

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
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**Effects of Google Meet as an Online Application on Pupils'
Critical Thinking and Communicative Competencies: Case of
Second Year EFL Pupils at 'Maghni Sandid Mohamed
Secondary School' in Ain-Temouchent**

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for a
Master's Degree in Didactics and Applied Languages*

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Academic Year: 2023/2024

Dedications

To my wise father, my strong mother and ambitious sister,

To my number ten,

To my cats,

To my little Kawther,

To my dear Safaa and Halima,

And finally, to my second country, Palestine.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to express my gratitude to my dear supervisor **Dr. Chahrazed HAMZAOU**I without whom this humble study would not have been completed. Her guidance when I was lost, her kindness when I was harsh on myself and her patience inspired me to be a better learner and researcher in the future.

I would also like to thank the members of the jury **Dr. Boualem BENGHALEM**, **Dr. Chahrazed HAMZAOU**I and **Dr. Amel MEBARKI** for devoting their precious time in reading and examining this research work.

Last but not least, special thanks go to all the pupils and teachers who participated without hesitation in this research work.

Abstract

The demand of e-learning has dramatically increased in the last few years since it is believed to supply learners with skills beyond what the traditional classroom offers, especially in EFL classrooms where the focus is put on communicative and critical thinking abilities. This research work aims to test the effect of online learning -through Google Meet platform- on pupils' critical thinking and communicative abilities in the Algerian secondary education taking into account the potential obstacles that teachers and pupils may face. It also seeks to investigate how Google Meet can effectively be implemented to assure a successful integration of online learning and enhance pupils' critical thinking and communicative competencies. To reach this aim, a total number of 41 pupils and two English teachers participated in this study. A triangulation of research instruments encompassing an online classroom observation, an interview and a questionnaire were used. The collected data were analysed through the mixed-methods approach. Therefore, the results indicated that Google Meet as an online application can be implemented and can also intensify the pupils' critical thinking and communicative abilities depending on several measurements, among them the teacher's digital skills and the in-class reinforcement. Moreover, its future establishment requires serious pedagogical, cultural and technological considerations.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA: Algerian Arabic

BL: Blended Learning

CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning

CBA: Competency-Based Approach

CC: Communicative Competencies

CLT: Communicative-Language Teaching Approach

CMC: Computer-Mediated Communication

CT: Critical Thinking

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: French Language

F2F: Face-to-face

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

LMS: Learning Management Systems

MSA: Modern Standard Arabic

PLATO: Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operation

TBLT: Task-Based Language Teaching Approach

TL: Traditional Learning

UIS: Unit Introductory Sheet

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General Introduction

1. Background of the study

E-learning is seen as a great opportunity to enhance various skills beyond those established in a traditional classroom. These skills are taught and learnt through different computer mediated communication tools, such as Google Meet, Zoom, Skype, and so on. Considering the Algerian situation, seizing the opportunity of online learning have been stressed by different universities where students are profiting from courses taught online and generalising this opportunity to all learners is a great step towards equitable accessibility and learning enrichment so that they acquire not only digital literacy skills but also interpersonal skills.

Developing the digital literacy competency alongside communicative abilities and critical thinking skills is crucial for learners, particularly because critical thinking and communicative competencies are considered as two sides of the same coin. So, they provide them with lifelong-skills that help them academically and professionally leading to personal and societal achievements.

2. Aims of the Study

This study aims to test the extent to which Google Meet can offer the opportunity to support and develop pupils' thinking and communicative skills within the Algerian secondary education. It also seeks to unveil the obstacles that both teachers and pupils may face during and after this experience. Additionally, this research attempts to find out what procedures can be undertaken to successfully implement online learning to teach critical

thinking and communicative abilities, alongside developing the digital competency, awareness and familiarity of e-learning for teachers and pupils.

3. Statement of the Problem

Whether it is in the health sector, commerce, media or education, technology seems to be helpful in terms of facility, equity, quality and speed. In the case of the Algerian educational system, e-learning is mostly used in universities, however, its role is neglected in the secondary education. Additionally, within the Algerian secondary education, critical thinking and communication are poorly present in the EFL classroom. In fact, the majority of pupils believe that education is achieved when learning content by heart, whereas teachers do not have enough time to cover these skills.

This can be the result of the overloaded curriculum, the little awareness paid to these skills or even the unawareness of technology benefits (active participation, innovative collaboration, diverse interaction, skills development, and so on). Therefore, we suggest investigating on the role of Google Meet in enhancing pupils' critical thinking and communicative competence in secondary schools.

4. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses stem from the above-mentioned problem:

RQ1: To what extent can Google Meet support and affect EFL pupils' critical thinking and communicative competencies in secondary schools?

RQ2: How can Google Meet be effectively implemented to enhance EFL pupils' critical thinking and communicative competencies?

H1: Google Meet can support and impact EFL pupils' critical thinking and communicative abilities to some extent for, it complements teaching and creates an interactive environment. Yet, its success may face some obstacles including the inequity of technological devices and the inadequate teacher's methodology to teach these skills online.

H2: E-learning through Google Meet can be effectively implemented in secondary schools by creating online communicative courses, designing activities that target EFL learners' critical thinking and communicative skills, alongside the provision of technological devices.

5. Research Methodology

Due to the nature of this exploratory research, we opted for a case study research design type to explore the helpfulness of Google Meet in developing pupils' higher order thinking skills and communicative abilities as well as investigating the probable obstacles that may hamper a successful implementation of online learning in the Algerian secondary education. We opted for a triangulation of research instruments, which includes an online classroom observation, an interview and a questionnaire. Therefore, through a mixed-methods approach we analysed data qualitatively and quantitatively.

We relied mainly on the classroom observation for, the purpose was to put the idea of online learning into practice. We also conducted a structured interview with two English teachers and a questionnaire was administered to pupils who participated in the online experiment to collect feedback.

7. Significance of the study

This research work is significant for a future application of e-learning in the Algerian secondary education. It may benefit all teachers, pupils, and future researchers who wish to look at this matter, from others perspectives, aiming at serving the society. It can also help in revealing other obstacles and challenges, and finding solutions to allow the growth, acceptance and fruitful inclusion of e-learning in the Algerian Secondary Education.

9. Structure of the Study

This study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents various notions related to e-learning; it tackles its historical background, put emphasis on the role of computer-mediated communication and different modes of learning in addition to exhibiting the challenges of e-learning in the Algerian educational system. Similarly, the second chapter system is devoted to the definition of different concepts related to critical thinking and communicative competencies aiming at shedding light on their significance in the EFL classroom. The third chapter presents the research methodology followed in this study such as establishing the research design, identifying the sampling type and describing purposefully the instruments used (the classroom observation, the interview and the questionnaire). Then, the chapter analyses the collected data through a mixed-methods approach. Finally, the last chapter provides an interpretation of these data.

Chapter I

E-learning and Education

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1.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to e-learning and its relation to education. It provides an overview on the historical background of e-learning, then it defines the concept of e-learning according to different scholars' views. Afterwards, it highlights the significance of computer-mediated communication in education. Then, it offers a distinction between online learning and offline learning before discussing the blended learning mode. In addition to that, it highlights the teacher's roles in delivering online lessons and in managing online classrooms while focussing on the use of Google Meet as the main tool. Finally, it discusses and demonstrates the challenges of e-learning in the Algerian educational system.

1.2. E-Learning: A Historical Background

We are living in the 21st century, where technology has become a tool that promotes the development, enrichment and success of different sectors in any given country (economy, science, education, media, and so on). Education for example has gone through major changes and adjustments to adapt to a new version of teaching/learning process and give birth to what is commonly known as e-learning.

The idea of e-learning began in the 1840 with Sir Issaac Pitman and his Shorthand technique, which involves sending written assignments to his students by mail then his students reply by mail providing answers to the assignments. This technique was known to be the first distance course (Verduin & Clark, 1991, as cited in Niaz et al., 2021). And based on this corresponding model of schooling, Anna Eliot Ticknor (1873) found a society which pioneered the study at home in Boston and Massachusetts. This was known by Kentnor (2015) as a form of distance education where students and their teacher were physically separated; yet, this approach to teaching/learning was criticised simply because it did not support the two-way communication course (Verduin & Clark, 1991, as cited in Niaz et al., 2021).

Following the innovative creation of both Sidney Pressey's machine for testing students (1920) and Skinner's teaching machine (1954), Bezhovski and Poorani (2016) explain that because of these inventions, institutions have the ability to manage programmed instructions for their students. In fact, in 1925, the first "radio course" started in Iowa University of United States with a total of five credit hours (Moore & Kearsley, 2005, as

cited in Niaz et al., 2021). So, 176 radio stations were specifically made to meet educational needs and objectives (Schlosser & Simonson, 2010, as cited in Niaz et al., 2021).

After that and by introducing the audio system to instructional delivery of lectures, televisions and phones were used as tools to distance learning in the mid-1930s at Iowa University (Casey, 2008, as cited in Niaz et al., 2021) which led to the emergence and acceptance of “Tele-Courses” (Moore & Kearsley, 2005, as cited in Niaz et al., 2021). According to Harasim (2006, p. 60) this is more of a “communication revolution” because it started by written mails with no two-way communication; to the use of audio systems through phones and televisions; to reach the Internet, Mailing and World Wide Web.

Moving on through time, in the early 1960s, Dr Don Bitzer created the first based computer training programme called *Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operation* (PLATO). Basically, PLATO aimed at delivering online courses to students. Woolley (1994) advocates that PLATO is a system that foreshadowed online forums and message boards, email and instant messaging, chat rooms and remote screen sharing in addition to multiplayer games. Put simply, it is “the world’s first online community” (as cited in Niaz et al., 2021, p. 139). PLATO is a time-shared computer system that made it possible for other forms of e-learning to emerge such as CALL, *Computer Assisted Language Learning* in 1960s. CALL is simply defined by Niaz et al. (2021) as the use of any technological application targeting the teaching learning process.

With the emergence of *Delphi System*, a computer conferencing system by Murray Turoff in 1971, videoconferencing was made accessible and eventually the New Jersey Institute of Technology launched the computer mediated technology which was later on referred to as *Virtual Classroom* (Niaz et al., 2021). So, it enabled students to attend online classes and benefit from courseware¹. Moreover, the arrival of *Personal Computers* (Pcs) in the 1980s motivated the online learning of different skills and subjects just from home and thus, in 1989, the University of Phoenix introduced the first online university degree programme (Niaz et al., 2021).

Consequently, and after the expansion of the Internet and web-based training (WBT), the *Learning Management Systems* (LMS) was developed. LMS is described as “online technologies for learning, management and delivery of course material” (Sabharwal et al.

¹ It is an educational material such as lessons, assessments or activities delivered online.

2018; Turnbull, Chugh, & Lcuk, 2020, as cited in Niaz et al., 2021, p. 141). The first web based LMS was called *Cecil* and was created in 1996. It aimed at organising documents, delivering and recording online course (Sheridan, Gardner & White, 2001, as cited in Niaz et al., 2021). LMS was then developed in 2001 by Martin Dougiamas into the so-called *Moodle*.

In addition to what Cecil provided, Moodle equipped students and teachers with the ability to host and deliver learning content, web conferencing, chat forums, learning games, blogs, grading ... etc (Niaz et al., 2021). In an attempt to expand the notion of ‘openness in education’, MOOCs was introduced in 2008 and became a popular learning method to promote communicative and self-learning because of its ability to provide 24 access of online content to a large number of students (Cheikh, 2020).

E-learning has gone through major changes starting from simple written mails to taking advantage of radio broadcasts and time-shared computer systems, moving on to launching web-based learning system and computer conferencing systems. These global achievements made learning accessible, affordable and unlimited to students and teachers worldwide while at the same time taking into account new ways to instruct, new approaches to adopt and new skills that both teachers and students should acquire.

1.3. Definition of E-learning

The coming of e-learning has reshaped the route of education swiftly since it has brought with it new perspectives on how to teach and how to collect knowledge even how to share it, interpret it, store it and display it. Many scholars and researchers in the field of education and technology defined what is meant by e-learning and generally speaking, the term is divided into: ‘E’ which stands for electronic whereas ‘learning’ is commonly known as the process by which a person (usually a learner) collects information/knowledge about a subject.

Supporting this idea, Koohang and Harman (2005, p. 77) defined e-learning as “the delivery of education (all activities relevant to instructing, teaching, and learning) through various electronic media”. The term ‘electronic media’, here, refers to the use of different devices that can store and distribute information (personal computers, smartphones, TV, radio, interactive white boards, and so on) for the sake of supporting and enriching the teaching/learning process.

Moreover, Chitra and Raj (2018) explained that e-learning can also be utilised synchronously or asynchronously via either networked computers or standalone computers and other devices. Ellis and Allen (2004) expanded the definition of e-learning, summarised the previous definitions and state that:

E-learning covers a wide set of applications and processes, such as Web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration. It includes the delivery of content via Internet, intranet/extranet (LAN/ WAN), audio- and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive TV, and CD-ROM. (as cited in Bouhezam, 2021, p. 22)

What interests us mostly, is how fast technology is growing to the point of implementing new approaches to teaching and learning. This changed the way we look at education for, now it became an offered experience to never be forgotten. For instance, the power that online or virtual classrooms has in creating a balance between what is expected to be learnt face to face, and what is discovered outside of the traditional classroom to overcome the limitations and expand the teaching and learning potentials.

The presented definitions have exhibited broad and specific definitions of what is meant by e-learning. Yet, it is important to have a look at some platforms through which e-learning occur.

1.4. Platforms Related to E-learning

E-learning has gained popularity when Covid19 pandemic started to spear viciously. Therefore, it was impossible for stakeholders to close all schools and institutions and postpone the continuity of the teaching and learning process. Instead, they opted for another solution which was more convenient until learners were able to return to their traditional seats. To do so, different countries chose to use several platforms and applications that serve education. These platforms/applications were mainly Zoom, Google Meet and Google Classroom.

Following this belief, several researches have been conducted on the efficiency of these technological tools at different educational levels, one of them is Zoom. The Zoom

Support website defined this platform as “a communications platform that allows users to connect with video, audio, phone, and chat”. So, it allows students to interact with their classmates and teachers, teachers to share different materials (pictures, videos and documents) as well as tracking the students’ progress through audio-visual conferencing.

At the level of primary school, Syarip et al. (2022) analysed the effectiveness of using the Zoom Meeting application to online learning in Indonesia. The results showed that pupils had a positive attitude towards Zoom Meeting application, this is due to several reasons (1) the learning environment, (2) students’ interaction, (3) access and management of Zoom classes. Yet the only problem the students faced was the internet quota that was running out quickly (p. 567).

In addition to this, Palupi and Raharjo (2020) argued that Zoom is an efficient tool for students at the tertiary level for, it supports virtual communication and saves the quota of the internet, but it does not provide the classroom with sufficient functions such as providing/correcting assessments and scheduling future lessons like Google Classroom can, additionally it can only be used for 40 minutes freely and it is easily hacked.

Another tool that supports the free access to virtual classroom, is Google Meet. It is an online videoconferencing application that equips its users with a simple and easy way to manage infrastructure that supports the following: live videoconferencing, synchronous chat, the ability to use subtitles and the ability to listen without breaks, which is crucial for learners with special needs mainly for the deaf, mute and blind learners. The conference is able to join one hundred people with no time limit, offering an accessibility to share screens, pictures, documents, videos, and so on.

Various researches have been conducted upon the efficacy of Google Meet as a teaching/learning tool. According to Setyawan et al. (2020, p. 3933), using Google Meet as a learning strategy in teaching creates a “unique learning experience to achieve learning goals such as building knowledge and student learning outcomes while learning from home”. In the same vein, Benmansour (2022) said that it strengthens the teacher-learner, learner-teacher interaction, communication and motivation to pursue the course.

From their part, Pedroso et al. (2022) believed that despite some uncontrolled occurred circumstances, Google Meet remains a tool that backed up most of the learning

process chiefly during the covid19 wave. Therefore, conducting further researches and experiments will help in providing solutions for the issues encountered by teachers and learners when using Google Meet, Zoom or any other platform in order to reach great results and better fulfil the learners' needs especially when covid19 is no more a menace to the teaching/learning process and e-learning is seen as a complementary to traditional learning.

Actually, in the Algerian higher education sector, it seems that a certain balance between face-to-face (hereafter, F2F) and online learning is burgeoning, especially with the implementation of online learning regarding some transversal and discovery unities. This represents an important step, which can be studied, as to whether it can be generalised in all of the rest of the educational levels or not, taking into consideration the fact that online learning can bring fruitful outcomes especially when it comes to developing the communicative skills of the learners.

1.5. Computer-Mediated Communication and the English Language

The development of technology has affected the educational sector as any other sector largely. Students and teachers can now communicate and learn via a device (computers or smartphones) from different locations at the same time. This idea is embodied within the computer-mediated communication (CMC) field of research.

CMC is a branch of a larger field of study known as Computer Assisted language Learning (CALL). The term CMC was coined by Hiltz and Turoff (1985, as cited in Loughraieb, 2022) and was defined originally by December (1996) as any process that people utilise to create, exchange, and perceive information via telecommunication systems to send, receive and decode messages. Similarly, Luppisini (2007) defined CMC as "communications, mediated by interconnected computers, between individuals or groups separated in space and/or time" (p. 142). It is important to mention that, CMC does not have a specific definition for, the focus changed from the tool itself (for example the computer) to the role it provides (the interaction); that is why, CMC in relation to language teaching and learning was defined by Kern & Warschauer (2000, as cited in Loughraieb, 2022, p. 21) as process that allows users and speakers to communicate with each other using the target language through a networked access.

