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Specialty: Linguistics

Developing Critical Thinking Skills Through Reading Short Stories

The Case of Second Year EFL Students at Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla.

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Dedication

I dedicate this humble study to express my gratitude and appreciation. Firstly, to my great mother Nedjmafor her immense sacrifices, unconditional love, and unwavering support throughout my educational journey. She has never ceased to pray for me. To my diligent and steadfast father, Mohammed Aid who remains our constant pillar of support. To my sisters Fatima Zahra, who has been a blessing from God in this world, as well as Farah and Maryam. To my brothers Muhammad Al-Amajad and Abdul Fattah. To my wonderful cousin, the source of positivity in my life and my guiding light, Nesrine, as well as Hiba. To my grandparents, especially my grandmother Khayra, who has supported me financially and emotionally throughout my life and is overjoyed today with my studies. To my aunts all especially Karima, uncles for their love and support. To my precious friends, Lulu, Saida, Oum Hani, andAbir, the gentle gifts of God in my life. To everyone who has prayed for me and wished me well, and to all those who have contributed to the completion of this research. I thank you all

Shaima Naami

Dedication

I dedicate this work from the bottom of my heart to my dear mother" Aicha" the woman who inspires me with her patience in this life, and gives me support and encouragement to fulfill this dream. To my father "Ibrahim", to my brothers "Issam, Salahedine, Mohammed Lamine, Abdeljalile", and to my dear sisters" Nadia, Hiba". I also dedicate this modest work to my friends for their never ending love, who have been helpful and caring "Oum Hani, Fatima, Bouchra, and special thanks goes to my best friend ever "Shaima". To my classmates, and my teachers and all the people who paved the way, thank you so much, I would not be her without you

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Saida Maaroufi

Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the impact of the exposure to short stories on second year EFL students' critical thinking skills. To fulfill this objective, the study employed a mixed-method approach, utilizing both an online questionnaire and an offline test. The former was devoted to gauge students' familiarity with reading short stories and its influence on their critical thinking abilities. While, the latter was designed to assess their critical thinking skills in the context of a short story. Together, these methods provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between reading short stories and their impact on students' critical thinking skill. The findings 60.4% obtained from the questionnaire and that was confirmed via the test, indicate that reading short stories significantly contributes to the enhancement of critical thinking skills among students since learners try to analyze complex characters, plots and themes, use evaluation skills by interpreting evidence to draw judgments about characters, themes and messages, encouraging inference from implicit cues and supporting conclusions with textual proofs.

key words:

Critical thinking skills; Reading short stories; Reading skill.

List of abbreviations

CT	Critical Thinking	
EFL	**English Foreign Language**	
RC	**Reading Comprehension**	

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General Introduction

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1.Background of the study

The term 'critical thinking' was introduced by the American philosopher and educator- John Dewey in his book 'how we think' in 1910. According to the educational theory, it means a mode of cognition that enhances the mind to think critically. It is defined as "the ability to analyse information effectively and form a judgment". In addition, some theorists have insisted that critical thinking can be regarded and valued as a process that is used to solve problems. Critical thinking is then, a set of skills and strategies that allow someone to reason reflectively in order to demonstrate a fact. Furthermore, theorists thought that teachers should train students to think effectively as critical thinkers by using some techniques and skills such as the reading skill.(Gosner, 2024)

The historical background of reading short stories and its impacts on students' critical thinking skill is rooted in the evolution of literature and education. Throughout history, storytelling has been an integral part of human culture, with oral traditions dating back to ancient civilizations. With the development of written language, short stories emerged as a popular form of literary expression, offering concise narratives that could entertain, inform, and provoke thought. In ancient Greece, storytellers like Aesop crafted fables to convey moral lessons, laying the foundation for the use of narratives in education. Over time, short stories became increasingly integrated into curricula worldwide, particularly in the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, as educators recognized their ability to engage students and stimulate critical thinking. Modern research continues to demonstrate the positive impact of reading short stories on students' analytical skills, empathy, and cognitive flexibility. Studies such as those by Kidd and Castano (2013) and Haddadi and Arani (2017) highlight the connection between reading short stories and the development of critical thinking dispositions among students.

2 -The aim of the study:

The aim of this particular study is to scrutinize the effects of reading short stories on the critical thinking skills among second year EFL university students at Kasdi Merbah Ouargla. This research shed light on how reading can be used as an EFL teaching tool to encourage more complex thinking and reasoning skills by examining to what extent reading short stories affects cognitive functions like analysis, evaluation and inference. The

study at hands seeks to gain understanding of student's awareness about how reading can improve their critical thinking skills and the ability to analyse, evaluate, and interpret literary texts, including character's motivations, plot developments, themes, and authorial techniques.

3-Rationale:

The main reason behind conducting this research is that critical thinking helps second year EFL learners understand how we read better, ask questions, think more deeply about the text, analyse and evaluate. It makes the learner differentiate between facts and opinions, forming their views based on logical reasoning and evidence. It allows the learners to exercise their judgments for assessing credible information, promote creativity, come up with new ideas, improve performance and prepare their minds for the future.

4-Significance of the study:

This dissertation is a supplement to the several researches that have been conducted over the past years. It holds an important significance for developing the student's mental abilities needed to handle complexity in a variety of life situations. Reading short stories exposes readers to multiple perspectives, which challenges their assumptions and encourage critical thought. By means of this procedure, people refine their capacities to assess data, identify recurrent themes and form well-structured opinions. This developing critical thinking abilities that are essential for addressing issues, reaching decisions, and communicating effectively.

5-Research question:

The current Master's Dissertation has attempted to answer the following question:

> ➢ **To what extent reading short stories affect critical thinking skills of second year EFL university students at Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla?**

6-Research hypothesis:

Reading short stories may help improving second year English students' critical thinking skills.

7-Research methodology:

Online and an offline test was designed to assess students' critical thinking skills in reading short stories situations. The test contains an appropriate short story and about seven questions to assess students's reading comprehensions, also their critical skills.

8-Structure of the dissertation:

This research is composed of two chapters: the theoretical part and the practical one. The theoretical part is composed of two sections. The first section revolves around critical thinking's historical background which opens the door for defining it correctly, according to different scholars. Next in line, are the main features of critical thinking as well the characteristics of critical thinker which is followed by its advantages. Just after that, comes the criticism of critical thinking and its barriers. The second section presents reading, starting from the definition, types, techniques of teaching reading, significance and reading comprehension. The practical chapter is devoted to the methodology adopted which includes the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

9-Limitations of the study:

This study met some limitations. The results in this study cannot be generalized since the type of sampling used is a purposive one. Also, the time allotted for the test was not enough due to the students' schedule timetable.

Chapter one:

Critical thinking and Reading

Theoretical Framework

Introduction:

Critical thinking is one of the 21 century skills which means being able to think carefully and make good decisions. It also means to think using your mind and not to believe anything you hear. People who are good at critical thinking can think for themselves and make smart choices. CT is like putting the pieces of the puzzle together in your mind. It is about figuring out how different ideas connect, making sure your arguments make sense(Kim, 2019).

Reading is the process of taking in the sense of meaning of letters and symbols. (Webster,2023) For teachers and researchers, reading is a multifaceted process involving such areas as word recognition, orthography, alphabetic, phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and motivation (Leipzig, 2013).

This chapter contains a literature review of critical thinking definitions according to different scholars, approaches, skills, importance and barriers. In addition to, a theoretical overview of the technical term reading and fundamental aspects including: The five pillars of reading instruction, types, strategies, significance and reading comprehension. Furthermore, the relationship between reading short stories and critical thinking skills.

1.1. Section one: Critical thinking

1.1.1. Definition of Critical thinking

Diane Halpern, a former president of the American Psychological Association, is heavily quoted in modern literature on critical thinking for her conception of critical thinking components in education. Her definition, although very broad, seeks to capture the main elements of the various definitions of critical thinking found in cur- rent psychological literature:

"Critical thinking is the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. It is used to describe thinking that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed... [it is not] merely thinking about your own thinking... it is using skills that will make "desirable outcomes" more likely. Decisions as to which outcomes should be desirable are embedded in a system of values. (Halpern, 2003, p. 6-7)"

Renowned thinker Robert Ennis defines critical thinking as a thoughtful and rational process focused on determining what to believe or do. This practical approach emphasizes the

application of knowledge and skills. Often credited as the pioneer of critical thinking, John Dewey describes reflective thinking as a thorough examination of beliefs in light of supporting evidence. He stresses the importance of actively and persistently evaluating beliefs, rather than passively accepting them. Dewey's emphasis on careful consideration highlights the responsible and diligent nature of critical thinking. To improve our critical thinking abilities, it is essential to acquire theoretical knowledge and engage in practical application, as well as reflect on our own interactions with others. Critical thinking is not just about avoiding errors in reasoning, but also understanding ourselves as individual susceptible to biases and emotions that can impact our judgments. It is about recognizing our strengths and weaknesses in order to enhance our critical thinking skills.(Hanscomb, 2023)

The authors asserted definition, Critical thinking is the capacity to judge all the received information, the useful decision making, better life choices. CT represents the whole process of questioning, evaluating, reasoning and conclusions making of the piece of knowledge at hand.

1.1.2. Approaches to Critical thinking:

Throughout the past, scholars adopted several approaches attempting to explain critical thinking principles. Glaser (1941) wondered that if critical thinking has aspects that are properly regarded as skills-based, do these skills represent generic traits and skills or are they context-bound? the matter has not been settled yet. Glaser ''wonder was repeated by Ennis (1989) that there is little consensus about whether critical thinking is a set of generic skills that apply across subject domains or depends on the subject domain and context in which it is taught (Al-ghadouni, 2021). Following is the classification of the different approaches to critical thinking:

1.1.2.1. General/generic/enrichment approach:

This approach is one of the oldest and experienced approaches or teaching thinking (Sedaghat&Rahmani, 2011). The general approach tries to teach critical thinking separately from subject-matter instruction. According to Woolfolk (1998), higher order thinking such as critical thinking requires consciously applying abstract knowledge, heuristics or procedures learned in one context to some novel circumstance or situation.

