

Image Analysis as a Teaching Strategy to Enhance Learners' Critical Thinking Skills in Oral Expression Classroom

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Abstract:

Language learning is an active process that requires the integration of the four skills .The ability to communicate, think critically and express ideas effectively and be fluent, is one of the key concepts of mastering any language, therefore adopting the right teaching practices in which students can logically and reasonably share knowledge and utterances needed for any learning activity is of a paramount importance. Learners are required to shape their ability to think deeply and creatively to make correct decisions .Forming these skills is considered as one of the foreign language teachers' objectives particularly within Algerian context. Due to its importance, critical thinking is designed among classroom practices in different explicit ways like visual materials to strengthen students' creativity and improve not only their academic achievements but also bridge the gap between what they learn in schools with what they encounter in real life. The present research paper demonstrates the feasibility of enhancing critical thinking skills through the use of image analysis in oral class. We examined the impact of analysing images in fostering critical thinking skills in oral expression class through an action research that was conducted in the first semester at the University of Belhadj Bouchaib Ain Temouchent. A mixed method is adopted in order to collect data about learners' critical and analytical thinking skills. The results show that the use of images and picture based activities are useful tools for EFL learners to develop analytical skills that could be served as motivating factor to enhance learners' critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Analytical skills, Critical thinking skills, Image analysis, Oral class

1. Introduction

The cultivation of critical thinking skills has emerged as fundamental objective in modern education, particularly in language environments where the ability to communicate

effectively and analyse complex information is paramount. In the oral expression classroom Learners must not only develop linguistic competences but also engage in cognitive processes that enhance their capacity for analysis, evaluation and reasoning. Among the innovative pedagogical strategies that address this dual objective is the integration of image analysis as a tool for stimulating CT and improving oral communication skills. Image analysis when employed as an instructional technique, provides a rich, multidimensional platform through which learners can engage with visual stimuli, prompting them to interpret, infer and articulate their insights. Images, when carefully selected and strategically used, serve as powerful visual stimuli that engage learners in multiple levels, encouraging them to interpret, infer, and articulate their thoughts. By critically examining images, students are encouraged to delve deeper into their cognitive processes, exploring various interpretations and perspectives, thereby honing their ability to construct and defend arguments. Moreover, this strategy helps bridge the gap between abstract thinking and practical language use, empowering learners to explore diverse perspectives and form well-constructed responses. The use of images in this context not only enhances learners' oral proficiency but also strengthens their CT abilities, fostering skills that are essential both in academic settings and in broader societal discourse.

As mentioned above, it is fundamental to take into account that the skills and abilities needed for imagination to generating ideas, questions and hypotheses, hence, will encourage them to take 'sensible risks' in their work that is important for building up their creative confidence. Therefore they learn how to actively participate in discovering learning capacities, make their own analysis, judgments and solve problems. By this learners will know how to develop the ability of thinking critically. As the main objective is fostering learners' critical thinking skills, central is the role of the chosen picture -based activities used for analysis opting for the ones that fit their level of interest. The aim behind the choice of this medium is to assist Second year LMD students in developing analytical and critical thinking skills in oral class. This study will examine the theoretical foundations of image-based learning, its practical applications in oral language instruction, and its impact on students' ability to think critically and communicate effectively. We believe that thinking critically helps the students to think outside the box since it involves a set of cognitive skills, such as identifying complex issues, gathering and evaluating information to make correct decisions. Through the exploration of visual stimuli and the practical applications of image-based learning in oral language instruction, learners are encouraged to transcend surface - level observations, and engage in deeper analytical and evaluative processes. Therefore, fostering such skills is more interesting and likely to lead to academic achievements. In fact, higher education seeks to push students towards assessing their strengths and weaknesses where they can intelligently find ways to enable them speak, participate, share their ideas, thoughts and manage using the target language correctly and purposefully.

Review of the Literature

2.1 A brief overview of Critical Thinking

The word Critical thinking (CT) originates from Socrates' investigation of thinking through questioning in the 25th century BC. He demonstrated that people should ask deep questions that stimulate profound and logical thinking supported by arguments. His method of questioning is now called "Socratic Questioning". There has been a debate about whether the notion of critical thinking is clearly defined or not. Some scholars argue that is a broad scope (Mcpeck 1990). The question of whether critical thinking has a precise definition has been discussed. While Cottrell (2005) asserted that (CT) is a cognitive activity, focusing on argumentation, which requires the use of the mind, and fluency in communication—two crucial and necessary skills that language teachers and learners need to develop for their academic and social success.

Hogan (2006) suggests, however, that it is very important to define notions of critical thinking skills prior to the application of any strategy. The concept of (CT) can be expressed in a variety of definitions, depending on one's purpose. Many educators and researchers have also believed that engaging in (CT) requires the particular skills and dispositions (Giancarlo et al. 2004; Fisher 2001; Facione et al. 1995). According to Facione (2000), the possession of skills enables us to perform better. In the case of thinking skills, these can improve the quality of and effectiveness of thinking. Ennis (1991) proposed that critical thinking skills could be categorised into clarification skills, basic decision-making skills, inference skills and the skills of supposition and integration.