Kuo and Wible (2001), on their part, explicated that CMC is a “research field that explores the social, communicative and linguistic impact of communication technologies, which have continually evolved in connection with the use of computer networks (esp. the Internet)” (cited in Loughraieb, 2022, p. 21). So, from these definitions, we can understand that CMC is a research field that targets the innovative use of technology for communication purposes.

Communicating using CMC takes place synchronously and asynchronously, meaning that it is divided into two different modes. Synchronous CMC, from the one hand, is described by Lee (2009) as an instantaneous online communication system via internet and the use of a computer that gathers different functions from text, audio and video function to lead to a communication between speakers. Synchronous CMC examples include mainly videoconferencing platforms that function using texts, audios and videos. From the other hand, asynchronous CMC occurs when participants interact, but not in real-time. This claim was supported by Simpson (2006, as cited in Loughraieb, 2022) and validated by Lee (2004) who explained that asynchronous CMC have been used for brainstorming, writing and promoting critical thinking of the participants.

Speaking of the effectiveness of CMC in the EFL (English as a foreign language) classroom, many studies have proven its utility in supporting speaking skills. For example, Repman et al. (2005) investigated the effectiveness of CMC. They concluded that synchronous and asynchronous CMC succeed in supporting interaction and engagement in the online environment. Additionally, Mehr et al. (2013) pursued a research to analyse the effects of synchronous CMC on the Iranian EFL learners’ speaking skill at Islamic Azad University and asserted that synchronous CMC not only increased the learners attention and motivation, but also their language production including accuracy and pronunciation.

1.6. Online Learning vs. Offline Learning

Today with the impact technology has on education, learning appears in different forms mainly online and offline. On the one hand, Online learning refers to any learning that happens through the use of internet, so learners and teachers are in this case physically separated and interaction, instruction, assessment and lesson delivery take place online. On the other hand, offline learning is commonly known as the traditional learning (TL) where

face to face interaction and instruction occur between students and teacher in the same classroom.

However, distinctions between online and offline learning do not only turn around the setting where students learn and teachers teach, because there are some opportunities that online learning offers and offline learning does not and vice versa. For example, in an online lesson the spotlight shifts from the teacher to the learner, for the simple reason that TL focuses more on the teacher-based system where the teacher talks more and students less, so even if F2F interaction occurs more in the traditional classroom, there is no real interaction between teacher and learners (Bouhezam, 2021, pp. 34-35). To state matters explicitly, the following table, adapted from Bouhezam (2021), highlights the aspects where online learning and offline learning differ. These aspects are presented as follows:

Table 1.1 Difference Between Online and Offline Learning (Adapted from Bouhezam, 2021, p. 35)

| Aspects | Offline learning | Online learning |
|---|---|---|
| Classroom discussion | The teacher talks more than the students. | Students talk as much as or even more than the teacher. |
| Learning process | It involves the participation of the whole classroom. | It takes place in groups or on the level of individuals. |
| The subject matter | Lectures are derived from a planned curriculum. | Students participate in determining the lectures. |
| The emphasis in the learning process | The focus is on finishing the curriculum on time while neglecting problem solving and an inquiry-based education. | The subject matter is richer and is connected to the real world. It emphasises the “how?” over the “what?” (Bencheva, 2010, p. 64). |

As presented in the table above, it is noticeable that offline learning and online learning have their pros and cons. On the one hand, the TL seems to involve the whole classroom in the learning process; yet, teaching higher-order thinking skills (e.g., critical

thinking, problem-solving, analysing, evaluating and so on), employing an inquiry-based approach² as well as providing more opportunities to students' talking time seem to be left behind because of the overloaded curriculum. On the other hand, online learning provides more freedom from students to choose what they want to study/learn and more opportunities for them to communicate but may lack in supporting inclusiveness. Interestingly, online learning shifts the focus of the lesson's content from the 'what' to the 'how' i.e., in an EFL classroom the focus shifts from knowing what the language encompasses to understanding how to use the language in real life situations.

When it comes to cost-effectiveness of online and offline learning, Bartley and Golek (2004, as cited in Kaymak et al., 2021) explained that online learning is time convenient for, students are not required to travel from one location to another in order to attend the lessons. Moreover, Dhawan (2020) argued that although human touch and communication is lost specially during the COVID-19 era, EdTech can be seen as an opportunity to develop online learning and to offer better learning conditions in the future because the younger generation understands and knows much more about online education resources than the older generation does (Margaryan et al., 2011, as cited in Kaymak et al., 2021).

In contrast to what Dhawan (2020) mentioned, Damayanti and Rachmah (2020) exposed in their research on the effectiveness of online vs. offline learning, that students preferred largely offline than online learning because they can communicate more, they can concentrate on the lesson's content better and even the teacher can analyse if the students do not understand the lesson. Additionally, and compared to offline learning, Arkorful and Abaidoo (2014) explained that online assessments may affect the lawfulness of the activities because of different actions like cheating and plagiarism. Moreover, motivation can be a great disadvantage to online learning which can lead learners to choose offline learning. This disadvantage is, according to Sarkar (2012), self-motivation, i.e., students who lack self-motivation and autonomy will fail. And this reduced motivation is one of the results of isolation effect while learning online (Johnson et al., 2008)

² It is a system of learning that supports the development of students' problem solving and critical skills (Maxwell, Lambeth, & Cox, 2015).

Undoubtedly, nothing can replace a F2F interaction, but we cannot deny the help and support online learning has yielded. This claim was supported in the late 20s by Van Dusen (1997) In his book titled '*The virtual campus: Technology and reform in higher education*' where he explained that online learning supports offline learning by providing lecture content that the offline learning cannot. So, online learning can be seen as a support to offline learning. Another key difference between the online and offline classroom is the classroom management.

1.7. Online Classroom Management

Teaching online is a whole process that involves several requirements such as a deep consideration of the curriculum, an effective teacher training and a great skill in managing a virtual classroom. To begin with, it is important to know that the teacher plays a major role in the success or failure of the classroom management for, he is the host of the online classroom and have to use different methods and strategies to create a sophisticated and collaborative environment for his learners. This can be a hard task to accomplish for novice teachers or teachers who do not accept the idea of online teaching at all.

According to Iverson (2003, as cited in Stewart, 2008), classroom management is a preventive activity that leads to reduced number of disciplinary problems. Arends (2007, as cited in Stewart, 2008) reinforces Iverson's claim by asserting that through classroom management (good planning, interesting and relevant lessons as well as an effective teaching) disciplinary problems will be solved.

Managing a classroom can be tough on novice teachers and far easier for experienced ones. This is what Ghateolbahra and Samimi (2020) concluded from their research titled "*Classroom Management Strategies in Online Environment: A Comparative Study on Novice and Experienced Teachers*". They deduced that, in contrast with experienced teachers, novice teachers face several issues while teaching online. These obstacles are: (1) lack of infrastructure, (2) time management, (3) lack of interaction in the classroom and (4) inappropriate use of classroom materials (p. 513). Additionally, Mardiani and Azhar (2021, p. 102) affirm that in a virtual classroom, novice teachers' challenges in managing a classroom are summarised into: (1) Students unreadiness to join the virtual classroom; (2) Internet connexion problems; (3) Restricted time for teaching; (4) Students turning off

camera and sound; (5) Students learning inattentively and (6) Less interaction and inappropriate classroom control.

Following the aforementioned scholars' results, experienced teachers, therefore, know better how to manage time following the curriculum, how to make their students interact and participate in classroom activities and discussions as well as controlling undesired behaviours. Yet, internet connexion can be an issue that both novice and experienced teachers encounter. Moreover, Ghateolbahra and Samimi (2020) report that to be able to manage an online classroom, a teacher should be able to: (1) manage the time of the lesson material, (2) provide quick teacher feedback through a variety of tools, (3) a sense of community, (4) the use of verbal tools, discussion, and group activities. What is worthy of note is how online classroom. can never replace F2F classroom; that is why, online learning should be seen as a support rather than an adopted methodology in education that fully replaces F2F education.

One of the challenges that a teacher -notably the one who is dealing with secondary school pupils- consists in managing the classroom behaviour involving "self-discipline, patience and sincerity during the learning process of the learners" (Biswas & Dey, 2020, p. 4). This behaviour is, unfortunately, noticed in many Algerian secondary schools.

Considering the advantages and disadvantages both online and offline learning have in relation to different aspects, discussing the importance of leveraging the strengths of both of them is essential; hence, leading to a new mode of learning commonly known as blended learning.

1.8. Blended Learning and Education

With the development of the field of technology in relation to education and pedagogy, new modes of learning emerged; one of these modes is called 'blended learning' (hereafter, BL). It is important to mention that in some cases, BL is also referred to as Hybrid learning (Khaldi, 2022; Boutlidja, 2021; Rovai & Jordan, 2004; Shaykina, 2015). This research work uses the term 'blended learning' to refer to the combination between traditional and online learning models to complement the overall learning experience.

Along the same line, Graham (2006) described BL as the convergence between the traditional face to face and computer-mediated learning. Although this definition is the most

commonly known, Marsh (2012, p. 6) argued that “simply mixing information technologies with F2F learning is not sufficient to exploit the potential of blended learning” since it also covers different methods and learning styles. In addition to that, BL should be *complementary*, meaning that for BL to be successful, it is significant to pay attention to the learning outcomes and the students’ needs to then understand how BL can support teaching (Marsh, 2012).

Consequently, BL activities facilitate interaction between (a) learner and learners, (b) learner and his instructor, and (c) learner and the community-based partners (Hollis & Madill, 2006, p. 74). Therefore, blended activities contribute to fostering long-term learning by promoting the skill of discovering information along with developing the interactive skills (Goodyear et al., 2006).

BL supplies learners with opportunities to explore and experience learning from a new angle. This opportunity should be seized by all learners despite their educational level to create a community where communication of knowledge, development of different skills and sense of community are goaled. In this regard, Rovai and Jordan (2004, as cited in Pizzi, 2014, p. 338) explained that “the development of blended courses creates a stronger sense of community for students”. However, teacher and students should understand their role in contributing in online learning through the key perspectives that Hollis and Madill (2006, pp. 74-75) established. These perspectives are cited as follows:

-Key instructor’s perspectives:

1. Effective and efficient communication with students.
2. Appropriate preparation for the online courses’ development.
3. Appropriate training for electronic pedagogy.
4. Support for the transition to online learning.
5. Input into evaluation design and procedures.
6. Clarification of intellectual property and decisions about course ownership.

-Key students’ perspectives:

1. Increased access and great convenience
2. Individual control over scheduling education in line with other life demands.
3. A self-paced approach.

4. The need of reliable technology.
5. Appropriate quantity and type of interaction for learning to occur.
6. Selection of students with characteristics that predispose them to succeed in online courses.

Nonetheless, looking at the fourth aspect in “Key students’ perspectives”, The need of reliable technology can be seen as one of the barriers to BL for, not all students can afford buying a computer-based device or have access to the internet. In addition to that, Mishra and Juwah (2006, as cited in O’Hare, 2011) unveil that not all students feel comfortable using online learning particularly the online tools (such as discussion boards and chat facilities). This is due to cultural, linguistic and technological reasons.

Cultural reasons concern the degree of acceptance of technology. Linguistic reasons involve the language competences and skills including speaking, writing, reading, listening and communicating. Finally, the technological reason which evolves around the students’ experience in using technology which can lead the learners to be nervous and uncomfortable while using it.

With reference to what Hollis and Madill (2006) presented as key perspectives, there is much to be understood to properly implement BL in education, particularly in the Algerian context where BL can be a key supporter for versatilely teaching the four English skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), in addition to the cognitive skills peculiarly for secondary school pupils. Therefore, it is important to highlight the role of the teacher in using such mode of learning to ensure the provision and reception of knowledge as well as to maintain vitality of the interaction between the teacher and the learners.

1.9 Teacher’s Role in Using Blended Learning

E-learning gained popularity during the Covid-19 pandemic expansion which led many researchers to investigate the utility of e-learning, the role of the teacher in the e-learning setting, the platforms to be used and even the significance of e-learning after the pandemic (Gunawan et al., 2020; Fassekh, 2023; Kapur, 2023). In this section, the light is shed on the role of the teacher as part of online learning.

According to Handoyono and Pambudi (2021), the success of the blended learning relies on the role of the teacher because technology on its own is simply a tool that

complements the learning process in a sense that, the role of the teacher online is the same in the traditional classroom. if the teacher is competent enough to deliver lesson content, manage and control undesirable behaviours and develop his students' skills to be applied in real-life situations, then learning will succeed.

In this respect, Sharma (2019, p. 326) suggested that before tackling the role that the teacher plays in blended learning mode, teachers should first look at some traits that make them open to accept and use technology as part of their teaching. These traits are listed as follows:

- *Be willing to learn*: which includes taking advantage of training programmes to develop their online teaching skills and interaction with online software/hardware. If the “traditional” teacher is not willing to learn how to use technology, online learning will fail.
- *Be open to new teaching strategies*: in this case, the teacher should have a large knowledge content about the subject he teaches, and the instructions he employs based on his learners needs.
- *Be a leader*: which means to show his students the right way to find information and answers to their inquiries while on the same time be strategic in keeping students motivated, engaging and interesting.

When it comes to the role of the teacher, Sharma (2019) explained that in the process of teaching online, which takes time, teachers play the vital role of a guide to help their learners to learn in addition to acquiring technological skillset.

As a result, the teacher is not only teaching his learners the lesson's content and the basic skills of using software but also developing their autonomy. However, the teacher is more than just a guide since according to Sharma (2019, p. 326), a teacher is also (1) a Facilitator, (2) Coach and tutor, (3) Classroom planner, (4) Content expert, (5) Collaborator, (6) Provider of Opportunities to extend learning, (7) Analyser of student data to support instructional decisions, (8) Risk taker, (9) Manager of effective differentiation of learning, and finally (10) Evaluator.

In short, to ensure a successful blended learning practice, the teacher should be able to facilitate the learning process by guiding his learners through each step they take. This

may not happen if the teachers do not understand how to plan a lesson online. A good teacher collaborates with his learners, communicate and expand their knowledge/skills horizon. Thus, to make sure that his learners are walking on the right path, he should be able to provide opportunities to extend the learning experience while at the same time providing a support and evaluating their learning.

1.10 E-Learning in the Algerian Education

In Algeria, e-learning has been considered as a solution to support the gap that the covid19 yielded during these last three years. In this regard, many researches were pursued to reveal its relevance and the obstacles that prevent the successful implementation of e-learning in different levels exclusively in the Algerian higher education (Bin Herzallah, 2021; Fehaima, 2022; Ghounane, 2022; Hamzaoui, 2024). However little research was conducted on the importance or inclusion of e-learning in the Algerian secondary education.

When it comes to the success or failure of e-learning in Algeria, Fehaima (2022) revealed that there are many factors that lead to the online learning interruption: (1) the bad internet connexion which caused several cuts during the online lesson, (2) The lack of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) for the students which resulted in an inequity of opportunities for all students to benefit from online learning, (3) Bad conditions and the lack of educational atmosphere during the meetings because learning conditions may vary from one learner to another, i.e., not all of them own optimal and private spaces to learn, this can hinder the process of online learning. These results can be useful to check whether these factors can be applied in the secondary education level and whether they can provide reliability of findings or not.

Similarly, Hamzaoui (2024) explained that one of the difficulties that hampers the success of e-learning in the Algerian Higher education is the limited access to the internet infrastructure, especially for those who live in the rural areas. However, this does not mean that e-learning cannot yield great academic achievements. In fact, e-learning is a complementary to traditional learning and developing its implementation without neglecting the significance of traditional learning will contribute to better academic achievements.

Bellatrache and Aloutti (2020, p. 273) concluded from their study that online learning endures many challenges that prevent its success in the educational sector, which can be summarised into:

1. The weak flow of the internet which is a major issue in Algeria.
2. The absence of teachers' training which without online teaching can break.
3. The challenge of transformation of the administration routine
4. Lack of clarity of policy for future use of this system.

Additionally, Guemide and Benachaiba (2012, as cited in Bin Herzallah, 2021) affirmed that e-learning was first launched in Algeria in 2006 with the collaboration of both "Thomson" and "Microsoft" corporations. However, they exposed that the first comment based on the fact that e-learning strategy in Algeria, started by Djaweb³, was targeting the need for specific programmes dedicated for teachers to gain professional development from ICTs and e-learning.

In fact, Bin Herzallah (2021, p. 77) argued that “spending scarce resources on informational technology hardware and software without financing teacher professional development as well is wasteful” thus, e-learning in Algeria requires a great encouragement to develop the ICT use by the teachers alongside with spreading awareness about the importance of e-learning and how to remediate issue that the Algerian e-learning face.

For a developing country like Algeria, the adoption of technology in education particularly in higher education is still in its infancy (Laifa et al., 2023), and several researches have been undertaken to reveal the benefits and drawbacks of BL in the Algerian higher education programmes (Berbar & Ait Hamouda 2019; Ladaci, 2017). The results of these researchers showed that teachers and students are aware of the importance of BL in higher education to assist the students' learning process and their acquired skills. Nonetheless, Algeria and many other developing countries still face issues to fully exploit the potentials that technology offers. This is because of several reasons Laifa et al. (2023, pp. 882-883) categorised into three groups according to previous works (Islam et al., 2022;

³ Djaweb, formerly called 'Easy ADSL' then 'The internet offer Idoom', includes the various offers of the internet access provider Algeria Telecom.

