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**Examining the Effects of Problem-based Learning on Critical  
Reading of Literary Texts among EFL Learners  
Case of Third Year EFL Students at Khenchela University**

Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Doctorate Degree in  
Didactics of Literary Texts

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## **Dedications**

I dedicate this work to all my family

To my late father Kellil Abd-Allah and late brother Kellil Aissa.

To my mother Kellil Khadija

To my daughter Kellil Rinas Manel

To my friends.

## **Abstract**

This study aims to investigate the effects of problem-based learning on English as a Foreign Language learners' critical reading of literary texts at Abbas Laghrour University of Khenchela. From a population of 86 third year students, a group of 39 students were chosen as the experimental group and a group of 47 students as the control group. Following a pretest, the experimental group received an 11-week intervention of problem-based instruction of British and American literary texts. Therefore, critical reading scores were measured prior to and following the intervention to compare group means in performance. In order to examine critical reading more thoroughly and assess the extent to which critical reading test scores were reliable, the researcher carried out classroom observations and assessed learners' critical reading performance using an observation grid. In addition to tests and observations, the researcher administered an attitude questionnaire in an attempt to reveal the experimental group's opinions towards the effectiveness of problem-based instruction in the literary texts classroom. The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (25) to run the analysis of covariance, Pearson's correlation analysis and tests of parametric assumptions. The analysis of pre-test and post-test scores revealed that there was no significant difference in critical reading performance between the control and experimental group. Results from the questionnaire revealed that the more learners practiced problem-based learning activities, the more positive attitudes they expressed towards these activities. Moreover, the questionnaire results revealed that problem-based learning implementation in literary text classes promoted self-directed learning practices. Analysis of the observation data confirmed the results obtained from the tests analysis, which indicated that problem-based learning failed to affect learners' critical reading. The observation, however, revealed that problem-based learning promoted some aspects related to active reading.

Based on these findings, we recommend the use of problem-based learning to promote self-directed learning in literary texts courses. Further research is needed.

*Keywords:* Problem-based learning, critical reading, literary texts, EFL

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## **List of Abbreviations**

- ANCOVA:** Analysis of covariance
- CR:** Critical Reading
- CG:** Control group
- EFL:** English as a Foreign Language
- EG:** Experimental Group
- KA:** Knowledge application
- LT:** Literary text(s)
- MC:** Matters of correctness
- PBL:** Problem-based learning
- SE:** Supporting evidence

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## **General Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

Problem-Based Learning (PBL), as a constructivist approach of teaching and learning, can be defined as the application of a set of instructional activities that aim to prompt learners to use schematic knowledge to tackle and solve various problems related to real life situations. In addition to schematic knowledge, learners are expected to use their logical, interpretative, and analytical skills to approach different topics and lessons (Walton and Mathew, 1989). Moreover, Major and Palmer (2001) assert that team work is a tool through which learners are expected to solve real life complex problems by evaluating, interpreting, and synthesizing resources. The purposes of integrating PBL approach are to foster the retrieval of stored information, encourage learners' autonomy, and improve problem solving skills (Norman and Schmidt 1992).

The initial implementation of PBL dates back to the 1960s in medical school classes at McMaster University in Canada. The first practitioners of this approach are Barrows and Tamblyn (Barrows, 1996). Afterwards, the use of PBL has gained momentum in other educational areas such as social studies, business studies, and education. Teaching second or foreign languages was no exception. With the shift from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach to language teaching, much attention has been devoted to the learner, making him/her the most vital element in the teaching-learning process (Brown, 2001). Hence, PBL, being a self-driven and self-directed learning method, is a major point of interest for researchers in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching.

A growing number of studies have been devoted to investigating the extent to which PBL is effective in various classroom situations. Othman and Shah (2013) tested the use of PBL in English language classes. They opted for an experimental design to inquire the effect of PBL activities on

course content and language development. They found that PBL groups could deliver better arguments and richer content in their essays whereas the control group's (CG) overall level remained constant. Temel (2014) reported that the implementation of PBL increased learners' problem-solving ability. He also reported that PBL did not affect critical thinking skills of pre-service teachers. However, in another study in Taiwan, Chen (2015) conducted an action research to investigate the effect of PBL on critical thinking in the news media literacy class. Chen, unlike Temel (2014), found that integrating PBL was beneficial as it helped in developing learners' critical thinking.

In literature teaching context, PBL has been tested by a number of researchers. Azmi et al. (2016) conducted a study to investigate the effect of the implementation of PBL on teaching literature, which revealed that integrating PBL fosters learners' critical thinking. In another study, Sommers et al. (2006) examined the role of PBL in promoting critical reading (CR) response behavior. The authors reported that the overall results support the hypothesis that PBL promotes better CR behaviors.

CR tightly overlaps with critical thinking since the latter forms the basis upon which the former is built. Highered (2010) asserts thinking while reading is the basis of CR. This implies analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, synthesizing, and consciously adopting or rejecting information in a given passage. Wallace (2003) asserts that passiveness in reading texts has no place in language classes when reading critically. That is, when reading critically, learners are completely involved in the reading process.

Many studies in the field of language teaching have been devoted to improving learners' CR abilities. For instance, Xue (2013) tried to improve EFL learners' CR competence through lexical strategies. The researcher found that the implementation of a pedagogy based on morphological

analysis and other related strategies significantly improved EFL learners' CR. In another inquiry Asghar and Al-Bargi (2014) examined the usefulness of CR in EFL and ESL classes. The findings indicate that CR of texts promotes learners' analytical skills and widens their horizon of reading and understanding various texts. Further, Al Qatanani (2017) investigated the impact of a multiple intelligences-based program on improving EFL learners' CR skills in Jordan. The findings obtained from the pre-test and post-test revealed that the program was quite beneficial. In another EFL context, Sabet et al. (2018) conducted an inquiry examining the effect of problem solving task on CR of Iranian learners and found a statistically significant effect of problem-solving instruction on outcomes of reading comprehension.

Numerous studies have attempted to facilitate the process of English teaching and learning. For instance, PBL has been used in many research inquiries to prove its effectiveness as a constructivist approach to EFL teaching. Likewise, researchers tried many teaching approaches, strategies, and techniques to improve learners' CR skills. After an extensive review of the literature, the researcher has concluded that there is a considerable gap in the literature, which is the need for further research on the effects of experimentally induced PBL in the EFL classroom with the aims of facilitating the process of CR. This gap seems to be more prevalent in the Algerian context considering the scarce research found on PBL in this setting. Hence, this study is an attempt to be just one stepping stone in the path towards reducing this gap in the literature. This study aims to empirically test the effects of PBL on EFL learners' CR of literary texts (LT) within the Algerian context.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

After understanding a text on the literal level, EFL learners are expected to go beyond the substantial bodies and approach any literary text (LT) critically by being able to highlight basic

information in a text, deal with various deep structures, determine truths and falsities, and consciously question, accept or reject ideas. Levines et al (2000), as proponents of CR, claim that it is vital to promote learners' CR skills so they are able to read actively by contextualizing and connecting themselves to various reading materials.

In the Algerian context, however, EFL learners seem unable to approach LT critically since they are accustomed to analyzing the surface meanings of texts, attempting to decipher the metalanguage in those texts and waiting for teachers' ready-made transmitted knowledge and interpretations (Arab, 1993). Likewise, Bousbai (2010) claims that in many Algerian universities, EFL learners are rarely asked to extract meaning or interpret LT. This monotonous passiveness usually results in de-motivated and anxious learners who lack self-confidence and self-esteem. In turn, this may result in learners who are unable to process an active reading through which they analyze, interpret, evaluate, synthesize, and construct new meanings of their own using their schematic knowledge.

Hence, since PBL is believed to involve learners in the teaching learning process, eliciting their schematic knowledge to question, analyze, interpret and evaluate exposed facts in the learning process, this study attempts to examine the impact of PBL on EFL university students' CR of literary texts.

### **3. Research Questions and Hypotheses:**

- 1- To what extent does the implementation of PBL in the EFL classroom affect learners' CR of literary texts?
- 2- Which aspect of CR, if any, is affected most by PBL?
- 3- What are learners' attitudes towards PBL in the LT classroom?
- 4- Does PBL intervention in LT classes promote self-directed learning practices?

5- To what extent are learners' experiences with PBL activities related to their attitudes towards these activities and the PBL environment?

**H1:** PBL in the EFL classroom will help improve EFL learners' CR of LT.

**H2:** All aspects of CR will improve as a result of PBL.

**H3:** Most learners will find PBL to be enjoyable and effective.

**H4:** An intervention of PBL promotes self-directed learning.

**H5:** Learners who employ PBL more often will view the activities more positively.

#### **4. Aims of the Study:**

The main aim of this study is to examine the effect of PBL on learners' CR in literature classes. In unveiling the potential of PBL for teaching literature to EFL learners, the study aims to gain insight into the factors that play a role in improving learners' ability to read texts critically rather than passively. In doing so, the current study aims to provide practical guidelines for implementing PBL in the EFL classroom for the sake of improving learners' reading practices, which has the potential to help them improve in their overall achievement and language learning progress.

#### **5. Significance of the Study**

The current study provides university EFL teachers of LT with insight into teaching literature using a learner-centered approach. Additionally, the study is felt significant since it contributes to the existing literature in two ways. First, it gives EFL researchers some ideas about how to implement PBL in literature classes. Second, it bridges a gap in the literature on the effectiveness of PBL on CR of LT.

## 6. Operationalization of Variables

**PBL:** The main independent variable in this study is PBL. In this teaching and learning approach, “complex, real-world problems are used to motivate students to identify and research the concepts and principles they need to know to work through those problems. Students work in small learning teams, bringing together collective skill at acquiring, communicating, and integrating information” (Duch et al., 2001, p. 6). In this study, PBL is applied through as a one-semester treatment in the EFL literature classroom. For 11 weeks, PBL was applied as per the following steps and procedures: problem creation, problem exposure, researching, thinking, synthesis, application, reapplication, reflection, and knowledge. All these steps were carried out under collaborative work, self-directed learning and with the facilitating role of the teacher. (Refer to Appendix A for Sample PBL Lesson Plans)

**Critical Reading :** Pirozzi et al. (2014) define CR as “high-level comprehension of written material requiring interpretation and evaluation skills that enable the reader to separate important information, use inference to come to logical conclusions, distinguish between facts and opinions, and determine a writer’s purpose and tone” (p. 2). The construct CR of LT is measured using two tools. First, the researcher measured the construct using a test, which was administered prior to and following the intervention. The test targeted six features of CR of LT: comprehension, analysis, synthesis, knowledge application (KA), use of supporting evidence while arguing (SE), and matters of correctness (MC) (Refer to Appendix B and C for the pre-test and post-test questions and Appendix D and E for sample answers). As a supplementary tool for measuring CR, the researcher used an observation grid containing 16 key elements of CR of LT. These elements are annotations, marginalia, questioning, dictionary use, mastery of figurative language, skimming, re-reading, summarizing, paraphrasing, open-mindedness, arguing reasonably, analyzing,

inferring, synthesizing, contextualizing, and KA. Some of these elements are the same as those measured in the test, while most of the other elements are different. The researcher opted to target all of these elements because not all of them can be measured at once using one test. So the researcher opted to observe learners' behavior for the rest of the elements (Refer to Appendix F for observation grid).

## **7. Method**

The current study adopted a mixed-method approach where both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were employed. An intervention of PBL was integrated into the literature classroom in order to see its effects on the CR of LT. Students' CR of LT scores were measured using a test then coded quantitatively. The test was administered to the CG as well as the EG prior to and after completion of the intervention to see whether there was a difference in performance between the two groups. In terms of qualitative data collection and analysis, the researcher observed students' CR practices before and after the PBL intervention. Finally, a questionnaire was used to obtain information about learners' attitudes towards the intervention as well as other aspects of the PBL experience. Hence, in employing these three tools, the study aimed to achieve triangulation, thus increasing reliability.

In terms of data analysis, the researcher employed more than one method in order to answer the research questions. First, data were collected and inserted into an Excel spreadsheet where they were coded and organized. The data were then imported into the software SPSS (v25). After running all relevant descriptive statistics, the researcher proceeded by running the necessary inferential statistics. To answer the first and second research questions, the researcher used Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), supplemented by the researcher's observations. To answer

the third and the fourth research questions, the researcher only employed descriptive statistics, and to answer the fifth research question, the researcher ran Pearson's correlation analysis.

## **8. Basic Assumptions:**

A few basic assumptions have been taken into account by the researcher at the starting point of this study. First, the researcher considers that third year EFL learners have a basic level of comprehension that paves the way for them to develop their CR. Second, EFL learners are able to perform their tasks in a learner centered approach.

## **9. Structure of the Study:**

This dissertation is divided into six main chapters: the first three are devoted to theoretical underpinnings of the different constructs, and the remaining chapters are related to fieldwork. The first chapter is devoted to the literature review on PBL. The second chapter is devoted to the literature review on CR, and the third chapter is a review of the literature on teaching LT. Chapter four is devoted to outlining the research methodology used in this study. Chapter five provides a detailed discussion of the data analysis, results, and interpretations. Finally, chapter six provides an overview of the implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research.

The first chapter of the review provides an overview of the history of PBL, its assumptions and activities, and the like. Afterward, in the second chapter of the review, an outline of reading and CR skills as well as critical thinking skills is provided. Then, a section is devoted to highlighting the relationship between the independent variable (PBL) and the dependent variable (CR) and (LT).

In the fieldwork chapter, the adopted design, data gathering tools, the sample, and the validity and reliability are discussed. Furthermore, data analysis, interpretation, and discussion are

involved. Finally, the researcher writes a general conclusion in which he provides a summary of the dissertation and pedagogical and research implications.

# **I. Chapter One: Literature Review on Problem-based Learning**

## **Introduction**

The current chapter reviews literature on PBL as an instructional learning and teaching approach. The researcher starts by providing definitions of PBL and its history, highlighting its multidisciplinary implementations. In doing so, the researcher discusses the role of PBL in language learning classrooms. The researcher also describes the different levels and types of problem scenarios in PBL. After that, the main elements and characteristics of PBL are tackled. Moreover, details about various PBL models are introduced. Finally, the role of PBL to promote numerous EFL learners' attributes, besides the challenges and limitations of PBL implementations, are presented.

### **1.1. Definitions of Problem-Based Learning**

As a teaching and learning approach, PBL was firstly adopted in the medical field in McMaster University before its implementation across numerous disciplines worldwide (Pijl-Zieber, 2006; Walsh, 2005). Because of this, as a constructivist approach of teaching and learning, PBL has been defined by many researchers and educators. The instructor in McMaster University, Walsh (2005), describes PBL as the educational approach where learners are stimulated, and their learning is guided through the use of problems as a point of departure of every class. Additionally, she asserts that the problem's roles are to help learners discover their learning needs, analyze, synthesize, and apply the knowledge gained in solving the problem. All these steps are undertaken in light of collaborative and self-directed learning. In another attempt to define PBL, Savery (2015) refers to it as "An instructional (and curricular) learner-centered approach that empowers learners to conduct research, integrate theory and practice, and apply knowledge and skills to develop a viable solution to a defined problem" (p. 5).

Barrell (2007) also attempts to define PBL by providing a more detailed definition. He says that PBL is a curricular framework of which the aim is to make learners engage in active learning where they use critical thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing and applying knowledge in order to solve ill-structured problems. He elaborates saying that PBL involves the use of complex or open-ended problems similar to those encountered in real world so as to offer opportunities for learners to engage with the problems, ask questions, make inquiries to find answers, report findings, and devise stakes in learning.

After examining the above mentioned definitions, it can be concluded that the primary and common core component of PBL is problems that simulate real life situations. Self-directed and collaborative learning are two critical elements of PBL since they are present throughout almost the entire process. This learning process is undertaken by the learners, as Hmelo-Silver (2004) claims, in order to actively construct knowledge by working in light of collaborative learning.

## **1.2. History of Problem-Based Learning**

The ongoing debate over the nature of learning dates as far back as at least ancient times, from the profound Plato-Aristotle debate over rationalism and empiricism to the Constructivism-Humanism distinction that marked twentieth century educational psychology. As a reflection of these radical fluctuations in viewpoints, language teaching methodology has also been subject to several major shifts. Consequently, classroom activities, the teacher–learner relationship, methods of assessment and error correction, and the role of the mother tongue—among other features—have been under constant modification in the language learning classroom, all in aims of finding the most effective combination for maximum benefit. Moreover, the major changes that took place throughout the past few decades have significantly affected language teaching methods.

With more recent technological development, globalization has made the world smaller by facilitating contact between people from all over the world. Moreover, the growing role of English as a lingua franca, mainly due to the dominance of the United States in most sectors, has urged people from all countries to learn English. This has resulted in the emergence of different approaches and methods of teaching and learning English. It is believed that teaching approaches and methods change along with the change of the set objectives of curricula. Because today's world is highly developed and needs individuals who can adapt to every new problem, this criterion has become an essential objective in language learning curricula. As a reflection, PBL, among many other teaching methods, emerged as a teaching approach with the aim of creating problem solvers.

A reader of the history of PBL will certainly highlight two periods, one that is scientific and another that is non-scientific. The non-scientific period of PBL, according to Wee and Kek (2002), may be rooted in the beginning of time as many things were learned through apprenticeship. That is, apprentices learned crafts and trades from tutors via experiential learning since apprentices used to accompany their tutors during working times. Therefore, practice under the supervision of a tutor was their only way of gaining experience and knowledge. Since gaining experience through practice and tutors were fundamental elements in apprenticeship learning as far back as the beginning of time, and since PBL considers these two elements prerequisite, it can be asserted that PBL had been adopted as a teaching method in the beginning of time (Ansarian & Teoh, 2018).

However, according to Schmidt (2012), the scientific period of PBL originated in Socrates' dialectical approach in which individuals' critical thinking was stimulated through argumentative dialogues. Kilpatrick and Dewey are seen as the main proponents of PBL during the last century

as both of them accentuated the benefits of experiential learning (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). Dewey argued that learners perform better if they become involved in activities of their interest that allow them to experience different situations.

As an innovative instructional method, PBL was adopted in the field of medicine. Since it had been well-established by many studies that PBL enhances students' problem-solving and self-oriented learning skills, it has been widely used in many faculties of medicine (Barrows and Tamblyn, 1980). Not only this, but the aforementioned reasons also made PBL gain momentum. That is, the positive reviews and results of using PBL have paved the way for the adoption of PBL in many other fields such as chemistry, engineering, geography etc. (Ansarian & Teoh, 2018). Yet, the field of language education has witnessed little activity during the last century (Ansarian & Teoh, 2018).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, many researchers (Chen, 2015; Larsson, 2001; Othman and Shah, 2013; Sommers et al., 2006; Temel, 2014) have been implementing PBL in language teaching and learning. Most of these studies gave prominence to the fruitful outcomes of PBL in language teaching and learning.

To sum up, this highly developed world and the growing role of English in most sectors have urged practitioners in the field of education to generate new teaching approaches that may help individuals become more equipped in order to be able to live in such a world. PBL is one of the teaching approaches that were adopted by many fields with the aim of getting real-life problem solvers. Owing to its success in other fields, PBL was adopted in language teaching and learning.

### **1.3. Problem-Based Learning in Language Learning**

Brooks and Brooks (1993) argue that in a teacher-centered environment, where the teacher is both knowledge and task master, it is believed that providing and filling students' brains with knowledge allows them to use it in different real life situations. Unavoidably, this means that the process of giving the same taken knowledge was the heart of the assessment in traditional teacher-centered methods. Notably, students' performances in different activities were neglected. Likewise, the behaviorist view to language teaching and learning attempts to help students acquire knowledge through rehearsal and reinforcement of decontextualized content. The mechanical acquisition of knowledge, in addition to lack of contextualization, makes students inapt to perform adequately in real life situations (Short et al., 1996).

However, the constructivist view to language learning and teaching criticizes the explicit teaching of different language rules and concepts. Instead, constructivists argue that students should implicitly acquire language by being involved in activities and situations that are similar to the ones faced in real life. In doing so, students are expected to use their prior knowledge in order to construct new knowledge (Savery & Duffy, 1996).

In congruence with constructivists' assumptions, PBL focuses on developing learners' ability to use language in real life situations. In other words, students interact with each other using the target language during the problem solving process or the presentation of findings, which may boost their language skills and knowledge. Additionally, whenever a problem is given by the teacher, students use their prior knowledge to solve it. Moreover, they will call their critical thinking skills into play in order to find a solution to the given problem. All in all, in a PBL environment, students' language skills are optimized through the use of the target language in discussing, presenting findings, and negotiating meanings; students sharpen their thinking skills by using them frequently to solve different assigned problems (Abdullah, 1998).

In foreign language classes, PBL may take place in a variety of ways. Real life problem scenario is a common way through which EFL/ESL teachers help students learn different language aspects (Ansarian & Teoh, 2018). A teacher who wants to teach adjectives may use a certain scenario. For example, he/she may ask his/her students to imagine a wife looking for her daughter who was lost in a zoo, but the wife could not find her. Then, she went straightly to a security agent asking for help. She tried to describe her daughter to the security agent, but she could not because she does not speak English well. After that, the teacher shows some of the daughter's pictures and asks his students to describe the daughter for the security agent. Students, according to Ansarian and Teoh (2018), will firstly discuss the cause of the problem. Then, students will jot down the adjectives they know in regards to describing physical appearance. In case students lack some of the required vocabulary, they are allowed to use external materials such as dictionaries. Afterwards, students negotiate with each other the choice and the appropriacy of some adjectives before joining their ideas to produce a conversation or a paragraph. A discussion of ideas may take place after every presentation. This way, students learn how to use adjectives they may already know and acquire some new ones in a contextualized manner.

#### **1.4.Types of Problems in Problem-Based Learning**

Unlike PBL, teachers in lecture-based learning use problems to test their students. Simply put, PBL is based on real life problems as trigger (Neville &Britt, 2007). When it comes to planning a lesson, teachers who use PBL as a teaching method are expected to choose two types of problems: well-structured or ill-structured problems. According to (Shin et al., 2003), prompts and students' cognitive engagement are the major factors that determine the type of problem. Notably, for well-structured problems, many detailed prompts are provided by the teacher; thus,

students are limited in terms of cognitive engagement. They will not use many of their cognitive skills to solve the given problem since it was well-structured and elaborate to begin with. This may result in having a limited number of solutions. However, in ill-structured problems, the teachers give more freedom to their students by providing less detailed prompts. Giving less detailed prompts or not giving prompts at all calls for students' high cognitive engagement in finding a possible solution (Rotgans & Schmidt, 2011). Nevertheless, it is highly recommended that teachers know their students' prior knowledge and cognitive skills so that they select the most suitable problems for them (Duch, 2001).