(CT) refers to the deep thinking that an individual possesses about a particular aspect, it is also associated with quality thinking, the ability to think deeply, critically and in a logic way to make connections, and build strong arguments to understand a message. (CT) entails three major stages: 1) collecting and filtering information from or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication; 2) conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating the collected information, and 3) constructing the understanding of a problem and offering a solution (Dewey, 1982; Scriven & Paul, 2009). When the three levels work simultaneously, they develop the ability of (CT) to 'construct meaning and articulate and evaluate arguments, as well as evaluate sources and support' (Mazer, Hunt, & Kuznekoff, 2007, p. 176). There has been a debate about whether the notion of (CT) is clearly defined or not. Some scholars argue that is a broad scope (Mcpeck 1990), whereas Cottrell (2005) asserted that (CT) is a cognitive activity, focusing on argumentation, which requires the use of the mind and to communicate fluently are two important and necessary skills that language teachers and learners need to develop for their academic and social success.

2.2 Critical thinking Vs analytical thinking

Analytical thinking refers to the cognitive ability of breaking down information into components and understanding why and how they are interconnected. Spaska et al (2021) identify the key components of analytical thinking as: "...in-depth search, data analysis and evaluation, problem-solving, and decision-making." A basic difference between critical

thinking and analytical thinking is that the later deals with examining information, collecting the facts through the use of reasoning and logic whereas critical thinking is the ability to seek information analyse alternatives to make conclusions and forming opinion. Thus analytical thinking is a sub skill in (CT).

2.3 Critical thinking in language teaching

Teaching (CT) in the language classroom has gained lot of importance, different studies have confirmed the role of critical thinking in improving FL writing ability; language proficiency (Liaw, 2007); and oral communication ability (Kusaka & Robertson, 2008.). In fact, language learners who own the ability to develop their (CT) skills are willing to do activities of which other students may see hard to accomplish. Implied in the study by (Mahyuddin et al.2004) is that language learners with (CT) ability are capable of thinking critically and creatively in order to achieve the goals of the curricula ,capable of making decisions and solving problems: capable of treating thinking skills as lifelong learning; and finally intellectually ,physically ,emotionally, and spiritually well-balanced. In fact, the effectiveness of language teaching depends on how teachers transmit suitable practices and implement materials, methods in which learners can consider a purposeful and relevant extension of their horizons (Widdowson1990).

1.4 Approaches Used in Fostering Critical Thinking

Fostering (CT) in educational settings requires the implementation of diverse, research-backed approaches that challenge students to engage deeply with content and develop their analytical abilities. The Socratic Method, for instance uses systematic questioning to provoke reflective thinking and intellectual inquiry, compelling students to defend their ideas while continuously re- evaluating their assumptions. This method enhances students' ability to scrutinise concepts and refine their reasoning. Another widely used approach, Problem-Based Learning (PBL), places learners in real world, complex scenarios that demand critical analysis and problem solving. PBL encourages students to take ownership of their learning, applying theoretical knowledge in practical contexts and improving their ability to form hypotheses and evaluate solutions. Collaborative learning further supports critical thinking by creating environments in which learners exchange ideas, critique each other's perspectives, and develop coherent arguments. Through group discussions, peer reviews, and teamwork, students are exposed to diverse viewpoints, fostering their ability to evaluate and synthesize information critically. Similarly, Inquiry Based Learning promotes intellectual autonomy by allowing students to pursue their own questions and engage in self-directed investigation. This approach shifts the focus from passive reception of information to active exploration, requiring students to assess sources, analyze data, and form reasoned conclusions based on evidence. The case study analysis approach, offend employed in disciplines such as law, business, and medicine, immerses students in real life scenarios, prompting them to dissect complex situations, identify problems and propose viable solutions. This method strengthens critical thinking by simulating real- world decision making encouraging learners to apply

theoretical frameworks to practical challenges. Structured debates also play a pivotal in developing critical thinking, as students must defend their positions, respond to counterarguments and critically evaluate evidence in real-time. Debates sharpen students' ability to think on their feet, communicate persuasively, and appreciate multiple perspectives on contentious issues.

Language teachers are among the practitioners who can greatly influence the type of learning chosen by language learners. Therefore they are responsible for promoting (CT) in learners since there is no one way to foster a skill in learners. Critical thinking skills can be taught directly or explicitly as mentioned by Ennis (1992; in Emilia, 2005; Talaska, 1992) who suggested three broad approaches to the teaching it as follows; the general approach, the infusion approach, and the mixed approach. The first approach deals with the teaching of specific skills using non-school contexts (Sternberg, 1987, as cited in Emilia, 2005). The second approach is the infusion approach, according to Ennis (1992; as cited in Emilia 2005), involves infusion of critical thinking instruction in subject matter instruction which students are encouraged to think critically about the subject. The mixed approach combines both practices from general and infusion approach.

2.4.1 Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Domain

Bloom's Taxonomy was created by Benjamin Bloom in 1956, published as a kind of classification of learning outcomes and objectives that have, in the more than half-century since, been used for teaching, questions and assessments. It portrays the process of intelligent guesses and analysing information and knowledge processes. It has proven to be a useful and an influential tool (Paul, 1985).

Bloom's taxonomy consists of six levels of thinking: "(a) knowledge, (b) comprehension, and (c) application represent lower-order thinking skills; (d) analysis, (e) synthesis, and (f) evaluation signify higher-order thinking or (CT) skills" (Bloom, 1984, p. 18). The levels are ordered from simple to complex in terms of the development of critical thinking. The steps to engage in (CT) are the higher order skills of Bloom's taxonomy, which only can be reached based upon prerequisites of the lower level (Brown, 2004). Furthermore, some categories in Bloom's hierarchy embodied terms that confuse teachers and learners in their effort to optimize the usage of Bloom's hierarchy (Krathwohl, 2002).

