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## Developing Critical Thinking Skill Through Reading: Both Teachers and First Year Master Students' Perspectives, Department of Letters and English Language, Guelma University

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

**Candidate:**                                          **Supervisor:**

**Khamsa DJEFAFLIA**                        **Ms Imene TABOUCHE**

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## Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved family.

To my parents Djefaflia Noureddine and Djefaflia Bariza**.**

To my cherished brothers Yacine and Ayoub.

I also dedicate it to one of my best friends Naziha.

Thank you all.

Khamsa.

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# Abstract

The current work endeavors to explore teachers and students' attitudes towards reading, critical thinking skill, and more importantly, towards developing critical thinking skill through reading at the departments of letters and English Language at Guelma University. English language students are facing different obstacles that may hinder their learning process and development. One of those problems can be the lack of sufficient processing of information, which may lead to misunderstanding and misinterpreting any given material. In other words, they lack the ability to think critically. In order to carry out this research, a quantitative study has been conducted. Two different questionnaires were administered to sixty-one first year master students and twenty-seven teachers of different modules. The analysis of the two questionnaires revealed that both teachers and students are aware of the existence of critical thinking skill and stress the importance of reading. Moreover, they showed a positive attitude towards developing critical thinking skill through reading, however, the majority of students tend to ignore reading and abandon it and they are not trying to develop their critical thinking skill neither through reading nor through other tools. Following the research findings, it is recommended to raise students' awareness about the importance of reading as well as critical thinking skill in foreign language teaching and learning. More importantly, to implement some reading programs that can help learners enhance their critical thinking skill.

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# List of Abbreviations

**ARS**    **Advanced Reading Strategies**

**CT**    **Critical Thinking**

**CTS**    **Critical Thinking Skill**

**EFL**    **English as a Foreign Language**

**FL**    **Foreign Language**

**LMD**    **License, Master, Doctorate**

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**Introduction**

The twenty-first century is characterized by the availability of different kinds and sources of information that are easily accessed. As human beings, we are required to reflect on, and rationalize these data before believing in or rejecting it. However, being able to do so requires the possession of different cognitive skills such as the ability to think critically. This ability is needed in every domain of life, most importantly in the field of education.

**1. Statement of Problem**

In a learner-centered class, students are the core of the teaching-learning process, in which the teacher acts mainly as a guide and monitor his/her students' learning process and progress. That is, learners are supposed to search for information to share with their classmates the same way their teachers used to do. Algerian students are supposed to be such kind of learners who depend on themselves in their journey of learning and meaning making since the adoption of the License, Master, and Doctorate (LMD) system in the Algerian universities. However, this may not be the case for the majority of Algerian English as Foreign Language (EFL) students, who still depend on their teachers when it comes to presenting the needed information and the necessary materials. In fact, those students tend to copy and paste data available on the internet without showing any effort to look for the reliability of this source of information, or even try to paraphrase or summarize such data. This can be the result of not being aware of developing their cognitive skills, especially their ability to judge, analyze, question, or even criticize the credibility of the information. Simply, to develop their critical thinking skill (CTS). This latter, can be developed if students show attention towards it. Reading, for example, may pave the way to enhance CTS, because while reading readers use their cognitive skills among which: analyzing, interpreting, inferring, etc. However, students tend to neglect reading and may not be aware of the existence of CTS, or if they are, they may not try to develop it. As a result, students become passive and tend to believe in whatever information presented to them,

regardless of its source, i.e. be it their teachers' or the internet. Accordingly, this study stresses the importance of CTS and reading, and aims at investigating both students and teachers' perspectives towards developing CTS through reading. Additionally, it seeks to raise awareness about the significance of both CTS and reading in the teaching-learning process.

**2. Aims of the Study**

Several aims were planned to work as the platform and as a guiding vehicle for this study, these are:

1. This work aims at raising teachers/students ' awareness about the importance of developing CTS like any other skill.

2. It attempts to stress the importance of reading.

3. It sheds light on the importance of incorporating intensive and/or extensive reading program that can help develop CTS.

**3. Research Questions**

As it is the case before addressing any problem, there should be some questions, which inspire the researcher to conduct a particular research. Likewise, this study aims at addressing the following questions:

1. Can reading develop CTS?

2. Are teachers and students aware about the impact of reading on CTS?

3. To what extent can CTS promote learners' academic achievement?

4. How can teachers raise students' awareness about the importance of reading?

**4. Research Hypotheses**

The research hypotheses of this study are as follows:

**1.** There is a teachers' positive attitude towards developing CTS through reading.

**2.** There is a students' positive attitude towards developing CTS through reading.

**5. The Study Sample**

The sample of this study consists of two types of population; students and teachers. Participants of the first sample are twenty-seven teachers at the department of Letters and English Language at Guelma University, and who have had experience in teaching different modules. The second sample contains 61first year master students at the same department.

**6. Data Gathering Tool**

In order to investigate both teachers' and students' perspectives towards reading , CTS, and more importantly towards developing CTS through reading, this study opted for a quantitative method. Two questionnaires were administered to 61 first year master students, and 27 teachers at the department of Letters and English Language, Guelma University.

**7. Structure of the Dissertation**

The current study is divided into three chapters in addition to a general introduction and a general conclusion. The first two chapters are devoted to the theoretical part of this study, and the third one for the practical part. The first chapter tackles the first variable, that is, CTS. Hence, it provides an overview about it; its definition, characteristics, developmental stages, skills and sub skills. Moreover, it discusses its importance, and obstacles. Then, the second chapter is concerned with the second variable, which is reading. Again, it deals with its definition, strategies, and approaches to teaching it, as well as its importance. Then, a final part sheds light on the two variables in relation to each other. In other words, how reading can be used as a tool to enhance CTS. Finally, a third chapter is oriented towards the practical part, which analyzes data generated from teachers and students' questionnaires. Furthermore, a space is devoted to recommendations and limitations of the research.

**Introduction**

Thinking critically is an ability that helps to think in an appropriate, rational, and logical manner. That is, CTS is needed in every domain of life. More importantly in the field of education generally, and foreign language (FL) classes specifically. In other words, foreign language learners need to develop such a skill, simply because during their educational career they face different sources of information that they are not familiar with. Thus, they need to carefully deal with such kind of data for the sake of not being influenced, misled, or brain washed by those sources that may contradict the learners' principles and believes.

**1.1 Defining CT**

The ability to think is what differentiates humans from other creatures. However, "… much of our thinking, left to itself, is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed, or downright prejudiced" (Paul &Elder, 2013, p. 366). That is, unlike other creatures, human beings are gifted with the ability to think, however, their thinking is not always right, and rational i.e., not all humans are critical thinkers. Because "critical thinking … begins when we start thinking about our thinking with a view toward improving it" (ibid). Accordingly, as long as humans have minds, they are required to think, yet the ability to a critical thinker cannot be generalized to all humans.

Lau (2011) asserts that "critical thinking is thinking clearly and rationally. It involves thinking precisely and systematically, and following the rules of logic and scientific reasoning, among other things" (p. 1). In other words, critical thinking is the ability to think in an objective and organized manner, following logic, reason, and avoiding any sort of bias or fragmentation.

Critical thinking is described as "… correct thinking in the pursuit of relevant and reliable knowledge about the world. Another way to describe it is reasonable, reflective, responsible, and skilful thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do" (Schafersman, 1991, p. 3). In the same vein, (Wood, 2002) declares that critical thinking is the practice of being rational in order to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong from what we heard in daily

life. Moreover, Dwyer & Rainbolt (2012) claim that "critical thinking is the skill of making decisions based on good reasons" (p.5). Therefore, being a critical thinker means being a skillful thinker who has the ability to decide what to believe or reject. Hence, a particular decision is taken after passing through a whole process of analyzing and filtering a particular data or knowledge.

CT, then, is an important skill that needs to be recognized and developed. However, there are some people who are not aware of the existence of such skill, hence, they do accept and absorb whatever information presented to them without any attempt to know whether is it true and reliable or not. While others tend to scrutinize, ask questions, and analyze any sort of data presented to them before deciding to believe or reject it.

**1.2 Characteristics of the Critical Thinker**

As stated previously, CT is not a skill that is mastered by all human beings. That is, those who have such ability of thinking are distinguished by certain characteristics from other people. As a result, different researchers (Lau, 2011; Black 2012) attempt to set certain features for critical thinkers. According to Lau (2011) a critical thinker is someone who is able to formulate ideas logically and successfully. Moreover, being a critical thinker means having the ability to appraise and look for evidences before accepting or rejecting a particular assumption or hypothesis. In addition to scrutinizing things before taking a particular decision, besides the ability to defend rationally the importance of one's beliefs, ideas, and views.

Black (2012) asserts that rationality and CT are two sides of the same coin, and claims that being rational (critical) thinker requires different processes; these are the ability to analyze, evaluate, infer, and explain the significance of a particular data, argument and/or point of view. Besides, the ability to provide and construct rational and well-formed decisions and opinions.

To sum up, a critical thinker is someone who is able to use different critical thinking skills and sub-skills successfully and appropriately. However, to be such kind of thinker, one should be first aware of the existence of this skill, and then he should work on to develop it.

## 1.3 Critical Thinking Skills and Sub-skills

Researchers who are interested in CT (Facione, 1990; Bloom, 1956) discuss a number of skills and sub skills that are related to it. It is worth mentioning that though those researchers may differ in the number and the labeling of CT skills and sub skills, they do share the same basis and the same aims of such a skill.

### 1.3.1 Fcione's Classification

According to Facione (1990), critical thinking skills are classified into six skills each skill is the umbrella of other different sub-skills, these are:

#### 1.3.1.1 Interpretation

It is the ability to understand, explain, and clarify the meaning of different things in different situations. It involves a variety of sub skills:

##### 1.3.1.1.1 Categorization

In order to interpret a particular material or information, the person needs first to categorize, classify, or group such information into a particular order according to specific standards in order to facilitate the process of apprehension. As (Inglebert & Pavel, 2007, p.102) define it "to formulate categories, distinctions, or frameworks to organize information to aid comprehension".

##### 1.3.1.1.2 Decoding significance:

It is to recognize, interpret and understand the real message or meaning behind a particular piece of writing or utterance in a particular situation or about a particular manner. In other words, it involves the detection of the aims, importance, and incentives, etc. that are stated and expressed in a certain behavior, claim, or convention.

### 1.3.1.1.3 Clarifying meaning

It is to facilitate as much as possible any expression or intended meaning so that to avoid confusion or misunderstanding. Hunter (2013) argues that clarifying meaning is a crucial step that should be taken before determining to believe in or do something. If not, therefore, different mistakes may occur such as trusting something that should not have been trusted, taking action that should not have been taken…etc.

### 1.3.1.2. Analysis

It involves the identification and evaluation of the nature of the relationship that exists between particular items, expressions, ideas, declarations, etc. and those beliefs, decisions, or views they intend to express. It involves different sub skills:

### 1.3.1.2.1 Examining Ideas

A careful analysis of the reasons and intentions of a particular expression, statement, or argument that are used to convey a certain message before determining whether to believe or reject it. Simply, it involves the identification of the real aim behind the implementation of a particular argument in a particular context or situation.

### 1.3.1.2.2 Detecting Arguments

As its name implies, it requires analyzing arguments in order to extract whether a particular argument is determined to support or oppose a particular claim i.e. to spot the set of expressions or raisons used to reinforce or reject a particular judgment, opinion, statements, etc.

### 1.3.1.2.3 Analyzing Arguments

According to Jackson & Newberry (2015), "analyzing arguments is a foundational skill, since you cannot begin to determine how good an argument is until you understand exactly how the argument works" (p.39). In this respect, analyzing arguments refers to a whole process of identifying and discriminating between the central idea or argument and the other sub-arguments that are used to support the main idea. In other words, it is to scrutinize and carefully

examine each item of a particular argument in an attempt to understand and avoid misinterpreting it.

### 1.3.1.3 Evaluation

Being a critical thinker requires the ability to appraise statement, arguments, and assumptions with a view towards accepting or rejecting what has been said or written. It requires the following sub skills:

### 1.3.1.3.1 Assessing Claims:

Refers to the process of judging and evaluating the credibility of a particular information before placing trust on it. In this sense, one cannot determine the credibility and acceptability of a particular claim or assumption without any attempt to scrutinize and evaluate it.

### 1.3.1.3.2 Assessing arguments

It is to judge and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a particular argument before taking in guaranteed its significance. In other words, it is the ability to appraise and consider whether a statement or assumption relies on strong, rational arguments or suspicious doubtful ones.

### 1.3.1.4 Interference

To state the appropriate elements required to reach a particular conclusion. In addition to detecting, and extracting the relevant information drawn from a particular statement, claim, opinion, etc.

### 1.3.1.4.1 Querying Evidence

On the one hand, this sub skill seeks to formulate strong arguments to support a particular assumption or statement. On the other hand, it refers to scrutinizing and evaluating information before determining its acceptability.

### 1.3.1.4.2. Conjecturing Alternatives

In dealing with problems, it is needed to have plan A and B so that if the first does not work the person will shift to the alternative plan to avoid falling into troubles and stress. Furthermore, to formulating alternative predictions and hypothesis in order to achieve a particular aim.

### 1.3.1.4.3 Drawing Conclusions

It is to determine which conclusion should be taken, and which one should be rejected in a particular situation or issue i.e. it involves the act of inferring and synthesizing the needed information form a particular conclusion from what has been said or written.

### 1.3.1.5 Explanation

As its name indicates, this skill requires explaining and justifying the reasons behind thinking in a particular manner or taking a particular decision or judgment. Simply, it requires providing some clarifications about the incentives that pushed a particular person to think in a particular manner or support a particular judgment.

### 1.3.1.5.1 Stating Results

It is "to produce accurate statements, descriptions or representations of the results of one's reasoning activities so as to analyze, evaluate, infer from, or monitor these results" (p.18). Simply, it is to state precisely the outcomes of a particular judgment, point of view, evaluation, etc.

### 1.3.1.5.2 Justifying Procedures:

It is to justify and explain the methods, procedures, or tools that have been used to judge, interpret or evaluate a particular claim or argument, and to explain and justify the reasons behind their use. Simply, it is to provide a good reason behind a particular interpretation or analyses of something whether to one's self or to others.

### 1.3.1.5.3 Presenting Arguments

It refers to providing strong arguments behind accepting a particular claim or statement. In other words, it refers to stating logical and valuable justifications behind deciding to put trust on some claims and assumptions.

### 1.3.1.6 Self-Regulation

It includes one's ability to consciously double-check oneself interpretation, evaluation or conclusion that he has been drawn before. It can be viewed also, as a kind of self-assessment, because, it requires one's ability to question and judge one' self-assumptions and decisions.

### 1.3.1.6.1 Self-Examination

It refers to the ability to monitor, check or revise oneself thinking or judgment taking into consideration possible misunderstanding or stereotypes that may hinder one's objectivity. This CT sub skill, if applied appropriately, will pave the way to avoid thinking distortion and subjectivity.

### 1.3.1.6.2 Self-Correction

After examining oneself, self- correction takes place, and if errors have been detected, by adjusting and rectifying those errors and the causes behind them. Thus, self-correction takes place only after examining one's self thinking.

### 1.3.2 Bloom's Classification

Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) divides the way people learn into three domains cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The former is divided into different levels: higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation), and lower order thinking skills (knowledge, comprehension, application).

