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**Exploring the Role of Classroom Discourse in Enhancing
EFL Students' Critical Thinking Skills.**

The case of Study: Third year EFL Students at the University of Béjaïa.

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master's
Degree in Linguistic at Bejaia University.

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Introduction

Learning English in the EFL context involves developing not only language skills such as writing, listening, reading and speaking, but also critical thinking skills, which are considered as the 21st century skills. The improvement of English teaching and learning depends not only on traditional way of teaching and learning, but also on the output resulting from learners' productions. Important bodies of research about the importance of critical thinking in teaching and learning experiences are reported in the literature. For example, Guendouzi (2016) highlighted the importance of promoting critical thinking skills through developing speaking abilities in the Department of English at Béjaïa University. However, the question which should be addressed is how can these skills be improved?

Statement of the Problem and Research Aim

The issue of the present research is the lack of critical thinking among EFL students. Most of them seem to be incapable to think critically and achieve higher order of thinking due to many reasons such as the absence of good instruction and the lack of background knowledge. In addition, both of teachers and students seem to ignore the importance of developing critical thinking skills.

This study, then, aims to explore the role of classroom discourse in developing EFL students' critical thinking skills. Specifically, it seeks to shed light on the techniques and tools used by teachers to promote critical thinking in the classroom.

Researches on improving students' critical thinking skills have suggested several strategies and techniques. Tawil (2016) showed in his research that debating in the classroom improved students' overall critical thinking disposition. Most of them argued that classroom discourse is important to enhance critical thinking skills since it is already

critical. Moreover, they asserted that classroom interactions and discussions play a crucial role in developing critical thinking skills.

Research Questions

This research is guided by the following questions:

1/How does classroom discourse contribute in enhancing EFL students' critical thinking?

2/ what are the techniques used by the teachers to enhance their students' critical thinking skills?

Research Design and Methodology

In order to achieve the objective of our research, qualitative method was used to collect data from the participants. It consisted of classroom observation of 3rd year LMD students at Béjaïa University. Besides, we observed how group discussion and debate improve their abilities in thinking critically. In addition, Interviews with some students and some of their teachers were conducted.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of this research consisted of 3rd year students studying in the Department of English at the University of Béjaïa. The research participants were from group 6, which consisted of 26 students divided into two subgroups: A and B.

Organization of the Work

The study at hands consists of two parts: the theoretical part and the practical part. The first one is concerned with the background studies. It is made up of two sections; the first section is devoted to discuss the concept of critical thinking, and the second one is concerned with a detailed discussion about classroom discourse.

Chapter One:

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter is an overview about the variables of our research. We aim to define and discuss some concepts by reviewing some studies in relation to critical thinking skills. This chapter is divided into two sections, the first one deals with the definition of critical thinking and its importance. The second one is devoted to discuss the concept of classroom discourse.

Section One: Critical Thinking

Teaching and learning a foreign language is not easy. Many learners encounter various difficulties and problems, and one of the main issues is that they are incapable to master critical thinking skills. Although critical thinking is considered as a 21st century skill, it is not a new concept; it has been discussed for decades. For instance, Facione (1992:10) discussed CT, and defined it as cognitive skills.

Reed (1998) reviewed the main aspect of this skill. The literature in the field of critical thinking shows that there is no single approved definition. In this chapter, we will review the most important definitions of critical thinking; consider who is a critical thinker? and highlight the importance of this skill in both education and society.

As we have mentioned earlier, there is no common definition of critical thinking, this is due to its complexity and because it is an elusive skill. Facione (2015) consider it as higher order thinking skills and cognitive skills.

The literature on critical thinking skills shows that there are two main disciplines: a philosophical and a psychological one. Each one has its own view. The first one is based on the qualities and the nature of a person. However, the second one focuses on the

cognitive side. Lewis and Smith (1993) stated that the philosophical approach focuses on the hypothetical critical thinker, enumerating the qualities and characteristics of this person (as cited in Lai, 2011:5).

Reed (1998:16) conducted a study on critical thinking and reviewed the main differences between two disciplines. She claimed that “philosophers have tended to focus on the nature and quality of the products of critical thinking, for example argument. Psychologists, on the other hand, have concentrated on the process of cognition”.

Lipman and Paul (1993) were leaders of philosophical approaches. Paul (1993) has defined critical thinking as “disciplined, self-directed thinking that exemplifies the perfections of thinking appropriate to a particular mode or domain of thought” (as cited in Lai, 2011:9). Researchers who belong to this approach believe that critical thinker is inquisitive in nature and critical thinking is a set of qualities that are born with a person.

By contrast, the psychological approach is based on behavior and cognitive skills. Lai (2011:7) stated that psychologists tend to define critical thinking by the types of actions or behaviors critical thinkers can do. Thus, the psychological approach defined the concept of critical thinking as a cognitive skill, and then a critical thinker follows steps and actions in order to achieve higher order thinking. The critical thinker will observe, analyze, interpret and finally reflect. According to Willingham (2007), “seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms your ideas, reasoning dispassionately demanding that claims be backed by evidence ,deducing and inferring conclusion from available facts, solving problems and so forth” (as cited in Lai 2011:8).

The Third approach is the educational approach. According to this approach, the process of thinking critically occurs in six steps: knowledge, comprehension, applications, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. According to Lai (2011:9) Bloom’s taxonomy is

hierarchical, with comprehension at the bottom and evaluation at the top” (Lai, 2011: 9). According to this approach, critical thinking is associated with cognitive sides. It starts first by recalling prior knowledge, applying information, analyzing, and finally evaluating. These Taxonomies make the educational approach different from others.

Although the philosophical, psychological and educational approach have different views about the concept of critical thinking and tend to define it in different ways, there are common points. The three approaches agree that critical thinking is based on reasoning, problem solving and decision-making. According to Ennis (1985) Paul (1992), Willingham (2007) “critical thinking means making inference using inductive or deductive reasoning “(as cited in Lai, 2011:9).In addition, the educational approach combines the two field’s view. This point is supported by Reed (1998:16). She said: “while most theorists have continued to base their theories and definition of critical thinking or higher order reasoning in one discipline or the other, some educators have noted the importance of drawing on both philosophy and psychology”

1. Definition of Critical Thinking

According to Moon (2005:5) many students who come across the word ‘critical’ would reasonably associate it with the everyday sense of making a negative comment about something. The concept of critical thinking seems as it is evident and everyone can define it as a skill and/or the ability to give a critic about something either negative or positive. However, researchers define it in different ways such as decision making, critical reflection, solving problems, reasoning and higher orders thinking.

We selected some important studies where the concept of critical thinking skills is defined in different ways and views.

Moore and Parker (2007), proposed that “Critical thinking is the process of determining whether to accept or reject a claim by careful evaluation and assessment (as cited in Savich, 2009: 4).

A recent study of Tawil (2016:5) asserted that the critical thinking process is a cognitive process which requires a certain level of flexibility during this process.

Moon (2008) also believed that there are different steps required in critical thinking, understanding, analyzing then evaluating information. All these steps have to function together in order to perfect one’s critical thinking. This point is supported by Tawil (2016:6). He proposed the following steps:

- a) Observation/ research.
- b) Assumptions /inferring.
- c) Reasoning/analysis and judgment.

The steps listed are the basic skills needed to think critically and the ability to reason a judgment that will enhance open-mindedness. Beyond this, the concept of critical thinking refers to the set of components process and abilities that students should develop in order to be ideal critical thinkers such as observation, analysis and evaluation that governed a logic thinking and careful judgment.

The following figure summarizes the steps of critical thinking skills.

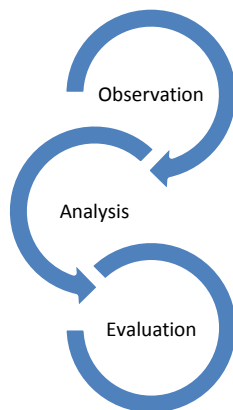


Figure1: The steps of critical thinking skills

2 .Features of Critical Thinking

When we go beyond definitions of critical thinking, we will find diverse views due to the context, time and manner in which we use the term critical thinking. However, it has some prominent features that describe it and show agreement between those views such as reflection, authenticity, standards, truth, and objectivity. A Recent study of Butterworth and Thawaites (2013:4) on thinking skills and critical thinking showed that reflection, reasoning and creativity are crucial for a person to think critically. In fact, this is what distinguishes thinking from higher order thinking (critical thinking).

2.1 Reflection

According to the psychological view which focuses on the cognitive side, critical thinking is not only the process of thinking, but also it requires other processes such as reflection. Reflection is a quality of human beings, so everyone can think. Sometimes, people think without a deeper thinking. That is to say, they tend to take a decision according to their beliefs, habits, etc. However, in order to think critically, people need not only to think, but they need to have a deeper thought in order to analyze and evaluate everything before making decisions or judgments. Besides, it involves thinking about thinking. “Reflection on the way we think or thinking about thinking, helps us to evaluate how effective our thinking is, what its strengths are, where it sometimes goes wrong and most importantly, how it can be improved” (Butterworth and Thawaites , 2013: 3)“This means that critical thinking starts when we reflect about the reason of such a view, so why? What is the evidence? , which arguments can support my judgment? These questions are parts of critical thinking whereby we can be aware about evaluation and judgment.