Brown(2004 , p. 76) declared a key framework for encouraging (CT) is Bloom's taxonomy, which essentially instructs students on how to "establish clarity and accuracy, assess relevance, and demonstrate the ability to think in depth." In order to assess students' (CT), teachers might utilize Bloom's taxonomy as a guide for creating lesson plans, setting learning objectives, interviewing students, planning class activities, and creating assessments (Anderson, 1994). A multi-tiered model of knowledge creation and thinking, Bloom's taxonomy is "convenient, quick, efficient, testable, measurable, and accountable" (Berry, 2004, p. 464).

By understanding the hierarchical nature of learning objectives, teachers can design activities and assessments that align with students' cognitive abilities and encourage higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). The taxonomy has been widely used in education to enhance the learning process and promote critical thinking skills among students.

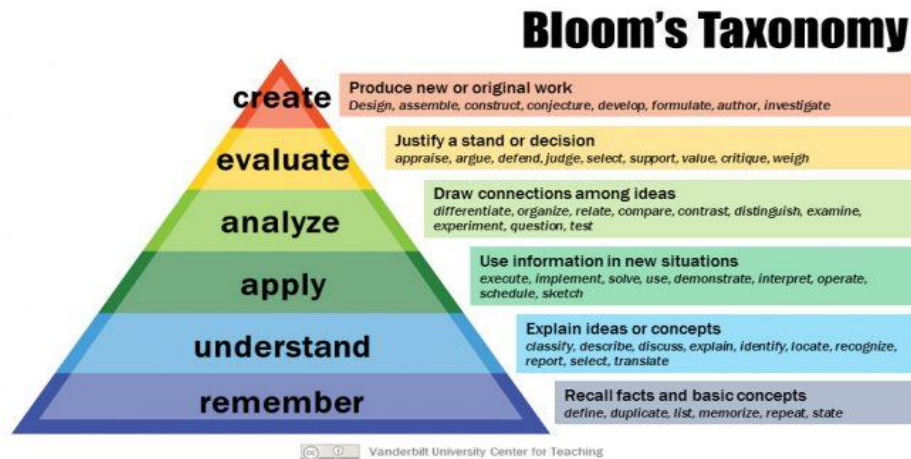


Figure01: Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Domain

2.5 Oral language and critical thinking

Language learning is an interactive process that requires communication between teachers and students, as well as students with other students. Therefore, oral language involves the use of both verbal and non-verbal ways to communicate and negotiate meaning. To communicate effectively in the target language, learners integrate multiple skills for an active learning process; they construct knowledge, create utterances, debate and think logically to identify relationships between ideas. When speaking, learners need to articulate their ideas coherently, give constructing and convincing arguments that necessitate clear thinking and logical organization of thoughts. In spoken and oral communication, language interaction is produced and negotiated differently than it is in written form. Speakers and listeners deal with language production and processing simultaneously. But these two skills are highly sensitive and greatly dependent on time constraints which mean that they must process language as they go without any opportunity to go back, check and make necessary changes. Speakers must also consider the relationship with others or to whom they are listened and based on the meaning they wish to convey adjust their language (Thornbury, 2007).

Oral language development and (CT) are deeply intertwined, as the ability to communicate ideas verbally often hinges on the capacity for thoughtful analysis, reasoning, and reflection. In an educational context, fostering (CT) through oral language involves encouraging students to articulate their thoughts clearly, defend ideas logically, and engage in meaningful dialogue with others. Speaking is not merely about fluency or accuracy; it is about expressing well-structured arguments synthesizing information, and critically evaluating the content of one's speech as well as that of others. Oral language tasks that promote critical thinking require students to engage with content on a deeper cognitive level. These tasks may

include structure discussions, debates, presentations, and group dialogues, where learners are encouraged to critically examine ideas, support their claims with evidence, and reflect on alternative viewpoints. As students articulate their thoughts, they develop metacognitive skills, such as the ability to evaluate their own reasoning, identify biases or gaps in logic, and adapt their communication strategies accordingly. Furthermore, Oral language provides a dynamic platform for immediate feedback, allowing learners to revise and refine their arguments in real-time. Engaging in dialogues encourages learners to listen actively, question assumptions, and consider the implications of their ideas. It also promotes higher order thinking, as students must not only process information but also analyse, synthesise, and evaluate it before expressing it verbally. This recursive process of speaking, listening, and thinking fosters an on-going cycle of critical engagement with content. In the classroom, structured oral language activities like debates or case discussions simulate real world communication challenges, enhancing students' ability to think critically under pressure. For example, in a debate, learners must anticipate counter arguments, respond in a coherent manner, and adjust their viewpoints based on new information. This dynamic process sharpens not only the verbal fluency but also their (CT), as it requires constant analysis and evaluation of ideas in real-time. Based on the above explanation; oral language and (CT) are closely interconnected and play an important role in the development of effective communication. Facione (2006) believes that the following skills build up the very core of (CT) : interpretation, inference, explanation, self-regulation, and evaluation of one's own judgments.

Thus, oral language serves as both a medium and a tool for (CT) .As students develop their oral language skills, they simultaneously cultivate the ability to thinking critically, enhancing their capacity to reason, evaluate information, and communicate effectively in diverse contexts .By integrating oral language development with (CT) instruction, educators can help students become more reflective, articulate, and capable of navigating complex ideas and discussions.