## **1.5.Characteristics of Problem-Based Learning**

### **1.5.1. Facilitation in Problem-Based Learning**

Many practitioners provide different definitions of facilitation in PBL classes, what is considered to be a vital characteristic in PBL. Facilitation in PBL has been a debatable subject over which researchers do not share one common definition. For instance, Savin-Baden (2003) and Ansarian and Teoh (2018) define facilitation as the process of creating learning opportunities for students instead of exposing facts. According to Barrows and Tamblyn (1980), transmitting knowledge to students has no place in PBL classes. In another definition, Knowles (1975) says that teachers' emphasis has to be on the situations students are getting through during the learning process rather than on what the teachers are doing. He also argues that teachers 'authoritative practices should be eradicated, allowing them to show their uncertainties, weaknesses, and knowledge when they act as co-learners. In spite of these definitions, facilitation still appears to be a rather vague construct.

#### **1.5.1.1.On Becoming a Facilitator**

In the majority of traditional teaching methods, teachers perform according to certain assumptions related to teacher-centered methods. The teacher is a lecturer who shows mastery of knowledge through conveying facts making him/herself the main responsible for the teaching learning process. Learners are, therefore, expected to show passiveness by merely assimilating the information presented. Additionally, the lesson plans and the set objectives are among the teachers' tasks (Lathan, n.d; Rogers & Frieberg, 1994).

However, since PBL is based on constructivist assumptions (Savin-Baden, 2003), it emphasizes the following factors: the party responsible for the learning process, the use of prior knowledge to construct new knowledge, the active construction of knowledge through experiencing and interaction (Bruning et al., 2004). Therefore, in order for teachers to be constructivist, according to Brooks and Brooks (1999), several things should take place. First, students should be exposed to different problems of their interest. Second, concepts are the basic elements upon which a lesson is based. These problems and concepts must be complex so that students ought to inquire more to solve and fully grasp them. For the sake of refinement and revision of students' understanding of concepts, teachers should ask questions and expose paradoxical information, generating activities that are challenging to students' beliefs. Furthermore, a constructivist teacher should trigger students' viewpoints and consider them valuable since he or she will use those viewpoints when developing different lessons. Finally, the teacher must assess his or her students. In constructivist classrooms, assessment is embedded in the learning process. This is to say, assessment is not considered to be distinct from every day teaching since it takes place along with the daily activities.

With this being said, the role of a facilitator in PBL, according to Savin-Baden (2003), requires more tasks than other teaching forms. Since students take more ownership of the learning

process in PBL classes, tutors ought to let go of some of their power and control. Otherwise stated, they should refrain from making decisions about what should be learnt, showing confidence in students learning by themselves even if they are not provided with handouts, which means that students have the freedom to decide and select which materials are suitable to solve a given problem (Savin-Baden, 2003; Tan, 2003).

Savin-Baden (2003) summarized the practices of an effective facilitator:

Being an effective facilitator is more than just asking a particular type of open ended question, adopting a body posture that speaks of interest and openness or providing a snug and cosy atmosphere. More is demanded of us than this. At its most basic level, the facilitator's position is one of being there to ensure that the team works effectively and that team members' learning needs are met. However, the facilitator is also there to promote the development of a team culture, to challenge, to help the balancing of task and process and to enable students to move from critical thinking to critical thought and then to critique. The position and type of power and understanding of students' perceptions and concerns are important components in what it means to be effective in the facilitation process. However, facilitation is also affected by notions of ethics and honesty in PBL teams and it is to this that we turn next (p. 60).

#### **1.5.1.2. Transitory Phase: from Lecturer to Facilitator**

Savin-Baden (2003) introduces some elements that are necessary for a transition from a lecturer to a facilitator to take place as far as PBL is concerned. These concepts are displaced academic; repositioned academic, divided into three sub themes: repositioned to maintain

control, repositioned to offer control and repositioned to relinquish; dislocated academics and commodifying academic.

In regards to displaced academic, Savin-Baden (2003) asserts that tutors in PBL classes ought to get themselves ready to cope with many disciplines rather than only one because complex problems are usually interdisciplinary. According to her four-year study about the transition from lecturer to facilitator, she reports that teachers were not at ease with being involved in disciplines in which they owe a little mastery due to their shortage of knowledge. Namely, tutors were confused and uncertain because they were far from their comfort zone.

Concerning repositioned academic, Savin-Baden (2003) says that it refers to PBL providing opportunities for both tutors and learners to reposition their roles in congruence with PBL pedagogical stances. This mainly means that tutors become enablers of learning while students become active learners. In this regard, she introduces three sub-themes. The first sub-theme is reposition to maintain control. This refers to a tutor's role changing depending on the learning process. For example, if the tutor sees students' inability to construct essential knowledge in a given topic, he or she can decide to be more directive, which implies that tutors can play the role of knowledge provider making sure learners attain the knowledge and skills required for practice.

As a second sub theme, she presents reposition to offer control. Here, she refers to the role of the tutors in PBL classes in promoting self-direct learning by offering opportunities for learners to gain ownership of the learning process. For the third sub theme, which is reposition to relinquish control, she relates it to tutors' promotion of collaborative learning with the aim of allowing the learners to optimize their team work skills and use of previous experiences. In other

words, a tutor's intervention in the learning process is intentionally stopped in order to increase learners' autonomy in practice.

When it comes to dislocated academic, Savin-Baden (2003) argues that during the transition from lecturer to facilitator, tutors were unable to let go when it came to decision-making and control of the learning process because, when they did let go, they felt disjunction. Besides, some teachers were disconnected because they felt lack of power when dealing with multiple disciplines at once due to their lack of knowledge about those disciplines. This situation caused those teachers to feel loss of status and power inside their classrooms; hence, they felt they were not valued by their students. Not only this, but these teachers also were dislocated because of their lack of trust in students to learn by themselves.

The last theme that Savin-Baden (2003) presents is commodifying academic. This theme refers to the pragmatic practices of some tutors who emphasize the accomplishment of goals rather than the process of achieving them. In other words, tutors do not try to promote collaborative work or processes of analysis, interpretation, judgment, and knowledge construction; therefore, this situation ends up with tutors focusing on students' grasp of practical knowledge, knowledge that takes place in and is validated through real life situations. In light of this theme, the role of the tutors is minimized because they perform mainly as providers of practical knowledge.

### **1.5.1.3. The Six Dimensions of Facilitation**

The six dimensions, presented by Heron (1989), discuss the main areas through which a facilitator can affect the learning process. These dimensions are planning, meaning, confronting,

feeling, structuring, and valuing. He states that facilitators can affect these areas to varying degrees.

The first dimension is planning. This, according to Heron (1989), comprises six essential areas. The first area concerns objectives that the facilitator sets, highlighting knowledge and skills attained by group members. The second area is the program. By this, Heron refers mainly to the content to be learnt, the time frame within which the objectives are accomplished, and the adopted teaching and learning methods. Concerning the third area, which is the methods, the facilitator specifies how learning will take place. Differently put, he or she chooses open learning, group work, or active learning. Concerning the fourth area, which is the resources, entails the use of human resources, such as specialists or other students, and physical resources, such as books, computers, painting materials and so on. Apropos the fifth area, the author shed light on assessment. Through assessment, the facilitator must to highlight criteria through which he or she can assess students' performances. More importantly, he or she can determine whether the students accomplished the set objectives or not. The final area is the evaluation process. The facilitator evaluates his or her performance during the learning process in addition to evaluating all the aforementioned areas of planning.

The meaning dimension, as Heron (1989) proposes, comes second. This dimension is related to students' cognition since it is related to their understanding of the learning process, the use of their experiences, and their motifs behind doing certain things. He continues highlighting the significance of both understanding and retention, arguing that information retention without understanding is meaningless mechanical learning while understanding without retaining is a temporarily blink that will not enlighten one's future ideas. Understanding followed by enough

rehearsal is, however, as he describes, as effective learning. In addition, he introduced four kinds of understanding.

The four kinds of understanding that Heron (1989) introduced are conceptual, imaginal, practical, and experiential understanding. Heron defines conceptual learning as the ability to understand information explicitly stated or evident in a statement whereas imaginal understanding is seen as the understanding of aspects expressed implicitly in symbolism that lies behind such things as shape, sound, sequence, and so on. This is more of the type of understanding required for such things as metaphors in literary work. The third type is practical understanding, which refers mainly to an individual's understanding of how to do things. Concerning the last kind, which is experiential understanding, he presents it as one's understanding during experiences that encountered him during the learning process.

The third dimension described by Heron (1989) is the confronting dimension. By this, he refers to the facilitator's role in enhancing learners' awareness towards issues like resisting and avoiding situations with which they need to cope since this resistance and/or avoidance may result in rigidity in regards to group dynamics. Such rigidity may, in turn, lead to hindrances in the learning process. This hindrance may occur as a result of different factors: educational alienation, cultural oppression, psychological defensiveness, underdevelopment, and easy street. Educational alienation refers to the situation in which group members have one kind of objective whereas cultural oppression sheds light on the role of cultural values such as competitiveness in hindering group dynamics. As for psychological defensiveness, the author defines it as the distortion of learning due to individuals' increasing anxieties in a formed group. Regarding underdevelopment, Heron (1989) sees it as state of shortage in knowledge and competence among group members, which may lead to resistance. Lastly, easy street is when group members

opt for the easy ways in dealing with convenient situations during the learning process, which is seen as lack of risk-taking.

As a fourth dimension, Heron (1989) considers the feeling dimension. In spite of it being called “feeling”, this dimension entails various emotional processes. According to him, the feeling dimension considers the facilitator’s role in managing different emotional processes within a group of students in addition to managing feelings in groups. This is to say, he introduces positive and negative emotional processes that tightly overlap with feeling. In terms of positive emotional processes, he mentions many; some of them are identification, acceptance, control, and redirection of an emotional state. In terms of negative emotional processes, however, he mentions alienation, suppression, fixation, distraction, and so on. In order to make the distinction between emotions and feelings clear, Heron (1989) proposes different definitions for both emotions and feelings. He refers to that parallelism with content of experience gained through participating and reasoning in different situations as feeling (Heron, 1992). On the other hand, he defines emotion as follows: “emotion is to do with the fulfillment or frustration of our individual needs and interests in the forms of joy, surprise, anger, grief and so on” (p. 195).

The fifth dimension that Heron (1989) sheds light on is the structuring dimension. While the planning dimension holistically covers the program with its content, time frame, activities, objectives, and so on, the structuring dimension deals with the adaptive structuring of learning plans based on facts of what is taking place inside the classrooms. In other words, the facilitator has the ability to modify any plan or learning methods previously stated in the program to make it suitable for a particular group of learners. More specifically, this dimension considers change in design of exercises and how they were supposed to be supervised. All in all, the structuring

dimension can be referred to as the facilitator's role in the management and modification of a learning plan according to the learners' needs.

Finally, in his book, Heron (1989) introduced the sixth dimension—the valuing dimension. By discussing this dimension, Heron emphasizes the facilitators' role in helping learners create an environment where they have the possibility to be autonomous and this autonomy is to be respected, valued, and honored. According to the author, doing this enables learners to express themselves authentically, comfortably talking about their true concerns and interests. For instance, a facilitator can personally intervene to show appreciation and love for a learner's values and qualities to increase his self-esteem or even to show personal love for him or her.

#### **1.5.1.4.Modes of Facilitation**

Since the starting point of every lesson is different according to the learners' needs and interests, Savin-Baden (2003) argues that this difference entails the ways of facilitation within PBL itself, yet alone the difference in facilitation between PBL and the other teaching forms. For the aforementioned dimensions of facilitation to be handled, Heron (1989) claims that a beginner facilitator can manage to work according to three different modes of facilitation. These modes are the hierarchical mode, the co-operative mode, and the autonomous mode, each of which aims to delineate the role of tutors and learners during the learning process.

Concerning the hierarchical mode, the facilitator had better intervene to a greater extent since he is, according to Heron (1989), supposed to intervene in almost every aspect of the learning process. In other words, the facilitator has a broader scope of manipulation since he or she acts like a leader in every formed group, and he/she is responsible for making decisions, setting learning objectives, managing resistant learners, and so on.

Unlike the first mode of facilitation, the co-operative mode requires less intervention from the part of the facilitator in regards to the six dimensions. Otherwise stated, the facilitator allows learners to take part in deciding over the topics to be learnt or the objectives to be accomplished. Not only this, but the facilitator also does not impose his or her perception; instead, he or she ought to share it with the learners in order to negotiate. By doing so in as much as every dimension, the facilitator would increase, to some extent, learners' self-directness (Heron, 1989).

The third mode of facilitation involves a greater ownership of the learning process from the part of the learners in a way that they become autonomous in every dimension. Hence, the facilitator's role is significantly minimized. This mode is thus called the autonomous mode of facilitation. In light of this mode, self-directed learning noticeably takes place since learners select by themselves the topics to be tackled, the course materials with which they would work, the objectives to be attained, and so on. The facilitators, in turn, have no influential role unless the learners cannot decide over a certain dimension whereby the facilitators suggest some views (Heron, 1989).

**Table 1. 1. Modes and Dimensions (adopted from Heron, 1989)**

	Planning	Meaning	Confronting	Feeling	Structuring	Valuing
Hierarchy (facilitator alone)						
Co-operation (facilitator with learners)						

Autonomy (Learners alone)						
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As Table 1.1 presents, Heron (1989) argues that in spite of the difference between the modes of facilitation, facilitators can use them interchangeably. Facilitators can use the hierarchical mode in the planning dimension, and they are able to use the autonomous mode to cope with the confronting dimension. This flexibility between the modes should take place because, according to him, using the hierarchical mode frequently will probably increase learners' passiveness and resistance, which, in turn, negatively affect self-directness, which is thought to be a principal element of learning. The repetitive use of the autonomous mode, however, may create chaotic environments due to many misunderstandings. To sum up, this mode-switching expands the facilitators' horizon, giving them different options to approach various situations.

With this being said, Savin-Baden (2003) claims that Heron's three modes pave the way for a novice facilitator to perform as such, but when it comes to PBL classrooms, these modes are not sufficient to understand the role of a facilitator since facilitation in PBL varies according to the learning context, the PBL models, and the type of curriculum. Additionally, facilitation in PBL is not viewed as something static because it is subjected to flexibility and changes during the transitory phase from a lecturer to a facilitator. This is to say, facilitation processes are influenced by teachers' experiences, time, and PBL groups (Savin-Baden, 2003; Wilkie, 2002).

Moreover, in order to prove that teachers' experiences affect the facilitation processes, Savin-Baden (2002) introduces a concept named "pedagogical stance", which she defines as teachers' and learners' perceptions of themselves in certain learning environments. This stance is

said to be acquired from experience, which is different from one person to another; thus, these stances are not seen as bounded. Savin-Baden introduces four domains that are related to pedagogical stance. The first is the reproductive pedagogy domain, which refers to tutors' perceptions of themselves as the only knowledge masters. The second is the strategic pedagogy domain. This domain entails a tutor's role of providing different learning strategies and using tactics as long as institutional recommendations and guidelines are respected. Concerning the third domain, which is the pedagogical domain, Savin-Baden (2003) says that tutors see themselves as providers of learning opportunities that aim to get objectives previously defined by learners autonomously accomplished. The last domain is named the reflective pedagogy domain, a domain in which tutors help learners understand that knowledge is contextually constructed, meaning that a learner's perception is not the only valid way of perceiving things. Savin-Baden (2002) reports that tutors' different pedagogical stances affect their ways of adopting the role of a facilitator in PBL, making facilitation processes flexible and variable.

#### **1.5.1.5.Four Approaches to Facilitation in Problem-Based Learning**

The different ways facilitation was practiced in PBL classes resulted in the emergence of four approaches. These approaches are the directive conventionalist, liberating supporter, nurturing socializer, and pragmatic enabler approach (Wilkie, 2002). In the conventionalist approach, facilitators use directive questions to initiate content since the latter is considered as the main element in this approach; hence, emphasis is not put on learning skills and critical thinking. In the case of the liberating supporter approach, facilitators choose to reduce their intervention scope allowing learners to take the lead in their learning. With this being said, the main focus of this approach is knowledge acquisition. In the case of the nurturing socializer approach, facilitators

encourage learners to use narrative frequently to make them feel valued. The fourth approach that Wilkie (2002) introduces is the pragmatic enabler approach, in which she refers to facilitators' responsiveness to contextual facts and learners' interests. This role is thought to be gained as a consequence of the burgeoning exposure and adoption of PBL. It is regarded as the only approach that really emphasizes the optimization of learning process over knowledge acquisition. In spite of this, both Savin-Baden (2003) and Wilkie (2002) highlight the uniqueness of every facilitators' styles in PBL classes, arguing that facilitator styles change over time.

### **1.5.2. Self-Directed Learning**

Knowles (1975) gives to self-directed learning the following definition: "Broadly, as a process in which individuals take the initiative with or without the help of other[s], to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes." Bull (2017) argues that despite the fact that Knowles' definition focuses on learners' responsibility on the learning process, it does not imply that the learning environment should be wholly self-directed nor should it completely lack self-direction. The author argues that there should be degrees of self-direction. Meaning, in some situations, the tutor may intervene in any aspect of the learning process whereas in other situations, learners may take the lead by controlling any element of the learning process.

Most of the elements mentioned by Knowles (1975) and Bull (2017) are present in PBL environments. According to Savin-Baden and Major (2004), PBL actively involves learners in the learning process, allowing them to evaluate problems, define learning gaps, create maps to solve different problems, use preferred materials, provide and analyze information, and find solutions to the given problems. Moreover, concerning reflection and self-evaluation, Tan (2003) claims that

learners in PBL environments are prompted to evaluate their own performances and findings. With similarity to tutors' and learners' alternative control over the learning process discussed by Bull, Savin-Baden (2002) argues that facilitators' roles in PBL processes are subjected to changes according to the context. Hiemstra (1994) reports that if learners orient their learning, it does not imply that they do it in isolation from their classmates. This means that group work may take place in self-directed learning.

### **1.5.3. Collaborative Learning**

Collaborative learning refers to two or more individuals sharing decisions and performing together during the learning process with the aim of learning something (Dillenbourg, 1999; &Panitz 1996). The existing literature suggests that the active initiation of dialogues, the social constructive creation of knowledge, the belief in the learning community as the element responsible for the learning process, and critical openness are the main critical elements of collaborative learning (Lee & Tan, 2004).

According to Lee and Tan (2004), learners' active initiation of dialogues is considered as the first element of collaborative learning since it is believed that learning is both a social act and takes place through talk. This involves learners anticipating dialogues with their classmates as well as with facilitators, allowing themselves to explore and clarify ambiguities, exchange interpretations to know differences in viewpoints, and negotiating meanings. Smith and Macgregor (1992) and Barnes (2008) argue that every learner in the learning environment has to take part in "exploratory" and "presentational" talks to better understand the material and to provide knowledge.

Providing that collaborative learning is concerned, knowledge is necessarily attained constructively and socially. This entails that providing knowledge is not the teacher's duty; however, it is the responsibility of the entire learning community. Evidently, the authoritative role of the teacher is significantly minimized since a great deal of ownership of the learning process is within the grasp of the learners (Lee & Tan, 2004).

As a fourth element, critical openness suggests that through collaborative learning, a culture of learners showing willingness to reconsider and evaluate their own perspectives and understandings should be promoted. This reconsideration of one's views may take place when learners with diverse opinions share ideas amongst themselves, when learners are exposed to evident arguments, or through self-evaluation. All these practices are undertaken by the learners with the aim of expanding knowledge (Lee & Tan, 2004; Thiessen, 1999).

In their book "Small Group Learning in the Classroom", Reid et al. (1989) claim that collaborative learning process goes through five stages: engagement, exploration, transformation, presentation, and reflection. First, the learners meet and actively engage with input provided by the facilitator. Secondly, the learners start an exploratory process through which they determine what they already know and connect their previous experiences with the information encountered; additionally, they agree on what is needed to be known. Next, the learners ought to transform knowledge. Notably, they need to organize and elaborate knowledge through discussion before synthesizing it. Afterwards, the learners are asked to present their findings while expecting feedback from the audience. Finally, the learners reflect on their performances during the group learning activities, identifying their strengths and weaknesses. More importantly, they should re-

examine what they have learnt so as to get better understanding of the newly constructed knowledge.

According to Tan (2003) “PBL provides an excellent vehicle for collaborative inquiry and learning.” (p.47) This means that collaborative learning elements are clearly present in PBL classes. Similar to collaborative learning PBL comprises the use of small groups in order to offer opportunities for learners to actively engage in group learning and collaborative inquiries (Tan, 2003). Collaborative learning sustains the contribution of every individual in the learning process; likewise, Dolmans et al. (2005) assert that in PBL environment, learners’ equal and active contribution is one of the learning process’s key features.

In addition, and in congruence with collaborative learning principles, learners in PBL classes need to make use of and develop their social and communicative skills. They also need to be aware of the significance of teamwork in understanding the problem, gathering and analyzing data, and applying knowledge to propose solutions to the problem (Lee & Tan 2004; Tan, 2003). Through group learning in PBL classes, “we make our thinking and mind visible through dialogue” (Tan, 2003, p. 151). This means that all learners ought to participate in group discussion in order to share opinions and negotiate meanings with other group members; hence, they free themselves from their limited views and broaden their horizons (Skinner et al., 2016; Tan, 2003).

Through discussion and meaning negotiation between learners with complementary skills, new knowledge, which none of them had possessed or would have brought, is constructed (Schrage, 1990). This collaborative construction would not have taken place without critical openness. Otherwise stated, when group members conduct a critical appraisal of each other’s perspectives and findings about the problem, they come up with new shared knowledge.

Additionally, in this regard, after presentation of their solutions to the problems, learners use the feedback provided by the facilitator and their classmates in order to revise their own perspectives, thus, forming new, broadened ones. Listening to others' criticism helps develop a spirit of critical openness among the learners; revising their thoughts based on the provided feedback develops reflective thinking (Lee & Tan, 2004).

All in all, according to Skinner et al. (2016) and Johnson and Johnson (2009), collaborative learning involves the use of group practices such as face-to face conversations, collaborative data collection, and meaning negotiation and group dynamics such as mutual engagement and cooperation. Similarly, according to Lee and Tan (2004), learners in PBL environments actively engage with problem scenarios and collaboratively decipher, gather, and analyze data. Moreover, they negotiate meanings throughout the learning process before proposing their solution to a given problem. Furthermore, after presenting their findings, learners go through self-evaluation and reflection.

