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## **Integrating Critical Thinking and Problem-solving Strategies to Boost EFL Communication Skills in the Learning Journey.**

The Case of First-year Students at Biskra University.

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Sciences of Language

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### **Dedication**

*I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends. A special Feeling of gratitude to my beloved parents, **LOUCIF Zaidi** and **BEN SALEM Houria** and my supervisor **Bechar Maamar** for being supportive and treating me as family.*

*I also dedicate this dissertation to my teacher since the high school until this day and always **Ben Abdlerazak Abdelnacer** for encouraging me to continue my studies.*

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### **Abstract**

The study investigates the effectiveness of integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to improve EFL communication skills among first-year students at the University of Biskra. It employs a quantitative research design using a close ended questionnaire to gather data on students' engagement with these strategies, their perceived impact on communication skills, and the challenges faced in applying them. The study population includes 683 first-year EFL students, with a random sample of 60 students selected. The findings aim to provide evidence-based teaching methods to help develop students' communication skills effectively. The research questions focus on the impact of critical thinking and problem-solving strategies on EFL communication skills, students' perceptions towards integrating these strategies, and the challenges faced in applying them. The study hypothesizes that integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies may enhance EFL communication skills among first-year students. The research objectives include assessing students' engagement with these strategies, evaluating their perceived impact on communication skills, investigating the role of the classroom environment in promoting their practice, and identifying challenges faced in applying them. The study is limited by potential biases in self-reporting data and the focus on first-year students at UMK Biskra University, the thesis consists of two main parts: a theoretical section exploring critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, and an empirical section analyzing the questionnaire data. The study found that integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies led to a moderate improvement in EFL communicative skills among first-year students at UMK Biskra. This outcome confirms the research hypothesis that these strategies can enhance EFL communication skills.

**Keywords:** critical thinking, problem solving, EFL communication skills, UMKB.

**List of Abbreviation and Acronyms**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**UMK:** University Mohamed Khaider

**CT:** Critical Thinking

**PS:** Problem Solving

**PSS:** Problem Solving Strategies

**ICS:** Interactive Communicative Skills

**PBL:** Problem-Based Learning

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

**TBL:** Task-Based Learning

**IBL:** Inquiry-Based Learning

**Q:** Question

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# **General introduction**

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### **Introduction**

Critical thinking and problem-solving are essential components in enhancing communicative skills in English as a Foreign Language learning environments. The integration of cognitive skills into EFL instruction is advocated to foster quick, creative, and analytical thinking, which are pivotal for effective communication (Ansari, 2021). The incorporation of critical thinking and problem-solving strategies can help learners improve their communicative skills. For that reason, many educators around the world rely on critical thinking and problem-solving, which provide a variety of interactive implements that help students develop their language skills. This facilitates the learning process and makes students more engaged in the classroom.

The integration of critical thinking and problem-solving provides a significant boost to communicative skills, particularly in English as Foreign Language (EFL) students. These skills play a crucial role in enabling learners to analyze and evaluate information, identify and solve problems, and communicate ideas effectively. This approach aligns with contemporary educational goals, which include the development of 21st-century skills essential for global communication. EFL students can become better communicators and engage in effective communication in professional and personal settings. Thus, the present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to improve EFL communication skills among first-year students at UMK Biskra.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A large number of papers highlight the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving in EFL communication; however, they neglect the integration of both as they complete each other to develop learners' communicative skills. The gap in these studies lies in the lack of research on the practical implementation and evaluation of the combination of critical thinking and problem-solving strategies in EFL classrooms. There is a notable lack of

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empirically tested approaches to enhance these skills among EFL students. To overcome this problem, we suggest investigating the practical application and assessment of integrating critical thinking and problem-solving skills in EFL classrooms to enhance learners' communication skills and to provide EFL teachers with evidence-based teaching methods that help develop students' communication skills effectively.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study holds paramount significance for:

- Teachers: The study offers a practical, accessible, and engaging strategy for incorporating critical thinking into their teaching repertoire. This can empower educators to enhance their instructional methods and student outcomes.
- Students: Students will encounter these crucial skills in a fresh and engaging context. This fosters a connection between classroom learning and real-world applications, making the educational experience more meaningful and relevant.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the impact of critical thinking and problem-solving strategies on EFL communication skills?
2. What are the perceptions of first-year students towards integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to improve their EFL communication skills?
3. What are the challenges EFL student face in integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies in their learning journey?

### **Hypothesis**

We hypothesize that integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies may enhance EFL communication skills among first-year students in UMK Biskra.

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### **Aims of the Study**

#### General aim

Throughout our project, we aim to investigate the effectiveness of integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies in enhancing EFL communication skills among first-year students at UMK Biskra.

#### Specific aims

More specifically, we aim to:

1. To assess the level of engagement of EFL students with critical thinking and problem-solving strategies in their English language learning process.
2. To evaluate the perceived impact of critical thinking and problem-solving strategies on the development of various communication skills in English.
3. To investigate the role of the classroom environment in promoting the practice of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in EFL learning.
4. To identify the challenges faced by EFL students in applying critical thinking and problem-solving strategies during their English language learning.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The proposed research employs a quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire aims to gather data on EFL students' engagement with critical thinking and problem-solving strategies, their perceived impact on communication skills, and the challenges they encounter when applying these strategies in their English language learning.



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### **Population and Sampling**

The study population includes first-year EFL students at UMK Biskra (License level). A random sampling technique used to select a sample of 60 students from 683 first-years EFL students at UMK Biskra,

### **Data collection methods and tools**

The research utilizes a quantitative research design, using printed questionnaire and an online one. A 20 printed copy was given to the students randomly due to absence of the majority of them. By given them 30 minutes to answer, the papers were collected at the end of time. For that we create an online version and send it to delegates of first year students which contact their colleges and answer the questionnaire. As a result, 40 students answer the online questionnaire and that gives us a total sample of 60 students. The primary data collection tool is a close ended questionnaire designed to gather comprehensive data.

### **Structure of the dissertation**

The present study consists of two main parts: theoretical and practical. The primary section includes two main chapters, and the final section is an empirical section that includes one chapter. The first chapter of this dissertation provides an overview of critical thinking and problem-solving strategies, including definitions, models, types, challenges, and their roles according to the requirements of each element. The second chapter explores the essential elements of communication, the role of critical thinking in language learning, and the benefits of integrating critical thinking and problem-solving skills to improve EFL communicative abilities. The last chapter is concerned with methodology and gathering and analyzing the data obtained through the questionnaire.

# **Chapter one:**

## **Critical thinking and problem-solving strategies**

## **Introduction**

In today's rapidly evolving knowledge-based society, fostering higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, has become a paramount concern in the field of education. These skills are essential for success in both professional and personal spheres, enabling individuals to navigate complex challenges, transform knowledge, and create innovative solutions. The Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, recognizing the significance of these abilities, prioritizes their development among students across various disciplines.

This chapter investigates the intricate relationship between critical thinking and problem-solving in the context of language learning, with a specific focus on the English as a Foreign Language EFL classroom. It explores the fundamental concepts, theoretical frameworks, and practical strategies that facilitate the cultivation of these invaluable skills. By examining the roles of teachers and learners, as well as the challenges and potential solutions, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how critical thinking and problem-solving can be effectively integrated into the language learning process.

## **Thinking**

Thinking is a complex cognitive process involving the manipulation of information to form concepts, solve problems, make decisions, and reflect upon ideas and past experiences. It encompasses a range of mental activities, from logical reasoning and abstract thought to creative ideation and problem-solving (Dunbar, 2001; Markman & Gentner, 2001). Interestingly, thinking is not a monolithic process but varies across different domains and developmental stages. For instance, logical thinking, which is central to scientific inquiry and mathematics, is characterized by the ability to reason deductively and inductively, often requiring the manipulation of abstract symbols and adherence to formal rules (Muzaky et al.,

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2020; Smith, 1978). On the other hand, creative thinking, such as divergent thinking, involves generating multiple unique solutions to open-ended problems and is predictive of logical reasoning abilities beyond mere cognitive capacity (Chantal & Markovits, 2022).

### **Critical thinking**

#### *Definition of critical thinking*

In the context of EFL, critical thinking is regarded as a complex ability that encompasses advanced cognitive processes, and is improved through interactive and collaborative learning practices (Rivas et al., 2022).

According to Jonathan Heard et al, (2020) the 1988–1990 American Philosophical Association's Delphi Project, led by Peter Facione, aimed to establish a comprehensive definition of critical thinking. It contained 46 experts from diverse fields including humanities, sciences, social sciences, and education. After two years of collaboration, the project yielded a definition that identified critical thinking as a disciplined, self-directed, and analytical process of evaluating information and arguments, with the goal of forming reasoned judgments and making informed decisions. As a result, the APA framework for critical thinking outlines six fundamental abilities: interpreting, analyzing, drawing conclusions, assessing, explaining, and self-managing. Each of these core skills is further bolstered by a collection of subsidiary skills.

Peter Facione (2011) defines Critical Thinking as a deliberate and self-regulated process of making judgments that involves interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and drawing inferences. It also includes explaining the underlying evidence, concepts, methods, criteria, and context that support those judgments.

Yan, (2021) defines critical thinking as "the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment" It is clarified as a concept that include "analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information" (Zahrani & Elyas, 2017). Development of critical thinking in EFL involves "interactive technologies" such as "students' discussions, collaborative learning,

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work in small groups, problem-based learning activities, and project method"(Fomenko & Bilotserkovests, 2022). These concepts collectively indicate that critical thinking in the EFL environment contains more than just a cognitive capacity. It is also a pedagogical method that promotes engagement and interaction among learners. Interestingly, while critical thinking is recognized as a valuable skill in EFL learning, its explicit integration into the classroom is not as widespread as one might expect (Yan, 2021). Moreover, despite potential challenges, such as religious or pedagogical barriers in certain contexts, the benefits of fostering critical thinking are well acknowledged (Zahrani & Elyas, 2017).

### **The significance of critical thinking in language learning**

In language learning, critical thinking plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall proficiency and effectiveness of learners (Fu & Wang, 2021). By employing critical thinking skills, language learners are able to analyze and evaluate the information they encounter, allowing them to understand the underlying meanings and context. This helps learners in interpreting and producing language in a more accurate and nuanced manner. Additionally, critical thinking enables language learners to engage in active problem-solving and decision-making processes, which are essential for effective communication. Furthermore, critical thinking in language learning promotes a deeper understanding of cultural nuances and perspectives. By critically examining socio-cultural contexts, learners can better interpret and navigate cultural norms and values embedded in language (Majumdar et al., 2021). This enhances their intercultural competence and communication skills, enabling them to interact sensitively and respectfully with speakers of other languages. Overall, critical thinking skills are fundamental for language learners to become independent, reflective, and effective communicators.

