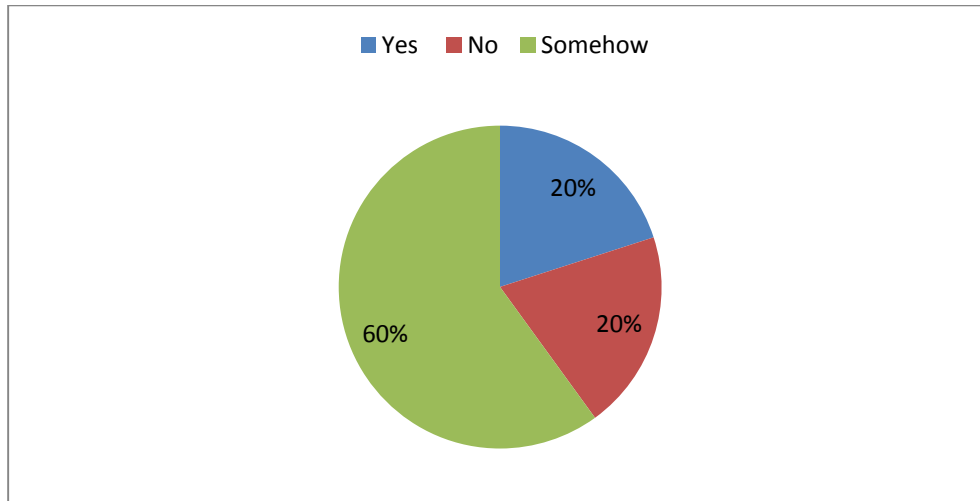


Figure 2.9: Complexity of Critical Thinking for Students

It is observable in this figure that 60% of the respondents think that CT is “somehow” a complex concept. 20% answered with “yes” and the same number (20%) answered with “no” emphasizing that CT is not a complex or a difficult to grasp concept.

Note: 8% of total respondents have followed their answers with elaborations, linking the complexity of the concept to laziness and unfamiliarity, and others have linked it to the concept being a wide range of theories and skills to be learned.

3.3 Interpretation of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was addressed to third year students at the university of Dr. Moulay Tahar. Total count of respondents was 25 students most of them were females.

The findings indicate that most students’ level of English proficiency is mostly average. The aim of this inquiry is to determine whether students have a hard time understanding the given lessons and courses, which can be a bit of a challenge for teachers when trying to implement any type of notion, nevertheless, the complex and vast concept of critical thinking.

The information gathered from the third question shows that most students practice and focus on the speaking skill more than the other skills. It was apparent from the findings that none of the respondents have interest in focusing nor improving the reading skill. Reading can enrich one’s

knowledge about all sorts of fields considering knowledge to be one of the most important pillars in the process of treating matters in a critical way.

When it comes to group work, students claimed that the occurrence of the latter is not enough to be considered frequent. It is known that group work can be of a great help, as it makes it easier for the teacher to achieve the objectives of the course, and it triggers the instinct of order among students. Moreover, it is the proof of a good classroom management.

The majority of students seem to prefer speaking activities, while some like writing activities, and very few other preferred listening and reading activities which tells us a lot about the interests of students in the classroom and what draws their attention.

The objective ought to be reached from the sixth inquiry was the extent of the students' knowledge and awareness of CT, which entailed that nearly half of them do not have the slightest idea about the matter. Whereas, most of them claimed to know about the subject. A small proportion of the respondents even defined the notion in their own words providing surface level information. Furthermore, having background knowledge about something can make it easier to engage in deeper aspects of it, making the process of studying it undertaken smoothly and easily. (Hirsch, 2003)

A good amount of answers came out positive for the idea that whether CT should be taught, while the rest were between disapproving and being neutral. Students clarified that CT should be taught for the sake of the independency of the judgment on things and that students should stay critical towards the source and the content they are engaged with. Others claimed that the implementation of CT is essential to keep up with everyday global change.

One of the aims of the questionnaire was to have an idea about how teachers are introducing the concept of CT to their students if it was introduced at all. Most of the students claimed to never have CT introduced to them by their teachers, while others, seem to have their teachers introduce critical thinking to them in a form of classroom discourse and debates, simple explanations, advices... etc. all in an indirect way. None of the respondents claimed that critical thinking was plainly and directly discussed in class.