Adams (2015) summarizes the six levels of cognitive learning objectives as follows

### 1.3.2.1 Knowledge

It is considered as the foundational cognitive skill and requires students to retain specific different pieces of information. This skill can be assessed through the use of different tools such as multiple or short-answer questions that require students to retrieve or recognize a particular information.

### 1.3.2.2 Comprehension

At this level, students are required to paraphrase the content of knowledge in their own words, classify items in groups, compare and contrast items with other similar entities, or explain a principle to others. Comprehension does not require the learners to simply recall a set of information, but it requires a high set of cognitive skills that help learners incorporate their existing schemas.

### 1.3.2.3 Application

It requires students to use knowledge, skills, or techniques in new situations. In other words, it refers to their ability to apply what has been incorporated in their schemas.

### 1.3.2.4 Analysis

It is the beginning of the higher levels of the taxonomy, which Adams consider as CT enter. Analysis, therefore, requires students to distinguish between what is fact and what is opinion and identify the claims upon which an argument is built. It also, requires the learners to break the information into different pieces to identify the most appropriate and needed search terms.

### 1.3.2.5 Synthesis

This skill entails creating a new product in a specific situation. In other words, it is the ability to combine different parts of information into something new according to what a particular situation requires.

**1.3.2.6 Evaluation**

It is the highest level in Bloom's Taxonomy, which requires students to critically appraise the validity of a study and judge the relevance of its results for application.

**1.4 CT developmental Stages**

The educational psychologists Paul &Elder (2010) are a sample of scholars who are interested in the importance of CT in humans' lives. They believe that being a skilful thinker is very important whether in everyday life or in professional one. However, poor thinking may lead to different problems and obstacles in humans' life.

According to Paul & Elder (2010) CT is not an innate skill, which can be acquired or learned by all humans. Accordingly, they have developed a theory of stages of development in CT. This theory consists of six developmental stages:

**1.4.1 Stage One: The Unreflective Thinker**

At this stage, people are not aware of the importance of thinking in their lives. They are not even aware that thinking as a cognitive process needs to be developed and monitored. People are born as unreflective thinkers, however, certain people may die this way (Hall et al., 2011).

**1.4.2 Stage Two: The Challenged Thinker**

These kind of thinkers are aware of the importance of thinking in their lives, and that being poor thinkers may cause them serious problems. They may also possess a variety of skills in thinking. However, their thinking is still limited, and they are unable to recognize those thinking skills that they may have.

**1.4.3 Stage Three: The Beginning Thinker**

Beginning thinkers become aware of the problems of their thinking, therefore, they will actively try to develop it. The issue at this stage is that, although thinkers are explicitly aware of the problems of their thinking, they are still unable to form a systematic solution to solve

those matters. According to Taleff (2006, p.42), thinkers at this stage "are beginning to develop a degree of intellectual confidence they can think well".

### 1.4.4 Stage Four: The Practicing Thinker

Thinkers at this stage start to get an idea about which habits of their thinking should be developed and start to recognize the need to think systematically. However, they still lack the ability to deeply deal with the problems of their thinking. In the same vein, Boyle (2014) argues that this kind of thinkers acquires and develops different skills that will help them to avoid and correct their problems in thinking.

### 1.4.5 Stage Five: The Advanced Thinker

At this stage, thinkers establish good thinking habits of thought and they become deeply engaged in the process of dealing with their problems of thinking. Boyle (2014) "advanced thinkers are thinkers who have mastery over their critical thinking faculties and who are able to place under heightened surveillance their thought process and decision-making processes" (p.329).

### 1.4.6 Stage Six: The Accomplished Thinker

It is the final stage in Paul's and Elder's theory of development in CT, at which thinkers are highly skilful in thinking, they have a sense of empathy towards others, which enables them to be dynamic in the sense that they accept contradictions and others' views and opinions. However, reaching this stage is not an easy task, because it requires hard working on developing one's own thinking.

### 1.5 The Importance of CT

CT plays a significant role in different domains of life. Bassham et.al. (2011) provides a list of different domains where CT can be beneficial.

**1.5.1 The Classroom**

Critical thinking may play a major role in developing students' autonomy, because the basis of critical thinking is to judge, assess and scrutinize a particular information whether written or spoken before deciding to put trust on it. Thus, students who develop their critical thinking skills are less likely to depend and parrot only what their teachers say. Instead they will depend on themselves and take the responsibility of their own learning in checking and questioning the reliability of what they are exposed to.

Qing (2013) investigated the importance of CT in college English learning. In this respect, he points out that those students who think critically are more confident, self-reliant, and come out with trust worthy conclusions. The study also, suggestd that English teachers are supposed to foster critical reflection by encouraging students to participate actively through new approaches.

Snavi &Tarighat (2014) hold another study that aims at investigating the impact of teaching CTS on speaking proficiency of Iranian EFL learners in Tehran. The findings indicated that raising CT awareness explicitly has a significantly positive impact on the speaking proficiency of female Iranian adult intermediate EFL learners.

**1.5.2 The Work Place**

Nowadays, what really matters for employers is not the extent to which a particular employee is highly specialized in a particular domain or job, but what is important is the extent to which such employee possesses critical or good thinking skills. Because, employees who have such skills tend to be more contributive with their creative ideas, analytical evaluations and effective communication to their companies or any other place of work.

**1.5.3 In Life**

Bassham et.al. (2011) provide three different ways in our lives in which critical thinking plays a major role. First, it helps people avoid taking wrong decisions in their daily or personal

lives, because sometimes they tend to take some decisions or perform action that they recognize later that they were too ambitious and irrational. Critical thinking then may keep them away from falling in such mistakes by critically and logically analyze any decision before taking it. Second, they argue that critical thinking helps promoting democracy, arguing that poor thinking is the major sources of todays' issues. Third, they believe that developing critical thinking skills is important for humans' own personal life. Simply, because most of human beings tend to build and accept different prejudices and stereotypes due to their tendency to accept what they are told without questioning its reliability.

## 1.6 Barriers to CT

CT is an important skill that people need to develop. Its importance ranges from personal life to professional and educational domains. However, there are different obstacles that hinder reaching that aim i.e. to be a critical thinker is not an easy task. Bassham et al. (2011) provided different hindrances of CT.

### 1.6.1 Egocentrism

This obstacle is associated to the tendency to see reality as centered and based only on oneself. Thus, Egocentrics are those who tend to prioritize their own interests, points of view and beliefs as being true and better than those of others. This kind of people are likely to be subjective, prejudiced and biased. Egocentrism is of two types:

### 1.6.1.1 Self-interested Thinking

It refers to the tendency to accept and support only those beliefs and arguments that serve one's self-interest. Therefore, self-interested thinkers are narrow minded in the sense that they see reality from what interested them and goes hand in hand with their own beliefs and opinions. Their reasoning is based on the idea that what serves and benefits the one's self is true and good. This kind of thinking is a major obstacle towards critical thinking, because being a critical thinker means having the ability to reason logically and selflessly.

### 1.6.1.2 Self-serving bias:

It is the tendency to overestimate or value oneself, and to perceive oneself as superior to others. In other words, it is to see yourself better than what actually you are. Although, it is good to value oneself, but being overconfident may negatively affect one's objectivity, because, it makes people rigid, less likely to improve and recognize their strengths and weaknesses.

### 1.6.2 Unwarranted Assumptions and Stereotypes:

Unwarranted assumption is to believe that something is true without reasonable or logical evidence. In other words, it is to believe in things without any attempt to check their reliability, and validity. Among its types is a stereotype which refers to the tendency to form opinions based on particularities rather i.e. to generate things on the basis of small minority. As a result, such kind of assumption hinders critical thinking because it is based on unreasonable, unanalytical and irrational arguments and beliefs.

### 1.6.3 Self-focusing

It is the tendency of human beings to think only about their needs and benefits. However, to be a critical thinker someone needs to avoid such tendency and try to understand others views and opinions that are different from one's self (Hansen, 2012).

### 1.6.4 Misunderstanding What is Meant by Criticism

Certain people think that criticism is mainly about stating negative aspects, as a result, they fail to make accurate analysis when they are required to do so, as they are not aware that criticism is both negative and positive (Cottrell, 2017).

**Conclusion**

Some researchers label CTS as the twenty-first century skill, this indicates the extent to which this skill is important and needs recognition. This chapter was devoted to discuss the notion of CT skill. It started by stating some definitions that were provided by different researchers, it stated some features that characterized critical thinker. Next, it introduced those

skills and subs kills underlying the CT skill. Moreover, it provided some CT developmental

stages. Moving later to provide some important aspects related to this skill in different domains.

Finally, it provided some obstacles to CTS.

**Introduction**

Reading is a constructive process that can help students to acquire new knowledge, and develop some important skills. It is not merely a linguistic activity, but also a cognitive process and a multifaceted skill which includes lower and higher level skills. It has two main purposes reading for pleasure and reading for academic purposes. This chapter provides a brief overview of reading and its aspects. It discusses the notion of reading, approaches to teaching it, reading strategies, the importance of reading, and it relates, at the end, reading to CTS as this latter is one of the main focuses of this study.

**2.1 Defining Reading**

Reading in main words refers to the active process of understanding print and graphic text. In fact, considering the previous definition of reading, one may think that it is simple and easy to be practiced. However, researchers who are interested in the study of that skill do not argue with the former idea. As the case with Shoenbach et.al (1999), who believe that reading is not just a basic skill which we learn when we are at primary school once and for all, rather, reading skill goes beyond such a simple process of decoding and understanding the meaning of words. In other words, it is a complex process, which involves mental abilities to understand and monitor the meaning of different texts, in addition to the ability to interact with the presented material using various strategies. Moreover, "reading is a complex process that entails more than simply learning sounds and words in isolation. Good readers integrate the meaning of the text, the structure of language, and visual cues throughout the reading process" (Pike, 2000, p.4 as cited in Clay 1991).

Reading can be also defined in terms of process and product, as the case with Alderson (2000) who clarified the nature of reading and made a distinction between reading as a process and reading as a product. He defines the process as what happens between the reader and the text, which means the kind of interaction that takes place while reading. And, it goes beyond

simply deciphering and decoding what those printed symbols mean or how they are related to each other. In the process of reading:

> The reader is presumably also 'thinking' about what he is reading: what it means to him how it relates to other things he knows, to what he expects to come next in texts like this … may be consciously reflecting on the difficulties or ease he is experiencing when reading … [as he] may be completely unconscious of how he is reading, and of what is happening around him (p.3).

That is, while reading the reader is actively engaged in different cognitive processes such as activating his/her prior knowledge, interpreting the meaning of the text, expecting what is going to happen, giving his/her point of view about the text, etc. The reader may be also aware of what is going on during the process of reading and aware of those constraints that are facing him/her, or he/she may be totally unaware of those things. Additionally, the process of reading is dynamic, it changes from one reader to another, or even the same reader may perceive the same text differently at a different time with a different goal. Manzo & Manzo (1995) believe that reading as "process refers to the functions, or operations, that one goes through in deriving meaning" (p.9). In other words, it refers to those procedures through which the reader goes in order to extract meaning from the written material, or simply it highlights the steps that have been taken by the reader to obtain a particular meaning.

The view towards reading as a product gets less attention nowadays than it was earlier this century because researchers become more interested in the process of reading believing that it is more complicated, so it needs more attention. But, previous studies which were interested in reading as a product have attempted to define it. The proponents of this view give much emphasis to the result of reading which is manifested in understanding the text. In other words, what is important for them is that the reader understands the text, rather than how that understanding was reached. So, according to Alderson (2000) this approach to reading is based

on the view that "although readers may engage in different reading processes, the understanding they end up with is the same…. What matters, then, is not how you reach that understanding, but the fact that you reach it" (p.04). Moreover, "Reading as "product – or more appropriately "products"- refers to the actual information and insights reached as a result of reading" (Manzo& Manzo, 1995, p.9). Accordingly, the view of reading as a product emphasizes final result of reading i.e. what is important is the fact that the reader understands what was read.

## 2.2 Approaches to Teaching Reading

Reading is not always directed towards one goal. That is, reading takes different forms and has different aims. In this respect, teaching reading has different approaches, each of which has its own methods, principles, and goals. Therefore, the following are the main two approaches to teaching reading:

### 2.2.1 Extensive Reading

Bamford& Day (2004) argue that "Extensive reading is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of easy material in the new language"( p.1).In such type of reading styles, learners read for pleasure i.e. it is reading for the sake of reading ( for information entertainment). Besides, readers have the freedom to choose what to read according to their own interests. In other words, extensive reading is a "supplementary reading" where the aim is, "the development to the point of enjoyment and the ability to read the foreign language" (Michael 2014, as cited in Shelly, 2015, p.5). Thus, it is used as a tool for enjoyment because learners are not required to do any task after finishing the material that has been read as well as they are not required to continue reading it if it does not suit their interests, it is difficult, or if they get bored. This type is seen as a way to improve interest in reading, build up positive attitudes toward reading, and ameliorate their proficiency in the target language through enhancing various aspects including vocabulary gain and writing, in addition to developing various skills such as listening and speaking skills. In that sense, reading for pleasure will create

a sense of motivation for students. In addition, the more students read, the more they benefit, and the more they become fluent in the target language, as stated, "the best way to improve your knowledge in a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next best way is to read extensively in it" (Nuttall 1996, as cited in Lien, 2010, p.194).

In the context of teaching reading generally and extensive reading specifically, Bamford & Day (2002) provide ten principles for teaching such type of reading styles. They assert about the easiness of the reading material and its availability. Also, readers are free to choose what to read. But, they should read as much as possible, when the ultimate goal is to read for pleasure i.e. readers are not required to do any task of comprehension after they finish reading. Additionally, in extensive reading, the teacher acts only as a guide for his/her learners, and is considered as a role model. Moreover, in such type of reading, readers are expected to read slowly and silently.

### 2.2.2 Intensive Reading

While extensive reading is referred to as free reading, intensive reading is regarded as guided reading, in which teachers are the ones who choose the reading material and then guide their students through the reading process. Zhenyu (1997) argues that "Intensive reading as its name suggests, requires students to read a passage (often called a text) very carefully and in great detail" (p.40). In other words, students, as well as teachers, are required to go slowly reading the text, explaining its different parts and simplifying its difficulties.

> In an intensive reading, students normally work with short texts with close guidance from the teacher. The aim of intensive reading is to help students obtain detailed meaning from the text, to develop reading skills … and to enhance vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Renandya & Richards, 2002, p.296).

Thus, intensive reading requires a high degree of comprehension in which the reader needs to read the presented material carefully and deeply trying to understand as much as possible

each and every detail. Therefore, in an intensive class the teacher is the one who is responsible for the selection of the reading material. Likewise, he/she is responsible for the selection of the reading strategies, the time frame of the reading activities, and the linguistic aspects to be learned. Furthermore, in such type of reading, the process of evaluation and assessment of students' understanding of the reading material is simplified, because readers receive the same reading material and the same activities at the same time (Ferris & John, 2009).

## 2.3 Reading Strategies

Strategies have been defined as the "specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information"(Brown,2007 as cited in Karami, 2008 p.2). Therefore, reading strategies are techniques used by the reader in order to facilitate the process of reading and overcome reading difficulties. These strategies are divided into strategies that take place before, during, and after reading a particular material. McNamara et.al (2007) grouped reading strategies as follows:

### 2.3.1 Strategies prepare to read

This first step is the reading preparation phase, in which the reader prepares his/her self to start reading. At this stage, the reader uses different strategies to guide his/her self through the reading process.