#### **1.5.4. Self-Assessment and Reflection**

Langendyk (2006) assumes that PBL promotes the use of self-assessment. Self-assessment refers to situations where learners judge the quality of their own work. This means that learners are expected to identify what they already know about a topic and identify what they need to know. In doing so, learners are uncovering a gap in knowledge that allows them to set clear learning objectives and facilitates the process of achieving them (Duffy & Holmboe, 2006). Ansarian and Teoh (2018) claim that this assessment allows learners to identify their mistakes and weaknesses in any problem they encounter. This identification of these weaknesses and mistakes in previous

experiences leads learners to reflect on these previous experiences since reflection refers to the thinking of one's own experiences.

In PBL classes, reflection takes place in order to enhance the role of both teachers and learners. The former reflect on the appropriateness of learning situations and processes whereas the latter reflect on several things such as defining a problem and the data required for solving it, validity of the resources used to gather data, how to use them, and their performances in completing a given task in group work. Reflection helps the teachers and learners avoid making the same mistakes; hence, it betters the entire learning process in the future (Ansarian& Teoh, 2018).

### **1.6.Problem-Based Learning Taxonomy**

Barrows (1986) asserts that “The possible permutations and combinations of design variables in PBL are endless.”(p. 483) This means that there are a plethora of PBL designs formed by different combinations and alteration of PBL characteristics involved. Each design tackles diverse educational objectives for different extents. The author also says that each variety of PBL design must be evaluated considering the type of problem used, learners' self-direction, assessment methods, and the way learning and teaching takes place. In spite of the great variety in PBL designs, Barrows' taxonomy (1986) emphasizes six commonly used varieties, each of which identify the educational objectives that it can address. The taxonomy mentions six varieties (Barrows, 1986):

- 1- Lecture-based cases: In this variety, information is exposed to the learners by the teacher through lecturing. Afterwards, a case or two are being dealt with in order to show the relevance of the information. Since content is provided by the teacher, inquiries are not needed to be conducted.

- 2- Case-based lectures: In this setting, learners use their prior knowledge about the presented case histories to analyze it before any information is provided. The presented case should highlight the content to be learned.
- 3- Case method: Here a full case study is given to learners who are, then, asked to research about it and prepare for following class discussion. In this variety, there is a considerable degree of self-directed learning since they start their own inquiries. During class discussion, there is a compromise between teacher-directed learning and students-directed learning.
- 4- Modified case-based: Some information relevant to the topic is exposed. After that, the learners decide and select the ways of inquiry most suitable for them to get the required information to bridge the gap. Based on the learners' final findings, the facilitators provide the missing information.
- 5- Problem-based: In this design, facilitators use simulations of problems as a trigger for free inquiry. The facilitators guide their learners throughout the exploration of the problem to activate learners' prior knowledge in order to enable to understand the problem.
- 6- Closed loop problem-based: This is an extension of the problem-based method. The facilitator ask their learners to evaluate the resources of information that they used in the problem solving process in order to give them an opportunity to reflect upon their reasoning to better understand the material.

### **1.7.Problem-Based Learning Process**

In PBL, problems are used as a means during the learning process. In order to conduct this process, tutors should go through various steps. After deciding which type of problem to use, teachers must create a problem related to learners' real life context. Most importantly, the main

idea of the problem should revolve around what learners had been taught so as to keep them engaged and motivated (Duch et al., 2001). The following step is the creation of the scenario through which the tutor designs a problem to be exposed later to the learners. In doing so, the tutor had better keep the problem complex since easy problems are thought to be less challenging and therefore less engaging. Then, the tutor exposes the challenging problem, introducing any ambiguous terms, assignments, and timelines. After the exposition of the problem, learners form groups giving everyone a sub task so the problem is solved. The first step with which learners in the formed groups proceed is analyzing the problem, which allows them to identify what is known and what is unknown. This self-directed activity helps them activate their schemata, recognize missing elements, and understand the issue at hand to a great extent. Collaborative learning practices such as peer learning, collective investigation, and meaning negotiation take place. Put differently, since the missing elements are required, learners start the exploration of many resources with the aim of retrieving required data and discussing where and how they can find them along with discussing their credibility. This research also aims at answering previously asked questions and testing any formulated hypotheses (Genareo and Lyons, 2015; Abdullah, 1998).

Norman and Schmidt (1992) report that this part of the PBL learning process enhances the autonomous practice of constructing as well as retaining knowledge due to self-directed learning. Besides, Abdullah (1998) argues that learners better their skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing while they search for data, discuss with their group members, and report and expose their findings. Furthermore, he says learners' social skills such as meaning negotiation, questioning, and turn-taking are developed during the presentation of potential solutions to the problems.

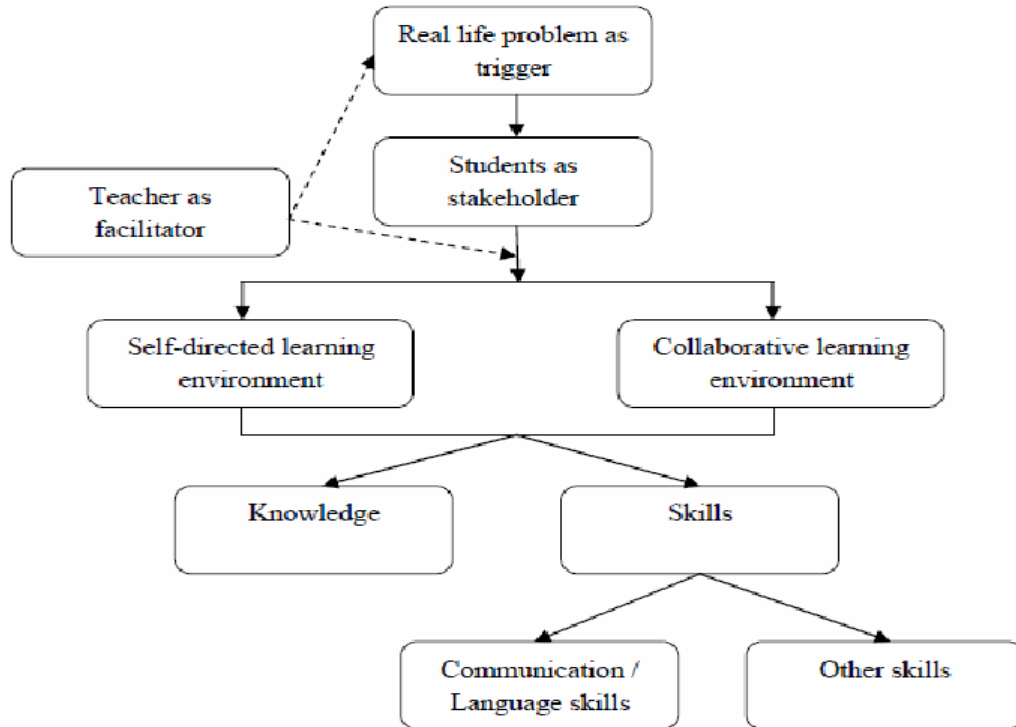


Figure 1. 1. PBL Process (adapted from Tan, 2003)

### 1.7.1. Facilitators' Tasks in the Problem-Based Learning Process

Despite the fact that the PBL approach is a learner-centered approach that gives a great deal of ownership of the learning processes to learners, it does not mean that tutors have no role during the learning process. Many researchers tried to identify some common elements and tasks that shape the role of a facilitator in PBL classes allowing andragogic learning to take place. These tasks are not standardized due to the tutors' uniqueness in approaching facilitation (Savin-Baden, 2003). Planning, climate setting, analyzing learners' needs and goal setting (Knowels, 1975), facilitating group learning, facilitating the understanding of the problem, coaching learners (Tan, 2003), designing learning plans (Knowels, 1975; Tan, 2003) prompting self-directed and collaborative learning, engaging in learning activities (Knowels, 1975), and evaluating learning

outcomes are considered as the most common tasks that a PBL facilitator should perform (Tan, 2003).

Before the learning process occurs, a facilitator ought to devise a plan and prepare a real world problem scenario making sure that it is complex and of learners' interests in order to make the situation challenging. Planning usually refers to curriculum design. Through this process, a facilitator ought to highlight the learning objectives in case negotiations with learners do not help in highlighting them. The rationale for adopting PBL had better be provided by the facilitator, identifying the scope and subjects to be tackled, which helps in setting vague objectives. In addition to that, the facilitator needs to determine a timetable that would allow him or her to get the set objectives accomplished, taking into consideration learners' abilities in performing in self-directed learning. Moreover, if learners are unable to decide over course materials to be used in solving different problems, the facilitator has the final say over that. Last but not least, the facilitator has to clearly identify the methods through which he or she will evaluate learners' performances, the objectives attainment, and the efficacy of execution of PBL, along with evaluating the facilitator's performances by other teachers or by learners (Tan, 2003).

Concerning climate setting, Knowles (1975) refers to it the process of familiarizing learners to perform in PBL environments. That is to say, the facilitator has to inculcate team work spirit in his or her learners in order to enable them to work in groups and learn from each other or share some tasks; additionally, learners need to be prepared for their self-directing role, which implies that they take the lead during the learning process. Moreover, Tan (2003) supports this idea by arguing that learners' "mindsets" should be changed in a way they do not focus only on content acquisition; in addition to this, they should focus on developing their skills because work life

requires not only knowledgeable individuals but also skillful ones. Added to that, learners need to know that they will probably encounter problems that require the use of interdisciplinary knowledge to solve them. Learners, especially those who used to study in a spoon-feeding environment, ought to be informed that these new aspects and roles may frustrate them.

In order to set learning objectives and diagnose learners' needs, facilitators had better communicate and negotiate with their learners over them. That is, learners should have a say in setting the objectives and diagnosing their needs. Since learners are expected to be responsible for their learning process, facilitators need to diagnose both their prior knowledge and needs in order to see if they are able to perform in self-directed learning. Further, this diagnosis helps facilitators design several learnable problems, set attainable objectives, and identify areas of difficulty for learners (Knowles, 1975; Tan, 2003).

Moreover, the facilitation of PBL groups is critical since PBL is based on collaborative work. In this process, facilitators are expected to encourage learners to communicate with each other with the aim of developing a learning environment where students share views and knowledge. Not only this, but learners should also assign a task for each member in the group, a chairperson, a recorder, or a reporter. The facilitator had better monitor the role of each individual in the group, making sure he or she is taking part in the learning process and checking if roles are being rotated. When exposed to the problem scenario, learners should be given sufficient time for scrutinizing every word or idea and for asking questions (Tan, 2003). Afterwards, the facilitator ought to encourage every learner to share his or her view regarding the problem and promote a culture of listening to, respecting, and valuing others views (Heron, 1989). After brainstorming, learners are asked to write a problem statement introducing their own perception of the problem

scenario. Through this, the facilitator aims to know whether problem identification is done correctly or not. Most importantly, the facilitator had better avoid answering any asked question; rather, he should respond to learners' questions using other questions in order to keep them thinking continuously (Tan, 2003)

According to Tan (2003), the aforementioned steps also facilitate understanding of any problem scenario to some extent. However, he affirms that facilitators need more practices in order to increase learners' comprehension of the problem. For instance, learners should read carefully to highlight any pertinent detail so they can identify what they already know about the given problem in order to precisely determine what they need to know to solve the problem. Additionally, avoidance of biased or limited perceptions is seen as a recommended practice. Further, the facilitator needs to communicate with the learners about things in and out of control regarding process of problem solving for the betterment of learners' performances. Questions that require deeper thinking mainly these starting with "why" and "how, should be asked by the facilitator.

Facilitating inquiry is among the tasks of tutors in PBL environments (Tan, 2003). When faced with the problems, questions like "what are your thoughts on the scenario?" and "could you explain what is meant by this concept?" should be asked. In addition to this, the facilitator ought to ask the learners to paraphrase the scenario or report the group discussion in order to help them summarize it. As long as the aim is to help the learners analyze the problem, the facilitator should ask questions similar to "what can we make out of the information?" or "do you have enough data to suggest that...?" Asking learners such questions as "why do you think this issue is important?" or "what made you include...?" helps them set their learning objectives. Moreover, the facilitator

should check the reliability and validity of the information brought by the learners as well as their rationale for selecting it (Tan, 2003).

Furthermore, when it comes to coaching, PBL mainly aims at promoting inquisitive, metacognitive, and motivational aspects through tutor learner interaction (Tan, 2003). Facilitators have to help learners design their learning plans by discussing over strategies of looking for, identifying, and accessing relevant resources (Knowels, 1975). Besides negotiating meaning and purposes, the facilitator ought to inculcate in learners the spirit of considering alternatives. This is to say, learners should be encouraged to try other plans in case their main plan fails to solve a given problem. If the learners deviate from their set goal, the facilitator must lead them back to it. Concerning metacognition, coaching in PBL environments entails developing learners' cognitive connections. In data collection, the learners encounter different sources containing a plethora of knowledge; therefore, the learners are pushed to call into play their analytical thinking skills so as to be able to select the data required to solve the problem. Moreover, the learners need to connect with their schemata and experiences, with the actual context, with others' opinions, and with any constructed facts (Tan, 2003).

As it was suggested by Knowels (1975), a facilitator has to identify the parts of a lesson for which he or she will be responsible and the part which is the learners' collective or individual responsibility. In PBL classes, according to Tan (2003), small group learning has to take place in order to solve any problem at hand. The facilitator, therefore, must make sure that practices such as learners' discussion and sharing of attitudes towards the given problem, using others' points of view to better understand the problem, and the active involvement of every student in inquisitive processes are occurring.

The final stage is evaluation. Evaluation in PBL classes entails both learners' and tutors' performance (Knowels, 1975; Tan, 2003). Concerning the learners, after presenting their solutions, facilitators are recommended to keep prompting self-directed learning by providing constructive feedback. As for the tutors, according to Tan (2003), communicative evaluation should take place as a means of checking the effectiveness of PBL implementation with the aim of improving tutors' performances. Such questions as "what are the three key things you have learnt?" "What did you learn about your dependent learning?" or "how would you apply it to another situation?" are useful for evaluating learners. Both learners and other teachers can be referred to as monitors of the tutors' application of PBL practices (Tan, 2003). Further, continuous evaluation needs to be undertaken using findings of prior evaluations, allowing the tutors to identify any weaknesses so as to propose changes over any aspect of the curriculum (Niemi & Kemmis 1999)

### **1.8.Problem-Based Learning Models**

Unlike traditional teaching methods that imply surface learning, PBL is based on deep learning strategies, which means it focuses on the application of PBL learning processes to get problems solved (Ansarian & Teoh, 2018). This process differs from one tutor to another because of the variety in tutors' pedagogical stances, resulting in the emergence of various PBL models. This is to say, practical models of PBL are thought to be based on well-established theoretical elements; however, tutors change some steps of the learning process according to their perspectives and contextual facts, making the process flexible (Savin-Baden, 2002). With this being said, the most common features among all the models are self-directed and collaborative inquiry and attempt to explore and decipher knowledge in order to solve different problems encountered. When it comes to categorizing PBL models, the literature suggests that some models are categorized according to their purpose while others are categorized according to the steps

followed for solving problems (Ansarian& Teoh, 2018; Savery& Duffy, 1994; Savin-Baden, 2003;)

### **1.8.1. Models Organized According to Purpose**

The first set of models is categorized according to their adaptation purpose. Savin-Baden (2000) suggests five models: PBL for epistemological competence, PBL for professional action, PBL for interdisciplinary understanding, PBL for transdisciplinary learning, and PBL for critical contestability. Each of these models, according to Savin-Baden (2007), can be adopted as an instructional method or as a curriculum design itself. In other words, PBL can be an aspect of a curriculum for a subject used along with other methods in order to meet certain objectives. PBL can also be used as the predominant approach when designing a curriculum.

The first model is PBL for epistemological competence of which the principal aim is to enable learners to become competent in using knowledge to solve different problems. This means that knowledge is thought to be propositional in light of this PBL model while problem scenarios are considered as a tool through which learners acquire the competence of managing knowledge in order to grasp the content included in the curriculum. Solutions of problems adopted are already known by the facilitators. The utilization of this model generally leads to having both facilitators and learners work under a reproductive pedagogy. All in all, the finality of this model is to help learners comprehend and acquire content (Savin-Baden, 2000).

The second model that Savin-Baden (2000) proposes is PBL for professional action. Unlike the first model, which is based on learning content, this model, as its name indicates, emphasizes the “know-how”. As far as this model is concerned, action is seen of great importance in the learning process. Defining what learners will be enabled to do and indicating the mechanisms that

make it possible for learners to become competent to practice are the two main concerns of this model. Learners' performance is a matter of fact since learners are expected to learn how to solve problems and apply those learnt procedures to similar real life problems. Similar to the first model, this model goes under a reproductive pedagogy since learners are considered to be competent when they are able to practice the same skills successfully to solve other problems. With this being said, the reproductive pedagogy in this model is different in a way that involves the reproduction of attitudes validated by the facilitators alongside the reproduction of knowledge and skills.

The third model, which is PBL for interdisciplinary understanding, emerges as a result of a demand for getting away from mere learning of procedural and propositional knowledge. This is to say, the know-how and /or know-what are no longer emphasized; instead, this model involves problem scenarios that aim at closing the gap between the know-how and know-what and between knowledge from different disciplines. Since there are different disciplines to explore, facilitators will opt for strategic learning in order to allow learners to learn just what is required to achieve positive outcomes so that facilitators promote interdisciplinary understanding and develop learners' meta-skills surpassing the confines between the academic milieu and the real-life workforce. In light of this PBL model, making learners aware of the contextual feature of knowledge may take place through reflective learning. If the aim is to acquire both knowledge and skills, the facilitator may adopt a reproductive pedagogy (Savin-Baden, 2000).

As a fourth model, Savin-Baden (2000) mentions PBL for transdisciplinary learning. The central purposes of this model are to enable learners to acknowledge the existence of boundaries across disciplines and make them aware of this illusory existence. Transcendence of these boundaries will probably occur; meanwhile, facilitators ought to stimulate learners to provide their

own critical stance towards knowledge. Therefore, facilitators, as long as this model is concerned, generally opt for an autonomous pedagogy in order to ensure flexibility in learning. The recognition of boundaries takes place with the aim of maintaining learners' independence within the defined boundaries.

When providing higher education is a major concern, both facilitators and learners ought to adopt the fifth model, which is PBL for critical contestability. According to the curriculum of this PBL model, learners' exposure to various types of knowledge and action is unavoidable. In addition to this, using reasoning skills and reflective learning practices, learners challenge, question, and evaluate both knowledge and actions so that learners build disciplinary comprehension. Transcending, examining, and questioning boundaries across disciplines are regarded of high value since they are the processes through which learners explore and gain credentials of understanding a discipline. Problems are designed in a way that makes them multidimensional— inciting multidimensional solutions in order to promote the idea that knowledge is contingent, contextual, and constructed. Ownership of the learning process goes to the learners, minimizing the facilitators' role and causing them to feel threatened, especially since their beliefs and knowledge are under continuous scrutiny and evaluation by the learners (Savin-Baden, 2000).

### **1.8.2. Models Organized According to Steps**

As previously stated, PBL for epistemological competence, PBL for professional action, PBL for interdisciplinary understanding, PBL for transdisciplinary learning, and PBL for critical contestability are categorized by Savin-Baden (2000) according to their purpose of adoption by institutions and facilitators. However, there are other PBL models that are categorized based on

the process followed by facilitators and learners in exposing, investigating, and solving various problem scenarios. These models are attempts to design learning processes in light of PBL. In spite of this, the percentage covering all PBL features varies from one model to another. This variety takes place mainly due to tutors' stances and the nature of disciplines in which PBL is adopted. This means that adopting PBL in ESL classrooms is not similar to using it in geography classes (Savin-Baden, 2002; Ansarian and Teoh, 2018). The following models will be tackled: Barrows' model, Hmelo-Silver' model, and PBL Language Learning model.

#### **1.8.2.1.Barrows' Model**

This model, which is thought to be the most representative regarding PBL characteristics, was introduced and adopted in medical schools. The first step is climate setting, in which learners are divided into small groups, and a facilitator is assigned to each group. Then, learners are exposed to a real life problem scenario which should fall within their interests. Added to that, facilitators have to make sure that none of the students know anything about the problem before its presentation. Sharing ideas through group discussion, learners formulate hypotheses based on prior experiences and knowledge. After conducting inquiries, the learners make it possible for themselves to identify facts pertinent to the hypotheses generated and highlight areas in which they show shortage of knowledge. By identifying their needs, the learners implicitly set their own learning objectives without the intervention of the facilitator. Afterwards, the learners are given opportunities by the facilitator to deliver their perspectives concerning the diagnosis of the problem at hand (Savery& Duffy, 1996).

Once the session ends, it is time for self-directed learning to take place. Learners need to study by themselves by collecting the required data so as to construct new knowledge.

Additionally, consultants are assigned so that the learners refer back to them when seeking knowledge. The evaluation process starts as soon as the learners meet the following session to discuss the usefulness of the data gathered and the resources. After all these steps, the learners understand the problem better, which allows them to re-examine the problem. The learners use the constructed knowledge to report their solutions to the problem. During the last phase of this process, the learners are asked to write a summary using definitions, diagrams, lists, and concepts and so on in order to clearly highlight what they have learned. After various presentations, the learners are prompted to self-evaluate so as to refine and gain knowledge. This evaluation entails three elements: self-directed learning, skills in being a part of a group, and problem solving (Savery and Duffy, 1996).

#### **1.8.2.2. Hmelo-Silver's Model**

Hmelo-Silver (2004) proposed an instructional PBL model, of which most features are similar Borrows's model. However, she emphasized the ideas from learners' collaboration as a key in gaining knowledge, solving problems and assigning the role of facilitators to teachers, whose main duty is to guide the learners throughout the PBL process. Problem creation, facts identification, hypothesis generation, learning issues identification, KA, and abstraction are thought to be the main steps of Hmelo-Silver's (2004) PBL model.

