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**Exploring the Impact of Listening Skills on the Development
of Critical Thinking**

Among Second-Year EFL Students at Saida University

A thesis submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Didactics.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that the present dissertation, entitled "Exploring the Impact of Listening Skills on Developing Critical Thinking of Second-Year EFL Students at Saida University," is my own original work and has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for any academic degree or diploma at this or any other university or institution.

All sources and references used have been properly acknowledged and cited in accordance with academic standards. This work complies with the ethical standards of academic research.

Saida University

Faculty of Letters, Languages and Arts

Department of English

Submitted by: Tedjini Siham

Academic Year: 2024–2025

Date:

Signature:

Dedication

To my dearest parents,

Whose love carried me through the storms,

Whose sacrifices whispered strength into my soul,

And whose prayers lit the way even when I could not see it.

You are the heart of every line I write.

To my beloved siblings,

Who stood beside me in silence and in joy,

Cheering me on in ways only a family can.

This journey is yours as much as it is mine.

To my teachers,

Your wisdom did more than fill pages، it shaped a mind.

With each lesson, you opened doors I never knew existed.

Thank you for guiding, inspiring, and believing.

To my classmates,

With whom I shared long days, quiet worries, and small victories.

You made this path more meaningful and far less lonely.

To my dearest friends,

Who stood beside me when days were heavy,

Long before the bright ones came.

You were my quiet strength and steady light,

My companions through dreams and days alike.

We dreamed aloud with open eyes,

Shared hopes that reached beyond the skies.

In campus halls, our laughs still stay,

With talks of dreams, we chased every day.

This work is a tribute to every gentle push, every kind word, every silent prayer.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This study investigates the role of listening skills in enhancing critical thinking among second-year EFL students at Saida University. The research aims to determine whether listening activities contribute to the development of learners' cognitive abilities and to examine the extent to which teachers incorporate critical thinking into their listening instruction.

A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining quantitative data from a questionnaire administered to 54 students with qualitative data gathered through interviews with three teachers of oral expression module and observations of five oral classes.

The findings reveal that while students generally perceive listening as essential for understanding and cognitive processing, their grasp of critical thinking remains limited. Most students report using listening strategies such as prediction, note-taking, and summarizing; however, their responses suggest shallow engagement with higher-order thinking processes such as evaluation, inference, and judgment. Only a minority of students indicated being frequently encouraged to interpret deeper meanings or justify their viewpoints during listening tasks.

Similarly, although teachers recognize the value of listening in promoting critical thinking, classroom practices often focus on comprehension rather than analytical or reflective tasks. Observations showed that listening materials, particularly authentic audio or video, were underused, and activities rarely required students to evaluate content, draw conclusions, or respond critically. Teachers cited time constraints, curriculum demands, and students' language limitations as common obstacles.

The study concludes that listening, when strategically integrated with critical thinking tasks, has the potential to significantly enhance learners' cognitive engagement. It recommends that EFL instructors adopt more structured activities targeting inference, evaluation, and reflection to effectively cultivate critical thinking through listening. Incorporating authentic materials, scaffolding listening tasks, and encouraging classroom discussions can better align listening practice with the goals of higher-order thinking.

Keywords: Listening skills, critical thinking, EFL students, cognitive development, listening strategies.

List of Abbreviations
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
SLA: Second Language Acquisition
PBL: Problem-Based Learning
ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

General Introduction

In the field of foreign language learning, listening has emerged not only as a means of communication but also as a cognitive process that can enhance learners' critical thinking abilities. As educational priorities shift towards 21st-century skills, critical thinking has increasingly been recognized as a core component of academic success and lifelong learning. In English as an EFL context, students are expected to engage deeply with spoken texts, interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating the information they hear.

Despite its importance, listening often takes a backseat to other language skills, and its potential to foster critical thinking is frequently overlooked in teaching practices and curriculum design. The relevance of listening to cognitive development is supported by Bloom's Taxonomy (revised version), which categorizes cognitive skills from lower-order (remembering and understanding) to higher-order thinking (analyzing, evaluating, and creating). Similarly, constructivist theory emphasizes the active role of learners in building their knowledge through meaningful experiences, including listening tasks that require them to interpret and reflect on spoken content.

At Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saida, second-year students of English participate in oral expression sessions, which are interactive classes focused on improving spoken communication. Within these sessions, various listening activities, such as audio-based discussions, video analyses, and comprehension tasks, are integrated into classroom practices. However, it remains unclear how effectively these listening tasks promote the development of critical thinking skills.

Many learners struggle to engage with spoken input on a deeper level, often due to factors such as limited vocabulary, poor comprehension, or a lack of instructional support aimed at enhancing their cognitive engagement. Furthermore, while teachers employ various strategies to guide students through listening tasks, the effectiveness of these methods in nurturing critical thinking has yet to be fully explored. This raises questions about whether listening activities in the current curriculum truly serve as tools for analytical thinking or are merely exercises in surface-level comprehension.

The present study is situated within the field of didactics and aims to explore the role of listening activities in fostering critical thinking among second-year EFL students. Specifically, it investigates

how these activities are designed and delivered, the challenges students encounter in engaging critically with spoken content, and the extent to which teachers facilitate this cognitive development. By focusing on this area, the study contributes to the broader goal of enhancing EFL teaching practices by emphasizing the cognitive dimensions of listening.

Accordingly, the research has three main objectives:

1) to examine the extent to which listening activities contribute to the development of critical thinking skills in second-year EFL students,

2) to identify the primary difficulties students face when applying critical thinking during listening tasks, and

3) to explore the strategies teachers use to promote critical thinking through listening instruction.

To guide the investigation, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. To what extent do listening activities contribute to the development of critical thinking skills in second-year EFL students?

2. What are the most common challenges students face when applying critical thinking during listening tasks?

3. How do teachers facilitate the development of critical thinking through listening activities?

Based on these questions, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Listening activities play a significant role in fostering critical thinking skills by encouraging analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of spoken content.

H2: Second-year EFL students face challenges such as comprehension difficulties, limited vocabulary, and struggles in critically analyzing spoken information.

H3: The effectiveness of listening tasks in developing critical thinking depends on the instructional strategies used by teachers, such as guided discussions, questioning techniques, and multimedia resources.

General Introduction

A mixed-methods approach was adopted to conduct the study. Quantitative data were collected through an online survey distributed to second-year students of English. A total of 54 students from different groups responded to the questionnaire. To complement this, qualitative methods were employed: five classroom observations were conducted during oral expression sessions to explore how teachers and students interact with listening tasks, and interviews were held with three teachers to gain insights into their strategies and perceptions. This triangulated design was chosen to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

This research is structured into three chapters. The first chapter reviews the literature related to listening skills, critical thinking, and their interrelationship, offering both theoretical and empirical perspectives. The second chapter presents the research design, including the tools, sample, procedures, and data analysis methods. The third chapter reports and discusses the findings of the study, linking them to the literature, and concludes with pedagogical implications and practical recommendations.

While this study provides important insights into the role of listening in fostering critical thinking, a few limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research was limited to second-year students at one university, which may restrict the broader applicability of the findings. Second, although the study employed multiple data collection tools, the number of classroom observations and teacher interviews was modest due to time constraints. Lastly, students' self-reported responses may reflect perceptions rather than actual performance, which could introduce some bias. Despite these limitations, the use of mixed methods enhances the reliability of the results and provides a well-rounded understanding of the topic.

Chapter One:

Literature

Review

1 Introduction

In recent years, the role of listening skills in language learning has gained increasing attention, particularly in EFL contexts. Listening is not merely a passive skill but an active cognitive process that requires comprehension, interpretation, and critical evaluation of spoken information. Despite its significance, many traditional teaching approaches have focused more on speaking and writing, often neglecting the importance of listening in developing higher-order thinking skills.

This chapter explores the concepts of listening skills and critical thinking. The first section defines listening, its types, and challenges. The second section examines critical thinking, its components, and its importance in education. Finally, the third section discusses the relationship between listening and critical thinking, highlighting theoretical perspectives, the role of listening in analytical skills development, decision-making, and problem-solving, as well as challenges in linking the two.

Section One: Listening Skills

Listening is a foundational skill in language acquisition, essential for effective communication and comprehension. It enables learners to process spoken language, interpret meaning, and engage in meaningful interactions. As a receptive skill, listening supports the development of other language abilities, making it a critical component of second language learning. This section explores the nature of listening, its different types, the stages involved, common challenges, and strategies for enhancing listening proficiency.

2 Definition of Listening

Listening is a complex process where spoken language is transformed into meaningful ideas within the listener's mind. Some experts describe it as a series of interconnected stages, each depending on the previous one, while others define it as involving four main activities: sensing, the initial perception of sound; interpreting, the process of understanding meaning based on context and prior knowledge; evaluating,

where the listener assesses the accuracy and significance of the message; and responding, which involves providing verbal or non-verbal feedback. This skill is vital for effective communication and plays an essential role in preventing misunderstandings, particularly among people with different native languages. As a receptive skill, listening enables learners to absorb new information and supports the development of other language abilities (Abduvahobova & Erdonova, 2023).

Nazarieh et al. (2022) argue that listening goes beyond the passive act of hearing; it is a dynamic and complex process where individuals actively use their cognitive abilities and interpret contextual clues to understand spoken communication. This perspective underscores the interactive nature of listening, requiring listeners to actively construct meaning by processing auditory input and relating it to their prior knowledge. Rather than being a simple skill, listening involves a combination of mental processes and situational factors that work together to help the listener grasp and respond to the message effectively.

According to Astrid et al (2024), listening comprehension is the ability to attentively listen and understand spoken communication. It's a fundamental skill for language acquisition, as learning depends on understanding input at the right level. It's also considered the most difficult language skill for foreign language learners due to the complex processes and high levels of concentration and attention it demands.

3 Types of Listening

Listening occurs in various forms, each serving a distinct purpose in communication and comprehension. In the context of language learning, understanding these types is essential for developing effective listening strategies.
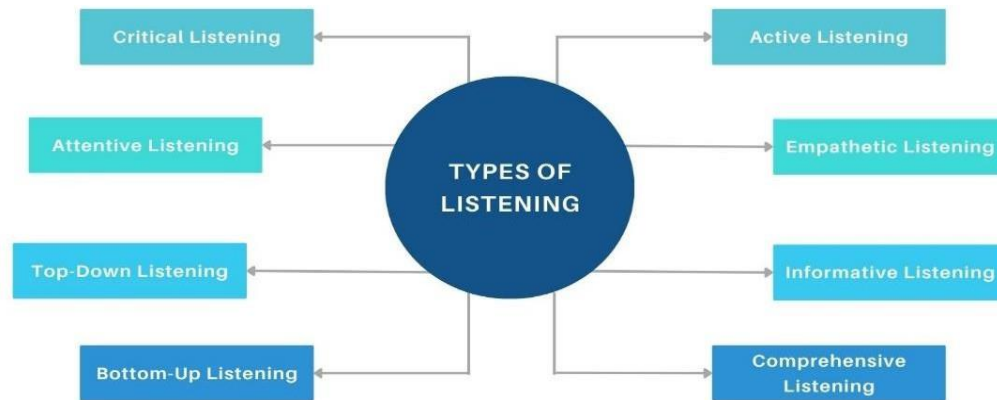
Figure 01: Major Types of Listening in Language Learning

Designed by the researcher

This figure illustrates the main types of listening relevant to language learning and communication, as compiled from various academic sources.

As shown in Figure 01, the primary types of listening include:

3.1 Active Listening

Active listening is a vital communication skill where the listener genuinely engages with the speaker to fully understand their message. It involves focusing on the speaker, providing reflective feedback, asking clarifying questions, showing empathy, using nonverbal cues to convey attentiveness, and avoiding interruptions. This approach fosters better understanding, trust, and rapport between individuals during conversations (Abduvahobova & Erdonova, 2023).

3.2 Empathetic Listening

According to Staddon et al. (2021), empathetic listening involves showing respect, care, and attentiveness in conversations. It goes beyond simply hearing words, requiring the listener to understand the emotions and intentions behind the speaker's message. This approach fosters trust and creates an open environment, enabling deeper connections and mutual understanding, key elements in building meaningful relationships in conservation.

3.3 Informative Listening

Informational listening is primarily concerned with comprehending and retaining the information being conveyed. This type of listening is essential in educational environments, where individuals need to absorb knowledge from lectures or presentations. The focus here is on understanding the content thoroughly to facilitate learning and retention of the material being discussed (Abduvahobova & Erdonova, 2023)

3.4 Comprehensive Listening

Comprehensive listening is the ability to effectively process, integrate, and comprehend spoken messages. It goes beyond merely hearing words; it includes understanding their meanings, inferring the context, and recognizing the speaker's intentions. This skill is crucial for primary school students, as it not only helps them acquire new information but also aids in following instructions, participating in discussions, and enhancing their overall language skills (Bourdeaud'hui, Aesaert, & van Braak, 2020).

3.5 Critical Listening

Critical listening is the process of actively engaging with and assessing auditory information, which goes beyond mere passive hearing. It requires individuals to analyze and evaluate what they hear, utilizing both perceptual and communication skills to discern sound qualities and articulate their observations effectively (Elmosnino, 2022).

3.6 Attentive Listening

Attentive listening is defined as a communication skill that involves fully concentrating on the speaker, understanding their message, and responding thoughtfully. This practice requires the listener to be entirely present in the conversation, minimizing distractions to enhance comprehension. (Tustonja et al., 2024)

3.7 Top-Down Listening

Utomo & Sulistyowati (2021, p. 414) defined top-down listening as the processes that deal with the student's ability to utilize background knowledge that has been gathered and stored from previous experiences to interpret meaning.

3.8 Bottom-Up Listening

Bottom-up listening is a method of understanding spoken language by focusing on the smallest units, such as sounds and words, rather than relying on prior knowledge or context. This approach is driven by the actual linguistic input, where listeners decode speech from phonemes to larger structures. It is essential for grasping specific information, especially in situations like announcements, where prior knowledge may not provide the needed context (Jassouma, 2020).

4   Stages of Listening

According to Hagen et al. (2022), listening comprehension comprises several essential elements, each playing a critical role in the effective understanding of spoken language. These elements are reflected in the five sequential stages of the listening process, as shown below.
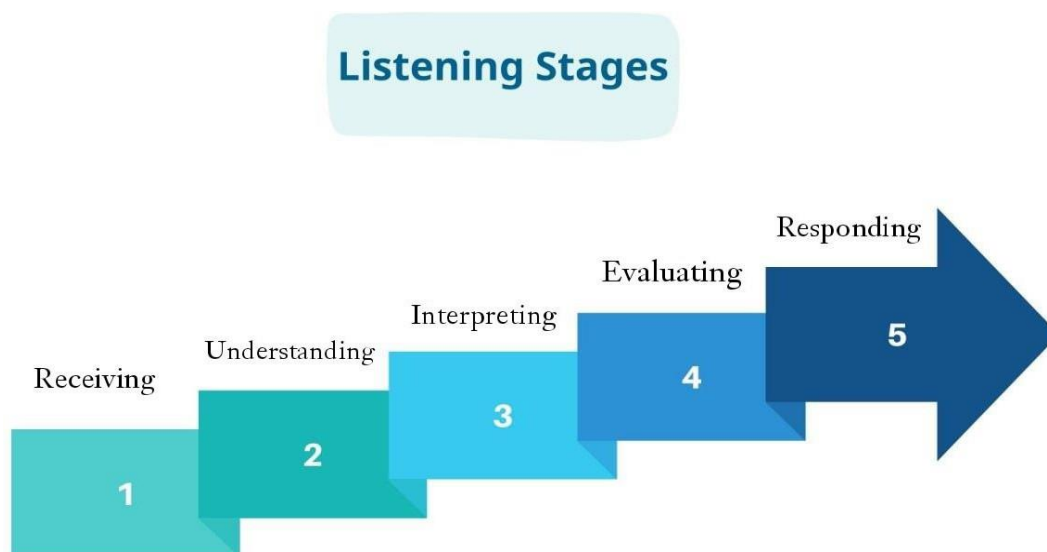
Figure 02: The Five Stages of the Listening Process (adapted from DeVito, 2000).

The listening process involves five interconnected stages: receiving, understanding, interpreting, evaluating, and responding. Each stage contributes to accurate comprehension and effective communication.

4.1   Receiving: This is the initial stage, where the listener perceives spoken words and sounds. It requires focused attention and the ability to distinguish relevant auditory input from background noise. Factors such as the speaker's clarity, speech rate, and environmental distractions can influence how well the message is received.

4.2   Understanding: Once the auditory input is received, the listener processes it by recognizing vocabulary, identifying grammatical structures, and making sense of sentence patterns. This stage relies on linguistic competence, including phonological awareness and syntactic knowledge, to grasp the speaker's intended meaning.

4.3   Interpreting: At this stage, the listener goes beyond the literal meaning of words and integrates the information with prior knowledge and contextual clues. This process allows for deeper comprehension, helping the listener infer implied meanings, recognize the speaker's tone or attitude, and connect ideas within the conversation.

4.4   Evaluating: Here, the listener critically analyzes the received message by assessing its accuracy, reliability, and relevance. This involves comparing the information with existing knowledge, identifying possible biases, and determining the credibility of the speaker. Critical thinking plays a key role in this stage, as it helps the listener distinguish facts from opinions and detect inconsistencies.

4.5   Responding: The final stage involves providing feedback, which can be verbal or nonverbal. Responses may include answering questions, expressing agreement or disagreement, seeking clarification, or simply using gestures that indicate engagement, such as nodding. Effective responses demonstrate that the listener has not only heard the message but has also actively processed and understood it.

Hagen et al. (2022) highlight that these elements are fundamental for educators and parents aiming to enhance children's listening skills. Developing competence in each stage contributes to overall language proficiency and fosters meaningful communication.

5 Challenges in Developing Listening Skills

The challenges of listening include a range of factors that can impact the ability to accurately receive and interpret information such as:

5.1 Listening Anxiety

Listening anxiety is a psychological factor that can interfere with comprehension, leading to feelings of worry, panic, and frustration. It can occur at different stages of the listening process: before listening, distractions and unfamiliar material may increase anxiety; during listening, difficulties in understanding words or making inferences can heighten stress; and after listening, failing to connect new information with prior knowledge may further escalate anxiety. In structured settings like classrooms or exams, pressure to perform can intensify this anxiety, reducing participation and engagement (Tayşi, 2019).

5.2 Linguistic Complexity

Linguistic complexity significantly influences the development of listening skills in second language acquisition (SLA). Listening comprehension requires learners to process various linguistic elements, such as syntax, morphology, and lexicon, in real- time. Higher levels of linguistic complexity, including longer sentences, increased subordination, and the use of less frequent vocabulary, can increase the cognitive load on learners, making it more challenging to decode and understand spoken language (Kuiken, 2023).

5.3 Limited Exposure to Authentic Materials

According to Sudewi and Isma (2023), Students often lack sufficient exposure to authentic listening materials that reflect real-world language use. Authentic materials, such as podcasts, videos, and audio recordings, provide learners with examples of natural speech, including various accents, speaking speeds, and colloquial expressions. Without this exposure, students may struggle to understand and process spoken English in real-life situations, such as conversations with native speakers or listening to English media. This

limitation can hinder their ability to develop listening comprehension skills that are essential for effective communication.

5.4 Underestimation of Listening Skills

According to Ardini et al. (2020), many people tend to underestimate the significance of listening, often overlooking its critical role in effective communication. This underappreciation can lead to neglecting the development of listening skills, which are essential not only in language acquisition but also in daily interactions. Strong listening abilities enable individuals to better understand and respond to messages, fostering more meaningful exchanges.

4.5 Insufficient Listening Skills

Yadav et al. (2023) explain that weak listening skills can make it difficult for individuals to fully understand and interpret spoken messages. When people do not actively listen, they may miss important details, misinterpret information, or fail to grasp the speaker's intent. This often leads to misunderstandings, confusion, and ineffective communication, particularly in academic and professional settings where clear and accurate exchange of ideas is essential. Students may struggle to follow lectures or engage in discussions without strong listening abilities.

5.6 The Influence of Cognitive Load

Mathias et al. (2023) highlight the challenge of cognitive load in developing listening skills, particularly in noisy environments where individuals must focus on relevant speech while filtering out distractions. Effective listening in such conditions requires substantial cognitive effort, including attention, working memory, and processing speed. Their findings suggest that cognitive load varies among individuals due to differences in cognitive abilities and genetic factors, emphasizing that listening difficulties are linked to hearing sensitivity and cognitive processing demands.

6 Strategies for Developing Listening Skills

6.1 Modeling Active Listening

Modeling active listening involves demonstrating attentive listening behaviours, such as eye contact, providing feedback, and asking clarifying questions. This approach helps children learn how to engage in conversations effectively and enhances their overall listening skills (Hagen et al., 2022).