### **The Role of Teacher in Critical Thinking in the EFL Classroom**

Critical thinking skills are essential in today's society, where information is constantly being presented and opinions can easily be manipulated and distorted. The role of the teacher in fostering critical thinking in the EFL classroom is crucial (Putri et al., 2019). Teachers play a critical role in cultivating and promoting critical thinking skills among EFL learners. They do this by creating an environment that encourages questioning, analysis, and evaluation of information. Teachers also provide guidance and support in developing strong reasoning skills, helping students to distinguish between fact and opinion, recognize biases, and analyze evidence. Additionally, teachers facilitate discussions and activities that require students to think critically and make connections between concepts. Through scaffolding and modeling, teachers demonstrate critical thinking processes and techniques, such as brainstorming, problem-solving, and decision-making. Furthermore, teachers guide students in the process of reflection and self-assessment, encouraging them to critically evaluate their own thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions. By incorporating various teaching strategies and techniques that promote critical thinking, such as case studies, debates, and evidence-based discussions, teachers empower EFL learners to become independent thinkers who are able to analyze information, make informed decisions, and engage in meaningful and constructive discussions (Sosnina & Starostina, 2020).

### **Challenges of Critical Thinking in the Classroom**

Critical thinking skills are crucial in today's education system, as they enable students to analyze information, make informed decisions, and solve complex problems (Steinley, 1987). However, implementing critical thinking in the classroom can be challenging due to various factors (Cajander et al., 2014). Aliakbari & Sadeghdaghighi, (2013) mentioned several challenges of critical thinking in the classroom include lack of time; in a packed curriculum,

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teachers may struggle to find sufficient time to foster and develop critical thinking skills. Additionally, dealing with a large class size of students, it becomes difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention and guidance to foster critical thinking in each student. Moreover, some students may not be motivated or interested in developing their critical thinking skills, making it challenging for teachers to facilitate meaningful discussion and promote active participation.

Lack of teacher training; teachers may not have received sufficient training and support in teaching critical thinking skills, making it challenging for them to effectively integrate critical thinking into their lessons. Furthermore, teachers may face lack of classroom materials and resources that promote critical, making it challenging for teachers to implement effective strategies. Meanwhile, standardized testing and a focus on rote memorization can overshadow the development of critical thinking skills in the classroom.

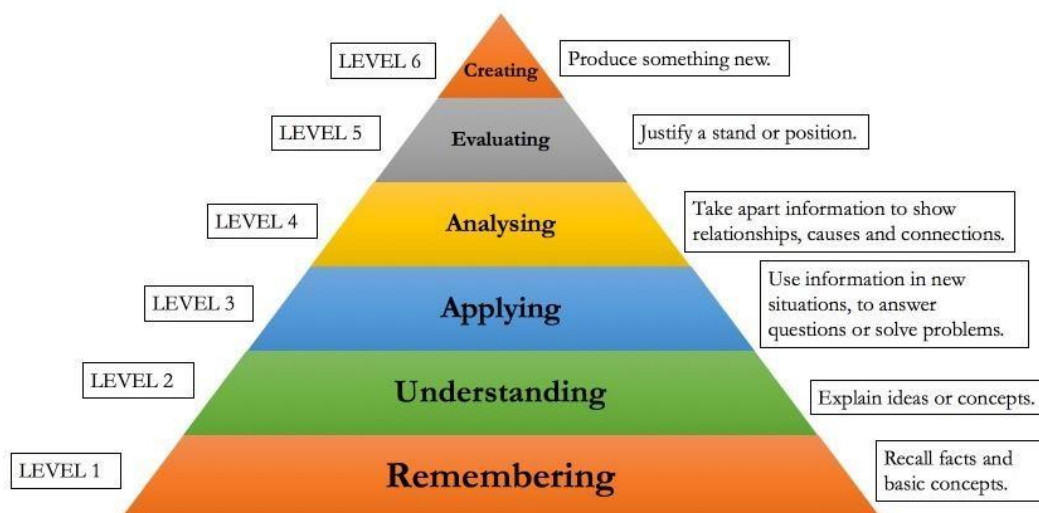
Education system constraints the pressure to cover a large amount of content and prepare students for standardized tests can limit time for critical thinking instruction. . In summary, the challenges of critical thinking in the classroom include lack of time, large class sizes, lack of student engagement, lack of teacher training and support, limited resources, and constraints of the education system.

Overall, integrating and promoting critical thinking in the classroom requires overcoming these challenges and creating a supportive environment that encourages students to question, analyze, and think critically about the information they encounter.

### Critical thinking frameworks and models

#### *Bloom Taxonomy*

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom developed a project that categorized learning behavior into six cognitive performance levels: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The levels were condensed into six exercises for students: recall, comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. This robust framework can be utilized for any type of content. Bloom's taxonomy assists students in providing reason for their answers, searching for diverse relevant topics, questioning the solutions, seeking new ideas, and reflecting in a creative way. (Sushant University, 2022)



**Figure 1. Bloom's Taxonomy**

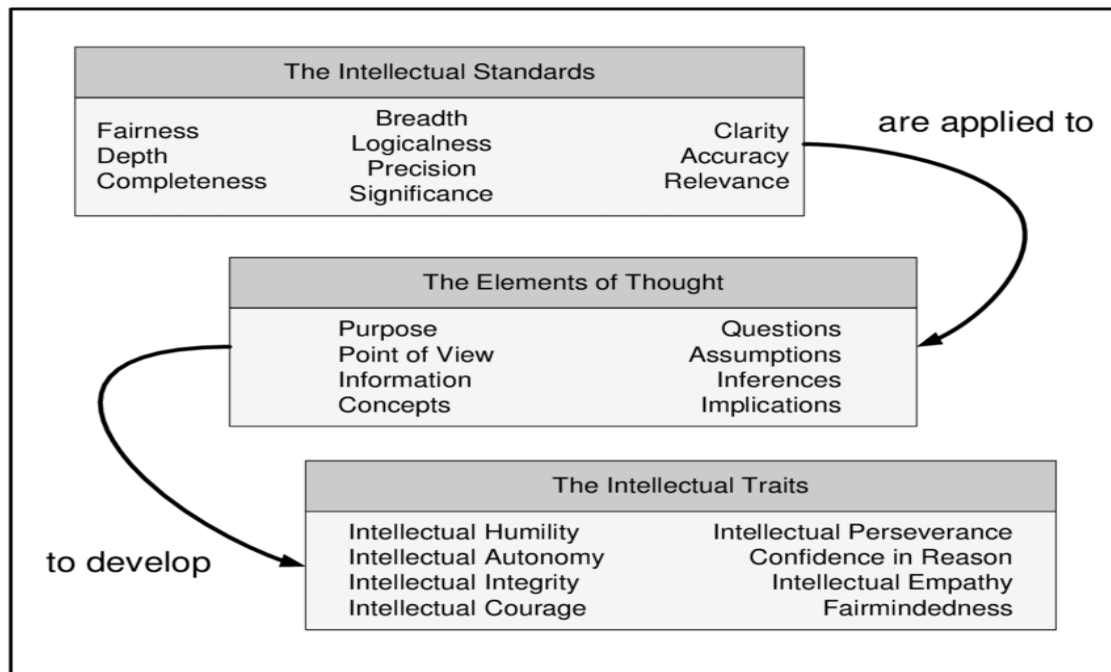
#### *Paul and Elder's Critical Thinking Framework*

Another model of critical thinking is Paul and Elder's Critical Thinking Framework, which emphasizes the development of intellectual traits such as clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, and fairness. It provides individuals with a systematic approach to thinking critically and making rational decisions this framework consists of nine



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elements of thought that are interconnected and build upon each other to enhance intellectual traits. The Critical Thinking Framework developed by Paul and Elder emphasizes the importance of approaching thinking and decision-making in a systematic manner. By considering these nine elements, individuals can develop a more structured and effective approach to critical thinking. (Kivunja, 2018)



**Figure 2. The Paul-Elder model of critical thinking**

### *The RED Model of Critical Thinking*

The RED Model of Critical Thinking, the educational publishing and services subsidiary of the international corporation Pearson has developed the RED model, which stands for Recognize assumptions, evaluate arguments, and Draw conclusions, as a framework for understanding and implementing critical thinking concepts in decision-making (Chartrand, Ishikawa, and Flander 2018; as cited in, Disruptive Leadership Institute, n.d.).



**Figure 3. The red model of critical thinking**

Recognize assumptions; it is crucial in distinguishing fact from opinion, as it helps to identify information gaps or unfounded logic. It's easy to assume information is true based on credibility or personal view, but it's essential to question and recognize these assumptions to ensure accuracy and fairness in communication. (Disruptive Leadership Institute, n.d.-b)

Evaluate arguments objectively and accurately, questioning the quality of supporting evidence and understanding how emotion influences situations. Common barriers include confirmation bias, which seeks information consistent with personal opinions or emotions. Being objective and sorting through the validity of different positions helps draw more accurate conclusions, as people may quickly conclude to avoid conflict. (ibid)

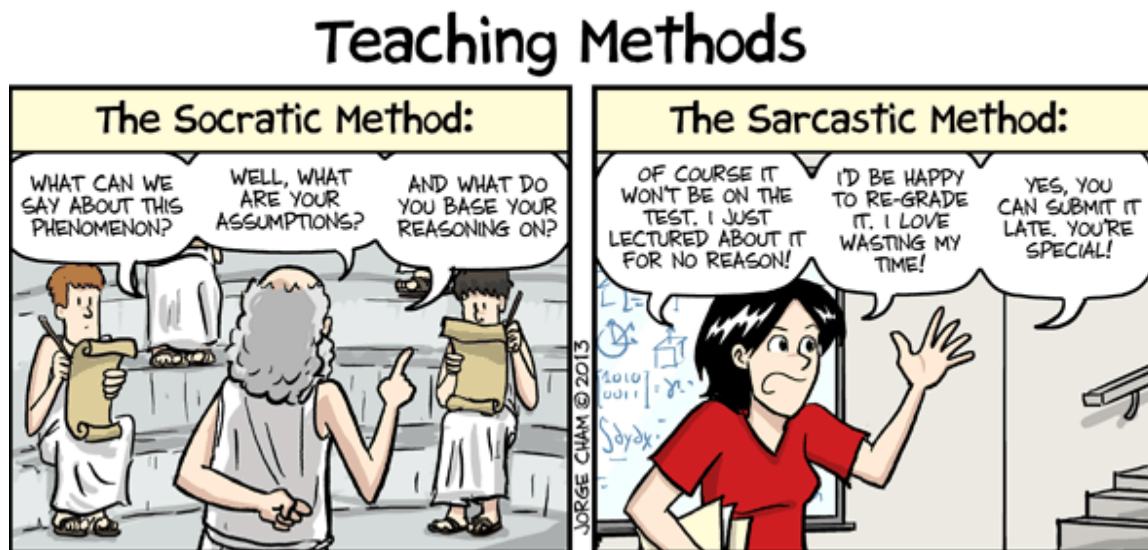
Draw conclusions; Individuals with these skills can synthesize diverse information, arrive at logical conclusions, avoid inappropriate generalization, and adjust their stance, when necessary, often referred to as having "good judgment" due to their quality decisions. (ibid)

### ***The Socratic model of Critical Thinking***

The Socratic Method is a well-known model of critical thinking that involves questioning assumptions, exploring different perspectives, and seeking deeper understanding. (Bazhouni, 2018). It includes a collaborative dialogue between teacher and student. The teacher

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guides the students by presenting engaging questions. Students actively participate by posing their own questions. The topic moves between different viewpoints.