Ashraf et al., 2021; Al-Hunaiyyan et al., 2021; Tupas & Linas-Laguda, 2020). These reasons are presented in the following table:

Table 1.2 Reasons Behind Incapability to Benefit from BL in Developing Countries (Adapted from Laifa et al., 2023, pp. 882-883).

| Technological Accessibility issues | Quality and skill issues | Equity and social issues |
|---|--|--|
| Problems in providing a good internet infrastructure (Ashraf et al., 2021). | Lack of ICTs competencies and proper training (Ashraf et al., 2021). | BL is a difficult system to economically disadvantaged countries (Laifa et al., 2023). |
| Financial issue in ensuring personal computers (Ashraf et al., 2021). | Inadequate mobile apps and educational software (Al-Hunaiyyan et al., 2021). | Teacher and students lack support to shift from TL to BL (Tupas & Linas-Laguda, 2020). |
| | | Lack of stakeholders' awareness and resistance to BL (Laifa et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2022). |

Evidently, the Algerian e-education still faces obstacles, be they financial or social, and requires serious consideration. This includes also normalising e-learning in other levels of education especially secondary schools upon which little studies are carried out. Although e-learning allows students to access courses, exams/activities and their sample corrections, further knowledge and lesson explanations, it still needs inclusion of necessary materials, development of teachers' competencies, normalising students and teachers' use of technology, along with encouraging the integration of synchronous rather than asynchronous learning to develop their communicative skills and thinking skills.

1.11 Conclusion

The present chapter has discussed the status of e-learning in the educational sector by focusing on the role computer-mediated communication and e-learning may serve in supporting the traditional learning to realise learning objectives, and thus leading to blended learning. Moreover, it has revealed the difficulties the Algerian educational system face regarding e-learning integration mainly in universities while stressing, at the same time, the role this learning mode may play in secondary schools.

Chapter II

Communicative Competence and Critical Thinking in the EFL Classroom

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2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the phenomenon of ‘communicative competence’, the second variable upon which this research work is built. First, it looks into the meaning of communicative competence, speaking skill and its status in the Algerian EFL classrooms. This chapter also considers the relationship between speaking skill and communicative competence and highlights different language teaching approaches, among which communicative language teaching approach is tackled.

Second, the present chapter tackles the aspect of critical thinking skills and its relation to education. It focuses on defining the concept of critical thinking alongside its status in the Algerian educational system. Finally, it gives importance to the role of critical thinking in the EFL classroom without neglecting the barriers that teachers face and strategies to be used to teach critical thinking in the EFL classroom.

2.2 Communicative Competence and Speaking

In the EFL classroom, speaking is the ability to produce correct utterances while communicating requires the learners to skilfully engage with others in English language. These competencies are grouped in what is known as ‘communicative competence’.

2.2.1 Definition of Communicative Competence

To define the notion of communicative competence (CC), it is essential to break down the concept into its two components. ‘Competence’ is usually designated as the ability to perform an action. The term ‘communicative’, however, comes from the verb to communicate which simply means to share, exchange, agree or disagree with an idea, a point of view or an information. That is to say, CC is the ability to communicate ideas and information effectively and purposefully within a community.

Hymes (1972, as cited in Taş & Khan, 2020, p. 88) argued that communicative competence, by contrast to what Chomsky considered as an ideal knowledge of a speaker’s language that is “unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors” (Chomsky, 1965, p.3), is not only related to linguistic competence (grammatical rules only), but also to sociocultural and communicative codes. He (1971) relates these to what is known as ‘sociolinguistic competence’ and ‘discourse competence’. Hymes (1972, as cited in Arbor, 1990) said in this

respect that “there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless”, leading to define communicative competence as “dependent upon both (tacit) *knowledge* and (ability for) *use*” (Hymes, 1972, as cited in Coste et al., 2012).

On the same path, Friedrich (1994, as cited in Vadalía & Joshi, 2015) provided a more defined characterisation of CC as he sees it as “a situational talent to set pragmatic and apposite purposes and to capitalize on their attainments by using understanding of self, other, context, and communication theory to breed adaptive communication performances” (p.84). Based on Hymes’ (1972) definition, Friedrich believed that, in addition to language structure, context and social rules dominate the communication in which both parties (receiver/sender, speaker/listener) share a meaningful interaction.

With respect to what has been mentioned, components of communicative competence were perceived and modelled by different scholars such as Friedrich (1994) and Hymes (1972); however, Canale and Swain’s model (1980) is considered to be a more simplified model which includes the following aspects defined by Canale and Swain (1980, cited in Jasno, 2012, p. 4):

- **Linguistic competence:** is concerned with knowing how and when to use grammar, syntax and vocabulary of a language.
- **Sociolinguistic competence:** is concerned with understanding how and when to use language in an appropriate manner, highlighting the setting and the participant who take part of the discussion.
- **Discourse competence:** is related to knowing how to construct larger utterances from smaller parts to produce a coherent text.
- **Strategic competence:** is related to the ability to remediate language breakdowns, especially when the speaker is not being understood or does not understand what is being said to him.

These competencies are divided by Canale and Swain (1980) into two distinct; yet, tightly related aspects, which are:

a-Linguistic systems including linguistic competence and discourse competence.

b-Functional aspects including sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence.

What is interesting about this model is the inclusion of sociolinguistic and strategic competencies. In other words, highlighting the importance social context including norms, values and culture in shaping a clear meaning of language, as well as strategies to overcome communication gaps that the speakers face.

2.2.2. Definition of Speaking

In general, speaking is a human ability that involves producing and articulating language orally.

According to Chaney (1998, as cited in Batang, 2016, p. 108), speaking is “The process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts.” As such, speaking is a mechanism that turns around applying verbal (lexicon, syntax, semantics) and non-verbal (such as body language) symbols in relationship to context so that speaking incorporates all of its meanings.

Because the act of speaking takes into consideration what surrounds the speaker of the English language, it is fair to mention the fact that speaking is a process where its steps should be systematic. This claim has been advocated by many researchers such as Mackey (1965, as cited in Loughraieb, 2022) who argues that to produce a correct utterance, not only the right choice of the rhythmical patterns is critical, but also the right choice of lexicon and its order to assemble and create a correct speech. Alongside this view, Bygate (1998, as cited in Torkey, 2006, p. 33) adds that a definition of speaking influenced by interactional skills which involve making decision about communication. Thus, it calls for making decision about the communication which, as mentioned above, necessitates a background context.

As a skill in language teaching/learning, speaking is composed of five components to measure the extent to which a learner is competent. According to Harris (1974, as cited in Kurniati et al., 2015) the speaking skill is composed of the following aspects:

- Grammar: a feature that deals with the language structure, grammatical form appropriations and rules that govern the language itself.
- Vocabulary: Vocabulary is the “appropriate diction which is used in communication” (Kurniati et al., 2015). It is seen as a set of elements that make an utterance meaningful and allow the person to speak freely and expressively. The more the range of vocabulary is high, the more ideas are expressional.

- Fluency: is the ability to speak smoothly, rapidly and without hesitations to express ideas and emotions free from pauses to retrieve an element of vocabulary or grammatical structure.
- Pronunciation: refers to the production of oral segments that should be clear and comprehensible according to rules of the language itself to create a comprehensible communication.
- Comprehension: if a person uses the right grammatical forms, the appropriate set of vocabulary clearly without hesitations or pauses then surely he is going to be understood; therefore, comprehension will occur.

2.2.3. Status of Speaking in the EFL Classroom

As far as the teaching process is concerned, speaking has been neglected in many Algerian EFL classrooms; maybe because speaking is an innate human ability that is evoked with little preparation. Yet, a language is firstly taught through speaking and listening, an operation where committing mistakes should be normalized. Indeed, speaking is a mean by which learners evolve and develop their foreign language ability and performance. This claim is supported by Bygate (1987, p.1) who considers speaking as “a medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is particularly conducive for learning” (as cited in Guettal, 2008, p. 44)

However, it is still a neglected skill compared to the rest of the language skills (listening, writing and reading) because the EFL classroom can create, from the EFL learner’s viewpoint, a stressful or anxious atmosphere for them to learn. This goes back to what Tuan and Mai (2015, as cited in Brahmia, 2021, p.16) consider as factors affecting the speaking performance which are listed as follows:

First, the lack of performance due to time pressure and standard performance; second, affective factors evolving around motivation, anxiety and self-confidence that affect a learner’s performance either positively or negatively, and finally the listening skill as part of speaking for, a good listening will lead to good speaking skill. All of these factors -which go hand in hand with what Littlewood (2007, as cited in Jannah & Fitriati, 2016)- advocate that inhibition and anxiety are easily created in an EFL classroom.

Another reason behind the marginalisation of the speaking skill is the unbalanced rhythm of the teacher’s fluency compared to the that of the learners. Based on a research

conducted by Silalahi & Sitorus (2015), this situation evokes in learners the sense of shame or fear of committing mistakes when speaking since they believe that the teacher is ahead of them when speaking and, eventually, preventing the learner from committing mistakes; again, an act that should be normalized in Algerian EFL classrooms.

Furthermore, in their article “*Speaking Instruction in the Algerian Secondary Schools: EFL Teachers’ Attitudes and Classroom Practices*” Belit and Aliouchouche (2021) shed light on an additional leading reason to the devalued status of the speaking skill which is simply the little attention provided to teaching speaking skills in the EFL classroom, although the curriculum stresses its significance. Belit and Aliouchouche (2021, pp. 452-453) reported that this is due to several factors which are (1) lack of guidance and documentation, (2) overloaded syllabus; (3) the content of the textbook; (4) absence of speaking in the Baccalaureate examination and finally (5) because teachers are not adopting an adequate approach to teach this productive skill.

2.2.4 Relationship between Speaking and Communicative Competence

Speaking is considered as the first manifestation of a language through which communication occurs. It is a productive skill to language teaching/ learning process; that is why, it is crucial to understand the tightness between speaking and communicating. Neglecting teaching the communicative aspect of a language can be the reason behind various consequences that the teacher should pay attention to and remediate. These may encompass difficulty for students to express themselves, poor interaction with other peers, frustration and misunderstanding occurrence leading to low self-esteem and demotivation to further learn English and use it outside of the classroom.

These outcomes will eventually affect the learners’ overall competency in communicating effectively. Therefore, it is important not to neglect the communicative side of teaching English language whilst tracking their progress alongside the rest of the language skills. In an EFL classroom, learners should be aware of three aspects of knowledge about the speaking skill, As demonstrated by the NCLRC⁴ (2004, cited in Purjayanti, 2018, p.10):

⁴ NCLRC refers to the National Capital Language Resource Centre: A Foreign Language Resource Centre located in Washington DC to language teaching and learning; also, a joint project of Centre for Applied Linguistics (CAL).

- **Mechanics:** understanding the right usage of vocabulary and sentence structure (Grammar), in addition to controlling and the right spelling and pronunciation form of the language (Phonetics/Phonology and Morphology).
- **Functions:** understanding the function of the language according to different contextual settings, when the focus is, primarily, on transaction and interaction and when the focus can be on building relationship with a community.
- **Social and cultural rule:** by which the speaker answers the WH questions: To who he/she is speaking, where is the setting in which the communication occurs, what is the content or the core of the communication and for what purpose the communication occurred in the first place.

Therefore, as previously tackled (**see section 2.2.1 and section 2.2.2**) we can understand that although ‘speaking’ and ‘communicating’ may be used interchangeably, speaking is the ability to utter correctly and clearly through a spoken language; communication is a boarder concept that encompasses more than just the mechanism of speaking, it targets the efficiency of communicating in different contexts. So, for language convention to be effective and meaningful, speakers should pay attention to each aspect of the speaking skill (i.e., pronunciation, grammar, fluency and vocabulary use) as well as the norms, rules and codes of any given community to reach effective communication, building social networks and understanding different cultures.

In fact, speaking is part of communicating. It affects the communication channel either positively (leading to natural and meaningful communication) or negatively (leading to broken communication with misunderstanding). To teach English language, teachers should use a set of fitting approaches or/and methods that tackle the speaking and communication aspects of the English language starting from pronunciation to communicative skills. That is why, a range of language teaching approaches are required.

2.3. Language Teaching Approaches

Teaching English involves the application of several approaches to language in order to instruct learners on the various layers of the language starting from the first layer which includes the letters and sounds moving on to word formation, sentence construction and grammar rules until reaching building a conversation and communicating both in written

and spoken forms. Therefore, a good teaching strategy calls for applying different approaches that serve the needs of learners, mainly to develop their speaking and communicative skills. So, approaches and methods such as ‘the competency-based approach’, ‘the communicative language teaching approach’ and ‘the task-based language teaching approach’ are stressed to develop spoken language in relation to real-life context.

2.3.1 Competency-Based Approach

In contrast to what rote memorisation approaches advocate for as repetition of already provided knowledge, competency-based approach (CBA) looks into the competencies that should be developed for all learners. In other words, CBA is interested in the outcomes of learning because what matters is the learners’ mastery of skills, behaviours and knowledge (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, as cited in Chelli & Khouni, 2011). As explained by the U.S Office of Education (1978, as cited in Chelli, 2010, p. 66) CBA is “a performance-based process leading to demonstrated mastery of basic life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society stresses what the learners can do with the language not only what they know about it”. Accordingly, through this approach, students will be assessed not only on what they know, but also on how they can use this language to function within a society and to serve it.

Thus, following the above definitions and based on Chilli’s assumptions (2010) CBA is characterised by being (1) an action-oriented approach that urges students to take charge of their learning; (2) a problem-solving approach that assesses the students on the capacity to solve problems related to language by thinking while doing and finally (3), it is a cognitive approach related to Blooms’ taxonomy (**see section 2.6**).

Through using CBA, the teacher’s role revolves around determining what and how learners will perform through assessment. This latter is a great component of CBA since it provides teachers with the necessary data on how well learners are progressing. In this regard and according to Bader and Hamada (2015) teachers’ role consist of (1) facilitating learning and guiding learners; (2) providing clear instructions to all learners; (3) using authentic materials; (4) supply all learners which a chance to perform; (5) understanding that each learner learns in his own pace; while also (6) ensuring a continuity of assessment and feedback.

From the part of the learners, their role relies on practicing and performing the skills taught (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, as cited in Bader & Hamada, 2015). They also need to be aware of when and how to use the competencies since they are the core of this approach and as a result, the mastery of these competencies leads to personal achievements.

2.3.2 Communicative Language Teaching Approach

Like the CBA, Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) accentuated the importance of communication over memorisation and repetition (Elkadaoui, 2017). The CLT approach is defined by Richard et al. (1992) as “an approach to foreign or second language teaching which emphasises that the goal of language learning is communicative competence” (as cited in Thamarana, 2015). Remarkably, Richard et al. (1992) connected CLT with the notion of ‘communicative competence’ as being a pillar purpose to teach a second or foreign language since, within this approach, the aim is to strike a balance between usage (grammar) and use (spoken form) (Jasno, 2012).

Additionally, Littlewood (1981, as cited in da Luz, 2015, p.16) explored the characteristics of CLT and said that “one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view”. In other words, CLT calls for teaching not only what the language is (structure), but also how to use it in different contexts (functions).

Furthermore, Richards and Rodgers (2001) claimed that there are plenty of activities a teacher can use to foster the communicative competence of his learners; these include *games, role plays, simulations, and task-based communication activities*. (as cited in Toro et al., 2019, p. 112). So, in order to develop the speaking/communicative skills of the learners, these activities should be interactive and have meaning so that learners acquire the necessary knowledge and practice to improve their speaking and communication. Moreover, Schiffrin (1996, as cited in Toro et al., 2019, p. 112) explained that authentic materials can also improve the learners’ communication and it can also be exploited in different ways and different levels since the traditional books do not include the necessitated instruction to develop the communicative abilities in the target language (in this case, English).

2.3.3 Task-Based Language Teaching Approach

When talking about language use in real-life situation, it is important to mention the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach which is one of the CLT realisation (Bui Thi Hang, 2016). To be more explicit, through TBLT, learners take the language as a medium to complete tasks in the target language, so, the aim of this approach is to develop the cooperative and communicative skills of the learners through the realisation of the tasks (Bui Thi Hang, 2016). TBLT goes beyond memorisation of set of rules or drilling separate segments to be then reapplied and repeated, it teaches learners how to use the language according to the situation they are involved in; hence, teachers are considered to be instructors and guides whereas students are both receivers and the main agents (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2011).

In this regard, the TBLT's goal is to take tasks as a key advantage to create contextual settings where English language is the medium between the speakers and the tasks wished to be realised. According to Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2011), TBLT will "provide learners with a natural context for language use, present a fruitful input of target language for learners, increase their ability to communicate effectively, and to maximize their motivation to the lesson" (p.4).

From East's viewpoint (2021, p. 37) "A task has a goal which requires processing input, creating output and interacting with others to meet it" so, in order for a teacher to apply TBLT in his lesson, a plan consisting of several stages should be followed where a task realisation is the aim. As stated by Willis (1996, cited in Ji, 2018, p. 153), these stages consist of the following:

1. Pre-task: in which the teacher introduces the topic and the task instructions.
2. Task cycle: here students work in pairs or groups to realise the task using English language.
3. Language focus: after the task realisation, the students and the teacher discuss the language use and the difficulties encountered by the students.

The tasks that the learners are asked to realise are usually related to real life situations such as asking where the bus station is, telling the doctor about your symptoms, and so on. In this regard, East (2021), in his book on "*Foundational Principles of Task-Based Language Teaching*", provided an example of a task to be realised through listening

where the instruction simply says: “You and a partner/group are planning a class party for the end of the semester. Make a list of all the items you need to buy to make the party a success” (p. 54).