Another study of Moon (2008:34) had a common view with the previous one concerning reflections. It argued that some forms of reflections such as ‘critical reflection’ might include critical thinking. We also reflect in order to achieve the kind of thinking that

engages prior experience. Similarly, Butterworth and Thawaites (2013:4) said: “what distinguishes higher orders of thinking is that they apply knowledge and adapt it into different purposes” .They highlighted the importance of background knowledge while we reflect since we cannot judge anything without background knowledge. In order to achieve higher thinking, we need some evidence on which we can stand to evaluate our thinking so as to make a judgment that is based on evidence and logic.

2.2. Reasoning

Reasoning is another important component of critical thinking. We can say that it is impossible to think critically without the process of reasoning. According to Butterworth and Thawaites (2013:2), reasoning is required both to enable and to apply creative thinking, just as creative thinking is needed to give a spark to reasoning. He added: “Reasoning is the process by which we advance from what we already know to new knowledge and understanding”.

2.3. Creativity

Creativity is the result of reasoning. Without reasoning, there will be no creativity. Hence, each one affects another one, and both of them are a quality of critical thinking skills. Creativity is related to authenticity. “At the first time, critical thinking and creativity might seem to have little in common, or even to be mutually exclusive construct... as such good thinking requires the ability to generate intellectual products ,which is associated with creativity”(Lai,2011:22).

3. Critical Thinking and Learning

According to Reed (1998:13), the ability to think critically and to reason well has been regarded as an important and a necessary outcome of education. Developing critical thinking skills depends on learning and CT skills which play a crucial role in the learning process. There are interchangeable interests between them. Accordingly, teaching students

how to think become substantial goal. “The concept and its relationship to the educational process seem to have emerged on top and it is time to explore the landscape of this term” (Moon, 2008:14).

4. Components of Critical Thinking

According to Moon (2008:14), the term of critical thinking is used confidently and knowingly. Everyone can define the concept of critical thinking. It refers to judgments or giving critics about something. However, the right meaning of the term is totally different. The term critical thinking is a complex term. There are different components to critical thinking which are dispositions, teaching logic and components process. Those components describe the process of critical thinking.

4.1 Disposition

In addition to ability and willingness, critical thinking skills involve disposition. It is something related to attitudes, beliefs as well as cognition. According to Facione (2000:63) critical thinking disposition is a consistent internal motivation to act toward or respond to persons, events or circumstance in habitual, yet malleable ways (as cited in Lai, 2011:10).

Moon (2008:7) claimed that it is an approach that includes emotional as well as cognitive and whole person functioning. “Critical thinking disposition measures the person’s ability to think (Tawil , 2016:2).

4.2. Teaching of Logic

The word ‘logic’ refers to something based on reason and objectivity. It is a part of critical thinking. In other words, critical thinking is based on logic thinking, and the logic approach to critical thinking refers to the quality of reasoning focusing on the analysis of

the arguments. Moon (2005:47) in his book argued that teaching logic takes a technical view of the process of critical thinking as a cognitive ability that can be increased by knowledge of the rules of logic and practicing them.

According to Moon (2008:47), logic deals with the quality of reasoning and arguments. “A concern that is inspired by the logic approaches to critical thinking is the place of rules to the learning processes of critical thinking (Moon, 2008: 49). “We must acknowledge that there are many forms of logic, and what we therefore generalize here the application of logic was seen to maximize the objectivity of critique and argument” (Moon, 2008: 49)

4.3. Component Process

Components processes consist of a set of processes such as process of evidence, skills and abilities. According to Moon (2005:7), the process of critical thinking involves relatively systematic consideration of ideas that we might call evidence. This might be called the process of evidence.

5. The Importance of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking has a big importance either in society or education. According to Mason (2007), today’s society is more demanding in that it develops and offers more challenges and choices that requires more active, creative and critical workers who are lifelong learners (as cited in Tawil 2016:8). Since critical thinking is decision making and problem solving, the critical thinker will always activate their critical reflection when it is necessary in order to solve problems or change situations. Thus, they bring new things and solutions by following steps to fostering critical thinking which are evaluation, analysis, and observation. This later is the first step that occurs. We say occurs and not flowed by

critical thinker because of the nature of the person. If he is aware, he will observe everything around him after evaluating and reflecting.

The reason why “critical thinking” is an important skill is because of the large amount of information we are fed daily. We need to stay critical towards both content and source to be able to make our own judgment on things. This is essential to keep our democratic community in the way that citizens have to be able to challenge the information they are given and question power so that the society can evolve together. (Kristensson, 2007).

Similarly to society, education has, also, benefited from promoting critical thinking. A simple search on Google shows that critical thinking has a central role in education and this is evident in mission statement for higher education (Moon, 2008:16).

Consequently, researchers and educators shed light on this skill by encouraging using techniques and methods to enhance it. “More recently the partnership for 21st century skills has identified critical thinking as one of several learning and innovation skills necessary to prepare students for post-secondary education” (Lai, 2011). “Educators have long been aware of the importance of critical thinking skills as an outcome of student learning “(Lai, 2011). Over the years, researchers gave importance to critical thinking. However, it became now a fashionable term of 21st century. This is why developing critical thinking is a prominent objective and a goal of many universities over the world. “Critical thinking: to support students and scholarly approach to their discipline this will enable them to apply their knowledge (Moon, 2008:16). Therefore, developing critical thinking gives more opportunities to achieve higher levels not only in education, but in all domains. It has an effect on attitudes. “It has been shown, unsurprisingly, that confidence and aptitude in critical thinking and problem solving will assist students to achieve higher grades across all the subjects that they study (Butterworth &Thwaites, 2013:4).

Since one of the main parts of democracy is about being able to make your own choices, critical thinking is a crucial part of it. Understanding, analyzing and evaluating all come together when trying to educate a democratic citizen (Kristensson,2007: 19).

Accordingly Reed (1998:13) also said that “educators are not alone in recognizing the importance of critical thinking. The demands of employment in a global economy, the survival of a democratic way of life and personal decision making in a complex and rapidly changing society require people who can reason and make good judgment with rapidly changing and technological development”

Hence critical thinking is considered as 21st century skills because it helps us to manage with actual world change whereby it enables us to solve problems and perform well in complex situations.

6. Characteristics of a Critical Thinker

We can find critical thinking abilities in writing, reading, listening and speaking. For instance, while listening, the ideal critical thinker is that person who listens well to others’ opinions without any prejudice. And while reading, the ideal one who can analyze well, evaluate and interpret as well as in the process of writing and speaking (productive skills), the one who can convince others by valid arguments and evidence as well as the way in which he defends their opinion. Flexibility, open- mindedness and truth-seeking are also important characteristics of an ideal critical thinker and everyone should develop such characteristics in order to think critically and achieve higher order of thinking. “A certain set of characteristics attributes that can be used to describe a person inclined to use critical thinking, analyticity,systematicity,inquisitiveness,open-mindedness.Self-confidence, truth seeking and maturity” (Hajhosseing,2012:1360). In order to display critical thinking, students need to develop skills in interpreting, analyzing, reasoning, evaluation, means

learning how to think critically. “There are many abilities that the students need to know to be an ideal critical thinker” (Kristensson 2007:15). For him, ability to judge credibility of a source, to analyze arguments and to ask questions.

According to Tawil (2016), open-mindedness is the most important skill to be developed in the critical thinking modal. Open-mindedness enables students to examine the facts from all sides and evaluate the information for correctness. Students that lack open-mindedness tend to rely on their own judgments and react on personal basis by discounting reliable information being presented to them. Thus, making an erroneous decision or even failure to act. ” In addition, according to the American Philosophical Association, the ideal critical thinker is inquisitive in nature, open-minded, flexible, has a desire to be well informed, and understands diverse viewpoints(Lai,2011:9)

Accordingly, Butterworth and Thwaites (2013:9) reported these characteristics:

- Open-mindedness: “without open mindedness, we cannot judge fairly and objectively whether some statement or story is true or not.
- Active and informed: “we have to be ready to take an active interest in the subject matter and be prepared to investigate and enquire. Hasty, uninformed judgments are never critical” (Butterworth & Thwaites, 2013:9)

Section Two: Classroom Discourse

The process of learning is not only the input information, but it is also creativity, problem solving and output resulting from learners' product. As well, the activity of teaching is not only the amount of information and the transfer of knowledge, but also the creation of good environment and setting for better construction and classroom instruction. Recent development in SLA finds that there is no single method that is the best which gives a better result. However, each method can play an important role in the development of teaching and learning English. Both of learners and teachers play a role in the development of learning process and their behaviors in classroom effect learning outcomes. Without any doubt, classroom discourse is the heart of language teaching and learning. It is a broad area that covers multiple aspects. In other words, it is a source for the emergence and development of student skills, particularly critical thinking skills. For Behnam and Pouriran, "Classroom discourse is dynamic and cooperative where the teacher and the learners cooperate and negotiate with each other in achieving certain instructional goals in the classroom" (2008:7). Besides, we attempt to discuss in this section the concept of classroom discourse and its role in teaching second language acquisition.