2.5.1 The use of images in developing critical thinking

Images are a part of visual literacy which is used for constructing meaning and conveying accurate messages. In foreign language teaching and learning, interpreting a picture involves the learners to be active communicators of the target language. Pictures are considered among the well-selected materials that provoke a discussion and pave the way for students to imagine, when those pictures are stimulating their interest and intrigue their attention they will talk (cited in Kieran Donaghy and Daniel Xerri 2017).This visual imagery supports the learning process in various ways, such as directing attention to the topic and motivating the learners by making the language more accessible and stimulating. Increasing the number of potential pathways to learning is one of the fundamental goals for teachers and pairing visual imagery with linguistic text is one possible route within the foreign language classroom.

Images are a crucial instrument which develop learners' critical thinking skills, because they portray ideas around diverse social aspects through multiple layers of meaning (Emmison & Smith, 2000). In an age gradually dominated by visual materials, it becomes essential to understand how our visual processing system works, how our visual cognition is

shaped by different cultural and socio-political influences, and how visual messages can be transferred and shaped to elicit specific responses.

Recent cognitive research has determined that our information processing system consists of three main memory structures sensory memory, working memory, and long term memory (Malamed, 2009, p. 22). In the first stage of memory when light emanates from a screen, it reflects an image that is briefly created in our short term sensory memory, the image then moves to working memory where it becomes part of our awareness and linked to our existing knowledge to be encoded for the first impression. At this stage the brain determines whether the image has been seen before, whether it can be compared to something we already know or consider and whether it can be accepted and categorized. At this level our brain receives this as perception. At the end of the process, our memory focuses on the part of the image perceived and encoded to transfer it to our long-term memory from which we can later retrieve the information.

For Sturken and Cartwright (2009), the meanings of images are negotiated according to particular historical and social contexts. In relation to this, Mitchell (2005) suggests that instead of asking “what pictures want”, it should be the exchange between the image and the beholder Sullivan’s (2005) view is that interpreting images should be considered as the result of dialogue among individuals’ backgrounds and the picture. Barthes (1967) also supports the construction of a critical viewer who practices analytical looking he explains that images, as texts, are built into the beholding action and this is filtered by political and cultural standpoint of the viewer.

In the speaking language classroom, producing a high level of participation and motivation for EFL learners is so challenging, since learners approach this skill differently, they need creative ways to construct their own knowledge, reflect on what they learn. Learners may become proficient language users if they have motivation and are taught the ways of displaying critical thinking in foreign language usage, which signifies that the learners must have reflection on their production of ideas, and they may critically support those ideas with logical details (Rafi, 1999). Therefore, the process of analysing pictures involves deep interpretation by learners so that to answer the questions of what why and how. These questions lead to captivate the learners’ cognitive processes to think in an intelligent and logic way towards what is presented in the picture. Through this active learning strategy, it is expected that students can actively devote and engage themselves in learning processes and develop necessary skills for constructing, creating, and sharing the knowledge as an individual and also working in a group or as a team member.

3. Methodology

3.1 Context

The study took place at the University of Belhadj Bouchaib Ain Temouchent Algeria during the

Academic year 2019-2020. This university was created in 2009 as a center of higher education ,then it is recently transformed into a university named under the Martyr ‘‘Belhadj Bouchaib’’. It consists of five faculties; Faculty of Economics and Management, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, Faculty of Science and Technology, Faculty of Languages, and Faculty of Biology.

The course being investigated in this study was Oral Expression .Based on the curriculum, the course objective is to teach listening and speaking skills, furthermore, enable learners to improve their speaking abilities and communication through the variety use of activities and authentic materials in which they practise the real use of the English language, and express their ideas, perform tasks, discuss and debate different topics.

As far as this research is concerned, the researcher seeks to answer the following questions:

- Are students aware of using their critical thinking skills?
- To what extent does analysing images enhance learners’ critical thinking in oral class?
- Has this strategy proved beneficial?

In setting out to answer these questions, we have proposed that

- Students are conscious of their use of critical thinking skills.
- The integration of image analysis in oral expression leads to the mastery of and boosting learners’ critical thinking skills.
- This strategy proved to have positive impact on learners’ critical thinking skills.

3.2 Participants:

The participants of the present study consists of Second year LMD students ,at the department of English ,University of Ain Temouchent ,who studied Oral expression module for one year ,they were divided into 2 groups (Group 1: 24 students, Group 2 : 26 students) which means the population contains 50 students . In our random sampling, we have divided the groups into 4 subgroups composed of subgroups A group1(12 students) and subgroup group2 (12students) .The first is the control group and the second is the experimental. The two groups studied the same course contents prescribed by the syllabus on the same days (Tuesday and Thursday) for 90minutes each with the teacher –researcher.

Variables	Respondents/24	%
<i>Very good</i>	8	33.33
<i>Good</i>	10	41.66
<i>Average</i>	5	20.83
<i>Need work</i>	1	4.16
<i>No answer</i>	0	0
<i>Total</i>	24	100

Table 1.3 Students (Levels in English)

3.3 Procedures:

3.3.1 Action Research

Aims at improving teaching and learning, bringing about change and involves a cyclical process involving four stages; plan, act, observe and Revise. It aims at understanding what happens and why it happens the way it does. Regardless of how much he/she knows , the researcher undertaking an action research is curious about the topic of investigation “Anyone and everyone can do action research. You do not need any specialized equipment or knowledge. All you need is creativity, curiosity and a willingness to engage” cited in Niff, Lomax, & Whitehead, 2003). And that was the reason behind conducting this type of research.