**Figure 4. The Socratic Method vs. Sarcastic Method**

### **Relationship between critical thinking and problem-solving strategies**

Critical thinking and problem-solving strategies are closely intertwined in education (Paul & Elder, 2016). Critical thinking involves the ability to analyze, evaluate, and form reasoned judgments about information and situations. Problem-solving, on the other hand, involves identifying and implementing effective solutions to problems or challenges. In education, critical thinking skills are essential for students to effectively engage in problem-solving. Having strong critical thinking skills allows students to approach problems with a systematic and analytical mindset. This enables them to identify and evaluate potential solutions, consider different perspectives, and make informed decisions. By using critical thinking strategies, such as Socratic questioning, students can develop their problem-solving abilities. These strategies promote deep thinking and understanding, allowing students to

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explore multiple solutions and perspectives (Katsara & Witte, 2018). By incorporating critical thinking into problem-solving strategies, students are able to go beyond surface-level knowledge and apply their understanding in real-world situations (Paul & Elder, 2016).

### **Problem-Solving**

#### *Communicative problem*

Communicative problems in the context of EFL refer to difficulties or challenges that individuals encounter when using English as a means of communication. These problems can arise due to various factors, including limited vocabulary, grammar errors, pronunciation difficulties, and a lack of confidence in speaking (Cai, 2022). In addition, communicative problems in EFL can also arise from cultural differences, misunderstandings, and the inability to effectively convey one's thoughts or ideas due to language barriers or a lack of fluency in English (Puspa et al., 2020).

#### *Definition of Problem Solving*

Problem solving in education is a multifaceted concept that involves the application of knowledge, skills, and critical thinking to identify, analyze, and resolve problems. It is a higher-order cognitive process that is integral to learning across various disciplines (Mitrevski, 2019). In the context of physical education, problem solving is linked with fostering student inquiry, creativity, and the ability to tackle challenges within the learning environment (Pill & SueSee, 2017).

Problem solving in the context EFL refers to the process of addressing and resolving challenges or difficulties that arise during language learning and communication in a non-native English-speaking environment (Bemmousat & Bouyakoub, 2019).

### **The role of Problem Solving in Language Learning**

Problem solving plays a crucial role in language learning as it aids learners in actively engaging with the language and developing their communication skills (Hutapea et al., 2020). It helps learners find solutions to linguistic challenges, such as grammar or vocabulary usage, and encourages critical thinking and creativity in language production. Moreover, problem solving allows learners to actively apply their knowledge and strategies in real-life situations, facilitating a deeper understanding of the language and its cultural context (Parwati & Sugesti, 2023). By actively participating in problem-solving activities, language learners can enhance their ability to communicate effectively and confidently in the target language. Furthermore, problem solving in language learning involves analyzing and resolving issues that may arise during the language acquisition process, such as difficulties in understanding texts or communication breakdown. Problem solving helps learners overcome these challenges by identifying the root causes and coming up with strategies to address them. In summary, problem solving in language learning is essential for developing communication skills, promoting critical thinking and creativity, and overcoming obstacles encountered during the language acquisition process (Hutapea et al., 2020).

### **The Role of Teacher in Problem Solving in the Classroom**

Teachers play a crucial role in guiding students through problem-solving activities (Prodromou & Clandfield, 2007). They are responsible for designing tasks that align with the students' needs and interests, while also creating a "real" situation in class that motivates students to invest time and energy into solving the problems (Chen & Zhang, 2019). Teachers need to take into account students' language skills and negative emotions, as these factors can affect the outcome of the problem-solving process. Additionally, teachers should provide detailed help and guidance to students in developing problem-solving skills, recognizing that

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some students may require more support than others. By doing so, teachers can transform classroom problems into valuable learning opportunities and empower students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities that can be applied beyond the confines of the classroom. They are responsible for creating a supportive and stimulating environment where students feel encouraged to take risks, think creatively, and collaborate with their peers (Chen & Zhang, 2019). Furthermore, teachers need to scaffold the problem-solving process by providing clear instructions, modeling strategies, and offering guidance when students encounter difficulties (Berardo, 2011). Teachers also have a responsibility to assess and evaluate students' problem-solving abilities, providing constructive feedback that highlights areas of improvement and strategies for further growth. Overall, the role of the teacher in problem-solving in the EFL classroom is to facilitate and support students' development of problem-solving skills through thoughtful task design, guidance, scaffolding, and assessment (Chen & Zhang, 2019).

### **Challenges and recommendations of problem solving in the Classroom**

Problem solving in the classroom presents a variety of challenges that educators must navigate (Prodromou & Clandfield, 2007). One challenge is that students may struggle with critical thinking skills and find it difficult to approach problems from different angles. Another challenge is the limited time and resources available in a classroom setting, which may hinder the exploration of multiple solutions or alternative approaches to problem solving. Additionally, students may face difficulties in working collaboratively and effectively communicating their ideas and solutions to their peers. Lastly, students may also encounter personal challenges and negative emotions that can impede their problem-solving abilities, such as fear of failure or lack of self-confidence., the challenges of problem solving in the classroom require teachers to create engaging and relevant tasks, support students' language

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skills and emotions, foster creative thinking, and provide appropriate guidance and scaffolding to help students develop effective problem-solving strategies (Chen & Zhang, 2019). It may be that students require more detailed help and guidance in such skills. One of the greatest challenges in teaching is helping students do something with ideas they have read and comprehended (Steinley, 1987). They comprehend most texts fairly well, but they have more difficulty when dealing with evaluating a text they have comprehended or applying the ideas. In order to address these challenges, it is important for teachers to provide a variety of techniques, activities, and tips that can turn classroom problems into learning opportunities. Some of the sources provided highlight the challenges of problem solving in the classroom, including managing large classes, maintaining discipline, accommodating mixed-level classes, providing appropriate homework assignments, and teaching exam classes (Prodromou & Clandfield, 2007). In addition, the design of the task itself plays a crucial role in the overall difficulty of the problem-solving process (Chen & Zhang, 2019). Teachers must consider the needs and interests of their students, create an engaging and realistic task that aligns with the curriculum, and provide support and guidance to ensure that students are able to successfully complete the tasks. In summary, some of the challenges in problem-solving in the classroom include limited time and resources, difficulty in exploring multiple solutions, challenges in collaboration and communication, and personal barriers such as fear of failure (Prodromou & Clandfield, 2007). Teachers must be proactive in addressing these challenges by providing support, guidance, and strategies to help students overcome difficulties and develop effective problem-solving skills. Furthermore, there is a need to incorporate real-life situations and authentic materials in the classroom to enhance students' enthusiasm and motivation for problem-solving. These challenges can be addressed through a student-centered approach, where students are encouraged to actively participate in problem-solving activities and are provided with opportunities to practice and apply their problem-solving skills. Overall, the

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challenges of problem solving in the classroom require teachers to create engaging and relevant tasks, support students' language skills and emotions, foster creative thinking, and provide appropriate guidance and scaffolding to help students develop effective problem-solving strategies (Chen & Zhang, 2019).

### **Process of Problem Solving in Language Learning**

Problem solving is an essential skill in language learning that allows learners to overcome challenges, improve their proficiency, and enhance their overall language abilities (Nuzum, 1987). In order to effectively solve language-related problems, learners can follow a structured process that includes several steps. These steps include problem recognition and definition, and problem exploration, generating possible solutions, evaluating potential solutions, implementing the chosen solution, and refine the outcome (Davidson et al., 2003). By following these steps, learners can effectively address language learning difficulties. They can begin by recognizing that they are facing a problem, whether it be difficulty in understanding grammar rules or struggling to communicate in a target language. Once the problem is recognized, learners can define the problem more specifically by breaking it down into specific aspects or components that need to be addressed. Next, learners can explore the problem by gathering information, analyzing patterns, and identifying any underlying causes or factors contributing to the problem (Migal et al., 2018). After exploring the problem, learners can generate possible solutions by brainstorming ideas, seeking guidance from teachers or peers, and considering different strategies or approaches to overcome the problem (Nuzum, 1987). Next, learners can evaluate the potential solutions by considering the feasibility, effectiveness, and practicality of each option (Migal et al., 2018). They can weigh the pros and cons, consider the resources and time required for each solution, and assess how well each solution aligns with their specific learning style and goals. Once a solution has been selected,



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learners can implement it by putting their plan into action (Nuzum, 1987). They can practice using the chosen strategy, engage in targeted language activities, seek additional support or resources as needed, and actively apply the solution to their language learning process (Davidson et al., 2003).



**Figure 5. Problem Solving Process (PSP)**

### **Problem solving models**

Language learning is a complex process that requires effective problem-solving models to ensure successful acquisition and proficiency (Singh & Mahmood, 2021). One problem-solving model often used in language learning is the Communicative Approach (Hutapea et al., 2020). It known as communicative language teaching (CLT), interaction and problem solving are crucial as a mean and end goal of learning English language .the emphasis is frequently placed on exercises like role-playing, pair and group work(Communicative Approach - Teflpedia, 2023.) This approach emphasizes the importance of communication, function, and meaning in language learning (Lamy & Hampel, 2007). By focusing on real-life situations and

meaningful interactions, learners are encouraged to actively engage with the language and find solutions to communication problems they encounter.