### 2.3.1.1 Skimming

It is a reading strategy, which, involves a speedy reading of the written material, and aims at picking up its general idea, especially, if the selected material is too long (Sullivan, 2014). Bhardwaj (2009) argues that "in this reading the reader does not fix his eye on each and every word. He lets it move from one word to some other, jumping over a word or two" (p. 196). In that sense, the reader is not required to go through a deep reading process, because the main

aim of such strategy is to get a general idea or to check whether the selected material is consistent with the reader's needs and preferences.

### 2.3.1.2 Scanning

It is another strategy used by the reader in order to pick up a specific information that s/he needs. Thus, the reader does not read to get a general information, but to get a particular data from the entire text. As Bhardwaj (2009) exemplified " we skim through a report to have a rough idea of what it says but we scan page of telephone directory to find a particular number or name" (ibid). In the same vein Grellet (1981, p.19) asserts that "when scanning … we simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it be a name, a date, or a less specific piece of information".

### 2.3.1.3 Previewing

This reading strategy involves finding out where the needed information is likely to be. Readers may manipulate "… key parts of a text, such as the title, subheadings, bold or italicized words, figures and tables, the introduction and conclusion, and key sentences" (McNamara et.al.,2007,p. 475).  This technique may be useful in many ways, as it helps to get an idea of what the selected material is likely to be about.

### 2.3.2 Strategies to Interpret Meaning of Words, Sentences, and Ideas in the Text

This category includes strategies that help the reader to grasp the meaning of the written material, through making sense of words, sentences, and concepts to construct a coherent understanding of what is read.

### 2.3.2.1 Inferring

Duffy (2009) argues that "inferring is the ability to read between lines or to get the meaning an author implies but does not state directly" (p.122). In that sense, this strategy requires the reader to go beyond what is explicitly said and to try to understand what the author really means by a particular word or expression. This requires the reader to be actively engaged in the text

so that he or she can understand what the author's intention behind what he/she wrote. In other words, inferring is constructing meaning beyond what is literally stated.

### 2.3.2.2 Guessing the Meaning of New Words

This strategy requires the detection of the meaning of unknown words without referring to the dictionary. It is beneficial to find a technique that would help the reader to grasp the meaning of unfamiliar words for a given material. Among the significant techniques is to look for hints that may help in grasping the meaning of words and/or expressions in the context, or to look for those words which are placed before and after the unfamiliar term (Williams, 2013) . In other words, instead of interrupting the reading process by stopping at the unknown word and checking the dictionary, which may take time and hinder the reading progression. The reader has to develop the strategy of guessing the meaning of new words by relating them to the context in which they appear, to the words which appear before or after them, according to their definitions, etc.

### 2.3.2.3 Using the Text Structure

As its name implies this strategy requires the reader to depend on the text structure to extract the meaning of the written material. In other words the reader manipulates the text organization to make connection between its ideas to achieve an overall understanding of what is written. The main two types of the text organization are whether it is expository or narrative. Readers, especially at elementary stages, find it difficult to understand expository texts due to their structure complexity.

### 2.3.2.4 Paraphrasing

It is to reword what has been said by the writer using the readers' own words and keeping the general idea. Being able to paraphrase the author's ideas means that the reader has grasped the content of the written material. Carter (2012, p.206) affirms that "paraphrasing doesn't mean

repeating the author's words exactly; it means putting the author's ideas into your own words yet maintaining the same ideas".

### 2.3.2.5 Rereading

This strategy requires the reader to keep reading until getting the intended meaning. Kelly et al. (2012) argue that "rereading is a valuable reading strategy" and they claim that "readers reread for two reasons: to clear up confusion and to pay attention to missed details" (p.30). Simply, rereading is a strategy that is used by readers to clarify meaning and to ensure that no details are missed.

### 2.3.2.6 Chunking

It is to break down the elements of a sentence into meaningful phrases in order to clarify meaning and facilitate the process of understanding difficult terms or expressions. Bergeron & Wolff define it as "analyzing words by breaking them into decodable parts" (2003, p.10). In the same vein, Moss & Lapp (2017) state that "chunking is a technique for breaking larger pieces of text into smaller, more manageable pieces" (P.60).

### 2.3.2.7 Taking Notes

This strategy requires the reader to write down the main ideas that have been taken from the written material. Taking notes seems as an easy technique, however, it requires a high degree of comprehension. Because, the reader should pick up only principle elements from what has been read, and this could happen only if the reader really grasped the content of the written material.

### 2.3.3 Strategies to Go Beyond the Text

Reading does not require the reader to keep only attached to the written material at hand. Since, comprehension may demand other external factors such as the reader's prior knowledge and personal experience to facilitate the process of getting the meaning of the written material (McNamara et.al 2007).

**2.3.3.1 Asking Questions**

This strategy requires the reader to ask questions before, during, and after reading a particular material, which may allow him/her to predict the content of the present material. Questions while reading are kind of self-testing that the reader uses to check whether s/he really understands the given material. Questions after reading are raised to confirm or disconfirm the predictions that have been formed previously by the reader. Farrell & Sylvester (2008) consider "Questioning as a means of previewing a text is another important strategy that proficient readers use" (p.58).

**2.3.3.2 Visualizing**

The reader creates images in his/her mind that reflect the ideas of the text. According to Coan & Clark (2007, p.249) "… visualizing requires the reader to make 'mind movies', pictures, and sensory impressions based on what has been read", while, Benjamin (2013) argue that visualizing "… is a way of staying engaged, making the abstract concrete, making the reading experience memorable" (p.130). Accordingly, visualizing as its name implies requires the reader to be active and engaged in the text so that s/he will be able to envisage what has been read.

**2.3.3.3 Think Aloud**

Thinking aloud is a strategy used by readers in an attempt to understand the written material. As it has been defined by Roob (2000, p.70) " thinking aloud means that you say what is going on in your mind as you read and try to understand what your are reading". In other words, this strategy is a kind of self-monitoring in which the reader keeps trying to control and check what is going on during the reading process and whether s/he is understanding what has been read or not.

**2.3.4 Strategies to Organize, Restructure, and Synthesize the Text content**

It is the final category of reading strategies that require the reader to use his/her mental abilities to provide a coherent representation of the written material. This category includes two major strategies, as follows:

**2.2.3.4.1 Summarizing**

It is "a reading strategy in which readers extract and paraphrase the essential ideas of a text.It requires readers to determine what is important, to condense this information, and to state it in their own words" (Harvey& Goudvis, 2007, as cited in Gaither & Shiverdecker, 2016, p.345). That is, summarizing is a strategy used by readers, which requires them to extract the most important ideas and retelling them using their own styles with fewer words.

**2.2.3.4.2 Graphic Organizers**

They are manifestations and externalizations of the ideas of the text. They are considered as a way to reinforce the readers' understanding and memorization of the content of the written material. They refer to the use of different aids such as drawing maps, graphs, charts, diagrams. However, students should be trained on how to use this kind of strategies, because it needs a deep understanding of the written material, in order to make connection between its ideas and their representations by the reader.

**2.4 The Importance of Reading**

There is no hiding the fact that reading is a critical skill that contribute to the promotion of many aspects whether in the field of FL or other fields. To name but few, it enriches vocabulary, extends ones' knowledge in different domains of life, develops the writing skill. Glen (2017) identifies different benefits of reading among which:

**2.4.1 Enhancing Smarts**

Reading is a tool to improve ones' intelligence and general knowledge. Similarly, Welford & Hardy (2012, p.131) "reading is an active mental process… you'll think more and you might

become a little bit smarter". Moreover, it helps in making intelligent and more informed decisions (Sharp, 2011).

### 2.4.2 Reducing Stress

Reading can be the best way to reduce stress. For example reading an awesome fiction book is the best way to relax, because, when the reader reads he/she will engage with the written material that would help him/her to forget about other issues related to the professional or educational careers.

### 2.4.3 Improving analytical thinking

Through reading, knowledge can be fostered**,** consequently, readers will develop the ability to think critically and analytically. In that regard, Sharp (2011) argues that reading is a tool to improve critical thinking skills, because the more readers read, the more they will be exposed to multiple points of view and the less they will be influenced or manipulated by others' opinions, media, or propaganda.

### 2.4.4 Increasing Vocabulary

The more readers read the more they encounter new vocabulary. In other words, people who tend to read a lot have a higher chance to encounter and learn new words, and they will be more able to detect the meaning of words independently and in their contexts, unlike those who do not tend to read a lot. Besides, reading can be effective in developing one's language skills (Welford & Hardy, 2012).

### 2.4.5 Improves the Writing Skills

Reading is a tool to enhance the writing style. According to Sharp (2011,p.37) "the connection between reading and writing is well established … reading improves your vocabulary and your knowledge of grammar, sentence structure, style, and mechanics, all of which can help you write more effectively". Reading also, enhances grammar, in the case of

EFL for example, the more students read in the FL, in this case English the less they are exposed to errors in terms of style, punctuation, word choice, etc.

## 2.5 Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Reading comprehension, as its name implies, refers to the process of understanding the written material. In other words, it refers to the construction of meaning from what is read. It requires the reader to grasp what certain words mean, and the way they have been used to create that particular meaning. It also requires the reader to contextualize, analyze, and evaluate the different components of the written material. In addition to the capacity to recall what has been read (Schumm, 2006).

Reading comprehension, however, is not a simple process, because not any reader can grasp the content of the written material easily and successfully. Therefore, there are different comprehension difficulties that face readers while reading. Westwood (2008) provides different factors for poor comprehension.

### 2.5.1 Limited Vocabulary Knowledge

This occurs when students are not understanding what they are reading, especially when they cannot connect the meaning of words as they know with their meanings in the text. In other words, they fail to understand the meaning of words according to their context. Or, when they face new words and fail to both recognizing them independently and in relation to their context (Westwood, 2008, p.34). In the case of FLL, learners are more exposed to such problem, especially for those who do not read a lot. Because, the less they read the more they will not be able to recognize new terms and concepts.

### 2.5.2 Lack of Fluency

It is another obstacle to reading comprehension. Fluency is related to the rate of reading, and to the extent to which readers are able to identify smoothly and easily the meaning of words whether independently or in relation to the context. However, readers who tend to read too fast

or too slowly are much likely to face reading comprehension difficulties. Because "slow reading tend to restrict cognitive capacity to the low-level of letters and words rather than allowing full attention to be devoted to higher-order ideas and concepts within the text" (Westwood, 2008, p.34). That is, when readers read slowly, they focus more on the process of decoding words and letters instead of focusing on grasping the meaning of those words and concepts. Moreover, fluency problems may be related to the way the written material is read, whether silently or aloud since some readers can understand "better under one condition than the other" (Brassell & Rasinski, 2008, p.50).

### 2.5.3 Lack of Familiarity with the Subject Matter

It is much easier to read with understanding if the reader possesses some previous background knowledge about the topic (Gersten et al., 2001; Thomas et al., 2008 as cited in Westwood, 2008, p.35). Accordingly, when readers are reading a particular topic for the first time without having any prior knowledge about it, they may fall in troubles in extracting the meaning from it.

### 2.5.4 Difficulty Level of the Text

The more the text is complex in terms of its content, structure, words, etc. the harder it will be for readers to understand it.

Shehu (2015) conducted a research in which she investigated the reading comprehension problems encountered by FL students; the case study was Albania, Croatia. The results of this study revealed three most important reasons:

- Vocabulary, which plays an important role in understanding the written material. Therefore, if students encounter new vocabularies and fail to comprehend them, they are more likely to fail in understanding the written passage as a whole.

- Absence of extensive reading may cause comprehension difficulties. Because, if students do not train themselves to read, especially in the FL, then they will encounter serious problems in comprehension.

- Type of the text is another barrier to reading comprehension. Actually, some types of texts are easy to be understood while others are just the opposite. This depends mainly to how students perceive the written material.

## 2.6 Developing CTS through Reading

Critical thinking is a mental process that requires the use of different cognitive and metacognitive skills when dealing with a particular piece of information. This skill, however, is not innate. In other words, human beings are not born with the ability to think critically. Accordingly, being a critical thinker goes through different stages and needs some means to reach such kind of thinking. Reading is regarded as a tool to develop critical thinking skill, but how? And why?

Reading is both a thinking and a cognitive process. Thus, it is "… not an isolable skill in itself but is based on more general thinking abilities that are an integral part of all cognitive activity" (Reichl, 2009, p.33). This means that reading is not merely a process of decoding the meaning of the printed words, rather it consists of different mental skills that are considered as the crucial elements of critical thinking, including inference, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation (Grabe, 1991).

According to Tankersley (2003), reading is like a tapestry which consists of six threads that are mingled together to build a strong reading comprehension. Among those threads, she identified higher-order thinking in which the reader "… is able to apply the levels of Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy (1956) and make meaning at more sophisticated level. This thread is reading at the evaluation, synthesis, analysis, and interpretation levels" (p. 116). Accordingly, while, reading the reader is engaged in higher order thinking skills, which indicates that reading is an

active process. Moreover, it implies that while reading, the reader is using some critical thinking skills and sub skills. As a result, it seems that there is a relationship between reading and critical thinking. In other words, reading can be used as a tool to foster critical thinking skill.

King (2011) claims that reading is a tool to enhance critical thinking, because, as readers read they tend to develop certain ideas and concepts that are the core of all thinking manners. Moreover, the process of thinking is related to the knowledge of semantics, which allows the person to be aware of and to critically analyze the aim of the language used by both writers and speakers i.e. whether it is used to inform, convince, influence, etc. Additionally, she proposes the essential steps of how critical thinking can be fostered through reading. To reach such a goal, she emphasizes that the materials selected in the curriculum should be objective directed, students' ideas should welcomed and respected, and the teaching strategies should be planned to develop students' thinking.

Hosseini et.al (2012) investigated the relationship between critical thinking ability, reading comprehension and reading strategy use among 70 male and female Iranian university students majoring in English Translation and English literature. The results revealed that there is a strong impact of structured reading lessons on the development of critical thinking skills. This study showed that students who received structured reading lessons had better performance on California Critical Thinking Skills Test in comparison to those who received traditional reading instructions.

**Conclusion**

Reading is a complex concept that cannot be covered in few pages. However, in this chapter we tried to cover some important aspects related to reading as its definition, types, strategies, its importance. In addition to some major reading comprehension difficulties, and whether reading can be used as a means to develop critical thinking skill. In general, this chapter aimed at raising

students' awareness about the importance of reading not only in the academic context, but also in other domains.

**Introduction**

This chapter is devoted to the practical part of this study, which aims at presenting and analyzing teachers as well as students' perceptions about reading and its impact on the development of critical thinking skill. Therefore, two questionnaires are administered to both teachers and students in order to achieve the aims of this research. The first part of this chapter deals with the analysis of students' questionnaire, whereas, the second part is oriented towards the analysis of teachers' questionnaire.

**3.1 Students' Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a data-gathering tool, which is designed to extract specific information. The first questionnaire used in this study is distributed to first year master students to investigate their perceptions about the impact of reading on the development of CTS.

**3.1.1 Population and Sample**

The first population of the present study is concerned with first year Master students at the department of Letters and English Language at 8 Mai 1945- Guelma- University who enrolled for the academic year 2017-2018. The aim behind this selection is that students at that level are expected to have a wide view about the topic under investigation. Thus, they may provide consistent and helpful data.