6.2 Intense Listening

Yadav et al. (2023) describe intense listening in academic settings as a form of deep engagement with the speaker's message, where students focus entirely on the content without distractions. This type of listening enables students to grasp not only the factual information but also the emotions and intentions underlying the speaker's words. It is especially valuable during discussions or presentations, where understanding the speaker's perspective is crucial for effective communication.

6.3 Structured Language Programs

Structured language programs are designed to systematically improve children's oral language abilities, including vocabulary, narrative skills, and active listening. These programs have been shown to yield positive outcomes in enhancing children's language development and equipping them to meet academic challenges (Hagen et al., 2022).

6.4 Cognitive Listening Strategies

Cognitive listening strategies involve mental processes that assist in understanding spoken language by actively engaging with auditory input. These strategies include inferencing, prediction, elaboration, summarization, and note-taking, which help listeners process, organize, and retain information. By making connections between new input and prior knowledge, cognitive strategies enhance comprehension and aid in recognizing key details. Unlike passive listening, these strategies require active involvement, enabling learners to interpret meaning, anticipate content, and structure information effectively (Pešić, 2020)

6.5 Meta Cognitive Strategies

Metacognitive listening strategies are methods that assist learners in managing their listening comprehension by organizing, overseeing, and assessing their understanding. These strategies include setting objectives for listening, tracking comprehension progress, and determining the effectiveness of the listening process. By applying these strategies, learners can actively control and evaluate their understanding, which is essential for enhancing their listening skills (Majeed, 2022).

6.6 Socio-Affecting Strategies

Socio-affective listening strategies involve techniques that learners use to manage their emotions and engage with others to enhance listening comprehension. These strategies focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning, helping students reduce anxiety, stay motivated, and collaborate with peers. According to Awinindia (2023), socio-affective strategies include activities such as relaxing before listening to recordings to ease anxiety and practicing English with other students to improve understanding and receive feedback. These approaches create a supportive learning environment and contribute to a more effective listening experience.

7 The Process of Listening in Language Learning

Listening is an essential yet often overlooked skill in language learning, with speaking and writing typically taking the spotlight. It involves a range of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes that are vital for clear communication. Strong listening skills not only help learners absorb new information but also boost their confidence and motivation. Effective listening can lead to better communication, increased productivity, and improved relationships, especially in foreign environments. It also helps learners understand different accents and dialects. Recognizing the difference between intensive and extensive listening can be key to improving fluency and staying motivated (Yurko & Styfanyshyn, 2020).

Listening is a fundamental skill in language learning, serving as one of the four macro skills in communication, alongside reading, speaking, and writing. According to

Ambubuyog et al. (2023), listening is essential for language acquisition and comprehension, as it helps learners develop awareness of the sound, rhythm, intonation, and stress of a language. Active listening, in particular, has a significant impact on various language components, including phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. It aids learners in improving pronunciation, understanding word structures, and interpreting the meaning of sentences, which are vital for effective communication.

Ambubuyog et al. (2023) also emphasize that active listening creates a positive learning environment, enabling learners to focus on language acquisition, resolve unclear concepts, and develop self-awareness, ultimately making them more proficient language learners.

Section 2: Critical Thinking

Critical thinking plays a vital role in education, equipping learners with the ability to analyze, evaluate, and apply information effectively. This section defines the concept, outlines its main characteristics and stages of development, and emphasizes its relevance in both academic settings and language learning contexts.

1. **Historical Background of Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking originates in ancient philosophy, with Socrates introducing systematic questioning to evaluate ideas rather than accepting them without reflection. His approach influenced later philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, who emphasized reasoning to distinguish between appearance and reality. During the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas developed logical thinking by promoting structured reasoning. The Renaissance marked further advancements, with Francis Bacon advocating for analytical thought across various fields. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Hobbes and Locke explored rational thinking about human rights and governance. By the 19th century, Comte and Spencer expanded critical thinking into the social sciences. In the 20th century, John Dewey highlighted its role in education, emphasizing the importance of reflective thought in fostering independent reasoning and problem-solving skills (Bouzobra&Boulkroune, 2021)

2. Critical Thinking Definition

Critical thinking is a multidimensional process that incorporates reasoning, analysis, and self-reflection to help improve the capability of an individual to explore and understand complex issues. It goes beyond logical argumentation to include perspectives from philosophy, science, literature, and social theory. This scientific perspective, when combined with education across multiple disciplines, provides individuals the ability to critically evaluate information, allowing them to base their actions on rational inquiry rather than simply taking claims at face value (Foresman et al., 2017).

According to Thornhill-Miller et al. (2023), Critical thinking is a process of analysing and evaluating information by questioning assumptions, examining evidence, and considering alternative explanations. It is required for making rational decisions, solving problems, and promoting innovation. This ability is important for success in education and the workplace because it helps people develop logical thinking and find the right solutions to their problems.

3. Characteristics of a Critical Thinker

Critical thinkers exhibit key characteristics that enable them to analyze information objectively, solve problems efficiently, and make well-reasoned decisions. According to Sharif et al. (2021), these traits include:

3.1 Problem Identification and Analysis

Critical thinkers can identify and analyze problems in complex or ambiguous situations. According to Sharif et al. (2021), this ability allows them to break down challenges into smaller components, enabling a more structured and logical assessment.

3.2 Logical Reasoning and Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Critical thinkers apply logical reasoning by thoroughly examining evidence and avoiding assumptions or biases. Their decision-making is grounded in solid reasoning and reliable data, ensuring well-founded and justifiable conclusions.

3.3 Creativity and Innovation

Rather than relying solely on conventional methods, critical thinkers explore alternative solutions and think beyond traditional boundaries. This flexibility allows them to adapt to new challenges and develop more effective strategies (Sharif et al., 2021).

3.4 Effective Communication

Critical thinkers can clearly articulate their ideas, participate in discussions, and present arguments coherently and logically. Their ability to explain, analyze, and defend viewpoints enhances their engagement in academic and professional discourse.

3.5 Adaptability and Open-Mindedness

Critical thinkers consider diverse perspectives and are willing to revise their viewpoints in light of new evidence. This intellectual flexibility ensures that their reasoning remains dynamic and reflective, fostering a comprehensive understanding of issues (Sharif et al., 2021).

3.6 Strong Problem-Solving Skills

Rather than treating knowledge as static, critical thinkers transfer and adapt their understanding to real-world situations, enabling them to navigate complex challenges effectively.

Sharif et al. (2021) highlight that critical thinkers engage in active reasoning, questioning, and problem-solving rather than passively accepting information. They combine analytical skills, creativity, logical reasoning, and adaptability to formulate well- supported conclusions.

4. Development Stages of Thinking

Paul and Elder (2012) outline six stages that people typically go through as they develop their critical thinking abilities. Each stage represents a deeper level of awareness and skill in reasoning effectively.
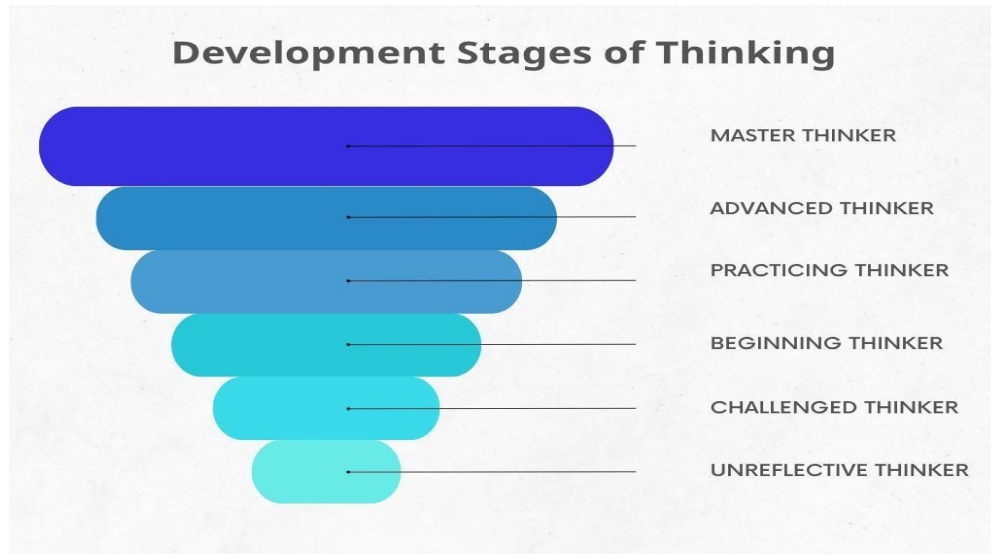
Figure 03: Developmental Stages of Critical Thinking (Paul & Elder, 2012)

This figure illustrates the six progressive stages in the development of critical thinking as outlined by Paul and Elder (2012): Unreflective Thinker, Challenged Thinker, Beginning Thinker, Practicing Thinker, Advanced Thinker, and Accomplished Thinker. Each stage represents a deeper level of intellectual self-awareness and discipline in reasoning.

4.1 Unreflective Thinker

Individuals are mostly unaware of how their thinking shapes their lives. Many people do not recognize the problems that come from poor reasoning. They also lack the tools to evaluate or improve their thinking. Often, they misunderstand or overlook important concepts like assumptions and logical structures.

4.2 Challenged Thinker

Challenger thinker marks the point where people start to see how their thinking impacts their lives. They know that flawed reasoning can cause problems and that

improving their thinking takes effort. However, they might still have difficulty figuring out where their thinking goes wrong.

4.3 Beginning Thinker

Individuals take active steps to improve their reasoning. They identify fundamental issues in their thinking and attempt to address them. However, their method may lack organization and a systematic approach.

4.4 Practicing Thinker

In this stage, people focus on improving their thinking skills. They know that practising regularly and intentionally helps them think better. They analyze their reasoning across different areas of life and start to monitor it more closely, though they may not yet fully grasp deeper or more complex issues.

4.5 Advanced Thinker

The advanced thinker is characterized by consistent application of critical thinking principles. People at this level can spot and solve complex problems in their thinking. They understand important concepts about thinking well and actively work to improve how they reason.

4.6 Master Thinker

The accomplished thinker is a top-level critical thinker; at this stage, people carefully assess their reasoning in all areas of life. They are highly aware of their thought processes and focus on improving themselves continuously.

Progressing through these stages enables individuals to develop deeper self-awareness, refine their reasoning skills, and ultimately become more effective, independent thinkers in all areas of life.

5. Critical Thinking Skills

Critical thinking comprises several interconnected skills that enable individuals to analyze information, assess arguments, solve problems, and make well-reasoned decisions. The following sections outline key critical thinking skills and their significance in logical reasoning and effective decision-making.

5.1 Reasoning

Reasoning is the process of decision-making, problem-solving, and conclusion-drawing through applying logical thinking. It entails connecting two or more ideas, assessing evidence, and using logical principles to justify actions or beliefs. Reasoning is essential for critical thinking because it helps people modulate their environment, look for patterns, and make reasonable decisions (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023)

5.2 Analysis

Dami and Drid (2022) state that analysis involves identifying relationships between concepts by examining, comparing, and contrasting different ideas. This skill helps individuals break down complex information into smaller components to understand its structure and connections effectively.

5.3 Examining Ideas

Examining ideas means looking at different concepts carefully, breaking them down, and comparing them to understand their key points and possible issues. It helps people think critically, spot connections, and judge whether an argument or idea makes sense in different situations (Dami & Drid, 2022).

5.4 Arguing

Arguing is a way for people to discuss different opinions. It often happens because of different beliefs and interests. In an argument, participants explain their reasons and provide evidence to support their views. They also consider opposing

opinions. It is not just about winning; it is essential for resolving disagreements and encouraging understanding through discussion (Lee, 2022).

5.5 Evaluation

Dami and Drid (2022) explain that evaluation involves assessing the reliability of information, arguments, and sources. This ability allows individuals to gauge the quality of evidence, recognize potential biases, and form sound judgments through logical reasoning.

5.6 Problem Solving

Sharif et al. (2021) define problem-solving skills as the ability to use knowledge, facts, and data to address issues effectively. These skills encompass critical thinking, creative thinking, innovation, and analytical thinking. They also involve applying existing knowledge to new and varied situations. Furthermore, problem-solving skills enable individuals to generate new ideas through inspiration, discussion, and evaluation.

5.7 Decision Making

Decision-making skills involve evaluating different options and choosing the most appropriate one. This process includes identifying key factors, gathering relevant information, analyzing potential outcomes, and considering the advantages and disadvantages of each choice. Strong decision-making skills enable individuals to make informed and logical decisions that align with their needs and objectives (Siagian et al., 2023).

By developing these critical thinking skills, individuals can enhance their ability to process information logically, evaluate different perspectives, and make informed decisions, ultimately improving their problem-solving abilities and overall cognitive flexibility.

6. The Importance of Critical Thinking in Language Learning

Critical thinking is an essential component of language learning, complementing the core skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Shalikiani-Skhireli, 2021). It involves actively analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information in the target language, leading to deeper comprehension and more meaningful communication.

Through strategic questioning, learners engage with different types of prompts, such as "explain," "discuss," and "analyze", that encourage them to move beyond memorization and develop deeper reasoning skills.

The process of critical thinking in language learning begins with identifying a problem or question, whether it involves interpreting a text, understanding cultural nuances, or constructing an argument. Learners then gather and assess information from various sources, evaluating credibility and potential bias. By analyzing key arguments, assumptions, and evidence, they develop a well-rounded perspective before synthesizing their findings into well-reasoned conclusions. This iterative process fosters improved problem-solving skills and enhances learners' ability to articulate their ideas effectively (Lailiyah & Wediyantoro, 2021).

To integrate critical thinking into language learning effectively, educators can use interactive activities such as debates, problem-solving tasks, and analytical discussions. These activities challenge students to think critically, assess information, and communicate their ideas with clarity. Additionally, incorporating peer feedback, self- assessment, and technology-based tools fosters independent thinking and strengthens language proficiency. However, challenges such as a lack of explicit critical thinking instruction and teacher-centered methodologies can hinder its development. Shifting towards more student-centered, inquiry-based approaches creates a dynamic learning environment that nurtures critical thinking and enhances overall language competence (Zeng et al., 2023).

7. Teaching Critical Thinking

Teaching critical thinking involves developing students' ability to analyze, evaluate, and reason effectively, particularly in educational settings.

Xiaomeng et al. (2023) emphasize that critical thinking instruction in English as an EFL classroom often relies on Western definitions and teacher-led assessments. To cultivate independent reasoning, educators should integrate questioning techniques, structured discussions, and problem-solving activities that prompt students to reflect on their thinking processes. Additionally, incorporating peer feedback, self-assessment, and technology-based tools can enhance engagement and encourage students to take an active role in their learning. While certain constraints, such as limited teacher training and large class sizes, persist, a shift toward interactive, student-driven instruction can improve critical thinking development.

Dekker (2020) further highlights that fostering critical thinking requires exposing students to multiple perspectives, encouraging them to question strong assertions, and guiding them toward independent decision-making. This approach, commonly used in student-centered classrooms, allows learners to explore diverse viewpoints, participate in discussions, and develop well-informed conclusions. By promoting an academic culture of dialogue and inquiry, teachers help students move beyond passive learning and actively engage in critical analysis.

Assessment plays a crucial role in developing critical thinking. Larsson (2021) suggests that effective evaluation should focus on students' ability to recognize assumptions, assess arguments, and draw logical conclusions. One effective strategy involves contrast-based tasks, where students compare strong and weak reasoning to refine their analytical skills. This method not only enhances their ability to distinguish between sound and flawed arguments but also fosters flexibility in applying critical thinking across different contexts. Moreover, assessments should go beyond summative evaluations; periodic formative assessments can provide continuous feedback and opportunities for skill improvement.

Teaching critical thinking requires a structured approach that integrates interactive learning strategies, exposure to diverse perspectives, and effective assessment methods. By fostering inquiry, reasoning, and reflective thinking, educators can equip students with the analytical skills needed for academic success and real-world decision-making. Shifting away from rigid, teacher-centered methods toward dynamic, student-driven learning environments will ensure that critical thinking becomes an integral part of education.

Section Three: The Relationship between Listening and Critical Thinking

Listening and critical thinking are closely linked. This section explores how active listening supports critical thought, drawing on key theories and recent studies. It also examines how listening enhances reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making skills, while addressing challenges in linking the two.

1. Theoretical Foundation

Listening is an active cognitive process that requires critical engagement with spoken content. Several theoretical perspectives explain how listening contributes to the development of critical thinking skills, such as:

1.1 Bloom's Taxonomy: A Hierarchical Model of Cognitive Skills

Faravani and Taleb (2020) highlight the significant role of Bloom's Taxonomy in explaining the connection between listening comprehension and critical thinking in EFL contexts. Originally introduced by Bloom (1956) and later revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), the taxonomy categorizes cognitive skills into six levels, progressing from lower-order to higher-order thinking. Remembering involves recalling or recognizing information, while understanding entails explaining, summarizing, or interpreting it. Applying requires using learned knowledge in new situations to solve problems, whereas analyzing involves breaking down information into components to identify relationships and patterns. Evaluating necessitates assessing arguments or methods based on evidence and reasoning, and the highest level, creating, involves

generating new ideas, constructing original solutions, or synthesizing information in innovative ways.

Faravani and Taleb's (2020) study found that when teachers incorporated higher- order questioning techniques, specifically those requiring analysis, evaluation, and creation into listening activities, students demonstrated notable improvements in both listening comprehension and critical thinking abilities. Their findings suggest that critical listening extends beyond passive reception and requires learners to engage in cognitive processing, such as assessing arguments, comparing perspectives, identifying logical inconsistencies, and making inferences.

Traditional lower-order listening tasks, which primarily focus on recall and comprehension, do not engage students at the same cognitive level as tasks that require them to analyze, evaluate, or synthesize information. For example, instead of simply recalling what a speaker said, students might be encouraged to compare viewpoints, justify an argument, or infer implicit meanings. These types of activities promote deeper cognitive engagement and foster critical thinking. Furthermore, Faravani and Taleb (2020) found that students exposed to higher-order questioning techniques outperformed their peers in both listening comprehension and critical thinking assessments.

1.2 Constructivist Learning Theory: Active Engagement in Listening for Critical Thinking

Munira et al. (2024) explore the role of Constructivist Learning Theory in enhancing listening skills and fostering critical thinking through an integrative listening method, an approach that encourages active engagement with spoken material. Their study critiques traditional listening instruction for being predominantly passive and teacher-centered, arguing that such methods limit students' ability to critically engage with spoken content. Instead, they advocate for a constructivist-based approach, where listening activities are designed to be interactive and student-centered, enabling learners to actively construct meaning rather than passively absorb information.

According to Munira et al. (2024), critical listening goes beyond comprehension by requiring students to analyze, evaluate, and interpret spoken input. Their approach aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which describes the gap between what a learner can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with guidance or collaboration. By incorporating peer discussions, student-generated questioning, and connections to prior knowledge, this method fosters deeper cognitive processing and critical thinking skills. Their findings suggest that dialogic learning, where students listen, reflect, and respond critically, significantly enhances both listening comprehension and analytical reasoning.

Ultimately, Munira et al. (2024) conclude that a constructivist-based listening approach not only improves comprehension but also strengthens the cognitive processes necessary for critical thinking. By actively engaging with spoken content, students develop essential analytical skills, such as assessing arguments, identifying implicit meanings, and synthesizing information. These findings position constructivist listening instruction as an effective pedagogical strategy for promoting both language acquisition and higher-order thinking in EFL contexts.

1.3 The Paul-Elder Framework: Intellectual Standards for Critical Listening

Barseghyan (2021) explores the Paul-Elder Critical Thinking Framework and its significance in fostering structured reasoning through intellectual standards. Within this model, listening is recognized as an active cognitive process, enabling individuals to systematically assess ideas, arguments, and perspectives rather than passively receiving information.

The Paul-Elder framework defines critical thinking as a structured process of analyzing, evaluating, and reconstructing thought, in which listening plays a fundamental role. Effective listeners engage with universal intellectual standards, including clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, and fairness, to critically assess spoken content. By applying these standards, listeners evaluate assumptions, identify implications, and test logical consistency, allowing them to distinguish between well-founded arguments and flawed reasoning.

Additionally, the framework highlights eight elements of thought, such as purpose, information, inferences, and perspectives, which are essential for both listening and critical thinking. When learners listen actively, they engage in reasoned analysis, questioning the credibility of sources, detecting biases, and forming well-supported conclusions. The study also underscores the value of Socratic questioning, in which educators pose thought-provoking questions that prompt students to critically interpret and respond to spoken content, thereby deepening their analytical abilities.

In summary, the examined theories emphasize the crucial role of listening in developing critical thinking. They highlight how active engagement with spoken information enhances analysis, interpretation, and problem-solving. Understanding these theoretical foundations reinforces the idea that effective listening is a key driver of critical thinking skills.