In short, to teach English language in an EFL classroom, different approaches to language teaching are to be used. Each approach targets a layer of the language. When it comes to teaching speaking and communicative abilities, it is important to consider approaches that better help the sustenance of the learners’ needs without neglecting their levels since for an approach to work effectively, students’ level, learning preferences and needs are stressed. So, it is the teacher’s job to balance creatively between accuracy and fluency, lesson’s content, students’ preferences and needs.

2.4. The Role of Interaction in the EFL Classroom

Another aspect that can be considered successful to communication in the EFL classroom is interaction whether it is a teacher-learner or learner-learners’ interaction; hence, creating a sense of community where a teacher and his learners belong to the community of teaching/learning English language. In fact, according to Barbour (2015) whenever the degree of community increases, the verbal communication will automatically rise and inversely.

Borup and Stevens (2017, as cited in Lindfors & Pettersson, 2021. p, 251) explained that for a teacher to understand the needs of his learners, respond to these needs and help them achieving their goals, he should understand the significance of interaction and building relationships, especially in an online learning environment. Using a teacher-centred approach will prohibit learners from feeling at ease and free to learn.

Conversely, a cooperative and collaborative teacher is the key to build an interactive community where a teacher provides, and learners receive and vice versa. However, communicating in an EFL classroom is an art that requires thinking to understand and to be understood to judge and to analyse the spoken language; therefore, it is crucial to understand the art of thinking while communicating.

2.5. Critical Thinking and Education

For many centuries, critical thinking has been one of the fundamental skills of self-reflection, questioning and reasoning. In fact, it has become the 21st century’s influential

subject in education because of its importance in shaping learners' thinking, analysis and evaluation of knowledge. Critical thinking enables learners to take advantage of various skills such as reasoning and speculating, problem-solving and decision-making.

2.5.1 Definition of Critical Thinking

To be critical means to judge, analyse and reflect on one's thinking and the thinking of others to infer what is true or what is meant to be believed based on facts. Within the same line, the NCECT⁵ (2014) stated that Richard and Scriven (1987) define critical thinking (CT) as: "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action".

Put simply, it is a tool that encompasses a list of skills which permit a person to enlarge his way of perceiving matters, understanding and analysing, providing logical conclusions, and better to say, to think freely and reflect leading to self-correction and innovative thinking especially while communicating. Interestingly, Limpan (1988, p.3) believed that "critical thinking is a skilful, responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because it (a) relies upon criteria, (b) self-correcting, and (c) is sensitive to context". CT is an engine that will surely lead to correct judgement and only if it relies upon criteria, in a sense that it is impossible to make a judgement if it is not based upon standards, principles, rules and laws that vehicle the judgement itself.

Alongside the criteria that affect the final judgement of an idea, one should be conscious about self-correction. Since one of the factors that leads to critical thinking's mastery is the ability to correct one's thinking about thinking (metacognitive skills) to avoid falling into the trap of erroneous, egocentrism or not being able to back up a personal thought with arguments. Thinking critically involves asking the right questions since CT is an inquiry process of finding answers, solutions and deduce conclusion. Limpan (1988) gave some examples related to questioning one's thinking such as: "When our opinions come under

⁵ It is the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking: An organisation that seeks to promote essential change in education and society through the cultivation of fair-minded critical thinking which embodies intellectual empathy, intellectual humanity, intellectual perseverance, intellectual integrity and intellectual responsibility.

fire, to what do we appeal?” “When our claims are contested, what do we invoke?” “When our assertions are not convincing, what do we cite to strengthen them?” especially when it comes to speaking and writing.

Self-correction is mandatory for the logical reason that CT is affected by context which is considered as the frame of thinking. Without understanding it, errors occur, misjudgement happen, and misled conclusion will be inferred. Thus, critical thinking exists everywhere. It is an essential tool of mastering any field of research and education.

2.5.2. Definition of Education

To educate means to provide knowledge to someone. And in the frame of schooling, education is a process of instructing and teaching learners in order to change their behaviours positively, develop their skills and prepare them for the world of professions. Similarly, according to Adesemowo and Sotonade (2022, p. 1) “Education is a life-long process which is always used to imply a positive state of mind”, so, education enriches the mind positively.

In addition to that, Cremin (1976) asserted that Education is “the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, provoke or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills or sensibilities as well as any learning that results from the effort” (as cited in Chazan, 2021, p. 15). Consequently, it is perceived as an action to nurture the mind of the individual with diverse knowledge, behaviours, skills and values to enlarge his perspectives; empower his critical thinking and decision-making skills; enrich his personal, social and cultural growth to eventually contribute to the society by providing a strong workforce, protecting the cultural heritage and encouraging technological advancement (Verma et al., 2023).

Moreover, education takes place inside school (instructions) as well as outside of it (personal experiences), which gives rise to different types of education. According to Agrawal (2021, pp. 1-2) education is divided into:

1. Formal education: It refers to a systematic and organised model of education. It is characterised by its laws and norms; curriculum and its content, objectives and methodology. It joins all of the teacher, students and knowledge in one formal setting called the classroom.

2. Informal education: In contrast to the formal education, informal education does not require a systematic plan of education nor is prescribed by a curriculum or managed by a time-table, it is rather the result of personal experiences. That is why it is described as “a long-life process” (Agrawal, 2021, p. 2)
3. Non-formal education: It takes place outside of the formal educational setting however it still follows a rigid and structured system. Its goal is to develop specific skills.

To sum up, Education is a vital process that offers long-life learning of the individuals by boosting their curiosity and desire for discovery and learning. It also provides an ongoing progress of the society when the full potentials of the individuals are reached.

2.6. Significance of Critical Thinking in Education

CT is found in all subjects of education, especially in EFL classrooms; hence, education should provide learners with two types of knowledge processing: (a) the content of the course or the subject being taught (what to think), (b) understanding the subject content effectively (how to think).

Whereas educators succeeded in teaching learners about the subjects (what to think), the understanding of the subject matter itself or how to think effectively is a failure because ‘how to think’ is tightly related to critical thinking (Schafersman, 1991). This explains why Lochhead (1980) opined that “We should be teaching students how to think. Instead, we are teaching them what to think” (as cited in Schafersman, 1991, p.1). As much as CT can be an influential factor in the educational system, it is still ambiguous for many educators in terms of how to incorporate it within different courses from science and mathematics to foreign languages.

Critical thinking goes beyond absorbing knowledge to be reapplied in tests and exams through memorisation, it is rather a long-life skill that benefits the learners both academically and professionally. This claim was supported by Cuseo (1996, as cited in Geryville, 2021) as he explained that CT shifts from the mere memorisation of the information towards deeper levels of thinking and reflection.

Thus, it is significant to teach learners different skills related to CT since it will supply them “with the competency necessary to reason about social affairs in a rapidly

changing world” (Ku, 2009, p. 70). Therefore, CT plays a major role in educating learners because it will make them ready to serve themselves and their society. Likewise, Shirkhani and Fahim (2011) advocated in their article titled “*Enhancing critical thinking in foreign language learners*” that implementing CT in the EFL classrooms is indispensable because of the promising advantages it yields. Consequently, it is the duty of the teacher to lead his learners towards a new level of knowledge process, which should be critical. Additionally, Rafi (2009, pp. 63-67) explained that CT is crucial in language classrooms because of the following reasons:

1. It permits language learners to be in control of what they are learning with regards to evaluating and monitoring knowledge.
2. It broadens the horizons of learning and make it more significant.
3. It is tightly related to the learners’ achievement.

In light of this, it is important to look at the revised Bloom’s taxonomy by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001, as cited in Wilson, 2017) to understand better the necessity behind shifting the focus of learning from the ‘what’ to the ‘why’ and ‘how’. The model provides a hierarchy of thinking skills to be applied. Krathwohl (2002, p. 215) in his article “*A Revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy: An Overview*” explains the new version of this model in the table below:

Table 2.1: Stages of Thinking Skills (Adapted from Krathwohl, 2002, p.215).

| Stages of thinking skills | Definition |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Remember | Retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory. It involves recognition and recalling |
| 2. Understand | Determining the meaning of instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication. It involves Interpreting, Exemplifying, Classifying, Summarizing, Inferring, Comparing and Explaining. |
| 3. Apply | Carrying out or using a procedure in a given situation. It involves Executing and Implementing. |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| 4. Analyse | Breaking material into its constituent parts and detecting how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose. This operation involves Differentiating, Organizing and Attributing. |
| 5. Evaluate | Making judgments based on criteria and standards. It involves Checking and Critiquing |
| 6. Create | Putting elements together to form a novel, coherent whole or make an original product. It involves Generating, Planning and Producing |

To illustrate these six stages of thinking, the following example, supplied by Sanabria (2023) in his article title “*Critical thinking and Information Literacy*” is provided below - with some changes- to exemplify how can these steps be employed within an EFL classroom dealing with speaking skill: The teacher can ask the following questions to deepen the knowledge and thinking of his learners:

1. Remembering: In what year did King make his great speech “I Have a Dream”?
2. Understanding: Why did Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. make this great speech?
3. Applying: How can you help turn Martin Luther King Jr.’s vision into a reality?
4. Analysing: What would Dr. King have accomplished if he were still alive?
5. Evaluating: How would Martin Luther King react to our current state?
6. Creating: Construct an outline of what this country would look like without racism.

To sum up, CT is an essential skill that promotes self-awareness, reasoning, analysis, deduction and drawing conclusions; that is why, in the case of the Algerian educational system, it is important to take into consideration these stages to be implemented in the EFL classrooms. Additionally, the status of CT in the Algerian EFL classrooms alongside with the teacher’s role and obstacles should be highlighted.

2.7. Critical Thinking and the Algerian EFL Classroom

Algerian schools as any other school in the world require the incorporation of CT within different curricula for the sake of developing learners’ ability to use their own

thinking and leave their personal fingerprints in different aspects of life. Because secondary school pupils are more cognitively developed than those of primary schools and middle schools; and are acquainted with various topics and subjects that are generally more complex, CT tend to be more emphasised at this level due to its influential role in preparing them for future careers and demands of higher educations. Accordingly, it is worth considering the status of CT in the Algerian secondary education, more precisely, in the EFL classrooms.

In her attempt to reveal the real status of CT in Algerian secondary schools, Baghoussi (2021) explained that the mission of implementing CT in the EFL classrooms is still not fulfilled yet because although syllabus designers stress learner centeredness; call for the use of competency-based approach (see section 2.3.1) and project-based learning, teachers still opt for traditional approaches to language teaching which focus only of developing the linguistic competence to help their pupils pass their baccalaureate exam. Therefore, “rote recall is the key to success” to finish the programme in time and expose pupils to all the linguistic competencies needed (Baghoussi, 2021, p. 108). Eventually, stakeholders along with the education community should rethink about the status of CT especially in relation to exams designs (Baghoussi, 2021).

Likewise, Achoura and Merrouche (2021) showed in their article titled “*Critical Thinking in the Algerian Secondary School EFL Class*” that CT is still absent in the EFL classrooms; this is because in their research, the majority of the teachers displayed little or no familiarity with the fundamental characteristics of CT. Therefore, the ability to teach CT and to promote higher order thinking skills is poor. According to Achoura and Merrouche’s findings (2021) reasoning is not often fostered in the Algerian EFL classrooms and exchange of different beliefs is not well conducted -which can be due to the fact that teachers do not know really how to implement CT in their lessons-; Yet, this does not mean that teachers are not making efforts to foster communication and reasoning. As a matter of fact, teachers are willing to improve themselves to ensure a beneficial inclusion of CT in the future.

Nevertheless, to guarantee a rewarding integration of CT in the EFL classroom, particularly in the Algerian EFL classrooms, it is of paramount importance to define the teacher’s role in promoting critical thinking, and to highlight the challenges that face the EFL teachers as far as CT is concerned.

2.8. The Teacher's Role in Fostering Critical Thinking in the EFL Classroom

Many researches have been conducted regarding the role of teachers in guiding the learners and promoting critical thinking. Geryville (2021) piloted a study to investigate the significance of integrating critical thinking in Algerian EFL teaching curriculum. She (2021) opines that the teachers play a significant role in promoting and levitating the critical thinking skills in their students using different strategies. These are listed as follow:

- (1) Taking into account students' interest and choice,
- (2) Using Information and Communication Technology,
- (3) Encouraging multiple perspectives,
- (4) Making personal connections to learning,
- (5) Using Authentic Materials,
- (6) Enhancing collaboration,
- (7) Encouraging students' autonomy.

Through the above-cited strategies, Geryville (2021) pointed out that what generates CT in the EFL classroom is enriching an educational environment with more freedom for learners to choose what they like to learn since the first motive of learning is to appreciate what they are learning specifically when using a diversity of technological aids. This will certainly influence students and urge them to come up with their own conclusions or own viewpoints without hesitating or being afraid of committing mistakes because the teachers and learners work together while connecting "what they study to their own lives" (Gerville, 2021, p. 534) all along with generating the learners' autonomy.

From another perspective, Harizaj and Hajrulla (2017) related CT to the communicative competencies in the EFL classroom because for a classroom to be communicative, it should be collaborative, and for students to be critical thinkers, they should draw a line relating both known information with unknown. In this situation, the teacher, as indicated by Harizaj and Hajrulla (2017), should:

- (1) Understand the students' needs.
- (2) Use different skills in pedagogy in student-centred classes
- (3) Assist and monitor the students' assignments
- (4) Show students how to relate thoughts with meanings.

(5) Show students how to resolve and draw conclusions.

(6) Take into consideration rising the questions Why, When and How to deepen the meaning of the lesson.

In relation to the teacher's role in facilitating the flow of communication and the acquisition of the CT skills, it is not always an easy task to carry since the teacher may face multiple of challenges that can prevent him from implementing CT in the EFL classroom.

2.9. Critical Thinking and EFL Teachers' Challenges

Beghoussi (2021) argued in her research article titled "*Critical Thinking in Algerian Secondary School EFL Classes: Expectations and Reality*" that one of the reasons behind the incapability of implementing and developing CT in the EFL secondary school classrooms is the length of the programmes the teachers have to complete before the baccalaureate exams take place. This makes them forget about the higher-order thinking skills and focus more on finishing the programme on time, which is stressful for the teachers.

Classroom management is another obstacle encountered by the teacher, this is because "collaborative and group work activities [...] are time-consuming and engender much noise in overcrowded classrooms" (Beghoussi 2021, p.106), In other words, the Algerian EFL classrooms face the issue of crowded classrooms and heavy programmes that fall upon the teachers' responsibility.

Additionally, Geryville (2021) suggested other obstacles faced by the English teachers which are: (1) Lack of student's motivation, (2) Unavailability of ICT's, (3) Lack of teacher training, (4) Lack of critical thinking abilities. Therefore, accordingly, we can look at the inclusion of CT as a result of a combination of different variables and these variables can be summarised into one set of cause-and-effect equation which consists of:

Minimising the curriculum's length and maximising its content by sifting it will affect the teacher's will, motivation and time to promote CT \Rightarrow The teacher's effective training will affect the amount of CT awareness \Rightarrow The inclusion of ICT within an EFL classroom will support teaching \Rightarrow which will affect the pupils' will and motivation to learn and urge to ask question and dig deeper into the subject's core = The development of the pupils' performance and awareness of CT.

Put simply, if the curriculum is upgraded and revised to fit the school year while sifting its content to only stress what straightforwardly benefit pupils, the teacher will have more time to incorporate CT in his lessons especially if he is trained and aware of CT and its principles. It also would be more beneficial to incorporate technological aids (for example projectors) and relate it to innovative approaches to teaching that fit the 21st century. As a result, learners will be motivated, interested and well educated about the importance of CT as well as organised in their learning to eventually reach desired outcomes.

In other countries such as Iran, Aliakbari and Sadeghdaghighi (2013) explained that there are other reasons behind the incapability of implementing CT in the Iranian educational system. These barriers can match with the issues that Algerian secondary schools might face as well. They are presented in the following table:

Table 2.2: Barriers to Critical Thinking (Adapted from Aliakbari and Sadeghdaghighi, 2013, pp. 3-4).

| Barrier to CT | Explanation |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Students' Characteristics | It encompasses students' lack of motivation, concern of getting good grade, and resistance to active learning |
| Self-efficacy | Teachers are not sure of their abilities to teach critical thinking skills, how to model or demonstrate critical thinking. |
| Lack of knowledge | Teachers shows lack of knowledge on how to evaluate students and how to promote critical thinking. |
| Faculty resistance | Teachers are not willing to implement new teaching strategies and even if they accept, they cannot change their strategies into new, innovative ones. |
| Content coverage | Short time to cover the content within the overloaded curriculum. |
| Importance and relevance of CT | Teachers are not aware of the importance of CT in the classroom and believe that it is not as necessary as the curriculum content in the teaching process. |
| Institutional Barriers | Administrations and institutions do not support the idea of including critical thinking in the classrooms in addition to |

lack of appropriate instructional material and loaded classrooms.

Therefore, and from what has been discussed, a thorough revision of the curriculum and its content is highly recommended. Moreover, reflecting on the strategies and approaches to promote CT and to trigger the learners' motivation to active learning is significant.