1.1.2.2. Infusion approach:

Content is important in the infusion approach. Critical thinking is an explicit objective in the infusion course. The infusion of critical thinking requires deep, thoughtful, and well-understood subject matter instruction in which students are encouraged to think critically in the subject. Additionally, general principles of critical thinking skills and dispositions are made explicit (Abrami et al., 2014). It presupposes the encouragement of students to think critically within each subject matter in which the general principles of critical thinking are explicitly formulated.

1.1.2.3. Immersion approach:

Content is important in the immersion approach. Critical thinking is not an explicit objective in the immersion course. In the immersion approach, subject matter instruction is thought provoking, and students are immersed in the subject. In contrast to the infusion approach, general CT principles are not made explicit (Abrami et al., 2014). Students are immersed in the respective domain without being specifically referred to the principles of critical thinking. Students taught with the immersion approach are not aware of that they are being trained to think critically.

1.1.2.4. Mixed approach:

In the mixed approach, critical thinking is taught as an independent track within a specific subject content course. The mixed approach consists of a combination of the general approach with either the infusion or immersion approach. Under it, students are involved in subject-specific critical thinking instruction, but there is also a separate thread or course aimed at teaching general principles of critical thinking (Abrami et al., 2014).
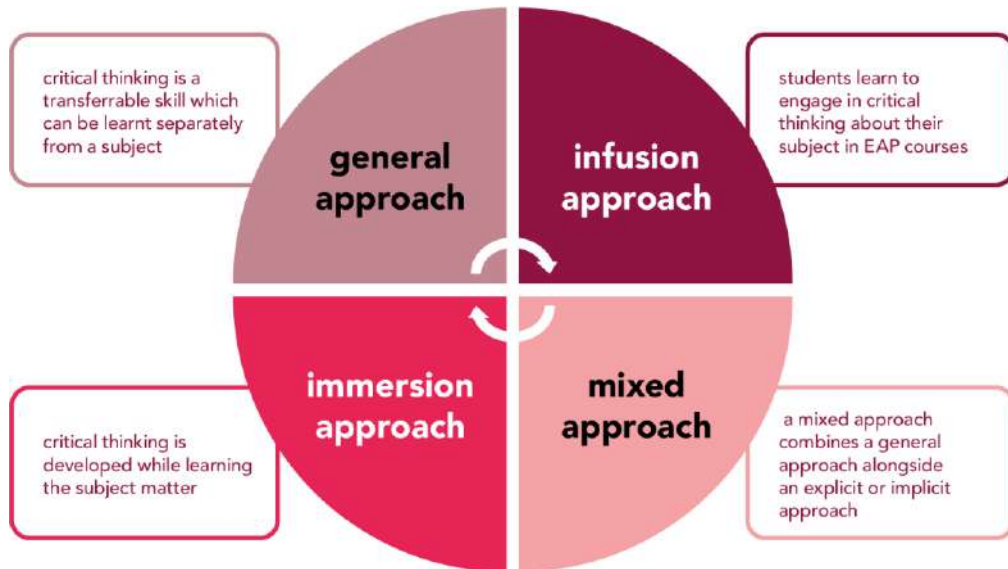
Figure1.1. Schematic Model of the Critical Thinking Approaches (Semantic Scholar.2019)

The figure above represents the four approaches of critical think and its interrelationship.

1.1.3. Critical thinking skills:

1.1.3.1. Disposition:

According to Dr. Christopher Dwyer, disposition towards critical thinking is the extent to which an individual is disposed, inclined or willing to perform a given thinking skill and that a person with strong disposition towards critical thinking tend to possess positive habits such as: Reflection, Truth-seeking, Resourcefulness, Perseverance, Clarity, Self-efficacy.

The developing of critical thinking habit prevents the tendency of thinking quickly in situations where thinking slowly would be more useful is needed. Critical thinking skills help us arise better habits of thought in which these skills are motivated by dispositions. To be a critical thinker in this sense is having what Ennis calls an 'inclination' to think critically. It does not mean completely changing who you are, but rather adjusting how you think and make decisions, as seems to be suggested by Harvey Siegel (1988, p.41) 'When we take it upon ourselves to educate students so as to foster critical thinking, we are committing ourselves to nothing less than the development of certain sort of person'. This means it is more about fine-tuning our existence instead of completely transforming us. Each person's

critical thinking tendencies will be unique to them, but they may share similar traits when it comes to discussing annualizing arguments. (Hanscomb, 2023)
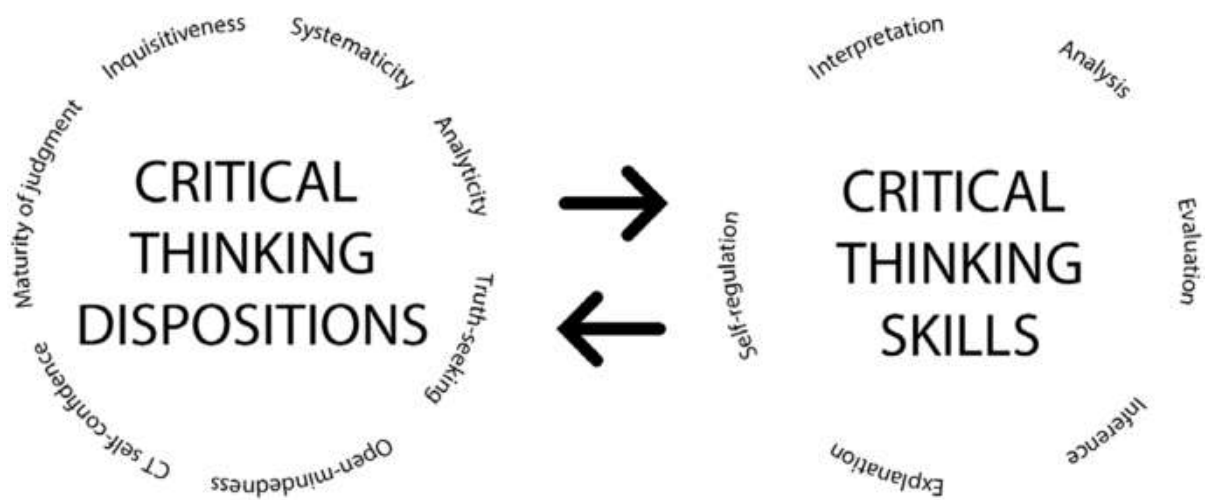
Figure1.2: Disposition towards critical thinking (Spring Nature .2024)

1.1.3.2. Emotions:

Recent research, building upon the arguments of psychologists and philosophers, highlights the relationship between emotions, reasoning, and moral decision-making (Young and, 2007; Decety and Cowell, 2014; Narvaez and Vaydich, 2008; Goldstein, 2018). Emotion, as described by Sander and Scherer (2009), involves various components influencing perception, motivation, bodily reactions, feelings, and cognitive evaluations, showcasing its complexity in shaping responses to situations based on personal, cultural, and social factors. Emotions not only affect attention and judgment but also play a significant role in opinion formation, often working alongside reason (Bowell, 2018). Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that emotions are critical for moral cognition and can inadvertently influence opinions in Favor of in-group biases (Jenkins et al., 2008; Vollberg and Cikara, 2018). The importance of decentring from one's own perspective and values, as advocated by Ennis (1987) and Facione (1990), is underscored, emphasizing the need for independent thinking and empathy, which starts developing in young children around the age of 2 (Call and Tomasello, 2008; Seyfarth and Cheney, 2013). These findings enrich discussions on educational interventions regarding socio-scientific issues, emphasizing the necessity of

considering both rational and emotive aspects in fostering critical thinking and ethical reasoning (Sadler and Zeidler, 2005; Jiménez-Aleixandre and Puig, 2012).

1.1.3.3. Arguments and arguments reconstruction:

An argument in critical thinking represents logical disagreements between conflicting viewpoints, fostering productive debate and deeper understanding through reasoned analysis. It emphasizes the importance of justifying beliefs with evidence and reason rather than mere assertion, promoting respectful engagement and nuanced exploration of differing perspectives. Through this approach, arguments serve as a vehicle for intellectual progress and the pursuit of truth.(Famin, 2024)

Argument reconstruction and evaluation is a way to practice critical thinking skills. It is a skill that takes practice because arguments can be interpreted in different ways. The more one practice, the better one will get at it. This skill will help us in all areas of life where we need to understand and question arguments. The goal is to summarize the main point of an argument. Critical thinking helps us avoid mistakes in reasoning by being able to create strong arguments and assess others' arguments. Understanding arguments properly is a key to evaluate them effectively.(Hanscomb, 2023)

1.1.4. Critical thinking importance:

Critical thinking is a cognitive skill with the power to unlock the full potential of your mind. In today's rapidly evolving society, where information is abundant but discerning its validity is becoming increasingly challenging, the art of critical thinking has never been more crucial. It helps people make better decisions by giving them the ability to consider different options, think about what might happen as a result, and choose the best option. It also helps people learn more about themselves and how they can get better at things. (Halpern, D. F, 2014).

CT plays a vital role in navigating the complexities of the modern world, enabling individuals to discern truth from falsehood and make informed decisions (Kahneman, 2011). As Daniel Kahneman elucidates in "Thinking, Fast and Slow," our minds are susceptible to cognitive biases that can lead us astray, making it essential to cultivate critical thinking skills to overcome these innate tendencies. Alec Fisher, in "Critical Thinking: An Introduction," underscores the significance of logical reasoning and argument analysis in evaluating information and constructing sound arguments (Fisher, 2011). Furthermore, Rolf Dobelli's

"The Art of Thinking Clearly" emphasizes the importance of recognizing and mitigating cognitive errors to enhance decision-making process (Dobelli, 2013). In essence, critical thinking empowers individuals to approach problems with clarity and creativity, enabling them to devise effective solutions and navigate the complexities of the modern world with confidence.