2. Recent Studies on Listening and Critical Thinking in EFL Contexts

Building on the theoretical perspectives linking listening skills to critical thinking, several recent studies provide empirical evidence supporting this connection in EFL learning environments.

Sipayung, Saragih, and Rumapea (2023) examined how Indonesian EFL learners' listening comprehension strategies influence their critical thinking skills. Their study revealed a strong positive correlation between students' use of metacognitive listening strategies, such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating, and higher-order cognitive skills like problem-solving and analytical reasoning. The findings suggest that training students to actively engage with spoken content can significantly enhance their critical thinking abilities.

Similarly, Baki (2025) emphasized that critical listening plays a key role in developing critical thinking by training learners to assess, question, and interpret spoken information. The study found that individuals who engage in critical listening activities develop stronger reasoning skills and make more informed decisions. These findings

reinforce the idea that listening is not just a passive skill but an essential cognitive process that supports logical analysis and evaluation.

Further evidence comes from Guo et al. (2024), who conducted a systematic review on Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in EFL contexts. Their findings showed that PBL, which requires learners to engage in inquiry, discussion, and problem-solving, enhances both listening comprehension and critical thinking skills. The study highlights that listening within PBL-based tasks helps students interpret information critically, refine their reasoning skills, and apply knowledge to real-world scenarios.

These studies collectively confirm that active engagement with spoken content strengthens critical thinking in EFL learners.

3. Listening as a Tool for Critical Thinking

Listening is essential for developing critical thinking, as it helps learners analyze, evaluate, and interpret spoken information. Through active listening, students enhance their reasoning skills, recognize biases, and assess the credibility of arguments, making it a key tool for critical analysis.

3.1 The Role of Listening in Enhancing Critical Thinking

Listening is crucial to developing critical thinking by gaining analytical and evaluative skills. Sulistyani et al. (2023) argue that critical listening is more than just understanding, as it makes learners analyze logical arguments, detect biases, distinguish between facts and opinions, and detect persuasive techniques. Participating in listening activities, such as inferring, comparing and contrasting, and identifying relevant information, enables students to critically analyze oral texts. These exercises allow students to practice such thinking skills as hypothesis formation, inductive and deductive reasoning, and the critique of conclusions. Through the integration of listening and critical thinking, students become better at interpreting and critiquing information effectively, which leads to better comprehension, reasoning, and decision-making skills.

3.2 Distinguishing Facts from Opinions in Spoken Information

Listening is essential in separating facts from opinions as it allows learners to critically evaluate spoken information. Critical thinking, as argued by Bouzobra and Boulkroune (2021), entails the evaluation of arguments, identification of biases, and determination of the credibility of various opinions. Good listening enables one to recognize logical fallacies, distinguish between evidence-based arguments and personal opinions, and identify persuasive strategies that disguise opinions as facts. Through critical listening, students can check information with credible sources, contrast statements with existing knowledge, and form well-supported judgments. Such analytical listening improves understanding and decision-making in academic as well as real-world situations (Bouzobra & Boulkroune, 2021).

3.3 Enhancing Logical Reasoning Through Listening

Listening contributes to logical reasoning by engaging cognitive processes such as analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. According to Nainggolan and Hanifah (2020), effective listening enhances comprehension by enabling individuals to decode messages accurately, which is fundamental to logical processing. Additionally, listening fosters analytical and inferential skills by allowing learners to recognize patterns and draw conclusions based on auditory input. Furthermore, critical listening aids in evaluating information credibility and distinguishing between facts and opinions, which are essential for sound reasoning. As listening requires individuals to justify their thoughts with evidence, it promotes explanation and structured argumentation. Lastly, self-regulation in listening helps learners reflect on their interpretations, identify biases, and refine their reasoning skills, ultimately leading to more coherent and logical thinking.

3.4 Evaluating Arguments Through Listening

Evaluating arguments through listening involves assessing the credibility, logic, and relevance of spoken information to form sound judgments. According to Sulistyani et al. (2023), critical listening requires listeners to not only comprehend messages but also analyze reasoning gaps, identify biases, distinguish between facts and opinions, and

detect persuasive techniques. Effective evaluation includes recognizing inductive and deductive reasoning, explaining conclusions, and assessing evidence supporting arguments. By integrating these skills, listening comprehension exercises enhance students' ability to critically assess spoken content and develop logical thinking.

4. Listening for Analytical Skills Development

Listening is not merely a passive activity but an essential cognitive process that enhances analytical thinking.

According to Basyoni and Medd (2023), listening plays a crucial role in developing analytical skills by enabling individuals to evaluate spoken messages critically. They state that active listening allows individuals to assess the logical structure of arguments, identify key points, and differentiate between credible and biased information. This process also involves interpreting verbal and nonverbal cues, such as tone, gestures, and facial expressions, to gain deeper insights into the speaker's intentions. Additionally, they declare that analytical listening helps individuals recognize patterns, compare new information with prior knowledge, and reassess existing beliefs based on evidence. By engaging in systematic listening, individuals strengthen their ability to deconstruct complex messages and extract meaningful conclusions.

Similarly, Malh, Wood, and Chung (2023) argue that listening fosters analytical thinking by training individuals to assess logical consistency, identify underlying assumptions, and distinguish objective facts from subjective opinions. They explain that this process enables listeners to scrutinize arguments, evaluate evidence, and make reasoned judgments. Moreover, they assert that effective analytical listening enhances problem-solving skills, as individuals learn to break down complex issues, examine different perspectives, and formulate well-reasoned responses. According to Basyoni and Medd (2023), continuous refinement of listening abilities cultivates a habit of critical examination, ultimately strengthening individuals' overall analytical thinking and decision-making capabilities.

5. The Role of Listening in Decision Making and Problem Solving

Listening is a fundamental skill that shapes how individuals process information, assess situations, and respond to challenges. It enables clearer understanding, reduces misunderstandings, and supports more effective decision-making and problem-solving.

5.1 Listening and Decision-Making

Listening is an important criterion that helps us in making decisions, as it helps us process information. When you listen actively, you get a better understanding of important information, so your decisions will be based on that data.

Kluger and Itzchakov (2022) highlight that high-quality listening creates an environment in which people feel psychologically safe to state their views. As a result, carefully making choices may enhance the quality of choices they make because they become less prone to other cognitive biases like confirmation bias and anchoring via perspectives. When individuals listen actively, the decision-maker is less likely to rely on existing assumptions and more likely to give an objective assessment.

In a group, listening helps us work together as a team by building trust and helping agreement. Also, when a person listens, it drives creativity and flexibility and helps generate new ideas and solutions. Leaders who listen well make better, more ethical and strategic choices, as they take more viewpoints into their problem-solving. Finally, listening improves decision-making by ensuring choices are informed, balanced, and respect other people's opinions (Kluger & Itzchakov, 2022).

5.2 Listening and Problem-Solving

Listening also plays a significant role in problem-solving as it helps to identify the problem, find solutions, and create content. When groups are together, listening helps them talk so they do not ignore people's different thoughts and ideas. Solution recommendations are developed based on the understanding of the problem and then learnt and internalized through listening.

In addition, it helps review tactics and take feedback for better decisions. Listening when students are engaged in solving a problem helps them justify their reasoning, challenge each other's ideas, and contribute to the group (Sjöblom & Meaney, 2021).

The ability to listen is crucial for effective problem-solving and decision-making. By paying attention, a person can enhance understanding, reduce cognitive biases, collaborate more effectively with others, and adapt with ease.

6. Challenges in Linking Listening to Critical Thinking

Linking listening to critical thinking presents several challenges, such as:

6.1 Cognitive Barriers to Effective Listening

Meng et al. (2023) identify several cognitive barriers that impede effective listening in EFL learners. Phonetic processing difficulties arise when students struggle to distinguish between similar sounds or comprehend connected speech. Vocabulary recognition issues also hinder comprehension, as learners may have a limited word bank or experience delays in retrieving known words. Additionally, challenges in syntactic and semantic processing occur when students misinterpret sentence structures, leading to misunderstandings even when individual words are recognized. Problems with semantic comprehension further complicate listening, as learners may struggle to integrate explicit information across sentences, preventing them from constructing a coherent understanding of the message. Pragmatic inference difficulties also contribute to listening barriers, as some students either lack sufficient background knowledge or apply it too broadly, making it challenging to grasp implied meanings. These cognitive difficulties can interact in different ways, with some compensating for others while certain deficits reinforce each other, ultimately obstructing comprehension.

6.2 Linguistic and Comprehension Challenges

According to Palakaprasith et al. (2024), EFL learners encounter both linguistic and comprehension challenges that affect their listening skills. Linguistic difficulties stem

from unfamiliar words, idioms, jargon, slang, and complex grammatical structures, which complicate the processing of spoken language. Additionally, variations in pronunciation, unclear articulation, stress patterns, intonation, and accents further hinder comprehension. On the other hand, comprehension challenges include difficulties in following the sequence of spoken information, recognizing words in connected speech, distinguishing word boundaries, and understanding lengthy texts. Learners also struggle with inferring meaning, interpreting speaker transitions, and identifying key ideas within spoken discourse, all of which negatively impact their listening comprehension.

6.3 Environmental and Contextual Factors

According to Harrison et al. (2023), students in academic settings face multiple environmental and contextual challenges that hinder their listening comprehension. Background noise, including side conversations, external disturbances, and poor classroom acoustics, disrupts focus and makes it difficult to process spoken information. Physical conditions such as uncomfortable seating, inadequate ventilation, improper lighting, and extreme temperatures contribute to fatigue and reduce students' ability to concentrate. Additionally, lecture timing plays a role, as students may struggle with attentiveness in late-day sessions or become overwhelmed by cognitively demanding content. The necessity of multitasking, such as simultaneously listening and taking notes, further divides cognitive resources, increasing the likelihood of incomplete understanding and reduced retention of key information.

6.4 Emotional and Psychological Barriers

According to Basyoni and Medd (2023), emotional and psychological barriers significantly impact critical listening skills, affecting learners' ability to process and evaluate spoken information. Anxiety and stress are major obstacles, as nervousness about comprehension or performance can lead to mental overload, reducing focus and retention. Low confidence further exacerbates listening difficulties, making learners hesitant to engage actively or interpret complex messages. Preconceived biases and personal prejudices also interfere with listening by causing selective attention, where listeners focus only on information that aligns with their existing beliefs. Emotional

distractions, such as personal concerns or external pressures, divert cognitive resources away from the listening process, leading to fragmented understanding. Additionally, defensive attitudes arise when listeners feel challenged or criticized, prompting them to formulate responses rather than objectively analyze the message.

6.5 Digital Distraction

According to Pérez-Juárez et al. (2023), digital distractions present significant challenges to listening and learning in academic settings. The widespread use of technological devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops in classrooms has created a paradox where technology enhances learning but also serves as a major source of distraction. One of the primary challenges is media multitasking, where students attempt to divide their attention between listening to lectures and engaging with social media, messaging apps, or web browsing, which negatively impacts comprehension and retention. The constant notifications and alerts from digital devices further interrupt focus, making it difficult for students to sustain attention on spoken content. Additionally, students often underestimate the cognitive load imposed by digital distractions, believing they can effectively multitask when research shows that switching between tasks reduces overall performance. The presence of digital distractions also creates a ripple effect, as students using devices for non-academic purposes can distract their peers, leading to a decline in collective attentiveness. These challenges highlight the negative impact of digital distractions on students' ability to engage in effective listening and process spoken information during academic activities.

In conclusion, while listening is a key factor in critical thinking, certain challenges can hinder its effectiveness. Implementing strategies such as active engagement, critical questioning, and structured listening activities can help bridge this gap. Strengthening these skills will better equip students to analyze information critically and make informed decisions.

7 Conclusion

This theoretical chapter aims to define and explain the key concepts related to listening skills and critical thinking. The first section explored listening skills by reviewing various scholarly perspectives on their significance, classification, and the cognitive processes involved. It also examined the role of listening in language learning and comprehension.

The second section focused on critical thinking, outlining its definition, core components, and importance in academic and real-life contexts. It discussed different models of critical thinking and how they relate to students' intellectual development.

The final section examined the relationship between listening skills and critical thinking. It provided a theoretical foundation for how listening can serve as a tool for developing analytical skills, problem-solving abilities, and decision-making processes. Additionally, it highlighted the challenges students face in linking these two competencies and reviewed empirical studies supporting their connection.

Chapter Two:

Methodology

and

Research

Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to investigate the influence of listening skills on promoting critical thinking among second-year students of English at Saida University. It describes the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, and analysis procedures. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, the study ensures a comprehensive understanding of the topic through the use of surveys, classroom observations, and teacher interviews. This methodological framework aims to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings while providing both quantitative and qualitative insights into the relationship between listening and critical thinking.

Section one: Methodology

This section presents the study's research design, detailing the mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative surveys with qualitative observations and interviews. It further specifies the sampling strategy for participant selection and addresses critical ethical considerations in data collection.

2.2 Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of listening skills on promoting critical thinking among second-year English students at Saida University. The use of multiple research methods enhances the validity and reliability of the findings by allowing data triangulation, ensuring that different aspects of the research problem are examined from various perspectives.
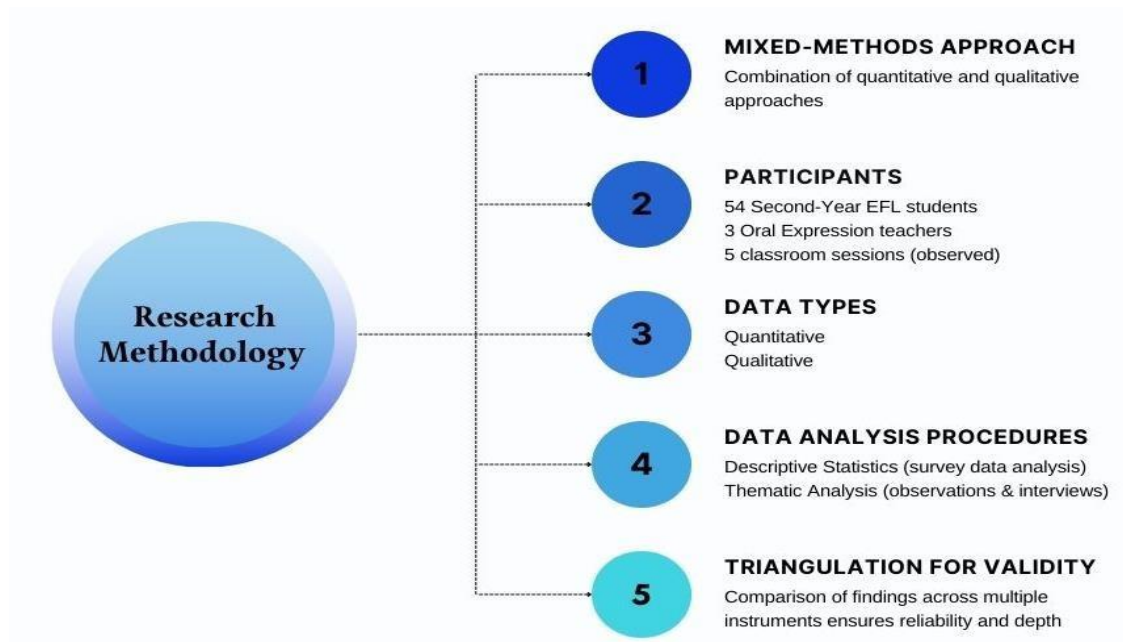
Figure 04: Overview of Research Methodology

Designed by the researcher.

As shown in Figure 5, the study combines both quantitative and qualitative methods, ensuring triangulation and a deeper understanding of the research problem from multiple perspectives.

- **Mixed-Methods Approach**

A mixed-methods approach was chosen for this study because it combines the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative methods, such as surveys, allow for the collection of numerical data that can be analyzed statistically, providing insights into general trends and relationships. On the other hand, qualitative methods, including observations and interviews, offer deeper insights into behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions that may not be fully captured through numerical data alone.

By integrating these two approaches, the study ensures a more balanced and in-depth analysis. The quantitative data from student surveys provides measurable

evidence of students' listening habits and critical thinking skills, while the qualitative data from classroom observations and teacher interviews help contextualize these findings by exploring the real-world application of listening strategies and their impact on students' cognitive abilities.

- **Reasons for Employing Multiple Data Collection Methods**

To ensure the credibility and depth of the findings, this study utilizes three research tools: surveys, classroom observations, and teacher interviews. Each tool was selected for its ability to contribute unique and complementary data, addressing different aspects of the research question.

1. **Survey (Questionnaire)**

The survey was used to gather quantitative data from students regarding their listening skills and how they perceive their development of critical thinking.

Questionnaires are widely used in educational research because they allow for the collection of data from a large sample efficiently. The structured nature of surveys enables researchers to analyze patterns, measure relationships between variables, and draw generalizable conclusions.

In this study, the questionnaire consists of closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to assess students' listening strategies, engagement in critical thinking tasks, and their perceptions of how listening contributes to problem-solving and decision- making. The results provide a broad overview of students' experiences and allow for statistical analysis to identify trends.

2. **Classroom Observations**

Observations were conducted to capture real-life interactions in the classroom, focusing on how listening activities are implemented and how students engage with them to enhance their critical thinking skills. Unlike surveys, which rely on self- reported data, classroom observations provide firsthand evidence of students' behaviors, participation levels, and teachers' instructional strategies.

This method was chosen because it allows researchers to examine the teaching and learning process in a natural setting, ensuring that the findings are grounded in real classroom experiences. The observations focused on key aspects such as students' engagement with listening tasks, their responses to critical thinking prompts,

and teachers' techniques for fostering analytical discussions. By analyzing these elements, the study gains deeper insights into how listening is used as a tool for critical thinking development.

3. Teacher Interviews

To supplement the findings from surveys and observations, semi-structured interviews were conducted with oral session teachers. The purpose of these interviews was to explore teachers' perspectives, experiences, and challenges in integrating listening activities that promote critical thinking. Unlike surveys, which provide broad numerical insights, interviews allow for in-depth exploration of individual viewpoints, offering richer qualitative data.

The interviews covered key topics such as teachers' strategies for enhancing listening comprehension, their methods for encouraging critical thinking, and the challenges they face in engaging students in higher-order thinking tasks. This data helps contextualize the findings from the surveys and observations, providing a holistic understanding of the research problem.

- **Triangulation and Data Validity**

Using three different research tools allows for data triangulation, which enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple sources of data to validate findings and reduce biases. By comparing the results from surveys, observations, and interviews, the study ensures that its conclusions are well-supported and not solely dependent on a single data source.

For example, if survey responses indicate that students believe listening improves their critical thinking skills, classroom observations can confirm whether students actively engage in analytical discussions during listening tasks. Similarly, teacher interviews provide expert opinions that either support or challenge the students' perspectives, adding another layer of validation.

In conclusion, this study adopts a mixed-methods design to provide a comprehensive and well-rounded analysis of how listening skills influence critical thinking development. The combination of quantitative surveys, qualitative classroom observations, and teacher interviews ensures that both numerical trends and real- world experiences are captured. Each method serves a specific purpose: surveys

quantify students' perceptions, observations document actual classroom practices, and interviews explore expert insights.

By integrating these methods, the study achieves a balanced and credible research framework, ensuring that the findings are both statistically significant and contextually meaningful. This approach not only strengthens the validity of the research but also contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of listening in developing students' critical thinking abilities.

2.3 Population and Sampling

Accurately defining the population and sampling is essential to ensuring the reliability and validity of research findings. This section outlines the target population of the study and the sampling techniques used to select participants. Since this research investigates the influence of listening skills on promoting critical thinking, it was important to select a representative and diverse sample to capture meaningful insights.

2.3.1 Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of second-year students of English at Dr. Moulay Tahar University in Saida. The total number of students at this level is 236, divided into five groups. These students were chosen because, by their second year, they have already developed fundamental listening skills and are increasingly exposed to academic discussions, analytical listening tasks, and critical thinking exercises. Examining their listening comprehension at this stage provides valuable insights into their ability to engage critically with spoken content in English.

Since the study also investigates the role of teachers in fostering critical thinking through listening, oral session teachers were included as participants. Their insights provide context for students' experiences by offering information about teaching strategies, instructional challenges, and the effectiveness of listening activities in developing critical thinking.

2.3.2 Sampling Technique

Given the large population size, it was impractical to collect data from all 236 students. Therefore, sampling techniques were employed to select a subset of participants that accurately represents the student population.

- **Student Sampling** (Convenience Sampling for Online Survey)

The online survey was posted in the Messenger group of the five second-year student groups, allowing all students to access and voluntarily complete it. Out of the 236 students, 54 students responded. Since participation was voluntary and depended on students' willingness to engage, this method falls under convenience sampling.
While it does not ensure complete randomness, the fact that respondents came from different groups improves the diversity and representativeness of the sample.