2.10 Strategies to Teaching Critical Thinking in the EFL classroom

Although teaching CT or supporting teaching with CT seems to be a complex task, it is important to highlight some strategies that -in addition to considering what was cited in section 2.8- may help the teacher to prompt his learners to thinking critically. Sulaiman (2012) presented a frame which encloses the cognitive skills and the critical thinking strategies framework⁶. These strategies include:

1. Questioning: which is concerned with asking questions to trigger thinking skills of the learners to deepen their ability to understand, analyse and criticise information rather than memorising only.
2. Small Group: a strategy that involves -for example- dividing the classroom into small groups to create group devoted to enrich the communicative dimension of the classroom.
3. Debate: From small talks comes great debates, and debates allow learners to deepen their communication, learn how to defend their points of view, generate new skills of thinking, and so on.

Additionally, Harizaj and Hajrulla (2017, p. 130) presented some activities to foster students' critical thinking skills. According to them, these activities should enhance their creativity, expand their vocabulary, language knowledge and cultural knowledge. These activities are cited as follows:

1. Information-gap activities: Students work in pairs; they share information with each -other (example: a listening or a speaking exercise).

⁶ Adapted from Simpson and Courtney (2007).

2. Role-play activities: students are put in pairs and they play roles for about 5 to 10 minutes in relation to real-life situations such as “*in an airport, in a doctor’s office, in a shop*”. The goal is to practice the language according to the aim and to set free their critical thinking skills.
3. Jigsaw activities: through the use of the textbook, students are divided into groups, each group takes a topic and tries to discuss about it, share information in relation to the topic, provide opinions. Teacher can extract a passage from the textbook and invite the students to collaborate.
4. Interviews: Each student prepares a set of questions for his classmate at home to be used in the classroom. Topics vary from each students’ interest and choice.

However, these above-cited strategies are not the only ones to be used; in fact, a teacher can use any strategy or design any activity that fosters critical thinking regarding students’ choices and preferences, simply because teaching is an art.

2.11 Conclusion

The chapter at hand has aimed, first, at providing an account on the importance of teaching communicative competencies in an EFL classroom. It has also emphasised the role of different language teaching approaches in encouraging the learner’s communicative abilities as well as building a sense of community inside the so-called EFL classroom. Then, this chapter has discussed the concept of critical thinking in relation to the EFL classroom; targeting its status in the Algerian EFL classroom. Finally, it has highlighted the major obstacles faced by the EFL teachers regarding the implementation of critical thinking skills as well as providing a set of strategies and activities to reinforce the process of teaching critical thinking.

Chapter III

Research Methodology, Data Analysis and Interpretation

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3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an account on the rationales and motives behind choosing the suitable methodology for this study. First, it describes the type of research design in addition to the choice of sample, and the site of research from where data were collected. Then, it displays the data collection tools while exhibiting the aims behind utilising each tool. Besides, this chapter presents the research results interprets them to infer answers to the research questions.

3.2. Research Design Type

Borwankar (1995, as cited in, Akhtar, 2016) mentioned that a research design serves as the plan, structure, strategy or investigation which addresses a specific research question. It also ensures control over different variables and lead to research results obtainment.

Because the study aims at exploring the effect of online learning and how it can be used in secondary education to support critical and communicative abilities in the EFL classroom, the research design of our study is an exploratory case study. This is because a case study is a “very useful design when exploring an area where little is known or where you want to have a holistic understanding of the situation, phenomenon, episode, site, group or community” (Khanday & Khanam, 2019, p. 100).

3.3. The Pilot Study

We conducted a pilot study to, first, look at the phenomenon closely and observe the limitations that prevent the samples from incorporating critical thinking, developing communicative abilities and refining the methods used to collect data (**see section 3.6. for more details on the research tools**). We conducted pre-experiment sessions and went to the secondary school to conduct four non-participant observation sessions in three classrooms to gather primary knowledge and to confirm that the teachers do not teach critical thinking and communicative abilities to a large extent. This led us to decide on what to include in the observation grid as additional aspects to be observed.

3.4. Sampling and Site of Research

This section provides a thorough description of the participants and the site of research.

3.4.1. Site of Research

We have chosen ‘Maghni Sandid Mohammed secondary school’ situated in Ain-Temouchent as a site of research to get in touch with the pupils, the teachers and the administration staff. From this institution, we had the opportunity to work with two classrooms from the level Year Two; belonging to two different streams. Classroom ‘A’ belongs to the Experimental Sciences stream whereas classroom ‘B’ belongs to the Management and Economy stream.

3.5. Sample Population

The sample of this study consists of a total number of 43 participants including 20 pupils from classroom ‘A’, 21 from classroom ‘B’ and two English teachers. These participants are second- year pupils selected from two different classrooms in addition to their English teachers respectively.

Based on the following characteristics: (1) pupils who possess smartphones; (2) English teachers who know the basis of using videoconferencing software and aware of the fundamentals of critical thinking and communicative competence; and (3) Pupils and their teachers who are willing to join the online learning experience, we opted, more specifically, for the *Quota Sampling*. This sampling type is defined by Davis (2005, as cited in Taherdoost, 2016) as a non-probabilistic sampling technique in which the samples are chosen based on predetermined characteristics to meet the same characteristics of the wider population.

3.6. Research Tools: Structures and Aims

This section is devoted to the presentation of the research tools used to collect the necessary data.

3.6.1. Classroom Observation

Observation is a scientific method which “serves a formulated research purpose, [it] is systematically planned and recorded, and it is subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability” (Kothari, 2004, p. 96). This method can be structured or unstructured, participant or non-participant, controlled or not controlled (Kothari, 2004). We have selected non-participant observation to prevent as much bias as possible, and allow the phenomenon

to occur in its natural way. We used a printed observation grid during the observation sessions (see **appendix A**) during the six online lessons, which began on January, 23rd and ended on January, 30th

It is important to mention that the participation consent was given by the head of the administrations and the teacher in order to take part of the experiment.

The participants did not give their consent about activating their cameras while being recorded. This led us to protect the samples' identity and provide full anonymity. We had to cover the teachers' and pupils' identity which includes: their gender, age, name as well as to not record the online sessions.

Another point to consider is that the teachers preferred to specify 30 minutes per session to teach online due to personal reasons.

3.6.2. The Questionnaire

To understand the pupils' viewpoints towards online learning, we opted for a close-ended questionnaire. According to brown (2001) a questionnaire is a set of questions or statements that the participants should answer in order to collect data (as cited in Sabo, 2019). In order to design a questionnaire, drawing a clear picture of the type of the questionnaire, types of questions and the method of delivery is imperative. The questionnaire serving this study relies on the Likert scale as a psychometric response scale to assess the pupils' degree of interest and benefice. As stated by Kothari (2004, p. 84), a Likert-type scale is composed of "statements which express either a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the given object to which the respondent is asked to react".

The questionnaire was designed for the pupils to answer each statement in relation to several degrees (from 'Not interesting/beneficial at all' to 'Completely interesting/beneficial'). It is composed of six items related to the extent of the pupils' interest to learning English online (see **appendix B**). The questionnaire was handed to the pupils on January, 31st and the filled-out version was recovered on February, 1st. It is important to mention that this type of questionnaire may lead to untrustworthy answers simply because the participants may answer randomly or without reading the proposed items, or they can even lie.

3.6.3. The Interview

In order to collect data about the teachers' viewpoints and perceptions about the future of online learning in secondary education, an interview was conducted with the teachers to collect deep and personal feedback from their experiences, and to anticipate on the future of e-learning in Algerian secondary education. An interview is defined by Kothari (2004, p. 97) as a "presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses".

For this study, we conducted a structured interview (see **Appendix C**) to ensure a systematic and rigid procedure where questions are formed and asked in a prescribed order (Kothari, 2004). The choice of this type of interview was crucial for the simple reason that it prohibits the flexibility of the questions which will lead to lack of comparability when comparing one interview with another, hence, leading to difficulty in collecting data (Kothari, 2004).

3.7. The Mixed-Methods Approach

As stated by Creswell (2015), a mixed methods approach is an approach to research related to social, behavioural and health sciences. It combines the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approach through the collection of statistical trends (quantitative data) and stories and personal experiences (qualitative data) to better understand a research problem than either one of them can alone, which is what our research attempts to fulfil. Moreover, it supplies the research with a logical ground, methodological flexibility as well as in-depth understanding of the case being studied (Maxwell, 2016, as cited in Dawadi et al., 2021) which aligns with our research aims.

This research work opted for a mixed methods approach for data collection. The purpose is to explore the extent to which Google Meet, as a learning platform, can support and affect the communicative abilities and critical thinking skills of the secondary school pupils; and at the same time, revealing the challenges encountered from the participants when using it, alongside its effects on the pupils' skills. The mixed-methods approach is necessary for this study since it provides "rich insights into the research phenomena that cannot be fully understood by using only qualitative or quantitative methods" (Dawadi et al., 2021).

3.8. Data Analysis

This section is concerned with the analysis of the collected data. It seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the online learning to support critical thinking and communicative abilities. It starts with analysing of the classroom observation results, followed by the questionnaire then the interview results.

3.8.1. Analysis of Classroom Observation Results

Classroom ‘A’

Table 3.1: Classroom Observation Information of Classroom ‘A’

| Classroom ‘A’ | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Day | Duration | Attended pupils |
| Session 1: 23 rd of January. | 44 minutes 32 seconds | 90% |
| Session 2: 26 th of January | 40 minutes | 80% |
| Session 3: 30 th of January. | 45 minutes 49 seconds | 85% |

As far as classroom management is concerned, we noticed how the teacher’s competency influenced the overall classroom engagement. While sessions 1 and 2 lacked in professionally using Google Meet platform (skills only in muting and unmuting the pupils), session 3 witnessed effective progress that was mirrored in the pupils’ actions. This includes the strategic use of visual aids that had captured the attention of the pupils compared to the sessions 1 and 2, and the upgraded quality of lessons’ presentations.

Time management was a deficit in all sessions for, all sessions exceeded the prompted time (30 minutes) and this goes back to the teacher’s uneven and haphazard division of time. For example, the teacher gave more time to book reading, redundant explanation of the UIS content as well as over-explaining the activities when it was not really necessary. Moreover, constant internet cuts also prohibited the fluidity of the lesson. Despite this, the teacher was cheerfully welcoming all the pupils while treating them all equally

across the three sessions. Wrong behaviours were controlled throughout the three sessions by: muting/unmuting pupils, extrinsically motivating them (addition or subtraction of marks) to stop misbehaving (laughing, shouting, calling their classmates by their nicknames, and so on).

Regarding the teacher's strategies in delivering the lessons online, we noticed how the lack of visual aids and the redundancy of the lessons' content covered online affected the overall engagement and interest of the pupils in sessions 1 and 2 due to his heavy reliance on the textbook for reading purposes to explain concepts related to the unit 'Waste Not Want Not' in session 1 and the 'Unit Introductory Sheet' (UIS) (see **appendix D**) which was pre-printed and already covered F2F in session 2. The teacher also did not include any additional information, and focused only on what the textbook or the UIS provided as knowledge which decreased the degree of the pupils' interest. In addition, he did not take into account his pupils' preferences/likes/dislikes and followed rather a teacher-centred approach⁷. Although using such an approach helped in maintaining a well-managed classroom, it also hindered the development of CT across all sessions, therefore the focus on the 'how' and 'why' aspects of the lessons were concluded to be poorly stressed.

As far as the communicative competencies are concerned, we noticed that the teacher had his own weaknesses and strengths. The teacher exhibited *good* competency in supporting all of linguistic (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary choices), sociolinguistic (language formality and mutual respect) and discourse competencies (cohesion and coherence of speech) across all sessions through the ongoing provision of alternatives and corrections. However when it comes to strategic competence, he relied only on translating from English to Algerian Arabic (AA), Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and French language (FL) such as in session 1 "search", "smoke" and "punishment" were all translated into the MSA version "يبحث", "دخان" and "عقوبة" respectively, "تقد طوره؟" (in AA) to mean "can you develop it?" in session 2 and in session 3 one pupil used the word "يطفو" (in MSA) meaning "it floats" to support communicative breakdowns.

⁷ It is a traditional approach to teaching where the teacher is the source of knowledge. He lectures, he presents the lessons and the students receive the knowledge passively.

Concerning language functions, the teacher did not encourage the pupils to summarise, paraphrase, persuade or even use any other language function apart from stating opinions, agreeing and disagreeing.

Referring back to the revised Bloom's taxonomy, we viewed that promoting CT online had also its pros and cons with an inconsistency across all sessions. From the one hand, we noticed that the teacher fostered the lower order thinking skills (memorising, understanding and applying) through different strategies such as action-consequence technique to explain the relationship between oil preservation and the theme *Recycling* and a series of questions to justify pupils' choices in session 1. In session 3, the teacher used pictures of technological tools (see **appendix E**) as well as the translation technique -from English language to MSA, AA and FL- (ex: "Laptop : حاسوب" "Memory stick: clé USB ") whereas session 2, witnessed the use of no strategy due to the already covered content F2F previous to the online session. This contributed to positive outcomes regarding the pupils' engagement and, thus, rose their curiosity in sessions 1 and 3. However, negative feedback stemmed from session 2.

As far as the activities used to promote CC are concerned, the teacher relied on pair work for oral presentations in session 1. In session 2, he used a role play activity (Mark Zuckerberg and the two consumers) from which three pupils participated. This automatically excluded the rest of the pupils from participating. And in session 3, the teacher valued the importance of debates which affected positively the pupils' engagement in comparison to sessions 1 and 2 where student-teacher and student-students communications were lacking because of the teacher's misuse of materials, lack of interaction, the teacher's approach and reliance on already covered content leading to unengaging, and uninterested pupils in communicating online.

Analysing the teacher's material and urging the pupils to analyse, criticise and judge their classmates' choices of answers were also inconsistent. It was not stressed in sessions 1 and 2 due to the uninteresting material and already covered content, which affected the pupils' motivation; yet, greatly supported in session 3 because the teacher used visual aids and valued the significance of debates which affected in return the pupils' motivation to infer/deduce meaning. Moreover, the teacher did not incite his pupils to ask questions across all sessions; this stems from the teacher-centeredness he followed especially in sessions 1

and 2; in fact, he was the only one providing questions and awaiting answers from the pupils. It is worth mentioning that, there was not a wide variety of activities that supported CT online expect for session 3 in which the teacher asked the following open-ended question that required solution to what he considered as real-life problem and led to opened debates: *'what would happen to your life if technology stopped working one day?'*. Therefore, the activities employed to target and elevate CT were limited mainly in sessions 1 and 2.

Classroom 'B'

Table 3.2: Classroom Observation Information of Classroom 'B'

| Classroom 'B' | | |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| Day | Duration | Attended pupils |
| Session 1: 23 rd of January | 45 minutes | 95.24% |
| Session 2: 26 th of January | 47 minutes 17 seconds | 95.24% |
| Session 3: 30 th of January. | 48 minutes 09 seconds. | 100% |

Starting with the aspect of 'classroom management', the teacher showed excellent competency in using the platform Google Meet and its different features strategically across all sessions (including screen sharing, muting/unmuting, closed-captioning). When it comes to screen sharing, the teacher began each session by sharing a picture that welcomed the pupils. This action led fruitfully to positive outcomes regarding the pupils' comfort and ease. Similar to classroom 'A', the teacher treated all of his pupils' equally and managed misbehaviours (mostly laughs) extrinsically (addition or subtraction of marks). Additionally, internet connexion was a handicap for the continuity of the lessons. This affected the time management across all sessions; however, this does not mean that the teacher did not manage time well. In fact, time division was strictly followed by the teacher across all sessions, he specified time to take attendance by calling his pupils' names, present the lessons' content, do the activities and correct them with the pupils, specialise time for the pupils' questions as well as providing a summary at the end of each session.

Considering the teacher's strategies in presenting the lessons online, it was remarkable how his digital competency in delivering the lessons was high-quality in all sessions, resulting in a large increased level of the pupils' attentiveness and engagement. This is because of the various materials employed: in session 1 the teacher used a picture of *The Energy Pyramid* to explain and introduce new information beyond what they have already learnt in the classroom (see **appendix F**) and a video from YouTube titled "*Energy, let's save it!*" for classroom activities.

In session 2, the teacher used the UIS "*No Man is an Island*" (see **appendix G**) which, similarly to classroom 'A', it was printed and distributed to the pupils and us beforehand along with a picture of *The Natural and Human Induced Disasters* (see **appendix H**). This helped him in introducing new facts and in developing class activities.

Likewise, in session 3 the teacher displayed a picture of the word "*Charity*" to target pronunciation/vocabulary expansion; he also used the textbook for reading purposes then screenshared a video from YouTube titled "*The red cross, red crescent and red crystal; What do they mean? In one word: Protection*" for classroom activities and interaction. All of this equipment helped him to focus more on the 'how' and 'why' aspects of the lesson to assure more depth taking into account the pupils' preferences and choices which was noticed several times (asking them whether they want to watch a video, whether the themes of discussions suit their preferences, and so on). The teacher also provided feedback when necessary, corrected the wrong answers when needed and praised the right responses on every occasion.

In terms of strategies to foster CC and CT, the teacher supported them both significantly; yet undeniably, he encountered few issues. CC was greatly supported across the three sessions with a balanced and consistent provision of feedback required for all the competencies. In terms of linguistics (mainly grammar use and pronunciation), sociolinguistics (language formality in regards to respecting norms/ the setting and the people with whom a discussion is maintained) and discourse competencies (coherence and cohesion of speech ex: "*Because, but, and, to, if*" upgraded into "*Yet, so, as well as, unless, in addition, despite*"), they were similarly levitated through the ongoing furnishment of advanced alternatives to be used.