**3.1.2 Administration of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in the present study is a self-completion paper questionnaire distributed by the researcher. The questionnaire has been administered to first year Master students at the department of Letters and English Language, University of 8 Mai 1945. It was distributed to 64 students, however, only 61 of them have answered the questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered on 29 April 2018, and handed back in the same day. The major problem that faced the researcher while distributing the questionnire was the reluctance of some students to answer it.

### 3.1.3 Description of Students' Questionnaire

Students' questionnaire contains 20 items grouped into three sections. The questions are a mixture of closed-ended (multiple-choice and yes/no questions) and open-ended questions.

### 3.1.3.1 Section One: Background Information (Q1-Q3)

This sections is composed of three questions (Q1-Q3). It aims at gaining information about how long students have been studying English, whether it was their choice or not and how they perceive their level in English.

### 3.1.3.2 Section Two: Reading (Q4-Q10)

In this forth question (Q4), students are asked to give their degree of appreciation to reading. In the following questions, (Q5-Q6) students are asked to set how many times they read, then, they are provided with a list of choices to specify what type of materials they prefer to read. In question (Q7), students are required to set their aims behind reading through ticking one or more choices, and they are provided with an open space to specify other purposes that are not mentioned on the provided list. The next question (Q8) is a yes/no question in which students are requested to answer whether they tend to stop reading when they do not understand what they read or not. If their answer is yes, then they are required to choose which strategy (ies) they use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties. The ninth question (Q9), students are asked to indicate if their teachers ask them to read or not. Additionally in (Q10), they are asked to give their views about whether or not reading is a necessary skill for them to develop. In this question, whatever their answers, some justifications are required.

### 3.1.3.2 Section Three: Critical Thinking and Reading (Q11-Q20)

The opening two questions of this section (Q11-Q12) are directed towards investigating students' awareness of the existence of critical thinking skill, and whether their teachers draw their attention to its existence or not. In the following question (Q13), students are required to give their opinion about whether or not critical thinking skill should be studied explicitly like

the other four skills, then, they are asked to justify their answers. In question (Q14), students are requested to decide if the development of critical thinking skill would help them to be self-sufficient learners or not, and again they are asked to justify their responses. Question (Q15) is concerned with investigating students' degree of agreement or disagreement about the idea that reading is a thinking process, which requires the use of different cognitive skills. In this question, some justifications are required. Moreover, students in Q16 are provided with a list of choices with the opportunity to choose more than one option or add other choices for the sake of exploring critical thinking skills and sub skills that students tend to use while reading. The next question (Q17) is a yes/no question that requires students to give their opinions about whether reading can develop their critical thinking skill, they are also asked to give justifications regarding their choices. Then, in Q18, if they have opt for yes in Q17, they are required to choose which type of reading can better develop their critical thinking skill, intensive and/or extensive. In Q 19, students are requested to answer if their teachers are using some strategies to enhance their critical thinking skill or not. If their answer is yes, they are requested to explain how they do so. In the last question (Q20), students are invited to give some additional opinions and suggestions about the issue under investigation.

### 3.1.4 Analysis of the Results

The following section provides an analysis of the results to the previously described questions.

**Section One: Background Information**

**Q1-** How many years have you been studying English?

**Table 3. 1**

*Students' Years of Studying English*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|-------------------|------------|
| 11 years | 57 | 93.44% |
| 12 years | 4 | 6.56% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

In response to the first question, nearly all the respondents (93.44%) indicated that they have been studying English for 11 years; only 6.56% of them responded that they have been studying English for 12years. This indicates that nearly most of them have succeeded during their academic career without neither blocking nor repeating any year. Moreover, this may imply that those years are quite enough to master the English language.

**Q2-** Was it your choice to study English at university?

a. Yes

b. No

**Table 3. 2**

*Students' Choice of English at University*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|-------------------|------------|
| A | 55 | 90. 16% |
| B | 6 | 9.84 % |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

As it is displayed in the table 2, the majority of the sample (90.16%) claimed that it was their choice to study English at University, while just a small number (9.84%) reported that English was not their first choice. This implies that most of the participating students like English and are motivated to learn it, so that they intended to choose in their future academic career.

**Q3-** How could you describe your level in English?

    a. Very good

    b. Good

    c. Average

    d. Bad

    e. Very bad

**Table 3. 3**

*Students' Perception of Their Level in English*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| A | 6 | 9.84% |
| B | 37 | 60.65% |
| C | 18 | 29.51% |
| D | 00 | 00% |
| E | 00 | 00% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

Concerning students' description of their level in English, only (9.84%) claimed that it is very good. Over half (60.65%) of these questioned students reported that it is good. 29.51% indicated that their level in English is average, and none of the respondents claim that their level is bad or very bad. These results indicate that the majority of students are satisfied with their level in English, which may imply that they are doing well in their domain of study. It is also

worth mentioning that reaching that level is possible only after a selection made by the administration, i.e. only good students are chosen.

**Section two: Reading**

**Q4-** Do you like reading?

    a. Yes

    b. Somehow

    c. No

**Table 3. 4**

*Students' Appreciation of Reading*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|-------------------|------------|
| A | 22 | 36.06% |
| B | 34 | 55.74% |
| C | 5 | 8.20% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

According to table 4, 36.06 % of the sample reported that they like reading, whereas, over half (55.74%) of them claimed that they like reading in some way. However, 8.20% indicated that they do not like reading. The result may mean that the majority of students are not giving high importance reading. However, students, especially at that level should focus on reading as it can be a means to develop different other skills most importantly the writing skill. Reading also enhances one's knowledge of different aspects whether in relation to education or to daily life. Therefore, students are recommended to give more attention and importance to that skill.

**Q5-** How many times do you read?

    a. Usually

    b. Sometimes

c. Rarely

d. Never

*Table 3. 5*

*The Frequency of Students' Reading*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|-----------|
| A | 10 | 16.39% |
| B | 30 | 49.18% |
| C | 20 | 32.79% |
| D | 1 | 1.64% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

Table 3.5 demonstrates that only 16.39% of the respondents indicated that they always read, however nearly half of them (49.18%) reported that they read from time to time. 32.79% responded that they rarely read, while only 1.64% stated that he/she never reads. This may imply that the respondents do not consider reading as one of their primary preferences. But, students should keep in mind that this level requires reading and reading a lot. Additionally, students at that level are expected to be autonomous learners who construct and broaden their own understanding, and this process can take place through reading.

**Q6- what types of materials do you prefer to read?**

    a. Novels

    b. News papers

    c. Magazines

    d. Academic books and articles

**Table 3. 6**

*Students' Preferences of Reading Materials*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 24 | 39.34% |
| B | 6 | 9.84% |
| C | 9 | 14.75% |
| D | 6 | 9.84% |
| A+B+C | 2 | 3.28% |
| A+C | 1 | 1.64% |
| B+C | 3 | 4.92% |
| A+B+D | 2 | 3.28% |
| A+D | 3 | 4.92% |
| A+B | 4 | 6.55% |
| Other | 1 | 1.64 |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

Table 3.6 demonstrates that 39.34% of the questioned sample reported that they prefer to read novels, while only 9.84% opted for reading newspapers and the same number opted for academic books and articles. 14.75% responded that they prefer to read magazines. A small minority of respondents (3.28%) indicated that they favor reading novels, newspapers and magazines. Another 3.28% choose novels, newspapers and academic books and articles as their preferable reading materials. Hardly any of the participants (1.64%) like reading novels and magazines. 4.92% prefer reading novels and academic books and articles, and the same number favor reading novels and newspapers. 6.55% opted for reading novels and newspapers. While, very few minority (1.64%) have stated other options than those that have been mentioned in the

provided list, these options were short stories. This entails that the majority of students prefer reading materials that are not related to the academic context that is, they prefer extensive reading. But, it is worth mentioning that whatever material is, it can be useful and beneficial, however, students' should not ignore reading academic materials as the latter can help in improving their academic achievements.

**Q7- For what purpose do you usually read?**

    a. pleasure

    b. to better understand the content of the ( difficult) lessons

    c. to improve other skills

    d. to enrich your vocabulary and knowledge

    e. all of the above

**Table 3. 7**

*Students' Purposes behind Reading*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| A | 27 | 44.26% |
| B | 5 | 8.20% |
| C | 00 | 00% |
| D | 8 | 13.10% |
| A+B | 2 | 3.28% |
| A+C | 1 | 1.64% |
| A+D | 6 | 9.84% |
| B+D | 2 | 3.28% |
| A+C+D | 5 | 8.20% |
| C+D | 2 | 3.28% |
| All | 1 | 1.64% |
| Other | 1 | 1.64% |
| They did not answer | 1 | 1.64% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

As shown in table 3.7, 44.26%of the respondents stated that they read for pleasure. However, only 8.20% reported that their purpose behind reading is to better understand the content of the

(difficult) lessons. 13.10% indicated that to enrich their vocabulary and knowledge is the mainly aim for them behind reading. Only two students stated that they read for pleasure and better understand the content of the (difficult) lessons. The same number have chosen that they read in order to better understand the content of the (difficult) lessons, and to enrich their vocabulary and knowledge. Another two students specified their purpose behind reading as to improve other skills and to enrich their vocabulary and knowledge.

Hardly any of the participant (1.64%) indicated that they read for pleasure and to improve other skills; while the same percent number reported, has chosen all the mentioned reading purposes options. Another 1.64% have added other aspects behind the aims of their reading. However, the same percent number did not answer this question, because they opted for no in the previous i.e. they do not like reading. Concerning reading for pleasure, and enriching vocabulary and knowledge only 9.84% of the respondents read for this sake.

Students in this question have stated different purposes behind reading, however, this result confirms to some extent the result of Q6 that the majority of students prefer to read novels, which may be mainly for pleasure. In fact, reading can be done for different purposes, however, students should seek balance between those aims, and not concentrate on one aim at the expense of the other.

**Q8-** Do you tend to stop reading when you do not understand what you read?

    a. Yes

    b. No

**Table 3. 8**

*Students' Reaction When They Do Not Understand What They Read*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|-------------------|------------|
| A | 28 | 45.90% |
| B | 33 | 54.1% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

In response to the question8, 45. 90% commented that they stop reading when they do not understand the reading material. 54.1% indicated that they do not stop reading when they do not comprehend what they are reading. From the analysis of the above question, we find that it that 45.90% of students at this level tend to stop reading when they do not understand what they are reading

For those who opted for (No) they were provided with a list of strategies that they may use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties, these are presented in the next question:

If no, what strategy (ies) do you generally use to overcome reading comprehension difficulties?

a. Inferring

b. Rereading

c. Paraphrasing

d. Asking questions

e. Summarizing

f. Other

**Table 3. 9**

*Reading Strategies Used by Students*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A | 4 | 12.12% |
| B | 15 | 45.45% |
| C | 2 | 6.07% |
| D | 1 | 3.03% |
| E | 00 | 00% |
| A+B | 6 | 18.18% |
| A+B+D | 1 | 3.03% |
| B+D | 1 | 3.03% |
| A+B+C | 1 | 3.03% |
| Other | 1 | 3.03% |
| Did not answer | 1 | 3.03% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

According to the results displayed in table 3.9, 12.12% of the respondents indicated that when they do not understand a particular material they depend on the inferring strategy to facilitate the process of understanding. Nearly half (45.45) of them tend to reread the presented material when they face ambiguities. However, only 6.07% of the participants use paraphrasing as a means to overcome reading comprehension difficulties.

While 3.03% ask questions to simplify the process of grasping the meaning of the reading material, the same percent (3.03%) tend to combine the previous strategy with inferring, and rereading to achieve the same goal. Another 3.03% of the sample adopt rereading and asking question strategies. Moreover, the same percent number has opted for the following strategies; inferring, rereading, and paraphrasing. 3.03% have added other strategies that were not mentioned in the list that are the use of dictionaries .However, 3.03% of the respondents have indicated that they do not stop reading when they not understand the written material, but they did not provide a particular strategy (ies) that they use to overcome comprehension difficulties.

18.18% depend on inferring and rereading strategies to overcome reading comprehension difficulties.

The results of Q 9 demonstrated that the reading strategies inferring, rereading are the most used strategies. Students tend to use these strategies because they are easy and take place as the reader reads the written material, so they do not need much time and effort like summarizing and paraphrasing.

**Q9-** Do your teachers encourage you to read?

    a.  Always

    b.  Sometimes

    c.  Rarely

    d.  Never

**Table 3. 10**

*Teachers' Attempts to Support their students to read.*

| Options | Number of Students | Number of Students |
|---------|--------------------|--------------------|
| A | 29 | 47.54% |
| B | 21 | 34.43% |
| C | 11 | 18.03% |
| D | 00 | 00% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

As indicated in table 3.10, 47.54% of the sample affirmed that their teachers always encourage them to read. 34.43% of them responded that from time to time their teachers boost them to read. However, 18.03% of the respondents indicated that their teachers rarely encourage them to read. Concerning these two last results, i.e. teachers sometimes or only rarely support their students to read, is maybe related to their expectation that students at that level are aware

of the significance of reading, and they know what helps them and what do not. Thus, they do not need others to remind them about what benefits them and what does not.

**Q10-** Do you think that reading is a necessary skill for you to develop?

    a. Yes

    b. No

**Table 3. 11**

*Students' Views about the Necessity of Developing the Reading Skill*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|-------------------|------------|
| A | 60 | 98.36% |
| B | 1 | 1.64% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

The overwhelming majority of the sample (98.36%) asserted that reading is a necessary skill for them to develop. Only 1.64% of the participants indicated that reading is not a necessary skill for them to develop. This means that the majority of students are treasuring reading, and they are aware of its importance and benefits, however, this result contradicts the results of Q5, because, though they are aware of the necessities of developing the reading skill, they are not working on it, as the majority of them abandon reading.

In this question, students were asked to justify their answers. Among those who opted for yes (60 students), only 47 of them have justified their choice, some of them are quoted as follows:

- "Reading is a tool to develop vocabulary, grammar, and the writing style".

- "When you read different types of books you will gain knowledge about different topics, as you will gain a lot of vocabulary".

- "Through reading you will be a good listener and a critical thinker".

From students' responses, it is noticed that they stress the importance of reading in developing one's vocabulary, besides other important aspects. Students, then, should be aware

that reading does not enhance vocabulary only, but also many different aspects including developing one's writing style and cognitive skills.

The only student who denied the importance of reading in developing one's self justified this by saying that the other skills (speaking and writing) are more important than reading in developing one's self.

**Section Three: Critical Thinking and Reading**

**Q11-** Are you aware of the existence of critical thinking skill?

    a.  Yes

    b.  No

**Table 3. 12**

*Students' Views about the Existence of CTS*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A | 58 | 95.08% |
| B | 3 | 4.92% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

As displayed in table 3.12, 95.07% indicated that they are aware of the existence of critical thinking skill, whereas, 4.92% stated that they are not conscious about its existence. This entails that the majority of students are knowledgeable about what does critical thinking mean. This awareness will probably help them to develop this skill if they decide to do so.

   **Q12-**Do your teachers draw your attention to the existence of such skill?

    a.  Yes

    **b.**  No

**Table 3. 13**

*Teacher' Attempts to Draw Their Students' Attention to the Existence of CTS*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A       | 51                 | 83.61%     |
| B       | 10                 | 16.39%     |
| Total   | 61                 | 100%       |

The majority of students (83.61%) replied that their teachers draw their attention to the existence of the CTS. However, 16.39% denied what has been said. This question may confirm to some extent the results of the previous question (Q11) i.e. most of students are aware of the existence of critical thinking skill because their teachers attract their attention to it. Moreover, the aim of the LMD system is to create autonomous learners. Thus, being a self- sufficient learner depends on one's ability to possess some skills that are necessarily to reach such a stage of thinking, among which the CTS with its skills and sub skills.