- **Teacher Sampling** (Purposive Sampling for Interviews)

For the teacher interviews, purposive sampling was used to select three oral session instructors who have experience teaching listening skills. This method ensures that participants possess relevant expertise in designing listening activities and fostering students' critical thinking skills. The selected teachers provided valuable insights into the relationship between listening instruction and cognitive skill development.

- **Classroom Observation Sample**

Observations were conducted in five different groups during oral sessions to analyze students' engagement, participation, and interaction with listening tasks.
These sessions were chosen based on availability and the willingness of teachers to participate, ensuring a realistic representation of classroom dynamics. The observed students were part of the larger surveyed group, allowing for a comparison between self-reported data and actual classroom behavior.

2.3.3 Sample Size Justification

The survey's response rate of 54 students out of 236 provides a manageable and representative sample for analysis. While the study did not use random sampling, the inclusion of students from all five groups ensures that a variety of perspectives and experiences are reflected in the findings. In educational research, a sample size of 30-100 participants is often considered sufficient for identifying patterns and relationships, making 54 respondents an adequate number for drawing meaningful conclusions.

For teacher interviews, selecting three oral session instructors is justified because their role in teaching listening skills and promoting critical thinking directly aligns with the research objectives. Since qualitative research prioritizes depth over quantity, interviewing a limited number of teachers still provides valuable insights into instructional strategies, challenges, and student engagement.

Classroom observations were included to validate the findings from the surveys and interviews by providing firsthand data on students' listening behaviors and teachers' methodologies. Observing five different groups ensured a broader understanding of how listening activities are conducted in different classroom settings. This triangulation of research methods ensures that findings are not solely based on self-reported data but are supported by real classroom interactions.

2.3.4 Demographic Information of Participants

Although this study does not focus on demographic variables, basic participant details help contextualize the findings.

• Students: The 54 survey respondents were from different sections of the second- year student population, ensuring diverse perspectives. Their age range typically falls between 19 and 22 years old, and they have varying levels of listening proficiency and critical thinking skills.

- Teachers: The three interviewed oral session instructors have different years of experience in teaching listening and promoting critical thinking, allowing for a variety of insights into the instructional process.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

Conducting research involving human participants requires adherence to ethical guidelines to protect their rights, ensure their well-being, and maintain research integrity. This study was conducted in accordance with fundamental ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data protection.

2.4.1 Informed Consent

•   Before participating in this study, both students and teachers were informed about the purpose, objectives, and significance of the research.

•   The survey included an introductory section explaining that participation was voluntary and responses would be used solely for research purposes.

•   For classroom observations and teacher interviews, the participants were informed that the researcher would be analyzing teaching strategies, student engagement, and critical thinking development during oral sessions.

•   The three interviewed teachers were explicitly asked for their consent before their responses were recorded and analyzed.

2.4.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

•   To protect participants' privacy, their identities were kept anonymous throughout the study.

•   The survey responses were collected without requesting personal identifiers, ensuring that no individual student could be linked to specific answers.

•   During classroom observations, no students were individually identified or singled out, and the focus remained on general classroom dynamics.

•   The teachers' interview responses were analyzed without mentioning their names, and only general trends were discussed in the findings.

2.4.3 Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw

•   Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and no students or teachers were pressured to participate.

•   Students were free to ignore the survey link in their Messenger groups if they did not wish to respond.

•   Teachers had the right to refuse interviews or to skip any questions they were not comfortable answering.

•   Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time without any consequences.

2.4.4 Data Protection and Security

• Ensuring the security of collected data was a priority to maintain research integrity.

• Survey data was stored in Google Forms, accessible only to the researcher.

•   Observation notes and interview transcripts were kept confidential and stored in a protected file.

•   The collected data was used strictly for academic purposes and was not shared with unauthorized individuals.

2.4.5 Academic Integrity and Avoiding Bias

• Maintaining objectivity and accuracy was crucial throughout the research process.

•　　　　The survey questions were designed to be neutral and unbiased, avoiding leading questions that could influence student responses.

•　　　　Classroom observations were conducted objectively, without allowing personal opinions to influence the interpretation of students' engagement.

•　　　　The interview data were analyzed fairly, ensuring that teachers' perspectives were represented accurately without distortion.

Section Two: Research Framework

This section presents the research framework by describing the instruments used in the study: student surveys, classroom observations, and teacher interviews. It explains how these tools were implemented to explore the research questions and ensure the reliability of findings through triangulation.

2.5 Research Instruments

To ensure a comprehensive investigation of the influence of listening skills on promoting critical thinking, this study employed three research instruments: a survey, classroom observations, and teacher interviews. These tools were chosen to provide both quantitative and qualitative data, allowing for a deeper understanding of students' listening skills, their critical thinking abilities, and the instructional strategies used by teachers.

Instruments	Purposes	Data Type	Participants
Online Survey	Measures listening and critical thinking skills	Quantitative	54 second-year EFL students

Classroom Observations	Observe students' engagement and instructional strategies	Qualitative	Second-year EFL students' groups (observed)
Teacher Interviews	Explore instructional strategies	Qualitative	3 oral expression teachers

Table 01: Summary of Research Instruments

Table 1 summarizes the three research instruments used in this study, including their respective purposes, data types, and participant groups.

2.5.1 Online Survey

The first research instrument used in this study was an online survey, which was designed to collect data from second-year students of English regarding their listening skills and critical thinking abilities. Surveys are widely used in educational research because they allow researchers to collect data from a large number of participants efficiently.

• **Purpose of the Survey**

The survey aimed to:

1. Assess students' self-perceived listening skills and their role in academic and everyday communication.

2. Measure students' critical thinking skills in response to listening-based activities.

3.   Identify the challenges students face when engaging in listening tasks that require analysis, interpretation, and reasoning.

4.   Gather students' opinions on whether listening activities in oral sessions help develop their critical thinking abilities.

• Structure of the Survey

The survey consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions to ensure both quantitative and qualitative insights. The questions were divided into the following sections:

a. Demographic Information: General details about the respondents, such as age and their level of proficiency.
b. Listening Skills: Questions measuring students' ability to understand, interpret, and critically engage with spoken English.
c. Critical Thinking and Listening: Statements related to students' analytical thinking, inference-making, and evaluation skills based on listening activities.
d. Challenges and Strategies: Questions about the difficulties students face while listening and how they overcome them.
e. Perceptions of Classroom Listening Activities: Questions about whether listening exercises in oral sessions contribute to critical thinking development.

• Survey Administration

The survey was distributed online by posting it in the Messenger group of the second-year student groups. Out of 236 students, 54 students voluntarily responded. The convenience sampling method allowed students from all five groups to participate, making the sample more diverse and representative of the population.

2.5.2 Classroom Observations

To complement the survey responses, five classroom observations were conducted in different groups. Observations are valuable in educational research because they provide direct, real-time insights into student behavior and teacher strategies, helping to validate self-reported data from surveys.

• Purpose of the Observations

The classroom observations aimed to:

1. Examine how students engage with listening materials and whether they demonstrate critical thinking skills during discussions.
2. Identify the teaching strategies that instructors use to develop students' listening comprehension and analytical skills.
3. Observe the challenges students face while listening and their reactions to complex listening tasks.

• Observation Process

Observations were conducted in oral sessions where teachers incorporated listening activities as part of their lessons. The focus was on:

1. The listening material used (audio recordings, videos, live discussions).
2. Student engagement (attention, participation, questioning, and analysis).
3. Teacher strategies (guiding questions, hints, explanations).
4. Interaction patterns (group discussions, debates, individual reflections).

One specific observation was conducted on Sunday, November 2, at 9:30 p.m., where the teacher used a data show to present a video, allowing students time to analyze and interpret its deeper meaning. The teacher provided explanations, hints, and guiding questions, encouraging students to use their critical thinking skills. The session was highly interactive, with most students sharing interpretations and engaging actively in the discussion.

• Justification for Classroom Observations

Observations were used to validate the survey results, ensuring that students' self-reported experiences aligned with actual classroom behaviors. They also helped identify teaching strategies that may contribute to critical thinking development, providing real-world evidence of how listening activities impact students' analytical abilities.

2.5.3 Teacher Interviews

To gain further insights into how listening instruction supports critical thinking, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three oral session teachers. Interviews are particularly useful for understanding teachers' perspectives, strategies, and challenges in fostering critical thinking through listening activities.

• **Purpose of the Interviews**

The interviews aimed to:

1. Understand how teachers design listening activities to promote critical thinking.
2. Identify the challenges teachers face when encouraging students to engage in deeper analysis of listening materials.
3. Gather insights on how students react to listening tasks that require reasoning and interpretation.
4. Explore whether teachers believe that listening skills contribute to students' critical thinking development.

• **Interview Structure**

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, allowing teachers to freely discuss their experiences while ensuring that key research topics were covered. The questions were divided into:

1. Teaching Approaches: How listening activities are integrated into oral sessions.
2. Listening and Critical Thinking: Teachers' views on whether listening exercises help develop students' analytical thinking.
3. Challenges in Teaching Listening for Critical Thinking: Difficulties in engaging students and strategies to overcome them.
4. Recommendations: Suggestions for improving listening instruction to enhance students' critical thinking skills.

• **Interview Process**

The three interviews were conducted individually to allow teachers to share their perspectives freely. Responses were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to identify common themes related to listening instruction and critical thinking development.

• **Justification for Teacher Interviews**

Teacher interviews provided expert insights that complemented the findings from surveys and observations. By comparing teachers' perspectives with students' self-reported experiences and classroom behavior, the study was able to develop a well-rounded understanding of the role of listening in promoting critical thinking.

2.6 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process for this study was carefully structured to ensure reliability, validity, and depth of analysis. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining quantitative data (survey responses) and qualitative insights (classroom observations and teacher interviews). The data collection phase took place over several weeks, allowing sufficient time to gather meaningful information on how listening skills contribute to students' critical thinking.

2.6.1 Survey Data Collection

The first phase of data collection involved administering an online survey to second-year students of English at Dr. Moulay Tahar University in Saida. The goal was to obtain students' perspectives on their listening skills, their ability to think critically during listening tasks, and the challenges they encounter.

• **Survey Distribution Process**

The survey was created using Google Forms, a widely used tool that allows for easy distribution and collection of responses.

To ensure maximum participation, the survey link was posted in the Messenger groups used by the five groups of second-year students. This method was chosen because Messenger is a platform frequently accessed by students, increasing the likelihood of engagement.

Students were encouraged to complete the survey voluntarily, with an assurance that their responses would remain anonymous and would be used for research purposes only.

- **Student Participation**

•   The survey was open for several days, allowing students enough time to respond.

•Out of 236 second-year students, 54 students participated, representing a cross-section of the five groups.

•The responses were automatically recorded and stored in Google Forms, ensuring accuracy and efficiency in data collection.

- **Survey Challenges and Considerations**

•   Some students did not respond to the survey despite the open invitation, possibly due to a lack of interest or time constraints.

•   Since participation was voluntary, the sample may reflect students who are more engaged with listening activities, which could influence the results.

•   To mitigate this limitation, follow-up reminders were sent to encourage more responses, but participation remained at 54 students.

2.6.2 Classroom Observations Data Collection

To gain a deeper understanding of how listening contributes to critical thinking, five classroom observations were conducted in different groups during oral sessions. Observations provided direct insights into students' engagement, listening

comprehension strategies, and teachers' methods for integrating critical thinking into listening activities.

- **Observation Process**

    •   The observations were carried out during regularly scheduled oral sessions, ensuring that students were in a natural learning environment.

- The observation was non-participant in nature to ensure objectivity and minimize researcher bias during the data collection process.

    •   Each observation lasted for the entire duration of the session, allowing for a thorough examination of students' participation and interaction with listening tasks.

    The primary focus was on:

    • The listening materials used (audio recordings, videos, teacher explanations).

    •   The extent to which students engaged in critical analysis of what they listened to.

    • Teacher strategies in encouraging discussion, questioning, and reasoning.

- **Ethical Considerations for Observations**

    •The observations were conducted with the full consent of the teachers and students involved.

    •No personal identifying information was recorded to maintain confidentiality.

    •The researcher remained a non-participating observer, ensuring that classroom interactions unfolded naturally without interference.

2.6.3 Teacher Interviews Date Collection

    To further explore how listening skills contribute to critical thinking, three oral session teachers were interviewed. The goal was to understand their teaching

strategies, challenges, and perceptions of students' ability to think critically when engaging with listening materials.

- **Interview Process**

    •   Teachers were contacted in advance and invited to participate in the research. They were informed of the study's objectives and assured that their responses would be kept anonymous.

    •   Interviews were conducted individually, allowing each teacher to express their opinions freely.

    •   A semi-structured interview format was used, meaning that while there were predetermined questions, teachers could expand on their answers and provide additional insights.

- **Interview Themes**

    The interviews focused on:

1. Teaching Approaches: How listening exercises are incorporated into oral sessions.
2. Critical Thinking Development: Whether teachers believe listening contributes to students' analytical and reasoning skills.
3. Challenges in Teaching Listening for Critical Thinking: What difficulties they face in engaging students and encouraging deep thinking.
4. Suggestions for Improvement: Recommendations for enhancing the role of listening in critical thinking development.

- **Interview Data Recording**

    • Responses were recorded and transcribed for later analysis.

    •   Thematic analysis was applied, identifying common patterns in how teachers approach listening instruction.

•   Findings from the interviews were compared with survey responses and classroom observations, ensuring consistency across the data sources.

- **Ethical Considerations for Interviews**

•   Participation was entirely voluntary, and teachers had the right to refuse or withdraw at any stage.

•   Responses were kept confidential, and only general insights were used in the final research report.

•   Interviews were conducted professionally and respectfully, allowing teachers to express their views freely.

2.7 Data Analysis Procedures

After collecting data through surveys, classroom observations, and teacher interviews, a systematic approach was followed to analyze and interpret the findings. Given the mixed-method approach of this study, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were applied.

The survey data, which consists of quantitative responses, was analyzed statistically to identify trends, while classroom observations and teacher interviews, which provide qualitative insights, were examined thematically. This combination of analysis methods ensures a comprehensive understanding of the influence of listening skills on promoting critical thinking among second-year students of English at Dr.
Moulay Tahar University in Saida.

2.7.1 Quantitative Data Analysis (Survey Responses)

The survey, completed by 54 students, generated quantitative data, which was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

- **Data Cleaning and Preparation**

 •   After downloading the responses from Google Forms, the data was reviewed for completeness.

 •   Responses were checked for errors or inconsistencies, ensuring that all recorded answers were valid.

 •   Since the survey was online and required students to complete all fields before submission, there were no missing responses.

- **Descriptive Statistical Analysis**

 •   Frequencies and Percentages: The first step in analyzing the survey data involved calculating the frequencies and percentages for each question. This helped identify how many students agreed, disagreed, or had neutral responses to specific statements related to listening skills and critical thinking.

 •   Mean and Standard Deviation: Where applicable, mean scores and standard deviations were used to summarize students' overall perceptions.

 •   Graphical Representation: To enhance clarity, results were presented using bar charts, pie charts, and tables, making it easier to visualize key findings.

- **Interpretation of Results**

 The statistical findings were analyzed to identify patterns and trends in how students perceived the role of listening in developing critical thinking skills.

 Differences in responses were examined, especially in areas where students expressed challenges in listening comprehension and analytical thinking.

2.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis (Observations and Interviews)

Since classroom observations and teacher interviews generated qualitative data, a thematic analysis approach was used. This method involves identifying recurring themes, patterns, and insights across the collected data.

- **Classroom Observation Analysis**

• The five classroom observations provided first-hand insights into how students engage in listening activities and demonstrate critical thinking. The analysis process involved:

• Reviewing Observation Notes: After each observation, detailed notes were reviewed to identify recurring behaviors, interactions, and learning patterns.

• Identifying Key Themes: The following themes emerged:

1. Student Engagement in Listening Tasks: Level of participation in discussions after listening exercises.
2. Use of Critical Thinking Strategies: Instances where students analyzed, interpreted, and questioned the content.
3. Teacher's Role in Encouraging Critical Thinking: Strategies used by teachers to guide students in analytical thinking.

• Comparing Across Sessions: Findings from different classroom observations were compared to detect common trends and differences across groups.

- **Teacher Interview Analysis**

The three teacher interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic coding. The steps included:

1. Transcription of Interviews: Each interview was transcribed into text format for easier analysis.

2. Initial Coding: Keywords and phrases related to listening and critical thinking were highlighted.

3. Theme Development: Recurring ideas across interviews were grouped into broader themes, including:

•	Teachers' Views on Listening and Critical Thinking: Their perceptions of the role of listening in developing students' critical thinking.

•	Challenges in Teaching Listening for Critical Thinking: Difficulties faced in implementing effective strategies.

•	Effective Classroom Practices: Teaching methods that successfully promote analytical listening.

•	Comparison with Other Data Sources: The insights from teacher interviews were compared with survey responses and classroom observations to ensure consistency and reliability.

2.8 Triangulation for Validity

•	To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation was used, meaning that data from multiple sources (survey, observations, and interviews) were compared.

•	Agreement Between Data Sources: If similar findings emerged from the survey, observations, and interviews, they were considered strong indicators of reliability.

•	Contradictions or Differences: If differences appeared, they were examined to understand potential reasons (e.g., differing perspectives between students and teachers).

•	Final Interpretation: The results from all three instruments were synthesized to provide a balanced and well-supported conclusion on how listening skills contribute to critical thinking.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodology used in this study, including the research design, population and sampling, data collection tools, and data analysis procedures. A mixed-method approach was adopted, incorporating a survey, classroom observations, and teacher interviews to ensure a comprehensive analysis. Ethical considerations were also addressed to maintain confidentiality and research integrity.

Chapter Three:

Data Analysis

And Interpretation

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the survey, classroom observations, and teachers' interviews. The objective is to examine the influence of listening skills on promoting the critical thinking of second-year students of English at Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saida. The data are analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions, classroom behaviors, and teachers' insights regarding the role of listening in fostering critical thinking.

3.2   Survey Results and Analysis

Section One: General Information

Question 01: What is your age?

Age Group	Numbers	Percentage
18-20	40	74.1%
21-23	11	20.4%
Above 23	3	5.6%
Total	54	100%

Table 02: Age Distribution of Respondents

As shown in the table above, the highest percentage of students (74.1%) belongs to the 18-20 age group, indicating that most respondents are in the early stages of their university studies. A smaller portion (20.4%) falls within the 21-23 range, while only 5.6% of respondents are above 23.

Question 02: What is your gender?
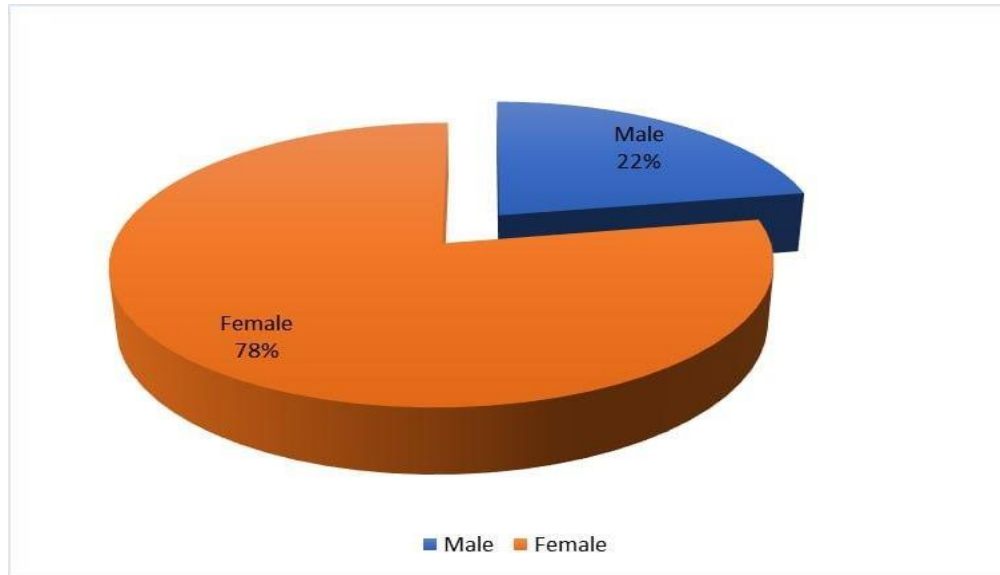
Figure 05: Gender Distribution of Respondents

According to the figure above, it is noticed that the majority of participants are females, with forty-two (42) students, i.e., (78%), identifying as female. In contrast, twelve (12) students, i.e., (22%), identify as male.