1.1.5. Critical thinking barriers:

It is important to someone who thinks carefully and thoughtfully to recognize and overcome any obstacles that may come up (Ennis, 1993). This means understanding what is expected of you and not being afraid to question or think differently (Paul R., & Elder, 2008). It's about exploring different perspectives and gathering information to make your own decisions (Facione, 2015). In graduate school, it is important to read a lot and ask questions to develop your critical thinking skills (Brookfield, 2012). There's no one right answer, just well-supported arguments(Scriven, M. & Paul R., 1987). This is a big part of graduate studies. Critical thinking is like being a detective (Elder & Paul, 2019). It means looking at all the good and bad parts of an idea or argument and thinking about different sides (Halpern, 2014). It helps you to understand things better, think more deeply, and decide if something is true or not (Bailin& Siegel, 2003). Sometimes, even smart and educated people have trouble thinking critically (Perkins, 1995). To understand critical thinking, it is not just about learning the steps, but also actually using what you learned to solve problems (Halonen&Whitbourne, 2003). Critical and reflective thinking are important skills that you keep getting better at as you grow up (lipman, 2003). Sometimes, people around you may not think carefully before making decisions, which can affect you (Nosich, 2018). It's important to notice this and use your own thinking skills to make sure you make smart choices based on evidence and good reasoning (Gelder, 2oo5)."

1.2. Section Two: Reading

1.2.1. Reading definition:

Reading is an active process of constructing meanings of words with the purpose of helping the reader to direct information towards a goal and focus their attention. In other words, reading is when you read a book and try to understand the meaning of words, this helps you learn new things to reach your goals and, pay attention to what you are reading. (Catherine E. Snow, 1998)

Reading is a multifaceted process that involves the interaction between the text and the reader (Hughes,2007). This means that reading is an activity where individuals engage with a written text. According to Cline, Johnstone and king (2006), reading entails deciphering and comprehending written material. In this context, students will be provided with a text by their teacher, and their task will be to read and comprehend the content. For Smahillah (2014), reading is an intricate activity that encompasses both perception and cognitive processing.

In spite of its importance in the world of reading research, many practicing educators do not know about the simple view of reading. It is a formula of demonstrating the widely accepted view that reading has two basic components: word recognition(decoding) and language comprehension.

This dissertation defines reading as the active process between the reader and the writer via the text. It requires trying to interpret the meaning intended by the writer. Each one of us has a different interpretation because of the different perspectives.

1.2.2. The Five Pillars of reading Instruction:

The five pillars of reading instruction are like building blocks that help students become good readers outlined by the National Reading Panel (2000). They are phonemic awareness (knowing the sounds letters make), phonics (putting those sounds together to read words), vocabulary (knowing lots of words), fluency (reading smoothly and quickly), and comprehension (understanding what you read). Teachers who teach, this thing well are helping their students become great readers.

1.2.2.1. Phonemic awareness:

Phonemic awareness is when you can hear and recognize the different sounds in words. It is like knowing that words are made up of smaller sounds, and being able to play with those sounds. When you learn about phonemic awareness, it works best if your practice with letters and focus on just a few different sound games. And it is also helpful to learn with a small group of other students.

1.2.2.2. Phonics:

Phonics is about how letters make sounds in words. It helps us read and write by knowing what sounds letters make. It is important for learning how to read well. Phonics is just one

part of reading, but it is a helpful part. Studies show that learning phonics helps people become better reader.

1.2.2.3. Vocabulary:

Vocabulary is a list of words including their meanings, it is used to express our ideas and feeling by communicating it in a language. As Hatch & Brown (2001:1) define that vocabulary as set of words for a particular language that individual speakers of language might use. It is knowing the right words to use when you talk or write. It is important to understand what the words mean and how they can be used in different situation.

1.2.2.4. Fluency:

Fluency means being able to read words correctly, fast, and with feeling. It also means understanding what you are reading. If you are good at reading fluently, it can help you do well in order parts of learning to read. It helps connect being able to read words to understanding what they mean.

1.2.2.5. Reading comprehension:

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and make meaning from what has been read. It involves using background knowledge, decoding skills, vocabulary, and critical thinking strategies to construct meaning from text. RC itself is the application of multiple skill components, and can be seen as the main goal of reading. The skills needed for reading comprehension can be broken down with the simple view of reading and Scarborough's Reading Rope.
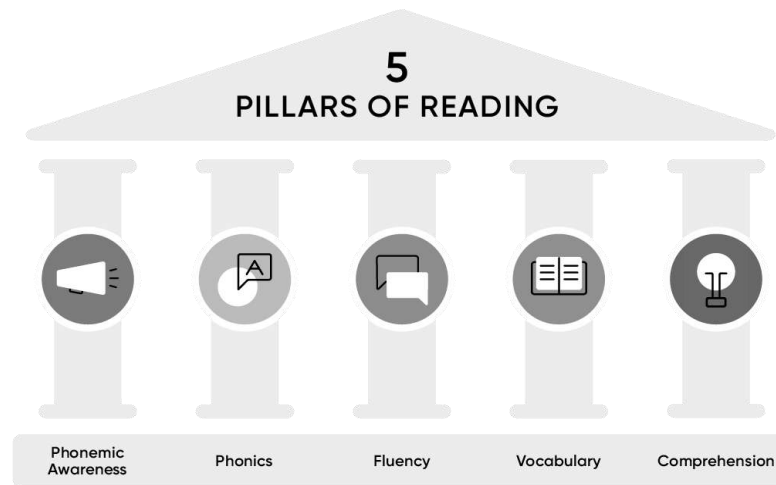
Figure 1.3: The five pillars of reading (NRP ,2000)

1.2.3. Reading types:

Learning a second language can be difficult and expensive, so many students do not like reading in that language. Teachers at school make it worse by having students read difficult short texts carefully, which is called intensive reading. Another way to learn a language is by reading a lot of books, this is called extensive reading; it means that you try to read as many books you can.

1.2.3.1 Intensive reading:

In order to define extensive reading, it is helpful to shortly explain what the idea of intensive reading is about. Bamford and Day depict intensive reading as careful reading of shorter, more difficult foreign language text with the goal of complete detailed understanding (1997). Thus, intensive reading is the traditional way of teaching language where the pupils do not have to focus on the content, but on the language. They do not have any influence on the text material at all, as the teachers choose what to read. Working with textbooks is commonplace. As the texts are short and difficult, they encounter numerous new vocabularies. So, it is possible that the pupils feel either bored or overtaxed, as they may not read at their own level. Moreover, intensive reading is when you carefully read shorter and harder texts in different language, the goal is to understand everything in the text. This is the traditional way of teaching language, where the teacher chooses what you read and focus on the language

instead of the story. It can be boring or too hard because the texts are short and have lots of new words.

In intensive reading, students normally work with short texts with close guidance from the teacher. The aim of intensive reading is to help students obtain detailed meaning from the text, to develop reading grammar knowledge. (Carrell and Carson,1997, Nuttall,1996).

1.2.3.2 Extensive reading:

An extensive reading approach aims to get students reading in second language, or to put things more formally as the Longman Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics does, extensive reading is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage linking for reading (Richards, Platt, and ,1992, p.133). As this definition implies, extensive reading means that teachers want students to read a lot in their second language and enjoy it. The goal is to help students develop good reading habits, learn more words and grammar, and start to love reading. This kind of reading also helps students become better at speaking and understanding the second language. Extensive reading helps students become better at reading in their second language. Reading for longer periods of time without distractions helps you learn more words and how sentences are put together. It also helps you understand what you read better and gives you more knowledge about different topics. Reading a lot can make you feel more confident and motivated to keep reading. It is also important to read for fun and (Richard R Day, 1998) enjoyment, not just to learn about language.

Short stories provide manageable yet rich content for students to engage with, fostering critical thinking and linguistic exploration. By alternating between extensive and intensive reading activities with short stories, teachers can cultivate a balanced approach to language acquisition, promoting fluency and deeper understanding simultaneously.
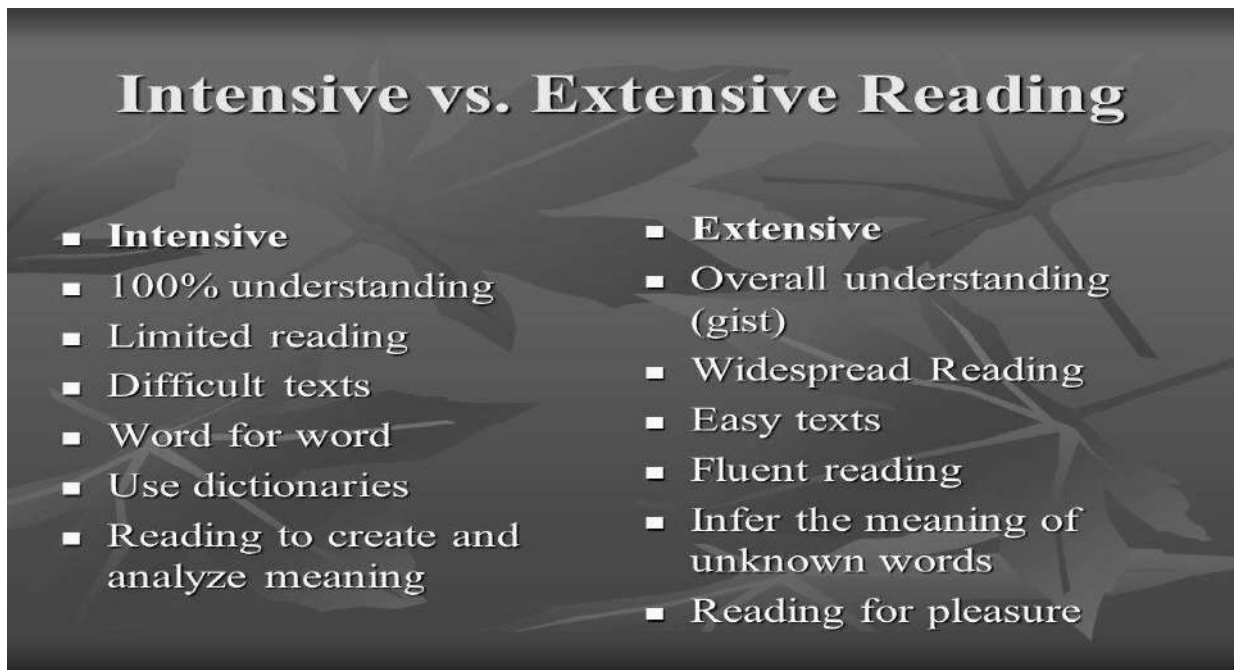
Figure 1.4: Comparison between extensive and intensive reading (Slide Make. 2024)

1.2.4. Reading strategies:

The use of effective reading comprehension strategies is really important for helping the readers improve comprehension and learning from text. It is really helpful to have good reading strategies when trying to understand a story, successful readers know when and how to use these strategies to help them understand better,(McNamara., 2007). The most common useful strategies for readers, are:

1.2.4.1. Predicting:

Predicting involves the ability of readers to get meaning from a text by making informed predictions. Good readers use predicting as a way to connect their existing knowledge to new information from a text to get meaning from what they read. They may think about the author or the title of the story to help them make predictions about what will happen next and the meaning that the author wants to convey. (Agency, 2002)

1.2.4.2. Skimming:

Skimming involves reading the text very quickly to gain the text's general ideas without searching for specific information. Skimming is an essential strategy for learning because it makes easier for students to understand what they are reading. To prepare students for

learning what is in the text, teachers should demonstrate how to skim a book by quickly reading the introduction, titles, subtitles, and index. When reading a text, proficient readers skip over it, because they simply attempt to acquire a general understanding of the text, their skimming time is three to four times faster than normal reading. When researchers have a lot of reading material to go through, skimming is very helpful because it allows them to quickly determine whether the text is what they are looking for. For readers to become proficient readers, skimming is an essential technique.(Elabsy, 2013).