**Q13-** Do you think that critical thinking as a skill should be taught explicitly as much like reading, writing, speaking and listening?

a. Yes

b. No

**Table 3. 14**

*Students 'Views about Teaching CTS Explicitly*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A       | 49                 | 80.33%     |
| B       | 12                 | 19.67%     |
| Total   | 61                 | 100%       |

80.33% of the respondents agreed that critical thinking should be studied explicitly as much like the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). This would appear to indicate that students are aware of the significance of CTS. Especially, as advanced learners who are, most of time, required to use this skill to deal with the paramount information they are faced with whether from their teachers or the internet. 19.69% were in discordance with the claim that critical thinking should be studied explicitly. This respondents may think that implementing CTS with other modules would be enough for them to develop this skill.

This question, required participants to provide some justifications. Among those who opted for yes, 36 have justified their choice claiming that critical thinking is a difficult skill, thus it should be studied openly and clearly, so that they can develop it. Others defended their choice by stating that critical thinking is a metacognitive process, so it plays an important role in developing their tendency towards learning by enabling them to build strong arguments, to widen their vision by avoiding drawing false conclusions, and it raises their objectivity. Moreover, some respondents claimed that during their academic career they are required to analyze, evaluate, criticize, etc. Thus, studying this skill explicitly would facilitate these mental activities for them.

Among those who view that it is not important to study critical thinking explicitly, only 8 students have justified their choice. They believed that it is interwoven with other modules as well as other skills such as reading and writing, so there is no need to be studied separately. Others view that critical thinking is going to be developed automatically whenever the learner becomes an advanced one. According to these justifications, it seems that though the majority of students are aware of the existence of critical thinking skill (as it is displayed in table 11), they are not conscious about the fact that being aware of its existence is not enough to become a critical thinker.

**Q14-** Do you think that developing such a skill would help you to become a self-sufficient learner?

    a.  Yes

    b.  Not sure

    c.  No

**Table 3. 15**

*Students' Perception about Raising Their Autonomy through CTS*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 49 | 80.33% |
| B | 12 | 19.67% |
| C | 00 | 00% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

The results show that the majority of the sample (77.05%) consider developing critical thinking skill as an essential step to be self-sufficient learners. While 22.95% of them were not sure about this.

Among 47 students who opted for yes, 27 have justified their answers. Some of them indicated that developing critical thinking skill would help them to be self-sufficient learners in the sense that it raises their self-confidence, so they will trust more their capabilities in a learner-centered approach. Additionally, others claimed that developing such skill will encourage them not to depend only on what their teachers say, but they will take an active part in the process of their learning. In other words, they will change their situation from being only receivers of information to being active learners who tend to analyze, scrutinize, and evaluate things before taking them for granted. Moreover, some respondents argued that being critical thinkers would help them to rely on themselves when dealing with difficult situations through developing the skill of problem solving. Therefore, the previous results may suggest that students have a

positive attitude towards developing the CTS, and may also imply the need of the advanced level learners to become responsible for their own learning.

Among 14 students who were not sure, whether developing critical thinking skill would help them to become self-sufficient learners or not, six of them justified their answers. In this respect, two of them indicated that there are other skills that are needed to be developed like reading, writing, and speaking. While others stated that critical thinking skill is a difficult skill and not everyone can be such kind of thinker, so according to them it is better to find other ways to develop autonomy. These results may indicate that learners believe that being autonomous does not necessitate CTS. Because, if learners are not critical thinkers this does not confirm that they are passive students. However, learners should be aware of the point that being a critical thinker means being able not to accept things without any proofs or analysis, and the same is true for autonomous learners.

**Q15-** To what extent do you agree that reading is a thinking process that requires the use of different cognitive skills?

    a. Strongly agree

    b. Agree

    c. Strongly disagree

    d. Disagree

    e. Whatever your answer, please justify

**Table 3. 16**

*Students' Views about Reading as a Cognitive Process*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 27 | 44.26% |
| B | 32 | 52.45% |
| C | 00 | 00% |
| D | 2 | 3.29% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

According to the results displayed in table 16, 44.26% of the respondents strongly agreed that reading is a thinking process, which requires the use of cognitive skills. Moreover, over half of them (52.45%) agreed about that. This implies that they are aware of the fact that reading is not merely a matter of decoding the written symbols, rather it is an active process that involves the use of cognition. The results point to the likelihood, that students are both aware and use different reading strategies that involve different cognitive skills (higher and lower ones). However, 3.29% disagreed about the assumption that reading is a thinking process that requires the use of cognitive skills. This minority are recommended to raise their awareness of the importance of reading, especially its strategies. Because, reading strategies justify the notion that reading is a thinking process and requires the use of different cognitive skills.

Students are required to provide justifications for their choices. Some of them are quoted as follows:

- "When we read we need to analyze and evaluate what we are reading to understand the content and the aim behind it".

- " reading, especially literary novels require the reader to analyze, criticize, read between the lines, explain… different things"

- "To understand what you read, you need to use your cognitive skills such as explaining, evaluating, summarizing, inferring…"

Students' justifications revealed that learners are aware and use different cognitive skills while reading among which those considered by Bloom's Taxonomy as higher order thinking skills (evaluation, analysis).

From those who denied the idea that reading requires the use of cognitive process, two of them justified that by claiming that reading is a passive process and it is only a matter of decoding the symbols of the written material. This implies that these respondents tend to ignore reading and its importance.

**Q16-** When you read a particular material do you tend to

      a.  Infer meaning using your background knowledge

      b.  Analyze and synthesize its content

      c.  Evaluate the value of its content

      d.  Criticize its author's ideas, views, etc.

      e.  Absorb the content without questioning its validity

      f.  Other, please specify

**Table 3. 17**

*Students' Reading Strategies and Tendencies when they read*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A | 24 | 39.34% |
| B | 7 | 11.47% |
| C | 8 | 13.11% |
| D | 3 | 4.92% |
| E | 4 | 6.56% |
| A+B | 6 | 9.84% |
| A+E | 1 | 1.64% |
| A+B+D | 1 | 1.64% |
| B+C | 1 | 1.64% |
| A+D | 1 | 1.64% |
| A+B+C | 1 | 1.64% |
| C+D | 1 | 1.64% |
| A+C+D | 1 | 1.64% |
| A+C | 2 | 3.28% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

As table 3.17 shows, 39.34% stated that when they read a particular material they tend to infer meaning using their background knowledge. While 11.47% of the respondents indicated that they have a tendency to analyze and synthesize the written material during the reading process, 13.11% of them reported that they evaluate the value of the content they are reading. Moreover, very few minority (4.92%) stated that they tend to criticize the authors' ideas, views etc. However, 6.56% reported that when they read a particular material they just absorb its content without questioning its validity. Only, 9.84% said that when they read something they tend to infer the meaning using their background knowledge besides analyzing and synthesizing its content.

A small number of the respondents (1.64%) indicated that they have two tendencies when they read either they use their background knowledge, or they absorb the content of what they read without questioning its validity. This result may suggest that, this kind of readers depend only on their prior knowledge while reading i.e. if they face something new that they do not have any idea about it they tend to believe directly what it says without any other effort. Another identical percent number (1.64%) reported that they tend to infer, analyze, synthesize, and criticize the ideas and views of the author of the reading material. Again 1.64% stated that while reading they attempt to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate what they are reading. The same percent number (1.64%) indicated that they tend to both infer the meaning depending on their prior knowledge, and criticize the authors' ideas and views. Additionally, 1.64% pointed out that before taking into granted what is written they attempt to infer, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the content of the available piece of writing. Evaluating and criticizing both the content and the authors' views and ideas is another tendency of 1.64% of students. Another 1.64% of the respondents claimed that when they read something they try to infer the meaning of the content depending on their background knowledge, evaluate and criticize the authors' views

and ideas etc. Finally, 3.28% of the sample reported that while they read a particular material they tend infer and evaluate the validity of its content.

The above results indicate that the most used CTS is inferring. This latter is categorized among higher order thinking skills according to Bloom's Taxonomy. Students use this strategy besides analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing more than the other skills, because these skills are required to understand the written material and they happen automatically during the process of reading. However, other skills (summarizing, paraphrasing…) mainly take place only if the reader is required to do so.

**Q17-**Do you think that reading can develop your critical thinking skill?

    a.  Yes

    b.  Not sure

    c.  No

**Table 3. 18**

*Students' views about the Use of Reading to Enhance CTS*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 51 | 83.61% |
| B | 10 | 16.39% |
| C | 00 | 00% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

83.61% of the participants indicated that critical thinking can be developed through reading. This result may come to confirm the results of Q16 that reading is a thinking process, which requires the use of different cognitive strategies. Thus, through reading one may develop one's cognitive and metacognitive skills such as CTS. However, 16.39% of the respondents were not sure about the idea that reading can foster critical thinking skill.

In this question, students were requested to provide some justifications. Some of them are quoted as follows:

- "When you read you are critically thinking about what you are reading. You are analyzing, explaining, criticizing, etc. Hence, reading is important to develop CT"

- "Reading and CT share the same strategies analyzing, evaluating, explaining, inferring, etc."

Since, reading requires the use of different strategies that are cognitively processed, it may be used as a tool to develop CTS. Thus, the more readers read the more they use these strategies (criticizing, inferring, evaluating, synthesizing, etc.), and the more they develop their cognitive skills.

Among those who were not sure of whether reading can foster critical thinking skill or not, only three (3) of them justified their answers. They argued that developing critical thinking skill through reading is only possible if the reader is reading with the intention of enhancing critical thinking skill otherwise it will not be developed.

**Q18-** If yes, what type of reading do you think can better develop your critical thinking skill?

a. Extensive

b. Intensive

c. Both

**Table 3. 19**

*Students' Views about the Type of Reading That Can Better Develop CTS*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| A | 11 | 18.03% |
| B | 1 | 1.64% |
| C | 44 | 72.13% |
| Did not answer | 5 | 8.20% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

While 18.03% of the participants indicated that extensive reading is the appropriate tool to develop critical thinking skill, only 1.64% said that intensive reading is the suitable vehicle to foster such a skill. The majority of the respondents (72.13%) declared that both reading styles are important in developing critical thinking skill. However, 8.20% of students did not answer. The results of this question indicate that whatever type of reading, be it free or structured, it can be used as a means to develop CTS. But, one may say that intensive reading may play a major role to develop the former skill. Because, in this type of reading students are required to do tasks and answer a range of different activities that may engage them to think critically, unlike extensive reading, in which readers are reading only for pleasure and are not obliged to do any kind of activities after they finish reading.

**Q19-**Do you think that your teachers (of all modules) are using some strategies to enhance your critical thinking skill?

    a.  Yes

    b.  Not sure

    c.  No

**Table 3. 19**

*Students' Views about Their Teachers' Strategies to Improve CTS*

| Options | Number of students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 16 | 26.23% |
| B | 31 | 50.82% |
| C | 14 | 22.95% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

The results show that half of the respondents (50.82%) were not sure about whether their teachers are using some strategies to develop their critical thinking skill or not. This indicates

that though some teachers may use some techniques to enhance that skill, they are using them implicitly. But, some participants (26.23%) reported that their teachers are using some strategies that may help them to develop their critical thinking skill. However, 22.95% denied that.

Those who opted for yes were required to justify their answers. Accordingly, some of them provided some justifications that are quoted as follows:

- "the teacher of Ethics and Deontology always asks us questions that require us to think critically, because they are indirect and tricky questions".
- "there are teachers who ask us to recall and summarize what we have dealt with in previous sessions, and others provided us provided us with activities that push us to think beyond what is written or said".

The results of table 20, may mean that there are only few teachers who implement some explicit strategies to enhance CTS. However, others may implement such kind of strategies implicitly which makes the majority of the respondent students not sure whether their teachers are using some strategies to improve their CTS or not. It is also possible that students do not know about the skills and sub skills of CTS. Thus, they cannot detect whether or not their teachers are teaching them explicitly or not.

**Q20-** Additional opinions and suggestions, if any, are welcome?

**Table 3. 20**

*Number of Students who Answered Q20*

| Options | Number of Students | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| They answered | 9 | 14.75% |
| They did not answer | 52 | 85.25% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

The majority of students (85.25%) did not add any further suggestions or opinions. They may have felt that the previous questions were sufficient for them to express their ideas. The remaining respondents (14.75%) have provided only some comments about the topic. Some of them commented that the topic is an interesting one, others claim that it is a difficult one, and the remaining ones wished for the researcher a good luck.

**Summary of Results and Findings from Students' Questionnaire**

The first section of students' questionnaire "General Information" indicated that the majority of first year master students have chosen to study English at University. This implied that they have a positive attitude towards studying EFL. Moreover, they are also satisfied with their level in English, which intimates that they have considerable capacities and high motivation that would allow them to learn more and develop their level.

The second section "Reading" reveals that the majority of the participants did not give much importance to reading, since most of them indicated that they either like reading in some way, or do not like it at all. Moreover, the majority reported that they just read from time to time, or rarely. In addition, the analysis of students' questionnaire showed that nearly half of them tend to stop reading whenever they face difficulties in comprehension. However, the results of students responses concerning whether students think that reading is an important skill for them to develop showed that the overwhelming majority of them confirmed the importance of reading. This would appear to indicate that, though almost all the respondents are aware of the importance of reading and the necessity to develop this skill, they are not working on it as the majority abandon it. Additionally, the majority of the sample affirmed that their teachers always encourage them to read. This suggested that teachers are aware of the importance of reading, and that their learners do not read. As a result, students are recommended to give more importance to reading as it may help them to enhance their academic achievements, and develop other skills.

The results obtained from the analysis of section three reveals that the overwhelming majority of respondents are aware of the existence of critical thinking skill. This awareness will probably help them develop such skill, if they decide to do so. Also, a very interesting and encouraging finding is that the majority claimed that their teachers attract their attention to the existence of this skill. This may mean that teachers believe that developing CTS is a crucial step in their students' academic career, especially is the probability that developing this skill may help students to enhance their academic achievements. Students also highlighted the importance of CTS when the majority of them agreed about studying explicitly this skill as much like the other four skills. Moreover, they confirmed to some extent their views about the importance of CTS, when nearly half of them thought that developing CTS would help them to be self-sufficient learners. Additionally, when they were asked whether they agree that reading is a cognitive process and requires the use of different cognitive process, nearly most of them agreed about that. The result points out to the likelihood that students agree about the assumption that reading can be used as a tool to enhance CTS. This probability was confirmed in **Table 18**, when the majority approved the previous assumption, claiming that both extensive and intensive reading can be used to achieve this aim. To sum up, from the analysis of students questionnaire we conclude that the overwhelming majority of students confirmed the hypothesis that students have a positive attitude towards developing CTS through reading.

**3.2 Teachers' Questionnaire**

In order to investigate teachers' perspectives about the impact of reading on developing CTS. A questionnaire has been used as a data gathering tool to reach the intended goal.

**3.2.1 Population and Sample**

Teachers at the department of Letters and English Language, University of 8 Mai 1945- Guelma- are chosen as the second population by the researcher to gather data about the topic under investigation. Teachers were chosen randomly i.e. they are not chosen on the basis of the modules they teach.