Question 03: How would you rate your English Proficiency level?
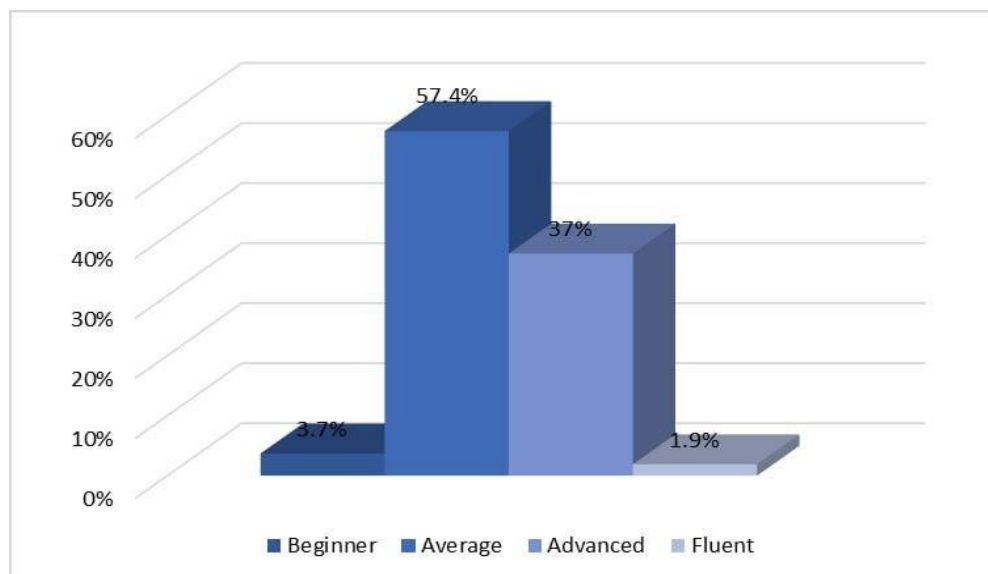
Figure 06: English Proficiency Level of Respondents

As illustrated in the figure above, more than half of the respondents (57.4%) rated their English proficiency as average, indicating that a significant number of students possess a moderate level of language skills. Additionally, 37% of respondents identified as advanced, reflecting a strong competency in English among a considerable portion of students. On the other hand, a small percentage (3.7%) classified themselves as beginners, suggesting that very few students struggle with the language at a basic level. Similarly, only 1.9% of respondents claimed fluency, indicating that complete mastery of English is relatively rare among the surveyed students.

Section Two: Listening Skills

Question 04: How often do you participate in listening activities during your English classes?
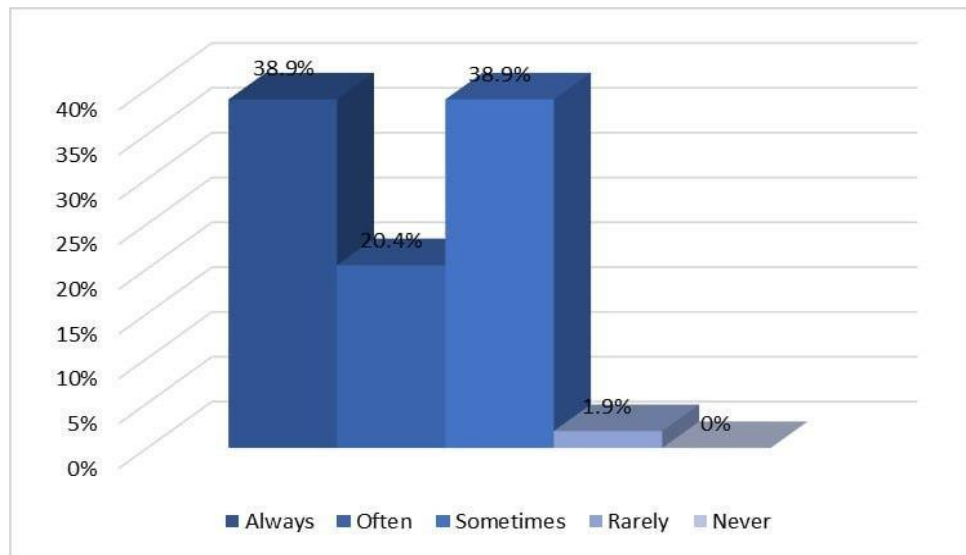
Figure 07: Students' Participation in Listening Activities

Based on the presented data, it is noticed that most participants engage in listening activities during their English classes. Specifically, 38.9% of students reported "Always" participating, while an equal percentage (38.9%) indicated "Sometimes. "Additionally, 21.4% selected 'Often,' showing moderate participation. In contrast, only 1.9% of students chose "Rarely," and none (0%) selected "Never," indicating that listening activities are an integral part of English classes.

Question 7: How often do your teachers use audio or video materials to enhance listening skills?
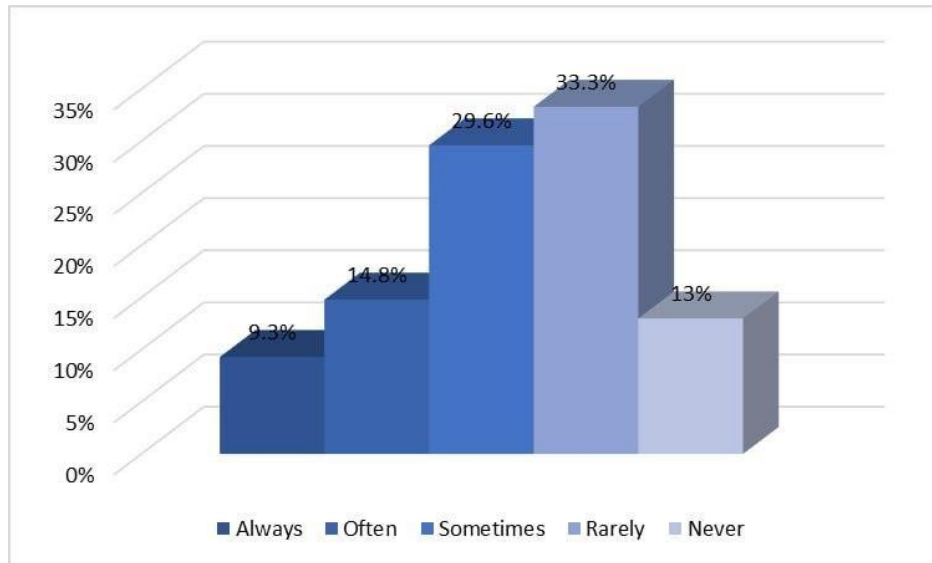
Figure 08: The Use of Multimedia Resources in Listening Instructions

The graph represents students' responses on how often their teacher uses audio or video materials to enhance listening. The highest percentage (33.3%) reported rarely, followed by sometimes (29.6%), indicating that multimedia is not frequently used. Only 9.3% said always, while 13% stated never. This suggests that most students experience limited exposure to such materials in listening instruction.

Question 06: Do you find listening tasks challenging?

Options	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	25	46.3%
No	14	25.9%
Sometimes	15	27.8%

Table 03: Students' Perceptions of the Difficulty of Listening Tasks

The results indicate that 46.3% of students find listening tasks challenging, suggesting difficulties related to comprehension, speech rate, or accents. In contrast, 25.9% reported

no difficulty, implying stronger listening skills or prior exposure. Meanwhile, 27.8% occasionally struggle, depending on factors such as clarity or topic complexity. These findings highlight the need for targeted listening instruction and strategies to enhance students' comprehension abilities.

Question 07: What strategies do you use to understand listening materials in class?
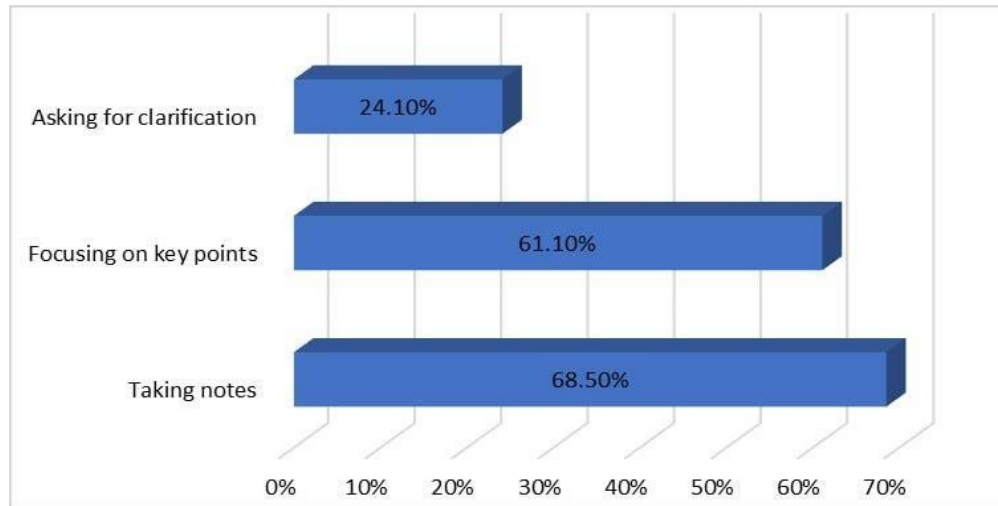
Figure 09: Listening Comprehension Strategies of EFL Learners

The bar chart highlights students preferred listening strategies. "Taking notes" emerges as the most frequently used strategy, reflecting a strong reliance on written records to retain and process spoken information. This may indicate that students prioritize accuracy and recall over immediate understanding. The popularity of "Focusing on key points" suggests that many students are developing selective listening skills, aiming to grasp the main ideas rather than processing every detail. However, the low use of "Asking for clarification" reveals a potential gap in interactive listening behavior. This could imply a lack of confidence in speaking up, limited classroom dynamics that discourage questions, or insufficient training in metacognitive strategies that encourage active problem-solving during listening. Such findings raise concerns about whether students are fully engaging with listening tasks as opportunities for critical thinking and active learning.

Section Three: Critical Thinking

Question 08: Do listening activities help you analyze and evaluate spoken content critically?
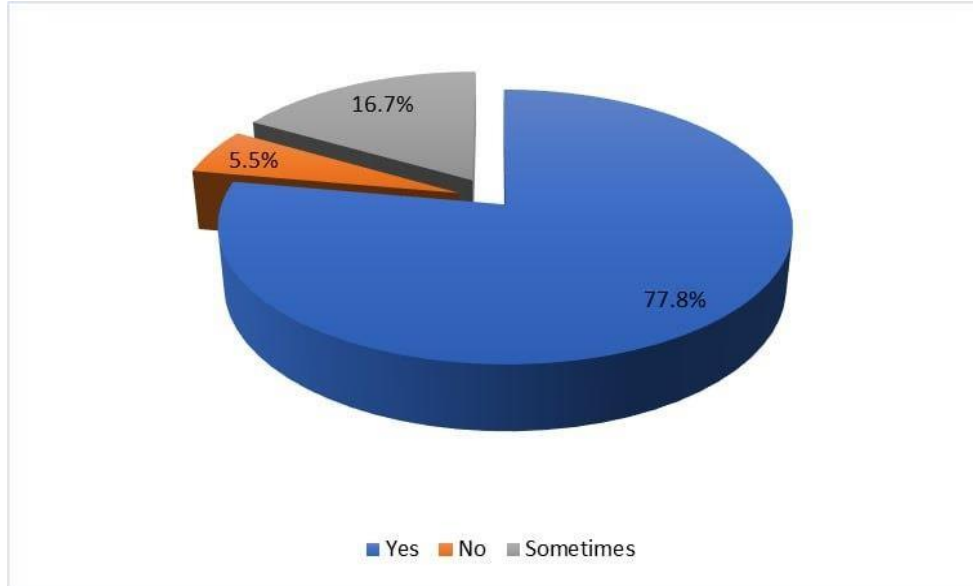
F**igure 10: Students' Perceptions of the Role of Listening Activities in Developing Critical Thinking Skills**

The chart illustrates students' responses to the question of whether listening activities help in developing their critical thinking skills. The majority of participants (77.8%) responded with "Yes," indicating that a significant portion of students perceive a positive relationship between listening activities and the development of critical thinking. A smaller percentage (16.7%) selected "Sometimes," which suggests that some students recognize the potential of listening activities to enhance critical thinking, but only under certain conditions or depending on the type of activity. In contrast, only 5.6% of respondents answered "No," implying that very few students do not perceive any link between listening and critical thinking development.

Question 09: How often are you asked to interpret or discuss the deeper meaning of what you hear?

Options	Numbers	Percentage
Always	8	14.8%
Often	14	25.9%
Sometimes	28	51.9%
Rarely	4	7.4%

Table 04: Frequency of Engaging in Interpretative Listening Activities

The data represented in the table reflect the extent to which students are prompted to go beyond surface-level understanding during listening activities. The highest percentage of participants (51.9%) indicated that they are "Sometimes" asked to interpret or discuss the deeper meaning of what they hear. This suggests that such tasks are incorporated in some lessons but are not a consistent feature across the learning experience. Meanwhile, 25.9% of students chose "Often", and 14.8% chose "Always," representing a combined 40.7% who experience these tasks with relative regularity. These responses point to the presence of some efforts to foster critical engagement through listening in the EFL classroom.

However, the overall distribution indicates that these efforts are not yet wid

espread or systematic. The smallest percentage (7.4%) reported "Rarely," suggesting that only a few students are not exposed to this type of activity.

Question 11: On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do listening tasks improve your critical thinking?
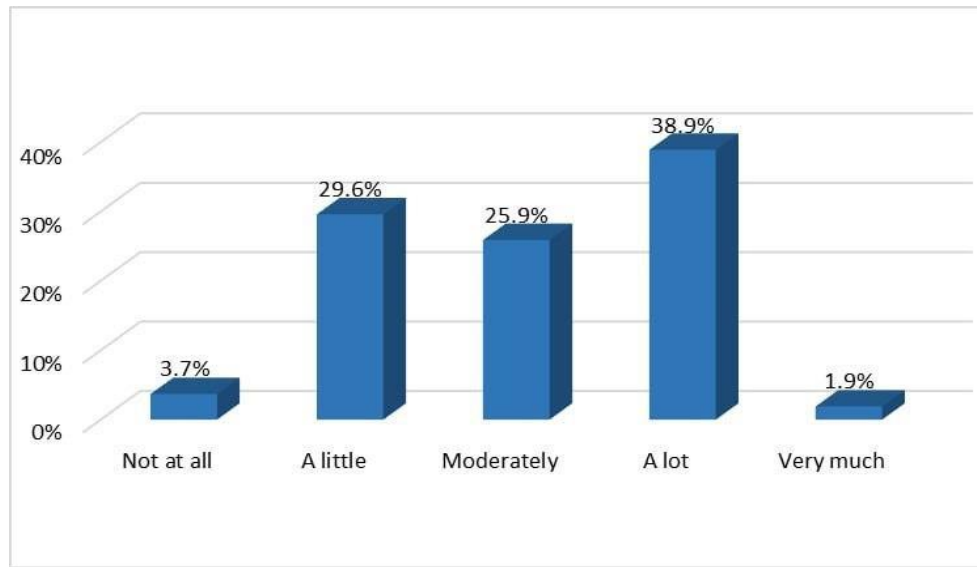
Figure 11: Students' Perception of the Extent to Which Listening Activities Stimulate Critical Thinking

The bar chart presents students' perceptions regarding the extent to which listening activities stimulate their critical thinking. The highest percentage of responses (38.9%) falls under the category "A lot," indicating that a significant portion of students believe listening activities contribute considerably to the development of their critical thinking skills. This is followed by "A little" (29.6%) and "Moderately" (25.9%), which together account for more than half of the responses, showing variation in students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of listening tasks in stimulating deeper thinking. In contrast, only 3.7% of students selected "Not at all," and 1.9% chose "Very much," suggesting that very few students perceive either a complete absence or a very high level of critical thinking stimulation through listening activities.

Question 11: What challenges do you face in applying critical thinking during listening tasks?
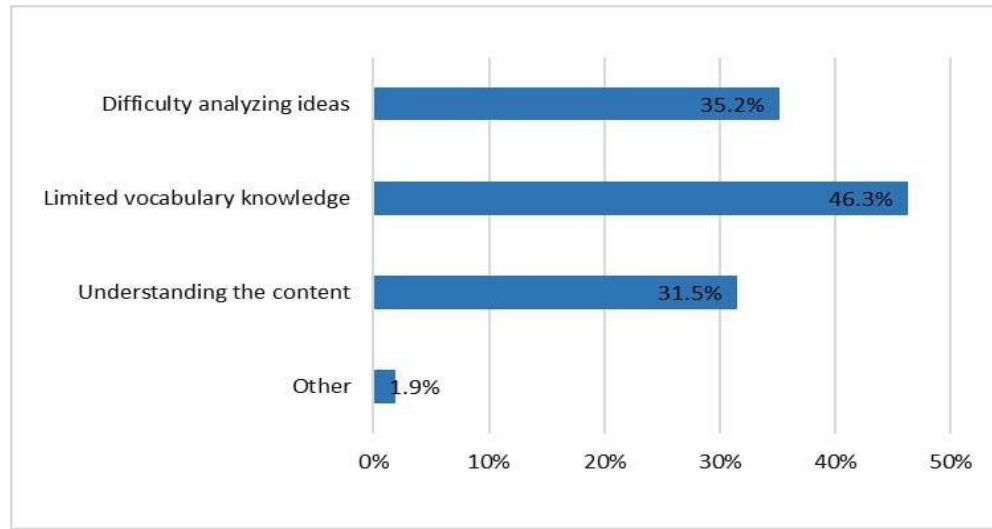
Figure 12: EFL Learners' Challenges in Applying Critical Thinking to Listening Tasks

The figure illustrates the primary difficulties EFL learners encounter when applying critical thinking in listening tasks. The most common challenge is limited vocabulary knowledge (46.3%), which may hinder comprehension and critical engagement with spoken content. Struggling to analyze ideas critically (35.2%) is also a significant issue, indicating that learners find it challenging to interpret and evaluate information.

Understanding the content (31.5%) presents another major obstacle, suggesting that some learners struggle with basic comprehension before engaging in deeper analysis. Lastly, a small percentage (1.9%) reported difficulty keeping up with rapid speech, which, while less frequent, may still impact overall listening comprehension and critical thinking development.

Question 12: How do your teachers encourage critical thinking during listening activities?
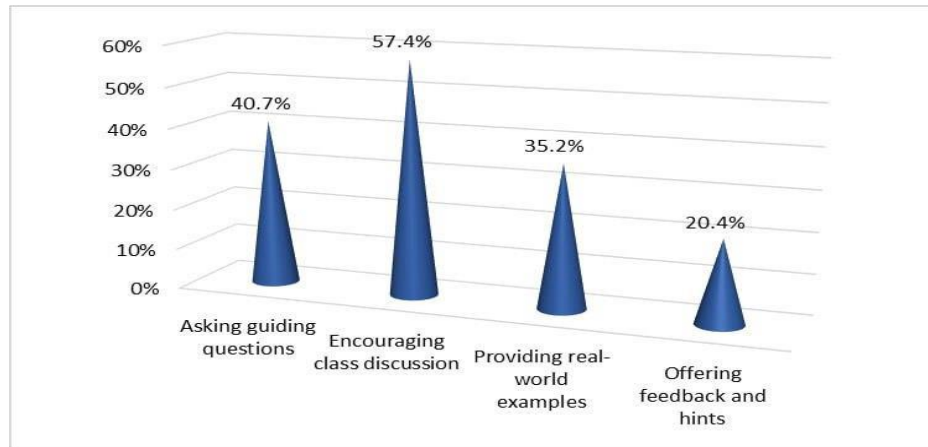
Figure 13: Teaching Strategies for Encouraging Critical Thinking in Listening Activities

The figure presents various strategies teachers use to foster critical thinking during listening activities. The most frequently employed method is encouraging class discussion (57.4%), suggesting that interactive dialogue plays a key role in developing students' analytical skills. Asking guiding questions (40.7%) is another widely used technique, helping students focus on key ideas and interpret content more deeply.

Providing real-world examples (35.2%) supports practical application and relevance, making abstract concepts more tangible. Lastly, offering feedback and hints (20.4%) is the least used strategy, indicating that while teachers provide some support, they may prioritize open-ended discussions and inquiry-based learning over direct guidance.

Question 13: After completing the listening task, do you check important information?

Options	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	40	74.1%
No	4	7.4%
Sometimes	10	18.5%

Table 05: EFL Learners' Habits in Verifying Information After Listening Tasks

The table shows how EFL learners check important information after completing a listening task. A majority (74.1%) actively verify details, indicating strong engagement and a focus on accuracy. A smaller percentage (18.5%) do so occasionally, suggesting that some learners may not consistently prioritize verification. Meanwhile, **7**.4% do not check at all, which could indicate a lack of awareness of its importance or reliance on initial understanding. These findings highlight the need to encourage all learners to develop consistent habits of reviewing and confirming information to enhance comprehension and critical thinking.