The current research is based on a mixed approach using data collection tools: classroom observation tests and the experiment. The two groups were randomly assigned to be experimental and control group for the present study.

In addition to designing lesson plans, and classroom observation, the teacher distributed the pre-test to the targeted group. The test includes selected competencies/skills of (CT) associated to bloom’s taxonomy (understanding, applying, evaluating.)

3.3.2 The intervention

The intervention was the teaching of analytical skills to boost (CT) skills through the use of images and picture based activities in the oral context .The framework adopted in developing the teaching model was carried out by an exercise developed by Stella Ting-Toomey called “Describe, Interpret, Evaluate” (See-Think-Feel) described in Figure 2.

See/Describe	Think/Interpret	Feel/Evaluate
Learners observe a picture then describe what they see	Learners answer the question of ‘why is it happening?’	Learners evaluate their shared ideas
Learners focus on describing the formal elements of what they see like: line colour, composition, texture..ect	Learners focus on deep vision of the picture and they try to think of the combination of what they see and what they understand from the picture	Learners at this level try to develop opinions, exchange ideas to evaluate the notion introduced through the image, and create new understanding for what they see.
The teacher help with questions: In the picture I can see.... There’s/There are It looks like a ...	The teacher guides at this phase by asking the question: ‘Can anyone guess why is it happening?’ Learners answers are based on guesses.	The teacher guide students through; answering questions like: What ideas can you add? Do you agree that...? What do you think..? Is that your opinion?

Figure 2. Adopted from Stella Ting-Toomey 2005 model to teach analytical skills.(cited in Opp-Beckman, L., Klinghammer, S. J (2006).

3.4 Description and aim of classroom observation

In the present study, the researcher conducted both a pre and post observation .First the pre observation was carried out during the first semester of the academic year (2019-2020). The researcher relied on an observation grid to record the data, and the main criteria that he evaluated were: the students’ use of verbal and non-verbal communication, the way they

answered instructions, interpretation of images, the use of cognitive skills .These criteria were based according to the dependent variable (Critical thinking skills). Some of them were designed by the researcher; whereas, others were extracted from Bloom’s Taxonomy of cognitive domain (Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric) to assess and mark students (CT) ability into six criteria: Communication, Analysis, Problem Solving, Evaluation, Synthesis and Reflection in each interaction through image-based activities.

The pre-test aimed at finding out the students' ability in critical thinking before they are treated with the image analysis technique. Second, post-observation took only three weeks and at the end of each session. The post-test is conducted to measure the enhancement of students’ critical thinking skills after they have been taught with new strategy. To measure the students' critical thinking, and assess their speaking ability, the researcher gave students an evaluation checklist to explore deeply his students’ answers and opinion towards the use of the new strategy in oral session.

The aim of the observation was to compare between the control group and experimental one before and after the implementation of image-analysis strategy to highlight whether there is a change in terms of students’ participation and (CT) skills enhancement in speaking.

4. Results and discussions

- **Question 1** *Are students aware of using their critical thinking skills? If yes. How?*

On whether or not students are aware about the use of (CT) skills in the oral class, such as remembering, analyzing ideas, evaluating contents to manage a discussion. Students used varied techniques to think critically. The strategy adopted by the teacher was directed by a set of questions to stimulate ideas about the topic. Learners were asked first about the meaning of critical thinking. For them, what makes a critical thinker is the ability to give arguments, defend opinions and think carefully before they speak. In addition to having good knowledge, some students (20%) believe that (CT) skills are strategies they use to communicate effectively in order to persuade their classmates in a debate. Others see that (CT) skills are related to their performance in speaking.

Learners before speaking, use multiple ways to prepare themselves for answering the instruction, this involves the activation of their mental or thought processes .Before they utter their first words in communicating items presented in the oral class, learners find themselves facing the obstacles of how well they will speak the language, and so they are confused to choose the words that are appropriate during a conversation. That is why it is so important for them to think first. According to Torkey (2006), learners at the pre- speaking stage plan the idea inside their minds so they will think what they want to speak, and formulate the information or idea before producing the speech act. The analysis of the Pre-questionnaire results is shown below:

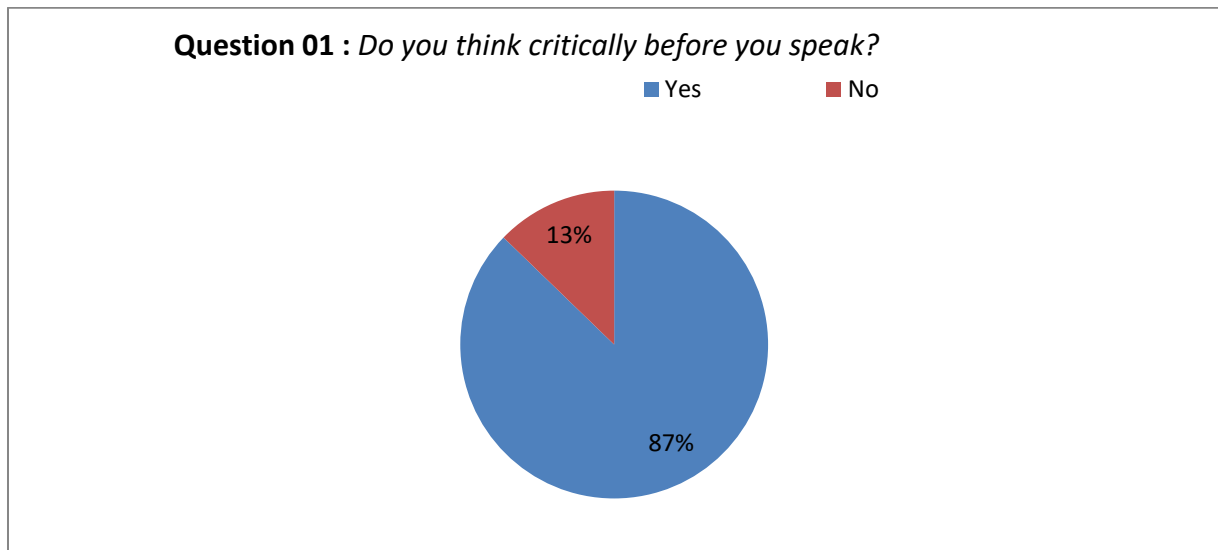


Figure 03: Students' awareness of critical thinking use

As far awareness is concerned, the researcher notices that the majority of learners believe that they think before they speak, but they embark on the task differently, some are aware of the skills and the strategies they use such as; using prior knowledge, interpreting the content, analyzing the information, using logical connections between ideas, giving and evaluating arguments conveyed through the message. With a few exceptions, some learners consider thinking important but they are not fully aware of what strategies and skills they use to think logically and critically. In fact, what makes a good critical thinker during the oral session is the ability to form strong reasons, use higher order thinking skills which enable the reflection of ideas and problem solving.

In the pre-test, the students had to work in pairs to answer a free topic (how would you survive in a deserted island?) .The discussion was raised to explore if students are able to find solutions for the problem. The researcher saw that among the (87 %) students who believe that they think critically before they speak, only few of them (32 %) could define the main problem in their own words, question the nature of the problem and draw a mind mapping to solve it, others just think superficially about available solutions given by their classmates. Moreover, their communicative abilities reduced according to the lack of content knowledge and validity of their arguments.

Question 2 *To what extent does analysing images enhance learners' critical thinking in oral class?*

During the lesson, the teacher selects a set of speaking activities which were developed into three stages: (1) – Describing: - Students only observe what they see and describe without thinking, the picture given in terms of (color, size, etc.) . In order to proceed, the teacher researcher guides her students through questioning methods which were based on Socratic model questioning technique to help students think critically and improve their thinking speaking ability.

In the interpreting stage, 65 % students analyze the content of the picture, shape their understanding of the items presented through linking what they see with what the picture wants to convey. Moreover, they answer questions in forms of guesses; at this level students become curious and aware of whether the idea they want to share is useful or not .Hence, the attempts students make to answer this task-based instruction enable them to think logically, self-evaluate their progress, and learn how to build strong arguments to communicate effectively during the learning process. At the last stage of evaluating- the students synthesize the ideas given in pairs and in groups, negotiate meaning and give other arguments to defend their opinions. The key themes covered through the observation were illustrated in the following table.

N°	Observed aspects	Students conditions	
		Yes	No
1	<i>Students give their opinion in the class</i>	80%	20%
2	<i>Asking a question</i>	65%	35%
3	<i>Answer the question</i>	59%	41%
4	<i>Make a conclusion</i>	40%	60%
5	<i>Talk to each other in the class use English</i>	82%	18%
6	<i>Correct each other</i>	20%	80%
7	<i>Self-evaluation</i>	68%	32%
8	<i>Identify, define, enumerate, analyze something</i>	65%	65%
9	<i>Generating ideas</i>	40%	70%
10	<i>Recognizing the main information</i>	49%	50%
11	<i>Build strong arguments</i>	50%	50%

Table2.4 Observation Sheet

Based on the observation it can be implied that the teaching and learning process functions effectively. The students were active and easily conditioned during the lesson. According to Waldman (2016) , a key component of a successful classroom is students' active participation in the learning process on all levels-mentally, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Before students can succeed academically , they must feel comfortable, welcomed, and respected. Personalizing learning helps students improve skills including thinking critically, using knowledge and information to solve complex problems, working collaboratively, communicating effectively, learning how to learn, and developing academic mindsets that would greatly increase students engagement (Raccoon gang ,2018).The results demonstrate two things. First, the majority of students are able to talk in English, using varied vocabulary, interact with each other through asking and answering questions, and expressing their opinions . Second, students are able to analyze, give opinion and build strong arguments during discussions through image illustration.

Besides, the participants exhibited a positive attitude toward the technique of using images in improving (CT) ability though they had no more opportunities to participate in the activities when they were in the classes. As a result, the majority of them believe they are

poor thinkers in English for different reasons such as a lack of vocabulary linked to the motion, fear of making grammar mistakes when speaking English, etc.