1.2.4.3. Scanning:

Another crucial reading strategy that students should be taught to perform is scanning. Scanning means looking for specific information in a text with the help of scanning. When they scan a text, students ought to know precisely what they are looking for. In other words, it is similar to looking for a word in a dictionary, or an idea in a passage.(Elabsy, 2013).

1.2.4.4. Visualizing:

Studies have shown that students who visualize while reading have better recall than those who do not (Pressley, 1977) readers can exploit outlines that are implanted in the text or make their own psychological pictures or drawings while reading without representation. Visualizing strategy is needed to increase reading comprehension. When students are able to visualize what they are reading, it can help them not only understand but also remember what they have read (Chan et al., 1990). This strategy can help students in all academic areas.

1.2.4.5. Summarizing:

Reading research indicates that summarizing is a strategy that is difficult for students to learn, but it offers incredible benefits to readers (Duke and Pearson ,2002). Summarizing improves reader's abilities to locate the main ideas and supporting details, identify and omit unnecessary details and redundant material, remember what is read, analyse text structure and see how ideas are related, generalizing details, clarify meaning, take notes and rethink what they have read so that they can process it more deeply. It is to distil large section of text, extract the most essential information, and then create a coherent more concise text that relates the same information as the original text.

1.2.5. Reading significance:

Reading has a lot to offer, from increasing your intelligence to strengthening your reading and writing abilities. If you want to understand what benefits one could reap from developing the habit of reading, then the authors have enlisted some of these benefits which are:

- One of the advantages of reading is that you will never lose knowledge you acquire from them. Your knowledge, in contrast to material possessions, will remain with you until the end of time.

- Reading every day can help you became more analytical. Reading mysteries helps you learn skills that will help you solve problems.

- This may be of interest to you, if you are convinced reading books is important. Reading improves vocabulary when it becomes a habit. Any kind of book can help you improve vocabulary significantly.

- Writing skills will come naturally to you, if you read more. Reading on a regular basis improves your vocabulary and pronunciation, which ultimately makes you better writer.

- Reading on a regular basis is a great brain exercise, when you read a book that is real, your brain has to remember the names and personalities of the characters. It entertaining and good food for your memory to go back through their history and recall events or plots. (Winter, 2023)

1.2.6. Reading Comprehension:

Reading comprehension (RC) contrasts from language comprehension as a result of the dependence on print, instead of oral language, to see the words and determine significance (Hoover and Gough,1990). As such, language comprehension becomes reading comprehension while word significance is gotten from print. It is possible to have strong language comprehension and still be a poor reader if there is difficulty with decoding. For the simple view studies, the students read a passage then retells the passage combined with answering oral questions that were not addressed.

Kamhi (2007) eloquently describes the distinctions between decoding (word recognition) and comprehension. Decoding is a teachable skill compared to comprehension, which is not a skill and is not easily to taught. Kamhi explains that word recognition is a teachable skill because it involves a narrow scope of knowledge (e.g. letters, sounds, words) and processes (decoding) that, once acquired, will lead to fast, accurate word recognition.

Kamhi further writes that comprehension "is not a skill. It is a complex of higher level mental processes that include thinking, reasoning, imagining, and interpreting." The processes involved in comprehension are dependent on having specific knowledge in a content area. This makes comprehension largely knowledge-based, not skills-based.(Farrel L, Hunter M, Davison M, Osenga T, 2024)

1.2.7. The relationship between Critical Thinking and Reading Short Stories:

Critical thinking is the cornerstone in the intellectual development since it strengthens the analytical skills which are essential in resolving the complications of life(Yanti, 2013). When applied to literature, particularly short stories, it reveals layers of meaning, encourages profound insight into the human condition. Short stories, by their concise nature, require an acute engagement from readers, prompting them to examine and evaluate every word, sentence and narrative device used by the author. This brevity encourages them to critically assess the themes, characters and symbols presented within the narratives. According to (khatib, M. Rezai, S. & Derakhshan, A, 2011)), two major reasons of students' failure in understanding and appreciating poetry in EFL situations are the inappropriate selection of texts and the ineffective teaching methodology. Short stories are some literary tools used to activate readers' power of criticism, analysis and evaluation which they can be suitable to help students achieve critical thinking skills. Reading literary short stories will help students take a critical look at all aspects of language learning, thus developing their critical thinking.(Khatib M, Kamran M, 2012).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this chapter offers a comprehensive exploration of critical thinking, its definitions, approaches, skills, importance, barriers, and its relationship with reading, particularly short stories. Diane Halpern and Robert Ennis provide insightful definitions, emphasizing the purposeful and reasoned nature of critical thinking. The discussion delves into various approaches to teaching critical thinking, from general to mixed approaches, shedding light on the complexities of imparting these skills. Critical thinking skills, including disposition, emotions, and argument reconstruction, are crucial for navigating the complexities of the modern world. Additionally, the chapter elucidates the significance of reading, the five pillars of reading instruction, reading types, strategies, and comprehension. Reading, especially short stories, serves as a catalyst for critical thinking development, encouraging readers to engage deeply with the text, analyse its components, and evaluate its themes. This symbiotic relationship between critical thinking and reading underscores the importance of literature in fostering cognitive growth and intellectual curiosity among learners.

Chapter two

Data Collection and Analysis

Introduction:

This chapter analyses and discusses the data collected in this study on critical thinking development through reading short stories. It tends to assess the effectiveness of reading short stories in enhancing CT abilities among second year license students who are studying English as a foreign language. Also, it discusses and interprets the results obtained.

2.1. Methodology

The methodology used to test the hypothesis is the mixed method which is composed of two instruments. the first tool is a questionnaire and the second is a written test. Both of which were administered to second year students during their second semester as EFL learners at Kasdi Merbah Ouargla university. The results are analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.

2.2. Section one: The questionnaire

2.2.1. The Sample and Administration

This research was conducted at the department of letters and languages, Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla, during the second semester of the academic year 2023/2024. The target population was second year EFL learners, the total of the six groups are 240 students. 48 of them are the sample of this study. this population was chosen purposively to get clear visions of their knowledge about reading and critical thinking that would provide some explanations and validity to the hypothesis. The questionnaire was given to the target sample via Google form in order to fill it for the sake of saving time. Also, it would be accessible for the students. In the period of two weeks, 48 answers were collected.

2.2.2. Description of the questionnaire

The questionnaire starts with an outset to explain for the students what purpose their answers will be used. It consists of 12 questions that are mostly multiple-choice, some are open-ended ones, others are yes or no questions. This tool is divided into 3 sections: reading, critical thinking and the relationship between them. the first section, reading is concerned with the student's attitude towards the reading skill. The second section is about the second variable of the study, critical thinking, which consists of 4 questions about student's perceptions and familiarity with the term. Moreover, it aims to know if the students are aware

of the use of critical thinking. The last section questions the students about the effectiveness of using short stories in the classrooms by their teachers.

2.2.3. The Analysis and Interpretation of the questionnaire

The analysis and interpretation will cover each section of the questionnaire' s questions separately.

2.2.3.1. The first section: Reading

Q1: Do you like reading short stories?

This question was given to detect students' tendency towards reading short stories. As it is clear in the figure 2.1 p.23, the majority of students (i.e. 64.6%) do like reading short stories, while the rest (i.e. 35.4%) do read but not that much. None of them answered by no. This indicates that most of students do like reading in contrary to what most of people think due to the type of reading they do especially stories which are not very long and they have an attractive style.

Figure 2.1. Students 'Preference for Reading Short Stories
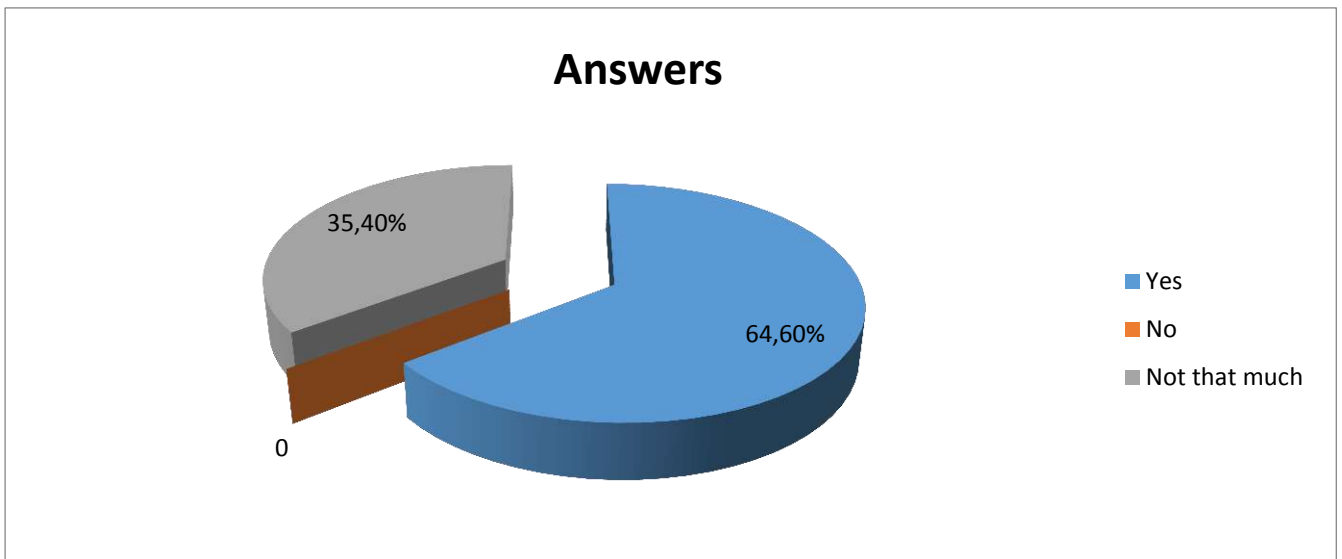
Q 2: For what purpose do you read?