The findings gathered to determine whether students struggle with understanding the concept of CT, shows that the overwhelming majority of students somehow think that the latter is complex, relating the cause of that to laziness, and CT being a very wide range of theories and skills to be mastered.

3.4 The teachers' interview

The interview questions were designed to get more insight on critical thinking, and to see from a teacher perspective how is it implemented and what kind of challenges do professional EFL teachers face when trying to improve student's critical thinking skills. Teachers with different specialties were interviewed (methodology, written expression, oral expression, and didactics).

3.5 Analysis of the teachers' interview

Q1: "What does the notion of CT mean to you ?"

Critical thinking: " the objective analysis, and evaluation of a given situation"

Every interviewee of the 4 have described CT in their own way, describing the process, the effects, and the importance.

"Critical thinking is all about asking questions and being able to assess both the meaning and the significance of arguments and claims. Building these skills make someone's life easier in different situations. Being able to identify, understand and analyze.. being a critical thinker makes you creative, reflective and being able to evaluate evidence and take a decision by your own no matter how the difficulty of the situation".

"It is a very important skill in learning and in particular in reading or listening to a particular material. It involves students' tendency to question and evaluate any content they are dealing with".

Q2: " Have you ever introduced critical thinking as a concept to your students ? If so, then to what end ? just as a skill to be developed or as a primary objective within the syllabus ? ”

“Critical thinking integrated within the course”

Three out of four interviewees claimed to have always integrated CT within the syllabus and the integrative tasks by giving their students assignments and *“projects from real life situations, where they are obliged to observe, question and analyze what surrounds them..”*

Only one participant said that he actually tackled the concept of CT with his students.

Q3: “How often is critical thinking implemented in your classroom ?”

“The implementation of critical thinking depends on the context of the course”

The participants reported that CT has to be implemented in a coherent way to solve specific situations which could not tell how frequent it was implemented.

Interviewees stated:

“it is dealt with each time this skill is needed to solve particular learning tasks.”

“Techniques differ from one context to another”

Q4: “What techniques/strategies/activities do you use ?”

Using improvisation activities to improve critical thinking

Participants suggested many strategies and activities such as : projects from real life situation strategy, problem solving, discussing material (after watching documentaries and taking notes), filling gaps, matching pairs, and developing ideas.

Q5: “What skills and sub-skills do you focus on the most ?”

Focusing on the language skills to improve critical thinking

Participants claimed that language skills are to be focused on in relation to critical thinking skills as an interviewee stated:

“I think all the four skills need to be given consideration; however the reading skills and the listening ones are closely related to critical thinking.”

Q6: “Why do you think students need to develop CT skills ?”

Critical thinking elevates the learners’ thinking abilities

Two out of four participants thought that CT is important for students to enlarge their cognitive abilities, others claimed that learning is based on good critical thinking, which is evaluating and questioning knowledge and the cognitive strategies involved with learning. Whereas others believe that CT renders students independent, innovative and aware of their own weaknesses through self evaluation.

Q7: “Do you think that group work is fundamental for developing CT skills ?”

Group work: “a useful teaching strategy”

Only one interviewee believes that group work is not fundamental in improving CT but claims that it is a good tactic that boosts students’ collaborative learning. On the other hand, other participants thought that group work is important and useful when guided appropriately by the teacher and that the group must include readers because they tend to be good observers that also comprehend, evaluate and manage situations. Another participant believes that group work makes timid students more effective, and points out that students tend to learn from one another more than they do from the teacher.

Q8: “Do EFL teachers face challenges when trying to improve students’ critical thinking?”

Difficulties linked to both, students and teachers

All the participants agree to the fact that EFL teachers do face a lot of difficulties when improving students CT. Some of them linked the latter to the lack of reading among students, while others believed that it depends on the teacher’s qualities and skills and the fact that

teachers do not integrate reasoning in their courses. In the same time there are other related problems such as crowded classrooms, classroom compositions, and the students' psychological barriers.

Q9: "Can you categorize the difficulties that EFL teachers may face when improving students' CT?"

Obstacles standing in the way of learning

The participants stated the difficulties as follows:

- Lack of reading among students and low performance.
- Lack of motivation.
- Students' psychological and mental problems.
- Poor time management.
- Lack of the initiative on the teachers' behalf to invite students to learn and motivate them.