**3.2.2 Administration of Teachers' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in the present study is a self-completion paper questionnaire distributed by the researcher. It has been administered to thirty teachers at the Department of Letters and English Language- Guelma University on 27 April 2017. However, only twenty-seven teachers have completed the questionnaire and handed it back. During the distribution of the questionnaire, many obstacles have raised. Some teachers refused to answer the questionnaire, while, others did not handed it back. In addition, some of them did not reply immediately, due to work pressure. Accordingly, it took more than two weeks to collect the data.

**3.2.3 Description of Teachers' Questionnaire**

Teachers' questionnaire aims at investigating teachers' view about the impact of reading on the development of critical thinking skill. It contains 18 items, which are a mixture of closed-ended (multiple choice and yes/no questions) and open-ended questions. These items are divided into three sections.

**3.2.2.1Section One: General Information**

In this opening section, teachers are asked to state their qualifications in Q1. Then, in Q2, they are required to state how many years they spent during their teaching career. Q3 aims at

investigating the type of modules they are currently teaching. In Q4, teachers are asked to indicate which kind of educational system they prefer, and they are required to justify their answers.

### 3.2.2.2 Section Two: Reading

In the fifth question (Q5), teachers are requested to indicate whether or not they have taught the module of advanced reading strategies. The following question (Q6) is a yes/no question, which aims at pointing out whether teachers support their students to read or not. For those who opted for yes, they were provided with a list of choices to indicate their aim(s) behind encouraging their students to read. In Q7 teachers were requested to tick what type of material(s) they encourage their students to read, and they are provided with a blank space to add other choices, if there are any. The following question (Q8) explores whether or not teachers integrate reading to help students grasp the content of the module(s) they teach. Then, for those who do so, they were asked to specify which type of reading they do implement. In the next question (Q9), teachers were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement concerning whether or not it is important to teach reading as a separate module at an early stage of teaching EFL. This question requires them to justify their answers.

### 3.2.2.3 Section Three: Critical Thinking Skill and Reading

In the opening two questions of this section (Q10-Q11) teachers are asked to state whether they are aware of the existence of critical thinking skill or not, and they are requested to indicate whether they support their students to develop such skill or not. If their answers were yes, then they are asked to give a brief definition to CTS (in Q10), and to justify their answers (in Q11). In the following question (Q12), teachers are required to indicate if they agree about the importance of developing the critical thinking skill to enhance students' academic achievements. Moreover, Q13 investigates teachers' views about whether or not they think that there are students who think critically. If they opt for yes, then they are provided with a list of

characteristics to indicate what characterizes them. Concerning Q14, it aims at finding out whether the respondent teachers provide to use some critical thinking skills or sub-skills or not, in this question they are provided by a list of choices. Q15 is concerned with investigating teachers' degree of agreement or disagreement about the idea that critical thinking skill can be taught in a separate module like the other four skills. In Q16, participants are requested to give their views about whether critical thinking skill can be enhanced through reading or not. In this question, some justifications are required. The following two questions (Q17-Q18) are open-ended questions in which respondents are asked to explain how they may use reading as a tool to engage their students to think critically (Q17), and finally they are invited to give some additional opinions and suggestions about the issue under investigation.

### 3.2.3 Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

The following section provides and analysis of the results obtained from teachers' Questionnaire

### Section One: background Information

**Q1**- what is your highest degree earned?

      a. B.A

      b. Master's/Magister's

      c. PhD

**Table 3.22**

*Teachers Qualifications*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|-----------|
| A | 00 | 00% |
| B | 26 | 96.30% |
| C | 1 | 3.70% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

According to the results displayed in table 3.22, 96.30% of the questioned teachers hold a magister degree. While, only 3.7% holds a doctorate degree. This implies that the participant teachers are qualified with the learning requirements, students 'needs and performances in English language. Thus, they may provide significant help to enrich the topic under investigation with their views and comments.

**Q2**- How long have you been teaching English?

**Table 3.23**

*Teachers' Teaching Experience*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---------|-------------------|------------|
| 4-9  years | 14 | 51.85% |
| 10-14 years | 11 | 40.74% |
| 16-33 years | 2 | 0.07% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

As shown in table 3.23, over half of the respondents (51.85%) claimed that they have been teaching from four to nine years.  The percent number 40.74% represented those teachers who have an experience of teaching English from 10-14 years. A small number (0.07%) reported that their teaching experience ranges from 16-33 years.

The results indicate that the majority of teachers have been teaching English for more than four years. This implies that the majority of them have a reasonable experience in teaching and may indicate that they have a wise view towards the process of teaching and learning in terms of students' needs, adequacies, strengths, and performances.

**Q-3** What are the modules you are currently teaching?

**Table 3.24**

*The Nature of the Teaching Modules*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Linguistic Schools + written expression | 3 | 11.11% |
| Translation + Translation culture and civilization | 5 | 18.52% |
| Literature + research methodology. | 3 | 11.11% |
| Oral expression + grammar + phonetics | 4 | 14.81% |
| Discourse analysis + ESP | 3 | 11.11% |
| Methodology | 3 | 11.11% |
| Race and Ethnicity, methodology, grammar | 6 | 22.22% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

According to table 24, 22.22% of the participants indicated that they teach Methodology, grammar, race and ethnicity. 18.52% of the respondent teachers reported that they teach culture and civilization, literature, research methodology. 14.81% of them claimed that they teach the module of oral expression, grammar and phonetics. The present number 11.11% represented teachers who teach the following modules; linguistic schools, literature, discourse analysis, written expression, translation, etc. The results of this question suggests that the respondent teachers have a considerable experience in teaching various modules i.e. one teacher may teach

two or more modules. This implies that they would provide considerable data and advices concerning the integration of CTS in the teaching-learning process.

**Q-4** Which educational system do you prefer?

      **a.** The LMD system

      **b.** The classical system

**Table 3. 25**

*Teachers' Preferences of Educational Systems*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| A | 7 | 25.93% |
| B | 12 | 44.44% |
| Both | 2 | 7.41% |
| No preference | 2 | 7.41% |
| No answer | 4 | 14.81% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

In response to the fourth question, nearly half of the participants (44.44%) claimed that they prefer the classic system. Whereas, 25.93% stated they do favor the LMD system. The percent number 7.41% represent those who reported that they prefer both educational systems, and those who have no preference. However, 14.81% did not answer the question at all. According to the results of this question, the majority of the respondents claimed that they favor the classic system; this is may be because this system is less overwhelmed than the LMD system in terms of the course content and the syllabus. Whereas, for the others who stated that they favor the LMD system this may be because in that system teachers are just guides, since they are not the only source of information and they are less exhausted. For those who prefer both systems, or believe that no system is better than the other, this may indicate that they have felt that the most

important thing in education is students as well as teachers' tendencies, perceptions, and attitudes towards the process of teaching and learning, not the educational system itself.

This question required some justifications, among those who claimed that they prefer the LMD system, some of them justified their answers by saying that:

- "for the classic system, we had few modules but within long period of time (4years), but now a lot of modules and only three years. To learn any foreign language we should have more years".

- "the classic system gives more space and time to study and learn. But, the LMD seems more condensed". Another one added, "The classic system has achieved both quantity and quality in education"

Accordingly, the LMD system is so exhaustive because it contains numerous modules that are taught in a short period of time, which may cause a pressure for both teachers and students. Moreover, the classic system is more goal oriented than the LMD system. In addition to other teachers who asserted that the LMD system has more clear objectives, more time, and less pressure which result in high quality of both teaching and learning processes.

Among those who favored the LMD system (seven teachers), only three of them justified their answers. Some of them are stated as follows :

- "despite being condensed (the LMD system), I think the modules being taught are more up to date and richer in content and value".

- "when applied appropriately (the LMD system), it offers students a real possibility for academic and personal developments".

In this respect, the LMD system is more fashionable in terms of the subjects being tackled, approaches, and content.

**Section Two: Reading**

Q5- Have you ever taught the module of advanced reading strategies?

    a. Yes

    b. No

**Table 3.26**

*Teaching the Module of Advanced Reading Strategies (ARS)*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 00 | 00% |
| B | 27 | 100% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

The results show all the participant teachers (100%) did not teach the module of ARS, because the course is newly integrated. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the respondents are not aware of the reading skill and its importance. Also, it does not mean that they ignore it or do not encourage their students to practice it, as reading can be integrated in many modules. However, it would be better and more advantageous to students when teachers have some experience in teaching reading.

Q6- Do you encourage your students to read?

    a. Yes

    b. No

**Table 3.27**

*Teachers' Supporting Their Learners to Read*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 26 | 96.30% |
| B | 1 | 3.70% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

According to table 27, the overwhelming majority of the participant teachers indicated that they encourage their students to read. This can imply that teachers are aware of the significant role that reading plays in developing their students competence, performance, and skills, etc. While, one teacher claimed that he/she do not ask his/her students to read. This may indicate that this teacher is expecting his/her students to read without telling them to do so. In addition, he/she may felt that students at that level are supposed to be knowledgeable and aware of what affects them positively. Hence, they do not need others to tell them what to do.

For those who opted for (yes), they were provided with a list of choices to indicate the reason(s) behind their choice

        a. develop their linguistic competence

        b. enhance their writing skill

        c. develop their cognitive skills

        d. Other, please specify

**Table 3.28**

*Reasons behind Encouraging Students to Read*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| A | 2 | 7.69% |
| B | 3 | 11.54% |
| C | 4 | 15.38% |
| B + C | 2 | 7.69% |
| A + B | 1 | 3.85% |
| All the above | 14 | 53.85% |
| Total | 26 | 100% |

As indicated in table 3.28, more than half of the questioned teachers (53.85%) pointed out that they ask their students to read in order to develop their linguistic competence, their writing style, and their cognitive skills. Hence, these teachers view reading as multifaceted tool which is important to improve different skills. The percentage number 15.38% represent those participants who support their students to read for the sake of enhancing their cognitive skills. Other respondents (11.54%) claimed that the purpose behind encouraging their students to read is to enhance their writing skill. Another two teachers, who represent 7.69% of the whole population, indicated that they support their students to read to improve their writing and cognitive skills. The remaining percentage (3.85%) stated that they reinforce students to read to develop their linguistic competence, and their writing skill.

The above results imply that the majority of teachers consider reading as a tool for students to develop different skills and competences. In addition, among the whole population who encourage their students to read (26 teachers), 22 of them chose developing cognitive skills as one of their choices behind their reasons to ask their students to read. This may suggest that these respondent teachers believe that reading is an active process that requires the use of cognition. In other words, it is the interaction between the reader and the presented material in which the reader reads the lines (understanding), reads between the lines (inferring), and reads beyond the lines (interpreting).

**Q7-** What type of English reading materials do you encourage your students to read?

      a. Novels

      b. Academic books and articles

      c. News papers

      d. Magazines

      e. Encyclopedias

      f. Other, please specify

**Table 3. 29**

*Types of Reading Materials Supported by Teachers*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| A | 1 | 3.70% |
| B | 3 | 11.11% |
| C | 00 | 00% |
| D | 00 | 00% |
| E | 00 | 00% |
| A+B | 8 | 29.63% |
| A+C | 1 | 3.70% |
| A+B+C+D | 5 | 18.51% |
| B+C | 1 | 3.70% |
| A+B+E | 2 | 7.41% |
| D+ E | 1 | 3.70% |
| All the above | 5 | 18.51% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

Concerning the type of materials that teachers encourage their students to read, 29.63% of the respondents said that they ask them to read novels and newspapers. 18.51% claimed that they support their students to read novels, academic books and articles, newspapers, and magazines. This may mean that these teachers support their students to read whatever material they have, because for them what really matters is the fact that students do not abandon or neglect reading. Other participants (11.11%) reported that they ask their students to read academic books and articles. This may imply that these teachers do so, because they believe that students during their academic career have to read such type of materials to enhance their

academic achievements. A small number (7.41%) indicated they encourage reading novels, academic books and articles, and newspapers. Moreover, the percent number (3.70%) represent those who support reading novels mainly, and others who encourage their students to read academic books and articles, and newspapers. It also represent teachers who reinforce their students to read novels, and newspapers. In addition to those who support reading magazines and encyclopedias.

According to these results, teachers have different views about which type of material their students have to read. However, it may be better if teachers support more their students to read academic books and articles, because this would help them to achieve better results in their academic career. Nevertheless, this of course do not mean that reading other materials is not important or could not help students to be better.

**Q-8** Do you integrate reading to help your students grasp the content of the module you are teaching?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. The module I teach does not permit the integration of reading

**Table 3.30**

*Teachers' integration of reading in the modules they teach*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 20 | 74.07% |
| B | 00 | 00% |
| C | 7 | 25.93% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

Table 3.30 demonstrates that the majority of the respondent teachers (74.07%) integrate reading in the modules they teach. This signifies the importance of reading in learning a FL, and the role it plays in grasping and supporting the content of the modules being taught. However, 25.93% of the participants indicate that the modules they are currently teaching do not permit the integration of reading. This may bear the interpretation that these teachers do not neglect reading, hence, it is only the nature of modules they are teaching that did not allow them to use it, otherwise, they would have integrated it.

For those who integrate reading to help students grasp the content of the module(s) they are teaching they were asked to specify what type of reading style they use:

      a.   Extensive reading

      b.   Intensive reading

      c.  Both

**Table 3.31**

*The Type of Reading Material Integrated in Teaching*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 7 | 35% |
| B | 3 | 15% |
| C | 10 | 50% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

As it is shown in table 3.31, half of the questioned teachers (50%) claimed that they use both extensive and intensive reading to support students grasp the modules they are learning. While, 35% of them indicated that they use extensive reading. This suggests that teachers do not oblige their students to read, but they recommend some materials for them to read i.e. students are free to choose the type of material they read. However, only 15% of the questioned teachers reported

that the use intensive reading to support their students grasp the content of the module(s) they are teaching. This may mean that the respondents see that structured reading is better in enhancing students' understanding of the module(s) they are learning, because intensive reading requires students to do some activities so that the teacher can check their understanding unlike extensive reading, which is for enjoyment at the first place.

Q9- To what extent do you agree that reading is important that should be taught as a separate module at an early stage of teaching EFL?

   a. Strongly agree

   b. Agree

   c. Not sure

   d. Disagree

   e. Strongly disagree

**Table 3.32**

*Teaching Reading at an Early Stage of Teaching EFL*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|-----------| 
| A | 14 | 51.85% |
| B | 10 | 37.04% |
| C | 1 | 3.70% |
| D | 2 | 7.41% |
| E | 00 | 00% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

51.85% of the sample claimed that they strongly agree about the idea of teaching reading as a separate module at an early stage of teaching EFL, followed by 37.04% of teachers who agree about that. These results may mean that teachers consider reading as a crucial step in teaching

or learning a FL. Because, when students develop the habit of reading in the FL, they will be familiar with it, in this case English. As a result, they would be better leaners and build a positive attitude towards the TL. However, 7.41% of the respondents disagreed about the idea of teaching reading as a separate module in early stages of teaching EFL. 3.70% were not sure about that. It may seem that teachers who disagreed or were not sure about the former idea think that reading can be implemented in many other modules, hence, needless to study it separately at early stages of teaching EFL.

In response to this question, teachers were requested to justify their answers. Only, teachers who agreed about what has been said, provided their justifications. They are quoted as follows:

- "Reading is the essence of learning. The present flagrant weak level of our students learning is shaped by their complete disinterest with this skill".