### ***Inquiry-Based Learning Model***

Another problem-solving model commonly used in language learning is the Inquiry-Based Learning Model. This model empowers learners to explore, analyze, and evaluate information independently, allowing them to develop their problem-solving skills (Ting et al., 2021). It is an educational approach that prioritizes student involvement in posing questions and delving into real-world issues. Within this learning setting, students take an active role in their learning journey and have the chance to delve into their innate curiosities to improve their creativity, critical thinking skills, and problem solving skills (Scholl & Scholl, 2023). Through inquiry-based learning, learners can make predictions, form hypotheses, and draw conclusions based on their research and evaluation of new information. This helps them develop a deeper understanding of the language and its application in real-life contexts (Lamy & Hampel, 2007).



**Figure 6. Inquiry-based Learning**

### ***Problem-based learning***

Problem-based learning is also an effective approach in language learning. PBL is a student-centered approach where learners are presented with real-world problems that require the application of language skills and knowledge to develop solutions (Hutapea et al., 2020). By engaging in problem-solving activities, language learners become actively involved in the learning process and develop critical thinking, creativity, and analytical skills.

### **Teaching Strategies in problem-based learning**

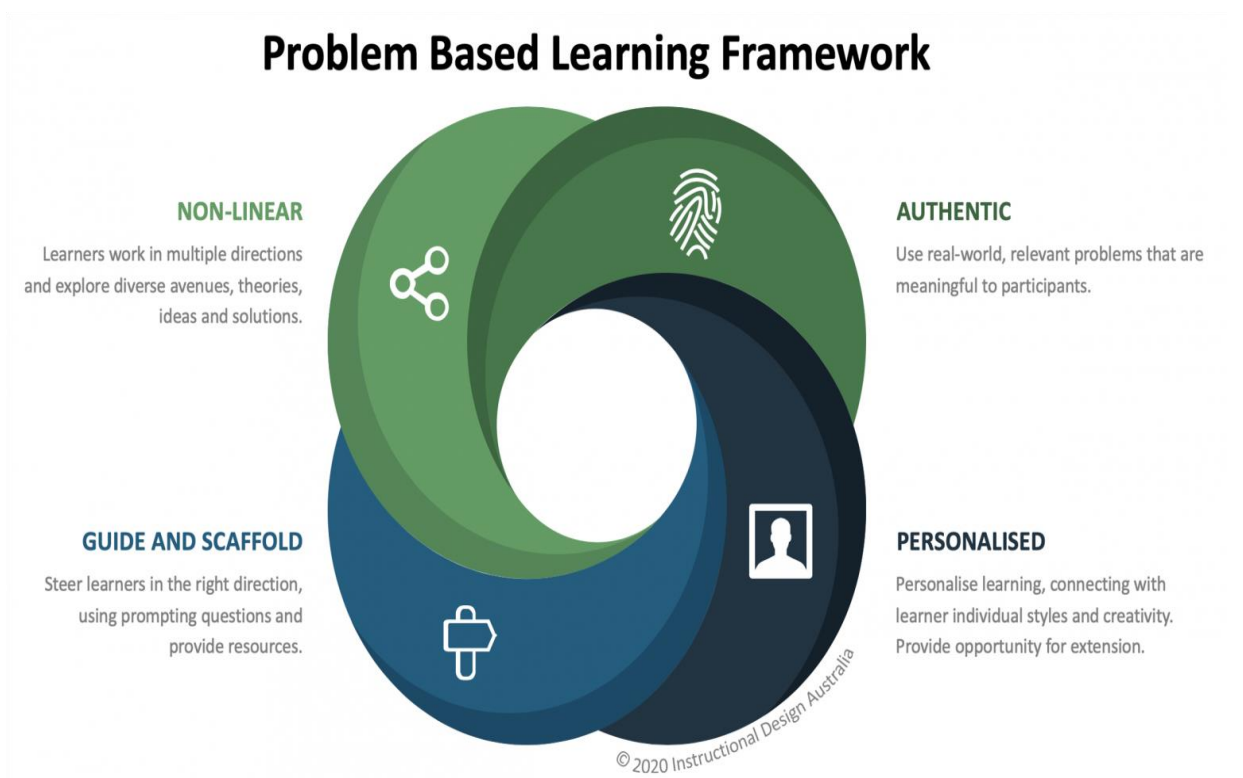
Implement PBL by designing learning experiences that:

- Guide and support learners to actively construct their own learning, as opposed to providing information to passive receivers
- Allow learners to take the lead, and scaffold by observing, noticing, reflecting and responding

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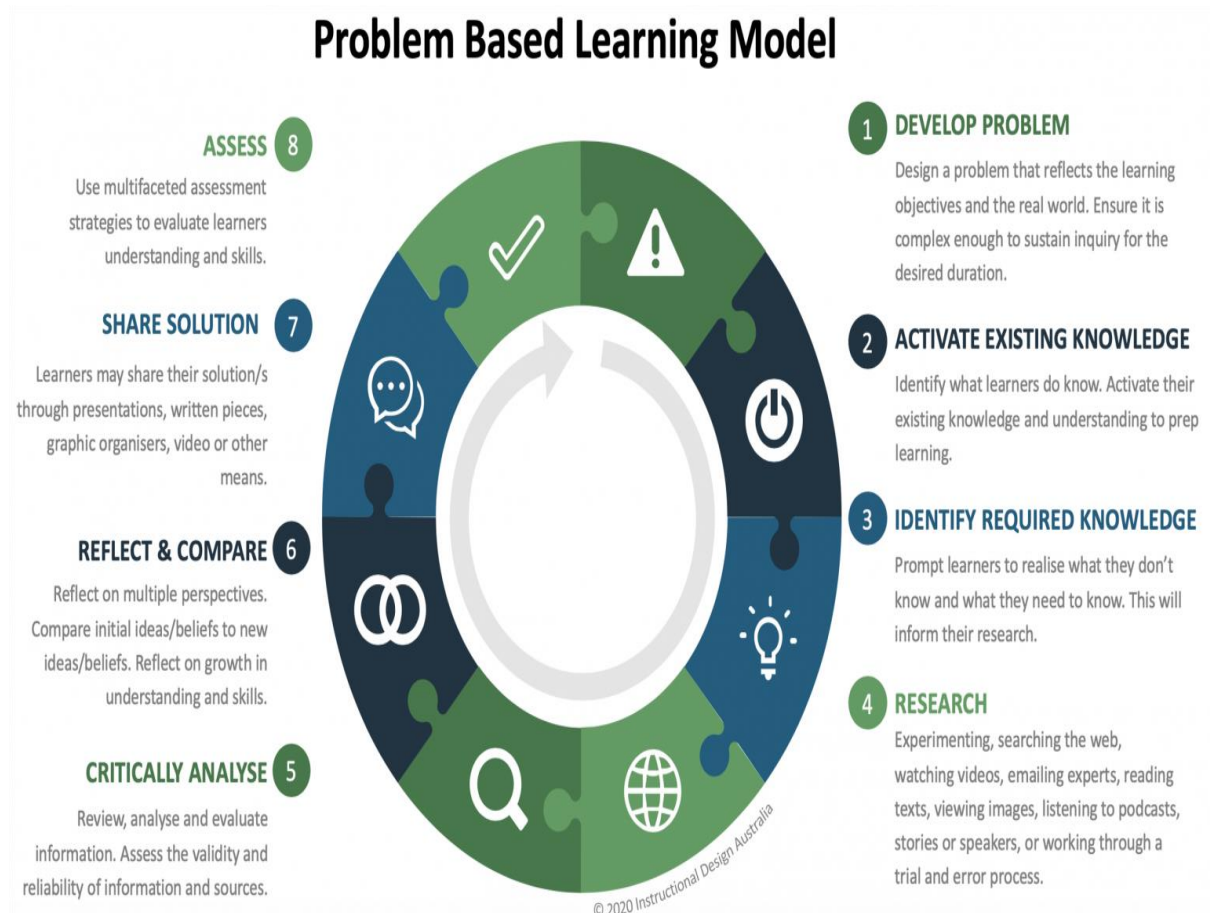
- Personalise learning, connecting with learners' individual styles and creativity, and providing opportunity for extension
- Allow learners to work in multiple directions, guiding students through questioning
- Implement multifaceted assessment through meaningful, 'connected' contexts throughout a program

(Applying Problem Based Learning (PBL), n.d.)



**Figure 7. Problem based learning framework**

The framework emphasizes learners working in multiple directions and engaging with real-world, relevant problems to explore diverse avenues, theories, and solutions. It includes elements such as guiding and scaffolding learners, personalizing learning experiences to individual styles and creativity, and providing resources and opportunities for extension where learners rely on authentic situation related to the problem.



**Figure 8. Problem based learning model**

### Online platforms

In addition to these models, technology can be leveraged in language learning to enhance problem-solving skills. For example, online communication platforms such as forums and chats can provide opportunities for learners to engage in problem-solving activities with peers from around the world (Lamy & Hampel, 2007). This allows learners to collaborate, exchange ideas, and collectively work towards finding solutions to language-related problems. By utilizing technology, learners can also access a wide range of resources such as online videos, interactive games, and virtual worlds that present language challenges for them to

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solve. Overall, problem-solving models in language learning provide learners with the necessary tools and skills to effectively navigate real-life communication challenges.

### **Conclusion**

Critical thinking and problem-solving are essential skills in the modern educational field, particularly in the context of language learning. This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of these crucial abilities, highlighting their significance, underlying frameworks, and practical applications within the EFL classroom.

Through an exploration of various theoretical models and teaching strategies, it is evident that fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills requires a multifaceted approach. Educators play a pivotal role in creating a conducive learning environment that encourages questioning, analysis, and creativity. By employing student-centered approaches, such as inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, and the communicative approach, teachers can empower learners to actively engage with language challenges and develop effective solutions. The relationship between critical thinking and problem-solving is deeply intertwined, as critical thinking skills form the foundation for effective problem-solving. By integrating critical thinking into problem-solving strategies, learners can approach language-related challenges with a systematic and analytical mindset, enabling them to identify, evaluate, and implement solutions that enhance their language proficiency and communicative competence. While integrating critical thinking and problem-solving into the EFL classroom presents challenges, such as limited time, resources, and student engagement, these obstacles can be overcome through effective pedagogical practices, teacher training, and a shift towards a more flexible and adaptive educational system. By leveraging technology and online platforms, educators can further enhance problem-solving opportunities and foster collaboration among learners.