According to Chaudron (2016:7) in recent years, a much greater role has been contributed to interactive features of classroom behavior such as turn-taking, questioning and answering, negotiation of meaning and feedback.

1. Definition of Classroom Discourse

According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002:12) underlying the word 'discourse' is the general idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life. A familiar example is medical discourse and political discourse. There are many types of discourse

such as political discourse, critical discourse, and rhetorical discourse and classroom discourse. Each one has a register which refers to such a domain and a specific field. It can be written or spoken. In the same book, they have proposed this definition of a discourse as a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world).

In this chapter, we focused on classroom discourse; special type of discourse. It is concerned with classroom instruction; interaction between teacher-student, student-student and it refers to the language that is used in classroom communication.” classroom communication is both highly complex and central to all classroom activity” (Walsh, 2011:12). It is considered as an interactional process in which classroom interaction competence is developed. This later refers to capacities of teachers and learners to communicate and interact without any barriers which will improve teaching and learning process by acquire and develop new skills. “Any endeavor to improve teaching and learning should begin by looking at classroom interaction (Walsh, 2011:12). Besides, classroom discourse is what happens inside the classroom based on language, communication and interaction that is raised between classroom’s participants. “Discourse in the language classroom is a matter of the oral use of language in the classroom” (Benham and Pouriran, 2008: 118)

The following figure presents the main patterns of classroom discourse. Interaction, IRF and FLE modal.

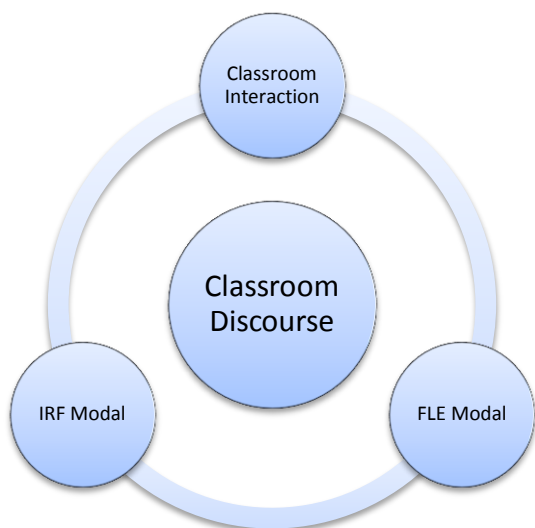


Figure2: Classroom Pattern.

2 Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction refers to the communication that occurs inside the classroom. It is termed by Markee (2015:30) as discourse interaction. It represents teaching and learning in classroom. It consists of teacher talk, students talk, different type of questions, student-student interaction, teacher -student interaction, IRF modal (Initiation-Response-Feedback), FLE Modal, input and output information. According to Rymes (2016:37), interactional context is another crucial dimension of classroom discourse.

2.1. Student-Student Interaction

Regarding interaction that occurs between students, it is concerned with the language used in the classroom in order to communicate and change ideas between each other in different context and situations. Teachers use different techniques and methods that aim to engage student in communication and produce language. Among the interesting techniques that are used to create good conditions are group discussion, debates, dialogic teaching, etc. Many researchers argued that they are effective.

Both dialogic teaching methods (Socratic dialogue and group discussion) have caused more tendency for a logical dialogue and positive tendency for using these methods and finally could attract the critical tendency of the participants to six elements of critical thinking dimension.

Hajhosseiny, (2012:1366)

2.2. Teacher-Student Interaction

Teacher-student interaction is totally different from student-student interaction. This type of interaction is based on different types of questions that are asked by teachers to student to check comprehension in addition to IRF modal (Initiations –Response-Feedback) and FLE modal (Facilitate-Listen-Engage).

- **IRF Modal**

IRF or IRE model (Initiation, Response, and Feedback) is a part of classroom discourse. It is considered as a traditional pattern. It consists of three moves. The first one is called initiation. Teachers ask different types of questions. Then, the second move is response. The student answers the teachers' question. Finally, it comes the most important one: feedback or evaluation. It means the teacher evaluates his students' response. The other three moves are labeled as opening, answering, and follow up" (Dailey,2010:5).IRF is considered as a traditional approach .In the first phase, teachers ask close questions that involve a short response. In addition, students hesitate because such responses have a limited number of answers such as yes/no. Thus, students are not sure in contrast to the referential one which is open ended and students can express as they want. As a result, the amount of discourse is predominant by the teacher. A recent study of Lloyd et al (2016) argued that because of the teacher's dominant role in leading and guiding the discussion, the traditional IRF modal perpetuates teacher –dictated communication.

- **FLE Modal**

It is a pattern of classroom discourse. Teachers plan a strategic instruction by using effective tools such as referential questions (critical questions). Authentic discourse can engage students, and make them reflect on their ideas, find new arguments and not just recall past experiences.

Lloyd et al. (2016:296) describe teacher's role in FLE modal as representative of horizontal communication that leads student to be independent in their thinking and contributions. FLE, "facilitate, listen- engage. Specifically, the teacher plans strategies and questions with the clear intention of engaging students in discourse and creating a sense of community within the classroom" (Lloyd et al,2016:296).

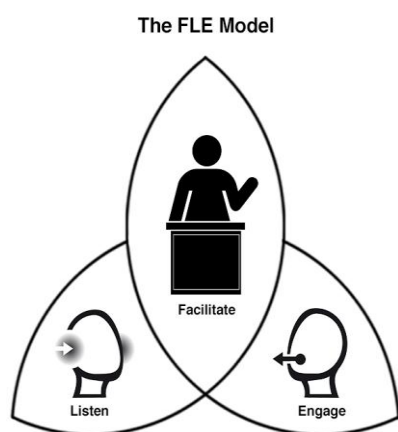


Figure 3: The Facilitate–Listen–Engage (FLE) Model.

This figure illustrates the role of the teacher as the facilitator and represents the horizontal communication established throughout the FLE Model (adopted from Lloyd et al,2016: 296)“Acting as the facilitator through each phase of the FLE model, the teacher through reflection and careful construction of lessons plans literacy instruction that purposely engages students in topic, related conversation”. (Lloyd et all, 2016: 296). In this phase, the teacher and the student are both participants in classroom discourse and they are both speaker and listener by contrast to IRF modal. The teacher is the dominant in the

conversation. In the engage phase, students demonstrate their thinking. It is quoted by Lloyd et al. “In fact, engaging in dialogue provides students with opportunities to communicate. In addition, Lloyd et al. (2016) compared between ERF modal (traditional approach) and FLE modal.

IRF	FLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher dominated. • Teacher talk invokes teacher to student discourse. • Teacher determines topic and controls interactions. • Teacher poses a question, students respond and teacher provides some type of quick feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-centered. • Teacher talk promotes student to student discourse. • Student to –student discourse creates a supportive classroom community. • Balance between teacher talk. • Students share in conversation-like dialogue and identify themselves as viable members of their learning community.

Table01: a comparison between IRF and FLE (adopted from Lloyd et al. 2016).

This figure compares the IRE model to the FLE model (adopted from Lloyd, 2016).

IRF Modal



Figure 4: A Comparison of Approaches to Classroom Discourse.

3. Types of Question Used in Classroom

Questions are considered as an engine of classroom discourse and interaction in the classroom. They are asked by the teacher either to check clarification and comprehension or to engage students in conversations. Many investigations concerned with the effective types of questions used in the EFL classroom. It is divided into two prominent types: display and referential questions. Both of them are important in enhancing student's abilities and skills. The first one is mainly used when the teacher wants to check clarification and the second one to promote discussion. Thus, the choice is important, and it depends on the aim of the lesson. According to Rezai (2015:4). Among different types of questions, display and referential questions are two common types asked in classroom. Another related study of Benham and Pouriran (2008:124) argued that referential questions made more classroom interaction.

➤ Referential question:” Questions in the language classrooms should be referential or meaning-based, and not focus only on forms”

According to Walsh (2011:12), display questions serve a range of functions, including: eliciting a response, checking understanding, guiding learners to words a particular response, promoting involvement and concept checking the answer will be short.

“Apart from display questions, teachers also ask genuine more open-ended questions, designed to promote discussion and debate”.

According to Walsh (2011:12):

- Referential questions result in more natural responses.
- Resulting in more conversational type of interaction.

- It begins with “wh questions” such as who-why- what,

The distinction between display and referential is less important than the relation between a teacher’s pedagogic good and voice of question. If the establish is to quickly check understanding or what learners already known; display questions are perfectly adequate. If, on the other hand, the... is to promote discussion ...the referential questions are more appropriate to be reformulated (Walsh 2011:12)

Another study shed light on different types of questions, Sutor (2001) As reported by Benham and pouriran (2008:124) proposed six types of question that are as follow:

- Socratic or elicitation questions: it is a methodological approach that is based on questions, formulating question from preview question. Researchers argued that this technique is not beneficial for the learners.” For example, accuses it of averting time in holding back information with could easily be given by the teacher”
- Convergent Q vs. Divergent Q: “Divergent question are used when the teacher wants to compare student’s ideas about a specific topic.”
 - Divergent questions allow the learning to establish real personal involvement in the course of the lesson.
 - Convergent questions can be divided into closed/yes/no answer) and open questions.
 - Represented questions: “questions in the language classrooms should be referential or meaning, based, and not fours only or form.