Q10: "Is there anything to add that might be of interest?"

Encouraging reading and motivating students

Most of the interviewees emphasized that students should be independent, autonomous, and motivated by the teacher during the lecture by inviting them to learn and engaging them directly with the course.

Interviewee 1: *"I think students need to develop their CT skills on their own. Yet, we as teachers need to help them become autonomous learners"*

Interviewee 2: *"A teacher has to also simplify the input for the student to be in their reach and they will be intrinsically and extrinsically motivated and involved in the course. "*

Other participants encouraged students to read more for it is very beneficial for developing critical thinking skills.

3.6 Interpretation of the teachers' interview

The findings of the teachers' interview revealed that every interviewee perceive the notion of CT slightly differently from the others, agreeing all on some points nevertheless, that critical thinking is the objective analysis, evaluation, questioning, and creativity.

Moreover, based on the results of the interview, it was concluded that critical thinking is not very often deliberately discussed in definition and terminology. But rather integrated within the curriculum in forms of tasks, projects, analysis essays, and strategically subtle ways that require students to use the critical thinking instincts.

Judging by the answers of the teachers, we can tell that their methods of teaching are different from one another depending on the circumstances and the requirements of the course, which affects the rate of implementing CT in the classrooms. For instance, each module requires certain methods, techniques and activities to go accordingly with its context. In addition, the implementation of CT requires using certain techniques and strategies as the teachers proposed. The techniques can be mainly activities that trigger interactive and active learning such as discussions, and problem solving.

When trying to go through the findings of the fifth question, we figured that most teachers focus on the listening, reading, and writing skills which are closely associated to the critical thinking skills i.e. analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem solving.

Furthermore, good reasons were provided by the participants about the purpose of developing CT for students. For instance, it was stated that CT is very important for the cognitive aspect, and all the other aspects that relate to successful active learning, which means that the teachers are very much aware of the vitality of CT in the learning context.

Once again, the findings show the versatile strategies of teaching among the participants, as it was observed that not every teacher finds group work an important strategy, but most of them agree on the fact that it is very useful and effective for students because of the facilitations it creates for learning and developing any type of notion or skill.

The results of the question that aimed to pick up some of the difficulties which EFL teachers face in improving students' CT, turned out to be associating the difficulties and challenges with student and teacher-related factors. EFL teachers seem to have the most struggle with the

students linking it mostly to the lack of reading among students suggesting that students require the initiative from the teachers so they will not be passive recipients of knowledge but rather motivated, active learners.

Finally, the participants recommend and encourage the students to take more interest in reading. Furthermore, they suggest that students need to be pushed and motivated by their teachers and be independent nevertheless.

3.7 The observation

The observation was designed and composed of 8 items to be observed. It was tasked and held by the researcher and took place in the classroom consensually. The aim behind this observation task was to try and get an image of what challenges are the teachers facing as well as the extent of the process of improving students' critical thinking.

3.8 Analysis of the observation

Item 01: teacher rendering students autonomous and making them think independently

While attending sessions with our target population, we have noticed that the teachers often strategically make the students think independently and help them become autonomous learners, by creating flexible tasks, such as optional tasks that they can finish on their own or giving them a passage to digest at the beginning of the session. It was noticeable that the students started to participate and give their own opinion on the matters that were handed to them. Mostly in oral expression sessions, the students find themselves in a cooperative atmosphere.

Item 02: asking open-ended questions to trigger active thinking in students

Sometimes the teacher asks open-ended questions in the middle of an explanation to students to see their perspectives on matters. Almost in every module, this technique was used allowing students to dive deep for the sake of elaboration, thus, triggering active thinking.

Item 03: the teacher encourages students to apply background knowledge

It was observable mostly every session that the teacher brought up the background knowledge, making the students apply what they know on a given situation to analyze it. This was observed in modules such as written expression, and methodology.

Item 04: the teacher encourages students to be active learners

In all the sessions attended and every module, the teachers do encourage students to be active learners rather than passive recipients of information, by starting large group discussions at the very beginning of the sessions after giving them an article or a video to discuss. In addition, the instructor also establishes interactive lecturing strategies such as discussing a presented notion and directly interacting with it.