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Ultimately, equipping EFL learners with critical thinking and problem-solving skills is crucial for their personal and professional growth, enabling them to navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world. By embracing these skills in the language learning process, educators can empower learners to become independent, reflective, and effective communicators, capable of thriving in diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. As the field of education continues to evolve, it is essential that educators prioritize the development of these invaluable skills, ensuring that learners are well-prepared to face the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

# **Chapter two:**

## **Strategies in EFL Communicative Skills**



## **Introduction**

Effective communication is a multifaceted process that involves the seamless integration of various skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Sumaiya et al., 2022). In the context of language learning, particularly English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the development of these skills is paramount. However, mastering communication goes beyond merely acquiring linguistic competence; it necessitates the cultivation of critical thinking abilities. Critical thinking empowers learners to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information, ultimately enhancing their overall communicative competence. This chapter explores the essential elements of communication, the role of critical thinking in language learning, and the benefits of integrating critical thinking and problem-solving skills to improve EFL communicative abilities; listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

## **Communication**

Communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, and feelings between individuals or groups. (Numonjonovna, 2021) define communication as the interaction between two or more people in the exchange of information that has a cognitive or affective-evaluative character. Another definition expands on this by describing communication as "a complex, comprehensive process of establishing and developing relationships that arise from the need for collaborative activities between people and consist of the exchange of information" (ibid).

According to the definitions communication can be seen as a multifaceted process that goes beyond mere information exchange. It involves building and rising relationships due to the need of achieving specific activities among people.

**Key components of communication skills**

Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are playing a pivotal role in the process of communication. Speaking is the act of conveying thoughts and information through verbal expression. An expressive skill requires the ability to form coherent sentences and to use voice and intonation appropriately. Listening, on the other hand, is a receptive skill that is foundational to language learning. It is the primary skill from which speaking abilities develop, as "one can never be a good speaker if one is not a good listener" (Sharma, 2017). Effective communication is thus seen as a two-way process, involving both speaking and listening, with listening laying the groundwork for speaking (Vani & Naik, 2023). Reading and writing are multifaceted and interrelated. According to Sparks (2023), "In order to read the target L2, an individual must be able to both decode (read) and comprehend the meaning of the text." This highlights the dual aspects of reading as both a decoding and a comprehension process. Similarly, Allen et al. (2014) supports this by indicating, "reading comprehension was strongly related to both vocabulary knowledge and the higher-level cognitive skills," suggesting that reading involves not just recognizing words but also understanding and integrating information.

In terms of writing, Chin and Kang (2022) reveals "the advanced Korean EFL learners' English writing abilities had a significant effect on their reading comprehension abilities," this implies that writing skills contribute to the development of reading comprehension. Furthermore, Moon et al. (2019) emphasizes the importance of reading comprehension in writing performance, stating, "Reading comprehension abilities... had a significant relationship with advanced Korean EFL learners' structural and linguistic aspects of writing performances." It suggests that reading and writing in communication are complex processes that require a combination of decoding, comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, and higher-level cognitive

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skills. While, writing not only involves the ability to construct text, it also supports the development of reading comprehension.

Communication is a complex interplay of numerous skills. Each component is vital in its own way and yet interconnected. Speaking lays the foundation for verbal expression, while listening forms the basis upon which speaking abilities are built. In other words, Effective communication involves competency in all aspects of language, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, which together facilitate a comprehensive understanding and expression of language.

### **The role of critical thinking skills in EFL communicative skills**

In the context of language learning critical thinking plays a crucial role in shaping the efficacy of learning and application across listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Through the lens of various studies, it becomes evident that the interplay between critical thinking and language skills is multifaceted and dynamic.

Critical thinking is not only a cognitive ability but also a determinant in the effective acquisition and application of language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. "Learning motivation positively and significantly correlated with critical thinking skills" (Nashori et al., 2023), suggesting that motivated learners are more likely to engage in critical thinking, which in turn may enhance their language proficiency across all four domains. Interestingly, while teaching critical thinking skills had a "significant difference between the two groups on reading comprehension test" (Fahim & Sa'ee pour, 2011), it did not show a significant difference in critical thinking itself, indicating that the impact of critical thinking instruction may be more readily observable in specific language skills like reading comprehension. Moreover, critical thinking has been identified as a mediator in the relationship between content knowledge representation strategies and writing proficiency, highlighting its role in the writing process (Xiaolei et al., 2023). Furthermore, critical thinking is essential for

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the integration of reading and speaking skills, and while its role in the context of hearing-impaired learners' motivation remains unclear, it is evident that a lack of focus on critical thinking in early literacy can have detrimental effects on language acquisition. (ibid)

According to above, critical thinking skills are integral to EFL learners' effective communication. They underpin the development of listening comprehension, enhance critical reading, and are interrelated with other language skills.

### **The Benefits of Critical Thinking in Writing Skills**

Writing is a fundamental skill that plays a vital role in various personal and professional settings (Jasper, 2005). It is widely recognized that strong writing skills are essential for effective communication and expression (Taufiq et al., 2021). Furthermore, critical thinking is crucial for improving writing skills in several ways (Jasper, 2005). Firstly, critical thinking allows individuals to analyze and evaluate information critically. This helps in the process of researching and gathering relevant information for writing, as critical thinking enables individuals to assess the credibility and reliability of sources. Additionally, critical thinking promotes creativity and originality in writing. It enables writers to make unique connections between different ideas and information, resulting in more innovative and engaging content. Moreover, critical thinking enhances the clarity and coherence of writing. By critically examining and organizing thoughts, writers can ensure that their ideas are presented in a logical and coherent manner. Furthermore, critical thinking helps writers to identify and address potential weaknesses or flaws in their arguments, leading to stronger and more convincing writing (Dexter, 2000).

### **Critical thinking in professional writing**

According to Kamg (2024), Max Messmer, chairman of Robert Half International (RHI), provides advice on how to write professionally using critical thinking and writing skills.

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He emphasizes the importance of professional writing, as it represents the writer's level of communication skills.

To ensure professional writing Messmer (n.d) suggests several key steps:

1. **Planning:** Before writing, carefully consider the purpose of the communication and determine the approach based on the information you want to present.
2. **Design an Outline:** Create a format, especially for lengthy or complex documents, to help the reader follow the path you have created.
3. **Depth of Information:** Decide on the depth and amount of detail to include based on the reader's needs and background.
4. **Pique their Interest:** Capture the reader's attention from the beginning by showing them how the information will impact them.
5. **Reach Your Audience:** Consider the terminology and information you include to effectively reach your audience, taking into account their backgrounds and familiarity with the topic.
6. **Always Proofread:** Proofread your document to ensure that the audience understands the topic and to avoid spelling and grammatical errors, which can reflect poorly on your attention to detail and overall skill set.

Professional writing is reader-centered, not writer-centered. By using critical thinking skills in planning and writing, students can produce well-received documents that help the reader understand the main points and the importance of the information. (Kamg, 2024)

### **Critical reading**

Non-critical readers often view texts as sources of facts and accept the author's interpretation of the subject matter. They read to gain knowledge by memorizing statements

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within the text. In contrast, critical readers recognize that any text represents just one portrayal of the facts, shaped by the author's unique perspective and selection of information. They examine not only what the text says but also how it portrays the subject matter. (Daniel J. Kurland, 2000)

The study outlines three levels of analysis in critical reading:

1. What a text says (restatement): Recognizing and restating the key points of the text.
2. What a text does (description): Reflecting on the purpose of the text's remarks, such as offering examples, arguing, appealing for sympathy, or making a contrast to clarify a point.
3. What a text means (interpretation): Inferring the overall meaning of the text based on the analysis of what it says and does.

Each mode of analysis focuses on a different aspect of the text:

- Restatement discusses the same topic as the original text.
- Description examines aspects of the discussion itself.
- Interpretation analyzes the text and asserts a meaning for the text as a whole.

The passage also lists common goals of critical reading, which involve making inferences from evidence within the text:

1. Recognizing an author's purpose by inferring the basis for choices of content and language.
2. Understanding tone and persuasive elements by classifying the nature of language choices.

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3. Recognizing bias by classifying the nature of patterns in the choice of content and language.

In summary, Daniel J. Kurland (2000) highlights the importance of critical reading as a means of analyzing texts beyond their surface-level meaning, considering the author's unique perspective, purpose, tone, and potential biases. It improves communication skills, promotes intellectual growth, and raises ethical awareness. These benefits collectively contribute to a more informed, empathetic, and thoughtful engagement with the world.

### **Critical thinking in speaking**

Sivapurapu (2020) highlights the importance of Interactive Communicative Skills (ICS) laboratories in developing students' speaking skills through critical thinking. She argues that these laboratories provide an environment where students can fully engage their evaluative and analytical skills, which are crucial components of critical thinking.

The main goal of incorporating critical thinking in ICS laboratories is to create free thinkers and speakers who can express themselves without any flaws. This is achieved by allowing students to think deeply about the topics they are given and to choose their own topics to discuss. By doing so, students can better understand what they want to say and how to express their ideas effectively.

Critical thinking plays a vital role in honing speaking skills by:

1. Encouraging students to analyze and evaluate the topics they are discussing.
2. Helping students organize their thoughts and ideas coherently.
3. Enabling students to consider different perspectives and anticipate potential counterarguments.

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4. Fostering creativity and originality in their speaking by encouraging them to think outside the box.
5. Building confidence in their ability to express themselves clearly and persuasively.

Through engaging in critical thinking during ICS laboratory sessions, students can develop the necessary skills to become effective communicators in various contexts, such as academic discussions, professional presentations, and everyday conversations. The freedom to choose their own topics and the opportunity to think deeply about them allows students to take ownership of their learning process and fostering free thinking and speaking, these laboratories help students become confident, articulate, and persuasive communicators.

### **Critical thinking in listening**

“Critical listening is actively listening to what the speaker is saying, while analyzing, judging and forming an individual opinion on the information that is being presented. It is used in scenarios where an opinion needs to be developed on a particular topic”. (Janelle Barowski, 2023). Systematic thinking and reasoning are used to determine if a message is logical and supported by factual evidence. Although critical listening can be developed with practice, it is not always easy to master. Critical listening becomes especially challenging when the message is complex. Unfortunately, some speakers might intentionally complicate their messages to evade critical examination. (“Stand up, Speak Out the Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking,” 2016)

### ***Improve Critical Listening***

Critical listening is a skill that can be developed and refined. This section outlines six techniques to help students become a more critical listener. (“Stand up, Speak Out the Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking,” 2016)



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### **1. Recognizing the Difference between Facts and Opinions**

Critical listening involves distinguishing between facts and opinions. This means recognizing when a speaker is presenting factual information or merely expressing an opinion, and also being aware of the interaction between your own opinions and facts while listening.