Interestingly, the pupils did not use any word in AA/MSA/FL in sessions 1 and 2, thanks to the teacher's technique that he called "*Find the Word*" to develop their strategic competence, foster communication and thinking; i.e., whenever a pupil find himself unable to express an idea due to the lack of vocabulary, he had to describe the word in English and his classmates/teacher help him to find the correct one or alternatives ex: '*Switch off*' was described by one pupil as: "*when you see a room with light but you don't... like, before you leave you...*".

Unfortunately, session 3 witnessed an increased adoption of the translation technique rather than collectively finding the appropriate word. In other terms, using AA/MSA/FL to fill the communication gaps was tempting for the pupils and as a result they could not refrain from translating. Addressing language functions was consistent; yet, it was lacking expansion. Meaning that, the teacher focused on *Stating points of view* (session 1), *Disagreeing/Agreeing* (session 3), *Comparing/Contrasting* (session 2) and *Summarising* (session 2 and 3). However, the use of language to *Paraphrase* and *Persuade* or any other language function was neglected across the sessions.

Moving on to CT, the teacher effectively encouraged lower and higher order thinking skills in each session through using different activities and went beyond teaching speaking, i.e., he promoted thinking while speaking which led to effective communication between the pupils and the teacher himself. Because of the assortment of instruments shared with the pupils, the teacher succeeded in promoting lower order thinking skills including memorising, understanding and applying through continuous questioning and explanations (Session 1: "*energy consumption is when you switch on the light to read a book, whereas energy conservation is when switch off the lights to conserve the lights and your money as well! Can you give me an example?*", Session 2: "*what does man mean?*", "*what is an island? Give an example*", Session 3: "*can you give me an example or meaning of the action of charity?*"). These actions led him to encourage higher order thinking skills through continuously asking his pupils to justify their answer choices and pupils reacted positively, consistently asking them to analyse and judge the content of the videos and pictures using the strategy of open-ended questioning to better draw conclusions using logical reasoning (ex: Session 2: "*What can you do to help if one of these disasters occurred?*") and also to analyse the answers of their classmates continuously. However, initiative questioning was

poorly displayed by the pupils across all sessions even if the teacher encouraged them to do so.

Consequently, the teacher employed different activities to support both communicative abilities and critical thinking skills. In session 1, the teacher used classroom discussion of the theme “*Energy Consumption in Modern Day*”, and a classroom discussion of the video “*Energy let’s save it!*”. In session 2, the teacher designed a game named “Survivor” which follows the principles of the task-based language teaching approach (see **appendix I**). The game basically implied the following: *imagine you are in the forest and suddenly a heavy rain started! You could not ask for help because no network was working! So, you found yourself in the night freezing, tired or even hungry! Choose one of these tools that seems reasonable for you to use in such condition and talk about its utility with you friends to convince them*”, in this case the teacher promoted collaboration, communication and thinking skills regarding real life situations for the whole classroom.

In session 3, the teacher chose pair discussion to discuss the video “*The red cross, red crescent and red crystal; What do they mean? In one word: Protection*” from YouTube; however, we noticed limitations in involving the whole classroom for classroom discussion purposes, the teacher opted for a pair discussion where other pupils were not allowed to interfere, so encouraging communication between the pupils in this case was neglected. As an additional note, the teacher “B” also gave great importance to the rising and falling intonation to communicate fluently in all sessions, mostly when the pupils were answering the teachers’ questions.

3.8.2. Analysis of the Pupils’ Questionnaire Results

The aim of the pupils’ questionnaire was to reveal their views towards this experience. Indeed, the classroom observation allowed us to put the idea of online learning in secondary education into practice, yet it is important to reveal the participants views about the experience itself.

Statement 1: The application I used to learn online (the virtual classroom)

Table 3.3: The Application Used to Learn Online

| Classrooms | Not at all | Slightly | To some extent | Completely | Total number | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|----------|----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Classroom A | 20% | 60% | 15% | 5% | 20 | 100% |
| Classroom B | 4.8% | 4.8% | 23.8% | 66.6% | 21 | 100% |

Regarding classroom ‘A’, twelve pupils (60%) expressed that the application through which online learning occurred was slightly interesting or beneficial compared to only one student (5%) who believed that the application was considered to be beneficial for the sake of learning. Besides, four pupils (20%) did not perceive online learning through Google Meet as interesting for educational purposes, whereas three pupils (15%) saw that Google meet is an interesting and advantageous platform to learn English. Interestingly, fourteen pupils (66.6%) from classroom ‘B’ viewed learning online through google meet as a fruitful experience to learn English; in comparison to only one student (4.8%) who thought that online learning through google meet did not caught his interest nor benefitted him. One student (4.8%) viewed English language learning by Google Meet to be interesting just a little bit while five pupils (23.8) who saw it is beneficial but only to some extent.

Statement 2: The way my teacher presents and explains the lesson (through sharing pictures, videos, using textbook, etc)

Table 3.4: The Way the Teacher Presents and Explains the Lesson

| Classrooms | Not at all | Slightly | To some extent | Completely | Total number | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|----------|----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Classroom A | 40% | 35% | 20% | 5% | 20 | 100% |
| Classroom B | 0% | 0% | 42.9% | 57.1% | 21 | 100% |

As it is shown in the table 3.4, eight pupils from classroom ‘A’ (40%) did not find the way their teacher used to present and explain the lesson serviceable to their needs, whereas seven pupils (35%) believed that the teacher’s way of explaining the lesson through visualisation caught just slightly their interest and satisfied their benefits. Only four pupils (20%) viewed that his strategies in presenting the lessons were more than slightly interesting/beneficial, and one student (5%) considered that the teacher’s way of explaining and presenting the lesson was completely beneficial and interesting.

Concerning the classroom ‘B’, all the pupils’ judged the teachers’ strategies in presenting and explaining the lesson either to be interesting and beneficial to some extent, or completely interesting and beneficial. In fact, twelve pupils (57.1%) believed that it was completely fruitful, whereas nine pupils (42.9%) viewed the teacher’s way of explaining the lesson was attractive and useful to some extent. None of the pupils believed that it was slightly beneficial/interesting or not interesting/fruitful at all.

Statement 3: My teacher motivating me to communicate in English

Table 3.5: Teacher’s Motivation in Enhancing Communication in English

| Classrooms | Not at all | Slightly | To some extent | Completely | Total number | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|----------|----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Classroom A | 5% | 25% | 30% | 40% | 20 | 100% |
| Classroom B | 0% | 0% | 71.4% | 28.6% | 21 | 100% |

In relation to the teacher’s motivation to urge his pupils to communicate in English, one student (5%) from classroom ‘A’ viewed that the teacher’s motivation was not useful at all to make him more communicative in the EFL classroom; five pupils (25%) believed that the teacher’s motivation helped them a little bit to communicate in English language. In addition to that, six pupils (30%) looked at the teacher’s motivation positively and judged it to be beneficial to some extent, whereas, nearly the half of them; i.e., eight pupils (40%) saw that their teacher’s motivation helped them largely to communicate in English.

In classroom ‘B’, none of the pupils confirmed that the teacher’s motivation was not slightly or at all helpful. They were rather divided into two groups. Fifteen pupils (71.4%) believed that the teacher’s motivation made them communicate in English to some extent,

while six pupils (28.6%) saw that the teacher's motivation boost them to communicate in English to a large extent.

Statement 4: My teacher correcting my English language

Table 3.6: Teacher's Role in Correcting English Language

| Classrooms | Not at all | Slightly | To some extent | Completely | Total number | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|----------|----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Classroom A | 5% | 15% | 65% | 15% | 20 | 100% |
| Classroom B | 0% | 4.7% | 66.7% | 28.6% | 21 | 100% |

Here, we can see that thirteen pupils from classroom 'A' (65%) believed that the teacher's role in correcting the pupils' English language was beneficial to some extent, whereas only one student (5%) viewed that the teacher's strategies to help them speaking correctly were not useful/helpful at all. In addition to that, six pupils were divided into two groups, three pupils (15%) saw that the teacher's way of correcting their English language was beneficial just a little bit, whereas three pupils (15%) argued that it was completely helpful for the sake of using correctly the English language.

According to the pupils from classroom 'B', none of the pupils (0%) believed that the teacher's role in correcting their English language was not beneficial at all. In contrast, with fourteen pupils (66.7%) who judged the teacher's directives to be effective and helpful to some extent. One student (4.7%) viewed it as helpful, but only a small extent. However, six pupils (28.6%) thought that the teacher's help in correcting their English usage was completely helpful and useful.

Statement 5: My teacher motivating me to explain and justify my ideas

Table 3.7: Teacher's Motivation to Explain/ Justify Ideas

| Classrooms | Not at all | Slightly | To some extent | Completely | Total number | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|----------|----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Classroom A | 0% | 65% | 30% | 5% | 20 | 100% |
| Classroom B | 0% | 14.3% | 28.6 % | 57.1% | 21 | 100% |

According to the pupils belonging to classroom 'A', more than half of them, i.e., thirteen pupils (65%), viewed that the teacher's motivation encouraged the pupils slightly to explain their ideas and justify their choices, whereas only one student (5%) saw that this motivation was largely beneficial. Besides, six pupils (30%) argued that the teacher's motivation inspired them to some extent in reinforcing their ideas by explaining 'why' or 'how', however, none (0%) viewed this motivation to be uninspiring or demotivating to clarify or rationalise their ideas.

As for classroom 'B', no one (0%) agreed on the fact that the teacher's motivation did not urge them at all to interpret and justify the choice of their ideas. In contrast with twelve pupils (57.1%) who maintained that it was completely helpful. With a rate of (28.6%), six pupils judged the teacher's motivation to be helpful to some extent; however, only three pupils (14.3%) reported that the teacher's motivation was somehow helpful.

Statement 6: My participation in different activities (oral presentations, role plays, debates, sharing information, and so on)

Table 3.8: Pupils' Participation in Different Activities

| Classrooms | Not at all | Slightly | To some extent | Completely | Total number | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|----------|----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Classroom A | 0% | 85% | 10% | 5% | 20 | 100% |
| Classroom B | 0% | 0% | 9.5% | 90.5% | 21 | 100% |

On the one hand, 17 pupils (85%) of classroom 'A' showed a negative attitude towards the set of activities to enhance and cultivate CC and CT and thus, believed that it was slightly interesting or beneficial. On the other hand, two pupils only (10%) believed that these activities were somehow compelling, and one pupil only (5%) viewed these activities as completely beneficial. Besides, no one from the 20 pupils (i.e., 0%) argued that these set of activities were not interesting/beneficial at all.

From the point of view of the pupils belonging to classroom 'B', nineteen of them (90.5%) -i.e., the majority of them- agreed on attributing the degree "completely beneficial and interesting" to describe their participation in these types of activities. The remaining two pupils (9.5%) believed that role-plays and the rest of the activities practiced online were fruitful and helpful to some extent.

3.8.3. Analysis of the Teachers' Interview Results

The aim of the interview was not only to look at this experience from the eyes of the teachers, but also to conclude a clear answer to whether e-learning can be integrated in the Algerian secondary education or not.

Table 3.9: Interview Information

| Teachers | Duration of the interview |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| Teacher 'A' | 45 minutes |
| Teacher 'B' | 40 minutes |

First Rubric: Teacher's Feedback Concerning the Online Learning Experience

Question 1: Based on your recent experiences in online teaching, how would you describe the overall learning experience?

This question aimed at exploring the overall satisfaction of the teachers in relation to online teaching. On the one hand, teacher 'A' considered the sessions to be fair enough because he believed it had its ups and downs especially when it comes to using the Google Meet application which made the session sometimes appear to be "*boring*". On the other hand, teacher 'B' judged the sessions to be good, thanks to his previous experiences in using

the application for educational purposes, as well as the active interaction of his pupils throughout the sessions. However, both of them complained about the bad internet connexion, and the pupils' background noises.

Question 2: Could you describe what technological device did you use for online teaching, and what is your overall perception on its effectiveness?

This question aimed at revealing the device through which online learning is delivered. In this regard, both teachers confirmed that they used their personal computers to teach their pupils online. They affirmed that using laptops was very effective because of their large screen size, professional presentations and options' manipulations. Teacher 'B' also believed that all teachers in secondary schools should know "*by now*" how to use these devices.

Question 3: Were you comfortable teaching online in parallel to your regular teaching? Why?

This question aimed at exposing the extent to which teachers felt comfortable and able to balance between two different modes of learning (online and F2F modes). Accordingly, each teacher had his own viewpoint. Teacher 'A' said that he did not feel comfortable while juggling between the two modes, simply because he felt confused while trying to do both. He also affirmed that if it was fully managed, it would have been easier for him. The teacher further explained what he meant by fully managed and said "*I mean, for example incorporating more lessons that deals with critical thinking and speaking*". On the contrary, Teacher 'B' expressed that he was actually comfortable while teaching in two distinct modes. Teacher 'B' mentioned that teaching online was entertaining and purposeful. He added that he was able to teach online and F2F because he was already interested in online teaching, and because he knew his pupils' traits and needs, he had an idea on how to teach them new matters in relation to English language and how to progress.

Question 4: If any, what positive outcomes did you infer from these sessions?

This question aimed at revealing the teacher's satisfaction in terms of outcomes. So, both teachers affirmed that there were some positive outcomes that stemmed from online teaching. Teacher 'A' explained that although he did not know how to use Google Meet very well, these sessions helped him in terms of assessing his pupils' thinking and communicative

skills, giving them a chance to express themselves. He even considered these sessions to be an experience for him to know what to expect in the future. From his point of view, teacher 'B' claimed that it helped him in visualising matters through pictures and videos which was not possible to do since they were time consuming F2F. Additionally, he said that through this experience, he was able to measure and help his pupils to develop their way of thinking and communicative abilities. He added that "*It also made me create my own community with my pupils where I supported safety and freedom of expressing oneself*".

Question 5: What obstacles did you encounter while teaching online?

This question played a major role in revealing the obstacles that the researcher was not be able to see through the observation sessions. Both teachers confirmed that there were many barriers that prohibited the success of online teaching. In the case of teacher 'A', he unveiled that there are four obstacles: lack of personal training in using technology which led to boring sessions and difficulty in managing time, slow internet connexion which also prevented him from delivering his lessons fully and in time, unacceptable behaviours from the part of the pupils (laughing, talking without permission, not respecting each other's talking turns), along with the fact that the rest of the classroom did not want to join the online learning; this limited the accessibility of the the whole classroom. Teacher 'B' on his part, declared that the obstacles included his pupils' childish behaviours, lack of inclusivity of the whole classroom in addition to the internet connexion which he described as slow and interrupting.

Second Rubric: Teacher's Concern with Teaching Critical Thinking and Communicative Competencies Online

Question 1: According to you, to what extent was promoting critical thinking successful online and why?

The goal behind this question was to determine whether, from the perspective of the teachers, online learning can be considered as a good support to promote CT skills or not. Regarding on this question, each teacher gave his verdict. Teacher 'A' expressed that generating CT was not fully possible because of different barriers that prohibited him from teaching these skills. He claimed that the first barrier was his abilities to teach critical thinking (which includes digital literacy and teaching strategies) and the second barrier was

the mindset of his pupils for, they were not taught the importance of critical thinking especially in the EFL classroom.

Teacher “A” claimed that *“although technology is not something new to them, but thinking outside of the box, sometimes, is”*. In contrast with Teacher “B” who exposed that, although incorporating CT was not always an easy task since it involves many matters (such as understanding what is CT and how to develop it in secondary schools), but because of his capacities and love for flexible learning, he managed to create an environment that levitated these skills to a good extent. He added that *“I felt that my pupils had fun especially when I gave them the chance to freely discuss, describe and debate!”*.

Question 2: From your own experience and compared to the traditional classroom, do you feel that communication was neglected online?

This question was asked to see whether online learning can succeed in fostering communication in the Algerian EFL classroom. Again, each teacher had his own view about the matter. Teacher ‘A’ indicated that there were not many differences when comparing the two modes. This was mostly because of his lack of digital literacy in using Google Meet, which made the pupils unmotivated to speak or to communicate. Teacher ‘B’ declared that he noticed a difference between online teaching and F2F teaching. In fact, he mentioned that while teaching online, he had a considerable amount of time to discuss different topics, discover his pupils’ thinking skills, and attempt to correct his pupils’ speaking and communicative abilities. Teacher ‘B’ also added that he felt as a monitor and provider.

Question 3: Did you notice, after your online teaching experience, any improvement in your pupils’ critical thinking and communication abilities? Explain.

The aim of this question was to see whether online learning can affect the pupils’ CC and CT skills F2F or not. Both teachers had different answer concerning this question. Teacher ‘A’ explained that after teaching online nothing really changed especially when it comes to their abilities in communicating or implementing critical thinking skills F2F. Pupils barely remembered what their teacher told them online. He said that *“when I was correcting and guiding them online, I saw some improvements, but when we met F2F there wasn’t much to be noticed only few of them were trying to reproduce what we saw online”* in fact, he believed that his pupils were not interacting, providing points of views of even speaking a

lot F2F. Teacher 'A' asserted, *"it is because I didn't know how to retrieve what we learnt and put it into practice F2F"*.

However, teacher 'B' believed that it impacted their degree of interaction and thinking to some extent. The teacher tried to relate what he taught online to the F2F sessions; pupils were interacting frequently and stating their opinions from time to time. The teacher even attempted to include the pupils who were excluded from the online experience whenever a debate was opened; yet, he failed to do so because he said *"I did not have time, I thought that online teaching will help me to support what I taught F2F, but it seems that overloaded curriculum hinders this goal; one hour is not enough"*.