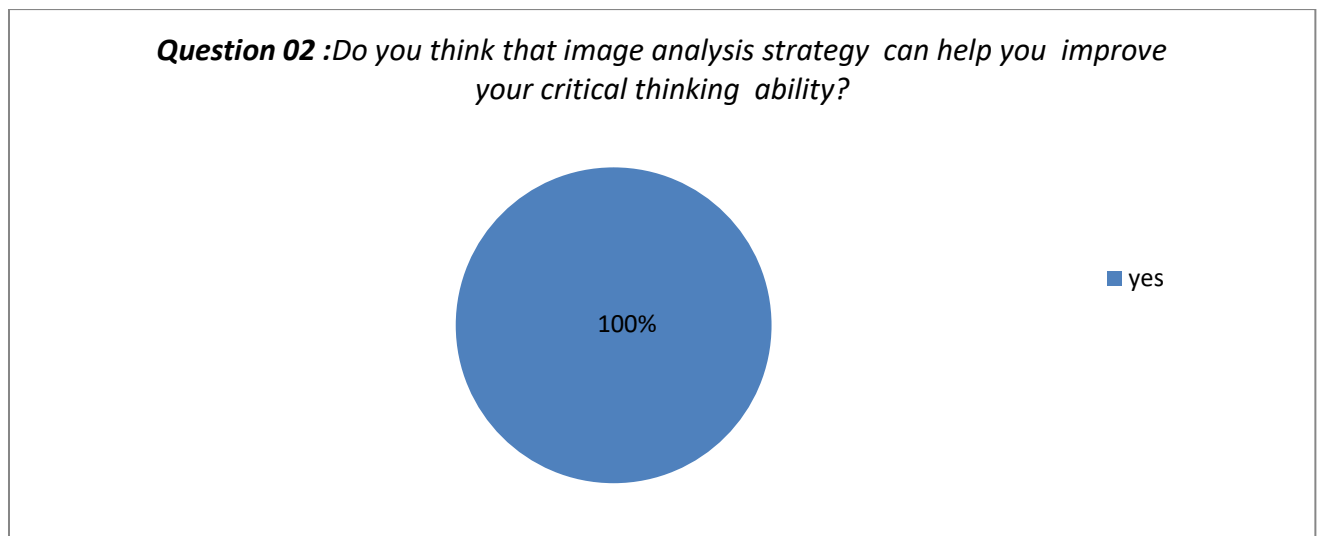


Figure 04 The proportion of students who agree that image analysis strategy can help them improve their critical thinking ability or not

It can be seen from the given graph that all the surveyed students (100%) agreed that the strategy could help them improve their critical thinking skills. To reach further details about the present study, the researcher included another questionnaire item where the participants were asked about the skills enhanced in (CT). The selected questions were developed from the Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric (HCTSR) to test the development and evaluation of (CT). The implications of these findings are discussed in the following pie chart.

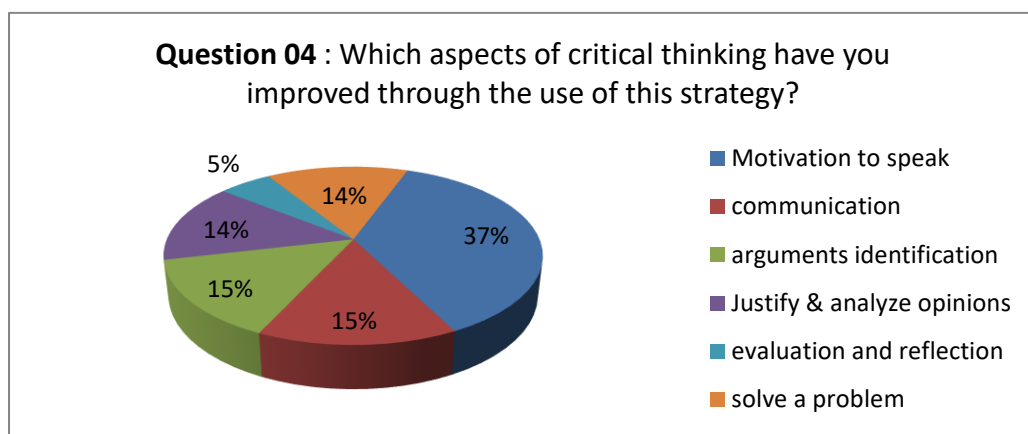


Figure 05: Students' critical thinking skills and other aspects percentages.

Overall, it was found that almost (52 %) of the participants are motivated to speak in English. In other words, students participate orally and use the language proficiently to

communicate during the task-based instruction to convey meanings. In order to develop good communication, students use arguing strategies, express their opinion using multiple expression such as (I believe, in my opinion..ect) to justify their own thinking .(15%) of the students believe that they can easily identify appropriate arguments . Problem solving and analysis were other aspects that have been improved (14% of the students). The researcher found out that the students can communicate effectively through arguing and giving logical reasons, better and more clearly. Besides, only (5%) of them show that they can evaluate, and reflect on their own ideas. This is mainly due to the lack of vocabulary use and strategies to give evidence; some students may fail to distinguish facts from opinions when speaking.

-Question 3 has this strategy proved beneficial?

To some extent, ‘Yes’ and this has been confirmed by the students’ evaluation checklists, and the researchers’ findings while doing the experiment. In the pre-test, students had to work in groups to debate the topic “surviving in a deserted island”. The researcher saw that the students’ (CT) skills are quite poor, as well as their motivation to speak is reduced. Although the students were given opportunities to think carefully before they speak, they couldn’t analyze the information given, give arguments, evidence and examples to defend their own thinking. However, in the post-test, most of these obstacles have been overcome. The following table illustrates (CT) scores obtained from both the pre-test and post-test.