### **2. Uncovering Assumptions**

Facts are backed by evidence, but assumptions are gaps filled with personal ideas and opinions, which may not be accurate. When listening to a speech, critically evaluate assumptions. For instance, a speaker discussing weight loss might assume that lack of motivation and self-discipline are the sole reasons for being overweight, ignoring genetic factors. Critical listening helps identify these assumptions and encourages further research to validate or refute them, rather than passively accepting them.

### **3. Being Open to New Ideas**

Some people are so entrenched in their beliefs that they resist new, beneficial ideas. Critical listeners should remain open to new ideas, evaluating them on their merits rather than dismissing them outright.

### **4. Relying on Reason and Common Sense**

Use common sense to evaluate the logic and credibility of a speech. If a message seems illogical, it likely is. Investigate questionable claims before accepting them. As a speaker, complement common sense with credible evidence to avoid logical fallacies.

### **5. Relating New Ideas to Old Ones**

Understanding new concepts can be easier when they are related to familiar ones. As a listener, making such comparisons can enhance your comprehension of the message.

## **6. Taking Notes**

Effective note-taking is crucial for critical listening. Striking a balance between listening and writing is essential to avoid missing key points or misrepresenting the message. Focus on capturing central issues and key phrases rather than full sentences to maintain the integrity of the speaker's message.

Critical listening can be enhanced by using various strategies to help analyze the message: distinguish between facts and opinions, identify the speaker's assumptions, remain open to new ideas, apply both reason and common sense when evaluating messages, connect new ideas to familiar ones, and take effective notes.

### **Problem solving process in EFL communicative skills**

According to problem solving process that we discuss in the first chapter we can suggest a hypothetical example in improving speaking skills

#### ***Example of the Process of PS in Improving Speaking Skills***

##### **Problem Recognition**

A learner realizes they are struggling with speaking in the target language. They notice difficulty in maintaining conversations, frequent pauses, and lack of confidence.

##### **Defining the problem**

The learner defines the problem more specifically: Difficulty in pronunciation, Limited vocabulary, Lack of fluency and confidence or Trouble constructing sentences quickly.

##### **Problem Exploration**

The learner gathers information about their speaking issues.

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- Records themselves speaking and identifies frequent pronunciation errors.
- Analyzes conversation transcripts to pinpoint vocabulary gaps.
- Reflects on specific situations where they feel most anxious or hesitant to speak.
- Reviews feedback from language exchange partners or teachers.

### **Generating Possible Solutions**

Students may use Brainstorming to get potential solutions

- Practice pronunciation with language learning apps or tools.
- Expand vocabulary through flashcards and reading.
- Engage in regular language exchange sessions with native speakers.
- Join a speaking club or take part in group discussions.
- Use relaxation techniques to reduce anxiety before speaking.

### **Evaluating potential solutions**

Student may choose a solution according to its feasibility, effectiveness, and practicality.

- Pronunciation apps are accessible and can be used daily.
- Flashcards and reading can be integrated into the daily routine.
- Language exchange sessions provide real-life practice but require scheduling.
- Speaking clubs and group discussions offer practice but might be limited in frequency.

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- Relaxation techniques are helpful but might need time to become effective.

### **Implementing the chosen solution**

Students may combine several solutions in order to get positive results.

- Use a pronunciation app for 15 minutes daily.
- Learn five new vocabulary words each day using flashcards.
- Schedule two language exchange sessions per week.
- Participate in a weekly speaking club or online speaking platforms.
- Practice deep breathing exercises before speaking sessions.

### **Reflecting on the outcome**

Over time, the learner can note the deference and evaluate their progress.

- Pronunciation has improved, with fewer errors noted in recordings.
- Vocabulary has expanded, making conversations easier.
- Increased confidence and fluency observed during language exchange sessions.
- Positive feedback from teachers and colleagues.

This example demonstrates the problem-solving process in improving speaking skills and can be adapted to enhance other EFL communication skills; listening, reading, and writing. By recognizing the problem, defining it, exploring potential solutions, and evaluating and implementing the best ones, learners can systematically improve their overall language proficiency.

**Benefits of integrating critical thinking and problem solving**

In regards to above, the integration of critical thinking and problem-solving skills can significantly enhance EFL communicative skills in the following ways:

1. **Improved comprehension and analysis:** Critical thinking enables learners to analyze and evaluate information more effectively, leading to better comprehension of spoken and written content. This deeper understanding facilitates more meaningful communication.
2. **Enhanced ability to express ideas:** Problem-solving skills help learners organize their thoughts coherently and express their ideas clearly. By practicing critical thinking and problem-solving, learners can communicate their perspectives more effectively, both verbally and in writing.
3. **Increased creativity and originality:** Critical thinking encourages learners to think outside the box and consider multiple perspectives. This fosters creativity and originality in their communication, allowing them to express themselves in more engaging and compelling ways.
4. **Better argumentation and persuasion:** Critical thinking and problem-solving skills enable learners to anticipate counterarguments, identify potential weaknesses in their reasoning, and construct more persuasive and well-supported arguments, enhancing their ability to communicate persuasively.
5. **Adaptability and context awareness:** Problem-solving skills help learners consider the context and audience when communicating, allowing them to tailor their language and message effectively for different situations.
6. **Improved critical reading and listening:** Critical thinking and problem-solving skills enhance learners' ability to critically analyze written and spoken content, enabling them

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to identify biases, evaluate credibility, and distinguish between facts and opinions, which is crucial for effective communication.

7. Increased confidence and self-expression: By developing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, learners gain confidence in their ability to express themselves clearly, articulate their thoughts, and communicate their ideas effectively.
8. Enhanced collaborative communication: Critical thinking and problem-solving skills foster the ability to consider diverse perspectives, which is essential for effective collaboration and communication in group settings.

### **Conclusion**

The interplay between critical thinking and EFL communicative skills is intricate and multidimensional. As evidenced by numerous studies, critical thinking serves as a channel for the effective acquisition and application of language skills across all domains. It enhances the development of listening comprehension, enhances critical reading abilities, and plays a pivotal role in writing proficiency. Furthermore, critical thinking fosters clear and articulate verbal expression, enabling learners to become confident and persuasive speakers. By fostering an environment that encourages critical analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information, EFL learners can transcend mere linguistic competence and develop into effective communicators capable of navigating diverse contexts with ease. Problem-solving process fosters a growth mindset to overcome communication challenges. This systematic approach empowers learners to become more confident, proficient, and effective communicators in the target language. The integration of critical thinking and problem solving into language learning curricula and pedagogical practices is therefore imperative, as it equips learners with the necessary cognitive tools to navigate the complexities of language and communication with finesse.

# **Chapter three: Analysis and Results**

**Introduction**

This chapter explains how the study was conducted. It describes the methods used to answer the research questions, test the hypothesis, and achieve the research goals. The researcher gathered most of the data through questionnaires to provide enough statistical information. The questionnaire was designed and distributed to university EFL learners of first year classes at UMK Biskra, since this study is aimed at exploring the integration of critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to enhance student's EFL communication skills.

**Research methodology**

As mentioned above, the present study is based upon a quantitative method using a survey method. The questionnaire provided will serve as the primary data collection instrument. The reason behind doing so is to get in-depth understanding of the responses obtained from the students and statistically analyze the variables in question to determine whether integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies has an impact of student's EFL communication skills.

**Population and Sampling**

As mentioned earlier, the target population of this study includes first-year students at the Department of Foreign Languages in Biskra University. A random sampling method was used to select students, aiming to generalize the results from this study. Out of the intended population of approximately 683 students, a sample of 60 students was obtained for the study.



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### **Data Gathering Tools**

The primary data collection tool is a quantitative questionnaire designed to gather comprehensive data. Frequency scale was used to measure the frequency of EFL students' engagement with critical thinking and problem-solving strategies. Rating scale was used to gather their supposed improvement in communication skills due to CT and PSS. Binary choice was used to gather the Effectiveness of CT and PSS. Multiple choices were used to perceive the classroom environment, the motivation of EFL student towards CT and PPS, and the challenges encountered in applying it.

### **Data analysis**

The collected data will be analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) will be used to summarize and interpret the responses to the closed-ended questions

### **Description of Students' Questionnaire**

The main aims of conducting this student questionnaire can be summarized as follows:

Assess the level of engagement of EFL students with critical thinking and problem-solving strategies in their English language learning process. This aim is addressed through questions 1 and 2, which ask about the frequency of applying critical thinking skills and integrating problem-solving strategies during English language learning activities.

Evaluate the perceived impact of critical thinking and problem-solving strategies on the development of various communication skills in English. This aim is addressed through questions 3-6, which ask students to rate the improvement in their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills as a result of using these strategies.

Understand the perceived effectiveness of critical thinking and problem-solving strategies in facilitating effective communication in English. This aim is addressed through

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questions 7 and 8, which directly ask students if they believe these strategies are essential for effective communication in English and if they have positively affected their overall English language proficiency.

Investigate the role of the classroom environment in promoting the practice of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in EFL learning. This aim is addressed through questions 9 and 10, which inquire about whether the classroom environment helps students practice these skills and if they feel encouraged to participate in related activities.

Identify the challenges faced by EFL students in applying critical thinking and problem-solving strategies during their English language learning. This aim is addressed through question 11, which provides a list of potential challenges and allows students to select the ones they encounter.

### Analysis of Questionnaire

#### Section one: Engagement with Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

Q1: How often do you consciously apply critical thinking skills during your English language learning activities?

**Table 1.**

*Frequency of consciously applying critical thinking skills*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Rarely</b>	0	0%
<b>Sometimes</b>	49	81.7%
<b>Often</b>	11	18.3%
<b>Always</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

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The majority of students 81.7% reported that they "sometimes" consciously apply critical thinking skills during English language learning activities, while only 18.3% students reported doing so "often.". No one reported doing it always or rarely. The result suggests a moderate level of engagement. While critical thinking is a valuable skill in language learning, it may not be consistently applied by all learners. The reason behind this may be the use of traditional teaching methods that focus more on rote learning rather than developing higher-order thinking skills.

Q2: How frequently do you integrate problem-solving strategies into your English language learning routine?