Third Rubric: Further Suggestions for Future Development of E-learning in Secondary Education

Question 1: Taking into account your online teaching involvement, do you find online platforms -as e-learning tools- effective suppliers to develop critical thinking and communicative competence among pupils of secondary schools?

This question emphasised the teachers' views on whether we can classify e-learning as a fruitful complementary to the F2F teaching to develop CC and CT skills. In the same vein, the teachers had different viewpoints that can be considered as two sides from the same coin. Teacher 'A' believed that e-learning in general is a beneficial tool for any subject matter (foreign languages, science, etc). However, when it comes to the Algerian educational system, it may have some *"flaws"* which include issues related to digital ethics, responsibility to administrate all Algerian pupils online, adapting new approaches to online teaching and even teaching pupils how to use technology as well as the issue of overcrowded classrooms. He mentioned that *"it is a complicated case, even if it seems feasible because of how fast this generation is learning how to use technology, one should look at it from different perspectives especially when it comes to our cultural awareness of e-learning in secondary schools and lack of financial support"*.

Teacher 'B', however, believed that e-learning is able to provide positive outcomes because -for him- technology is already covering all sectors to facilitate different tasks for the Algerian population, and sooner or later, it will also be integrated in the Algerian educational system. he said that *"I know and we all know that the Algerian educational*

system faces a lot of problems, but I have hopes”. Teacher ‘B’ continued by saying that CT skills and CC in English language are the skills of the 21st century which should be developed alongside using e-learning and that “*when the classroom cannot provide the pupils with everything, why not taking advantage of technology to develop these skills*”.

Question 2: Which measures could be taken to assure a successful e-learning integration to develop critical thinking and communicative abilities in the EFL classroom?

This question highlighted the teachers’ ability to foresee how e-learning can be incorporated in the Algerian secondary schools to promote CT skills and CC. Both teachers believed that in order to integrate e-learning in the Algerian secondary schools, it is important to make sure that all the pupils possess a smartphone; otherwise, it will lead to inequity of learning opportunities. They also stressed the need of serious teachers’ training to be able to use technology professionally and creatively. Moreover, they focused on raising learners’ awareness on the importance of e-learning. Finally, they believed that it is of paramount important to think of designing lessons and activities that target both CT skills and CC in the future.

3.9. General Interpretation of the Main Results

From the results obtained, we can infer that the success of e-learning depends on the teacher’s ability to manage the e-environment (Ghateolbahra & Samimi, 2020) which includes: First, time management, mainly in classroom ‘A’ where the teacher did not know how to evenly divide time to achieve learning goals and fulfil pupils’ needs. The slow internet connexion or the internet cuts from which suffered both classrooms were also considered as a great handicap; this aligns with the findings of Bellatrache & Aloutti (2020); Mardiani & Azhar (2021); Fehaima (2022); Ashraf et al. (2021, as cited in Laifa et al., 2023); Hamzaoui (2024). Second, lack of interaction in the classroom (especially in classroom ‘A’ due to, for instance, the dominance of the teacher-centredness), unfitting use of classroom materials (for example the over-reliance of the textbook or the Unit Introductory Sheet in classroom ‘A’).

The results also revealed how overcoming the traditional character of the teacher can improve the quality of online learning as far as CT and CC are concerned. This is because, in contrast with teacher ‘A’, teacher ‘B’ was, as Sharma (2019, p. 326) explained, a risk

taker and opened to new teaching strategies because he was always trying to incorporate new visual aids where he strived to make his pupils always attentive and talkative. This aligns with the questionnaire results, i.e., most pupils from classroom 'B' judged the teachers' presentation of the lessons and the activities employed as interesting and beneficial, in contrast with the majority of the pupils from classroom 'A' who found them unmotivating and unengaging.

Moreover, the teachers focused on the well-known activities to generate CT and CC (Sulaiman, 2012). However, there are other activities that would have made the sessions more engaging for the pupils including: Jigsaw activities⁸, interviews and information gap activity (Harizaj and Hajrulla, 2017). Furthermore, designing activities that do not target the inclusivity of the whole classroom can lead to the failure of online learning regarding CT and CC incorporation, that is why most pupils from classroom "B" appreciated the activities, whereas those from classroom "A" did not.

The results also reported that the role of Google Meet in promoting CT and supporting CC has a considerable relationship with the pupils' perception of learning and the teacher's mastery of delivering the lessons online. From the online classroom observation and the interview, we deduce that the poor presentation of the lesson online in addition to poor in-class retrieval of information will lead to poor remembrance and application of the information F2F as well as unskilled pupils regarding CT and CC. Additionally, this balance between F2F and online teaching can be the cause behind the teacher's stress and confusion, particularly in the case of teacher 'A', especially when dealing with a crowded classroom of up to 40 pupils online -in addition to F2F teaching-. This can be a highly demanding task to accomplish which may question the realistic advantage and success of e-learning in the Algerian secondary education.

Besides, the exclusion of certain pupils -because they do not own smartphones, the degree the degree of familiarity with technology or acceptance of technology (Mishra and Juwa, 2006, as cited in O'Hare, 2011)- will create unbalanced e-learning opportunities. Additionally, the pupils' lack of awareness can lead to the failure of e-learning in the

⁸ It is a cooperative learning technique where students work in groups to teach each other something about a topic to complete the assignment. Each student from each group is, therefore, considered as an 'expert' of a smaller parts of the topic.

Algerian secondary education. This includes the unawareness of critical thinking skills, unconsciousness of the impact of in-class communication due to potential pupils' anxiety to speak or fear of making mistakes (Silalahi, and Sitorus, 2015) and their overall personality that is resistant to active learning, concerned with getting good grades or simply unmotivated to learn (Aliakbari & Sadeghdaghighi, 2013).

Therefore, the teachers categorised four types of obstacles that may lead to the failure of e-learning in secondary schools: (1) cultural, (2) economic, (3) pedagogical and (4) technological which go hand in hand with the findings of Laifa et al. (2023) who grouped different obstacles into three categories: (1) Technological accessibilities, (2) Quality and skill issues and (3) Equity and social issues. Eventually, the teachers provided their views on how to successfully integrate e-learning in the Algerian secondary schools for example: developing the digital literacy of educators and pupils, enabling smartphones' equity for all pupils and creating a range of problem-solving and engaging activities that support activities done F2F leading to blended activities (Goodyear et al., 2006).

3.10. Recommendations and Limitations of the Study

This section proposes some humble recommendations for the sake of developing a safe, insightful and successful e-learning setting where long-life learning is supported. It also lists the limitations that hindered the process of research conduction and data collection.

3.10.1. Recommendations

The following represent a list of recommendations which are grouped into three categories: Cultural, technological and economic, and pedagogical.

➤ Cultural Recommendations

Raising awareness on the importance of e-learning in secondary institutions apart from universities can be achieved through two different ways. First, media awareness more notably using social media to target pupils' awareness. Second, political awareness which can be achieved through conferences and meetings that may educate parents and teachers on the advantages of online learning, critical thinking and communicative abilities as well as the significance of pupils and teachers' security when teaching/learning online hoping to reach acceptance from all the part of the concerned parties.

➤ **Technological and Economic Recommendations**

We propose assuring equity of technological devices for all pupils and teachers in the country to benefit from online learning. To reach this, stakeholders may conduct a survey to reveal the number of teachers/pupils who may not be able to afford a smartphone/Pc, then supply this category with electronic tools to ensure equity and develop digital literacy. And although we may view the action of purchasing smartphones and personal computers to be expensive, we believe that this action has to be seriously taken into consideration and planned carefully for future implications. Following the issue that both teachers encountered concerning the internet connexion, we propose in the future an equal distribution of the internet connexion to reach pupils and teachers, especially those who live in the rural areas where internet connexion is weak or not accessible at all.

We also earmark for the future development of a national application or platform that supports synchronous learning, critical thinking and communicative abilities tailored for Algerian secondary school pupils, as well as, emphasising the development of security systems to protect the identity of the pupils and their teachers throughout their educational journey in order to assure a safe learning environment.

➤ **Pedagogical Recommendations**

It is important to recommend a strong and effective training of the teachers in order to teach CT skills and CC. A revision of the content and structure of curricula and textbooks for a future blended learning mode is highly required. This is because of the potential advantages that may result from adopting a blended learning mode, this may include: flexibility of learning, developing digital literacy skills and promoting CT and CC. Additionally, we call for blended learning activities especially those which fall upon the type of ‘gamification’ regarding the age of secondary school pupils and their probable attraction towards games. We also propose designing a subject that targets CT and CC as any other subject studied in the Algerian secondary schools, perhaps naming the subject “Thinking and Communicative Skills”. As far as classroom management is concerned, we believe that it is vital to reflect on the classroom size particularly when the whole classroom is involved in online learning in order to enable the teacher to successfully and easily manage the whole classroom.

Besides and based on the fact that online learning can never replace F2F learning - because the former is a compliment of the later-, we advocate for the use of a programme to benefit from both modes of learning regarding the CT and CC in the Algerian secondary education. This process may begin with a F2F lesson instructed by the teacher, followed by an online lesson that deepens the value of the lesson and supports CT and CC, then finishing with a F2F assessment and evaluation of what has been taught/learnt. These ongoing assessments can result, perhaps, in the future enhancement of the pupils' critical thinking skills and communicative abilities (in and outside of the traditional classroom) as well as the pupils and teachers' awareness and familiarity concerning technology's benefits.

3.10.2. Limitations of the Study

To address the limitations of this study, we first acknowledge 'generalisation limitation' as the data were collected from 43 participants, i.e., only two classrooms were investigated. Second, we faced a major issue in accessing different journal articles, books and websites because they required to be purchased before being accessed. This restricted our scope of research especially in writing the literature review; that is why, we sometimes relied on secondary sources. Third, the number of online classroom observation sessions was also a handicap since it affected the expected results. We desired to conduct more than three observation sessions for each classroom; yet, because of the overloaded curriculum and the absence of designed lessons to specifically deal with critical thinking and communicative abilities, the teachers could not continue teaching online and declared that three sessions were all that they can offer to us.

3.11. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodological framework of the present study. It has also listed the different research tools used to explore how online learning can support and enhance critical thinking and communicative abilities among the participants. The mixed-methods approach, based on both quantitative and qualitative approaches, has been used to analyse the collected data. This chapter has also presented a general interpretation of the main results obtained. Moreover, it has discussed the limitations of this study and yielded some recommendations for a better e-learning integration where secondary school pupils can enhance their communicative abilities and critical thinking skills

General Conclusion

E-learning is a revolutionary mode of learning that helps in complementing the teaching/ learning process and achieve better quality outcomes. During the previous years, several studies were conducted on the benefit of e-learning without neglecting its drawbacks. However, little, if no, research has been undertaken to triangulate between e-learning, critical thinking and communicative competencies in secondary education in the Algerian context.

Therefore, the present study aimed at investigating the extent to which Google Meet as an e-learning platform can affect and promote the EFL pupils' critical thinking and communicative abilities, taking into consideration the obstacles that may hinder the development of these skills. This research work also aimed at putting forward insights to assure a successful establishment of e-learning in the Algerian secondary education. To seek answers to our research questions, we opted for a triangulation of research instruments, an online classroom observation close-ended questionnaire, an interview. Data were gathered from 43 participants to reach an understanding on e-learning integration in the Algerian secondary education.

Based on the results obtained from the online classroom observation, Google Meet can generate the pupils' critical thinking and communicative abilities to some extent for, it depends on the teacher's competency in using the platform, his strategies used to deliver the lessons online, the pupils and teachers' awareness -regarding critical thinking, communication and e-learning- and the in-class reinforcement. Eventually, this will affect the pupils' degree of attention and engagement; hence, either increasing or decreasing their critical thinking and communicative potentials. Through the online classroom observation, it was noticed that the internet connexion and the teacher's approach to online teaching are major obstacles for the success of e-learning. Additionally, the results from the pupils' questionnaire revealed that the pupils' performance and degree of interest was mirrored by the teacher's creativity and skillset. These facts confirm partially our first hypothesis.

The results of the teachers' interview showed that in order to achieve a rewarding integration of e-learning to complement the in-class learning and to promote critical thinking and communicative abilities, a thorough consideration of a number of actions is required. These include, considering the pupils' and teachers' digital literacy development, designing an interactive and flexible curriculum that supports both online learning and in-class

learning, considering the online class sizes to reduce any potential disruption that may challenge the teacher's online classroom management, creating a range of problem-solving and collaborative activities to promote pupils' engagement and thinking skills, as well as promoting equity of technological devices. These findings confirm partially our second hypothesis.

In accordance with the results of this study, we propose other areas of research to be investigated to enlarge the scope of e-learning in the Algerian secondary education. Firstly, we encourage researchers to undertake a longitudinal study on the effect of online learning in the secondary education to reveal other results that the present research work has not yielded. Second, we recommend conducting a study on the strategies that improve pupils' abilities online. We, also, invite other researchers to explore the relevance of online learning in relation to other skills (writing, listening, reading).

Third, and because pupils are more likely to be interested in learning through games, we call for the need to investigate the role of gamification in promoting active online learning in the EFL classroom. Fourth and to address the need of designing courses that target pupils' critical thinking and communicative abilities, we advocate for discovering the potentials in designing lessons that target these skills in the Algerian EFL classroom. And finally, because of the significance of e-learning, we invite researchers to develop and test -in the future- new platforms that address the pupils' needs regarding critical thinking and communicative abilities. These areas of research leave the door open for future achievements and accomplishments.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Observation Grid:

The classroom under observation:

The subject:

The stream and level:

The unit:

The date of observation:

Duration of the classroom observation session:

| Aspects under observation | The extent | | | | | Comment Section |
|--|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Online Classroom Management | Very poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent | |
| a. Teacher shows competency in using the application and its features (technology). | | | | | | |
| b. Pupils are treated equally. | | | | | | |
| c. The environment is adequate (welcoming) | | | | | | |
| d. Teacher manages time effectively | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|--|
| e. Teacher controls and remediates wrong behaviours. | | | | | | |
| 2. Teacher's performance during the lesson | Very poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent | |
| a. Teacher takes into account pupils' choices. | | | | | | |
| b. Teacher explains the lesson using a variety of materials (pictures, videos, texts... etc) | | | | | | |
| c. Teacher introduces interesting facts related to the topic. | | | | | | |
| d. Teacher's instructions make the pupils more attentive and interactive. | | | | | | |
| e. Teacher praises pupils' correct answers. | | | | | | |
| f. Teacher reinforces incorrect answers with explanations. | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|--|
| | | | | | | |
| g. Teacher focuses on the “how” and “why” aspects of the lesson more than the “what”. | | | | | | |
| h. Teacher provides feedback. | | | | | | |
| 3. Teacher fostering “think and communicate” process | | | | | | |
| Communicative skills | Very poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent | |
| b. Teacher encourages pupils to speak and communicate with each other. | | | | | | |
| c. Teacher shows competency in correcting the pupils’ pronunciation | | | | | | |
| d. Teacher shows competency in correcting the pupils’ choice of grammar/vocabulary | | | | | | |
| e. Teacher shows competency in | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p>correcting/remediating the pupils' use of appropriate language to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State points of view. - (dis)agree, - Persuade. - Summarise, - Paraphrase, - Comparing/Contrasting. | | | | | | |
| <p>f. Teacher shows competency in correcting the pupils' level of language formality (formal, informal)</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>Teacher shows competency in correction the pupils' coherence and cohesion of speech.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>g. Teacher shows competency in promoting strategic competence to support pupils' communicative breakdowns</p> | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|--|
| h. Teacher supports speaking/ Communicating through a variety of activities: - role plays - guessing games - pairs/ group debates - Show and tell | | | | | | |
| Critical thinking | Very poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent | |
| a. Teacher uses strategies to make the information understandable and memorisable. | | | | | | |
| b. Teacher urges pupils to analyse his materials (pictures, videos... etc). | | | | | | |
| c. Teacher asks open-ended questions to rise pupils' curiosity. | | | | | | |
| d. Teacher urges pupils to draw logical conclusions and to infer/deduce meaning. | | | | | | |
| e. Teacher asks pupils to justify their answers/choices. | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| f. Teacher encourages pupils to evaluate their answers and the answers of others. | | | | | | |
| g. Teacher encourages pupils to ask questions. | | | | | | |
| h. Teacher uses problem-solving and decision-making activities for language use. | | | | | | |

Appendix B: The Pupils' Questionnaire

1. In Modern Standard Arabic:

كم كانت الجلسات عبر الإنترنت ممتعة ومفيدة بالنسبة لك؟

ضع علامة لكل جملة أدناه:

| غير مثير للاهتمام أو مفيد على الإطلاق | مثير للاهتمام أو مفيد قليلاً | مثير للاهتمام أو مفيد كلياً | مثير للاهتمام أو مفيد كلياً |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| | | | التطبيق الذي استعملته للتعلم عبر الإنترنت (القسم الافتراضي) |
| | | | الطريقة التي يشرح بها أستاذي الدرس (من خلال مشاركة الصور ومقاطع الفيديو واستخدام الكتب المدرسية... إلخ) |
| | | | أستاذي يحفزني على التواصل باستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية |
| | | | أستاذي يصحح لغتي الإنجليزية |
| | | | يحفزني أستاذي على شرح وتبرير سبب قول فكري |
| | | | المشاركة في أنشطة مختلفة (عروض شفوية، وأدوار، ومناقشات، وتبادل المعلومات... إلخ) |

شكراً لتعاونك ومشاركتك

2. In English Language:

How fun and useful have online sessions been for you?