First, the facilitator creates a real life and ill-structured problem. Second, after meeting and analyzing it, the learners start deciphering and rephrasing the problem so that the facilitator can check their understanding of it. Successful rephrasing of the ill-structured problem is regarded as an important step through which the learners identify pertinent facts from the presented scenario. Besides, successful rephrasing and facts identification help changing the problem from being ill-

structured to being well-structured. Then, the learners propose possible solutions to the problems in a form of hypotheses. By doing this, learning issues, wherein students determine knowledge gaps, are clearly stated. Afterwards, the learners direct their own learning again by conducting collaborative inquiries and search for useful facts; hence, they construct new knowledge that allows them to test the generated hypotheses. As a last step, abstraction involves the learners' reflection upon the new gained information and their self-directed learning. The facilitator has to focus on improving the learning of cognitive and collaborative skills used to solve the problems since these skills are considered vital in terms of lifelong learning (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

Despite the fact that some PBL models seem to be similar in regards to the process followed to solve a problem, they differ in terms of the role of the tutor, the role of the problem exposed, and the tools used during the learning process. For instance, in Barrows' model, problem scenarios are used to gain knowledge and cognitive skills. However, in other settings, such as anchored instructions, problem scenarios are represented through narrative videos with the aim of offering opportunities for learners to apply their shared knowledge to solve the encountered problem. Concerning the role of the tutors, in Barrows' model, the tutor's tasks are to facilitate the learning process and model reasoning whereas in anchored instructions, the tutor incites learners' prior knowledge and delivers content whenever needed. This variety in adopting PBL also entails other aspects such as learners' role, the process and so on (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery & Duffy, 1996)

### **1.8.2.3. Problem-Based Learning Language Learning Model**

PBL language learning model is introduced by Ansarian and Teoh (2018). They report that it shares the same elements with Hmelo-Silver's (2004) model. In spite of this, it is believed that using PBL in language studies is more complex and different from the way it is used in other fields

because language in PBL classes is both a tool for learning the target language and an end (Larsson, 2001). Problem creation and exposition are meant to be the first steps, followed by researching, reasoning, and synthesis. The next steps are application, reapplication, and reflection. The last step of this model is known as knowledge (Ansarian and Teoh, 2018).

As far as this PBL language learning model is concerned, the facilitator's first duty is to create a problem scenario. Designing an ill-structured problem is regarded as something important in PBL environments since having an ill-structure is thought to be the distinguishing feature of PBL. The facilitator ought to design authentic problems similar to those students may encounter in real life in a way that he or she contextualizes them and they represent the culture of the target language. Whenever a problem scenario presents content that is different from learners' culture and linguistic features, the learners find it challenging. In addition, facilitators have to take into account the following aspects when designing a problem: the context, the content, the cultural aspects of the lesson, learners' research and cognitive skills, the authenticity of the questions, the effect of the learners' first language on the learning process, and the learners' role in solving the problem (Ansarian & Teoh, 2018; Legg, 2007 ).

When exposing the problem scenario, facilitators should maintain its ill structure according to learners' level. In other words, when presenting the problem scenario, facilitators had better provide details according to the learners' reasoning skills in an attempt to keep the presented problem both challenging and motivating since providing a few or too many details would probably lead to demotivated learners (Ansarian& Teoh, 2018).

As soon as exposure to and presentation of the problem take place, learners start using their cognitive skills to decipher and analyze the different parts of the problem provided. This analysis

generally enables the learners to highlight what they already know about the topic and what information is needed to be known to solve the problem at hand. Afterwards, using their research skills and various sources, learners start gathering the required data to bridge the knowledge gap. Reasoning and researching skills are not restricted only to this phase because the learners make use of them throughout the whole learning process (Ansarian & Teoh, 2018).

After collecting pertinent data, the learners, according to Ansarian and Teoh (2018), start discussing with each other with the aim of selecting more relevant data that lead them to finding a solution to the problem. Evidently, in this part of the learning process, cooperative work occurs when learners start sharing their ideas. Not only this, but the learners also start negotiating the usefulness of their collected information. This part of the PBL learning process should not end without making a final decision concerning the information that should be used to solve the problem.

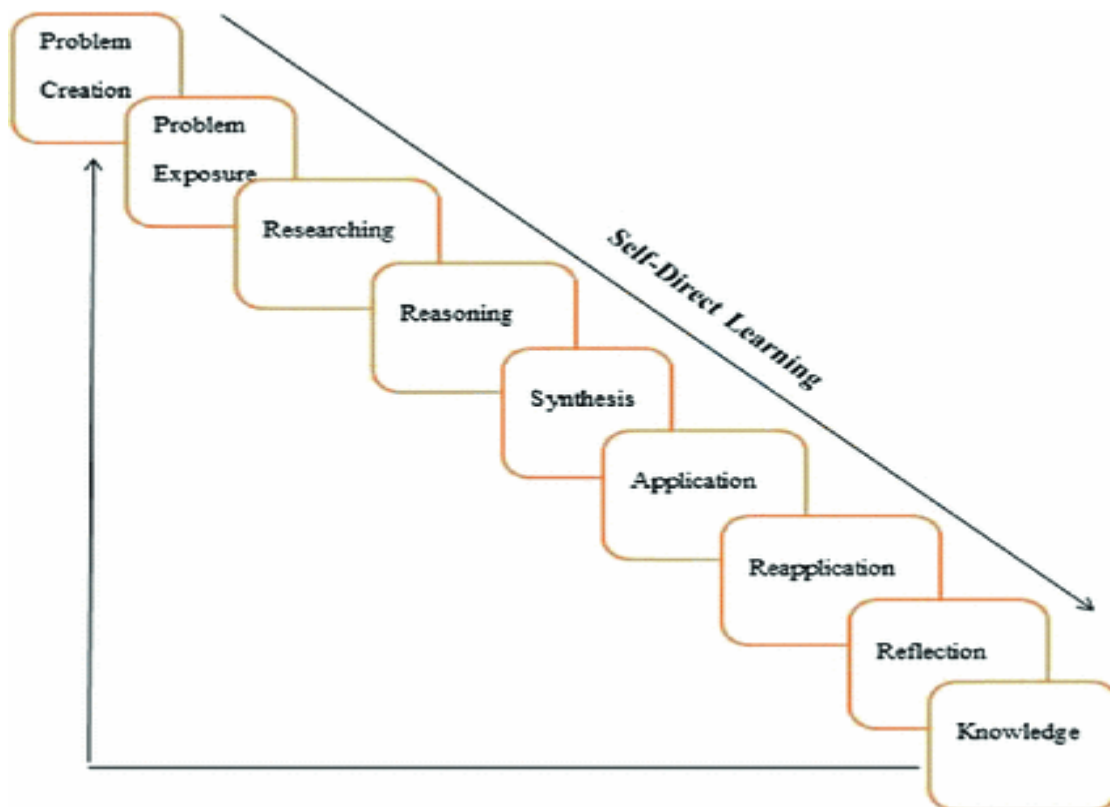
Synthesizing data comes right after searching for data and identification of pertinent information. In this phase, learners are expected to write down a list of actions to be taken in order solve the problem. Therefore, synthesis refers to putting together the selected information through discussion to make changes and propose alternative procedures to solve the problem. Before moving forward to the other stage, the learners ought to find a solution for the problem scenario (Ansarian & Teoh, 2018).

As shown in figure 1.2, the next steps are application and reapplication. In PBL classes, learners are supposed to exploit the newly learned content to present their findings through role playing, debating or discussing with other groups. However, this presentation cannot happen without learners' production. Similar to other teaching approaches, PBL processes involve

learners' production. This production is known as "application", which is thought to be a critical element of the learning process. Accordingly, application refers to the collaborative use of the constructed information to solve the problem (Ansarian & Teoh, 2018).

A facilitator should devote time to providing feedback after learners' presentations. Within this feedback, some answers may be considered as acceptable in regards to solving the problem while others may require modifications. Having modified what the facilitator indicated, learners need to present again in front of their classmates. This process, which is considered optional, is called by Ansarian and Teoh (2018) as "reapplication".

Figure 1. 2. PBL Language Learning Model (adopted from Teoh and Ansarian, 2018)



According to Figure 1.2 introduced by Ansarian and Teoh (2018), reflection is an element of PBL language learning model. In this stage of the learning process, learners are asked to think about their performance during the learning process and their presentation. In other words, they are prompted to evaluate themselves in an attempt to recognize their weaknesses so as to avoid making the same mistakes again; hence, they better their future performances. This self-evaluation may occur in a form of discussions among group members after presentations.

Ansarian and Teoh (2018) assert that “knowledge” is the concluding step of the PBL language learning model. It is seen as the final product that mirrors the learners’ deep understanding of the subject dealt with. Since PBL is based on constructivist learning assumptions, it regards construction of knowledge by the learners as the primary way of knowledge attainment. Finally, it is believed that PBL is a cyclical process (reference). This means that knowledge, which is considered as the final product of PBL process, forms the starting points of future problem scenarios; consequently, information retrieval will be enhanced when learners’ prior knowledge is activated.

### **1.9. Effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning in English Language Teaching**

The effectiveness of PBL has been investigated by many researchers in the field of teaching EFL in many countries. These investigations comprise various aspects of the English language among which are writing skills, speaking skills, reading skills, critical thinking skills, and other aspects. Facilitators and learners from higher education and secondary schools have been dealing with PBL to tackle various aspects.

The skill of writing has been targeted by many research studies in an attempt to examine the effectiveness of PBL in this regard. Othamn and Shah (2013) conducted an experimental study

trying to investigate the effect of PBL on learning course content and language development. Concerning the content, both control and experimental groups showed the same improvement; however, regarding language development, the PBL group performed better by writing richer essays and better arguments. In another study, Affandi and Sukyadi (2016) experimentally examined the effect of PBL and Project-Based Learning on EFL students' writing at the university. The study comprised two groups; one group was exposed to PBL whereas the other was exposed to Project-Based Learning. Regarding the PBL group, the authors report that learners' achievements improved; they also report that the learners find PBL interesting and that it helped them engage in the learning process, allowing them to think more critically. Furthermore, a descriptive study, conducted by Ghufron and Ermawati (2018) used a questionnaire that was distributed to 60 students in an attempt to evaluate cooperative learning and PBL. After analyzing the questionnaires, the authors assert that students think that PBL improves the following aspects: self-directed learning, problem solving skills, students' self-confidence, and exchange of knowledge among the students.

Similar to writing, speaking and listening skills have been inquired using PBL. Jiriyasin (2014) conducted an experimental study with the aim of testing the effect of PBL on students' oral communication in a private university in Bangkok. Posttest scores were much higher than those of the pretest, indicating that oral communication is more accurate and fluent after the intervention, and that learners used diverse sentence structures. In similar regards, Ansarian et al. (2016) designed a true experimental study in which they implemented PBL through cognition-based tasks to test its effectiveness on intermediate Iranian learners' speaking proficiency. The t-test results indicate that the treatment significantly optimized subjects' speaking proficiency.

Moreover, unlike writing and speaking skills, not so many researchers in EFL approached reading skills through the implementation of PBL. Lin (2017) investigated the effect of the adoption of PBL in reading classes on Taiwanese learners' reading comprehension and strategy use. To this end, the researcher, besides the use of questionnaires, designed an experimental design where the experimental group (EG) was exposed to PBL. Based on the scores gained from the reading comprehension pretest and posttest, the independent sample t-test, showed that the EG significantly outperformed the CG. This means that integrating PBL in reading classes improves learners' reading comprehension. Not only this, but the findings gained from the questionnaire also report that the learners in the EG used better strategies for identifying themes and supporting ideas.

Researchers also explored the effects of PBL on vocabulary learning. For instance, Mohammadi (2017) empirically tried to enhance vocabulary learning using PBL. He conducted an experimental study where he used problem-based tasks in order to prompt learners' cognitive and meta-cognitive skills to solve real world vocabulary tasks. Conventional vocabulary tasks, however, were used with the CG. After ten classes, the findings show that the EG scored significantly higher than the CG in vocabulary recall and vocabulary retention tests.

Furthermore, Bashith and Amin (2017) attempted to test the effect of PBL on EFL learners' critical thinking skills and learning outcomes following a quasi-experimental design. The authors used the t-test to analyze their data. The results highlight the outperformance of the EG in comparison to the CG. This means that PBL enhanced learners' critical thinking skills and learning outcomes.

### **1.10. Issues and Limitations in the Implementation of Problem-Based Learning**

Similar to any other teaching and learning approach, PBL, when adopted by itself as a learning approach, has some disadvantages. First, when teachers change their roles from a task and knowledge master to a facilitator, learners become negatively affected by this due to a lack of classroom role model. Second, learners find PBL environments less inspiring, inefficient, and demotivating since facilitators do not provide information and solve difficult situations (Davis & Harden, 1999; Wood, 2003). Pijl-Zieber (2006) criticized PBL in adult education, reporting that some learners become anxious because they get the feeling that they teach themselves and they learn nothing during the PBL learning process. According to another study conducted by Kirschner et al. (2006), analyzing the failure of PBL as a constructivist experiential approach, the authors claim that the role of the teacher as a facilitator contradicts humans' beliefs about what is needed for them to gain knowledge.

Both tutors and learners may become affected negatively in regards to role shifting. Mainly, learners' aptitude and tutors' unpreparedness to perform in PBL environments are the issues concerned when shedding light on role changes in the learning process. Concerning teachers, Kaufman and Holmes (1998) assert that teachers who used to expose knowledge to learners find the transitory phase from a teacher to facilitator very difficult. Likewise, Davis and Harden (1999) report that teachers may demonstrate shortcomings in facilitating skills. Tutors need to adjust their teaching habits according to PBL assumptions, which may take time to perform well in PBL environments. Habits like encouraging retrieval of knowledge or openly correcting learners' mistakes is recommended to be avoided since correcting learners' mistakes, for example, may hinder deep learning (Guido, 2016). Further, Savin-Baden (2003) reports that PBL gives ownership of the learning process to the learners, making them more independent, which causes

facilitators to feel some uneasiness and tension; hence, their performance may not be as it should be.

However, when it comes to the learners, aptitude is one of the main issues highlighted by researchers. In PBL environments, some learners can easily become involved in the learning process whereas others disengage owing to different factors. Learners' lack of familiarity with self-directed and collaborative learning in solving problems is one of these factors. These learners, therefore, feel overloaded and anxious upon becoming familiar with the features of PBL. Added to that, since PBL is based on activating learners' schemata to engage in the learning process and construct new knowledge, it is necessary that learners have the required prior knowledge. This means that learners with lack of prior knowledge are unable to perform appropriately in PBL learning processes (Guido, 2016; Savery & Duffy, 1996; Wood, 2003).

Additionally, owing to the focus on developing learners' problem solving skills, they probably fail to create an organized structure of knowledge. In other words, knowledge acquired in PBL is less organized compared to traditional teaching methods due to learners' different researching and reasoning skills and variety of sources. Another disadvantage in this regard is that the emphasis on developing skills may result in learners lacking breadth of knowledge; thus, they may fail to achieve high scores in different types of tests (Davis & Harden, 1999; Guido, 2016).

Moreover, another issue raised by educators is the variety of PBL models and the confusion it creates. Despite the fact that PBL emerged a few decades ago, many models exist, each of which is recommended and entails different teaching and learning practices (Newman, 2005). Furthermore, according to Savin-Baden (2003), each model is subjected to variance in regards to the way of

applying it because of tutors' pedagogical stances and experiences which, in turn, vary from a tutor to another. She also claims that each tutor facilitates the PBL learning process differently.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, the researcher has aimed to cover literature on PBL. It has been mentioned that the role of PBL has been under scrutiny in diverse disciplines after being primarily used in the medical field. As it has been stated, PBL is a teaching and learning method based on constructive assumptions of learning, especially that it accentuates active learning, learners' prior knowledge activation, and learners' self-assessment as well as it emphasizes collaborative work and facilitation of the learning process. The researcher presented PBL models and process highlighting how the different elements of PBL are put into practice in each model. The degree of integrating of PBL elements varies from each model to another. In spite of the difference among PBL models, all of them share a common ground which is the use of problem scenarios as starting points of every lesson in order to provide contextualized learning. Problems in turn vary in regards to their level of complexity and types depending on the level of the learners. Therefore, the role of the teacher in PBL settings is to prepare problem scenarios before every session, explain the problem to his/her learners, monitor and guide the learners without transmitting knowledge, and provide feedback. On the other hand, learners' role is to identify missing information required to solve the presented problems, gather data, negotiate its relevance, apply knowledge and present their findings which will be evaluated by other learners and the teacher. In the literature, PBL has proven its effectiveness in the English language classroom in spite of its disadvantages.

## **II. Chapter Two: Literature Review on Critical Reading**

### **Introduction**

The researcher, throughout this chapter, aims to provide a comprehensive review of literature on the reading skill and CR. This chapter, therefore, is divided into two sections, the first targets an overview of reading as a skill whereas the second tackles CR. In his attempt to shed light on the reading skill, the researcher starts by defining it before discussing its components, levels and models. Extensive reading and intensive reading are also explained. Reading strategies and skills are introduced and categorized according to their function. Not only this, but the researcher also elucidates how reading strategies are used in each literary genre. This first section ends with the presentation of stages of a reading lesson and reading principles.

Concerning the second section, the researcher firstly introduces and defines CR. After that, I present the theoretical framework upon which CR is based and. Principles, levels and characteristic of CR are explored. Moreover, when discussing levels of CR, the researcher accentuates CR strategies of beginner and advanced critical readers. What is more, the researcher discusses various CR strategies.

### **2.1. Reading**

#### **2.1.1. Definition of Reading:**

As the title of this study indicates, CR is a compound noun; therefore, the researcher will define reading then CR. Reading, which is considered as one of the main four language skills, has been defined by Urquhart and Weir (1998) as “the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print” (p.22). In another attempt to define reading, Clark and Silberstein (1977) assert that reading is an active process that calls readers’

cognitive abilities into play in order to understand authors' messages from printed materials. As a third definition, Rumptz (2003) describes reading as "a complex process. It involves visual acuity in discerning printed letters, identifying these letters as the components of words, and interpreting the meaning of these words" Many educators have debated over definitions similar to the ones provided above.

Smith (2004) argues that providing definitions that describe reading as the process of information extraction from pages is restraining since they do not provide insights and they limit the debate over the nature of reading. He claims that reading a novel is different from reading a text in social studies because the former integrates a reader in a colorful imaginary life setting while the latter exposes facts about a certain topic. In a slightly similar view, Grabe (2009) agrees that the concept of reading is so complex that no definition can be all-comprising. This is mainly due to the variety of processes and aims of reading. He states that reading as a comprehending process of which the aim is to understand a text, which is different from reading as an evaluative process, of which the purpose is to monitor the process of reading. Evidently, each reading process has a different purpose that makes it nearly impossible to cover the concept of reading using one definition, especially since reading is considered as a combination of different processes.

### **2.1.2. Components of Reading:**

When teaching reading to English language learners, instructors are recommended to take into account various critical components of reading. Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension are considered as the main components of reading. The first basic element is phonemic awareness. As its name implies, it is related to phonemes, which are the smallest parts of spoken language, of which the combination allows the formation

of syllables and words. Phonemic awareness, therefore, involves readers' ability to recognize all the phonemes in spoken language as well as the understanding of how words are constructed through the combination of sounds (Antunez, 2002). According to National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) (2000), phonemic awareness instruction enhances readers' performance to a great extent.

The second component of reading is phonics. Unlike phonemic awareness, of which the emphasis is on sounds, phonics' focal point is readers' understanding of the relationship between phonemes and graphemes, meaning the relationship between sounds and letters of diverse words. Readers who are skillful in phonics can easily correspond alphabetical letters to their sounds; thus, they can easily pronounce words that they have seen or have not seen them before (Antunez, 2002). "The goal is to enable learners to acquire sufficient knowledge and use of the alphabetic code so that they can make normal progress in learning to read and comprehend written language" (NICHD, 2000, p.99).

Fluency is considered as the third component of reading. Reading fluency is defined by Grabe (2009) as readers' ability "to read rapidly with ease and accuracy" (p. 291), their ability to comprehend what is being read, and their use of reading strategies. This component of reading, as the NICHD (2000) asserts, is mainly owned by skilled readers. Guided oral repeated reading helps readers develop fluency in since it gives them an opportunity to receive feedback from other, more skilled readers (NICHD, 2000). Additionally, fluency instruction positively affects "decoding, word recognition, silent-reading comprehension, and overall reading achievement."

Comprehension is believed to be another important reading component; it is critical since it is typically the main aim of any reading process. Reading comprehension is a reader's ability to

interpret text content and their ability to construct and infer meaning with the aim of making sense of what is being read. Besides phonemic awareness and phonic skills, vocabulary development is another significant component of reading. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, comprehension may not be achieved (NICHD, 2000). Vocabulary development, which entails the acquisition of word meaning, is important because it is the “primary determinant of reading comprehension.” Without knowledge of word meanings, text comprehension may not take place (Antunez, 2002).

### **2.1.3. Reading Purposes:**

Based on decisions and the surrounding setting, readers determine what, why, and how to read. Differently put, when readers take a newspaper, they may check the headlines and skim through articles to get a general idea of the text. In academic settings, readers may review some sources in order to synthesize or evaluate them, namely through opposing or comparing information from different sources. Nevertheless, connecting readers’ prior knowledge to their understanding of the main and supporting ideas rather than remembering details is a common objective in various types of reading (Grabe and Stoller, 2011). The authors suggest various purposes of reading:

- Reading for specific information: Readers scan materials at hand with the aim of finding a specific word, phrase or information.
- Reading to skim: After guessing where targeted information is located, readers move their eyes quickly over the passage in that location in order to get a general understanding of them.

- Reading to learn: This usually takes place in academic settings where readers need to grasp several facts about a certain topic. To this end, readers need to remember the learnt facts, classify them, and link them to their prior knowledge.
- Reading to critique texts: Readers' main aim is to examine diverse sources in order to critically evaluate them so that they extract and integrate information to accomplish their goal.
- Reading for general understanding: This reading aims at constructing “a general meaning representation of main ideas, and efficient coordination of many processes under very limited time constraints” (p.8) by processing words automatically and quickly.

#### **2.1.4. Levels of Reading:**

Adler and Van Doren (2014) classify different levels of reading according to their degree of complexity. These levels are:

- Elementary reading: It is the basic level for readers, wherein they show “reading readiness”, prove mastery over vocabulary, and develop their vocabulary until they become “mature”. This is the level in which they can read on their own at the simplest level.
- Inspectional reading: At this level, readers are able to get a grasp of a chapter or a segment by skimming the titles and headlines or summaries. This means that readers understand the material in a short time. This level of reading also includes “superficial reading”, which refers to the readers' ability to read a complete written work without stopping to clarify misunderstandings, though they still can understand it to some extent.

- Analytical reading: It refers to thorough reading that is done with the aim of gaining or improving better understanding of a print material in an unlimited time. Readers at this level have the ability to question the author’s messages and criticize them.
- Syntopical reading: This is the highest level of reading in which readers compare books to which they have been exposed before and relate their ideas in order to construct an analysis that any of the books may have contained.

Commenting about these levels, Adler and Van Doren (2014) argue that they are “cumulative”. In other words, according to them, lower levels of reading are included within the higher level; for instance, before doing inspectional reading, a reader must go through elementary reading.

#### **2.1.5. Levels of Reading Comprehension:**

Westwood (2001) asserts that “Reading comprehension is considered to occur at four levels of complexity” (p.21). Levels of reading comprehension are classified from the least to the most complex as follows:

- Literal level: This level refers to readers’ understanding of “basic” and “explicit” information stated in a text. For example, knowing a name of a character or where he or she lives is a sign of comprehension at the literal level.
- Inferential level: Readers who have attained this level of comprehension are able to go beyond the facts stated in a text for deeper meaning or for forming conclusions. Differently put, readers are able to read between the lines to comprehend what is not directly mentioned in a text.