**Table 2.**

*Frequency of integrating problem-solving strategies*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Rarely</b>	12	20%
<b>Sometimes</b>	17	28.3%
<b>Often</b>	13	21.7%
<b>Always</b>	18	30%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

20% of students indicated that they rarely incorporate problem-solving strategies. A slightly higher number, 28.3% reported that they sometimes use these strategies. 21.7% stated that they often integrate problem-solving strategies into their learning activities. Notably, the highest proportion of respondents, 18 students (30%), indicated that they always incorporate problem-solving strategies into their routine. This suggests that while a significant number of students consistently use problem-solving strategies, there is still a considerable portion that uses them infrequently. This distribution indicates that a significant portion of participants

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(51.7%) frequently integrate problem-solving strategies into their English language learning activities, with 30% doing so always. This suggests a proactive approach towards incorporating problem-solving skills into language learning routines, potentially enhancing the effectiveness of the learning process.

### Section Two: Perceived Improvement in Communication Skills

Q3: On a scale from 1 to 10, rate the improvement in your speaking skills as a result of using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies.

**Table 3.**

*Perceived Improvement in speaking skill*

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>1 (No Improvement)</b>	1	1.7%
<b>2</b>	12	20%
<b>3</b>	7	11.7%
<b>4</b>	0	0%
<b>5 (improvement)</b>	18	30%
<b>6</b>	16	26.7%
<b>7</b>	6	10%
<b>8</b>	0	0%
<b>9</b>	0	0%
<b>10 (extreme improvement)</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

A small fraction of students rated their improvement at the lower end of the scale, with 1 student (1.7%) reporting no improvement (rating of 1) and 12 students (20%) indicating very little improvement (rating of 2). Additionally, 7 students (11.7%) rated their improvement at 3.

The majority of students rated their improvement in the middle range. 18 students (30%) perceived moderate improvement (rating of 5), and 16 students (26.7%) indicated a moderately high level of improvement (rating of 6). Six students (10%) reported a substantial improvement (rating of 7). Notably, no students rated their improvement at 4, 8, 9, or 10, suggesting that while moderate improvements are common, extreme improvements are not perceived by any

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students. This suggest that while students do perceive benefits from using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to enhance speaking skill, the improvements are seen as moderate and they face challenges in it. This may be due to insufficient focus on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills within speaking activities (laboratories speech activities).

**Q4:** On a scale from 1 to 10, rate the improvement in your listening skills as a result of using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies.

**Table 4.**

*Perceived Improvement in listening skill*

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
<b>1 (No Improvement)</b>	0	0%
<b>2</b>	3	5%
<b>3</b>	2	3.3%
<b>4</b>	9	15%
<b>5 (improvement)</b>	13	21.7%
<b>6</b>	12	20%
<b>7</b>	11	18.3%
<b>8</b>	10	16.7%
<b>9</b>	0	0%
<b>10 (extreme improvement)</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

The majority of respondents (21.7%) rated the improvement in their listening skills as a result of using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies as a 5 out of 10, indicating a moderate level of improvement. The next most common ratings were 6 (20%) and 7 (18.3%), suggesting that a significant portion of respondents experienced a noticeable improvement in their listening skills. However, a considerable number of respondents also rated the improvement as a 4 (15%) or lower, with 5% rating it as a 2 and 3.3% rating it as a 3. It is important to note that no respondents reported "No Improvement" (rating of 1) or an "extreme

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improvement" (rating of 9 or 10) the data suggests that while critical thinking and problem-solving strategies can enhance listening skills, the degree of improvement varies among individuals. It may be due to strategies used to improve listening skills might have varied among respondents. Some might have focused on active listening, while others might have emphasized different techniques such as asking questions, breaking down problems, or managing emotions. The effectiveness of these strategies could have influenced the perceived improvement.

**Q5:** On a scale from 1 to 10, rate the improvement in your reading skills as a result of using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies.

**Table 5.**

*Perceived Improvement in reading skill*

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>1 (No Improvement)</b>	5	8.3%
<b>2</b>	6	10%
<b>3</b>	0	0%
<b>4</b>	6	10%
<b>5 (improvement)</b>	12	20%
<b>6</b>	21	35%
<b>7</b>	10	16.7%
<b>8</b>	0	0%
<b>9</b>	0	0%
<b>10 (extreme improvement)</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

The most common rating for the improvement in reading skills as a result of using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies was 6 out of 10, with 35% of respondents

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selecting this option. The next most frequent ratings were 5 (20%) and 7 (16.7%), indicating that a significant portion of respondents experienced a noticeable improvement in their reading skills. However, a considerable number of respondents also rated the improvement as a 1 (8.3%), 2 (10%), or 4 (10%), suggesting that some individuals did not perceive significant improvement or even experienced no improvement at all. It is important to note that no respondents rated the improvement as a 3, 8, 9, or 10, indicating that no one reported "extreme improvement" in their reading skills.

The data suggests that while critical thinking and problem-solving strategies can enhance reading skills, the degree of improvement varies among individuals. Factors such as fluctuation in using critical reading in classroom may contribute to the variation in the improvement in reading skills among the students.

**Q6:** On a scale from 1 to 10, rate the improvement in your writing skills as a result of using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies.

**Table 6.**

*Perceived Improvement in writing skill*

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
<b>1 (No Improvement)</b>	0	0%
<b>2</b>	2	3.3
<b>3</b>	6	10%
<b>4</b>	9	15%
<b>5 (improvement)</b>	12	20%
<b>6</b>	21	35%
<b>7</b>	10	16.7%
<b>8</b>	0	0%
<b>9</b>	0	0%
<b>10 (extreme improvement)</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

The most common rating for the improvement in writing skills as a result of using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies was 6 out of 10, with 35% of respondents

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selecting this option. The next most frequent ratings were 5 (20%) and 7 (16.7%), indicating that a significant portion of respondents experienced a noticeable improvement in their writing skills. The rating of 4 (15%) suggests that a substantial number of respondents perceived a moderate improvement in their writing skills. The rating of 3 (10%) indicates that a smaller but still significant number of respondents experienced a slight improvement in their writing skills. The absence of any respondents rating the improvement as a 1 (No Improvement) suggests that the strategies employed were effective in improving writing skills for most individuals. The absence of any respondents rating the improvement as an 8, 9, or 10 (Extreme Improvement) suggests that while the strategies were effective, they did not lead to a dramatic or transformative change in writing skills for any individual.

### Section three: Perceived Effectiveness of Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

Q7: Do you believe critical thinking skills and problem-solving strategies are essential for effective communication in English?

**Table 7.**

*Perceived Effectiveness of Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	60	100%
<b>No</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

All 60 students believed that critical thinking skills and problem-solving strategies are essential for effective communication in English, highlighting the importance of these skills in their language learning journey. It indicates that they have a clear understanding of the benefits that critical thinking and problem-solving bring to their communication competence and skills



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it may be due to positive experiences or observations of the benefits of applying these strategies.

**Q8:** Do you feel that critical thinking and problem-solving strategies have positively affected your overall English language proficiency?

**Table 8.**

*Positive effect on overall English proficiency*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	60	100%
<b>No</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

Similarly, all 60 students felt that critical thinking and problem-solving strategies have positively affected their overall English language proficiency, reinforcing the perceived value of these strategies because they experience positively the outcomes of the integration.

#### **Section four: Classroom Environment**

**Q9:** Do you feel your classroom environment helps you in practicing critical thinking and problem-solving skills in English?

**Table 9.**

*Classroom environment helps in practicing critical thinking and problem-solving skills*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	23	38.3%
<b>No</b>	13	21.7%
<b>Not sure</b>	24	40%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

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The table shows that 38.3% of respondents (23 out of 60) feel that their classroom environment helps them practice critical thinking and problem-solving skills in English. However, a significant portion of respondents 21.7% (13 out of 60) does not feel that their classroom environment is conducive to practicing these skills. Additionally, a large percentage of respondents 40% or (24 out of 60) are unsure about the impact of their classroom environment on their ability to practice critical thinking and problem-solving in English. The results suggest that while some students perceive their classroom environment as supportive of critical thinking and problem-solving in English, a considerable number of students either feel that their classroom environment is not helpful or are uncertain about its impact. This could be due to various factors, such as variations in teaching methods, classroom activities, and instructional approaches across different classrooms, lack of explicit focus on integrating critical thinking and problem-solving activities into language learning tasks, Insufficient opportunities or encouragement for students to engage in these types of activities.

**Q10:** Do you feel encouraged to participate in critical thinking activities and problem-solving tasks during English classes?

**Table 10.**

*Encouragement to participate in critical thinking activities and problem-solving tasks*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	24	40%
<b>No</b>	11	18.3%
<b>Sometimes</b>	25	41.7%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

The table shows that 40% of respondents (24 out of 60) feel encouraged to participate in critical thinking activities and problem-solving tasks during English classes. However, a

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significant portion of respondents 18.3% (11 out of 60) does not feel encouraged to engage in these activities. Additionally, a large percentage of respondents 41.7% (25 out of 60) feel that they are only sometimes encouraged to participate in critical thinking and problem-solving tasks during English classes. The results suggest that while some students perceive their English classes as supportive of critical thinking and problem-solving, a considerable number of students either feel discouraged from engaging in these activities or experience inconsistent encouragement. This could be due to various factors, such as classroom dynamics or student factors (e.g., confidence, motivation, language proficiency) that influence participation and limited opportunities or variety in the critical thinking and problem-solving tasks or activities provided.

**Section 5: Challenges**

**Q11:** Select the most challenge (s) do you encounter when trying to apply critical thinking and problem-solving strategies in your English language learning?

**Table 11.**

*Challenges faced in applying critical thinking and problem-solving strategies in EFL*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of motivation	24	40%
Lack of guidance from the teacher	8	13.3
Limited Resources	4	6.7%
Lack of critical thinking skills	18	30%
Lack of problem-solving skills	6	10%
All of above	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

The most significant challenge, reported by 40% of the respondents (24 out of 60) is lack of motivation identifying it as a significant issue. Lack of critical thinking skills is the second biggest challenge, with 30% of respondents (18 out of 60), indicating a substantial barrier to effective learning. Additionally, 13.3% of participants expressed concerns about the lack of guidance from teachers, underscoring the pivotal role teacher's play in fostering student engagement and skill development. Notably, 10% of respondents identified a deficiency in problem-solving skills as a challenge, highlighting the importance of improving this essential competency in student's EFL learning. Interestingly, limited resources emerged as the least reported challenge, with only 6.7% of respondents indicating its significance.

### **Analysis of the Findings**

The ultimate goal of the current research is to investigate the effectiveness of integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies in enhancing EFL communication skills among first-year students at UMK Biskra. Thus, we opted for one data collection tools, which is a questionnaire for learners. The data provided by this tool are summarized in the following points.