It is important to construct collaboration, and raise comprehension by using critical question that involves argument, reason such why? How? And so on, this point was supported by Hardman (2016) he suggested a question techniques with composed of three phase:

- Tutor closed questions
- Tutor open question (e.g. what's your opinion? What do you think? , how would you?)
- Tutor or another student a question

“ The students tended to give specific responses because the teacher asked display questions... they were asked with referential questions, the students were forced to respond with open-ended answers” (Winarti,2017:224).

4. The Importance of Question Used in Classroom

Good instruction based on the way asking question and the purpose, teachers should determine the needs of their students in order to make balance between the two types. “Classroom discourse is dynamic and cooperative where the teacher and the learners cooperate and negotiate with each other in achieving certain instructional goals in the classroom”. For example, “tutor why” agree-disagree and challenge questions helps to develop critical thinking (Hardman, 2016:9,10) This question technique can be used fully so as to encourage student participation, engage students with the teaching content develop thinking skills. Behnam and Pouriran (2008:123), said that “in the realm of teaching and learning , questions have been cited as not only the most often used, but also the simple most important strategy used by instructors“ .they added “ high. Level questions, in contrast, help students to use higher order thinking or reasoning skills” (Behnam and pouriran,2008:123), high level questions , open the way for discussion, long answer that is valid because, such types of questions mainly concerns with opinions, and so on. By contrast, low level of questions will limit answers. This will result in a lack of critical thinking abilities. Lloyd et all. (2016) proposed another component of questions which is argumentation, questions (that enhance conversation) causes argumentation; questions mother of argumentation. Hence, students will have an objective of

defending...their claims by reasoning, argumentation....”Argumentation can be regarded as probing questions where the teacher involves the students in a challenging situation in order to make them justify their reason(Lloyd et all, 2016 :119). In this phase, the teacher mainly asks referential questions which are called thinking questions. This latter offered to students opportunities to activate knowledge, give explanation and argumentations towards subjects which are based on logic thinking and reasoning. In fact, this is a crucial pedagogical aspect and instruction where teachers search for best methods and tools to gain best outcomes. Because questions asked by teachers play an important critical role in preparing learners for a better future.

5. Classroom Talk

Classroom talk is another important high quality classroom pattern talks of teachers should limit the TRF modal. This latter has a negative impact or talk classroom where students because passive and the teacher only who control the conversation by asking questions in order to check students’ understating or asking for clarification. However, if it is formative feedback strategies or feedback techniques, it will make a balance between teacher talk and student contribution. Instead of teacher centered learning, it will be student centered. Learning, whereby, they will improve their abilities and capacities. This idea is supported by Hardman (2016:11), these feedback techniques can help to open up and extend classroom discourse, facilitate knowledge commutation and a shared understanding, and encourage genuine communication and critical thinking

The importance of dialogic teaching that concerns with teaching and learning talk is highlighted in the recent wok of Hardman (2016). He assert that there is a need to make use of balance of the teacher-centered recitations and learner centered interaction and take charge of their own learning so that he required tutors to plan their teaching session

carefully so as to create dialogic spaces where discussion dialogues can purposefully take pace to achieve dialogue educational goals. On the insight of this citation, discussion and dialogue are other purposeful and successful techniques that will prepare students for skillful student which help them to build better future. Other studies investigate the importance of classroom talk and the way in which can improved.

Goria et all(2016:4) argued that high quality classroom talk is characterized by the use of open and authentic questions and formative feedback .High quality classroom talk requires the braking up of the tutor's control and breaking out of the limitations of the IRF recitation script through higher order questions and formative feedback strategies

5. Dialogic Teaching

Dialogue or dialogic teaching methods consist of two main tools which are: Socratic dialogue and group discussion. Many researchers argued that this method is effective for creating active learning that will improve critical thinking skills and student's abilities in reasoning and creativity. As well, they will be able to solve problems, learn to be more responsible, open-minded and aware about judgement. In our literature, we based on some of them. Students need to learn how they defend their opinions based on logic and valid arguments not on their beliefs. This can occur by posing questions and through eye contact, when the student sitting around and each one's contribution push another one to react and express their ideas toward a subject. "The teacher can divide the class into smaller groups and let them search for information on the given topic themselves this is a good opportunity to challenge their critical thinking and demand through investigation behind information and references to everything" (Hajhosseiny, 2012:1366).

Classroom Debates

Classroom discussion and debates make learner more active and skillful. In fact, this is what we call peer teaching and learning. The teacher will give them platform to stand on a better example which is critical thinking skills.

According to Tawil (2016:9), debates can be utilized as a method to teach student critical thinking skills. Since some researchers define critical thinking as metacognition, debating is an activity that helps increase the level of metacognition.

“By using debates as a tool, the students will firstly get to search their subject and develop their abilities of judging the credibility of a source, then they will get to communicate and improve their argumentative skills” (Kristenson, 2007:3).

“Classroom discussion could invite the student to listen and make a deep contemplation in reason of the opposite side through making a dialogic atmosphere “(Hajhosseiny,2012: 1366).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed the concept of critical thinking and classroom discourse as well as the effect of different classroom tools on enhancing student’s critical abilities. Additionally, the most important related studies were reviewed.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two: Research Methodology, Results, and Discussion

Introduction

To meet the objective of this study, a descriptive research design was opted. This study is primarily concerned with describing how classroom discourse and its components including types of questions, interaction, and classroom talk enhance students' critical thinking skills. This chapter is devoted to a description of the research methodology adopted in this study. It contains three main sections. The first section is concerned with the description of the study. The second one deals with the results and discussion of the results. The last one is about limitations, implications and suggestions for future research.

Section one: Description of the Research Methodology

The aim of this section is to describe the research methodology used in this study. It consists of a description of both methodology and research design, it also provides a detailed description of the participants, instruments and procedures that were used to collect and analyze data.

2.1.1 Population

The population of our study consisted of students and teachers in the Department of English at the University of Béjaïa. Precisely, 3rd year BA promotion of 2017-2018, there was 218 students divided into six groups.

2.1.2 Sample

The participants are 3rd year EFL students. Since qualitative methods take time, we could not conduct it on the whole population. Hence, we chose randomly group 6 as a sample for the present study (a group of 44 students), they were two subgroups: (A) and

(B), each subgroup consisted of 15 students. But the number of students who participated in our research was of 24 students of mixed gender.

2. Research Design

Classroom discourse may consist of students' engagement either in written or oral forms, our focus is on oral forms which can be through dialogue, debates, and questions asked by the teachers. The main objective of our research is to describe how classroom discourse affects students' critical thinking during oral expression session. For this reason, we opted for descriptive method which is based on the qualitative approach, as it seemed an appropriate design to achieve the underlined objective of our research.

3. Data Collection and Instruments

The nature of our variables requires description, explanation and dealing with small details in order to describe how classroom discourse can be an important factor in teaching and learning English language in general, and a key in improving critical thinking in particular. Hence, we have chosen observation and interviews as means for data collection. Before starting our data collection, we made a pilot study, in which we asked some questions to some students at the Department of English on November 2017.

Overt participant observation was used, that is the students were well informed by the researcher that they are part of the study. It has advantages and facilitates the work of researcher to take notes easily. According to Owens (2017:1), with overt participant observation the researcher is for example, able to record conversation, ask questions, take notes, etc. with the knowledge and the co-operation of the peoples involved. The participants may be affected by the presence of the researcher. Thus, the data may be invalid. For this reason we conducted an interview as a second means to supplement the observation data. Interview questions complement the observation data, by asking a set of

questions about what we noticed during oral sessions. First, we started our data collection by observing the sample then we have used interviews with both teachers and students.

2.3.1 Observation

Observation is one of the oldest research instruments and it is used for purposeful examination .It is used for data collection in order to describe phenomena that exist in classroom research.

We focused on the description and explanation. We attempted to shed light on student's interaction and engagement in their classroom discourse as well as how this later affects the development of student's critical thinking. Our observation started from 26th February till 9th April 2018, we attended more than 6th sessions in oral expression with both group (A) and (B) divided into two workshops with the same teacher. Even though it seems hard to observe all the behaviors, the observation was not done at random way. The participants were observed according to a set of characteristics that we have selected on the basis of the reviewed literature. Butterworth and Thwaites, (2013:9) proposed this characteristic:

- Open-mindedness: “without open mindedness we cannot judge fairly and objectively whether some statement or story is true or not”.
- Active and informed: we have to be ready to take an active interest in the subject matter and be prepared to investigate and enquire .Hasty ,uninformed judgment are never critical”.

Lai (2011:10) also reported “according to the American Philosophical Association the ideal critical thinker is inquisitive in nature, open-minded, flexible, has a desire to be well informed, and understands diverse viewpoints”.

We have followed observation grid during all the observation sessions, the observation grid will be used to analyses our data collection. During the observation period we used note taking, and audio record.

2. Interview

The interview was designed to supplement the observation data. Interviews were conducted with teachers, specialized in different options; Didactics and Linguistics. At the same time with third year LMD students.