- Critical level: At this level, readers evaluate different components of a written text such as accuracy, clarity, or potential biases.
- Creative level: This is the highest level any reader may reach; at this level, readers can make use of facts from previously-read books or passages to construct a new idea.

### **Reading Comprehension Process:**

Dallman (1982) asserts that no reading process can take place without comprehension. In an attempt to define reading comprehension, Kenedeou et al. (2007) state that it is a complex process that involves various skills and activities in order for a reader to interpret diverse information in a text. In addition to this, Smith (2004) argues that reading comprehension is the reader's interconnectedness of his/her surrounding world with predictions, prior knowledge, and intentions already available in his or her mind.

In order to initiate a successful reading comprehension process, "warm up" activities should be conducted. This is to say, readers' schemata related to the content of the text should be activated. The term schemata is an umbrella term that comprises readers' prior experiences, thoughts, and concepts that they recall in their first contact with the text. Whenever learners find that the presented text contains some of their prior knowledge and experiences, the reading process is generally less frustrating; hence, the learners are more motivated to interact with the text. Finally, Watkins (2017) highlights the criticality of the role of instructors in building interests in the text and activating learners' prior knowledge.

The reading comprehension process starts after decoding and recognizing every word in the text. This decoding process is facilitated by the pronunciation of words (Milan, 1986) and the use of long-term memory and prior knowledge (Smith, 2004). Whenever a reader is either unable

to decode a word or uncertain of its meaning, he or she should use the dictionary. Since reading comprehension is a sophisticated process, knowing the meaning of every word is not sufficient for the comprehension of the text; therefore, the reader's main task is to uncover the relationship between words within a text to attain the real meaning (Milan, 1986). To this end, the reader should make predictions; for instance, he/she may ask questions and guess the events likely to happen in a story. By predicting, the reader reduces ambiguity, especially since predictions allow him or her to eradicate irrelevant scenarios in advance. Since prediction refers to asking questions, answering these questions is a sign of comprehension (Smith, 2004).

Afterwards, the reader should paraphrase each sentence apart, demonstrating his or her understanding of the ideas. Albeit this practice is unlikely to take place in real life, it is considered highly practical in comprehending sophisticated ideas. Having paraphrased each idea, the reader becomes more able to summarize (Milan, 1986). Making clear distinctions between the main ideas and major details in a text, according to Pirozzi et al. (2014), is a skill of great significance to a reader since it enhances his or her comprehension of a text. The authors assert that sentences beginning with "in brief," "in short," and "in fact" occasionally introduce the main idea; however, sentences beginning with "first," "second," and "third" often introduce major details. According to (Rochester Institute of Technology, n.d), learners should possess the presented material by using its content and their prior knowledge to construct new one. Asking comprehension questions to be answered in written form is a common tool used by most instructors for assessing their learners' comprehension.

### **2.1.6. Reading Models:**

The existing literature suggests that there are two categories of reading models (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). The first category, as shown in Figure 2.1, represents models that are classified metaphorically; these models are bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models of reading (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009). On the other hand, Grabe and Stoller (2011) suggest another category named “specific models of reading”, which entails five reading models: interactive compensatory, word recognition, simple view of reading, dual coding, and psycholinguistic guessing games models.

#### **2.1.6.1. Metaphorical Models of Reading:**

Within the first category, reading models are classified metaphorically, which means they highlight the diverse processes used in order to comprehend material (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). The first model is the top-down process model. Harmer (2001) compares top-down reading to being above a forest and looking at it with the aim of getting a broad overview from the top.

Harmer (2001) states that top-down processing refers to a situation where a reader is trying to understand the general meaning of a text with the aid of the reader’s prior knowledge, which allows him to generate predictions about the content of the text. According to Grabe and Stoller (2011), during the top-down process, a reader sheds light on the places where he or she can find useful information so as to achieve his or her own goal. The authors, similar to Harmer, accentuate the role of the reader’s prior knowledge in inferencing.

On the other hand, Harmer (2001) links bottom-up reading to being in the middle of a forest examining each individual tree in order to have a general idea about the forest. Grabe and Stoller (2011) state that “the reader processes each word letter-by letter, each sentence word-by-word and

each text sentence-by-sentence in a strictly linear fashion” (p.25). In this process, readers focus on each individual word before moving upward to bigger units such as sentences and paragraphs. Afterwards, the readers relate all the components that have been treated to achieve comprehension and construct meaning from the given material (Harmer, 2001; Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009). The role of readers’ prior knowledge in this reading process is limited because there is much more reliance on information within the text (Grabe & Stoller, 2011).

When the processes and the advantages of both top-down and bottom-up models of reading are combined and integrated by a reader to construct meaning of text, the reader is adopting an interactive model of reading (Hedgecock and Ferris, 2009). In a similar view, Harmer (2001) argues that:

It is probably most useful to see acts of reading and listening as interactions between top-down and bottom-up processing. Sometimes it is the individual details that help us understand the whole; sometimes it is our overview that allows us to process the details. Without a good understanding of a reasonable proportion of the details gained through some bottom-up processing we will be unable to get any clear general picture of what the text is about (p. 201).

Grabe and Stoller (2011) illustrate how to mingle processes from top-down and bottom-up models of reading. For instance, instead of predicting the content of a text, the reader can predict the meaning of words by the aid of context clues.

#### **2.1.6.2. Specific Models of Reading:**

The first model to be discussed in this category is Compensatory Model. In an attempt to sum up its principles, Grabe and Stoller (2011) assert that in this model “(a) readers develop efficient reading processes, (b) less-automatic processes interact regularly, (c) automatic processes operate relatively independently, and (d) reading difficulties lead to increased interaction and

compensation, even among processes that would otherwise be more automatic” (p. 28). As its name indicates, the main principle in this reading model is readers’ use of compensatory strategies by making use of diverse reading processes in order to hurdle reading difficulties. For example, context clues can be used to grasp the meaning of a text or a word. In other words, whenever there are inadequacies in some reading processes, the reader compensates by using other strategies or resources.

Through their research, Seidenberg and McClelland (1989) introduced the Word Recognition Model in an attempt to depict the processes that take place to make it possible for readers to recognize words in fluent reading. This model, along with several other word recognition models, claims that information in our brains is organized in a form of “millions of bits of neuron networks” which, in turn, build larger ones that comprise certain categories of concepts or lexical items. Frequent exposure to words with similar meaning facilitates to some extent the process of reconstructing the neural network. This model is bottom-up in nature since it uses “prior input and experience” to enhance readers’ automaticity (Grabe & Stoller, 2011).

The Simple View of Reading Model, which is the third model of reading, is based on two: elements decoding and comprehension. Put differently, if a reader wants to grasp the meaning of a text, he or she must use both his/her decoding and comprehension skills. Gough et al. (1996) share the same view by saying “Skilled reading clearly requires skills in both decoding and comprehension” (p. 3). A reading comprehension score, therefore, is the aggregation of the measurements of decoding and comprehension abilities. This way, teachers of reading will be provided with reports about individual differences amongst readers concerning their reading skills (Grabe & Stoller, 2011).

The fourth model in this category is the Dual-Coding Model (Grabe & Stoller, 2011), which, according to Sadoski and Paivio (2004) is based on Dual Coding Theory. Paivio (1990) explains the Dual Coding Theory by arguing that our memories are affected by both verbal and non-verbal representations. This model, based on Sadoski (2009), suggests that reading comprehension abilities are enhanced when readers process texts both visually and verbally. Simply put, when readers have visual representations and imagery of the words they are reading, the reading comprehension process is significantly facilitated. This is not to mention the fact that this model considers language concreteness as a vital aspect because, according to Sadoski and Paivio (2004), “concrete language can referentially activate mental images as well as associatively activate mental language, whereas abstract has relatively less access to the imagery code” (p. 27). For instance, “baseball bat” can be dually encoded since the reader has the word and its image in his or her mind.

The fifth model of reading is proposed by Goodman (1967); it is called the Psycholinguistic Guessing Game Model of reading. In his research paper, Goodman (1967) refutes the old belief about reading, which considers reading as a “precise”, “exact”, and “sequential” process through which readers identify “letters, words, spelling patterns, and larger language units” (p.126). Instead, this model emphasizes the universality and repetitiveness of the reading comprehension process, which should go through the following steps: (a) Generate hypotheses, (b) take samples of surface characteristics from texts in order to (c) reject or confirm readers’ guesses using their prior knowledge and expectations about the contents of the texts (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). This is to say, readers should equalize between the use of syntactic, semantic, and graphic cues from texts in order to examine their expectations (Kenny, 2017).

## **2.1.7. Types of Reading**

### **2.1.7.1. Extensive Reading**

Extensive reading has been defined variously by numerous scholars in the field of education. For instance, Day and Bamford (1998) define it as readers' self-selected reading of a large amount of print material in order to get knowledge or for pleasure. Harmer (2001) describes it as students' reading on their own and their reading for leisure self-selected texts that are comprehensible to them. As another attempt to define extensive reading, Bamford and Day (2004) describe it as a stress-free process of reading a great deal of print material pleurably with the aim of gaining an overall understanding. When taking into account the aforementioned definitions, it can be assumed that extensive reading is based on reading a large quantity of material, learner's responsibility in choosing the material, and voluntarily reading for pleasure to get a general understanding of the content. With this being said, Hedgecock and Ferris (2009) argue that, in terms of practice, the features "voluntary" and "enjoyment" are probably "a bit idealistic".

There are some vital conditions that should be respected in order to have a successful extensive reading program. Harmer (2001) states that "If they—learners— are struggling to understand every word, they can hardly be reading for pleasure". This, according to him, implies that the first conditions are appropriacy and comprehensibility of the reading input. In addition to this, Day and Bamford (1998) note that in a successful extensive reading program, learners' exposure to a great deal of print material that covers various topics and genres is unavoidable. Moreover, learners' self-selection of materials is a must in extensive reading. Reading for pleasure and general understanding is seen as a key characteristic in successful extensive reading; thus, follow-up activities should be avoided, or minimized, after reading. Another criteria is that learners

should read individually at their own speed outside the classroom. When it comes to teachers, they should be role models by reading with their students, and they should guide them in achieving their goals.

In extensive reading, learners choose their own print materials; therefore, teachers will be dealing with diverse materials in terms of genre and topic. Using a variety of methods, teachers should assign tasks to examine and monitor their learners' reading since the teachers' aim is to motivate them to keep reading. Firstly, teachers can devote a lesson every two weeks where to asking their learners to collectively discuss the books they have read. Secondly, if learners' collective discussion does not work, teachers can choose to ask them to write reading diaries. Thirdly, learners may be asked to write reviews about the books they have read (Harmer, 2001).

#### **2.1.7.2.Intensive Reading:**

According to Aebersold and Field (1997) intensive reading is the predominant type of reading that teachers opt for in EFL classroom. The authors explain that in intensive reading “Each text is read carefully and thoroughly for maximum comprehension. Teachers provide direction and help before, sometimes during, and after reading. Students do many exercises that require them to work in depth with various selected aspects of the text” (p. 45). This connotes that each print material is “an end in itself.” Moreover, Harmer (2001) asserts that in intensive reading teachers are responsible for choosing reading inputs and directing reading lessons so as to help learners develop their receptive skills. As the above definitions imply, intensive reading is characterized by teachers' intervention throughout the reading process and learners' thorough and line-by-line analysis and understanding of print materials.

Furthermore, there are other features of intensive reading. For instance, the same text, which should be selected by teachers, should be exposed to all learners at the same time (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009). Since vocabulary issues may be time consuming, hindering the reading process, teachers should be able to cope with such situations. To this end, Harmer (2001) suggests that teachers can devote a specific time for learners to look up words by any means. He also suggests that teachers can limit the number of words in some answers given by the learners. Not only this, Hedgecock and Ferris (2009) state that all learners should be dealing with the same exercises and activities that are assigned by the teacher with the aim of assessing learners' understanding and reading efficiency. Additionally, teachers should not only adopt excerpts; instead, it is recommended that they also adopt complete works in their intensive reading activities. Moreover, the primary aim of an intensive reading lesson should be developing learners' reading skills so as to enable them to read outside the classroom.

Because teachers intervene to a great extent in intensive reading, many roles should be adopted by them. Besides creating interest in topics and increasing learners' motivation to read (Watkins, 2017), teachers ought to play the role of an organizer through which they clarify the aims of reading and simplify instructions to learners in order to attain the set aims. Learners' reading should not be interrupted by the teachers, meaning teachers should observe their learners' individual and collective performances so as to decide if more time is needed or not. Teachers should also ask the learners to provide their answers in pairs and compare them with others' answers. In this phase, it is recommended that teachers ask their learners to show exactly where in the text they found given information; as such, the learners will scrutinize forthcoming texts. Finally, whenever the learners fail to perform a task, it rests on the teachers' shoulders to intervene in order to obliterate any fuzziness (Harmer, 2001).

### **2.1.8. A Balanced Reading Program:**

Nowadays, teaching reading is based to a great extent on testing learners' comprehension, which is believed to be unconstructive in regards to the development of teaching of reading. Differently put, using an intensive-reading-only program has been argued to be a limiting strategy. Therefore, it has been stated that in order to have better L2 readers, it is recommended that teachers opt for a balanced reading program where teachers make use of both extensive and intensive reading activities (Watkins, 2017). Holding a similar view, Harmer (2001) says that "To get maximum benefit from their reading, students need to be involved in both extensive and intensive reading" (p. 210). Intensive reading classroom activities optimize mainly learners' precise comprehension. However, text comprehension may be negatively affected by lack of recognition of spelling and the retrieval of word meanings (Watkins, 2017); hence, teachers should develop fluent readers (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009) who are able to recognize unfamiliar words, morphology and syntax automatically (Smith, 2004). Automaticity in word recognition during reading is stated to facilitate the reading process since it frees up mental space, which allows more prior knowledge to be recalled by readers (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009). In order to develop fluent readers, Day and Bamford (1998) assert that a large quantity of books should be read, which means that practicing extensive reading is the easiest way to become a fluent reader. All in all, intensive reading develops accuracy of understanding while extensive reading optimizes reading fluency; therefore, a balanced reading program that makes use of both reading approaches is recommended to be adopted by educators to maximize benefits gained (Watkins, 2017).

### **2.1.9. Teaching Reading Strategies:**

Before discussing reading strategies, an explanation to highlight the difference between reading skills and strategies will be provided. Afflerbach et al. (2008) conducted a study to remove the confusion between reading strategies and reading skills; they asked some professionals in teaching reading about the difference between the two concepts and one of the professionals' answer was, "Skill is the destination, strategy is the journey"(p.365). This, besides answers of other professionals, led the authors to conclude that readers become skillful through the recurrent uses of reading strategies. This conclusion implies that reading strategies are teachable (Oxford, 2017) and "deliberate, conscious, metacognitive act" (Afflerbach et al., 2008, p. 368) that are used in order to cope with a situation where there is poor comprehension. Reading skills, on the other hand, are performed automatically and "out of awareness" (Oxford, 2013), and effortlessly (Afflerbach et al., 2008). Briefly, throughout the successful repetitive intentional practice of a reading strategy, the strategy becomes a skill that is called into play unconsciously and effortlessly (Afflerbach et al., 2008; Watkins, 2017).

Various educators distinguish between different reading strategies (Brown 2000; Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Harmer, 2001; Oxford, 2017; Watkins 2017). The first reading strategy is letting learners know the purpose of reading. Learners read efficiently when they know why they are reading and what information they are looking for. Learners should also know the objective of using any reading technique. The second strategy is prompting the decoding process through learning various rules and patterns graphemes. As a third strategy, teachers should encourage silent reading so as to ensure rapid comprehension. Nevertheless, this strategy should be avoided with beginner readers due to their shortage in vocabulary and grammar. Through this strategy, for

example, teachers can ask their intermediate or advanced learners to recognize phrases rather than separate words or ask them to ignore unimportant words or guess their meanings (Brown, 2000).

Grabe and Stoller (2011) mention various reading strategies. One strategy is planning what is to be executed in order to attain the reading objectives. Another strategy suggested by the authors is previewing. This, according to Mikulecky and Jeffries (2007), refers to quick reading that readers conduct in an attempt to know what a text, a chapter, or a book is about. This, for instance, can be done when teachers ask learners to read the first and concluding sentences of a paragraph (Mikulecky & Jeffries, 2007) or by asking learners to take glances at headings and subheadings so they have an idea about the structure of the material (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). In addition, previewing may entail vocabulary teaching through teaching the meanings of key words included in the text (Watkins, 2017). Again, the aim of this reading strategy is to enable learners to identify the topic; however, Harmer (2001) argues that identifying the topic cannot take place without activating learners' schematic knowledge.

Skimming and scanning, as Brown (2000) describes them, are probably the most “valuable” reading strategies of which learners should make use. Skimming refers to the process of reading wherein readers run their eyes quickly over a passage in order to get general comprehension of it all, ignoring specific details (Harmer, 2001). This strategy allows learners to predict the objective of texts and main ideas. One way of teaching this strategy is by allotting learners a short time to skim through a paragraph then asking them to close their books and retell what they understood (Brown, 2000).

On the other hand, scanning involves a situation where a reader moves his or her eyes quickly throughout the text looking for a specific piece of information or detail (Brown, 2000);

hence, readers ignore any unneeded detail (Harmer, 2001). This is to say, finding specific information without reading the entire passage is the main aim of scanning, especially. Accordingly, readers stop reading as soon as they locate the targeted information. Examples of activities that prompt scanning are those that ask readers to retrieve a date, a name or a definition of a concept (Brown, 2000).

When encountering a heavy load of ideas or events while reading a text, readers should maintain a connection between them. To this end, the readers should be taught how to use semantic mapping or clustering (Brown, 2000). Through this strategy, readers learn to group similar ideas or concepts forming meaningful clusters, which help them organize and manage the large amount of information. In line with this view, Mikulecky and Jeffries (2007) mention that “our brain helps us make sense of the world by sorting information into mental networks” (p. 134). By this, they mean that learners understand and remember information better when they categorize them in patterns. Additionally, they assert that writers use patterns to arrange their ideas; therefore, learners should recognize these patterns in order to read efficiently. The authors mention six common patterns of organization: “listing, sequence, compare and contrast, cause and effect, problem and solution, and extended definitions” (Mikulecky & Jeffries, 2007, p. 134).

Another strategy that should be taught is inferring. In this strategy, learners use their schematic knowledge and contextual clues to guess the meaning of words (Oxford, 2017). In line with this, Brown (2000) asserts that the inferring process may as well entail “Grammatical relationships, implied meaning, cultural reference, and content messages” (p. 309). He also recommends that teachers ask their learners to analyze vocabulary so they may infer efficiently.

By this, teachers may ask their learners to scrutinize affixes, examine roots, and consider grammatical and semantic contexts.

Moreover, Harmer (2001) discusses another reading strategy, which is text interpretation. Adopting this strategy, teachers encourage learners to go beyond literal meaning of texts so as to understand what an author is suggesting. In light of this, Brown (2000) claims that implied meanings are usually understood when “processing pragmatic information”. Moreover, summarizing is an important strategy that teachers may opt for in order to examine learners’ understanding and information retention. By summarizing, learners rewrite only key ideas of a paragraph in a reduced form using both words from the text and their own words (Mikulecky & Jeffries, 2007). Considering another strategy, Brown (2000) and Grabe and Stoller (2011) report that teachers should train their learners to establish relationships using discourse markers. This connotes that teachers should inform their learners about the significant role played by discourse markers highlighting relationships between ideas and phrases since a complete understanding of these markers boosts learners’ reading process.

Furthermore, Watkins (2017) suggests some reading strategies that teachers can adopt with the aim of making the reading process more efficient. For instance, he suggests that teachers can ask their learners about their strategy use, allowing successful readers’ strategies to be shared so that learners with poor comprehension can make use of them. Another important strategy involves teachers training their learners to use various reading strategies in combination since this is believed to be effective. In order to ensure the sharing of strategies amongst learners, Watkins (2017) recommends teachers to opt for group reading.

In an attempt to categorize reading strategies, Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) highlight three categories that reading strategies fall into. These three categories are cognitive, metacognitive, and support reading strategies. Based on Sheorey and Mokhtari's framework of 2001, Grabe and Stoller (2011) proposed a more recent categorization of reading strategies, which comprises three categories: global, monitoring, and support reading strategies. Metacognitive or monitoring reading strategies are referred to as "knowledge of strategies for processing texts, the ability to monitor comprehension, and the ability to adjust strategies as needed" (Auerbach & Paxton, 1997, pp. 240–241). However, cognitive reading strategies (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001) or global reading strategies (Grabe & Stoller, 2011) include the strategies that are used to rectify a situation (Watkins, 2017). Concerning support reading strategies, Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) describe them as the means used by readers in an attempt to assist comprehension. Another description of these strategies is provided by Watkins (2017); he describes these lists as non-exhaustive, arguing that the strategy of breaking words into roots and affixes, for example, are support strategies.

Global reading strategies are:

- Identifying purpose for reading.
- Previewing the text.
- Making and testing predictions.
- Asking and answering questions.
- Using contextual clues to guess word meanings.
- Linking schemata to text content.
- Examining texts structure.
- Inferring through connecting various parts of texts with each other.

- Identifying discourse organization.
- Visualizing what is read.
- Processing discourse relationships using discourse markers.
- Evaluating exposed ideas.

Monitoring reading strategies are:

- Monitoring comprehension.
- Identifying reading difficulties.
- Taking measures to repair misunderstandings.
- Rereading for better comprehension.
- Assessing objectives accomplishment.
- Reflecting on the learnt content.

Support reading strategies are:

- Using dictionaries and translating.
- Taking notes.
- Summarizing.
- Paraphrasing.
- Synthesizing.
- Underlining or using highlighters.
- Using graphic organizers.

Watkins (2017) describes these lists as non “exhaustive”, arguing that the strategies of breaking words into roots and affixes and sounding out words, for example, can be considered as support reading strategies. Concerning monitoring reading strategies, Sheorey and Mokhtari

(2001) mentioned an important reading strategy not mentioned in Grabe and Stoller's categorization, which is readers' evaluation of the appropriacy of the content in regards to goal achievements. Additionally, they noted that readers should select what to read. However, concerning the strategy of rereading, unlike Grabe and Stoller (2011), Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) consider it as a cognitive reading strategy.