Item 05: the teacher encourages students to identify, analyze, and solve problems systematically

This strategy did not seem to be adopted by all teachers at all times, but it was implemented often in a good manner. It involved tasks and activities in the middle of the session, such as problem identification, analysis, discussions, and problem solving. Noticed often in written expression sessions.

Item 06: the teacher encourages students' creativity

We noticed during the observation task that teachers never fail to encourage students' creativity, as they always create a compassionate and accepting environment as well as value and reward students for their creativity which encouraged more students to participate. This was observable in all modules.

Item 07: starting debates between students

Though this is a very useful way to encourage students to think critically, it was rarely observed in the classroom except for oral expression sessions where the teacher presented topics and open them for debate.

Item 08: integrating reasoning

The involvement of reasoning was rarely observed. Reasoning is one of the main skills of critical thinking, as it is the part where the learner should find strong evidence to reinforce the argument. However, the methodology teacher seemed to push students to use logic and reason by pressuring them for accuracy.

3.9 interpretation of the observation

One of the reasons why most students are too dependent on their teachers in the way of thinking and learning is that the strategy of the teacher does not involve activities and tasks that are within the reach of the students in terms of understanding and familiarity considering it can be a way of motivating them. Moreover, creating a cooperative atmosphere encourages students to start thinking independently and critically when dealing with a given situation or making a decision. Potts (1994)

According to Potts (1994) critical thinking works best when the students are asked to give elaborations and deep explanations about certain notion in an analysis procedure, and going back to their prior knowledge and information nevertheless.

Every teacher finds it easier to do the job when his students are active learners, that is why most teachers use strategies such as interactive lecturing and group discussions to create a proper learning environment.

The implementation of critical thinking can be tricky but not if done systematically focusing on every skill, because it is the only way students can organize their way of thinking that would guarantee them to solve problems that are much complex. However, some teachers seemed to not pay much attention to such notion which can cause somewhat of an ambiguity for students when trying to improve their critical thinking skills.

There is creativity within every human mind that needs to be unlocked, and for that to happen, the learning environment created by the teacher should be student-friendly and accepting. The findings show that teachers give much consideration in a positive way to creativity which is a thinking effort, that is why they reward students for it encouraging them to achieve more.

Further, debates are very useful when trying to get students to adopt critical thinking which seems that some teachers have missed. Starting debates is also a good opportunity to integrate reasoning as a feature that strengthens arguments with evidence.

The results revealed how reasoning could be integrated within the classroom considering its importance in the process of improving critical thinking for students. Thus, students feel more pressured to utilize the reasoning skill when they faced they are faced with an intolerance of inexactness.

3.10 Data Discussion

The discussion of the findings is an attempt to draw together the research questions with the results while also testing hypothesis. In addition, the major findings represent the difficulties, the strategies and the methods involved in the process of improving critical thinking for students.

In the light of the results that were found, the use of critical thinking skills in the EFL classroom may differ from one teacher to another depending on the context of the subject or the course, though critical thinking is considerably important for all learning in general. CT should be treated as a structured formula of skills and steps for its implementation to be successful. Furthermore, the reason for the teachers facing difficulties in improving students' critical thinking skills is because they seem to be far behind the integration of its main skills, such as; reasoning within the classroom context.

Additionally, there are many conclusions drawn on the matter of the difficulties. The findings align with the fact that some of the factors which are involved with the challenges accompanying the improvement of critical thinking skills, are linked to the capabilities of the students and their motivation to learn. The teachers on the other hand are still struggling to figure out the best conditions, methods, and strategies that are compatible with the process of implementing critical thinking skills

Finally, there will always be obstacles that stand in the way of learning but none that can not be dealt with. The instructors could find it much easier to provide their students with knowledge in a collaborative atmosphere. The trick in eliminating the difficulties of teaching is in making the students independent and autonomous learners' so that they lay down some of the burdens of

teaching. Eventually, the students motivation plays a major role in this matter as it is required from the teachers to motivate their pupils.

3.11 Recommendations

Improving critical thinking skills for students may come with its challenges for both the teachers and the students. The difficulties that the EFL teachers face can be apparent if we look closely into the mechanisms, and interactions, and deal with them so that we can come with counter measures and procedures to overcome the obstacles that get in the way of learning.