Among the different types of interviews, we chose Informal, Conversational Interviews. Firstly, we asked open questions. We adopted this type because it is mainly the appropriate one that helped us to collect important information about both teachers' and students' perspectives towards our variables, because the concept of critical thinking skills seems to be stranger for some teachers and students. Therefore, it is useful to use this type in order to have much possible answers as well as not to limit the interviewee with some questions.

2.4. Data Analysis Procedures

The observation data are presented under the form of tables with interpretations. Teacher and student's interviews data were analyzed using content analysis technique. The data were coded. Coding became the basis for doing the analysis. It is generally understood, that "coding is analysis".

Observations data were analyzed regarding the characteristics of ideal critical thinker which are: open- mindedness, self-confidence, flexibility, truth –seeking, inquisitiveness and reasoning. These characteristics are defined in Meriam Webster dictionary (2018)

Inquisitiveness: it means tending to ask questions and having a desire to know, to learn more. It refers to someone curious.

- Open-mindedness: It means to consider different ideas or opinions, that is to say accept others 'opinion and views.
- Flexibility: a flexible person is who is capable of bending or being bent. Flexibility means willingness to change or to try different things.
- Truth seeking: It is defined as it is research about truth. Every person should search for truth independently with his own thinking and efforts.

The next section is devoted to the results of the study.

Section two: Results and Discussion

This part was the most challenging part in the present study. While the first part is devoted to the description of the research design, the second one deals with the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the results of our study. Firstly, the observation data analysis results are presented. In a stage further, the interviews data analyses are reported.

1. The Analysis of Observation Data

It is difficult to measure abstract phenomena. According to Butterworth and Thwaites, (2013:2), assessing the quality of someone's thinking matters are more complicated .Mental performance is largely hidden inside a person's head, unlike physical performance which is very visible.

Thus, our analysis of observation data is based on a set of skills and characteristics of ideal critical thinker, they are as follows: flexibility, open-mindedness, self-confidence, truth seeking, inquisitiveness and reasoning.

The results are presented in tables, which are divided into two main columns; the first horizontal one represents the number of students who were present during the observation sessions, and the second, the vertical one, represents the characteristics of a critical thinker. Then we tick the students' abilities of thinking critically and interpret the data.

The First observation session, February 26th; 2018.

Oral expression session, subgroup A, 11: 20 am .

Students \ Skills	S1	S 2	S3	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12
Truth seeking									✓		
Open_ mindedness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Self-confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓
Flexibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Inquisitiveness	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasoning			✓				✓		✓		

Table1: Presentation of students' critical thinking skills during the first oral session with subgroup A.

This table presents students' behavior while discussing in class. The topic discussed is about things that bore them, so they express their opinions and feelings. They sat in a circle pattern, they apply turn taking technique; each one starts to speak when another student finishes. At the same time, they comment on each other's opinions. In this session we noticed that students did not try to give arguments to defend their opinions, because the

topics mainly dealt with feelings, whereby each one spoke about himself, experiences, keeping diary and feelings. Although they did not seek for truth and reasoning, we noticed that S3 and S8 were flexible, inquisitive and self-confident. In addition, they asked questions, they tried to comment on their classmates' contributions and they gave arguments and evidence to support their opinions. S1, S2, S4, S5 and S10 seemed to be flexible, open-minded, self-confident and inquisitive. However S6 and S7 did not give reasons or arguments, they seemed to lack for these skills. This is may be due to their nature, or to some psychological problems. At the same time teacher controlled the conversations, he guided it by feedback techniques which are based on positive feedback. All in All, this first session showed us that this subgroup is active, open-minded and inquisitive. Basically, a critical thinker needs to achieve a higher order of thinking.

Student (7) took turn to speak and expressed herself about what she did when she felt bored, as made clear in extract n° 01 below:

S7: When I felt bored, I try to write a diary and short stories about my feelings.

T: Oh, great!

S7: yah! I write usually when I feel sad, but I keep it for myself, no one can read it, because it is all about my sadness, so I won't anyone know about my weakness. In fact, people find their happiness in the weakness of others....

S5: (one of her classmates interrupted) I don't agree with you, since you have a talent, you can write it and publish it on anonym. Many of writers do this especially women in the past. They did not have rights, even to write so, there are several works on anonym, and those works belong to women writers

In the extract above, S5 reacted and gave an opinion about her classmates' contribution. It was based on evidence because she gave proofs.

The Second observation session, February 26th, 2018.

Oral expression session, subgroup B, 14:30 am.

Student Skills	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Truth Seeking										
Open-mindedness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flexibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Inquisitiveness										
Reasoning										

Table02: Presentation of students' critical thinking skills during second oral session.

Subgroup B.

We used the same table to analyze data; there was a difference in the techniques used by the teacher and the number of students who were present.

During the second session, students were organized into a group, sat in a circle pattern to discuss. The teacher implemented the same techniques with subgroup "B" as "A". We noticed that there was more spontaneous speech; there was a real communication that was based on exchange of opinions. Each one tries to express himself. The discussion was based mainly on personal subjects; this is why students treated the topic in a personal way. However, they did not support their ideas by arguments. Hence, there is more subjectivity.

Students of subgroup “A” appeared to be more skillful compared to students of subgroup “B”. S8,S9 and S 10 missed some basic skills to achieve higher order thinking, such as flexibility, inquisitiveness and open-mindedness. The teacher took control intelligently; he encouraged interaction and asked questions to engage the students in the conversation. It is noticeable that students were active when the task is shared. This latter created a classroom discussion. Accordingly, the discussion made students more active and productive of outputs.

The third session. March 5th, 2018.

Subgroup A, 11:20 am.

Students	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
Truth Seeking		✓	✓			✓
Open-mindedness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flexibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inquisitiveness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasoning	✓	✓				✓

Table3: Presentation of students’ critical thinking during the third oral expression session.

Regarding this session, the teacher used rattling story as a tool, he asked students to form groups of three students. The student (A) told a story and the receiver of the story student (B) retold it again to a third one student (C). Then last one who received the story student (C) came to the board and retold it again to all the members of the class. At the end, they discussed what they have understood as well as the moral of the story. Students

enjoyed this technique, they did it in perfect way, then they have selected the best story, this choice was based on the deeper meaning that they have understood from the story. S2, S3 and S6 seemed to be more active compared to S1, S4 and S5.

As already mentioned earlier, the participants appeared to be flexible, open-minded and self-confident. During this session we have noticed that S1, S2 and S6 tried to give arguments. They attempted critical thinking skills such as truth seeking and reasoning, as shown in extract N°02 below:

T: which story did you like?

S1: I like the last one (before she gives a reason her classmate interact)

S2: Me too, I like it.

(The third students also support their classmates' point of view)

S3: yes, it is nice story

T: The majority said, the last one, so why?

S1: Because it is purposeful, it gave us moral about success.

S6: Yah, the meaning behind is that we can succeed despite of all the difficulties.

The fourth session. March 5th,2018.

Subgroup B, 14:30 am.

Student Skills	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Truth Seeking										
Open- mindedness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self- confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flexibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inquisitiveness			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Reasoning										

Table04: Presentation of students' critical thinking during the fourth oral expression session.

The teacher used with subgroup B the same activity he used with subgroup A. Student "A" told the story to student "B" and student "C", then "C" retold it to all the class. At the end all the students discussed together the moral meaning of the story, here student "A" (the first teller of the story) explained what he understood from the story.

In this subgroup, we noticed that student just expressed their opinions without reasoning or truth seeking, compared to subgroup (A) in which students defended their viewpoint with arguments. The students just discussed and judged things personally; it was mainly based on emotions and feelings rather than truth and logic. It is shown in the following extract(n°03):

T: *what is the morale of this story?*

S1: *I think it speaks about good people*

(Other students keep silent)

T: *which one did you like?*

S1: *I like the one that speak about love*

T: *So, why?*

S: *because, it is meaningful, it took me to other world, where I feel the sadness of the boy...*

So from this extract, we understand that the student defend his opinion according to what he feel, so it is based on emotion and feeling.

The fifth oral session. March 12th , 2018.Subgroup A, 11:20 am.

Student Skills	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Truth Seeking		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Open- mindedness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self- confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flexibility	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Inquisitiveness	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Reasoning	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			

Table05: Presentation of students' critical thinking skills during oral session.

The data in the table show that students in the session appeared more active and flexible. Teacher chose a survey technique. He asked students to choose their partner and talk about any subject that inspired them. For example, student (A) asked student (B) about any topic, if s/he agrees or disagrees, and explain, the reason why then student (B) will change the group and retold the important element of the discussion that s/he had with student (B). Some students didn't enjoy this session, while others because of lack of time.

While discussing with them, I asked each group to tell me the main idea about the conversation. One student told "*I do not know why they speak about such topics, I didn't like those topics at all*" (Extract n°04). This reason shows that she was not familiar with the topic, as a result she cannot interact with her classmates. It appeared that she lacks necessary skills to take part in conversations. She did not display the characteristics of critical thinker, may be because of lack of background knowledge, absence of flexibility and inquisitiveness. There were other students who were more flexible and active, but they missed other important skills such as reasoning and truth seeking. It is however important to mention that some students performed the activity perfectly, giving arguments, evidence that supported their view point. Therefore, they demonstrate the characteristic of a critical thinker.