#### **2.1.10. Text Genre and Reading Strategies:**

Research studies highlight that reading strategies instruction is genre-specific (Best et al., 2008; Botsas, 2017). Notably, different genres of texts vary in terms of degree of difficulty (McNamara et al., 2012); thus, each genre requires emphasis on specific reading strategies to facilitate the comprehension of the texts that belong to that genre. For example, Best et al. (2008) report that comprehension of narrative texts require mainly decoding strategies whereas comprehension of expository texts require prior knowledge because they are characterized by "high-density concepts and information" (Botsas, 2017, p.157). Moreover, for readers to comprehend expository texts, much attention should be paid to text structure since expository texts are believed to be more complex than narrative texts as far as text structure is concerned (Botsas, 2017). Furthermore, comprehension of expository texts needs readers to have inferential skills (Saenz & Fuchs, 2002), summarization skills, and the ability to adequately use tables and graphic organizers (Rochester Institute of Technology, n.d).

However, when it comes to teaching narrative texts, Calfee (1991) states:

What you have to do with a story is, you analyze it; you break it into parts.

You figure out the characters, how they're the same and different. And the

plot, how it begins with a problem and goes on until it is solved. Then you understand the story better, and you can even write your own (p. 178).

This quote includes teachers focusing on specific strategies so readers can comprehend narrative texts. Firstly, since one of the objectives in reading narrative texts is decorticating a story, many researchers (Dymock, 2007; Kotch & Zackman, 1995) encourage the use of story maps, also known as story grammar. Kotch and Zackman (1995) mention that story maps help learners highlight the main components of stories. It has been stated that story grammars include the setting, characters, plot, resolution, and theme (Rochester Institute of Technology, n.d; Dymock, 2007; Kotch & Zackman, 1995). Therefore, they facilitate readers' comprehension of stories, especially when clarifying their overall structure (Dymock, 2007; Kotch & Zackman, 1995). In addition, retelling stories is another strategy teachers should emphasize since it prompts readers to analyze these stories in order to report them in their own words. Prediction is also believed to be a beneficial reading strategy as far as narrative texts are concerned. Using this strategy, teachers encourage their learners to predict the content of a story based on certain clues or after reading its title (Rochester Institute of Technology, n.d).

#### **2.1.11. Stages of Reading Lessons:**

Nowadays, the predominant approach adopted in teaching reading is the intensive reading approach. This may be due to the emphasis placed on intensive reading in course books employed by teachers (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009). Thus, a routine involving three unchanging stages of reading lessons has been adopted by teachers of reading (Watkins, 2017). These stages are pre-reading, during reading, and after reading stages. As shown in Table 2.1, each stage of a reading lesson has its own objectives, reading strategies, and activities.

**Table 2. 1. The Three Stages of a Reading Lesson**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Reading strategies and activities.</b>
<b>Pre-reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Preparing learners to read and building interest in the topic.</li> <li>-Setting purposes for reading.</li> <li>- Stimulating expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Activating learners’ prior knowledge through previewing, visualizing or predicting text content.</li> <li>- Pre-teaching vocabulary, skimming, questioning, K-W-L charts, bridging the gap between the existing and new knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>During-reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Facilitating comprehension and meaning construction.</li> <li>- Monitoring learners’ comprehension during the reading process.</li> <li>-Guiding the reading process.</li> <li>- Instructing and developing reading strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reading and re-reading activities, examining the predictions set in the pre-reading stage, scanning, guessing the meaning of new words, comprehension checking tasks (multiple choice questions, true/false questions, guiding questions...), using graphic organizers, highlighting, summarizing, questioning, and annotating.</li> </ul>
<b>Post-reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Checking comprehension</li> <li>-Summarizing and elaborating text information.</li> <li>- Synthesizing and evaluating what is read</li> <li>- Providing learners with opportunities to critique the authors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Summarizing the read material, answering questions in writing, filling in K-W-L charts, using concept maps, role playing, prompting learners to give their opinions about various components of the text.</li> </ul>

In the pre-reading stage, building learners’ interest in the topic of the chosen print material is the teachers’ main objective since building interest is a key factor in activating learners’ prior

knowledge about the topic and prompting learners to generate predictions (Watkins, 2017). Activating learners' prior knowledge, according to Hedgecock and Ferris (2009), may occur through print content, an advertisement or by asking them to free-write on a particular topic or in response to a specific prompt. If this process fails, teachers should play the role of knowledge suppliers by providing learners with necessary facts in order to allow them to process the text. Additionally, ambiguous words hinder learners' comprehension; therefore, it is recommended that teachers introduce vocabulary that is necessary for general comprehension of a text. This can be done by using word and phrase recognition techniques, the concept of a definition map (Grabe & Stoller, 2011), semantic mapping, or definition matching (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009). With this being said, Watkins (2017) argues that pre-teaching vocabulary may be avoided, especially, if the teacher sees that there is no necessity in adjusting the text level.

During-reading is the second stage in an intensive reading lesson. In this stage, learners are asked to initiate their "first reading", which may take place in the pre-reading stage (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009), in order to complete a set task (Watkins, 2017) such as true/false tasks, or ambiguous or clear words (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Not only this, but the first reading is also done by the teacher or the learners with the aim of confirming or rejecting learners' predictions made in the pre-reading stage (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009). Besides this, learners start their "second reading" to find answers to other tasks (Watkins, 2017). To be able to evaluate their comprehension process, learners' performance should be monitored by the teacher since this monitoring process, according to Grabe and Stoller (2011), "should provide interesting insights into our instructions, task procedures and student responsiveness" (p. 252). As Table 2.1 highlights, one of the teachers' main objectives in this stage is to facilitate comprehension. To accomplish this objective, teachers should do various things. First, if the text is lengthy, they should divide it into sections, checking

for and ensuring learners' comprehension of each section. Second, teachers may get their learners to answer some guiding questions as they progress through the reading process. Third, completing a graphic organizer may be an effective option in helping learners extract key information in visual formats. Moreover, this stage should be an opportunity to help learners develop and practice diverse reading strategies, especially strategies that are used in academic settings, such as annotating, highlighting, and outlining (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009).

The last phase of an intensive reading lesson is post reading. The tasks of this stage should prompt learners to synthesize, evaluate, integrate, and extend the knowledge acquired from the text before applying it (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009; Rochester Institute of Technology, n.d). Nevertheless, teachers may still need to ensure learners' comprehension of the text and all of its elements (Grabe & Stoller, 2011); therefore, (Rochester Institute of Technology, n.d) states that tasks that require written answers should be planned in this phase. Additionally, according to Hedgecock and Ferris (2009), summarizing the text by extracting its main points can be another option opted for by teachers so as to ensure that learners have understood the reading material. As another aim, learners should be involved in tasks that require them to ask questions and criticize an author's ideas; notably, teachers should prompt them to do it by themselves (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009). By this, it is "extremely important" that teachers "help students to ask the right questions, to pay attention to information in a text and how it is presented, and to express their own opinions about a text in ways that are balanced, objective, and grounded" (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009, p. 186). Furthermore, with the aim of extending learners information, teachers may design productive writing tasks that are connected to the read input. Simply put, the content of the print materials can be a source of inspiration for learners to produce projects, make interviews or prepare debates.

### **2.1.12. Principles in Teaching Reading:**

In his book “How to Teach English”, Harmer (1998) introduces six principles that teachers should take into consideration when teaching reading. These principles are:

- Reading is not a passive skill: in order to ensure the success of any reading process, readers are required to comprehend word meanings, create mental images, and evaluate diverse arguments; therefore, reading is believed to be an “active occupation.”
- Ensuring learners’ engagement with the reading material: teachers are recommended to help their learners maximize their benefits from the content of the reading texts by prompting them to actively engage in both topics and designed tasks.
- Encouraging learners’ response to both language and content of texts: learners’ exposure to texts with the aim of learning language features is of great significance. However, teachers should also provide opportunities for learners to interact, personally engage with authors’ messages, and express their opinions about text content.
- Prediction is a major factor in reading: teachers should make use of the effect that prediction has on prompting readers’ active engagement with texts. For instance, teachers may ask their learners to look at a picture and then ask them to generate expectations about the topic of the text or the report they are about to read.
- Match the task to the topic: after text selection, teachers design tasks for their learners. Herein, teachers should ensure appropriacy of the designed tasks with the reading text in a way that keeps them challenging and motivating to the learners.
- Complete exploitation of reading texts: in reading lessons, it is inappropriate to have learners simply read a text and shortly afterwards ask them to proceed to doing something

else. Instead, effective teachers should maximize the utilization of all the elements included in texts.

## **2.2.Critical Reading:**

Oftentimes, texts are written with the intention of persuading readers, meaning that authors do not take neutral positions; instead, they include their ideas and beliefs in an attempt to affect readers' attitudes and lead them to adopting a certain viewpoint. "It is important, therefore, that readers are aware of how they are being positioned and that they are able to "read the subtext— to see any hidden agenda— as well as more explicitly stated messages" (Watkins, 2017, p.210).

### **2.2.1. Definition of Critical Reading:**

Many scholars in the field of English language teaching have attempted to define CR. For example, Pirozzi et al. (2014) define CR as "high-level comprehension of written material requiring interpretation and evaluation skills that enable the reader to separate important information, use inference to come to logical conclusions, distinguish between facts and opinions, and determine a writer's purpose and tone" (p. 2). The authors assert that CR also involves understanding implicit meanings through inferencing. Tierney and Pearson (1994) describe CR as an active process that implies the reader's creation of meaning through questioning, analyzing, and evaluating a text with the aid of his or her prior knowledge during the interaction between the reader and the text. In another attempt to define CR, Milan (1986) describes it as "willingness" to perform a careful reading in order to understand the author's message and "question its validity and soundness" with the aim of highlighting multiple logical fallacies, unsupported claims and assumptions, and opinions that are portrayed as facts. With this being said, Browning (2018) and Milan (1986) argue that reading critically does not imply looking for authors' mistakes or weak

arguments; however, it requires reasonable, impartial, and careful analysis and evaluation of ideas and arguments included in a text.

Moreover, CR encompasses uncovering arguments, which implies that a reader should firstly recognize what an argument is— making clear distinction between arguments and personal opinions (Carter, 2011; Milan 1986) — and identify the subject (Carter, 2011). An argument, according to Milan (1986), refers to what is being proposed by the author. Readers should read carefully because some authors hide their underlying intentions. For example, in this quote from an automobile company, “Audi. The art of engineering”, the hidden argument being portrayed is “drive an Audi”. To be able to detect such intentions, readers must distinguish between facts and opinions, knowing that a fact is provable and verified statement while an opinion is merely personal belief (Carter, 2011).

Readers can uncover arguments; nevertheless, they often cannot determine the “unstated assumptions”, which are believed to be “the foundation upon which the argument rests” (Milan, 1986, p. 173). Nearly every written piece has its hidden assumptions that can be known by scrutinizing the author’s arguments or opinions. Thus, acceptance of an argument, or rejection thereof, depends to a great extent on acceptance of its hidden assumptions. For instance, in the statement “Criminals who use guns to commit crimes should receive mandatory jail sentence”, a reader should evaluate the assumption, which is that the execution of jail sentences prevents criminals from using guns. Such assumptions should be evaluated before judging any provided arguments since the rejection of the assumption may lead to the rejection of the argument. However, for the assumption to be accepted, evidence and support in this example should be provided, otherwise, readers will be doubtful (Milan, 1986). Hence, a reader who does not accept

the assumption that jail sentences prevent criminals from using guns would reject the argument that criminals using guns should receive jail sentences. Moreover, a writer trying to convince readers to accept such an assumption would have to provide evidence of the accuracy of the assumption.

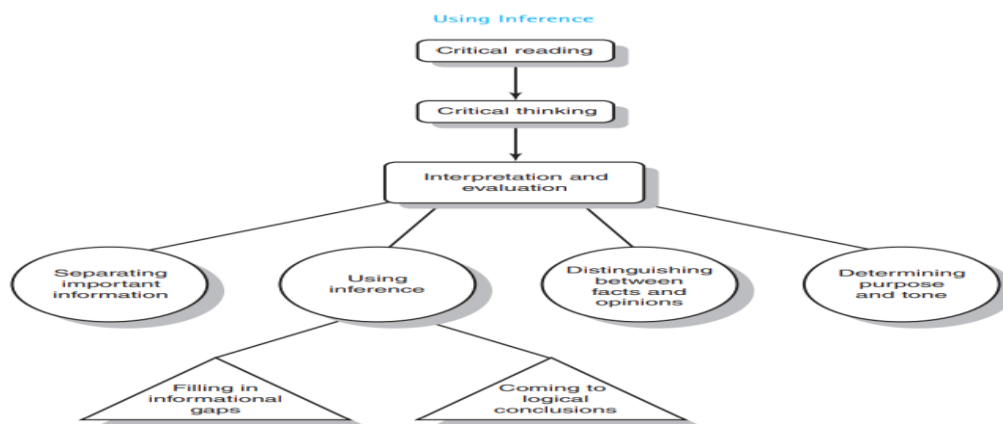
Additionally, CR has diverse uses, and it is believed to be a flexible process that changes according to its application. For example, if LT are being read critically, their in-depth textual analysis is to be provided (Browning, 2018). This analysis entails the settings, the relationship between the different elements of a novel, the themes, the figurative language, the structure of a poem, along with its images and symbolism (Rockowitz & Rockowitz, n.d). Additionally, Terrinoni (2012) states that reading LT critically involves readers' resistance of "the temptation of yielding to interpretations that come from above" (p. xi). This implies that readers should be skeptical of others' interpretations; therefore, the teachers' job should be to prompt their learners to approach authoritative interpretations critically by questioning their validity.

### **2.2.2. Theoretical Underpinnings of Critical Reading:**

Much mental activity is called for by readers in order to practice CR when approaching a text critically, as shown in Figure 2.1. For this reason it can be stated that "critical reading is dependent on critical thinking. Indeed, all of the characteristics of critical thinking can be applied to critical reading" (Pirozzi et al., 2014, p.234). In line with this assertion, DiYanni and Borst (2017) state that CR practices, such as annotating, asking questions while reading texts, prompting reflection, inference-making and so on are "foundational for critical thinking." The authors, therefore, assert that CR and critical thinking are "inextricably intertwined". The following quotation elucidates the relationship between CR and critical thinking:

When we add the adjective *critical* to the noun *thinking*, we eliminate reveries, just as we also eliminate snap judgments. We are talking about searching for hidden assumptions, noticing various facets, unraveling different strands, and evaluating what is most significant. The word *critical* comes from a Greek word, *krinein*, meaning “to separate,” “to choose”; it implies conscious, deliberate inquiry, and especially adopting a skeptical state of mind (Barnet & Bedau, 2014, p.3).

Figure 2. 1. *Using Inference* (Adopted from Pirozzi et al., 2014)



Evidently, critical thinking practices are similar to those present in CR. Similar to critical thinking, CR entails separation of essential from nonessential facts (Pirozzi et al., 2014). In addition, according to the above quotation, critical thinking involves uncovering unstated assumption, being skeptical, and evaluating facts and opinions. Likewise, as stated by Milan (1986), CR entails approaching texts with skepticism towards their content, evaluating them, and uncovering their hidden assumptions. Moreover, similar to critical thinking, which accentuates

deliberate inquiry through questioning, CR, as stated by DiYanni and Borst (2017) and Milan (1986), encompasses questioning the validity of what writers say.

### **2.2.3. Critical Thinking:**

Critical thinking is considered as a form of higher order cognition, which entails the identification of assumptions pre-set by the writer, followed by their routinization, challenging, and/or testing (Kincheloe & Weil 2004). In regards to teaching and learning, Bloom's Taxonomy is referred to when organizing critical thinking skills. It provides a hierarchy of six cognitive skills—ordered from the simplest to the most complex and from most abstract to most concrete—which facilitates the implementation of critical thinking within the classroom (Anderson & Bloom, 2001; Brown, 2004). The original taxonomy was revised in 2001 by a group of scholars and specialists, and the revised version has since been the point of reference for most research.

The lowest and simplest skill is remembering (Anderson & Bloom, 2001), through which the learner simply recalls information without further analysis or application. The second skill is understanding. In gaining an understanding of the meaning, the learner progresses one step up the hierarchy in terms of cognitive processing. Another step up the hierarchy is the skill of application, by which the learner not only recalls and understands the information, but he/she applies it within new situations or contexts. A slightly more complex skill in the hierarchy is analysis. When a learner analyzes information, not only does he/she understand and is able to apply the information independently of the context in which it was learned, but he/she becomes more critical by making connections between the different ideas included in the information learned or between the information learned and a different set of information already, maybe information already possessed by to the learner. Another step up the hierarchy is the skill of evaluation. This skill

involves the learner making an informed decision or opinion about the information rather than simply absorbing it; this could mean that the learner provides an appraisal, an argument, critique, or another form of judgment on the information. The highest skill in the hierarchy is creation. The learner goes beyond all the other skills and produces work that is his/her own (Anderson & Bloom, 2001).

#### **2.2.4. Principles of Critical Reading:**

Many scholars in English language education (Dale, 1965; DiYanni & Borst, 2017; Wallace, 2003) have attempted to set various principles of CR. The first principle that should be taken into consideration is that CR is not restricted to simply agreeing or disagreeing with text content or identifying its fallacies, biases and shortcomings. Instead, CR entails the general comprehension of a text, analysis of language and structural features, recognition of the author's creation of meaning and tone, and the use of reason to evaluate evidence. In short, readers must approach texts "responsibly" in a way they maintain openness towards the content of those texts by looking for useful information that may prompt their thinking while avoiding having "the impulse to contradict" with authors (DiYanni & Borst, 2017).

This openness towards texts, according to Wallace (2003), does not mean that an author's ideas and assumptions should be privileged. What is required from readers is to challenge any strategies adopted by the author in an attempt to position the readers and force them to see from a specific viewpoint. Secondly, Wallace (2003) mentions that CR is not concerned with developing reading skills as much as it is concerned with making readers responsive to texts. Further, CR emphasizes "communally negotiated" responses to texts rather than individual ones. These

negotiated responses, which take place through classroom discussion, are believed to be the tool by which texts are interpreted.

Thirdly, CR must not be employed before making readers aware of the obstacles that thwart them when trying to attain the truth. Namely, readers should know the fact that their previous experiences and prior knowledge, especially their common sense, shape the way they perceive things (Dale, 1965). In this regard, Wallace (2003) adds that readers find it difficult to critically approach texts that they consider as common sense; therefore, it is recommended that teachers encourage their learners to be able to change their perspective.

#### **2.2.5. Why Read Critically:**

Browning (2018) and Watkins (2017) argue that CR gives researchers opportunities to critically evaluate academic publications, which allows researchers to know if these publications contain reliable information. Watkins (2017) also argues that CR allows the reader to examine the validity of personal theories and opinions, giving him/her the chance to accept or reject the arguments included. Moreover, Browning (2018) states that CR is a helping factor in terms of optimizing learners' argumentative skills, particularly when those learners have a habit of employing CR strategies, which allows them to recognize and use the most persuasive strategies.

Having another perception about the purposes of CR, Wallace (2003) asserts that CR has linguistic, conceptual, and cultural purposes as far as the field of education is concerned. In terms of linguistic purposes, CR emphasizes the understanding of ideological meanings included in a text as well as learners' grammatical knowledge to allow them to recognize any strategies that may aim to affect their perception. The second purpose is conceptual, which refers to the improvement of readers' ability to go beyond what is explicitly stated by authors in order to develop arguments

around different texts. The third purpose of CR, although being considered cultural, does not imply the teaching of cultures. It aims, however, to help learners recognize “similarities and differences across national boundaries” (Wallace, 2003, p.43). Namely, CR allows learners to know diverse cultural perspectives.

#### **2.2.6. Critical Reading Framework:**

DiYanni and Borst (2017) present a model that contains the main steps readers go through for CR to take place. These steps are observing the text, making connections among observations, using observations and connections to make inferences, drawing conclusions based on the inferences, and taking into account possible text values. Firstly, readers should frequently practice noticing textual features and details such as text structure, sentence structure, and rhyme schemes, tone and mood of poems. Making observations is considered to be fundamental in CR, where readers notice and write down their personal remarks in order to get ready for classroom discussions so they can share their remarks and interpretations with their classmates. The authors argue that if readers notice more things in texts, they will have more things to say about them.

Secondly, establishing connections is a crucial step in CR, whereby readers make connections among textual features as well as connections between the presented text and their own lives. To illustrate this point, DiYanni and Borst (2017) used the following example:

For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings,

That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

DiYanni and Borst (2017) state that readers can make connections between “thy” and “I” or between the use of the past tense in the first line and the use of the present tense in the second

line. In terms of meaning, the readers can compare the literal meaning of kings' wealth and the metaphorical wealth of love. These connections are believed to prompt their first thinking about meanings. Moreover, texts are authenticated when readers relate them to their own experiences. For instance, when reading the two lines provided above, a reader may remember how his or her unhappy status may change as soon as he or she remembers beloved ones.

Making observations and establishing connections facilitate the process of generating inferences. Readers should be encouraged to make inferences that are grounded and supported by observed and connected details (DiYanni & Borst, 2017). Readers observe specific details in order to make general inferences; inference making, however, may occur when deduction proceeds from a general statement to a specific conclusion rather than the other way around (DiYanni & Borst, 2017; Milan, 1986). Be that as it may, readers should be aware of the fact that their inferences may be accurate, inaccurate, or only partially accurate (DiYanni & Borst, 2017).

Accordingly, noticing, establishing connections, and inference making are steps that pave the way for readers to draw conclusions. This means that their conclusions must be based on textual evidence. Since readers re-read the given texts, their conclusions and interpretations of texts may possibly change; thus, readers' interpretations and conclusions are thought to be tentative. Furthermore, readers run evaluative process whereby is better they evaluate if a given text has achieved its goal by judging the influence of the included persuasive techniques as well as by taking into account the values revealed and/or represented by the work. Differently put, readers uncover and evaluate the main idea in a text and examine the validity and reliability of the arguments provided by the author (DiYanni & Borst, 2017). For instance, when evaluating LT, readers should evaluate them while taking into account that LT aim to persuade them and that LT present a full and colorful settings where characters interact in a similar way to real life (Watkins,

2017). Finally, readers should evaluate social, religious, and cultural values included in the text and compare them to their own values. This comparison allows them to gain a better understanding of their own values. This kind of evaluation is likely to prompt readers to steer away from giving judgments since it provides them with opportunities to explore diverse elements related to their values. Readers should be informed that any evaluation is subjected to changes, therefore, it is never final (DiYanni & Borst, 2017).

### **2.2.7. Levels of Critical Reading:**

Some scholars (Barnet & Bedau, 2014; Garrigus, 2003) categorize CR into two levels. In spite of some differences between the two levels, both suggest one basic and higher in-depth level of CR. Garrigus (2003) asserts that basic CR requires a few skills. The first skill is making a clear distinction between texts that are organized topically and those organized according to the ideas. This means that the skill of recognizing patterns of organization is another basic skill of CR. Thirdly, the basic level of CR implies that readers should be able to identify the main idea of paragraphs. Additionally, beginner critical readers need to be familiar with common patterns of organizations that authors use to arrange their ideas.