After discussing the findings of our investigation, it was easy to locate the hindrances in this regard. It is highly recommended that students should work more on developing and enhancing the level of their target language in all its aspects, structures and skills.

Moreover, the teachers should create the right appropriate environment for the students to find themselves at ease to learn. The right environment is the classroom atmosphere where the student can be creative, interactive, more open-minded and less timid, because apparently some students do not even participate or function under pressure. Likewise, it is suggested that the teachers should train their students to be autonomous learners, by making them interact directly with the subject they are studying, and involving them in making decisions in tasks with cooperative learning strategies.

One of the best techniques in teaching that is very helpful and useful for teaching is group work. It is a technique that relieves the teacher from a good amount of the efforts made to achieve the learning objectives. In addition, group work is a good opportunity for learners to trade ideas, cooperate, think objectively and become critical thinkers.

A teacher can establish debates between students by making the debate questions relevant to specific curriculum implemented throughout the academic year. In-class discussions, with planning, can engage even the students who do not regularly participate as far as collaborative learning is concerned. Debates may help students improve critical thinking abilities including defining the problem, evaluating the reliability of sources, identifying and questioning assumptions, recognizing contradictions, and prioritizing the importance of each individual arguments in relation to the broader argument. (Kennedy, 2007, p.184) In a collective,

collaborative learning environment it also a good idea to establish competitiveness so that debates take place among students more often which will eventually make them use reason to argue and provide evidence as well analyze, discuss, and solve problems.

Another practical solution is to trigger active learning in students. Integrating active learning thus entails transitioning from the emphasis of instruction method to learner's knowledge construction through directed tasks, interactions, assignments, and atmospheres that foster profound meaningful learning.

Equally important, teachers do encounter challenges due to the lack of motivation among students. Therefore, teachers ought to attract the interest of the students by relating tasks and activities to the students' interests. They must motivate them with positive reinforcements and with creating a stress-free environment.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the gathered data from qualitative and quantitative tool material, was dealt with and analyzed sophisticatedly using the standard analysis method. The analysis were done using the graphs for numerical data extracted from the questionnaire followed by an interpretation as was done for the rest of the tools. Finally, suggestions and recommendations that were seen fit, were provided by the researcher for further contribution in the quest of finding the long term solutions to obliterate the obstacles that stand in the way of learning, in hopes of decreasing the difficulties facing EFL teachers in the process of improving their students' critical thinking.

General conclusion

The present study attempted to tackle one of the most controversial notions in the fields of research, study and education. Critical thinking is considered to be of high regards in the EFL context, for it is a way of thinking and a skill that encompasses the cognitive abilities responsible for the development of ideas and concepts making it easier for students to learn a language not only on a structural level, but also in terms of linguistics and deeper understandings of the language. Moreover, this research paper's main objective was to answer some frequently asked questions about the topic, and explore CT and CTS (critical thinking skills) in the process. It aims to highlight the difficulties and challenges that EFL teachers are facing when in the process of improving their students' critical thinking skills. In addition, the investigation was conducted in the university of Dr. Moulay Tahar with the sample study being 3rd year English language students in hopes of finding effective solutions for the given problematic situation.

The research began with a review of the existing literature, which gave details on several definitions, and several aspects of the topic. It also tackled the importance of CT in the EFL context, along with a detailed explanation about the CT skills and the sub-skills that are used within the same educational context.

Research questions were established based on a present dilemma to be given hypothesis and tested on the field. This paper was an attempt to investigate the skills of critical thinking in relation to the EFL context without overlooking the main concern which is the challenges that come with implementing critical thinking as well as the practical solutions for that matter.

One of the main concerns of this research paper is to explore the skills of CT that are used within the EFL classroom. In addition, the researcher have drawn some conclusions, eventually determining that all the skills are equally important and required within any educational context.

After going through the quantitative and qualitative data which was collected from the tools, the researcher came to the conclusion that the difficulties and obstacles facing EFL teachers in improving their students CT skills, can be linked to the teachers and the students alike on different levels. The interpretation of the results confirmed that it is important for students to be aware of what they are studying and have background knowledge about it. It is also very recommended for the students to do more reading on their behalf. The students' lack of

motivation is also one of the main reasons that present a challenge for the teachers to implement CTS.