The Sixth observation session. March ,19th,2018

Subgroup A, 11:20am.

Student \ Skills	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9
Truth Seeking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Open-mindedness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flexibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inquisitiveness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasoning	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓

Table06: presentation of students' critical thinking skills during oral expression session.

During the sixth session of observation, there seemed some improvement in students' critical thinking skills. Most of the students appeared flexible. In addition, they seemed curious, their inquisitiveness was higher in this session, and because of the nature of the classroom tools and techniques used by the teacher in this session,(the debates and type of question used). First, the teacher prepared students before starting the conversation. He informed them about the nature of the tools that will be used in the session; *"Today we will have debate, you can chose any topic to be discussed"* (Extract n°05). After students chose different topics, they decided about the most interesting one, mainly they preferred topics which were related to daily life, society, today issues, such as economics crises, women right, and Algerian education. Their choice was important, I noticed that such topics were more debatable because all the members of the group had knowledge about the subject, since it is related to the society; this later is an important factor in intelligent thinking. We cannot think critically without background knowledge. In addition through our

observation, we noticed when the topics of the discussion were familiar to all the member of the class, the amount of classroom discussion raised. In addition, the students interacted with others, they discussed in an objective and academic manner. As it is shown in the table, S1, S2 and S8 appeared to be the most active students in the group.

The seventh observation sessions. April 9th, 2018.

Subgroup A, 11:20 am.

Students \ Skills	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Truth Seeking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Open-mindedness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Self-confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Flexibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Inquisitiveness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Reasoning	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Table07: presentation of students' critical thinking skills during oral expression session.

The seventh session was the most challenging one. The teacher used debating techniques. The teacher asked students to write down the topic which inspired them, for discussion. Each one wrote the topic on a sheet of paper, and then the teacher chose randomly. They discussed different subjects. First one, was about women rights in our society. It was noticed that there were different views and opinions. Different arguments were given to support their positions. They debated perfectly. As shown in the table. The characteristics of critical thinker were observed in this session. S3, S4 and S10 who did not defend their opinions. However, S1, S2, S5, S6, S7 and S8 seemed critical thinkers,

because they dealt with the subject objectively and they gave logic claims. They accepted the other members' opinions. Although most of the participants were girls, they did not deal with the subject of women rights subjectively, they discussed it objectively.

The second topic was about education, the question was: *Is education worth our money and time?* Again the participants reacted and argued positively. Each claim was supported by arguments. The teacher, as usual, controlled the conversation and asked some referential questions such as "why", this increased the amount of communication; in addition it activated background knowledge in indirectly, students searched for evidence in their prior knowledge ,because the question "why" push them to reflect and think deeply. As it is mentioned in the table, while students were engaged in the debate and conversation critical thinking skills were raised .All the students seemed open-minded, flexible and inquisitive. From our observation, we noticed that students enjoyed debates and how topics were treated, in a modern way, since critical thinking is a 21st century skill.

2. Analysis of the Interview Data

The aim of the interview is to investigate teachers and students' perspective towards the concept of critical thinking and how it can be enhanced in EFL classes at university of Béjaïa. It is a semi structured interview, it consists of seven questions and includes some sub-questions, for, when the interviewee did not give the appropriate answer to gather the necessary data. We used a record interview as then we transcribed for a depth analysis.

2.1. Analysis of Teacher's Interview

As we mentioned earlier, in this study the interview data supplemented the observation data. Teacher's interview is divided into three sections, the first is concerned with teachers' techniques and methods used inside classroom, the second one deals with teachers' views

about critical thinking skills and the last one is concerned with suggestion for improving critical thinking

The first question is about the classroom discussion: “Do you create opportunities for classroom discussion?” Mainly all the teachers reported “yes”, they give opportunities to their students to discuss. Below a number of extracts from the data are presented for illustration:

Extract N°:01

This is actually what we keep doing on daily basis, in oral discussion that we do, mastering languages, but still the main focus is about communication is done by group discussion, debates... (T1)

T1 confirmed that discussion is his priority by using different techniques.

Teacher (2) also said “yes”, but it depends on the module and the purpose of the lesson, since each module requires different techniques, and because of some obstacles like strike, lack of time and the big number of students we can't give the chance to all the students to speak. We add another question here, if it is an oral session? She replies as follows:

Extract N°:02

Yes, in oral expression sessions for example is the learner-centred classroom. My role is to motivate them and guide them. It is teachers' responsibility to prepare a good environment that gives them the opportunity to discuss. The new paradigms of teaching assume that the classroom discourse should be shared between the teacher and students, and students' talk should be dominant. (T2)

The second question in this section also inquired about teachers' methods: Do you let your students express their views?

The same thing as the first question, all the interviewee answered by "yes". Among those answers:

Extract N°:03

If I understood your question well, yes, I allow my students to express their views and arguments and we discuss it all together (T3)

The third question was about the type of questions asked inside the classroom; Do you ask questions to involve your students in classroom discourse? If yes which type?

The answers gave us an idea about the questions that were asked by the teachers. Most of them mentioned referential questions and open questions. They also expressed its importance indirectly and without asking them what is its role. For example, the following answer affirmed that open questions lead to thinking deeply, so that it is effective to develop students' skills such as critical thinking skills. Below some extracts are reported as illustrations for teachers' answers

Extract N°:4

Most of the time I ask them questions that leads them to think deeper and look to things in details. I can say that open questions will help students to develop their skills, because every student can answer based on their way of thinking (T4)

T5 assumed that referential questions involve a higher level of thinking, he stated:

Extract N°:05

I usually ask referential questions. At the beginning it seems easy and simple for the students, but it has in fact a deeper meaning and involves higher level of thinking in order to answer it correctly (T5)

T6 supported the importance of referential questions, she described how she asked the questions, and the different steps she followed, as reported below:

Extract N°:06

I ask them questions, then when they answer, I ask them to give arguments and reason. It's all about monitoring the discussions, I always ask them "why" you should justify your answer, the matter is not given me the answer, but are you sure, is it really true, are you convinced? (T6)

The fourth questions in the same section concerned the provision of feedback techniques and how teachers evaluate students' responses.

Since we made this interview with teachers who were in charge of different modules. The answers were varied depending on the module taught. For example, teachers of writing seemed to have preference for written feedback, while teachers of other modules reported having a preference for immediate feedback. The following answers were reported:

Extract N°:03

I always try to understand students' stand points, and give a positive feedback (T3)

Extract N°:04

When I teach written expression for instance, I underline the wrong sentence and it is up to students to check the right one, I use to encourage them and give them a positive evaluation (T4)

Questions asked in the second section was about critical thinking skills, this question inquired about teachers' perspective towards critical thinking, Is there lack of critical thinking in EFL classes? According to teachers' answers, it appears that students of English at Bejaia University have difficulties in thinking critically, in addition they are incapable to achieve higher level of thinking due to many reasons such as lack of background knowledge, subjectivity and some other factors such as psychological problems. These points were highlighted by the interviewee. For example, in the following extracts; **T3** and **T6** gave some reasons for their students lack of critical thinking:

Extract N°:03

Well, according to my modest experience, yes, I noticed some students who lack critical thinking skills. May be it is due to their lack of background knowledge about the topic under study or their shyness and unwillingness to communicate (T3)

The first interviewee said that some of the students lacked critical thinking, because their shyness, unwillingness, and lack of background knowledge.

T6 pointed to the Algerian context. Most people react and make judgment in subjective way. The interviewee added that teachers and students did not make efforts to improve the situations. This is because teachers do not use techniques and methods inside that aim to improve their students critical thinking skills. The answer was as follows:

Extract n°:06

Yes, there is a lack of critical thinking skills, this is due to first our context, Algerian context, you know that most of Algerian people accept things without thinking, and this is the way of living and thinking, second reason is techniques and instruments used by the

teachers,they do not encourage students,the third reason is students, they do not make efforts in order to discover things and develop their abilities(T6)

The second question in this section enquired about the importance of critical thinking in both teaching and learning. We received different answers, the common point is that it is a very important skill and it should be developed. The most relevant one was as follows:

Extract N°:06

Well, it is important skills,developing critical thinking is my priority in the class,because I know that when my students improve their level of thinking critically,I will achieve my goals in teaching(T6)

Critical thinking is not a benefit for education only ,but it is also for society.When education prepares learners for professional life,society will benefit from those learners who are responsible citizens.This idea was produced by **T1** and it is shown in the following extract:

Extract N°:01

we do really need futur citizens who are responsible,who take initiative to change things around them,so I do belive that critical thinking is important and even it is crucial(T1)

Critical thinking is a very important skill for developing education in general and developing language skills such as writing, reading and speaking skill. By promoting critical subjects and topics, students will improve their level of speaking and communication.This is what **T7**confirmed in the following extract:

ExtractN°:07

I diffently say that critical thinking is very important skill and very neded in teaching ,especially speaking by promoting critical thinking topics(T7)

Therefore, critical thinking is not a new concept for the teachers at the university of Bejaia. Since all the interviewee claimed that it is a key for success and it is crucial.

The third question asked about what can be done to enhance students' critical thinking skills. All that we have mentioned before in the analysis of the observation data are confirmed by the teachers' interview data, this question explored how we can improve students' capacities and abilities in order to achieve high level of thinking skills.