Question 14: How often do you give examples based on the information you listen to?
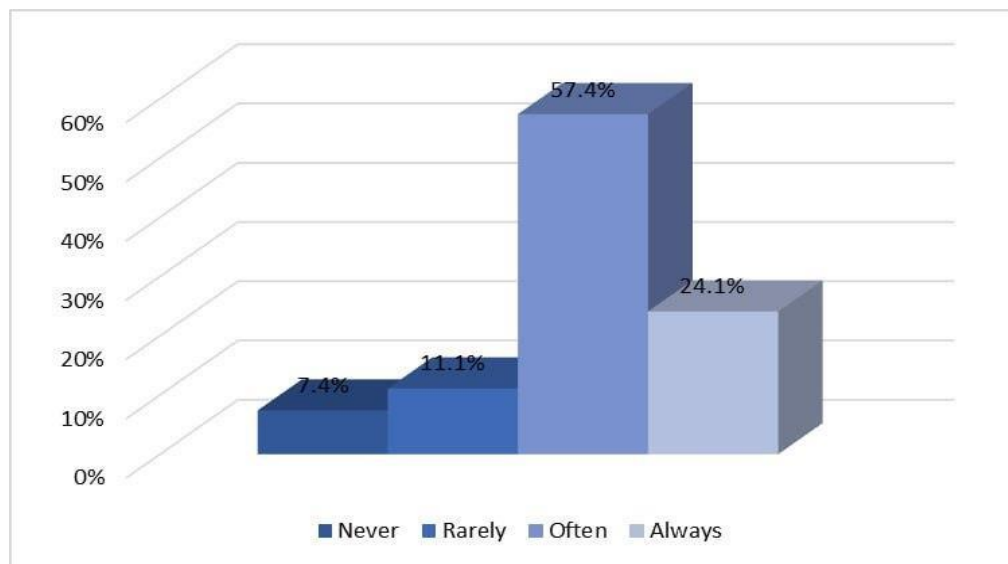
Figure 14: EFL Learners' Engagement in Applying Listening Content Through Examples

The data illustrate how often EFL learners generate examples based on the information they listen to. A majority (57.4%) do so often, indicating that many learners actively engage with the content by applying it in relevant contexts. 24.1% always provide examples, demonstrating a strong ability to connect listening material to real-world situations. However, 11.1% rarely and 7.4% never give examples, suggesting that a small portion of learners struggle with application or critical engagement.

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Question 15: How frequently do you combine information to form an impression?
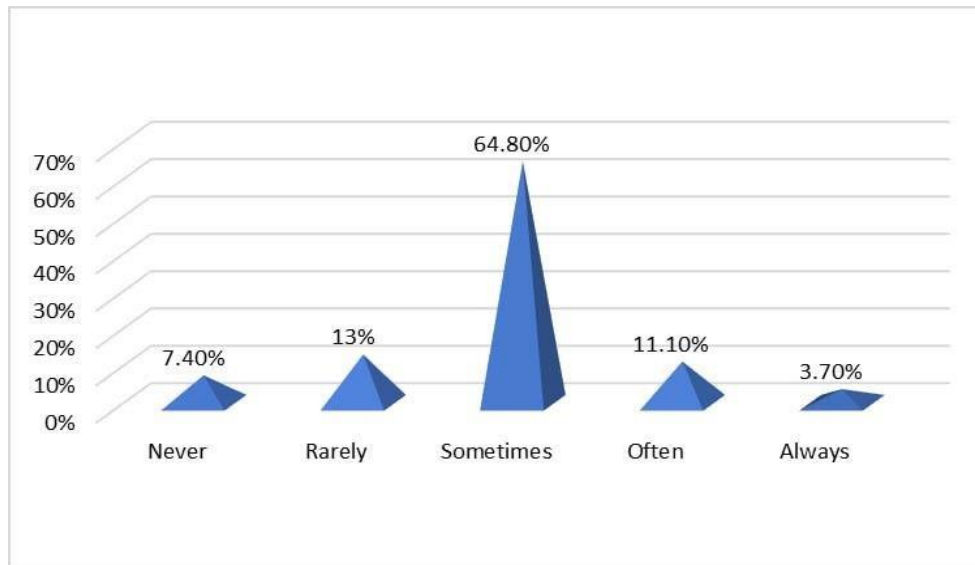
 Figure 15: EFL Learners' Frequency of Combining Information to Form Impressions

The data shown in the figure above reveals that a significant portion of EFL learners (64.8%) sometimes combine information to form impressions, indicating occasional engagement in synthesis. However, only 11.1% often and 3.7% always apply this skill, suggesting that few learners consistently integrate and interpret listening content.

Meanwhile, 13% rarely and 7.4% never engage in this process, highlighting potential difficulties in connecting and analyzing information.

Question 16: When you are interested in specific information, do you check if it is true?
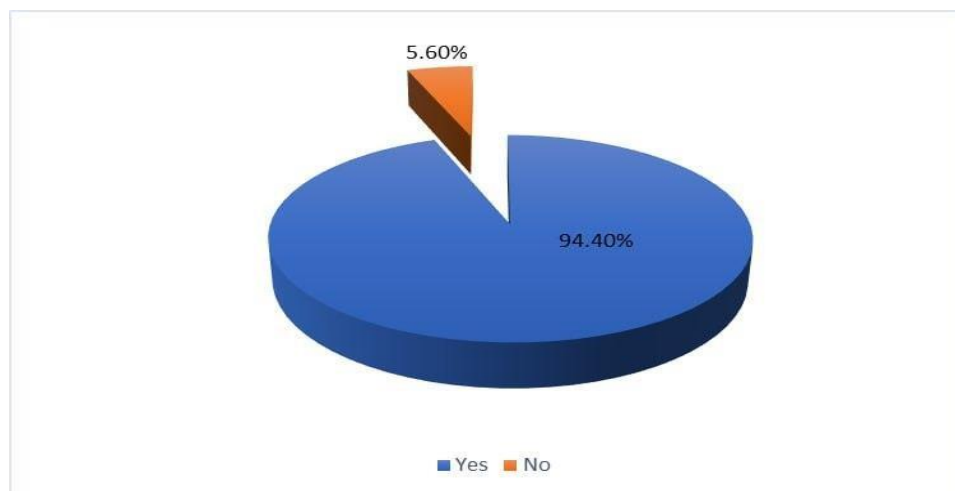
Figure 16: EFL Learners' Tendency to Verify Information of Interest

The data reveals that an overwhelming majority of EFL learners (94.4%) verify the accuracy of information when they are interested in it, demonstrating a strong inclination toward critical evaluation and fact-checking. In contrast, only 5.6% do not engage in this process, suggesting that very few learners overlook verification.

Question 17: How do you justify your answers during listening tasks?
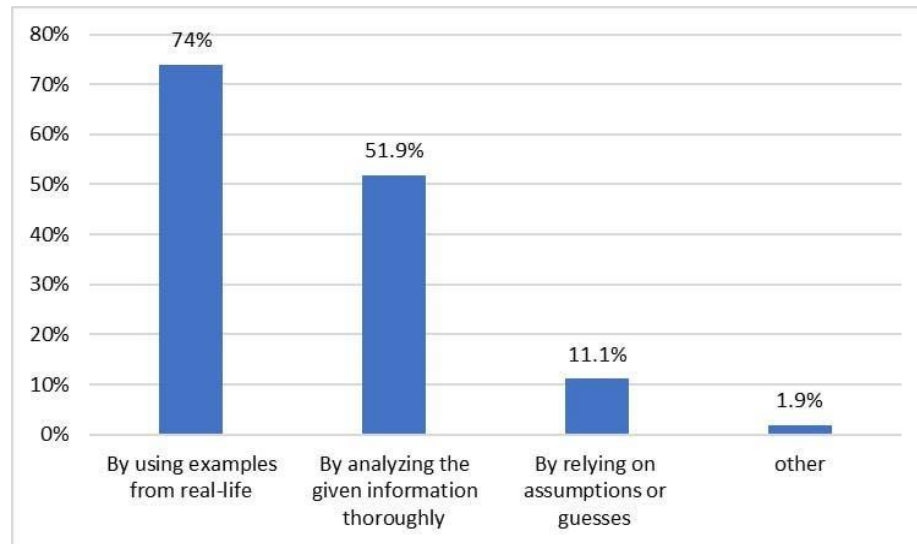
Figure 17: Justification Methods in Listening Tasks

This figure demonstrates that the majority of students (74%) justify their answers using real-life examples, indicating a preference for practical application. A significant portion (51.9%) emphasizes analyzing the given information thoroughly, showcasing a preference for careful evaluation. Only 11.1% rely on assumptions or guesses, suggesting that most students avoid speculative reasoning. Additionally, 1.9% provided a unique perspective, highlighting the use of objectivity, combining sound reasoning with personal experience, which reflects a more structured and thoughtful approach.

Question 18: To what extent do you interpret evidence, statements, and questions during listening tasks?
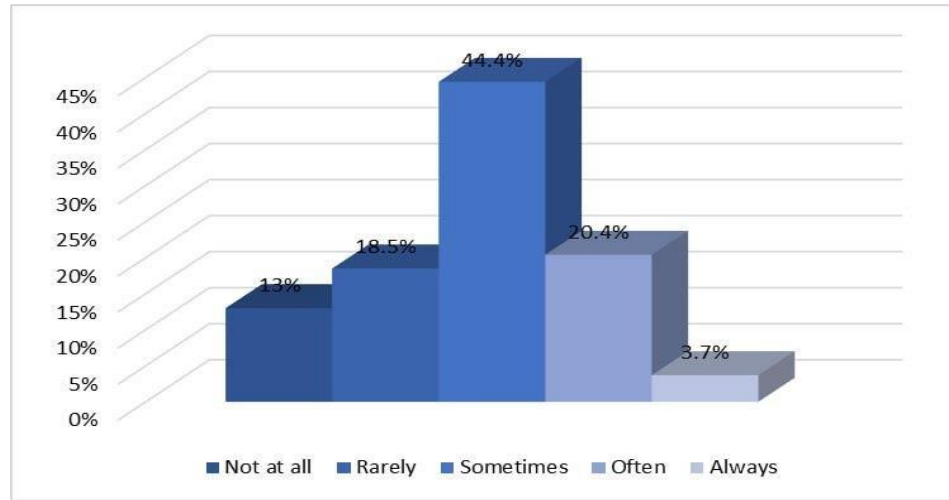
Figure 18: Frequency of Interpretation in Listening Tasks

According to the data shown in the figure above, the majority of respondents (44.4%) reported that they "Sometimes" interpret evidence, statements, and questions during listening tasks, indicating a moderate level of engagement with these aspects of the listening process. A smaller portion (20.4%) stated that they "Often" interpret these elements, while 18.5% do so "Rarely," suggesting that for these students, interpretation may not be a frequent focus. Only a small minority (13%) claimed they "Not at all" interpret, and even fewer (3.7%) "Always" engage in interpretation. This distribution reveals that while a considerable number of students occasionally interpret during listening tasks, the frequency and consistency of interpretation may vary, pointing to a potential area for improvement in developing more active listening and critical thinking skills.

Question 19: What do you do when encountering alternative points of view?
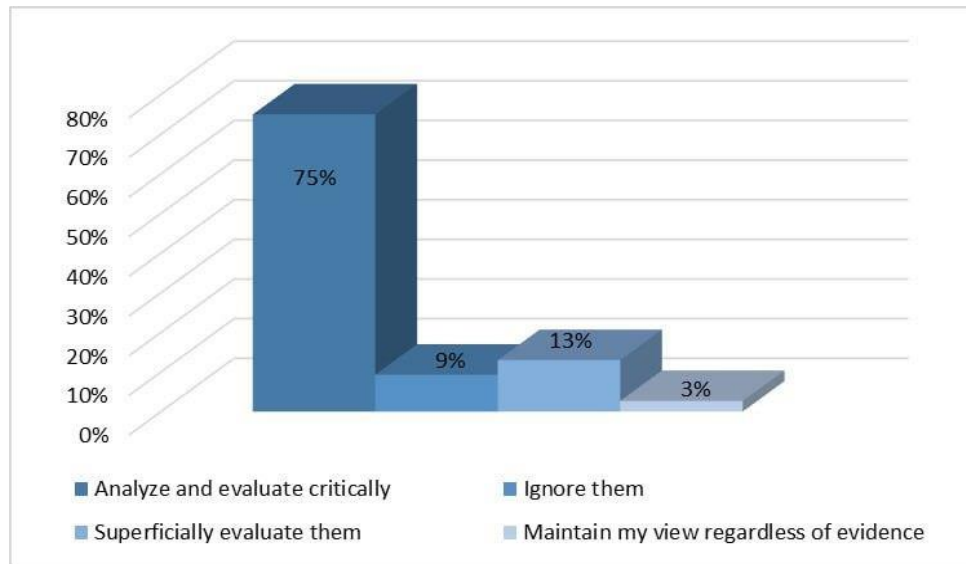
Figure 19: Students' Responses to Encountering Alternative Points of View

The figure reveals that the majority of students (75%) analyze and evaluate alternative points of view critically, suggesting a strong inclination toward critical thinking when confronted with differing perspectives. A small percentage (13%) engages with these views only superficially, while 9% chose to ignore them, reflecting some resistance to considering opposing viewpoints. A minority (3%) maintain their stance regardless of evidence, which could indicate a lack of openness to revising personal beliefs or a reluctance to engage with new information.

Question 20: Can you describe how you identify arguments and evaluate different points of view during listening tasks?

The responses demonstrate a range of approaches identifying and evaluating arguments during listening tasks, with many participants focusing on the importance of recognizing the main idea, supporting evidence, and key claims. Active listening techniques, such as taking notes and staying engaged, are emphasized as essential for effectively evaluating arguments. Respondents also highlighted the importance of assessing the credibility, logic, and potential bias of different points of view, along with an openness to contrasting perspectives. Some individuals reflect on their own thought processes after listening tasks, while others mention comparing viewpoints but without a detailed analysis of their

strengths or weaknesses. Overall, the responses indicate an awareness of critical listening, with varying levels of depth in evaluating the content presented.

3.3 Summary and Interpretation of Survey Findings

The survey results provide key insights into second-year EFL students' perceptions of the role of listening skills in developing critical thinking. The data reveal significant trends regarding students' engagement with listening tasks, the challenges they face, and the extent to which listening activities contribute to their critical thinking abilities. However, despite generally positive perceptions, a closer examination of the results exposes inconsistencies between students' beliefs and the actual design and implementation of listening activities, suggesting areas for pedagogical improvement.

3.3.1 Engagement with Listening Activities

Survey Question 04 asked students how often they participate in listening activities during English classes. A notable 38.9% selected "Always," and another 38.9% selected "Sometimes," indicating consistent exposure to listening tasks. However, when asked in Question 05 about the frequency of audio or video material use, 33.3% reported "Rarely," and 13% selected "Never." This suggests that while listening activities are common, the integration of authentic multimedia resources is limited.

The limited use of varied, real-world listening input may hinder students from engaging deeply with complex spoken content, which is an essential component for critical thinking development. As Guo et al. (2024) emphasize, authentic materials introduce cognitive challenges that stimulate analytical reasoning. The absence of such materials in many classes represents a missed opportunity to cultivate these skills.

3.3.2 Challenges in Listening Comprehension and Critical Thinking

Survey Question 06 revealed that 46.3% of students find listening tasks challenging, citing issues likely related to speech speed, accent variation, and vocabulary gaps.
Question 11 further indicated that 46.3% of students identified limited vocabulary as the

top challenge in applying critical thinking, followed by 35.2% who reported difficulties analyzing ideas critically.

These data points highlight a cognitive overload: students may be too focused on basic comprehension to engage in deeper evaluation. This finding aligns with Sulistyani et al. (2023), who argue that listening instruction must balance linguistic input with opportunities for higher-order thinking.

3.3.3 Perceptions of Listening and Critical Thinking Development

In Question 08, 77.8% of students agreed that listening tasks help them analyze and evaluate spoken content. Despite this strong perception, Question 09 showed that only 14.8% of students are "Always" asked to interpret or discuss deeper meanings during listening activities, while 51.9% are only "Sometimes" asked.

This discrepancy between students' beliefs and the actual classroom practice reflects a gap in pedagogical implementation. The belief in listening's value may stem from general enthusiasm rather than from systematic exposure to critical thinking tasks.

3.3.4 Evaluating and Justifying Perspectives

When asked in Question 19 how they respond to alternative viewpoints, 75% of students reported that they analyze and evaluate them critically, showing a promising level of cognitive engagement. Question 17 supported this trend: 74% of respondents said they justify their answers using real-life examples, and 51.9% mentioned analyzing the provided information. These strategies reflect an effort to apply practical and logical reasoning.

However, a smaller portion of students 9% reported ignoring opposing perspectives, and 3% admitted to holding their stance regardless of evidence. This suggests that while most students are developing evaluative habits, some require further support in cultivating open-mindedness and reasoning flexibility.

3.3.5 Interpretation and Synthesis

Survey Question 18 showed that only 3.7% of students "Always" interpret evidence, statements, and questions, while 44.4% do so "Sometimes." Similarly, Question 15 found that just 3.7% "Always" combine information to form impressions, with 64.8% selecting "Sometimes." These responses suggest that while students occasionally practice synthesis, it is not a consistently applied skill.

To build stronger critical thinking, classroom practices should include more structured interpretation and synthesis exercises. As Faravani and Taleb (2020) recommend, higher- order questioning and reflective prompts are key tools in nurturing these cognitive processes.

3.3.6 Information Verification and Application

According to Question 16, 94.4% of students verify information they are interested in, indicating strong potential for critical thinking. Yet Question 13 showed that only 74.1% verify information after a task, and Question 14 revealed that just 24.1% "Always" provide examples based on what they heard. This implies that although the ability is present, the application is not yet fully consistent across contexts.

In summary, while students perceive listening as beneficial to their critical thinking, the actual instructional practices, particularly the inconsistent use of authentic materials, lack of structured reflection, and limited opportunities for synthesis, hinder the full realization of this potential. These findings confirm the first two hypotheses: listening tasks do contribute to critical thinking, but challenges in comprehension and instructional design limit their effectiveness.

3.3.7 Relationship Between Listening and Critical Thinking

The data strongly support the idea that listening plays a role in fostering critical thinking, with students recognizing its value in developing analytical skills, verifying information, and evaluating arguments. However, the findings also reveal persistent gaps

in the implementation of structured critical thinking tasks during listening exercises, as evidenced by the inconsistent use of deeper interpretation and discussion techniques.

The reliance on students' self-perceptions, without consistent reinforcement through well-designed classroom activities, suggests that the potential of listening to enhance critical thinking is recognized but not fully operationalized. Without deliberate integration of critical engagement strategies, listening tasks risk becoming routine comprehension exercises rather than opportunities for transformative thinking.

3.3.8 Linking Findings to Research Questions

1. To what extent do listening activities contribute to the development of critical thinking skills in second-year EFL students?

The survey results demonstrate that listening activities contribute to the development of critical thinking skills, as indicated by the 77.8% of students who believe these activities help them analyze and evaluate spoken content. However, the findings also show that critical thinking tasks are not consistently integrated into listening exercises, with only 14.8% of students reporting that they are always asked to interpret or discuss deeper meanings. This highlights the need for more structured opportunities within listening activities to enhance critical thinking skills. Thus, while listening plays a role in critical thinking development, its impact remains contingent on the depth, quality, and frequency of critical engagement opportunities embedded within these activities.

2. What are the most common challenges students face when applying critical thinking during listening tasks?

The results reveal several challenges that students face when applying critical thinking during listening tasks. A significant portion of students (46.3%) reported difficulties with listening comprehension, specifically related to speech rate, accents, and understanding of the content. Additionally, 35.2% of students highlighted their struggles with critically analyzing the information they hear. These findings align with Hypothesis 2, suggesting that comprehension difficulties, limited vocabulary, and the inability to engage with spoken information critically are significant barriers to applying critical thinking

effectively during listening tasks. These challenges also suggest that enhancing critical thinking through listening requires addressing both linguistic competence and cognitive engagement simultaneously.

3. How do teachers facilitate the development of critical thinking through listening activities?

The survey indicates that while listening activities are an integral part of English classes, the use of instructional strategies aimed at fostering critical thinking is not consistent.

Although many students engage with listening tasks, only 14.8% are regularly asked to interpret deeper meanings, and only 51.9% participate in discussions or analyses of spoken content. These findings suggest that while teachers may incorporate listening tasks, they may not always employ structured strategies such as guided discussions, questioning techniques, or the use of multimedia resources, as suggested in Hypothesis 3. This inconsistency points to a broader challenge in the educational context: while there is awareness of the importance of critical thinking, systematic instructional practices necessary to cultivate it are not yet fully established.

3.3.9 Linking Findings to Previous Studies

The survey results align with existing research, reinforcing the role of listening in developing critical thinking while highlighting instructional gaps and student challenges.

➤To what extent do listening activities contribute to critical thinking?