50% of the participants has answered that they read in order to develop their language level. 25% has answered that they read to expend knowledge. The last percentage answered that they read for entertainment. This shows that students want to develop their level to become better.

Figure 2.2. Participants' s Purpose of Reading
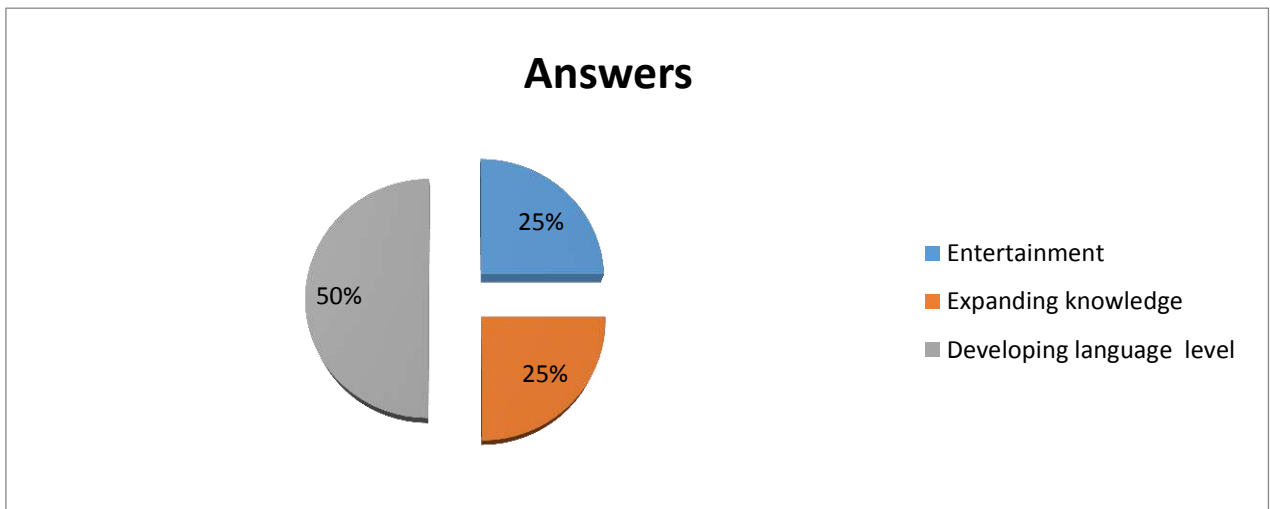
Q 3: How often do you read?

The answers for this question were quite varied. The majority of the students (i.e. 67%) chose that they sometimes read. 23% of the students' replied that they rarely read. However, a small percentage of them (i.e. 8%) said that they always read. Meanwhile only 2% of the participants do never read. This shows that students sometimes read for a certain purpose in mind.

Figure 2.3. Participants' Time of Reading
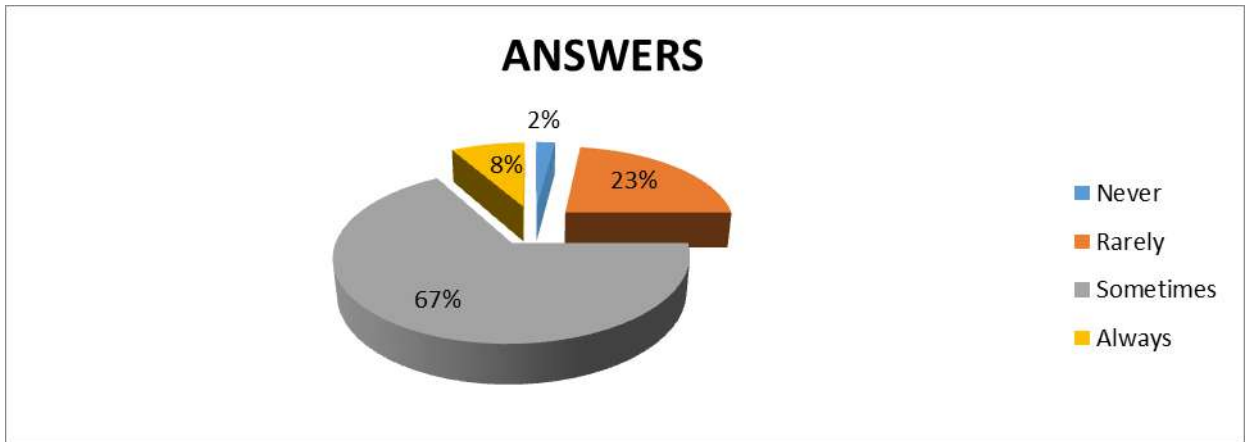
Q4: What is your favourite short story?

The participants were generous for giving their favourite short story such as ''Don't Give Up'', ''The Last Leaf'', ''The Happy Prince'' are examples of the several answered names. However, few of them have answered by ''I don't remember'' or ''I do not have one''. The diversity in the names of the students' favourite short stories indicates the extent of their awareness and preference towards reading short stories. It should also be noted that some participants' answers were accompanied by authors names which can be considered as recommendations.

Q5: What motivates you to read short stories?

The figure 2.4 p.26 represents the results of students' responses on what motivate them to read short stories. 64.6% of the students have responded that they read for enjoyment. 16.7% of the learners have answered that they read them because of recommendations from friends. People motivation for reading can be classified in four categories. First, aesthetics which means the enjoyment of experiencing a literacy text this may Apply at the results in hand in which enjoyment was the motivation of most students. Second, social, that includes reading in groups, exchanging texts in many social situations and reading as a recommendation from friends which is the most selected choice for the students. Then, the Challenge motivation where students read for the purpose of learning a complex idea could be in a form of assignments which was the third most chosen motivation for reading short stories. Lastly, relaxation activity, reading may help students to calm their stress yet, it was the least picked by the students.

Figure 2.4. Participants' Motivation for Reading
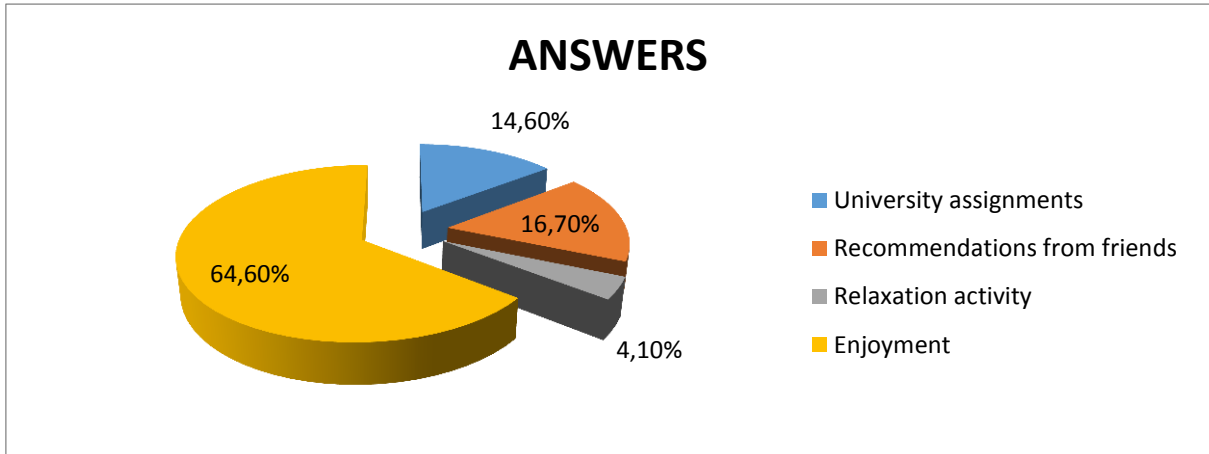
2.2.3.2. The second section: Critical thinking

Q1: Have you heard before about the term 'critical thinking'?

The question tries to seek students 's familiarity with critical thinking, figure 2.5 p.26 shows that the majority of them (i.e. 86%) said 'yes' whereas, 6% said that they do not. However, 8% of the students think that they may be familiar with it. The results show that most students are familiar with critical thinking concept. This may be because of the university modules as a basic reasoning however, life experiences and the variable faced situations that could be supplied through reading give people opportunities to get acquainted with the term.

Figure 2.5. Participants' Familiarity with Critical Thinking
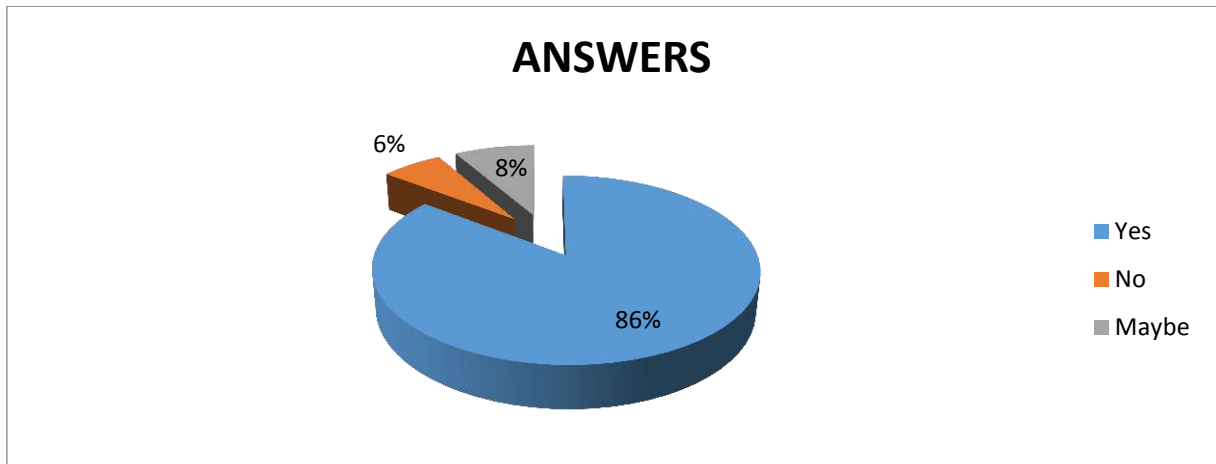
## Q2: Define critical thinking in your own words.