For **T4** think that it depends on instruction. **T3** and **T7** assumed that it was based on teachers' and students' responsibility to enhance it, because they should deliver good instruction, and students' responsibility because they should improve their level through reading and enriching their knowledge. The most revealing answers are reported below:

For example, in the following extract, according to **T3** experience, critical thinking can be improved by increasing students' knowledge, they should be informed and open minded to accept others' opinions.

Extract N°:03

So, in order to acquire critical thinking, I believe that one should read and listen a lot, then, once one has built strong background knowledge, s/he should take initiative in conversations and express his/her point of view by respecting other's view(T3)

Again, background knowledge is the basis element to think critically, as reported below:

ExtractN°:07

Students may not be encouraged to contribute with their personnel tach and they do not take part in the lesson if there is a lack of background knowledge about the content of the lesson,so they will probably not develop critical thinking skills(T7)

The two answers highlighted the importance of background knowledge in enhancing intelligent thinking,because people cannot engage in a converstation or discussion abouta specific topic with little knowldge.

T7 mainly shedlight on other characterstics such as self-confidence. He assumed that it is both teacher and students' responsibility to improve it. This is because it is based on personnel opinions and classroom content. He stated:

ExtractN°:07

In order to develop a critical thinking students should react on personnel basis,so they have to have a personnel voices, and it is based on the degree of classroom content and techniques and the extent to which these techniques will put students in situations more personelized learning (T7)

Without doubt critical thinking skills cannot be developed overnight or in few seesions.However, it can be developed gradually step by step untill stdents acquire these skills. **T4** mentioend this point as it is reported in the following lines:

ExtractN°:04

Developing critical thinking needs time ,efforts,motivation from students and teachers(T4)

The last section deals with teachers' suggestions of different techniques and methods in order to develop students' critical thinking. The first interviews that we made with *T1*, *T4* and *T7* raised an important point about some appropriate techniques and instruments, such as Socratic seminar, debates and group discussion. *T1* said :

Extract N°:01

Tradition way of teaching would be more spoonfeeding the students which means teachers hold the body of knowledge but new methods such as debates, discussion, Socratic seminar (is about just questioning ideas that have already explored when reading texts) are mainly about making students free to think, to speak their mind as long as they keep doing it (T1)

The interviewee added :

The teaching environment and teaching experience and learning experience would be handed over students, I means students should be involved more, should be independent to use their previous knowledge in the way which is appropriate. It depends on the purpose, sometimes is debates, sometimes is ordinary discussion, sometimes is what we call Socratic seminar. (T1)

We asked other question; So it is up to the instruction?

Absolutely is up to the organization of the institution and teachers mainly to provide students with this contexts to create environment that foster critical thinking, and fully engaged all sorts of conversations in which they have to question things around them (T1)

Thus it seems that it is instruction and teachers' pedagogy which lead students to think appropriately, in addition to being well informed about the world.

Extract N°:07

I think that classroom discussion, as a technique in my case is a very good technique will encourage critical thinking. Because in discussion every one says what s/he think and some times students have to defend their opinions ,and doing so I'm sure that critical thinking will be developed because students use this skill when discussing (T7)

This extract is another answer about other effective techniques. It also argued that classroom discussion is usefull technique that certainly will help students to discuss and interact between each others. This latter leads them to think intelligently. The interviewee said:

Extract N°:07

I think that challenging students is the best way to leads them to think critically, for instance when discussing sensitive issue all students react (T7)

2.2 Analysis of Students' Interviews

Students' interviews inquired about the participants' knowledge about critical thinking. Despite being crucial, it is a new term for most of the students. Thus, we started the interview with a short introduction about our research work; we mentioned the title and introduced key terms.

The interview comprised two sections, the first about students learning experiences, and the second one about their opinions, about teachers' methods, and the last one about their perspectives towards critical thinking.

The first question inquired about students' favorite sessions: Whether they enjoyed attending oral expression sessions, if yes, why?

Oral expression is the favorite session; it seemed to be the favorite session of the students, because they feel free to express themselves. All the interviewees answered by: "yes", the answers were as follows:

Extract°:01

Yes to great extent, may be because of teacher methods, like debates, and group discussion, I feel that this year my level is improved even I forgot my shyness; I am a shy person (....)(S1)

Extract°:02

I like attend oral expression actually it is my favorite session, especially this year comparing with previous years. Because of teacher methods, we discuss about lot of subjects. (T2)

The two students' answers show that the students enjoyed attending oral expression sessions because of teacher methods. They seemed to like debates and group discussions.

S3 spoke about classroom discussion and its importance, he stated:

Extract N°:03

Yes, of course. Because such enjoyable thing to express yourself and to give your mind free and express you're thought in your own way. I feel such free and opened to another world, discovering many things and enrich our knowledge through discussing different topics (S3)

The second question was about the way the students interacted and discussed with each other. The following answers were reported:

Extract N°02

I noticed that this year, we comment on others' opinion and we ask questions too, we do it a lot (S2)

We already noticed that they commented on their classmates' opinions. As it is useful to enhance reasoning, we asked a second question to the same person to do to know if it is really important to guide the discussion appropriately. Do you think that is useful?

He answered:

Extract N°:01

Yes it is effective and useful, because when we ask question "why" so we give arguments and reason.....I'm a kind of person who is objective ,I make myself a part of subjectivity(S1)

The observations showed that students were decisive about themes. Students needed to be helped to be familiar with the topics, which increased the amount of communication between them.

The role of the teacher is to choose the appropriate techniques and to guide the conversation. Therefore, the next question inquired about how teachers guide them: Do you take part in the decision about topics which will be under discussion?

S3 affirmed that the teacher gave them chance to talk about whatever they wanted. As a result all the participants reacted and defended their positions when there was agreement or disagreement. The answer was as follows:

Extract N°:03

Yes teacher always give us the chance to talk about the subject we want. It is beneficial and helpful. Because when we are all familiar with the subject we can react and interact between each other, but when it is little known about, it may be some of our classmates hesitate to talk so they will keep silent(S3)

The next question asked about techniques used by the teacher in the classroom. Does your teacher use debates in oral expression sessions?

The collected answers confirmed the use of debates and classroom discussions, in addition, they pointed to its importance, as follows:

Extract N°:03

We do it daily, especially in oral session that is the only session where we can debates. While speaking about different subject, the students try to prove their opinion and defend it, we search for arguments. When we disagree with someone idea, we try to find suitable arguments to defend our point of view (S3)

S1 provided the same answer as **S3**. He confirmed the use of classroom debates and discussions. On the light of her answer, we further asked her if it was useful: What do you think about the use of these tools?

Extract N°:01

Yes, of course, it is something worthwhile and beneficial for us, at the beginning we feel shy, not confident so we don't speak, and bit by bit our teacher made us very skillful through his techniques and encouragement. (S1)

The last section concerned the students' views towards critical thinking skills. The term seemed to be new for most of the students. Although they heard about it before, it was a stranger concept.

In other words, they understand it in different meanings. For them, to be critical means giving comments on a person's behavior or opinions. They did not know that to be a critical thinker involves several skills and characteristics. However, there were some students who knew the concept and hoped that it would be enhanced in our classes. The first question was about the reasons behind lack of critical thinking. The students answered that it was due to lack of knowledge as students are unwilling to think intelligently and think critically. Moreover, the instruction did not give opportunities to achieve and enhance these skills. The answer was as follows:

Extract N°:04

Most of students didn't acquire critical thinking till now because they didn't use to think critically about subject that involves objectivity, they discuss subject in subjective way, not academic, not objective, they take it in personal side, this is due to lack of conversation, debate, knowledge and so on .At the same time there are student who are critical thinker, those students are the minority who read a lot (S4)

We asked a second question related to the same issue, how can we develop students' critical thinking skills? The answers were as reported below:

Extract N°:05

I think that critical thinking skills is acquired through two main things, reading and being informative about everything(background knowledge) then discussion(T5)

We added; so it is the teachers' responsibility? They answer was as follows:

Extract N°:05

It is both teachers and students responsibility to develop critical thinking at this university. Students should read and be informative, and the teacher should use different tools and techniques, for example, making session debatable, preparing challenging environment.(T5)

In light of this answer, we assert that in order to improve students' level in thinking critically, both teachers and students should make efforts. First teachers, they should use effective techniques and tools which will help in enhancing critical thinking skills. Regarding students' responsibility, it is all about acquiring a new knowledge in order to ameliorate this skill.

In sum, the observation data show that the majority of the students seem to be critical thinkers, and have the ability to think critically. However, they still lack some of the critical thinker characteristics because they have not well developed this skill. In other words, third year LMD students at the University of Béjaïa appear to be able to think critically when they are provided with good instructions. In other words, they must be provided with a good plan in which the teacher uses different classroom teaching techniques, feedback techniques and types of questions such as referential questions. This latter is an important factor in enhancing critical thinking because "the tutor why" pushes students to reflect and to search for suitable arguments. Thus, these techniques should be used by teachers in order to start discussions inside the classroom.