The survey found that 77.8% of students believe listening aids critical thinking, but only 14.8% regularly engage in deeper interpretation tasks. This supports Faravani and Taleb (2020), who found that higher-order questioning enhances critical engagement. Similarly, Munira et al. (2024) argue that passive listening limits analytical skills, emphasizing the need for interactive, student-centered approaches. The present findings reinforce the view that surface-level listening activities, without critical scaffolding, are insufficient to promote deeper analytical thinking.

➤What challenges do students face in applying critical thinking during listening?

Listening comprehension difficulties (46.3%) and struggles with critical analysis (35.2%) confirm Meng et al. (2023) and Palaka Prasith et al. (2024), who identified cognitive and linguistic barriers, such as speech rate, accents, and syntactic complexity. The findings also align with Sulistyani et al. (2023), who stress the need for explicit training in distinguishing facts from opinions. These parallels with previous studies underline that critical listening skills must be intentionally developed rather than assumed to emerge naturally from general listening practice.

➤ How do teachers facilitate critical thinking through listening?

While 75% of students evaluate alternative viewpoints, only 14.8% regularly engage in deep discussions, suggesting inconsistent use of structured strategies. This reflects Guo et al. (2024), who emphasized that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) enhances listening- based critical thinking. Additionally, Kluger and Itzchakov (2022) highlight how guided discussions improve analytical reasoning. The current findings suggest that without deliberate and systematic incorporation of such strategies, the potential benefits of listening tasks for critical thinking development remain underutilized.

To sum up, the findings support the hypothesis that listening fosters critical thinking (H1) but also confirm that students face linguistic and cognitive barriers (H2) and that the effectiveness of listening tasks heavily depends on the teaching strategies employed (H3). While listening is integral to critical thinking development, structured questioning, authentic material exposure, and interactive learning remain underutilized, limiting the full realization of this potential.

3.4 Overview of Classroom Observations

Five oral expression sessions were observed between November 2024 and April 2025 with different groups of second-year students of English at Dr. Moulay Tahar University in Saida. These observations aimed to examine how listening activities were implemented, how students responded to them, and to what extent these activities fostered critical thinking. While several strategies intended to promote critical engagement were noted, a closer analysis revealed inconsistencies in how these strategies

were applied, the depth of student involvement, and the integration of authentic

 listening materials.

3.5 **Key Findings from Observations**

3.5.1 Teacher Strategies for Promoting Critical Thinking Through Listening

Teachers in the five observed sessions adopted a range of strategies to integrate critical thinking into listening tasks, though their application varied in depth and consistency. In Session 1, the teacher introduced a broad topic related to current social issues and invited students to share their opinions. Students were also asked to justify their views with examples. This encouraged open dialogue and gave students the chance to practice reasoning and interpretation. However, the teacher offered limited follow-up questions, which made the activity less effective in pushing students toward deeper analysis.

In Session 2, the teacher organized a classroom debate. Students were divided into two groups and assigned different positions on a given topic. This method supported collaborative learning and helped students engage with contrasting viewpoints. The teacher occasionally guided the discussion with comments, but the activity mainly relied on student-led argumentation. Although this promoted critical comparison, some students struggled to defend their positions with clear evidence, showing a need for more structured support.

Session 3 was more carefully planned. The teacher played an audio clip related to a controversial issue and provided a set of questions to guide student reflection. These included prompts like "What is the speaker's main argument?" and "Do you agree or disagree? Why?" Students responded by analyzing the speaker's intentions, evaluating the strength of the arguments, and offering their own perspectives. This session reflected Faravani and Taleb's (2020) recommendation that higher-order questions during listening tasks are essential for fostering critical thinking.

In Session 4, the teacher divided the class into small groups and assigned each group a different topic to discuss. Students were asked to present arguments and support

them with real-world examples. The teacher circulated around the room, posing guiding questions like "Can you support your opinion with an example?" and "What would be the counterargument?" This approach encouraged students to move beyond simple agreement or disagreement and helped them develop more structured, evidence-based responses. However, some students relied on vague or general ideas, indicating the need for further practice in constructing solid, well-supported arguments.

Session 5 involved the use of a short video. After watching, students were given time to reflect individually and then share their interpretations. The video presented a moral dilemma, which led to rich class discussion. Some students made thoughtful connections to real-life situations and demonstrated awareness of different values and perspectives. Despite this, others only summarized the video content, suggesting that not all students were equally engaged at a critical level.

Overall, while each session included efforts to develop critical thinking through listening, the strategies used were not applied systematically. Some tasks allowed students to explore ideas in depth, while others remained at the surface level. These findings suggest that simply adding discussion or reflection is not enough. Critical thinking must be intentionally and consistently built into the design of listening activities.

3.5.2 Student Engagement with Listening and Critical Thinking

Student engagement during listening tasks differed depending on how the teacher delivered the activity. In Sessions 3 and 4, teachers used audio or video materials and asked questions that required deeper thinking. As a result, students gave thoughtful answers, explored different viewpoints, and connected the content to real-life situations. For example, in Session 3, students listened to a recording about a controversial issue.
Afterward, they discussed the speaker's argument, gave their opinions, and supported their ideas with evidence. This showed their ability to think critically and analyze what they heard.

In Session 4, students worked in groups and responded to the teacher's guiding questions. They were encouraged to give reasons for their opinions and consider

opposing arguments. These sessions created opportunities for students to move beyond simple understanding and engage with the material more analytically.

On the other hand, in Sessions 1, 2, and 5, student responses were more basic. Most students focused on repeating information or sharing brief opinions without further explanation. In Session 1, for instance, students were asked to share their viewpoints, but many gave short and general answers. Session 2 involved group debates, but the discussion often stayed at a surface level. In Session 5, even though a video was used, most students shared only simple reactions rather than thoughtful interpretations. These examples show that when activities lack structure or guidance, students tend to rely on basic listening and do not engage critically.

This pattern is also clear in the survey results. Only 14.8% of students said they were regularly encouraged to look for deeper meanings in listening tasks. In addition, 35.2% said they found it difficult to analyze what they heard. These figures suggest that many students need more support to develop their critical thinking during listening activities.

Overall, the findings show that students do not naturally engage in critical thinking unless the teacher provides clear guidance. Simply asking students to listen and share ideas is not enough. Teachers need to use well-designed questions and tasks that guide students to think more deeply. Without this support, listening activities may remain limited to basic understanding, and the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills can be lost.

3.5.3 Use of Multimedia and Authentic Listening Materials

Multimedia and authentic listening materials were used in only two out of the five observed sessions. In Session 3, the teacher played a real-world audio recording. Students were then asked to respond to questions that required them to understand the speaker's point of view and judge the strength of their argument. In Session 5, the teacher used a video clip to start a class discussion. Students were asked to reflect on the video and

share their interpretations. These activities gave students a chance to think more deeply and respond in a more personal and meaningful way.

However, in the other three sessions, no multimedia or authentic materials were used. The lessons were based mostly on spoken discussions and teacher instructions.

There were no recordings, videos, or real-life examples included. This lack of variety limits the kinds of language students hear and the ways they are challenged to think. The survey results support this observation: 33.3% of students said that multimedia or real- world listening tasks were rarely used in class, and 13% said they were never used.

Classroom discussions can help students share ideas, but without exposure to real-world listening materials, students miss out on hearing more complex language and different viewpoints. These materials also help learners deal with uncertain or unclear messages, which are important for developing critical thinking. According to Guo et al. (2024), using authentic listening materials helps students practice handling ambiguity and understanding deeper meaning, which are key parts of critical thinking.

The lack of such resources in most sessions shows a gap in how listening tasks are used to build higher-order thinking. Including more real-world audio and video could help students improve both their listening skills and their ability to think critically about what they hear.

3.5.4 Linking Classroom Observations to Survey Findings

When comparing the classroom observations with the survey responses, several similarities and differences became clear. First, both data sources showed that multimedia and authentic listening materials were rarely used. In the five observed sessions, only two included audio or video. Similarly, 33.3% of students said these materials were rarely used in class, and 13% said they were never used. Group discussions were common, but they often lacked the depth and variety that real-world listening materials can provide.

Without such input, students may not be fully exposed to different styles of communication or complex arguments.

Second, there was a lack of regular and structured tasks designed to promote critical thinking. Although 77.8% of students said that listening can help develop critical thinking, only 14.8% felt they were often asked to analyze deeper meanings. The observations supported this. Only Sessions 2 and 5 included clear tasks that asked students to explain their ideas, give reasons, or connect their thinking to real-life examples. In the other sessions, students mainly answered questions based on surface understanding.

Third, differences in how students participated in class closely matched the survey results. In sessions where teachers used multimedia and asked deeper questions, students showed more interest and provided thoughtful responses. But when these strategies were not used, students mostly gave short or basic answers. This shows that students can think critically, but they need the right kind of support. Although 75% of students said they sometimes compare different opinions, this was only seen in class when teachers created activities that encouraged it.

In short, both the classroom observations and the survey results show that teachers and students see the value of using listening to build critical thinking. However, the way this is done in practice is still limited. These findings support Hypothesis 3, which says that listening tasks are only effective for promoting critical thinking when they are carefully planned. Without real-world materials, thoughtful questions, and chances to reflect, students may not get the full benefit of these activities.

3.6 Interview Analysis

The analysis of interviews conducted with three Oral Expression teachers (Teacher A, Teacher B, and Teacher C) revealed several key themes concerning the integration of listening skills and their influence on the development of students' critical thinking. While teachers expressed a clear understanding of the importance of listening for critical engagement, the interviews also highlighted variations in strategy, student challenges, and systemic constraints that impact the effectiveness of such practices.

3.6.1 Objectives of Oral Expression Classes

All three teachers emphasized that Oral Expression classes aim to enhance students' communicative competence, fluency, and confidence in speaking English.

- Teacher A described oral classes as opportunities to develop pronunciation and fluency through discussions and conversations, while also promoting critical thinking by encouraging students to organize and logically present arguments.

- Teacher B highlighted the importance of helping students express ideas clearly, engage in conversations, and respond appropriately across contexts.

- Teacher C emphasized building confidence, self-expression, and vocabulary, linking oral skills with broader thinking abilities.

Despite slight differences in focus, there was consensus that Oral Expression classes should extend beyond linguistic fluency to foster students' analytical and cognitive skills. However, the realization of this broader objective appears uneven in practice, often constrained by external factors such as time, class size, and resource limitations.

3.6.2 Integration of Listening Activities

Listening tasks are commonly integrated into Oral Expression classes, particularly at the beginning of sessions.

- Teacher A uses audio-visual materials, such as mute or short stories, to stimulate imagination and engagement.

- Teacher B incorporates structured listening tasks focused on identifying topics, main ideas, and supporting details.

- Teacher C utilizes pre-topic audio clips followed by discussion activities to deepen reflection.

These practices suggest that listening is regarded not merely as a comprehension exercise, but as a scaffold for productive language use and critical thinking. However, the

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degree to which these tasks challenge students to engage in deeper cognitive processes varies significantly, indicating that the critical potential of listening is sometimes underexploited.

3.6.3 Listening Materials Used

Each teacher integrates a mix of authentic and adapted materials:

- Teacher A prefers literary excerpts and monologues to expose students to rich, native language use.

- Teacher B selects podcasts, interviews, and dialogues aligned with students' interests and proficiency levels.

- Teacher C uses TED Talks, news reports, and documentaries to provide access to real-world language and global issues.

Although all teachers recognize the value of diverse, authentic input, they also acknowledged the difficulties it presents for students, particularly regarding fast speech and unfamiliar vocabulary. This tension highlights a common dilemma: authentic materials are essential for fostering critical thinking, but require careful scaffolding to avoid overwhelming learners.

3.6.4 Challenges Faced by Students

All teachers reported shared obstacles that hinder students' success in listening-based critical thinking:

- Fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and accent variation (especially Australian or Irish) were identified as major comprehension barriers.

- Teacher A added that anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and demotivation also undermine students' willingness to engage critically.

- Teacher B pointed out students' difficulty in inferring opinions and interpreting implied meaning.

- Teacher C emphasized lack of focus and limited vocabulary as key challenges.

These barriers demonstrate that critical thinking development through listening demands both linguistic competence and emotional resilience. Without adequate support in both areas, students are likely to remain at the surface level of comprehension rather than advancing to analysis and evaluation.

3.6.5 Listening and Critical Thinking Development

All three teachers believed that listening can foster critical thinking if appropriately integrated into class activities:

- Teacher A uses problem-solving scenarios, but noted that many students are reluctant to analyze or evaluate content, implying a motivation gap.

- Teacher B emphasized that listening tasks help students assess speaker intent and make meaningful connections between ideas.

- Teacher C noted that analyzing real-world issues and detecting assumptions or biases deepens students' critical engagement.

While the teachers' strategies are aligned with critical thinking principles, the interviews reveal a tension between instructional efforts and student readiness. Teachers' intentions to develop critical thinking often depend heavily on student motivation, suggesting that critical engagement cannot be taken for granted but must be actively cultivated.

3.6.6 Activities Requiring Analysis and Interpretation

Each teacher described efforts to incorporate activities demanding deeper cognitive engagement:

- Teacher A emphasized problem-solving tasks based on visual or audio input, encouraging interpretation and solution generation.

- Teacher B implemented summarizing and debate tasks requiring students to identify arguments and form opinions.

- Teacher C designed role-plays and analysis exercises focused on interpreting tone, context, and implied meaning.

While these activities reflect a clear pedagogical intention to stimulate critical thinking, the level of student engagement and success varied. This variability suggests that such tasks need to be carefully scaffolded, with explicit support provided to less proficient or less motivated students to ensure meaningful participation.

3.6.7 Students' Ability to Think Critically

Teachers reported mixed perceptions of students' critical thinking abilities:

- Teacher A expressed scepticism, arguing that many students demonstrate passivity and lack critical engagement.

- Teacher B observed that, with guided activities and consistent practice, students gradually improve in critical thinking tasks.

- Teacher C noted that higher-level students show stronger critical skills, but emphasized that even less proficient students can improve with appropriate scaffolding and repetition.

These responses suggest that critical thinking abilities are neither inherent nor static; rather, they are skills that must be intentionally nurtured through ongoing, structured practice.

3.6.8 Classroom and Institutional Challenges

All three teachers highlighted broader institutional and contextual challenges:

- Teacher A stressed lack of motivation, poor learning environments, and the absence of resources like language labs and libraries.

- Teacher B cited time constraints and large class sizes as major obstacles to personalized, critical-focused instruction.

- Teacher C emphasized the urgent need for more technological tools, engagement strategies, and supportive policies.

These systemic barriers undermine even well-designed instructional efforts, reinforcing that critical thinking development is not solely the responsibility of individual teachers but also requires institutional commitment to creating enabling learning conditions.

3.6.9 Recommendations for Improvement

The teachers offered practical suggestions to address these challenges:

- Teacher A proposed reforming the syllabus and reducing distractions such as smartphone use.

- Teacher B recommended incorporating more interactive tasks, pre-listening vocabulary work, and note-taking strategies.

- Teacher C advocated for smaller class sizes, better technological resources, and specialized training in integrating critical thinking into language instruction.

The convergence of these recommendations suggests a strong consensus that both pedagogical and institutional reforms are essential for realizing the potential of listening activities in promoting critical thinking.

3.6.10 Institutional Support

All three teachers emphasized the urgent need for institutional support:

- Teacher A lamented that universities have been slow to invest in necessary teacher development initiatives.

- Teacher B advocated for increased access to professional workshops and online learning platforms.

- Teacher C called for the establishment of language laboratories, ongoing teacher training, and greater administrative backing.

Without addressing these institutional shortcomings, efforts to foster critical thinking through listening activities are likely to remain fragmented and less impactful. Structural improvements are essential to support both teachers and learners in achieving higher cognitive outcomes.

3.7 Interview Interpretation

➢ Q1: To what extent do listening activities contribute to the development of critical thinking skills in second-year EFL students?

Hypothesis (H1): Listening activities play a significant role in fostering critical thinking skills by encouraging analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of spoken content.

Interpretation:

The teachers' responses consistently emphasized the potential of listening activities to engage students analytically. All three noted that reflective and evaluative listening tasks, when properly implemented, enhance students' ability to interpret meaning, assess arguments, and detect bias. However, the interviews also highlighted that the success of listening-based critical thinking initiatives is not automatic; it depends on student motivation, structured instructional design, and adequate scaffolding. Thus, while listening activities can indeed promote critical thinking, their effectiveness is mediated by a range of instructional and contextual factors.

➢ Q2: What challenges do students face when applying critical thinking during listening tasks?

Hypothesis (H2): Second-year EFL students face challenges such as comprehension difficulties, limited vocabulary, and struggles in critically analyzing spoken information.

Interpretation:

Teachers' accounts confirmed that students face significant linguistic, cognitive, and emotional barriers when engaging in critical listening. Fast speech, unfamiliar accents, limited vocabulary, and difficulties in inferring speaker intentions emerged as major

Obstacles. These challenges imply that critical thinking development cannot be separated from basic comprehension skills; students must first achieve a sufficient level of linguistic competence before they can effectively engage in deeper analysis. Additionally, motivational and emotional factors, such as anxiety and lack of focus, further complicate students' critical engagement with listening materials.

➤ Q3: How do teachers facilitate the development of critical thinking through listening activities?

Hypothesis (H3): The effectiveness of listening tasks in developing critical thinking depends on the instructional strategies used by teachers, such as guided discussions, questioning techniques, and multimedia resources.

Interpretation:

The teachers described a variety of strategies, including problem-solving tasks, structured discussions, and role-play exercises, aimed at promoting critical engagement with listening content. These methods reflect a clear understanding of how to scaffold higher- order thinking skills. However, the success of these strategies appears uneven, heavily dependent on factors such as class size, time availability, student motivation, and access to authentic materials. This suggests that while teachers are making efforts to link listening and critical thinking, their impact is constrained by broader systemic challenges that must be addressed for consistent and widespread improvement.

General Observations

1. **Student Engagement and Motivation:**

The acknowledgment by all three teachers that student engagement and motivation are key to the success of listening activities underscores a widely recognized challenge in language education. Teacher A's observation about the lack of student motivation, particularly in critical analysis and evaluation of content, reveals a fundamental obstacle. Without intrinsic motivation, students often view listening tasks as mere exercises in comprehension rather than opportunities to engage critically with the

Content. This lack of motivation is further compounded by Teacher B's note on the gradual improvement in student performance through structured activities, suggesting that students' initial passivity can be transformed over time. However, Teacher C's emphasis on scaffolding for lower-level students suggests that students' varying proficiency levels must be accounted for in task design. The need for scaffolding becomes more critical when considering that students at lower proficiency levels may struggle to transition from basic understanding to critical analysis. Thus, the interplay between motivation, engagement, and proficiency highlights the importance of differentiated instruction to address the diverse needs within a classroom. The findings point to a need for deliberate and targeted strategies that foster both intrinsic motivation and critical engagement from the outset.

2. Challenges in Critical Thinking Development:

The challenges outlined by the teachers reflect a multifaceted problem. Teacher A's attribution of passive behavior to the underdevelopment of critical thinking skills may point to a deeper issue with the cognitive processes involved in listening tasks. The development of critical thinking requires not only comprehension but also the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize spoken information skills that passive learners may fail to develop. Teacher B's suggestion that consistent practice and guidance are essential offers a solution but also underscores the long-term nature of critical thinking development. This aligns with educational theories that posit critical thinking as a gradual process rather than a skill that can be acquired in a short time. Teacher C's observation that higher-level students engage more effectively with critical thinking tasks suggests that proficiency plays a significant role in this process. It implies that more proficient students may have developed the cognitive tools necessary for engaging with complex listening tasks. This differentiation in student performance suggests that instructional strategies need to be flexible enough to accommodate various proficiency levels and provide scaffolding for less proficient students to navigate more complex tasks. In sum, the challenge lies not only in encouraging critical thinking but also in creating tasks that are appropriately demanding for all levels of learners.

3. Institutional and Classroom Limitations:

The institutional and classroom limitations highlighted by the teachers, large class sizes, time constraints, and lack of resources, are emblematic of broader challenges in educational systems worldwide. Teacher A's call for improved infrastructure, including language labs, addresses the importance of adequate resources in facilitating effective language learning. However, these institutional constraints are compounded by the practical realities of large classrooms, as noted by Teacher B, where individualized attention is scarce. This reality makes it difficult for teachers to implement differentiated instruction strategies, which are crucial for promoting critical thinking in diverse classrooms. The institutional support needed to address these challenges includes not only physical resources but also a commitment to creating a conducive learning environment that allows for personalized and effective teaching. Without addressing these systemic issues, the goals of fostering critical thinking through listening activities remain difficult to achieve on a large scale.