There were various definitions for critical thinking provided by the students yet, they have some points in common. According to the students, critical thinking is the ability to analyse, evaluate, make reasoned judgments, question and to discern connections between ideas for all what you read and hear. While, other participants said that they do not have any exact definitions for this term. This particular question highlighted the background knowledge of students about the term critical thinking in which they agreed on some specific points that are highly strong. student's opinions vary from one another based on their familiarity with the term. Those who are already conscious about the exact and literal definition of critical thinking, then, there are who have derived their own definitions from previous experiences that made them think deeply and the ones who just gave their assumptions about the term without any schematic knowledge about it.

Q3: According to you, what is the skill that enhances your critical thinking?

According to the results of the students answers that are shown in the figure 2.6 p.28 below, reading was the most selected skill that enhances critical thinking with 60.4%. Then, listening with 20.8 % and just after that, speaking with 10.4 %. Meanwhile few students find that writing is an effective skill to enhance the critical thinking. According to the results of this question students believe that reading is the most appropriate tool that develops critical thinking skills, this is due to the quantity of convoluted ideas, difficult vocabularies and unfamiliar information found also, the speaker in reading is absent which leads the readers to

use their minds and imagination in interpreting the meaning of the read text as in this case short stories. speaking can also improve critical thinking that is why it was the second most selected skill because, the listener receives throughout the speech various knowledge and terms. Meanwhile, speaking and writing means producing which does not give the students a chance to develop nor to use their critical thinking skills.

Figure 2.6. Students Choices of Critical Thinking Skills
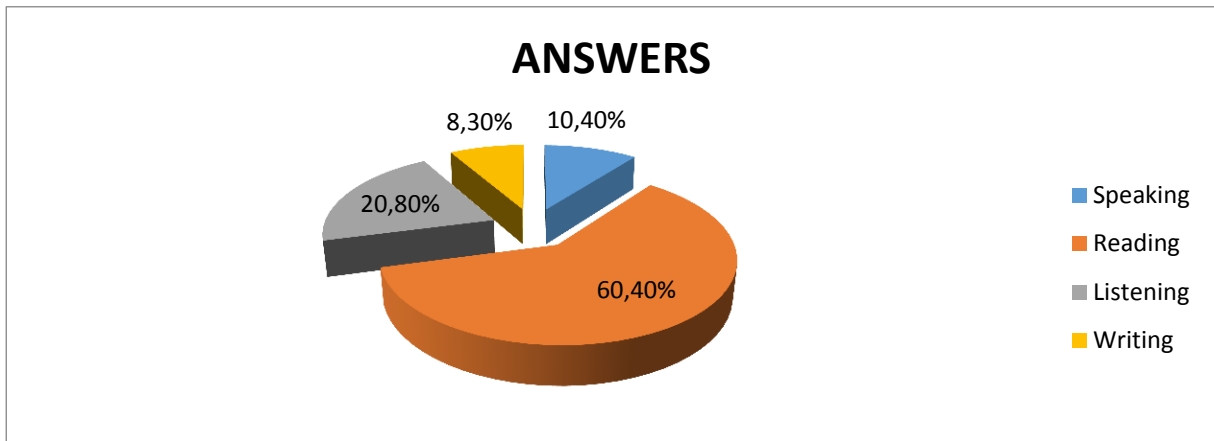
Q4: Do you consider yourself a critical thinker?

It is clear from the figure 2.7 p.29 that most of students are not sure of themselves as critical thinkers due to the high percentage of 'Maybe' selection (i.e. 70.8%). While 14.6% of the participants believe that they are critical thinkers. Similarity, with the same percentage they do not think at all of themselves as critical thinkers. Most of the student's answers were that they are not sure of themselves as critical thinkers, these outcomes prove that critical thinking abilities is a continuing progress of developing which means a person is not able to consider his or herself a professional critical thinker. Even though, some students do think themselves critical thinkers which may refer to their personal experiences. The answers of the small category who do not think of themselves as critical thinkers at all can be justified with the lack of confidence in their abilities of thinking deeply.

Figure 2.7. Participants Considering themselves as Critical Thinkers
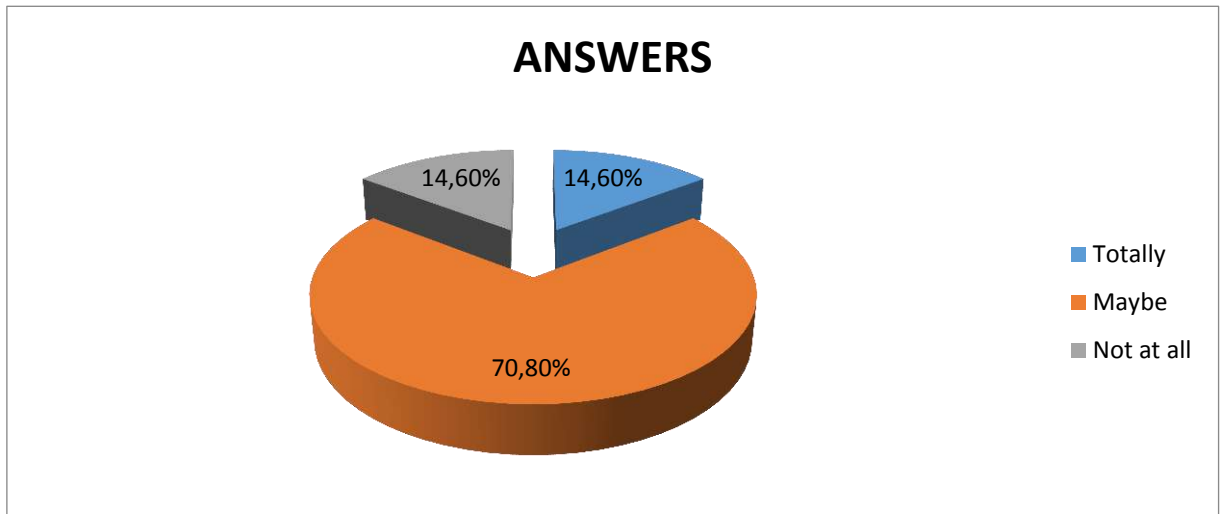
2.2.3.3. The third section: The relationship between reading and critical thinking

Q1: In university, does your teacher use short stories to develop your critical thinking?

The figure 2.8 p.30 shows the use of short stories in university according to the student's answers. A large percentage of them i.e. 62.5% said that their teachers sometimes use it. whereas, 22.9% chose 'not at all' as their answer for the question; however, 12.5% of the students stated that applying short stories to develop their critical thinking is always used by their teachers. Yet, only a small percentage i.e. 2.1% think that their teachers do use short stories to some extent. The findings for this question show that sometimes most of the teacher's use reading short stories as method to develop students critical thinking, support the idea of teacher's awareness about short stories effectiveness in helping students achieving higher level of critical thinking proficiency. The diversity of how often teachers use it may be explained by student's styles of learning, courses timing or even authorities related causes.

Figure 2.8. The Use of Short Stories in University

ANSWERS

- 2,10%
- 12,50%
- 22,90%
- 62,50%

Legend:
- ■ Yes, always
- ■ sometimes
- ■ No, at all
- ■ To some extent
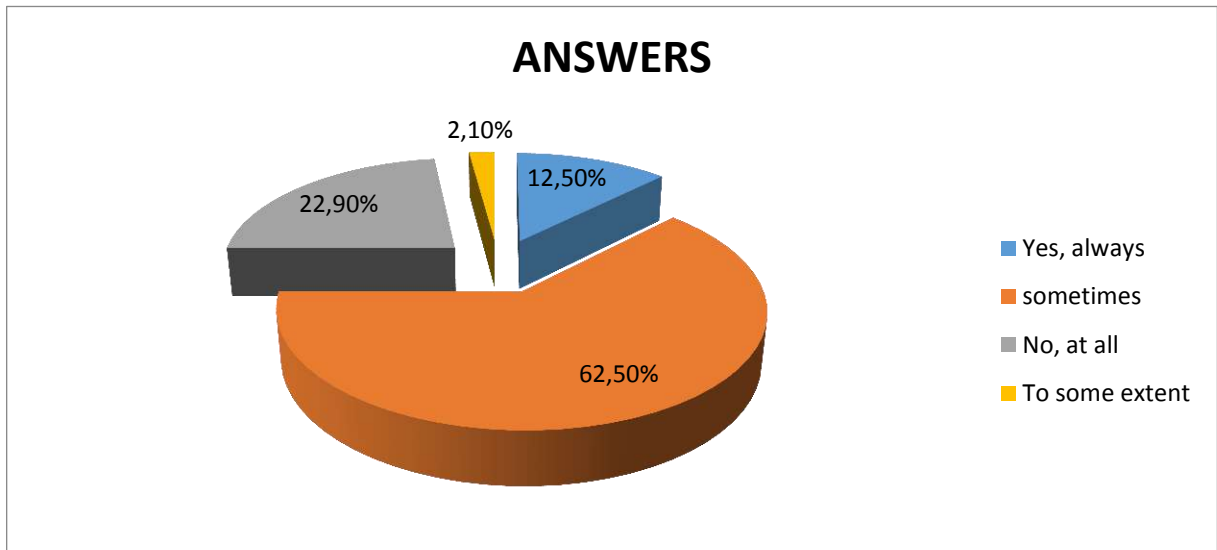
Q2: Do you think this technique is effective in increasing critical thinking skills?

The figure 2.9 p.31 below shows the effectiveness of using short stories in increasing critical thinking skills. The majority of the participants (i.e. 60.4%) believe that is effective to some extent meanwhile, 35.4 % of them see it as a total effective technique. In one hand, 2.1% of the students think that is sometimes on the other hand, 2.1% do not think that at all. Students' s beliefs about reading short stories technique are positive to some extents. This is due to its impacts on their way of thinking while reading; also, its attractive styles and the opportunities it gives them to criticize and evaluate the story events with the teacher; the number of new vocabularies they grasp every session. However, few students do not agree on its effectiveness maybe because of their lack of interests in literary texts or the idea of preparing the story before coming into the classroom.