To start with, the engagement with critical thinking and problem-solving

A majority of students reported only sometimes consciously applying critical thinking during language learning activities, indicating a moderate level of engagement. Similarly, while some students consistently integrated problem-solving strategies, a considerable portion did so infrequently or rarely.

In terms of perceived improvements, most students experienced moderate gains in their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills as a result of using these strategies. However, a

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notable number of students reported little to no improvement, suggesting varying degrees of effectiveness.

Interestingly, all students believed that critical thinking and problem-solving strategies are essential for English proficiency and have positively affected their overall language skills. This belief highlights the value students place on these higher-order thinking abilities.

Moreover, the data also reveals potential barriers in the classroom environment. Only a small percentage of students felt that their classrooms actively supported the practice of critical thinking and problem-solving in English. Many students felt either unsupported or inconsistently encouraged to participate in such activities.

In addition, the most significant challenges reported by students were lack of motivation, lack of critical thinking skills, and lack of guidance from teachers. These factors likely contribute to the inconsistent application and perceived effectiveness of the strategies.

### **Limitation of the study**

The data collected through questionnaires on self-reporting from participants, which may introduce bias or inaccuracies due to factors such as social desirability or memory recall. The data collected from first year students in university of UMK Biskra as result the findings cannot be generalized to other levels and universities. The study operates within certain time and non-expected circumstances (stress of work, decrease of motivation, lack of transportation means) were a barrier to manage time for the paper which limited the study and forced us to omit the interview with the teachers

**Conclusion**

Through the present chapter, we presented the methodology that was adopted for the interpretation and analysis of the data. The data was collected through semi-structured questionnaire. In this chapter, a detailed quantitative description and statistical analysis of the data were presented. Starting from describing the instrument used to collect the data, presenting the answers of the respondents, analyzing the results, and lastly providing an interpretation of the findings.

Finally, the results obtained from the questionnaire discussed under the title “Analysis of the Findings”. Thus, the current chapter is an attempt to draw conclusions of the case under investigation. The research findings lead us to infer that the results obtained confirm the proposed research hypothesis about integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies may enhance EFL communication skills among first-year students at UMK Biskra. Challenges and barriers highlight the need for a more consistent and supportive approach to implementing these strategies in the classroom to get more significant improvement in EFL communicative skills.

# **General conclusion**

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In summary, this research aims to investigate the effectiveness of integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to improve EFL communication skills. The primary objective of this study is to investigate research questions in order to validate our research hypothesis, which asserts integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies may enhance EFL communication skills among first-year students in UMK Biskra. In general, the study is composed of three key chapters; the first two chapters are dedicated to the theoretical part of this study, while the last chapter acts for the fieldwork. Through the first chapter, we tried to bring to light the most important elements critical thinking and problem-solving strategies initially, we presented a definition of critical thinking and its significant in language learning, then we mention the role and challenges of critical thinking in EFL classroom. Moreover, we introduce theoretical frameworks and models of critical thinking, and the relationship between critical thinking and problem solving. Later within this chapter, we define problem solving, view its role in language learning moving to, the role of the teacher, challenges, and recommendation in problem solving classroom. Furthermore, we present the process, models and framework of problem solving. As for the second chapter, it dealt the interplay between critical thinking and EFL communicative skills mentioning the key component of communication skills, the role of critical thinking skills in EFL communicative skills. Moreover, we view the benefits and outcomes of critical thinking in each communication component. Furthermore, we suggest a hypothetical example improving speaking skills through problem solving process. In the end we mention the benefits of integrating critical thinking and problem solving. The third chapter of this study is devoted the fieldwork section in which we reiterate the methodological procedure used while conducting this research work. That is, it holds the analysis of data that had been collected by the questionnaire. Regarding the results gathered from the previous collecting data method, the finding shows a moderate



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improvement in EFL communicative skills due to integrating critical thinking and problem-solving strategies. This leads us to say that the results confirmed the research hypothesis.

# **Recommendations**

**Recommendations**

Based on the finding and conclusions assembled out of this study the following recommendations were made for student and teachers.

**Recommandations for Students:**

1. **Engage Actively:** Actively participate in problem-solving activities, ask questions, and explore different viewpoints to enhance critical thinking skills.
2. **Develop Analytical Skills:** Analyze and evaluate topics thoroughly, think deeply about issues, and choose topics for discussion to improve speaking skills.
3. **Utilize Inquiry-Based Learning:** Embrace inquiry-based learning to explore, analyze, and evaluate information independently, fostering creativity and critical thinking.
4. **Collaborate and Communicate:** Collaborate with peers, exchange ideas, and communicate effectively to collectively find solutions to language-related problems.
5. **Reflect and Adapt:** Reflect on feedback received, adapt strategies when necessary, and be open to adjusting your stance based on new information.

**Recommandations for Teachers:**

1. **Create Engaging Tasks:** Design tasks that align with students' needs and interests, providing real-life situations that motivate students to invest time and energy into problem-solving.
2. **Provide Support and Guidance:** Offer detailed help, scaffold the problem-solving process, and provide clear instructions, modeling strategies, and guidance when students face difficulties.
3. **Assess and Evaluate:** Assess students' problem-solving abilities, provide constructive feedback, and highlight areas for improvement to support their growth.

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4. **Foster a Supportive Environment:** Create a supportive and stimulating classroom environment where students feel encouraged to take risks, think creatively, and collaborate with peers.
5. **Incorporate Technology:** Leverage technology, such as online platforms, to enhance problem-solving opportunities, facilitate collaboration, and provide access to a wide range of resources for language challenges.

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# Appendices

## Appendices A. Student's Questionnaire

*University Mohamed Kheider of Biskra*  
*Faculty of Letters and Languages*  
*Department of English and Literature*

### Questionnaire for students

Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are fundamental aspects of language learning, especially in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). These skills enable learners to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and creatively solve problems, all of which are crucial for effective communication in English. As part of ongoing efforts to enhance English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning environments, and improve communicative skills among students, the given handed questionnaire aims to gather valuable insights into the integration of critical thinking and problem-solving. This questionnaire aims to assess your engagement as EFL students with critical thinking and problem-solving strategies in your English language learning journey, as well as their perceived impact on your communication skills. Your feedback will provide us valuable insights into the integration of these skills into EFL learning programs and strategies in EFL teaching. Your responses will be anonymous and only be used for research.

Thank you for your contribution.

#### I. Engagement with Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

1. How often do you consciously apply critical thinking skills during your English language learning activities? (Tick one option).
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
  - Always
2. How frequently do you integrate problem-solving strategies into your English language learning routine? (Tick the option).
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
  - Always

## II. Perceived Improvement in Communication Skills

3. On a scale from 1 to 10, rate the improvement in your speaking skills as a result of using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies. (Tick the option).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No								extreme	
Improvement								Improvement	

4. On a scale from 1 to 10, rate the improvement in your listening skills as a result of using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies. (Tick the option).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No								extreme	
Improvement								Improvement	

5. On a scale from 1 to 10, rate the improvement in your reading skills as a result of using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies. (Tick the option).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No								extreme	
Improvement								Improvement	

6. On a scale from 1 to 10, rate the improvement in your writing skills as a result of using critical thinking and problem-solving strategies. (Tick the option).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No								extreme	
Improvement								Improvement	

### III. Perceived Effectiveness of Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

7. Do you believe critical thinking skills and problem-solving strategies are essential for effective communication in English? (Tick the option).

- Yes
- No

8. Do you feel that critical thinking and problem-solving strategies have positively affected your overall English language proficiency? (Tick the option).

- Yes
- No

### IV. Classroom Environment

9. Do you feel your classroom environment helps you in practicing critical thinking and problem-solving skills in English? (Tick the option).

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

10. Do you feel encouraged to participate in critical thinking activities and problem-solving tasks during English classes? (Tick the option).

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

### V. Challenges

11. Select the most challenge (s) do you encounter when trying to apply critical thinking and problem-solving strategies in your English language learning? (Tick one option)

- Lack of motivation
- Lack of guidance from the teacher
- Limited Resources
- Lack of critical thinking skills
- Lack of problem-solving skills
- All of above

### الملخص

جرت الدراسة تحقيقاً حول فعالية دمج استراتيجيات التفكير النقدي وحل المشكلات لتحسين مهارات التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بين طلاب السنة الأولى في جامعة بسكرة. تعتمد الدراسة تصميماً بحثياً كمياً باستخدام استبيان مغلق لجمع البيانات حول انخراط الطلاب في هذه الاستراتيجيات، وتأثيرها المتوقع على مهارات التواصل، والتحديات التي تواجهها في تطبيقها. تتضمن عينة الدراسة 683 طالباً في السنة الأولى من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، تم اختيار عينة عشوائية من 60 طالباً. تهدف النتائج إلى توفير أساليب تدريس مبنية على الأدلة لمساعدة في تطوير مهارات التواصل للطلاب بشكل فعال. تتمحور أسئلة البحث حول تأثير استراتيجيات التفكير النقدي وحل المشكلات على مهارات التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية، وتصورات الطلاب حول دمج هذه الاستراتيجيات، والتحديات التي تواجهها في تطبيقها. تفترض الدراسة أن دمج استراتيجيات التفكير النقدي وحل المشكلات قد يعزز مهارات التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية بين طلاب السنة الأولى. تشمل أهداف البحث تقييم مشاركة الطلاب في هذه الاستراتيجيات، وتقييم تأثيرها المتصور على مهارات التواصل، واستقصاء دور البيئة الصفية في تعزيز ممارستها، وتحديد التحديات التي تواجهها في تطبيقها. الدراسة محدودة بسبب التحيزات المحتملة في بيانات الإبلاغ الذاتي لأنها تركز على طلاب السنة الأولى في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة. تتألف الأطروحة من جزئين رئيسيين: قسم نظري يستكشف التفكير النقدي وحل المشكلات ومهارات التواصل، وقسم تجريبي يحلل بيانات الاستبيان. وأظهرت الدراسة أن دمج استراتيجيات التفكير النقدي وحل المشكلات أدى إلى تحسن متوسط في مهارات التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية بين طلاب السنة الأولى في جامعة بسكرة. هذه النتيجة تؤكد فرضية البحث بأن هذه الاستراتيجيات يمكن أن تعزز مهارات التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التفكير النقدي وحل المشكلات، استراتيجيات التفكير، مهارات التواصل، السنة الأولى، جامعة بسكرة