4. Recommendations for Improvement:

The teachers' recommendations for improving the integration of listening activities with critical thinking development offer practical insights but also reveal deeper systemic issues. Revising the syllabus, reducing distractions, increasing interactive tasks, and investing in resources and teacher training are all valid suggestions. Teacher C's specific call for smaller class sizes directly addresses the limitations imposed by large classes, offering a targeted solution that would likely increase the effectiveness of listening activities. However, these recommendations are not without challenges. For example, reducing class sizes or increasing teacher development requires significant institutional investment, which may not always be feasible in underfunded educational systems. While these suggestions are pragmatic, their successful implementation depends on broader institutional reforms, including increased funding for educational resources and professional development. Furthermore, these recommendations reinforce the critical role of teachers in shaping the learning environment. As highlighted by Ismail and Aziz (2020), instructional strategies, such as guided discussions and multimedia resources, are

Vital for fostering critical thinking. Teachers play a central role in facilitating cognitive engagement, but their ability to do so effectively depends on the support and resources available to them.

In summary, the interview findings reinforce the central hypothesis of this study: that listening activities, when thoughtfully integrated into Oral Expression classes, can foster critical thinking skills. However, the challenges identified, such as comprehension difficulties, limited vocabulary, and motivational barriers, must be addressed through targeted instructional strategies and institutional support. The teachers' insights suggest that while listening tasks can promote critical thinking, the effectiveness of these tasks depends heavily on the quality of instruction, the level of student engagement, and the availability of resources. Moreover, it is clear that a one-size-fits-all approach will not suffice; instead, a tailored, differentiated strategy that accounts for varying proficiency levels and student motivations is essential.

3.8 Comparison and Integration of Findings

This section compares the results obtained from the three research instruments: student surveys, classroom observations, and teacher interviews in relation to each of the research questions and hypotheses.

1. Contribution of Listening Activities to Critical Thinking (H1)

The results from all three methods support the idea that listening activities can foster critical thinking, although they differ in the consistency with which this is realized in practice.

The survey results indicate that a substantial majority (77.8%) of students believe listening activities help in the development of critical thinking, particularly when tasks require analysis and evaluation. However, only a small portion (14.8%) report being regularly encouraged to engage in deep interpretation of the content. This disparity suggests that while students acknowledge the potential of listening tasks to promote critical thinking, such tasks are not frequently designed to encourage deeper cognitive engagement.

Teacher interviews also align with this view, as all three teachers agreed that listening activities, when paired with tasks such as problem-solving, analysis of real- world issues, or detecting bias, can stimulate critical thinking. This endorsement from teachers highlights the potential of listening activities to foster critical thinking, but the implementation remains a key factor.

Classroom observations, however, revealed a gap between theory and practice. In only 2 out of 5 sessions did teachers integrate activities that promoted deep analysis and evaluation, underscoring a disconnect between the perceived value of listening tasks and their actual application in the classroom.

While both students and teachers recognize the importance of listening in promoting critical thinking, classroom observations suggest that these practices are not consistently applied. This discrepancy between beliefs and classroom realities indicates that while listening activities hold potential for fostering critical thinking, there are significant barriers to consistent implementation.

2. Challenges Faced by Students in Applying Critical Thinking (H2)

The challenges faced by students in applying critical thinking were consistently identified across all three methods. Comprehension difficulties, limited vocabulary, and struggles with analysis emerged as key barriers.

The survey results highlighted that a significant number of students face challenges, with 46.3% indicating limited vocabulary, 35.2% struggling with critical analysis, and 31.5% encountering difficulties with comprehension. Additionally, factors such as fast speech and unfamiliar accents were also mentioned as obstacles that hinder students' ability to engage critically with spoken content.

Classroom observations further confirmed these struggles, with students often providing literal responses rather than analytical ones, indicating difficulty in making inferences or evaluations. This suggests that the challenges identified in the survey are not merely theoretical but are reflected in actual classroom performance.

Teacher interviews also corroborated these findings. Teachers observed that students struggled with understanding various accents, inferring implied meanings, and maintaining focus during listening tasks. This consistency across all three methods highlights the significant barriers that hinder students' ability to apply critical thinking during listening activities.

In conclusion, there is strong alignment across the three methods regarding the challenges students face. These difficulties, particularly in comprehension, vocabulary, and analysis, substantially limit students' ability to engage in critical thinking while listening.

3.   Instructional Strategies for Facilitating Critical Thinking (H3)

The findings from the three research instruments reveal alignment in the importance of effective instructional strategies for facilitating critical thinking, although their application is not always consistent.

The survey results show that students value strategies like class discussions (57.4%) and guiding questions (40.7%) to support critical thinking. However, only a small percentage (14.8%) report regularly engaging in tasks that require deep interpretation. This suggests that while students recognize the value of such strategies, they are not consistently applied in practice.

Classroom observations revealed that when teachers employed strategies such as open-ended questions, video materials, and discussion tasks, students appeared more engaged in critical thinking. However, these strategies were not uniformly used across all sessions, indicating that their application is not consistent.

Teacher interviews strongly supported these findings, with teachers emphasizing the use of authentic content, debates, and guided reflection as key strategies for promoting critical thinking. However, teachers also noted significant challenges such as time constraints and large class sizes that hindered the consistent implementation of these strategies.

The consistency of findings across all three methods underscores the significance of instructional strategies in fostering critical thinking. Classroom discussions, questioning techniques, and the use of multimedia emerged as particularly effective methods for encouraging critical engagement. This aligns with Ha and Bao (2024), who argue that listening is not only crucial for comprehension but also for developing learners' skills in inference, interpretation, and prediction during the listening process.

In summary, all three methods emphasize the importance of instructional strategies, especially classroom discussions, questioning techniques, and multimedia resources, in fostering critical thinking through listening activities. These findings support the third hypothesis, which posits that the effectiveness of listening tasks in developing critical thinking depends on the instructional strategies employed by teachers.

The comparison and integration of findings highlight both the potential and challenges in using listening activities to foster critical thinking. While students, teachers, and classroom observations agree on the importance of listening tasks for developing critical thinking, the gap between theory and practice, coupled with the challenges students face, calls for targeted efforts to improve instructional strategies and classroom conditions. Additionally, the recommendations from both teachers and students suggest that more consistent and thoughtfully implemented strategies could better bridge the gap between the potential of listening activities and their actual impact on students' critical thinking development.

3.9 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study suggest that listening activities can significantly enhance EFL students' critical thinking skills when effectively integrated into oral expression sessions. Data collected from teacher interviews, student surveys, and classroom observations highlight that structured listening tasks, especially those involving guided questioning, analytical discussions, and multimedia materials, are particularly effective in stimulating students' abilities to interpret, evaluate, and reflect on spoken content.

These implications underscore the importance of viewing listening not merely as a passive skill but as an active, strategic tool for fostering higher-order thinking. When students are encouraged to engage critically with listening tasks such as analyzing speaker intent, identifying underlying messages, or making judgments about content, they develop essential cognitive skills. This, in turn, prepares them for academic success and equips them with the communication and analytical abilities necessary for real-world contexts. Educators should therefore prioritize activities that challenge students to think critically about what they hear, moving beyond simple comprehension to deeper analysis and interpretation.

3.10 Recommendations

- **For Teachers**

Based on the findings and implications, the following recommendations are proposed for EFL teachers to enhance the development of critical thinking through listening activities:

- Incorporate analytical listening tasks

Design activities that require students to identify the speaker's purpose, assess argument strength, or compare perspectives.

- Utilize multimedia resources

Integrate podcasts, debates, interviews, and documentaries to expose students to diverse voices and complex content that prompts deeper analysis.

- Guide critical reflection

Facilitate post-listening tasks such as discussions, debates, or reflective writing that focus on interpreting messages, tone, and underlying meaning.

- Encourage open-ended questioning

Use higher-order questions (e.g., "What motivated the speaker's opinion?" or "How does this relate to real-world issues?") to stimulate critical thought.

- Promote collaborative learning

Use group or pair discussions to help students explore multiple interpretations and practice critical dialogue.

- Scaffold critical thinking development

Begin with basic comprehension tasks and gradually introduce more demanding activities, such as evaluating credibility or detecting fallacies.

- Provide feedback on critical thinking

Assess not only comprehension but also the quality of reasoning and interpretation, offering feedback that fosters deeper reflection.

- Foster an open and inclusive classroom environment

Create a space where students feel safe to question, debate, and explore diverse perspectives.

- For Students

To effectively develop their critical thinking skills through listening, EFL students are encouraged to adopt the following strategies:

- Engage actively with listening materials

Move beyond passive listening by questioning the speaker's intent, analyzing arguments, and considering broader implications.

- Take notes strategically

Record key ideas, supporting arguments, contradictions, and implied meanings to aid analysis

and discussion.

- Participate in discussions

Share interpretations and engage in peer dialogue to refine understanding and examine

multiple viewpoints.

- Practice reflective listening

Reflect on what was learned, what was challenging, and how the content connects to

personal experiences or global issues.

- Expand exposure to authentic input

Regularly listen to podcasts, interviews, and debates to develop familiarity with different

accents, ideas, and perspectives.

- Develop metacognitive strategies

Monitor comprehension and adapt listening methods by setting goals, checking understanding,

and evaluating effectiveness.

- Manage listening anxiety

Build confidence by participating even when unsure. Expressing ideas helps improve

both language and critical thinking.

- Engage with opposing views

Rather than dismissing unfamiliar opinions, examine their logic and underlying assumptions

with an open mind.

- Use prior knowledge strategically

Connect new content to existing knowledge to enhance interpretation and judgment.

- Adopt an active learning approach

Ask clarifying questions, seek deeper insights, and take initiative in classroom discussions.

3.11 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter analyzed data from surveys, observations, and interviews, revealing that while listening activities have the potential to promote critical thinking, their implementation remains inconsistent. Key challenges, such as limited vocabulary and comprehension difficulties, hinder students' critical engagement.

Effective instructional strategies are essential, but not always applied. Overall, the findings support the study's hypotheses and highlight the need for more deliberate integration of listening tasks that foster critical thinking.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of listening skills on the development of critical thinking among second-year EFL students at Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saida. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research combined quantitative data from a survey of 54 students with qualitative insights gathered through five classroom observations and interviews with three oral expression teachers. It aimed to examine how listening activities contribute to learners' cognitive development, identify the main challenges students face when applying critical thinking during listening tasks, and explore how teachers facilitate this process in oral expression sessions.

The student survey revealed that most learners perceive listening activities as valuable tools for enhancing their analytical and interpretive abilities. Many students reported that tasks requiring active listening helped them evaluate spoken messages, interpret meaning beyond surface level, and engage in more critical thought. However, common challenges were also reported, including comprehension difficulties, limited vocabulary, and time pressure, which often hindered students' ability to think critically during listening exercises.

Classroom observations supported these findings. Listening activities designed with clear cognitive objectives and supported by guiding questions or visual materials significantly improved student engagement and promoted higher-order thinking. Lessons incorporating videos, problem-solving discussions, and reflective feedback created dynamic environments where students were encouraged to justify their ideas and participate meaningfully. In contrast, lessons that lacked such support were marked by limited participation and superficial responses.

The interviews with oral expression teachers further confirmed these insights. All three teachers emphasized that listening can foster critical thinking when approached as an active, constructive process rather than a passive one. They highlighted the importance of scaffolding (gradual support that helps learners build independence), contextualization of content, and post-listening reflection to guide students. Teachers also noted that listening tasks are more effective when they provide opportunities for debate, interpretation, and guided questioning.

These findings validate the three hypotheses proposed in the study. First, listening activities play a significant role in developing critical thinking by encouraging analysis, evaluation, and

interpretation of spoken content. Second, EFL learners face persistent challenges, especially comprehension difficulties and limited vocabulary, that restrict their ability to apply critical thinking while listening. Third, the study highlights the crucial role of teachers in facilitating this process through thoughtful instructional design, strategic classroom support, and the integration of critical thinking goals into listening lessons.

In conclusion, this research demonstrates that listening is not merely a receptive skill but an active cognitive process. When implemented effectively, it can enhance students' intellectual growth. By shifting the purpose of listening tasks from simple comprehension to critical engagement, EFL instruction can foster learners' analytical, reflective, and problem-solving abilities. The findings also underscore the need for curriculum developers and language educators to embed critical thinking objectives into listening instruction and to train teachers in the use of strategies that cultivate these skills.

Looking ahead, future research should examine how integrating listening with other skills, such as speaking and reading, can further promote critical thinking in EFL contexts. Studies conducted with larger or more diverse samples may also offer broader insights into how critical listening can be fostered across varied educational environments.

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Appendix

Appendix

Appendix A: Students' Survey Questionnaire

 Title: Survey on Listening Skills and Critical Thinking: A Case Study of Second-Year EFL Learners at Saida University

Purpose of the Survey:

This survey was designed to explore the extent to which listening skills contribute to the development of critical thinking among second-year EFL students. All responses were anonymous and collected solely for academic purposes.

Section 1: General Information

1. Age

☐ 18–20

☐ 21–23

☐ Above 23

2. Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

3. How would you rate your English proficiency level?

☐ 　　Beginner 　　☐ Average 　　　☐ 　Advanced 　　　☐ 　Fluent

Section 2: Listening Skills

4. How often do you participate in listening activities during your English classes?

☐ Always 　　　☐ Often 　☐ Sometimes 　☐ Rarely 　☐ Never

5. How often do your teachers use audio or video materials to enhance listening skills?

☐ Always 　　　☐ Often 　☐ Sometimes 　☐ Rarely 　☐ Never

6. Do you find listening tasks challenging?

☐ Yes ☐ No 　　☐ Sometimes

7. 　　What strategies do you use to understand listening materials in class? (Select more than one if applicable)

☐ Taking notes

☐ Focusing on key points

☐ Asking for clarification

Other: ……………………………………………………………………………

Section 3: Critical Thinking

8. Do listening activities help you analyze and evaluate spoken content critically

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

9. How often are you asked to interpret or discuss the deeper meaning of what you hear?

☐ Always   ☐ Often   ☐ Sometimes   ☐ Rarely

10. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do listening tasks improve your critical thinking?

1 = Not at all

2 = A little

3 = Moderately

4 = A lot

5 = Very much

11. What challenges do you face in applying critical thinking during listening tasks?

☐ Understanding the content

☐ Limited vocabulary knowledge

☐ Difficulty analyzing ideas

Other …………………………………………………………………………

12.   How do your teachers encourage critical thinking during listening activities? (Choose all that apply.)

☐ Asking guiding questions   ☐ Encouraging class discussion

☐ Providing real-world examples   ☐ Offering feedback and hints

Other: …………………………………………………………………………

Section 4: After Listening

13. After completing a listening task, do you check important information?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

14. How often do you give examples based on the information you listen to?

☐ Never   ☐ Rarely   ☐ Often   ☐ Always

15. How frequently do you combine information to form impressions?

☐ Never   ☐ Rarely   ☐ Sometimes   ☐ Often   ☐ Always

16. When interested in specific information, do you check if it is true?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

17. How do you justify your answers during listening tasks? (Select all that apply.)

☐ By using examples from real life

☐ By analyzing the given information thoroughly

☐ By relying on assumptions or guesses

Other: …………………………………………………………………………………

18.   To what extent do you interpret evidence, statements, and questions during listening tasks?

☐ Not at all   ☐ Rarely   ☐ Sometimes   ☐ Often   ☐ Always

19. What do you do when encountering alternative points of view?

☐ Analyze and evaluate them critically   ☐ Ignore them

☐ Superficially evaluate them   ☐ Maintain my view regardless of evidence

20.   Can you describe how you identify arguments and evaluate different points of view during listening tasks?

(Open-ended response)

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Appendix

Appendix B: Classroom Observation

Observer:		Group:	
Course:	Oral Expression	Date/Time:	
Level:		Academic Year:	2024/2025

Session Focus	Notes
General observation of the classroom environment: seating, group interaction, and use of listening activities	
Students' engagement with listening tasks and their critical thinking behaviors (analysis, interpretation, questioning)	
Teachers' instructional strategies for integrating listening and promoting critical thinking	
Challenges observed in students' comprehension, analysis, or response during listening activities	
Use of multimedia or audio-visual materials to support listening and critical thinking	

Appendix C: Teacher Interview

The following semi-structured interview aims to explore Oral Expression teachers' perceptions of the role of listening in promoting students' critical thinking.

Section 1: Background Information

1. According to you, what are the main objectives of Oral Expression classes?

Section 2: Teaching Listening Skills

2. How do you incorporate listening activities into your Oral Expression classes?

3. What types of listening materials do you use?

4.   What challenges do students face when engaging with listening activities in your classes?

Section 3: Listening and Critical Thinking

5.   Through your experience, how does listening contribute to the development of students' critical thinking?

6.   Do you include activities that require students to analyze, evaluate, or interpret spoken content? If so, can you give examples?

7.   Do you think students are generally able to identify arguments, recognize biases, or question the validity of spoken information? Why or why not?

Section 4: Challenges and Recommendations

8.   What are the main difficulties in integrating listening and critical thinking in your classroom?

9.   What improvements would you suggest to enhance the role of listening in fostering critical thinking among EFL learners?

10.   In your opinion, how can universities better support teachers in promoting listening comprehension and critical thinking?

Summary

This thesis explores the influence of listening skills on the development of critical thinking among second-year students of English at Dr. Moulay Tahar University in Saida. Employing a mixed-methods research design, data were collected through an online questionnaire administered to 54 EFL students, five classroom observations of Oral Expression sessions, and semi-structured interviews with three Oral Expression teachers.

The findings indicate that listening activities, particularly those involving authentic audio-visual materials, teacher scaffolding, and guided questioning, stimulate students to

engage in higher-order thinking processes such as analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and inference. These cognitive operations are central to critical thinking. However, the study also identifies significant barriers, including students' limited lexical range, difficulties in understanding spoken input, and challenges in formulating reasoned responses. Teachers were found to play a pivotal role in mediating these difficulties by integrating interactive pedagogical strategies, promoting reflective discussion, and leveraging multimedia to contextualize listening tasks. Ultimately, the study concludes that well-structured and intentionally facilitated listening activities can substantially enhance students' critical thinking in EFL contexts, and it calls for greater pedagogical emphasis on listening as a tool for cognitive development.

Résumé

Ce mémoire analyse l'impact des compétences d'écoute sur le développement de la pensée critique chez les étudiants de deuxième année en anglais à l'Université Dr Moulay Tahar de Saïda. En adoptant une approche méthodologique mixte, les données ont été recueillies via un questionnaire en ligne auprès de 54 étudiants, l'observation de cinq séances d'expression orale, et des entretiens semi-directifs avec trois enseignants de cette matière. Les résultats révèlent que les activités d'écoute en particulier celles qui utilisent des documents audiovisuels authentiques, un accompagnement pédagogique structuré et des techniques de questionnement guidé incitent les étudiants à mobiliser des compétences cognitives supérieures telles que l'analyse, l'interprétation, l'évaluation et la déduction. Toutefois, des obstacles subsistent, notamment la pauvreté du vocabulaire, les difficultés de compréhension orale, et la complexité d'exprimer des opinions critiques de manière argumentée. Les enseignants jouent un rôle central en proposant des stratégies pédagogiques interactives, en favorisant des discussions réflexives et en utilisant des supports multimédias pour enrichir les tâches d'écoute. En conclusion, cette recherche souligne que des activités d'écoute bien conçues et efficacement encadrées peuvent contribuer de manière significative au développement de la pensée critique dans les contextes d'enseignement de l'anglais langue étrangère.

ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة تأثير مهارات الاستماع في تنمية مهارات التفكير النقدي لدى طلبة السنة الثانية من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة الدكتور مولاي الطاهر بسعيدة. اعتمدت الدراسة على منهجية البحث المختلط، حيث تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان إلكتروني شارك فيه 54 طالباً، وملاحظات مباشرة لخمس حصص من التعبير الشفهي، بالإضافة إلى مقابلات شبه منظمة مع ثلاثة أساتذة في هذه المادة. أظهرت النتائج أن أنشطة الاستماع، خاصة تلك التي تعتمد على الوسائط السمعية البصرية الأصلية، والتوجيه التربوي المنظم، والأسئلة الإرشادية، تساعد الطلبة على تفعيل عمليات عقلية عليا مثل التحليل، والتفسير، والتقييم، والاستنتاج، وهي عمليات جوهرية في التفكير النقدي. ومع ذلك، أظهرت الدراسة وجود عوائق منها محدودية الحصيلة اللغوية، وصعوبة فهم المحتوى المسموع، وصعوبات في التعبير عن أفكار نقدية بصورة منطقية. وأكدت النتائج أن للأساتذة دوراً محورياً في تخفيف هذه الصعوبات من خلال اعتماد استراتيجيات تعليمية تفاعلية، وتشجيع النقاش التأملي، وتوظيف الوسائط المتعددة لتهيئة الطلبة لمهام الاستماع. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن تصميم أنشطة استماع فعّالة وتوجيهها بشكل منهجي يمكن أن يسهم بشكل ملحوظ في تعزيز التفاعل المعرفي وتنمية مهارات التفكير النقدي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.