- "… reading is very important to be taught earlier because it helps learners to train their tongues, eyes and ears on English language. In addition to developing their writing, spelling, punctuation and pronunciation and their minds and memories''

These responses indicate the extent to which reading is important for students and ignoring it would lead to unsatisfying academic achievements. Moreover, reading is a tool to develop the other skills, especially writing and speaking and is the core of language teaching and learning. Thus, it is the platform on which students build and develop the other skills.

**Section 3: Critical Thinking Skill and Reading**

**Q10-** Are you aware of the existence of CTS?

    a. Yes

    b. No

**Table 3.33**

*Teachers' Awareness of the Existence of Critical Thinking Skill*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A | 26 | 96.30% |
| B | 1 | 3.70% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

The overwhelming majority of the respondents (96.30%) stated that they are aware of the existence of critical thinking skill. Only one teacher claimed that he is not aware of this skill.

For those who opted for yes, they were required to define critical thinking skill. Among the 26 teachers who claimed that they are aware of the existence of critical thinking skill, 23 of them defined this skill. The following are some definitions provided by those respondent teachers:

- "The ability to respond to and evaluate a given material, or the ability to extract and infer information that is not stated explicitly".

- "It is the ability of individuals to take charge of their own thinking and develop appropriate criteria and standards for analyzing and evaluating their own thinking".

- "It is the ability to analyze, reason, infer, deduce, and induce anything before believe in it".

According to the previous definitions and the other definitions, it appears that the questioned teachers are conscious and knowledgeable about the CTS. As all the definitions that have been provided contain the key aspects of CTS including analyzing, inferring, evaluating, synthesizing… etc.

Q11- Do you encourage your students to develop their critical thinking skill?

     a. Yes
     b. No

**Table 3.34**

*Encouraging Students to Develop their Critical Thinking Skill*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 25 | 92.59% |
| B | 2 | 7.41% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

According to table 34, 92.59% of the sample reported that they encourage their students to develop their critical thinking skill. This implies that teachers do value this skill and consider it important as the other skills that should be developed by their students. A small number 7.41% indicated that they do not do so. This may indicate that these teachers expect their students to be aware of this skill, especially at that level of education.

This question required those teachers who opted for yes to explain how they encourage their students to develop such a skill. Some of them said that they do so by engaging them to think critically through asking them questions that require them to use their cognitive and metacognitive skills. Others claimed that they do so by keeping reminding them about the importance of being critical thinkers, and attracting their attention to the fact that they should not believe things without processing them to quote:

- "I always call their attention to the fact that not every information mentioned in any source is a reliable one. They have to confirm that information through reading further sources".

The results of this question may confirm the important role critical thinking plays in the field of education, especially that the aim of education is to create minds that can think critically and do not absorb things without questioning their significance.

**Q12**- To what extent do you think that developing students' critical thinking skill would help them enhance their academic achievements?

    a.  Very important

    b.  Important

    c.  A little

    d.  Not important

**Table 3.35**

*The Importance of Developing Students' Critical Thinking Skill*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| A | 17 | 62.97% |
| B | 8 | 29.63% |
| C | 1 | 3.70% |
| D | 00 | 00% |
| Did not answer | 1 | 3.70% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

62.97% of the respondents argued that developing students' critical thinking skill to enhance their academic achievements is very important, while, 29.63% indicated that it is important. In fact, critical thinking skill is important in the sense that it helps students to take part in the learning process, because if they are critical thinkers they will try to understand things around them through asking questions, evaluating, and criticizing what they are learning. Instead of just entering the classroom and staying silent writing down whatever said by their teachers or mates. In other words, developing the CTS would enhance their academic achievements. The percent number 3.70% represent both those who did not answer the question and those who

claimed that developing students' critical thinking skill is not important for students to enhance their academic achievements.

In response to this question some teachers who opted for yes provided some justifications, one of them indicated that "this skill does not help only in academic life, but in everyday life too". Another one added "students will be able to distinguish between common ideas (which are mostly fake) and reliable trustworthy one". Moreover, another teacher said, "it goes without saying that this skill will help students to transfer it to their professional and personal lives- the ultimate goal". From these responses, one may say that critical thinking skill is not important only in the academic field, but also in everyday life. Thus, developing it is of an ultimate importance. This implies that whether being a student or not, developing this skill is a crucial step for a better understanding the world around us.

Q-13 Are there any of your students who think critically?

      a. Yes

      b. No

**Table 3.36**

*Students Who Think Critically*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 25 | 92.59% |
| B | 2 | 7.41% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

As shown in table 36, the overwhelming majority of teachers (92.59%) reported that there are students who think critically. This may indicate that there are some students, who re not only aware of the existence of critical thinking skill, but who may work on to develop it and for a better educational career. However, 7.41% of the participants denied what has been said by

the former teachers. According to these teachers, students are lazy and tend to accept things without questioning their reliability or relevance.

Teachers who stated that there are students who think critically were provided by a list of choices that contain different characteristics of a critical thinker, these are

      a. Formulating ideas precisely

      b.  Analyzing problems systematically

      c. Justifying their beliefs and opinions

      d. Understanding the logical connections between ideas

      e. Questioning others' assumptions

      f. All the above

**Table 3.37**

*Characteristics of a Critical Thinker*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A+ B | 1 | 4% |
| A+D | 1 | 4% |
| C+E | 2 | 8% |
| A+B+C | 2 | 8% |
| B+C+E | 1 | 4% |
| C+D | 1 | 4% |
| A+C+D+E | 5 | 20% |
| A+C+D | 3 | 12% |
| All the above | 9 | 36% |
| Total | 25 | 100% |

36% of the questioned teachers choose all the characteristics that have been mentioned in the previous list. 20% of them reported that their students who think critically are characterized by formulating ideas precisely and analyzing problems systematically. The percent number 8% refers to those who claimed that justifying their beliefs and assumptions, and questioning others' assumptions are what characterize those students who tend to think critically. It also refers to students who formulate ideas, and understand the logical connections between them. Again, the same percentage (8%) represent those students who analyze problems systematically, justify their beliefs and opinions, and summarize and explain things. It also represent those who justify their beliefs and assumptions, and questioning others' assumptions. The remaining percentage (4%) signifies those students who can formulate ideas precisely and analyze problems systematically. The same percentage (4%) refers to those characterized by formulating ideas precisely and understand the logical connections between them. Again, 4% of the sample reported that analyzing problems systematically, analyzing problems systematically, and questioning others' assumptions are what characterizes those critical thinking students whom they faced. Finally, the same percent number (4%) claimed that these kinds of students are characterized by understanding the logical connection between ideas, and justifying their beliefs and opinions.

According to the above results, some students tend to think critically, and are able to use different critical thinking skills and sub-skills. It may also indicate that they are practicing those skills, to the point that they were able to attract their teachers' attention that they are critical thinkers.

**Q14-** Do you provide your students with tasks that require them to:

    a. Analyze and evaluate

    b. Synthesize

    c. Infer

d. Remember and recall

e. Summarize and explain

f. Transfer and classify

g. Other, please justify

**Table3.38**

*Kind of Activities provided to Learners*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| A | 1 | 3.70% |
| A+B+C | 3 | 11.11% |
| A+B+E | 3 | 11.11% |
| A+D+E | 1 | 3.70% |
| A+B+D+E | 1 | 3.70% |
| A+B+D | 2 | 7.41% |
| B+D+E | 1 | 3.70% |
| A+C+D | 2 | 7.4% |
| A+E | 4 | 14.81% |
| C+E | 2 | 7.4% |
| A+E+F | 1 | 3.70% |
| A+C+E | 1 | 3.70% |
| A+B+E | 1 | 3.70% |
| All | 3 | 11.11% |
| Did not answer | 1 | 3.70% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

Table 38 demonstrates that the highest percentage (14.81%) represent teachers who stated that they provide their students with activities that require them to analyze and evaluate summarize and explain. Whereas, the percentage number 11.11% refers to those respondents who use activities that require their students to analyze and evaluate, synthesize, and infer. The same percentage (11.11%) represent teachers who implement the following activities: analyze and evaluate, synthesize, summarize and explain. Again, another 11.11% of the participants reported that they use all the activities mentioned in the above list. Additionally, 7.41% of the sample said that they provide their students with activities that enable them to analyze and evaluate, synthesize, remember and recall. Again, 7.41% reported that they implement tasks that necessitate learners to analyze and evaluate, infer, remember and recall. Another identical percentage (7.41%) stated that they use activities, which make students infer, summarize and explain. While, few teachers (3.70%) indicated that they provide their students with tasks that require them to analyze and evaluate. Another 3.70% of the questioned teachers stated that to analyze and evaluate, remember and recall, and summarize and explain are the nature of activities they do provide their students with. The same number (3.70%) indicate that they provide students with activities that require them to analyze and evaluate, synthesize, remember and recall, and summarize and explain. Again 3.70% use the same previous strategies and they add synthesizing. An identical percentage (3.70%) said that the activities that they use need their learners to synthesize, remember and recall, and summarize and explain. 3.70% indicated that they implement tasks, which push their learners to analyze and evaluate, summarize and explain, transfer and classify. In addition to other teachers (3.70%) who claimed that they give their students activities that require them to analyze and evaluate, infer, summarize and explain. The same percentage (3.70%) reported that they do use activities that require students to analyze and evaluate, synthesize, and transfer and classify. Finally, 3.70% did not answer this question.

The results of this question (Q14) indicate that the majority of teachers are implementing tasks that foster critical thinking skills whether consciously or unconsciously i.e. sometimes, the aim of the teacher behind choosing a particular task is to develop CTS, and sometimes it is just the opposite. For table 35 it is noticed that the frequent use of the skills of evaluating and analyzing is highly implemented by teachers than the other skills. These two skills are classified by Bloom in his taxonomy as higher order thinking skills. Indeed, one may think that the majority of teachers are helping their students to use their cognitive and metacognitive skills in the classroom using tasks that require them to do so.

**Q-15** To what extent do you agree that critical thinking skill can be taught in a separate module as much like the other four skills?

    a. Strongly agree

    b. Agree

    c. Not sure

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly disagree

**Table 3.39**

*Teaching Critical Thinking Skill Separately*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| A | 3 | 11.11% |
| B | 9 | 33.33% |
| C | 10 | 37.04% |
| D | 5 | 18.52% |
| E | 00 | 00% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

In response to Q15, 37.04% of the respondents stated that they are not sure about whether CTS should be studied explicitly as much like the other four skills or not. In this respect, teachers could not take a particular decision i.e. they neither accept the idea nor reject it. However, 33.33% agree about what has been said, followed by 11.11% of respondents who claimed that they strongly agree about the idea of teaching critical thinking skill separately like the other four skills. This may indicate that these teachers believe that attracting students 'attention to the existence of this skill is not enough to for them to be critical thinkers. But, if they are exposed to it openly this may increase their chance to be critical thinkers and they can work more to develop such skill. However, 18.52% of the sample disagreed about what has been mentioned. This rejection may be because these teachers believe that critical thinking skill can be implemented in other modules, so, no need to be studied separately.

**Q16-** Do you think that critical thinking skill can be enhanced through reading?

      a. Yes

      b. No

**Table 3.40**

*Developing Critical Thinking Skill through Reading*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A | 24 | 88.89% |
| B | 3 | 11.11% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

The majority of teachers (88.89%) stated that critical thinking skill can be enhanced through reading. Only (11.11%) of the respondents denied this. This may indicate that most teachers believe that reading is an active thinking process that requires the use of cognitive skills. Thus, the more students read the more they will develop these skills.

This question requires teachers to provide some justifications. For those who argued that reading can be used as a tool to enhance CTS claimed that:

- " via the use of, of course, highly authentic and interesting materials, I could make them look beyond the written words … and make them rely on their own competence  to credit, think of possible actions, understand the hidden message, etc."

- "reading involves and requires the use of different critical skills as, analyzing, judging, comprehending, re-producing, problem solving, evaluating….So, it will be a good tool for encouraging and helping students not only to use C.T.S but even to train them on a conscious use of those skills".

Obviously, these teachers are highlighting the importance of reading, which requires the use of different cognitive skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, inferring…, in developing critical thinking skill. Others add that reading is a tool that broadens students' visions so they will see things with a critical view unlike those who do not read at all.

Among those who indicated that reading cannot be used as a tool to develop critical thinking skill, only one teacher justified his answer stating that:

- "reading is a passive skill and I think that it does not allow the learner critical thinking skill".

According to this answer, this teacher denied the fact that reading is an active process, which involves different processes and techniques to extract the meaning of the written material.

**Q17**- How can you use reading as a tool to engage your students to think critically?

**Table 3.41**

*Engaging Students to Think Critically via Reading*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| They answered | 23 | 85.19% |
| They did not answer | 4 | 14.81% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

This question requires teachers to provide some strategies that they use to engage their students to think in a critical way. In this respect, only 85.19% of the participants respond to this question, while, 14.81% did not.

Among the answers, one teacher stated that he/she uses reading comprehension tasks to develop this skill, by asking students to summarize, skim, synthesize… etc. Another teacher stated "if I would do this, I would choose texts that express contradictory ideas and let them seek the truth through reading and comparing ideas". Others stated that they use reading to engage students to think critically through asking questions and engage them in discussions that require them to use different skills attributed to critical thinking. These answers may imply that teachers are aware of how they can use reading as a means to develop critical thinking skill.

**Q18-** additional opinions and suggestions, if any, are welcome

**Table 3.42**

*Additional Views and Opinions*

| Options | Number of Teachers | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| They answered | 6 | 22.22% |
| They did not answer | 21 | 77.78% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

The majority of the sample did not answer this question; this is may be because they have felt that they have expressed their opinions in the previous questions. Some respondents gave some comments about the topic, as it was an interesting one. They also requested the researcher to share with them its results. In addition, one teacher said, "it is a crucial subject and a very important one that should be considered in future syllabus designs for how to include, teach and develop critical thinking skills/abilities among learners via through reading and writing".

Another one stated that it is important to dedicate some modules to raise awareness of critical thinking to enable students to develop such skill.

**Summary of Results and Findings from Teachers' Questionnaire**

The opening section of teachers' questionnaire "Background Information" shows that nearly all the questioned teachers have a magister degree, with a considerable experience in teaching EFL, which is ranged from 4 and 16 years. Only one teacher has a doctorate degree and the highest teaching experience (33 years). This indicates that these teachers are experienced enough to provide a considerable answers and suggestions that would help to enrich the topic under investigation.

The analysis of the second section revealed that no teachers experienced teaching the module of ARS. This would not appear to indicate that they are not aware of the importance of reading, or that they do not encourage their students to read. This probability is confirmed in Table 6, when almost all the teachers reported that they encourage their students to read. This support was mainly to develop their students' linguistic competence, writing skill, and their cognitive skills, as the majority of the respondents indicated. The analysis of teachers' questionnaire revealed also that teachers support their students to read different materials whether these materials are academic ones, or other. This implies that the most important thing for teachers is to push their students to read. In this respect, the majority of teachers stated that they do integrate reading to help their students to grasp the content of the module they are teaching. This suggests that teachers are treasuring the importance of reading and its positive impact on their learners. Moreover, they do support and integrate both types of reading i.e. extensive and intensive reading as half of them reported. In the justifications, that they provided to this question most teachers relate reading to the learning process i.e. the valuable impact of reading on the development of students other skills.