The findings suggest that teachers must put more effort into motivating their students and invite them to learn while also creating a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom. Promoting critical thinking abilities in EFL classrooms via teaching reading and writing is a difficult task, but one that pays off if done correctly. It necessitates efforts from all aspects of the teaching and learning process, particularly from the instructor, who ought to be properly prepared for any tight situations, and the student, who must put in more effort in class and develop a sense of enthusiasm towards learning.

Additionally, this research paper aspired to come up with the most satisfying outcome, despite of facing some hindrances such as shortage of time, social distancing protocols, a tight schedule and other financial issues resulting in the fact that not enough data and information could be gathered to cover all aspects of such a broad notion as critical thinking.

Finally, the researcher recommends for future works to explore more about critical thinking skills, sub-skills and the challenges that may occur in learning them. In addition, considering the large extent of theories about critical thinking it ought to be given time when investigated. It is advisable to work on easy schedule at a convenient time for conducting an investigation. To undertake a research is a quest of knowledge about the topic researched and the self, the researcher learns more and more about the topic all the while about himself as he progresses through.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire

Questionnaire for students

Dear respondent,

The current questionnaire is part of a Master Degree research that investigates the difficulties facing EFL teachers in improving critical thinking of their learners. We would be very grateful if you could answer the questions below that would take no more than 10 minutes of your time. Thank you for your much-appreciated time and collaboration.

1. Gender:

Male Female

2. How would you describe your English Language Proficiency :

C1 (Advanced) can express yourself fluently in almost any situation, can also produce clear, detailed texts on challenging subjects.

B1 (Intermediate) can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters , and can write simple letters stating facts and events.

A1 (Beginner) Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions.

3. Which language skill do you focus more on improving ?

Listening Speaking Reading Writing

4. How often do you work in groups/pairs in the classroom ?

More often Sometime Rarely Never

5. What type of classroom activities do you like more ?

Listening activities Reading activities

Speaking activities

Writing activities

6. Critical thinking is mainly the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment. Are familiar with this concept ?

Yes

No

-If yes, please provide a brief definition in your own words

.....
.....

7. Do you think that critical thinking should be taught ?

Yes

No

Neutral

- If yes then please clarify :

.....

8. Has critical thinking ever been introduced to you by your teachers ?

Yes

No

If yes then how or in what form ?

.....

9. Do you think that critical thinking is a complex concept ?

Yes

No

Someh

If you think it is complex then please elaborate:

.....

Appendix B : Teachers' Interview

Interview for teachers

Dear teacher,

This interview is dedicated for the accomplishment of a Master dissertation about the difficulties facing EFL teachers in improving critical thinking. Your mere interaction with this subject can be highly significant, in which you are much appreciated.

- 1- What does the notion of CT mean to you ?

- 2- Have you ever introduced critical thinking as a concept to your students ?
If so, then to what end ? just as a skill to be developed or as a primary objective within the syllabus ?
- 3- How often is critical thinking implemented in your classroom ?

- 4- What techniques/strategies/activities do you use ?

- 5- What skills and sub-skills do you focus on the most ?

- 6- Why do you think students need to develop CT skills ?

- 7- Do you think that group work is fundamental for developing CT skills ?

- 8- Do EFL teachers face challenges when trying to improve students' critical thinking?

9- Can you categorize the difficulties that EFL teachers may face when improving students' CT ?

10- Is there anything to add that might be of interest ?

Appendix C : The Observation

Objective items to be observed	Observable activities	Occurrence rate				
		<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Some-times</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
1- The teacher tries to render students autonomous and makes them think independently.	Creating flexible tasks					
	Creating a cooperative atmosphere					
	Allowing choices in tasks					
2- Open-ended questions are asked to trigger active thinking in students.						
3- The teacher encourages students to apply background knowledge to analyze a given situation.						
4- The teacher encourages students to be active learners not passive recipients of information.	Large group discussions					
	Encouraging Self-assessment					
	Interactive lecturing					
5- The teacher encourages students to identify, analyze, and solve problems systematically.	Problem identification					
	Analysis and discussions					
	Problem solving					
6- The teacher encourages students' creativity.	Creating a compassionate and accepting environment.					
	Value creativity and rewarding students for it.					

<p>7- The teachers starts debates between students to encourage them to think critically.</p>						
<p>8- The teacher integrates reasoning so students can come up with evidence-reinforced arguments.</p>						