Figure 2.9. The Effectiveness of Short Stories in Increasing Critical Thinking
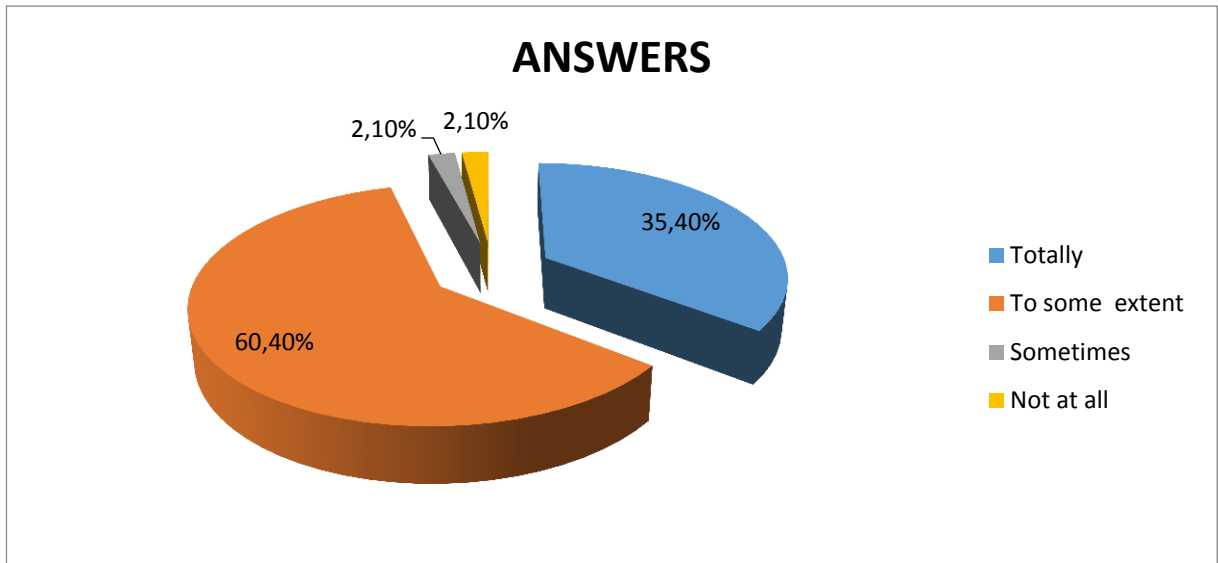
Q3: Have you ever faced some situations that need critical thinking while reading?

The objective of this question is to check the possibility of students facing critical thinking situations while reading. As it is clear in the figure 2.10 p.32, 61.7% of them have dealt with it for several times at the same time, about 25.5% said that they rarely where they face critical thinking situations through reading while, only 12.8% of the students who always face it. the purpose of this question is to prove that students are mostly exposed to several situations where making judgments and, questioning and thinking outside the box are required. The respectable percentage of 'rarely 'chosen by the students could be justified by students 's own recognition of critical thinking situations.

Figure 2.10. Times of Facing Critical Thinking Situations
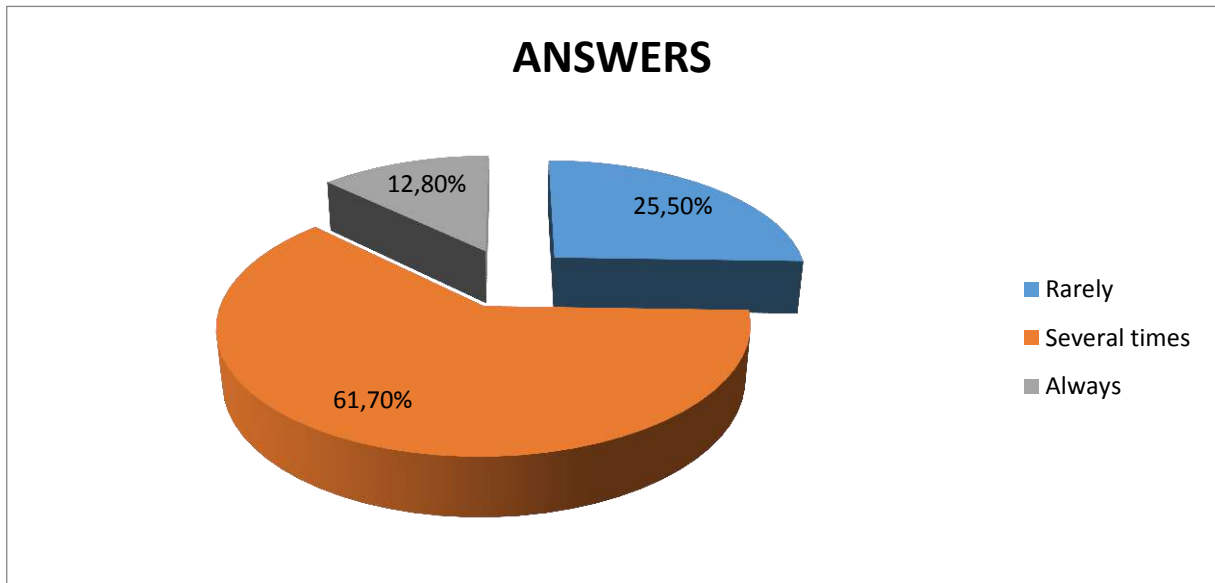
2.3. Section two: The test

2.3.1. Sample and administration

The target sample for this test was the promotion of second year English license 2023\2024 at Kasdi Merbah university Ouargla which is the same population for the questionnaire. While the questionnaire' s objective was to detect students' s awareness about reading and critical thinking, the test' s goal was to examine their proficiency of applying critical thinking skills in the time of reading a short story. About 63 of hard copies of the test were given by hand to fill at home unfortunately, only 50 of them were restored due to student's absences in Ramadan.

2.3.2. Description of the test

The test consists of the short story named ''The stone boy'' written by American novelist and short story writer **Gina berriault in** 1957, the story was later published in her 1965 collection The Mistress and Other Short Stories and her 1966 collection Women in Their Beds. The story is about a young boy who accidently shoots his brother, yet the story goes beyond the inciting incident to explore the varied and complex reactions to grief. plot

becomes secondary as the author relies on characterization and point –of-view to develop the theme.

The test questions were composed of seven analytical questions. Starting from the student's impression on the story to show if the story was attractive, boring, difficult or easy for them then, four comprehensive questions about the story events including justifications, their personal opinions and descriptions. One question about the genre of the story to check their schematic knowledge in literature and the last question was designed to student's creative imagination in which they are asked to suggest another scenario to the story.

2.3.3. Discussion and interpretation of the test results

Q1: What is your impression on the story?

Students' s answers were varied which is quite normal as this question deals with the mental image they obtained from reading the story. Most of the students think that the story was interesting and they liked it, it is perhaps because they found it mysterious, full of unexpected incidents which made them enjoy it. Meanwhile, others said it was sad and tragic. This indicated that they delved deeply into the story and felt even wondered about the explicit and implicit emotions of the characters, which led them to have this impression.

Q2: Do you agree that the shooting was an incident? justify your answer?

The answers were divided into two sides. First, the ones who believe it was an incident and gave their justification that it was already mentioned in the story "Arnold admires his elder brother" so there is no way that it was not an incident. On the contrary, some of participants consider it rather as crime, they reasoned it by suggesting that Arnold was jealous of his brother due to the unfair treatment of his family. Others justified their answers by his calmness even when his brother died. Those answers shows that students used their reasoning skills which is part of critical thinking.

Q3: With whom do you stand Arnold or his family? and why?

Many of the students chose Arnold because they see that he is just a kid and he didn't mean to kill his elder brother, and he is a victim of a neglectful family. Meanwhile, most of them answered "none". To them both of Arnold and his family were wrong at some points. His family were at wrong for neither supporting nor caring about him morally, it is also clear that

he is mentally unstable. some said that perhaps the difference of the family's affection for both brothers caused Arnold to generate a deep hatred for his elder brother.

Q4: Do you think Arnold deserves this treatment?

Many agree that he does not and that it was exaggerated even they showed sympathy for him, especially by his family, as they were supposed to support him and understand him because by nature he was a cold person who could not express what was inside him, on the other hand, some of them expressed that he deserved this treatment because he was a mysterious person and didn't report the incident at first time in addition to his calm and cold reaction to his brother's death.

Q5: Describe Arnold's state.

Students gave various personal descriptive for Arnold state. Many said that he was traumatized, guilty, shocked and was unable to express his feelings due to his mental illness where some students called it psychological disorder, schizophrenia and blind jealousy. The participants insisted that he was for sure weird, cold hearted and strangely calm. as it is clear students described Arnold state very specifically with details and justification which means they analysed Arnold state in a proficiency way.

Q6: what is the genre of the story?

Looking at some student's replies, which they did not understand what is it actually "genre" it proves that some of them have lack of literature knowledge. Yet, many of the answers were logical.

Q7: can you imagine another scenario to the story?

Students creative imaginations and well-structured scenarios even new plots for the story refers to the number of short stories they have read that enhances their critical thinking skills proficiency. Students intelligently analysed the story in hand and have created based on that another scenario for it.

2.4. Discussion of the main findings:

Their awareness of the importance of critical thinking. Furthermore, the test results demonstrate students' analytical abilities, as evidenced by their interpretations of story events and their creative imagination in suggesting alternative scenarios. These findings suggest that

engaging with short stories not only enhances language skills but also increases critical thinking abilities among language learners. Therefore, the study confirming the hypothesis that reading short stories may help improve second-year English students' critical thinking skills, the data collected through both the questionnaire and the written test support this assertion. The questionnaire results indicate students' positive attitudes towards reading short stories and confirms the hypothesis that reading short stories can contribute to the development of critical thinking skills among second-year English students.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this chapter delves into the analysis and interpretation of data collected through the research conducted on critical thinking development through reading short stories. Utilizing a mixed-method approach involving questionnaires and a written test, the study aimed to assess the effectiveness of reading short stories in enhancing critical thinking abilities among second-year English language learners. The findings provide valuable insights into students' attitudes towards reading, their perceptions of critical thinking, and the relationship between reading short stories and critical thinking development. The questionnaire results reveal students' preferences for reading short stories, their motivations, and their awareness of critical thinking concepts. Moreover, the test results shed light on students' analytical skills, their interpretations of story events, and their creative thinking abilities. Overall, the study highlights the potential of reading short stories as a means to foster critical thinking skills among language learners.