The data, also, revealed that feedback techniques (positive feedback) give fruitful results during classroom discussion as shown in extract n°01. The second factor which influences students' critical skills is the type of questions used by the teacher. For instance, referential questions are like an engine for students' talk whereby students do not only answer the questions, but also give arguments and defend their answers.

Concerning classroom tools and techniques, we found that debates and group discussions are useful and effective in enhancing and developing critical thinking skills. Similarly to feedback techniques, it creates a scaffold between the teacher and the students. It also seems to depend on the types of feedback techniques employed by the teacher, it could be either negative or positive.

With regard to the analysis of the interviews, the data confirmed that classroom discourse plays a vital role in improving students' critical thinking skills. Both of students and teachers highlighted the importance of critical thinking skills for the students and for the development of the whole society.

The students and teachers' interviews data showed that students at the University of Béjaïa lack critical thinking skills due to many reasons such as teachers' methods. In light of the reported answers (T4, for example), we can say that there is a lack of critical thinking, due to the Algerian educational context in general that does not favor the development of such skills. Teachers' discourse (instructions, for example) also seems to have an effect on the development of students' critical thinking. According to **T3** the reason behind lack of critical thinking skills is lack of background knowledge. Thus, the factors were summarized mainly in two main categories; first it is due to lack of background knowledge and due to instruction.

As a solution for this sensitive issue, the interviewees suggested several techniques and suggestions; it is based on classroom tools, such as debates, classroom discussion, as it is reported by **T7**. Thus classroom discourse seems to play a crucial role in enhancing critical thinking skills. Moreover it is at the heart of teaching and learning. **S3** supported this point by confirming the use of those tools in their classes during oral sessions. **S3**, **S4** and **S5** liked the application of those classroom tools. **S6** and **S8** likewise approved that debates and classroom discussion helped them to develop their level in thinking critically.

Conclusion

All in All, this chapter provided a detailed description of the research design, data collection tools, population and sample. Then a complete analysis of the two sets of data is provided. Finally, the major findings and results reached show that classroom discourse, specifically classroom tools, are important in promoting critical thinking skills among EFL students. As conclusion for this chapter, EFL students at the University of Béjaïa seem to be able to think critically, when they are provided with a classroom discourse that helped them to develop their levels in thinking critically through using debatable subjects and formal discussions.

General Conclusion

The current study was an endeavor to explore the role of classroom discourse in enhancing EFL students' critical thinking skills. Moreover, it investigated the contributions of classroom tools and techniques in the development of critical thinking skills. To reach the objective of the research, two main questions were formulated: 1) how does classroom discourse contribute in enhancing EFL students' critical thinking? 2) What are the techniques used by the teachers to enhance their students' critical thinking skills? A descriptive research design and qualitative approach was used for data collections and analysis.

The obtained results showed that classroom discourse contributes to enhancing EFL students' critical thinking skills, by using different classroom tools such as debates and implement different techniques and instruments that develop students' abilities in thinking critically. Therefore, classroom debates are important in inciting students to take part in class discussion as well as to achieve higher order of thinking.

Regarding the research questions stated earlier, we can say that classroom discourse has a vital role in enhancing students' critical thinking skills.

1-Limitation of the Study

The section below discusses the major limitations of this study.

- **Drawbacks of the Descriptive Design**

Due to the nature of the present research, we opted for qualitative approach .Needless to say that descriptive design has advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, choosing overt participant observation might have affected the behavior of the participants. They may have changed their behavior because of our presence. Another important point is the validity and reliability of our research results. Over observation participant has some limitations in terms of validity and reliability. According to Owens (2017:4) participant

observation studies are impossible to exactly “replicate” facts which give them limited reliability. In addition, absence of the students, the number of students in the sessions was insufficient to collect data. The same remarks also apply to interview data. The small group that collaborated and participated in this study feared not be able to answer our questions about critical thinking, as it was a new concept for the majority of them.

- **Lack of Time**

The fact that our research is qualitative and used overt participant observation, the data to collect could require months of work; it is really time consuming.

- **Lack of Resources**

Regarding the nature of our variables, which are new concepts, especially critical thinking, we had some difficulties to have access to primary sources.

2. Implications

For future learners

- EFL students should enrich their knowledge, because thinking critically needs background knowledge.
- Students should motivate themselves, be active and flexible, as critical thinking skills depend on being flexible learners.
- Students should learn how to accept others opinion and how to be open- minded.

- **For future teachers**

- Teachers should provide students with different activities, in which they could make their voices heard.
- They can organize debate sessions and group discussions as much as possible to debate and exchange ideas.
- Teachers of different modules should use different techniques in order to improve students' level.

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Appendixes

Appendix 01: Observation grid

Students Skills	S	S	S	S	S	S
Truth Seeking						
Open- mindedness						
Self-confidence						
Flexibility						
Inquisitiveness						
Reasoning						

Appendix 02: Teachers' interview

- 1) Do you create opportunities for classroom discussion?
- 2) Do you let your students express their views?
- 3) Do you ask questions to involve your students in classroom discourse?
If yes, which type do you use?
- 4) How do you evaluate your students' response?
- 5) Is there a lack of critical thinking in EFL classes?
- 6) What can be done to enhance students' critical thinking skills?
- 7) In your opinion, what are the techniques that can improve students' critical thinking skills?

Appendix 03: Students' interview

- 1) Do you enjoy attending oral expression sessions?
If yes, why?
- 2) Do you comment on you peers' contributions?
- 3) Do you take part in the decision about topics which will be under discussion?
- 4) Do you have debate sessions?
- 5) How can critical thinking skills be developed?

Appendix 04:

Extract 01: Teachers' interview

Q1: Do you create opportunities for classroom discussions?

T: *YES, of course.*

Q2: Do you let your students express their views?

T: *If I understood well your questions, YES, I allow my students to express their views and arguments and we discuss them all together.*

Q3: Do you ask questions to involve your students in classroom discourse? If yes which type do you ask?

T: *Well, I always ask questions related to the studied material and they are direct and indirect questions.*

Q4: How do you evaluate your students' response?

T: *I always try to understand the student's standpoint and give positive feedback.*

Q4: Is There a lack of critical thinking in EFL classes? If yes, this is due to what ? what are the techniques that you suggest to develop students critical thinking ?

T: *Well, according to my modest experience in teaching, YES, I noticed some students that lack critical thinking. May be it is due to their lack of background knowledge about the topic under study or to their shyness and unwillingness to communicate. So, in order to acquire critical thinking, I believe one should read and listen a lot. Then, once one has built a strong background knowledge, s/he should take the initiative in conversations and*

expresses his/her point of view by respecting the other's view. Also, I believe that observation is an important skill to have before critical thinking.

Résumé

Le but de la présente étude est d'explorer le rôle du discours en classe dans le renforcement des capacités de réflexion critique des étudiants. Plus précisément, il tente de faire la lumière sur les techniques utilisées par les enseignants pour promouvoir la pensée critique dans les salles de classe EFL. Pour atteindre notre objectif, nous avons opté pour un design de recherche qualitative utilisant l'observation ouverte des participants. De plus, des entrevues ont été menées avec les élèves et leurs enseignants. Les données ont été recueillies auprès des étudiants LMD de troisième année et de leurs enseignants du département d'anglais de l'Université de Béjaïa au cours de l'année académique de 2017-2018. Les résultats révèlent que le discours en classe joue un rôle crucial dans la promotion des compétences de pensée critique chez les élèves EFL.

Mots clés: Pensée critique, Discours en classe, Étudiants EFL, Techniques de classe, Compétences du 21ème siècle.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this simple work to the candles of my life who scarified their life for me.

There is no expression that can express their sacrifice. Thanks god they are with me today,

I wish that I will realize my dream and be what they want me to be.

To My precious Parents

Bouزيد and Fadila

To my adorable Brothers and sisters

Ilyes, Khirdenne, Rafik

To my sweety sisters

Aziza, Sadjia, Nariman, Lamia

Thank you for your encouragement, trust and tenderness

I did this simple work to make you proud of me

To my sisters and brothers in law:

Halwa, Djdjiga and Warda

Mohnd and Abdelhak and their children

To my Aunt Fatima

To all the members of family

To my Best friend Salima

Thanks for all friends without exception,

To all the members of campus Berchiche 01,

Who were my second family

Thank you for being with me

Thank you for being with me

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is to explore the role of classroom discourse in enhancing students' critical thinking skills. Specifically, it attempts to shed light on the techniques used by teachers to promote critical thinking in EFL classrooms. To reach our objective, we opted for a qualitative research design using overt participant observation. Moreover, interviews were conducted with students and their teachers. The data were collected from third year LMD students and their teachers at the Department of English of the University of Béjaïa during the academic year of 2017/2018. The results reveal that classroom discourse plays a crucial role in promoting critical thinking skills among EFL students.

Key words: Critical Thinking, Classroom Discourse, EFL Students, Classroom Techniques, 21st Century Skills.

Key Abbreviations and Acronyms

- LMD:** Licence, Master, Doctorate
- EFL:** English as a Foreign Language
- N°:**Number
- T:** Teacher
- S:** Student
- SLA:** Second Language Acquisition
- Q:** Questions
- CT:** Critical Thinking
- IRF:**Initiation, Response, Feedback
- FLE:** The facilitate-Listen-Engage

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