Criteria	Experimental group		Control group	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
<i>Communication</i>	20%	70%	22%	30%
<i>Analysis</i>	13%	80%	15%	22
<i>Problem Solving</i>	10%	65%	10%	11%
<i>Evaluation</i>	33%	65%	30%	20%
<i>Synthesis</i>	11%	70%	15%	20
<i>Reflection</i>	0%	59%	4%	5%

Table 3.4 : Critical thinking scores of the groups in the pre-test and post-test.

The table compares results of the pre and post-test given in class from both the experimental and control groups. Further details are mentioned in the following figure.

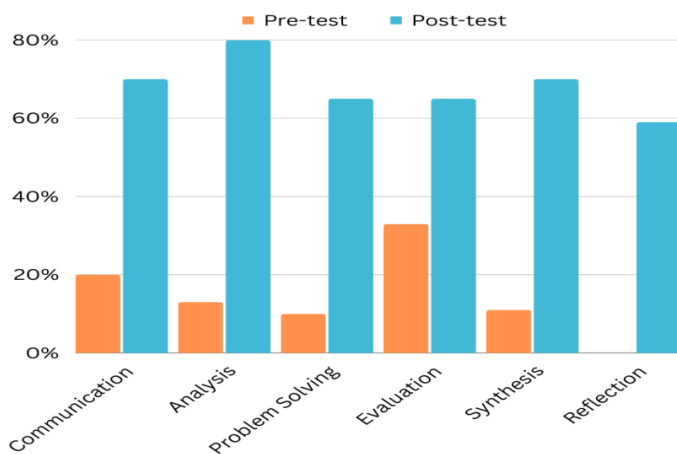


Figure 5 . Pre and post-test critical thinking scores of the experimental group.

It can be seen from the figure that there was a considerable increase in the average of the experimental group post-test results of (CT) scores compared to their pre-test results and that of the control group. Before giving the treatment, students from the experimental group show low communication skills, 20% of them only could communicate verbally ;this is due to the lack of classroom discussion raised between teachers and students; however, in the post-test 70% of them succeeded in communicating their ideas.

Moreover, while assessing their pre-test performance of the following criteria; Analysis, problem solving, evaluation, synthesis. The researcher found that only 20 % of the students could identify and analyze information learnt and it was very hard for them to recognize the main idea or problem correctly, also evaluate data, information, or evidence related to their arguments. However, it was observed that the majority of them used different strategies to communicate, express opinions, and analyze the information in the post-test ;including extended and strategic thinking through asking questions of (how , why, ..ect) In addition, they made very few mistakes in pronunciation, and vocabulary and this didn't hinder their ability to communicate effectively with their classmates . As a result, they received an average score that represents 70% in terms of synthesizing; students go beyond remembering and memorizing to evaluating and giving feedback.

Results from classroom observation and posttest questionnaire, show that there is significant difference between the students in the control group and the students in experimental group. The result of t-test shows that the strategy was beneficial; students enjoy the learning experience. As they explained their responses; the selected questions given by the teacher researcher improved both their speaking ability and (CT) skills. When evaluating language learners' productive abilities, there is a remarkable improvement at the level of communication , validity of arguments and other skills of (CT) such ; as analysis, problem solving and reflection.

Based on the explanation above, the study has two prominent findings which are (1) Second year LMD students enjoyed the oral session course .It indicates that they appear to have a positive attitude toward this method. (2) Image –analysis provided students with opportunities to use their analytical thinking abilities, and improve their (CT) skills in speaking. Thus, it has enriched our knowledge of how to implement the suggested hypotheses in oral expression module.

Conclusion

The result suggested of the study was to analyze the use of images to improve communication, critical thinking skills and develop speaking abilities through stages of selected activities, to sum up the use of image-based activities was an effective way for teaching oral expression and improving speaking especially for the students. It was demonstrated by seeing significant difference between pre-test and post-test. The researcher further come up that other lessons should not only focus on teaching free topic discussions and role plays , but they need to pay more attention to techniques and skills of discussions in teaching speaking by explore more various techniques that stimulate cognitive attention and skills to teach speaking. Utilizing image analysis as a teaching strategy in the oral expression class effectively enhances learners' critical thinking skills .This approach encourages students to engage deeply with visual content, fostering their ability to analyze, interpret, and clearly express their thoughts. By integrating CT with oral language development, image analysis promotes more thoughtful and articulate communication. Ultimately, this strategy provides learners with the tools to think more critically and convey their ideas with clarity , making it a highly effective method for improving both analytical reasoning and oral proficiency in the classroom.

Meanwhile, using strategies such visual literacy will enable students to have active learning and promote their (CT) skills. The teacher should make sure that the activities are related to the content of the materials being taught. Based on the experience of this researcher, image analysis strategy has been proven to be a productive one. Overall, it can be said the implementation of image-analysis activities in teaching oral expression help move the learners from working in a more structured environment into a more communicative one, as they are hopefully using lots of cognitive strategies, to cope with different speaking opportunities , and in the process developing their (CT) skills .

In terms of the limitations of this study and more focused scope for further research. To begin, this research only included the participation of twenty four second year EFL students. It would be good to create a more excellent knowledge about other levels, and assessing their progress in (CT) skills through several visual items, also conducting experiments or surveys with a more significant number of students. Furthermore, the researcher found very little sources that deal with the development of critical thinking skills to enhance speaking ability .There is a significant opportunity to learn more about the enhancement of (CT) skills and its relationship with speaking ability by conducting more action research to explore further details about how teach oral expression module and design other activities to boost (CT) skills in speaking.

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