Garrigus (2003) suggests that various skills are required for high-level CR to be processed. The skills mentioned are the abilities to make inferences, synthesize, evaluate, distinguish facts from opinions, understand figurative language, and recognize fallacious issues related to logic. Based on implicit ideas, readers should be able to draw inferences. Added to this, at this advanced level of CR, readers should demonstrate the ability to construct meaning by synthesizing numerous ideas. Moreover, advanced critical readers are skillful when it comes to making clear distinctions between authors' personal opinions and facts. Figurative language is also an area where high level

critical readers should show mastery. Last but not least, critical readers should have a sharp eye that allows them to perceive any erroneous and illogical elements.

On the other hand, Barnet and Bedau (2014) suggest two levels of CR— one basic and the other advanced— each of which implies that learners should demonstrate ownership of certain CR skills. In regards to a starting level of CR, readers should be able to preview; this involves readers’ ability to guess content of books by taking glance at the authors of these books or their titles. Beginning critical readers should also be able to uncover the major claim and conclusion of a text by skimming it. Skills like annotating, underlining, highlighting, summarizing, and paraphrasing should also be owned by readers in order to process basic CR. Furthermore, when drawing conclusions, authors will often make use of patterns of thoughts such as “if this...then that” or “this...therefore, that”. Beginning critical readers, in turn, should be aware of such patterns of thoughts.

The advanced level of CR proposed by Barnet and Bedau (2014) implies that readers should go “deeper into arguments”. This, in turn, means that advanced critical readers should master diverse skills. First, critical readers need to distinguish between persuasion and arguments since persuasion is a broader term that refers to an attempt to win a discussion while an argument, which is believed to be “a form of persuasion”, refers to a statement based on reason provided with the aim of representing a possible truth. In order to evaluate an argument, Barnet and Bedau (2014) and Carter (2011) suggest that a reader should firstly and accurately recognize the issue and the author’s viewpoint since it is recommended that readers know exactly what an author has said to be able to settle meaningful disputes. Second, to ensure high-level processing of CR, readers need to be able to identify the form of reasoning used by the author in trying to convince them— mainly inductive and deductive reasoning (Barnet & Bedau, 2014; Carter, 2011). In this regard, Barnet and

Bedau (2014), Carter (2011), and Milan (1986) assert that inductive reasoning refers to when specific information, cases, or proofs are used to draw a logical conclusion; deductive reasoning, however, refers to the use of a general principle to draw a conclusion. The significance of recognizing these patterns of reasoning by readers, according to Milan (1986), lies in deciding the validity of the included arguments and if these arguments are suitable for draw a logical conclusion.

Further, advanced CR requires readers' ability of uncovering unstated assumptions as well as recognizing stated ones. Not only this, but these readers should have the ability to detect "non-rational" persuasion that authors make use of by using satire, sarcasm, or irony. In addition, some authors may try to influence their readers emotionally in order to distract them and steer them away from the facts; therefore, advanced critical readers should be careful so as not to blindly accept anything authors throw at them (Barnet & Bedau, 2014).

#### **2.2.8. Characteristics of Critical Reading:**

Various characteristics have been attributed to CR; some of characteristics independent, problem centered, analytical and judgmental, and creative and imaginative reading. Firstly, CR is considered as an independent process because it involves thinking while reading; thinking, however, is seen as a self-directed and individual process. Differently put, the reader learns to use his or her own mind and perceptions to approach any input critically. Secondly, CR is believed to be problem centered. When approaching a text critically, readers focus on finding the problems, such as joblessness or child labor, as well as key concerns of each problem, meaning readers focus on the causes of problems, not only the symptoms. Thirdly, reading a work critically implies that readers identify its weaknesses and strengths and its logic and illogic, explicitly or implicitly

revealing whether the work is worth reading. This increases the belief that CR is both analytical and judgmental. Finally, imagination and creativity are also considered as characteristics of CR. Adopting CR in educational settings is a limitless experience where learners' interaction with print materials takes place while having nothing to set boundaries on their perspectives. These experiences eradicate monotonous reading since every text content or genre is approached differently (Dale, 1965).

### **2.2.9. Being a Critical Reader:**

The concept of critical reader has been addressed by many scholars. DiYanni and Borst (2017), for example, describe a critical reader as a “responsible” and “responsive” reader. The authors in this regard argue that responsible readers “hear out authors and texts, letting them have their say” (p.6). Differently put, when a reader is being responsible in reading a text critically, he/she should still be vigilant of and respectful towards the author's point of view, regardless of whether the reader agrees or disagrees with it. This can be done by uncovering the author's ideas and pattern of reasoning honestly. The responsive reader, on the other hand, ensures the occurrence of “answerable reciprocity” between him/her and the text. This reciprocity can occur through annotating to explain the text or via disputing its content using marginalia. In short, a responsible and responsive reader shows both “openness” and “resistance” to any text, which means that he/she should first fully absorb its meaning no matter what his/her attitude towards it is and then interact with it in order to judge and evaluate the author's ideas in a way that, as Dale (1965) asserts, he or she establishes a “dialog” with the writer.

In his article “The Critical Reader”, Dale (1965) also attempts to attribute some traits to a critical reader. According to him, the critical reader is self-directed, non-conformist, decisive,

sensitive to words, and transgenerational. The critical reader is believed to be self-reliant since he/she is responsible for the reading process, interpreting texts, constructing meaning, and providing his/her own judgments about a text. A reader is non-conformist in the sense that he/she is not a slave of his/her previous beliefs, meaning that he/she is always willing to change and discuss the validity and reliability of his/her own stereotyped ideas rather than treating them as sacred. Another important trait of critical readers is that they are decisive whenever they encounter different issues (Dale, 1965; Seyler, 2014). This implies that critical readers are not with and against the same idea; instead, they should choose a side and provide well-established judgments in order to prove that they are aware of their position. Moreover, critical readers usually have large vocabulary stock, and they like when authors play with words—especially when they use sarcasm or figurative language such as oxymoron. Being transgenerational is the final trait that Dale (1965) attributed to critical readers. By this, he means that critical readers should have background knowledge that allows them to “associate” with authors from diverse eras so as to analyze and evaluate their ideas.

Seyler (2014) and Harnadek (1978) also endeavored to characterize critical readers. Seyler (2014) asserts that a critical reader is a skeptical, active, open-minded reader. Critical readers demonstrate a sense of skepticism by not accepting everything he/she reads (Milan, 1986; Seyler, 2014). This skepticism, according to Milan (1986), can be demonstrated through questioning print materials; Harnadek (1978), in this regard, says that critical readers should question ambiguous things as well as meaningful ones. Additionally, skepticism, when reading critically, entails the phase of drawing conclusions wherein the critical reader considers several potential conclusions. In terms of activeness, critical readers are thought to rationally self-orient every task in the CR process such as reading, analyzing, and evaluating texts.

Moreover, open-mindedness is believed to be another trait of critical readers. This refers to their willingness to consider others' perspectives and learn from them (Seyler, 2014). Concerning this point, Harnadek (1978) argues that critical readers should reasonably agree or disagree with others, including authors. Further, critical readers are attentive and analytical (Seyler, 2014). This involves them detecting any discrepancies between the facts provided and the issue discussed in the text (Carter, 2011) and recognizing any arguments (Harnadek, 1978) or persuasive strategies used by the author.

#### **2.2.10. Critical Reading Strategies and Skills:**

- **Previewing:**

Wall and Wall (2005) assert that “Curiosity and Critical reading go hand in hand” (p.18). This curiosity is also considered by Barnet and Bedau (2014), who regarded previewing as a primary skill of which critical readers must demonstrate mastery. According to Pirozzi et al. (2014) previewing is “skimming to familiarize oneself with the material” (p.3). This familiarization takes place when readers collect information about the material (Walker et al., 1995) or when they already own some information about it. Previewing can be processed when readers ask themselves questions like, “Is the goal of reading to evaluate or to summarize a text?”, “Does the author’s name tell me anything about the text?” and “How is the material organized?” So, critical readers can learn about the content of the text by skimming through it (Barnet & Bedau, 2014). Watkins (2017) says that the aim of previewing is to create interest in the readers to ensure their affective engagement with it. Furthermore, in order to make the readers more familiar with the presented text, Watkins (2017) suggests that previewing can also be done by presenting key vocabulary of

the text to the readers, who, in turn, will brainstorm possible relationships between the presented words in an attempt to predict the text content.

- **Contextualizing:**

Readers' experience and contextual aspects— such as time and place— play a critical role in their understanding of texts and constructing meaning. Therefore, critical readers should contextualize texts by putting them in their respective historical and cultural contexts since those texts or books were written in a different time and place. This means that a critical reader is able to make clear distinctions between his/her own contemporary context and the context represented in the material at hand. This can be achieved by owning information about the time and the place where the material was published, by recognizing any unfamiliar language and concepts, and by being aware of the effect the difference between the contexts would have on understanding of the text (Axelrod & Cooper, 1999).

- **Annotating and Marginalia**

During the reading process, readers come across main theses, key supporting ideas and concepts, unclear words, and perplexing ideas; successful critical readers are active in that they interact with the material by making notes in the margin, highlighting and/or underlining the aforementioned textual elements in an attempt to make the material more comprehensible for them (Axelrod & Cooper, 1999; Barnet & Bedau, 2014; Walker et al., 1995; DiYanni & Borst, 2017). With this being said, Barnet and Bedau (2014) argue that it is not recommended to exaggerate when highlighting since highlighting large parts of the text may indicate that the reader is not putting much thought into what the main ideas are. Added to that, they recommend that readers' marginal notes should be "brief" and "selective".

Writing marginalia is another skill that critical readers should master. Unlike annotations, which are representatives of a text, writing marginalia allow readers to interact beyond the text. This means that by writing marginalia, readers tend to dispute various ideas included by authors by including marginal questions, expanding on these ideas, and/or comparing the text at hand with others they already know. By doing this, readers learn how to construct new meanings, thus making the text their own (DiYanni & Borst, 2017).

- **Summarizing and Paraphrasing:**

Pirozzi et al. (2014) define summarizing as conveying the main ideas of an author's text by using the reader's own words and expressions in a condensed way. Summarizing a text entails understanding and synthesis; hence, readers' ability to successfully write a shortened version of a passage indicates they have understood the text's main thesis and points and synthesized them well. Admittedly, summarizing should be preceded by outlining. Simply put, readers, prior to summarizing, should scrutinize the text's structure and list the main ideas of this text in a way that paves the way for them to write a good summary (Axelrod & Cooper, 1999). Hence, critical readers should master this skill in order to process CR successfully (Axelrod & Cooper, 1999; Barnett & Bedau, 2014).

On the other hand, paraphrasing, according to Barnett and Bedau (2014), refers to the reader restating or rephrasing a text "word-by-word or phrase-by-phrase" using his/her own words rather than the author's. Contrary to summarizing, paraphrasing can result in having a longer text than the original one. Both skills facilitate tracking the ideas included by the author. A paraphrase can be helpful when a teacher finds that his/her students disagree with many ideas included by the author.

- **Analyzing:**

Critical readers should have a sharp eye that allows them to connect and establish relationships among individual parts of a text after having dividing it down into parts (Walker et al., 1995). By conducting an analysis of a text, critical readers, according to Watkins (2017), are required to recognize the author’s persuasive techniques and to break texts down into viewpoints and facts. Additionally, critical readers ought to identify any particular word choice usually used by authors in order to affect their views. Other textual elements that an analysis comprises, as long as CR is concerned, are an author’s assumptions and bias and the credibility of the sources used by the author (Walker et al., 1995). In line with this view, Axelrod and Cooper (1999) assert that critical readers should acquire the skill of recognizing words or expressions that denote the author’s opposition to one side as well as expressions that demonstrate his/her favoritism towards the other side.

- **Vocabulary:**

Another area where critical readers should be skillful is vocabulary. In reference to the reading process, Carter (2011) sheds light on critical readers’ awareness towards “loaded language”, which refers to “heavily biased words and phrases” (p. 506) that are used by an author to defend or make readers agree with his/her point of view. Critical readers, in turn, are required to be acquainted with such language so as not to misunderstand the ideas included by the author or get manipulated by them.

Moreover, Carter (2011) says that critical readers need to be attentive to “high inference” language. This entails having a careful eye so that they are able to clearly distinguish between denotations and connotations as well as uncover an author’s tone and bias. While denotative

meaning refers to literal language or dictionary definitions of a word, connotative meaning of a word entails the reader's emotions and life experiences evoked by the word. For example, in the American context, the word "communism" may evoke negative associations since Americans have lived in an environment where "communism" is regarded as something "bad".

Further, an author's tone and bias, particularly in persuasive writing where the author's aim is to convince readers, should be under scrutiny by critical readers. Simply put, if an author chooses one side over the other or has a viewpoint about an issue, it means that he/she has hidden attitudes towards the issue of discussion in the way he/she expresses these attitudes; therefore, critical readers need to recognize the author's side by knowing the way his/her hidden attitudes are expressed since the author's viewpoint is straightly directed to his/her unstated attitudes (Carter, 2011).

- **Investigating Figurative Language:**

Since CR, according to Wall and Wall (2005), involves active reading, which in turn accentuates that readers should not explore only the surface level of a book, but he/she should also deal with it deeply by exploring its complexity. Hence, Axelrod and Cooper (1999) state that critical readers should be able to recognize and understand figurative language such as metaphors, similes, and symbols, especially since figurative language is believed to be the language that is used by authors to get their desired influence upon readers and is considered by Carter (2011) as an option revealing authors' "underlying emotions". Figurative language has been defined by various scholars. Scholars like Milan (1986) and Wall and Wall (2005) define it as the language used to convey sense other than the literal, meaning that according to Milan (1986), it refers to when words are put together to convey sense in "a metaphorical or imaginative way" (p. 130).

Different scholars introduce numerous figures of speech that critical readers should be able to identify and comprehend during the CR process (Axelrod & Cooper, 1999; Carter, 2011; Milan, 1986; Wall & Wall, 2005). The figures of speech upon which all the aforementioned scholars agree are metaphors and similes. In addition to similes and metaphors, Axelrod and Cooper (1999) and Wall and Wall (2005) state that critical readers should be able to deal with symbols, defining symbols as something material or an object that represents something else that is abstract. For example, a crown is typically used to symbolize a monarchy. Other figures of speech that should be understood by critical readers are personification, hyperbole (Carter, 2011) humor, wit (Wall and Wall, 2005), and oxymoron (Dale, 1965). These literary devices will be explained and illustrated in the chapter that follows.

- **Questioning:**

As Milan (1986) stated, critical readers are skeptical; this skepticism is therefore realized by asking questions when reading a passage in a sort of interaction with its author (Watkins, 2017). Having stated his/her questions, a critical reader has implicitly identified contradictory statements or missing facts and arguments, which also means they are being challenging to the author's ideas.

When it comes to questioning, Gallagher (2004) proposes three levels of questioning: literal level, interpretive level, and applied level. Firstly, critical readers should be able to ask and answer questions like what does the text/author say? In other words, critical readers must be able to deal with texts on the surface level before moving to the other levels by asking, for example, why the author has been repetitious with certain expressions. In regards to the level that follows, which is interpretive, critical readers are asked to form questions that tackle aspects related to the meaning. Sometimes, the meaning is not clear, so readers ask, "What does the author mean?" or

ask other, inferential questions. When dealing with metaphors, for instance, readers may ask interpretive questions in their search for meaning since metaphorical expressions are usually fuzzy. Having been reading on the surface level and between the lines, now it is time critical readers go deeper with the questions, meaning, they should go beyond the lines. At this level, critical readers are expected to apply the content of a passage or a story on real life situation, starting by asking a question such as “How can the themes included by the author be applied to today’s life?” Gallagher (2004) provide an example by tackling racism and injustice in “*To Kill a Mocking Bird*” and suggest that teachers should expose students to questions like, “Are racism and injustice against black men still being practiced?” This way, readers apply the relevance of the presented content to their real world.

Institute of Education (IoE) Writing Centre (n.d), as Table 2.2 illustrates, suggests a set of questions that should be asked by readers throughout the CR process. Firstly, critical readers should ask general questions about the text and questions related to the truthfulness of the arguments included by the author. Afterwards, critical readers ought to generate questions about how a text’s content would be different. Finally, questions that illicit political tendency and questions related to each reader’s experience should also be asked.

**Table 2. 2.** *Critical Reader's Questions (Institute of Education Writing Centre, n.d.)*

<p><u>Questions about the overall text</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the author’s purpose?</li> <li>- How does the author’s purpose affect his/her way of writing?</li> <li>- Why has the author decided to write about such topic?</li> </ul>
<p>Questions about the claims of the text</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the author’s assumptions?</li> <li>- What does the author argue?</li> <li>- Has the author supported his/her claims well?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are there any conflated terms?</li> <li>- Are the included claims based on authority or evidence?</li> <li>- Does the text contain any generalizations?</li> </ul>
<u>Questions about how the text could be different</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the missing ideas/concepts in the text?</li> <li>- In what way could the text be different?</li> </ul>
Political Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are any ethnic/political/religious groups/sects being marginalized by the author?</li> <li>- “Is there any exclusionary language used in the text?”</li> </ul>
Personal Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How <u>does</u> my prior knowledge/ social and cultural background interfere with my understanding of the text?</li> <li>- How is the text’s content related to my life experiences?</li> </ul>

- **Evaluation:**

Crater (2011) asserts that it is among critical readers’ requirements to understand arguments during the reading process of persuasive texts and to determine the issue being discussed as well as the author’s point of view. In this regard, Barnet and Bedau (2014) claim that when readers agree with the author upon the issue being discussed, discussing the arguments will be “fruitful”. Before evaluating an author’s arguments, Carter (2011) suggests that a critical reader should conduct a process called “mapping arguments”. By this, she means that a critical reader should firstly summarize the issue; then, he/she needs to identify the side of the issue chosen by the author, which can be found in his/her conclusion. Afterwards, since the author’s purpose is to persuade readers of his/her viewpoint or support it, he/she will often throw arguments at the readers’ faces; critical readers are, therefore, asked to recognize every stated argument.

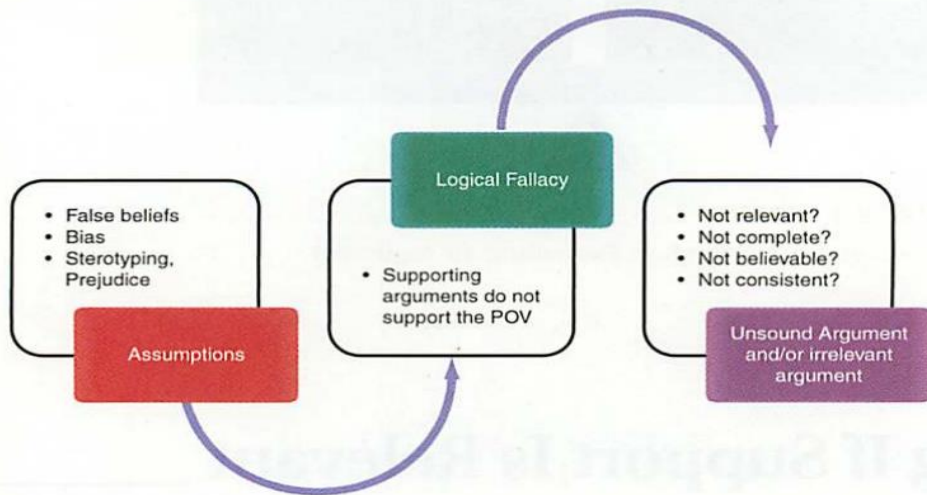
Critical readers should be familiar with all types of supporting arguments so that when they scrutinize a text, they can evaluate and decide whether the included arguments are weak or strong. First, critical readers should differentiate between facts and opinions since a fact refers to verified and proven statements or ideas while an opinion refers to the writer's own belief. For instance, statistics can be considered as a verified fact since the source from which those statistics were taken can be verified by reader. With this being said, statistical information can be used "out of their original context" and this is thought to be "misleading". Moreover, the use of statistics does not necessarily mean that the author is being objective, especially if he is using only facts that go in congruence with his/her point of view. It is true that statistics are seen as verified objective facts; however, the interpretation of statistics can possibly be biased (Carter, 2011).

Other types of arguments with which critical readers should be familiar are reasons, examples, counterarguments (Carter, 2011), expert's testimony, and common sense (Barnet and Bedau, 2014). Reasons are known as logical, fact-based, and verifiable arguments put forth by authors as support for his/her viewpoint. A counterargument, on the other hand, is believed to be an "equally valid reason" that is used as an argument of the proponents of an author's point of view. Authors introduce counterarguments to highlight errors in their proponents' reasoning. Moreover, testimony of experts refers to situations where an author quotes from "an authoritative source", an eyewitness or someone concerned with the issue being discussed. Expert's testimonies are not as strong as facts since experts may state his/her interpretation of facts; likewise, eyewitnesses may have misinterpreted the events; thus, their testimonies may be inaccurate. Last but not least, examples are considered as a type of arguments where authors illustrate their viewpoints by describing a situation or providing a "specific statement" to support his/her opinion.

Wall and Wall (2005) assert that “For any argument to be valid, the author must back it up with facts and sound ideas” (p. 33). Simply put, Axelrod and Cooper (1999) state that there are two components of an argument: a claim and a support. The claim refers to the point or the idea of which the author wants to persuade his/her readers while the support involves whatever evidence or facts are included by the author to back up his/her point of view. Thus, critical readers should have the ability to analyze the relevance and compatibility of the claim and the support. Sharing a similar view with Axelrod and Cooper (1999), Carter (2011) says that critical readers should deconstruct every argument, which means analyzing it “to see how the parts fit together” (p. 552). In addition to this, she mentions that by processing argument deconstruction, critical readers recognize whether the author used deductive or inductive reasoning to draw a conclusion. By tracking the author’s reasoning, a critical reader may facilitate highlighting any logical fallacies.

As shown in Figure 2.2, evaluation of an argument comprises the analysis of relevance, which entails examining whether the author’s viewpoint and supports are relevant, and the analysis of soundness, which targets the examination of the support’s consistency, believability, and completion. Instead of completion, Axelrod and Cooper (1999) name it appropriateness. By this, they mean that critical readers should be able to identify every logical fallacy, which is defined by Carter (2011) as “a flaw in reasoning”, such as faulty analogy, and non sequitur. More clearly, she states “A logical fallacy occurs when the premises or supporting arguments do not support the conclusion directly” (p. 554). Other logical fallacies are propaganda and card stacking. The aforementioned fallacies are believed to occur due to author’s bias, stereotyping, and/or wrong beliefs (Carter, 2011).