General Conclusion

In conclusion, this dissertation has examined the impact of reading short stories on the critical thinking skills of second-year English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students at Kasdi Merbah Ouargla through a mixed-method approach involving questionnaire and a written test. The study aimed to assess how reading short stories affects cognitive functions such as analysis, evaluation, and inference, ultimately enhancing critical thinking abilities.

The research question addressed in this dissertation was: To what extent does reading short stories affect the critical thinking skills of second-year EFL university students at Kasdi Merbah Ouargla?. The hypothesis proposed was that reading short stories may help improve second-year English students' critical thinking skills.

The methodology adopted for this study involved administering questionnaires online to 48 second-year English students and conducting an offline test to assess their critical thinking skills in real reading situations. The test included a short story and several questions to evaluate students' reading comprehension and critical skills.

The findings of the study provide valuable insights into students' attitudes towards reading short stories and their perceptions of critical thinking. The questionnaire results revealed that students generally have positive attitudes towards reading short stories and are aware of the importance of critical thinking. Furthermore, the test results demonstrated students' analytical skills and creative thinking abilities, indicating that engaging with short stories can foster critical thinking skills among language learners.

The aim of this research was to contribute to the understanding of how reading can be used as a teaching tool to encourage complex thinking and reasoning skills. By examining the effects of reading short stories on critical thinking, the study sought to enhance students' abilities to analyse, evaluate, and interpret literary texts effectively.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the development of students' mental abilities needed to handle complexity in various life situations. Reading short stories exposes readers to multiple perspectives, challenging their assumptions and encouraging critical thought. This, in turn, helps refine their capacities to assess data, identify recurring themes, and form well-structured opinions.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. Generalizing the results may be challenging due to the specific context of the study, and the timing for assessment may have affected the outcomes.

Overall, this dissertation contributes to the existing literature on the relationship between reading short stories and critical thinking skills, emphasizing the potential of reading as a tool for fostering critical thinking abilities among language learners.

To dig deeper into how reading short stories helps critical thinking, future research could look at a few things. First, it could check out different types of short stories-old classics and newer ones-to see which ones boost critical thinking the most. Also, researchers could try out different ways of teaching, like group discussions or writing exercise, to see what works best for improving critical thinking while reading short stories. It would also be helpful to follow students over time to see if reading short stories keeps helping their critical thinking skills. Lastly, researchers could see how things like what people already know, how much they read, and how they think affect how well short stories help them think critically.

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Appendices

THE APPENDICES

Appendix 'A'

The questionnaire

Questionnaire for L2 English students

Your answers will be used as data in the dissertation that is titled: **Developing**

Critical Thinking Skills through Reading Short Stories.

1. Reading Section :

   1) Do you like reading short stories?

      Yes

      Not that much

      No

2) For what purpose do you read?

      Entertainment

      Expanding knowledge

      Developing your language level

3) How often do you read?

      Never

      Rarely

      Sometimes

      Always

4)What is your favourite short story?

_____

5)What motivate you to read short stories?

University assignments ⬭

Recommendations from friends ⬭

Relaxation activity ⬭

Enjoying reading ⬭

Critical Thinking Section:

1)Have you heard about the term " critical thinking " before?

Yes, ⬭

No ⬭

Maybe ⬭

2)Define it in your own words?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3)According to you, what is the skill that enhances your critical thinking?

Speaking ⬭

Reading ⬭

Listening ⬭

Writing ⬭

4)Do you consider yourself a critical thinker?

Totally ⬭

Maybe ⬭

Not at all ⬭

The relationship between critical thinking and reading:

1)In university, does your teacher use short stories to develop your critical
thinking?

Yes, always ⬭

Sometimes ⬭

No,at all ⬭

2)Do you think this technique is effective in increasing critical thinking skills?

Totally ⬭

To some extent ⬭

Not at all ⬭

3) have you ever faced some situations that need critical thinking while
reading?

.

Rarely ⬭

Several times ⬭

Always ⬭

Appendix 'B'
The Test

This test is a part of the dissertation "Developing Critical Thinking through Reading Short Stories" Master degree data collections. We would like to let you know that your answers will be anonymous and are only going to be used for the sake of our study. We thank you in advance for your understanding and participation.

The test

The text:

A **ni**ne-year-old boy, Arnold, who lives with his mom, dad, sister, and an elder brother, Eugie. Although not very expressive, he admires his elder brother, Eugie in his heart and hopes to grow up to be like him. Every morning, he wakes up early to pick peas in the fields with his brother Eugie. He wakes him up and goes downstairs. He then picks up the rifle his dad gave them a few days ago to shoot ducks. Eugie comes downstairs too, reminds Arnold that it wasn't duck season and the two boys leave the house for an early morning trip to the fields to pick peas. They come to the wire fence that divides the fields from the lake. Eugie passes through the fence first. Arnold follows him, but his gun is stuck in the wires. In an attempt to untangle it, he jerks at it and accidentally fires a shot. Feeling foolish for making this mistake and bracing himself for the impending teasing from his brother, he reluctantly walks on but notices that his brother is lying on the ground. Unable to understand this behaviour, he looks more carefully and sees blood on the back of his head. He realizes that the shot that he accidentally fired ended up killing his elder brother. Instead of running to his family, informing them about the accident and seeking their help, he stays on in the field to pick peas as if nothing had happened. To him, it was reasonable to complete the task that he came to do in the first place. Leaving the task incomplete for something that was beyond his control didn't appeal to his reasoning, logical mind. He stays on, finishes the task and goes back home. He dreads breaking the news to his family but does so with amazing calm. Quite unsurprisingly, his family is devastated. While his mother finds it hard to come to terms with her elder son's death and Arnold`s pathological calm, his sister completely ignores his presence. His father, in addition to arranging for his son's funeral, has to take Arnold to the County Sheriff. Upon being asked to narrate the incidents from the morning that day, Arnold explains everything to his father and uncle Andy. However, he is at a loss of words when asked why he didn't run back home to announce the news. His father is puzzled by his cold demeanor, and Arnold starts to feel even more distant and aloof. The spell of

silence finally breaks when the Sheriff arrives. He asks Arnold a series of questions including why he had the gun in the first place and if he had a "good relationship" with his elder brother. Although his answers seem extremely cold, which is disconcerting, he concludes that there is no foul play and the shooting was indeed an accident. He lets Arnold and the family go. However, he does mention that the freakishly cold demeanor displayed by Arnold was indicative of a criminal mind in making. Uncle Andy agrees with Sheriff's explanation and goes till the extent of mocking his reasonableness. His cousin taunts him as well, saying that his father might have punished him severely if he did the same thing to his brother. Arnold keeps growing uneasy and even more distant, the weight of judgment from everyone around weighing heavily on him. At night, he eventually goes to his mom's room to explain to her in person about the events that transpired earlier that day, but his mother, who is still grieving, turns him away. He feels more and more like a burden on his family an unwelcome presence and with his brother gone and everyone else around him grieving he shuts himself off completely, vowing never to be vulnerable again. The following morning, when his mother asks what he wanted from her, he says "nothing" with a freakish calm, leaving his mother terrified.

Read the text carefully and answer the following questions:

1. What's your impression on the story?

2. Do you agree that the shooting was accident? Justify your answer.

3. With whom do you stand Arnold or his family? and why?

4. Do you think that Arnold deserves this treatment?

5. Describe Arnold state.

Résumé

L'objectif de l'étude est d'explorer l'impact de l'exposition à des histoires courtes sur les compétences en pensée critique des étudiants. Pour atteindre cet objectif, l'étude utilise une approche mixte, en utilisant à la fois un questionnaire en ligne et un test hors ligne. Le premier est consacré à évaluer la familiarité des étudiants avec la lecture d'histoires courtes et son influence sur leurs capacités de pensée critique. Tandis que le second est conçu pour évaluer leurs compétences en pensée critique dans le contexte d'une histoire courte. Ensemble, ces méthodes fournissent une compréhension globale de la relation entre la lecture d'histoires courtes et leur impact sur les compétences en pensée critique des étudiants. Les résultats de 60,4% obtenus à partir du questionnaire et confirmés par le test indiquent que la lecture d'histoires courtes contribue significativement à l'amélioration des compétences en pensée critique chez les étudiants, car les apprenants tentent d'analyser des personnages complexes, des intrigues et des thèmes, utilisent des compétences d'évaluation en interprétant des preuves pour tirer des jugements sur les personnages, les thèmes et les messages, encouragent l'inférence à partir de signaux implicites et soutiennent les conclusions avec des preuves textuelles.

الملخص

ان الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو اكتشاف تأثير قراءة القصص القصيرة على مهارات التفكير النقدي لدى الطلبة. ومن اجل تحقيق هذا الهدف، لقد تم الاعتماد في الدراسة على المنهج المختلط، حيث استخدم كل من استبيان عبر الإنترنت واختبار ورقي، حيث خصص الأول لقياس معرفة الطلبة بمفهوم قراءة القصص القصيرة وتأثيرها على قدراتهم النقدية، بينما هدف الثاني هو تقييم مهاراتهم في التفكير النقدي في سياق القصة القصيرة. تضمن هاتين الطريقتين معًا فهمًا شاملًا للعلاقة بين قراءة القصص القصيرة ومهارات التفكير النقدي لطلاب. تشير النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها بنسبة 60.4٪ من الاستبيان وتم تأكيدها عبر الاختبار إلى أن قراءة القصص القصيرة تسهم بشكل كبير في تعزيز مهارات التفكير النقدي لطلبة، حيث يحاول المتعلمون تحليل الشخصيات المعقدة والحبكة والمواضيع وكذا استخدام مهارات التقييم من خلال تفسير الأدلة لاستخلاص الأحكام حول الشخصيات والمواضيع والرسائل، وتشجيع الاستدلال من الإشارات الضمنية ودعم الاستنتاجات بالأدلة النصية.