Put a tick for each sentence below:

| | Not interesting or beneficial at all | Slightly interesting or beneficial | Interesting and beneficial to some extent | Completely interesting and beneficial |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| The application I used to learn online (the virtual classroom) | | | | |
| The way my teacher presents and explains the lesson (through sharing pictures, videos, using textbook, etc.) | | | | |
| My teacher motivating me to communicate in English | | | | |
| My teacher correcting my English language | | | | |
| My teacher motivating me to explain and justify my ideas | | | | |
| Participating in different activities (oral presentations, role plays, debates, sharing information, and so on) | | | | |

Thank you for your collaboration and participation.

Appendix C: The teacher's Interview

Section one: Teacher's feedback concerning the online learning experience:

Question 1: Based on your recent experiences in online teaching, how would you describe the overall learning experience?

Question 2: Could you describe what technological device did you use for online teaching, and what is your overall perception on its effectiveness?

Question 3: Were you comfortable teaching online in parallel to your regular teaching? Why?

Question 4: If any, what positive outcomes did you infer from these sessions?

Question 5: What obstacles did you encounter while teaching online?

Section two: Teacher's Concern with Teaching Critical Thinking and Communicative Competencies Online

Question 1: According to you, to what extent was promoting critical thinking successful online and why?

Question 2: From your own experience and compared to the traditional classroom, do you feel that communication was neglected online?

Question 3: Did you notice, after your online teaching experience, any improvement in your pupils' critical thinking and communication abilities? Explain.

Section Three: Further Suggestions for Future Development of E-learning in Secondary Education

Question 1: Taking into account your online teaching involvement, do you find online platforms -as e-learning tools- effective suppliers to develop critical thinking and communicative competence among pupils of secondary schools?

Question 2: Which measures could be taken to assure a successful e-learning integration to develop critical thinking and communicative abilities in the EFL classroom?

Thank you for your collaboration and participation


**Appendix D: “Budding Scientist” Unit Introduction Sheet from classroom “A”
(Double sided)**

Unit: BUDDING SCIENTISTS

UNIT INTRODUCTION

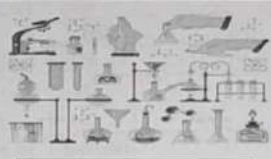
A. Match science branches (1-6) with their fields of research (A-F). Can you name other science branches?

1. Chemistry - 2. Physics - 3. Geometry - 4. Biology - 5. Computer Science - 6. Astronomy




A

The study of life and living things.



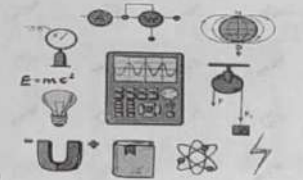
B

The scientific study of the form and interactions of substances.




C

The branch of mathematics that deals with points, lines, shapes and space.




D

The scientific study of forces such as heat, light, sound, pressure, gravity, and electricity, and the way that they affect objects.



E


The scientific study of the stars, planets, and other natural objects in space.




F

The study of computers and computing systems.


B. Match scientists (1-8) with their achievements (inventions/discoveries) and fields of research:




1
Mark Zuckerberg




2
Louis Pasteur




3
Graham Bell




4
Bill Gates




5
Thomas Edison




6
Cristopher Columbus




7
Ibn El Haythem




8
El Zahrawi




Telephone




Lightbulb




Microsoft




Camera




Facebook



Amireca



Rabies Vaccine



1st Surgical

Chemist
Surgeon
Biologist
Mathematician
Explorer
Computer Programmer
Engineer

1

My Glossary

1. Complete the chart as shown in the example using the suffixes in the columns:

| | Verb | Noun | Adjective | Meaning |
|---------|---------------|-----------|-------------------------|---|
| example | To discover | discovery | Discovered/discoverable | To find something new |
| | To invent | -ion /-or | -ive/-ed | To make/design something new |
| | To innovate | -ion | -ive | To make changes in something |
| | To observe | -ation | -able | To notice something happening |
| | To evaporate | -ion | -ive | To turn from liquid to vapour |
| | To illustrate | -ion | -ive | To make clear, to explain with examples.. |
| | To affect | -ion | -ive/-ed | To cause a change on someone or something |
| | To improve | -ment | -able/-ed | To make something better |
| | To experiment | - | -al | To make a scientific test |

2. The phrasal verbs in the box are related to technology. Match each verb with its corresponding picture:

To turn on - To turn off - To upload - To download - To back up - To plug in - To delete - To click



TEST YOUR WORD POWER

3. Fill in the blanks with words from the box:

revolution - technophile - impact - technophobe

1. Rami is such a He has to buy the latest phone.



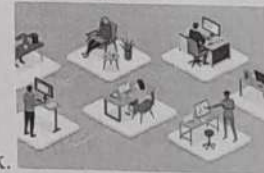
2. My uncle is a He still uses a typewriter.



3. The internet has caused a in the way we learn.



4. The internet has had an on how we communicate at work.

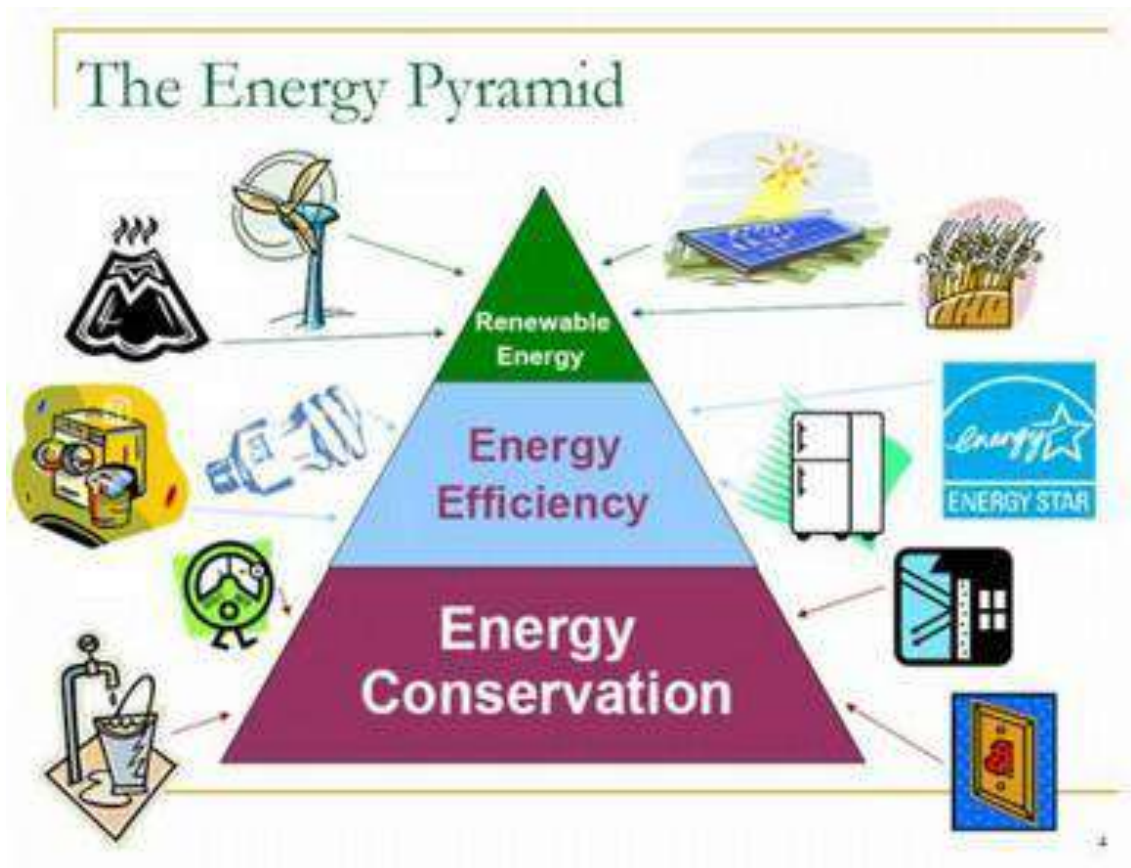


Appendix E: List of words related to technology and gadgets from classroom 'A'

 **Tech Gadgets Name List** 

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
|  Alarm Clock |  Antenna |  Calculator |  Computer |  Digital Camera |  DVD Player |  Earbuds |  Ebook |
|  Floppy Disc |  Game Console |  Hard Drive |  Headphones |  Laptop |  Memory card |  Memory stick |  Microphone |
|  Mouse |  Mp3 player |  Pda Phone |  Phone Camera |  Printer |  | | |

Appendix F: The Energy Pyramid representation, from classroom 'B'



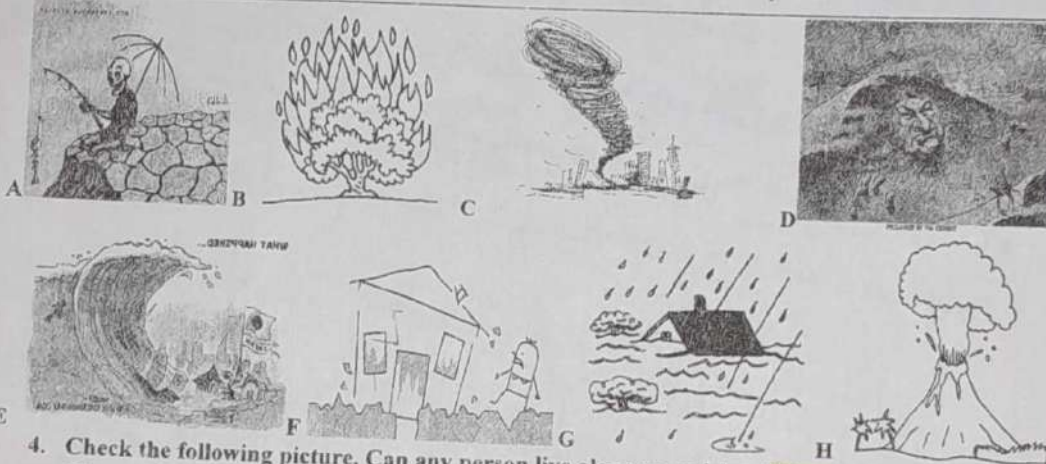
Appendix G: “No Man is an Island” Unit Introductory Sheet from classroom 'B'

Unit: No man is an Island Mini-Introduction

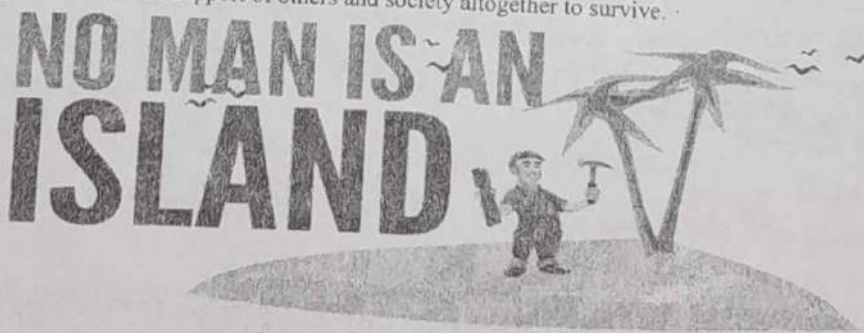
1. Puzzle: Unscramble the letters to get the synonym of the word *catastrophe*:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | D | I | E | S | R | A | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
2. Read the definitions of the natural catastrophes stated in the table, then name the pictures below:
3. What are the natural catastrophes that occur in your country?

| Natural Catastrophe | Definition |
|---------------------|---|
| Flood | a large amount of water covering an area that is usually dry. |
| Volcanic Eruption | a sudden occurrence of a violent discharge of steam and volcanic material. |
| Hurricane | a violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the western Atlantic Ocean. |
| Forest fire | an uncontrolled fire in a wooded area. |
| Sandstorm | a windstorm, especially in a desert, that blows along great clouds of sand. |
| Drought | a long period of time when there is little or no rain. |
| Earthquake | a sudden, violent shaking of the earth's surface. |
| Tsunami | an extremely large wave in the sea caused by an earthquake. |



4. Check the following picture. Can any person live alone on an island? Justify?
 Choose the correct answer: What did the man in picture mean when he said “No man is an Island”.
- a- A person can live in isolation without the support of others.
 - b- A person needs the support of others and society altogether to survive.



Types of Disasters

Natural Disasters



Men-made Disasters



Appendix I: The game of “Survivor”, from classroom ‘B’

 **Camping vocabulary**
@smartbunny_english Smart Bunny English

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| matches /'mætʃəz/ | axe /æks/ | @smartbunny_english tent /tent/ | flashlight /'flæʃlaɪt/ |
|  |  |  |  |
| first aid kit /'fɜːst eɪd kɪt/ | @smartbunny_english map /mæp/ | sleeping bag /'sliːpɪŋ bæɡ/ | pot /pɒt/ |
|  |  |  |  |
| penknife /'pennaɪf/ | @smartbunny_english rope /rəʊp/ | gas stove /gæs stəʊv/ | spade /'speɪd/ |

زاد الطلب على التعلم الإلكتروني بشكل كبير في السنوات القليلة الماضية حيث يُعتقد أنه يزود المتعلمين بمهارات تتجاوز ما يقدمه القسم الدراسي التقليدي، خاصة في أقسام تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أين يتم التركيز على قدرات التواصل والتفكير النقدي. يهدف هذا العمل البحثي إلى اختبار آثار التعلم عبر الإنترنت - من خلال منصة قوقل ميبت - على التفكير النقدي والقدرات التواصلية للتلاميذ في التعليم الثانوي الجزائري، مع مراعات العقبات المحتملة التي قد يواجهها المعلمون والتلاميذ. كما يسعى إلى التحقق في كيفية تطبيق منصة قوقل ميبت بشكل فعال لضمان تكامل ناجح للتعلم عبر الإنترنت وتعزيز التفكير النقدي وكفاءات التواصل لدى التلاميذ. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، شارك في هذه الدراسة عدد اجمالي من التلاميذ بلغ 41 تلميذا ومدرسان للغة الإنجليزية. تم استخدام طريقة التثليث في البحث العلمي والتي شملت الملاحظة عبر الإنترنت، مقابلة واستبيان. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها من خلال نهج الأساليب المختلطة. وبناء على ذلك، أشارت النتائج إلى أن تطبيق قوقل ميبت كمنصة عبر الإنترنت امر ممكن وأنه يمكن أيضاً تكثيف التفكير النقدي والقدرات التواصلية للتلاميذ استنادا بالعديد من المعايير من بينها مجموعة المهارات الرقمية للمعلم وكذا التعزيز داخل القسم. وعلاوة على ذلك، فإن إقامتها في المستقبل يتطلب اعتبارات جديدة خاصة التربوية والثقافية والتكنولوجية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم الإلكتروني، التفكير النقدي، الكفاءات التواصلية، التعليم الثانوي، قسم تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

Summary

The demand of e-learning has dramatically increased in the last few years since it is believed to supply learners with skills beyond what the traditional classroom offers, especially in EFL classrooms where the focus is put on communicative and critical thinking abilities. This research work aims to test the effect of online learning -through Google Meet platform- on pupils' critical thinking and communicative abilities in the Algerian secondary education taking into account the potential obstacles that teachers and pupils may face. It also seeks to investigate how Google Meet can effectively be implemented to assure a successful integration of online learning and enhance pupils' critical thinking and communicative competencies. To reach this aim, a total number of 41 pupils and two English teachers participated in this study. A triangulation of research instruments encompassing an online classroom observation, an interview and a questionnaire were used. The collected data were analysed through the mixed-methods approach. Therefore, the results indicated that Google Meet as an online application can be implemented and can also intensify the pupils' critical thinking and communicative abilities depending on several measurements, among them the teacher's digital skills and the in-class reinforcement. Moreover, its future establishment requires serious pedagogical, cultural and technological considerations.

Keywords: E-learning, Critical thinking, Communicative competencies, secondary education, EFL classroom.

Résumé

La demande en e-learning a considérablement augmenté ces dernières années, car on pense qu'il fournit aux apprenants des compétences au-delà de ce que la salle de classe traditionnelle offre, en particulier dans les classes EFL où l'accent est mis sur les capacités de communication et de pensée critique. Ce travail de recherche vise à tester l'effet de l'apprentissage en ligne -via la plateforme Google Meet- sur la pensée critique et les capacités de communication des élèves dans l'enseignement secondaire algérien en tenant compte des obstacles potentiels auxquels les enseignants et les élèves peuvent être confrontés. Il cherche également à déterminer comment Google Meet peut être mis en œuvre efficacement pour assurer une intégration réussie de l'apprentissage en ligne et améliorer la

pensée critique et les compétences de communication des élèves. Pour atteindre cet objectif, un total de 41 élèves et deux professeurs d'anglais ont participé à cette étude. Une triangulation des instruments de recherche englobant une observation en classe en ligne, une interview et un questionnaire a été utilisée. Les données recueillies ont été analysées selon la méthode mixte. Par conséquent, les résultats ont indiqué que Google Meet en tant qu'application en ligne peut être mis en œuvre et peut également intensifier la pensée critique et les capacités de communication des élèves en fonction de plusieurs mesures, parmi lesquelles les compétences numériques de l'enseignant et le renforcement en classe. De plus, sa mise en place future nécessite de sérieuses considérations pédagogiques, culturelles et technologiques.

Mot clés : E-learning, la pensée critique, les compétences communicatives, l'enseignement secondaire, la classe EFL.