The third section demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of teachers are aware of the existence of CTS, and only one teacher denied that. This result may indicate that teachers' awareness of this skill would lead them to raise students' awareness about it as well. This interpretation, then, was confirmed in **Table 11**, where nearly all the participant teachers encourage their students to develop their CTS. This may imply that CTS is a crucial skill in the teaching-learning process. In this respect, the majority of the questioned teachers asserted that developing CTS enhances students' academic achievements arguing that CTS is not important only in the academic field but also in professional and personal life. A very interesting result was revealed when the majority of teachers claimed that there are certain students who think critically characterized by the ability to analyze, justify, question…etc. This may indicate that students are able to use different skills related to CT. This may also imply that these kind of students would achieve better results in their academic career. Teachers also reported that they use strategies different strategies that require their students to think critically. These strategies involve different CT skills and sub skills such as inferring, analyzing, synthesizing…etc. This suggests that the majority of teachers are encouraging their students to think critically in a way or another. Others go further (as Table 16 indicates) to support the idea of teaching CTS in a separate module like the other four skills. This result highlights the extent to which teachers argue that CTS is important for students. The most important result in relation to the topic under investigation is when the overwhelming majority revealed that they have a positive attitude towards developing CTS through reading.

**Conclusion**

From the results obtained from both teachers and students questionnaires it is revealed that both participants have positive attitude towards developing CTS through reading. The results also indicated their positive attitudes towards the use of reading as a tool to develop CTS. However, the findings extracted from students questionnaire showed that students tend to

neglect and abandon reading, despite their awareness of its importance. Thus, students need to pay more attention to that skill. Moreover, they should work to develop their CTS, their teachers as well would implement more strategies that focus on both skills i.e. reading and CT. To sum up, the final results of this study have confirmed the hypothesis which assume that teachers as well as students have positive attitude towards developing CTS through reading.

**GENERAL CONCLUSION**

**1. Concluding Remarks**

The LMD system emphasizes the role of the student in the process of learning. That is, it is oriented towards a learner-centered approach. In this system, the learner is required to search for the information and to present it in an appropriate manner. This appropriateness may occur whenever the learner possesses some skills that enable him/her to scrutinize, analyze, evaluate … data for the sake of ensuring its validity and reliability before presenting it in front of their peers and teachers. Accordingly, students need to develop their CTS; and consequently, it is indicated in this study that reading is a suitable technique that helps developing CTS.

**2. Pedagogical Implications**

The main aim of this study is to investigate teachers as well as students' perspectives towards the impact of reading on developing CTS. Its results revealed that both participants have a positive attitude towards fostering CTS through reading. Moreover, it is also revealed that CTS is an important skill that would help students achieve better results in their academic career. However, from the analysis of students questionnaire it is noticed that students do not give reading the importance it needs, though they are aware about its importance, and argue that learners need to develop this skill.

As a result, students should give more importance to the reading skill, and should work to develop their CTS. Because, being only aware of its existence will not pave the way towards developing it. Teachers as well, should provide their students with activities that explicitly allow them to practice and develop their CTS. They should also design more extensive and intensive reading programs to help students develop other skills, most importantly their cognitive and metacognitive ones. Moreover, teachers may integrate reading as a means to engage their students to think critically. This can be done through classroom discussion about what has been read, by engaging students to use different CT skills and sub skills such as inferring, analyzing, synthesizing, criticizing, evaluating. Teachers have also seek implement

some strategies that aim at developing their learners' CT ability, since the majority agreed about the importance of developing this skill in the development of their students' academic achievements. In other words, teachers may seek balance to teach CTS the way they do with the other four skills. At the level of curricular, curricular designers should implement some modules, if possible, that are directed towards teaching CTS.

## 3. Research Perspectives, Limitations and Recommendations

We may be aware that our research may have different limitations. The first is time constraint, since this research is completed in a period less than six months, which makes it very hard to do the research in an appropriate way. In other words, this research would have been better conducted, if the time allotted for it was quite larger than it was. The second limitation is the scope of the study, as its focus was on first year master students, and a limited number of teachers. Thus, its results cannot be generalized. Moreover, other obstacles that have hindered this study was the lack of printed data at the level of the University's library. Thus, the researcher depended much more on online e-books that were not available as pdf formats – to be printed-, nor they could be saved to be read off line. Consequently, it was very hard to read from such sources. Therefore, to achieve better results on the same topic further research is highly recommended. However, they should implement other tools of gathering data, most importantly experiments. The sample also needs to be extended to seek generalizations of the research findings. Other studies should be done to stress more the importance of developing CTS on EFL learners.

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**الملخص**

يسعى العمل الحالي لإستكشاف مواقف الأساتذة والطلاب نحو القراءة ومهارة التفكير النقدي، والأهم من ذلك مواقفهم إزاء تطوير مهارة التفكير النقدي من خلال القراءة على مستوى كلية الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة قالمة. يواجه طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية عقبات مختلفة التي قد تؤدي إلى عرقلة مسارهم الدراسي، ومن بين هاته المشاكل هي عدم وجود معالجة كافية للمعلومات مما قد يؤدي إلى سوء الفهم وسوء تفسير أي معلومة، بمعنى آخر هم يفتقرون إلى القدرة على التفكير النقدي. ومن أجل إجراء هذا البحث، أجريت دراسة كمية من خلال استبيانين مختلفين لكل من طلاب السنة الأولى ماستر ومختلف الأساتذة، وقد كشف تحليل الإستبيانين أن الأساتذة والطلاب على حد سواء يدركون وجود مهارة التفكير النقدي ويؤكدون على أهمية القراءة. علاوة على ذلك أظهروا موقفا إيجابيا تجاه تطوير مهارة التفكير النقدي من خلال القراءة. ومع ذلك فإن غالبية الطلاب كما هو موضح من خلال النتائج يميلون إلى تجاهل القراءة والتخلي عنها. بعد نتائج البحث يوصى برفع وعي الطلاب بأهمية القراءة بالإضافة إلى مهارة التفكير النقدي في التدريس و تعلم اللغات الأجنبية. و الأهم من ذلك تنفيذ بعض برامج القراءة التي يمكن أن تساعد على تحسين مهارة التفكير النقدي الخاصة بهم.

**Résumé**

Cette étude vise à explorer la prise de position des étudiants et des professeures vis-à-vis de la lecture et de la compétence de l'esprit critique et le plus important c'est leurs opinions sur le développement de la compétence de l'esprit critique à travers la lecture au niveau de la faculté de Littérature et de Langue Anglaise à l'Université Guelma. Les étudiants sont confrontés à des obstacles multiples qui peut enfreindre leurs parcours d'études parmi ces contraintes on remarque l'absence de traitement suffisant d'information ce qui peut induire en erreur et causer une mauvaise interprétation de toute information. D'un autre coté les étudiants manquent d'esprit critique. Pour réaliser cette recherche on a établi une étude quantitative à travers deux questionnaires différents pour les étudiants de 1$^{ère}$ année master et pour tous les professeurs. L'analyse de ces questionnaires a permis de déduire que les professeures et les étudiants réalisent parfaitement l'existence de la compétence de l'esprit critique et insistent sur l'importance de la lecture. En plus, ils manifestent un avis positif vis-à-vis du développement de cette compétence à travers la lecture. Malgré cela, la majorité des étudiants comme le montre nettement les résultats de cette étude ont tendance à négliger la lecture et même à l'abandonner complétement. Apres ce constat d'étude et de recherche, il est impératif de sensibiliser les étudiants à prendre conscience de l'importance de l'esprit critique dans l'apprentissage et l'enseignement des langues étrangères et le plus important de tout cela c'est l'application de certains programmes de lecture qui permet de développer chez les étudiants l'esprit critique.

**Students' Questionnaire**

Dear students,

This questionnaire serves as a data gathering tool for a research work conducted at the department of Letters and English Language at Guelma University. It aims at exploring your views about the impact of reading on the development of critical thinking skill. We would be grateful if you could tick (√) your choice in the corresponding box (es) or give your full answer whenever necessary.

Thank you very much for your time and collaboration.

<div align="right">

Khamsa DJEFAFLIA

Department of Letters and English Language

Faculty of Letters and Languages

University of 08 Mai 1945-Guelma-

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**Section One: General Information**

1. How many years have you been studying English?

   ……………………………………………………………………………… .

2. Was it your choice to study English at the university?

   a. Yes  ☐

   b. No  ☐

3. How could you describe your level in English?

   a. Very good  ☐

   b. Good  ☐

   c. Average  ☐

   d. Bad  ☐

e.  Very bad        ☐

**Section Two: Reading**

4.  Do you like reading?

a.  Yes            ☐

b.  Somehow        ☐

c.  No             ☐

5.  How many times do you read?

a.  Usually        ☐

b.  Sometimes      ☐

c.  Rarely         ☐

d.  Never          ☐

6.  What type of materials do you prefer to read?

a.  Novels              ☐

b.  News papers         ☐

c.  Magazines           ☐

d.  Academic books and articles   ☐

Other, please specify

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

7.  For what purpose do you usually read?

a.  pleasure                                        ☐

b.  to better understand the content of the ( difficult) lessons  ☐

c.  to improve other skills                         ☐

d.  to enrich your vocabulary and knowledge         ☐

Other, please specify

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. Do you tend to stop reading when you do not understand what you read?

a. Yes     ☐

b. No     ☐

If no, what strategy (ies) do you generally use to overcome reading comprehension

difficulties?

a. Inferring     ☐

b. Rereading     ☐

c. Paraphrasing     ☐

d. Asking questions     ☐

e. Summarizing     ☐

Other, please specify

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………… .

9. Do your teachers encourage you to read?

a. Always     ☐

b. Sometimes     ☐

c. Rarely     ☐

d. Never     ☐

10. Do you think that reading is a necessary skill for you to develop?

d. Yes     ☐

a. No     ☐

Whatever your answer, please justify

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

**Section Three: Critical Thinking and Reading**

11. Are you aware of the existence of critical thinking skill?

    a. Yes ☐

    b. No ☐

12. Do your teachers draw your attention to the existence of such skill?

    a. Yes ☐

    b. No ☐

13. Do you think that critical thinking as a skill should be studied explicitly as much like reading, writing, speaking and listening?

    a. Yes ☐

    b. No ☐

Whatever your answer, please provide some justifications

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………… .

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

14. Do you think that developing such skill would help you to become a self-sufficient learner?

    a. Yes ☐

    b. Not sure ☐

    c. No ☐

Whatever your answer, please explain

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………….. .

15. To what extent do you agree that reading is a thinking process that requires the use of
    different cognitive skills?

    a. Strongly agree        ☐

    b. Agree                 ☐

    c. Strongly disagree     ☐

    d. Disagree              ☐

Whatever your answer, please justify

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

16. When you read a particular material do you tend to

    a. Infer meaning using your background knowledge  ☐

    b. Analyze and synthesize its content             ☐

    c. Evaluate the value of its content              ☐

    d. Criticize its author's ideas, views, etc       ☐

    e. Absorb the content without questioning its validity  ☐

Other, please specify

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………… .

17. Do you think that reading can develop your critical thinking skill?

    a.  Yes       ☐

    b.  Not sure   ☐

    c.  No       ☐

    Whatever your answer, please justify

    ……………………………………………………………………………………………

    ……………………………………………………………………………………………

    ……………………………………………………………………………………………

18. If yes, what type of reading do you think can better develop your critical thinking skill?

    a.  Extensive   ☐

    b.  Intensive   ☐

    c.  Both      ☐

19. Do you think that your teachers (of all modules) are using some strategies to enhance your critical thinking skill?

    a.  Yes       ☐

    b.  Not sure   ☐

    c.  No       ☐

If yes, please explain how

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………...................... .

20. Additional opinions and suggestions, if any, are welcome.

    ……………………………………………………………………………………………

    ……………………………………………………………………………………………

**Teachers' Questionnaire**

Dear teachers,

    This questionnaire serves as a data-gathering tool for a research work conducted at the department of Letters and English Language at Guelma University. It aims at exploring your views about the impact of reading on the development of critical thinking skill. We would be grateful if you could tick (√) your choice in the corresponding box (es), or give your full answer whenever necessary.

Thank you very much for your time and collaboration.

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**Section One: General Information**

1. What is your highest degree earned?

   a. B.A     ☐

   b. Master's/Magister's   ☐

   c. PhD     ☐

2. How long have you been teaching English?

   ………………..years.

3. What are the modules you are currently teaching?

   …………………………………………………………………………..

4. Which educational system do you prefer?

    a. The LMD system     ☐

    b. The classic system     ☐

    c. None of the above     ☐

Whatever your answer, please justify

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

**Section Two: Reading**

5. Have you ever taught the module of Advanced Reading Strategies?

    a. Yes     ☐

    b. No     ☐

6. Do you encourage your students to read?

    a. Yes     ☐

    b. No     ☐

If yes, you encourage them in order to

    a. develop their linguistic competence     ☐

    b. enhance their writing skill     ☐

    c. develop their cognitive skills     ☐

    d. All the above     ☐

Other, please specify

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

7. What type of English reading materials do you encourage your students to read?

    a. Novels     ☐

b. Academic books and articles ☐

c. News papers ☐

d. Magazines ☐

e. Encyclopedias ☐

f. All the above ☐

Other, please specify

………………………………………………………………………………………................ .

8. Do you integrate reading to help your students grasp the content of the module you are teaching?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

c. The module I teach does not permit the integration of reading. ☐

If yes, what type of reading do you use?

a. Extensive reading ☐

b. Intensive reading ☐

c. Both ☐

9. To what extent do you agree that reading is important so that it should be taught as a separate module at an early stage of teaching EFL?

a. Strongly agree ☐

b. Agree ☐

c. Not sure ☐

d. Disagree ☐

e. Strongly disagree ☐

Whatever your answer, please  justify

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**Section Three: Critical Thinking Skill and Reading**

**10.** Are you aware of the existence of critical thinking skill?

a.  Yes

b.  No

If yes, please provide a brief definition of it

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11. Do you encourage your students to develop their critical thinking skill?

a.  Yes

b.  No

If yes, please explain how

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12. To what extent do you think that developing students' critical thinking skill would

help them enhance their academic achievements?

a.  Very important

b.  Important

c.  A little

d. Not important      ☐

Whatever your answer, please justify

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13. Are there any of your students who think critically?

    a. Yes      ☐

    b. No      ☐

If yes, they are characterized by:

    a. Formulating ideas precisely      ☐

    b. Analyzing problems systematically      ☐

    c. Justifying their beliefs and opinions      ☐

    d. Understanding the logical connections between ideas      ☐

    e. Questioning others' assumptions      ☐

   Other, please specify

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14. Do you provide your students with tasks that require them to:

    a. Analyze and evaluate      ☐

    b. Synthesize      ☐

    c. Infer      ☐

    d. Remember and recall      ☐

    e. Summarize and explain      ☐

    f. Transfer and classify      ☐

    g. All the above      ☐

Other, please specify

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15. To what extent do you agree that critical thinking skill can be taught in a separate module as much like the other four skills?

    a.  Strongly agree    ☐

    b.  Agree    ☐

    c.  Not sure    ☐

    d.  Disagree    ☐

    e.  Strongly disagree    ☐

16. Do you think that critical thinking skill can be enhanced through reading?

    a.  Yes    ☐

    b.  No    ☐

Whatever your answer, please provide some justifications

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17. How can you use reading as a tool to engage your students to think critically?

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18. Additional opinions and suggestions, if any, are welcome

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