Figure 2. 2. *Logical Fallacies* (Adopted from Carter, 2011)



Axelrod and Cooper (1999) state an argument to be inappropriate if, for instance, it is a false analogy where an author considers two things to be similar in some aspects solely because they are similar in other aspects. Added to that, a text may contain a conclusion or a statement that does not follow, in terms of logic, the previous premises, which is known as “non sequitur.” Discussing aspects related to believability, the authors tackled generalization issues. In this respect, Carter (2011) argues that a critical reader should demonstrate awareness towards the fact that writers may mislead him/her by using what she called “glittering generalities”, where writers, when they are unable to provide “concrete arguments” in discussing an issue, use vague and abstract terms that are positive such as “honor, freedom, and happiness”, as arguments. Another element that, according to Axelrod and Cooper (1999), should be discussed when scrutinizing the authors’ believability is ‘begging the question’. This takes place when, in attempting to support his/her claim, an author provides support which, without any proof, supposes the truth of the claim. However, when it comes to “consistency”, Axelrod and Cooper (1999) mention that critical readers should be skillful in detecting any contradictory statements during the reading process.

- **Resistance of Manipulation:**

Authors of persuasive texts are believed to be manipulative, meaning they use whatever means in their grasp to try to make readers accept their viewpoints; therefore, critical readers ought to be resistant in a way that they become attentive towards writers' manipulative techniques such as propaganda, card stacking (Carter, 2011) loaded language, veiled threat, and bandwagon effect (Axelrod and Cooper, 1999). Concerning propaganda and card stacking, they have a common ground in the sense that they are biased since they include information that favors one side of an issue; however, propaganda— despite the inclusion of facts— is biased and deceptive because its aim is to “confuse” the issue for the readers. Differently put, propaganda is an “intentional error in reasoning” (p. 555) committed in order to hoodwink the readers with the aim of supporting an agenda (Carter, 2011).

Axelrod and Cooper (1999) and Carter (2011) attempt to set various propaganda manipulative devices used by authors. Appeal to authority, plain folk, personal attack, straw man fallacy, appeal to emotion (Carter, 2011), bandwagon effect, veiled threat, and faulty flattery (Axelrod and Cooper, 1999) are among the main propaganda devices authors use to manipulate their readers. Appeal to authority is the author's use of an opinion or witness of someone, who is believed to be authoritative, as undisputable evidence. Unlike appeal to authority, personal attack refers to the cases in which instead of discussing the ideas, authors target a person who holds an opposing view by stating his/her name. In regards to plain folk, which is mainly used in “political campaigns”, it is a device used by authors to convey the idea that the person about whom they are talking is behaving the same way common people do in order to raise the credibility and trustworthiness of this person. Authors may go further by misinterpreting an opponent's argument and highlighting it as the opponent's real view. Instead of emphasizing logic, an author may

attempt to manipulate his/her readers by focusing on evoking their emotions to make them accept what is being stated and this is known as appeal to emotion. Appeal to fear is a type of appeal to emotions where authors accentuate the danger of a situation to make them fear and agree with what he/she is claiming (Carter, 2011).

Furthermore, bandwagon effect refers to any leading statement through which authors aim to convince readers that an idea is true because everyone is believing it or doing it (Axelrod & Cooper, 1999), and this is what Barnet and Bedau (2014) call “common sense”. Finally, another device discussed by Axelrod and Cooper (1999) is false flattery. This involves the case where an author compliments his/her readers in order to make them accept his/her viewpoint.

### **Conclusion:**

The first section of this chapter targeted the reading skill. The multiplicity of definitions of reading demonstrates its complexity; thus, each reading process has its own objective, hence, its own definition. For example, reading to critique is different from reading to get a fact from a book. In order to explore the main components of reading, the researcher addressed the basic element phonemic awareness, and then proceeded to phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Each component paves the way for the success of the following component. In addition, four levels of reading were also explained starting from elementary reading where readers demonstrate aptitude through mastery of vocabulary. The most advanced level is syntopical reading where readers become able to relate, compare and contrast books. Concerning reading comprehension, the researcher described its process and levels. At the very basic level, readers show understanding of explicitly stated ideas before moving to the inferential level where they have to read between the lines to discover what authors implicitly want to say. The following level

of comprehension is the critical level where readers approach texts to evaluate their content. Finally, creative reading is the highest level of comprehension where learners use facts from previously approached books to produce a new one.

Concerning CR, writers usually involve their own convictions when writing books, essays or novels and even try to persuade readers; therefore, it is the readers' duty to resist the manipulation of those writers. This is can be achievable by recognizing techniques of manipulation employed by authors such as false flattery and bandwagon effect. Added to that, critical readers should be able to use various CR strategies such as questioning, annotating, analyzing, and synthesizing facts. Reading critically also implies identifying fallacies and biases. All in all, CR is thinking while reading.

### **III. Chapter Three: Literature Review on Teaching Literary Texts**

#### **Introduction**

What is literature? What are its types and genres? What characterizes fictional LT from other types? Can literature be a part of an EFL syllabus? How and why should literature be integrated? What are the approaches through which literature can be taught? What are some strategies to exploit LT? What is CR of LT? How to read literature critically? What is the relationship among PBL, CR, and LT? The researcher attempts to answer all the aforementioned questions and more throughout this chapter.

#### **3.1. Definition of Literary Texts**

Inclusive of various genres and characteristics, literature, once uttered, may incite many ideas into most hearers' minds. Scholars and educators have also attributed diverse definitions to literature. For example, Watkins (2017) claims that the closest path taken by our minds when hearing the word 'literature' leads to some reference to those 'classic' works that are culturally and socially reflective. In line with this definition, Cullar (1997) claims that common definitions include reference to "stories, poems, and plays." If, however, a theorist is asked 'what is literature?' a clear answer is not easily given. This theorist would probably take numerous factors into account. For instance, he or she may think of the varying forms and sizes of texts employed in literature and how difficult it is to provide an all-encompassing definition. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, a well-known literary work, is much similar to an autobiography whereas it is a novel. Added to that, this theorist may consider historical factors that affect the way a written work is viewed throughout different times. For example, although it is viewed as literature nowadays, Virgil's *Aeneid* was not seen as such when it was first published.

Clearly, providing a precise definition of literature is not easy; however, some scholars attempted to give broad and representative definitions. Culler (1997) explains that literature “is a speech act or textual event that elicits certain kinds of attention.” (p. 27). This attention is prompted due to the fact that literary works contain intricate language that triggers ambiguities, which are of course purposefully communicative. When it comes to English language teaching, Lazar (1993) limits the concept of ‘literature’ to mean fictional novels, plays, short stories, and poems. With the aim of providing another up to date perspective of literature in foreign language classrooms, Watkins (2017) states that literature can also comprise “modern novels, graphic novels, short stories, plays, poems, song lyrics, play scripts, screenplays, and even comics” (p.126). As a result of this debate over the definition of literature, Thornbury (2005) recapitulates the main features of literary works.

### **3.2.Characteristics of Literary Texts:**

As a result of the debate over the definition of literature, Thornbury (2005) recapitulates the main features of literary works. The author outlines the following characteristics:

- Expression of feelings through use of language.
- Conveying meaning via ironical, metaphorical, or imaginative language.
- Dependence on other texts for full comprehensibility (intertextuality of LT).
- Expose content that is greatly valued by the culture.

Authors of fiction often choose to convey messages using figurative language of which the meaning is different from the surface or literal meaning (Ribó, 2019). They accomplish this in different ways, which are represented in the use of various literary devices (Wall & Wall, 2005).

The main devices are:

**a- Metaphor:** This is a figure of speech that expresses resemblance and comparison between two things without including the words ‘like’ or ‘as’ (Wall & Wall, 2005). Example: Emily Dickinson said: “Hope is the thing with feather.”

**b- Simile:** Ribó (2019) defines it the same as a metaphor; however, he asserts that a simile includes an explicit use of words of comparison such as ‘like’ or ‘as’. Example: Shakespeare said “Her hair, like golden threads, play’d with her breath.”

**c- Personification:** According to Wall and Wall (2005), this literary device is employed through the attribution of human qualities to lifeless objects. An example is Emily Dickinson’s “Because I could not stop for Death –He kindly stopped for me.”

**d- Oxymoron:** This is a figure of speech that occurs when an author establishes connection between things that are otherwise contradictory (Ribó, 2019). Example: “O heavy lightness...”

**e- Symbolism:** It is when the representation of something, such as an idea or a concept, takes place through the inclusion of something else with which it is arbitrarily associated (Ribó, 2019). For instance, literary authors—particularly in fiction— often symbolize death with objects such as a ticking clock, especially black objects or animals like cats and crows.

**f- Irony:** This figure of speech occurs when something is said or done that is contrary to its true meaning or expectations (Ribó, 2019). Irony comes in two forms. The first is verbal irony, wherein something stated is opposite to the intended meaning. The second is situational irony, wherein an even contrary to everyone’s expectations occurs. This also comprises dramatic irony, which refers to situations, particularly in plays, where an audience knows things about a character that he or she does not know (Philipps, 2007).

**g- Hyperbole:** It is an exaggerated assertion that aims emphasize a certain point. An example of this is found in Shakespearean sonnets: “My love is as a fever, longing still.”

As another factor related to literary language, language deviance, is a common element used by authors of fiction. According to Leech (2014), literary language is believed to be creatively used by authors, thus, making it different from normal language in terms of language forms. In other words, Leech (1969) argues that authors of poetry invent new words, modify existing ones, or even change their structures and grammatical rules. Leech (1969) explains this more in-depth by highlighting eight types of language deviation in literary text:

**a- Lexical Deviation:** This refers to contexts where authors invent some vocabulary items in order to express their feelings. With this being said, this invention does not aim to put those words into frequent use. Examples of this type of deviation are pandemonium and assassination used by Milton and Shakespeare, respectively (Leech, 1969).

**b- Grammatical Deviation:** This type of deviation involves authors’ violation of word morphology or the correct arrangement of words in a sentence. Syntactically speaking, Leech (1969) highlights two subtypes of grammatical deviation: sentence surface structure and sentence deep structure. In doing so, he gave prominence to deep structure of a sentence, arguing that it is responsible for conveying an intended meaning. To illustrate, he gave the example “I does not like him”, saying that although though the deep structure is violated, the deep meaning of this sentence is still comprehensible. This being said, violation in deep structures opens the door to multiple interpretations of a sentence. Finally, Leech (1969) asserts that deep structure violation occurs due to ‘mistaken selection’ (p.45) of word class.

**c- Graphological Deviation** takes place when authors infringe writing rules and spelling. For instance, the writer Cummings is known for his deviant usage of capitalized letters and punctuation.

**d- Semantic Deviation occurs** when authors say what seems to be nonsense or odd, like in Wordsworth's 'The child is father of the man'.

**e- Dialectal Deviation:** As the name suggests, this type of deviation refers to the infringement of standard language by borrowing words that are known at a social or regional level.

**f- Deviation of Register:** Several 20<sup>th</sup> century poets are known for their divorce with old conventions related to poetic diction. Besides introducing new topics and structures, these poets used several domains such as medicine and law as sources from which they borrowed words.

**G- Deviation of Historical Period:** Leech explains that poets have "the freedom of the language" (p. 51). This implies that writers are not restricted to using contemporary language, but they can use language from any period of the English language.

### **3.3.Types of Literary Texts:**

Literature varies in terms of form; therefore, scholars have aimed at categorizing it into genres, which refer to 'literary species' of a text. According to Wall and Wall (2005), literature can be categorized into two main genres: 1) fiction, which refers to imaginary events or narratives, and 2) non-fiction, which are texts based on factual information or events. Each of the two genres contains unique subgenres. Fictional LT include prose fiction, poetry, and drama. Prose fiction refers mainly to stories that are written in a form of novel, novella, or short story. The most lengthy written fictional prose work is known as novel, while novella, though shorter

than a novel, is a lengthy narrative compared to short stories, which are believed to be short narratives containing no more than 10,000 words.

The second subgenre of fiction, poetry, can be described as the abundant usage of figures of speech and language in aim of persuading (Culler, 1997). Wall and Wall (2005) describe poetry as the inventive and rhythmic use of language that unfurls pleasure. In terms of content, poetry involves several types such as dramatic, lyric, epic, prose poetry (Wall & Wall, 2005) and Sonnet, Elegy, Ode, and Villanelle (Jago et al., 2011). Here are the definitions of some types of poetry:

- **Lyric:** It is a poem through which a poet expresses his/her feelings or personal thoughts making the poem non-narrative (Wall and Wall, 2005).
- **Elegy:** Written mainly to express grief, an elegy is a poem in commemoration of a dead person (Wall and Wall, 2005).
- **Epic:** This is narrative poem addressing heroic deeds of a 'quasi-divine' person whose homeland depends on him/her to be saved (Wall and Wall, 2005).
- **Sonnet:** Commonly, it is a 14-line poem targeting, essentially, the topic of love. Other topics concerned by sonnets are parodies, wars, and protests; therefore, sonnets are found to be the prevalent form of poems (Jago et al., 2011).

The last type of fictional LT is drama. Similar to novels and short stories, drama consists of a narrative or plot; however, drama, being made for plays and films, includes physically acting those stories in front of an audience on stage (Wall & Wall, 2005). It has diverse types, each with its purpose and characteristics. Comedy is the first type of drama, of which the purpose is usually to make an audience laugh, which means that comedies this type of drama usually exhibits happy

endings to the story. The second type of drama, tragedy, leads to an exposure to painful events that cause sorrow to the audience or readers, often with the demise of protagonists. As a further type of drama comes melodrama. This type is well-known for its use of hyperboles, making this type appealing to the emotions of the audience through exaggerating performances (Literary Devices Editors, 2013).

### **Nonfiction:**

According to Wall and Wall (2005), nonfiction refers to those texts whose primary aim is to expose factual information. Unlike fiction, which is 'expressive', nonfiction is usually as informative in nature (Thornbury, 2005). When an author writes a book informing readers about someone's life, they write a biography; however, if someone wants to inform readers about his or her own life, he or she writes an autobiography. Both biographies and autobiographies report true stories that had taken place in someone's life, so they are informative. The second type of nonfiction, essay, refers mostly to a work through which authors express their arguments or views about different topics in various fields. An example is journalism which involves texts whose aim is to report events that are currently taking place (Wall & Wall, 2005).

### **3.4. The Rationale of Using Literary Texts in the EFL Classroom:**

Exposure to different LT in EFL classes is not without consequences, especially since they are of varying forms and content (Thornbury, 2005). The role of literature in English teaching has been closely and critically examined. Today, it is well-established that the use of literature in the language classroom has become immensely beneficial. It is considered to be vital for numerous reasons, from cultural enrichment (Collie & Slater, 1987; Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009; Thornbury, 2005) and language development (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009; Lazar, 1993) to

authentic language exposure (Brumfit & Carter, 1986; Thornbury, 2005), and motivation (Lazar, 1993).

According to Thornbury (2005), the first benefit is cultural enrichment acquired from reading literature. It has been well-established that language and culture are inextricably linked. That is, language is the carrier of cultural messages, and literature represents aspects of the culture of its speakers. For many language learners, an ideal way to increase their understanding of verbal or nonverbal aspects of communication in the native country is just not probable. For such learners, literary works, such as novels, plays, short stories, etc. facilitate understanding of how communication takes place in that country. Though the world of a novel, play, or short story is imaginary (Wall & Wall, 2005) and the involved plots and themes are both everlasting and universal (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009), it presents a full and colorful setting in which characters from many social or regional backgrounds can be described. A reader can discover the way the characters in such literary works see the world outside (i.e. their thoughts, feelings, customs, traditions, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave in different settings) (Collie & Salter, 1987). This colorful created world can quickly help the foreign learner to feel for the elements that shape the real society.

Both Lazar (1993) and Thornbury (2005) highlight the language enrichment as the second advantage of implementing LT to teach the English language. As a loaded input, Collie and Slater (1987) assert that literature ensures learners' exposure to a wide range of lexical or syntactic items in spite of the fact that some features of LT, according to Lazar (1993) are 'deviant'. Collie and Slater (1987) also state that students become familiar with many features of the written language, "reading a substantial and contextualized body of text." They learn about

the syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas (Collie and Slater, 1987), which develop and enrich their own awareness and acquisition (Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009; Lazar, 1993; Thornbury, 2005). Thus, they improve their communicative (Widdowson, 1975) and cultural competence in the authentic richness, naturalness of the authentic texts (Thornbury, 2005).

The third reason, according to Brumfit and Carter (1986) and Thornbury (2005), considers the natural and meaningful application of language in literature. In recent years, the role of literature as a basic component and source of authentic texts of the language curriculum has been gaining momentum. Collie and Slater (1987) argue that authentic samples of language in real-life contexts (i.e. travel timetables, city plans, forms, pamphlets, cartoons, advertisements, newspaper or magazine articles) are included within recently developed course materials. Most works of literature are not created for the primary purpose of teaching a language. Thus, in a classroom context, learners are exposed to actual language samples of real life settings of native speakers. In reading LT, because students also have to cope with language intended for native speakers, they become familiar with many different linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings used by those native speakers. If the learners achieve this, then they will be able to internalize the language at a high level (Hill, 1986).

Last but not least, scholars, such as Hedgecock and Ferris (2009) and Lazar (1993), perceive LT as motivating and enjoyable, mainly because they come in various forms and include a wide range of content, which reduces the chances of monotony in learning (Thornbury, 2005). According to Lazar (1993), literature is regarded as something largely respected worldwide; thus, with students being able to undertake LT, a sense of achievement is promoted

among them. Moreover, authors of LT are well-known for their use of unusual language and promotion of suspense, which leaves students feeling the urge to uncover the meaning of the unusual language and the plot. In line with this view, Hedgecock and Ferris (2009) argue that both foreign and second language students find literature as “Evocative of universal human experience and emotions, the language and content of literature tends to be more interesting than other L2 texts that students might encounter” (p. 251).

### **3.5.Approaches to Teaching Literature to Language learners:**

The ways through which literature has been implemented in the English language classroom have fluctuating depending on various factors such as the aim in using literature, whether one is seeking to teach cultural or linguistic features, teaching methods being employed at the time, and learners’ level. Therefore, teachers should think of such factors in order to facilitate activities and suitable selection of course material, besides the choice of a suitable approach to teaching literature. The debate over the various ways of implementing literature in the English generates several literature teaching approaches. Language-based approach, literature as content, and literature for personal enrichment are the main approaches to teaching literature, each implying different tasks and course materials (Lazar, 1993).

#### **3.5.1. Language-based approach:**

The first approach introduced by Lazar (1993) is the language-based approach. As its name suggests, this approach is adopted by teachers whose principal aim revolve around fostering their learners’ linguistic knowledge of the English language and promoting their understanding of it. To this end, learners are involved in learning processes where they are

offered opportunities to analyze and evaluate the language of diverse LT. In regards to material selection, it is done based on the targeted ‘stylistic features’ and ‘literary merit’.

Proponents of this approach claim that it enables learners to revise their grammar and vocabulary in various contexts; hence, it enhances their linguistic knowledge of the language while responding to and interpreting LT. In contrast to these claims, opponents argue that there may be disengagement from the learning process, particularly by providing meaningless responses to texts, owing to the fact that some LT may be distant from learners’ lives (Lazar, 1993).

### **3.5.2. Literature as Content:**

Regarding this approach as the one most employed and traditional to teaching literature, Lazar (1993) asserts: “Literature itself is the content of the course, which concentrates on areas such as the history and characteristics of literary movements; the social, political and historical background to a text; literary genres and rhetorical devices, etc.” (P.24) Simply put, emphasis is placed on various aspects and background knowledge that the given texts exhibit; nevertheless, this emphasis is used as basis on which teachers provide opportunities for learners to develop their language skills. Holding a similar view, Aberesold and Field (1997) describe this approach as a “window to culture, helping students appreciate and understand other cultures.” (p. 157)

This approach, according to Lazar (1993), is advantageous in terms of overall potentiality. In other words, by using this approach to teach literature, teachers aim to tackle various fields. Because this approach does not focus solely on literature, it is more motivating for learners. However, one drawback of this approach is when teachers do not devote much time to providing historical, social, and political information related to a given text or fail to focus on

other aspects rather than the linguistic ones making the learning process both monotonous and disengaging.

### **3.5.3. Literature for Personal Enrichment:**

Learners' involvement with texts is expected to reach higher levels as far as this approach to teaching literature is concerned. This is mainly because teachers encourage their learners to immerse themselves in the texts where learners relate to their own lives and opinions. This approach implies the use of group work where materials are selected by teachers according to their students' interests. The target is to ensure learners' involvement with selected materials in order to make sure that students acquire the language (Lazar, 1993).

This approach is believed to facilitate learners' understanding of the materials selected by providing exposure to any relevant historical and social knowledge. With this being said, materials in this approach lead to an exposure to content which is very difficult linguistically; which may prevent intermediate students from being able to process or understand the language, demotivating them. Additionally, this approach requires much intervention from the teacher during the learning process since he or she is expected to paraphrase and provide the knowledge required to understand a given text (Lazar, 1993).

### **3.5.4. The Exploitation of Literary Texts in the English Language Classroom**

Since LT are of varying genres and forms, a teacher may find a plethora of ways, mostly suggested by scholars, to make use of these texts in the English language classrooms. Elements of a text are distinct (Aberesold & Field, 1997 as cited in Hedgecock & Ferris, 2009). Therefore, unlike tackling novels and short stories, where the focus may be on plot, characters, settings, and

themes, tackling poetry implies emphasis on imagery, themes, sentence structure, and tone. On the other hand, exposure to nonfiction, mainly informative texts, necessitates emphasis on such elements as the reliability or credibility of the author, the main ideas being addressed, and soundness and organization of the arguments proved.

Before making use of any literary text, Lazar (1993) suggests various factors to be taken into account by the teacher when it comes to text selection. She put together a checklist, shown in Table 3.1, providing criteria of text selection. These criteria are divided into three main categories: type of course, type of students, and some features linked with texts.

**Table 3. 1.** Checklist for Text Selection (Adapted from Lazar, 1993, p.56)

<p>Checklist for choosing literary texts</p> <p><b>TYPE OF COURSE</b></p> <p>Level of students</p> <p>Students' reasons for learning English</p> <p>Kind of English required</p> <p>Length/intensity of course</p> <p><b>TYPE OF STUDENTS</b></p> <p>Age</p> <p>Intellectual maturity</p> <p>Emotional understanding</p> <p>Interests/Hobbies</p> <p>Cultural background</p> <p>Linguistic proficiency</p> <p>Literary background</p> <p><b>OTHER TEXT-RELATED FACTORS</b></p> <p>Availability of texts</p> <p>Length of text</p>
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Exploitability Fit with syllabus
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In regards to the first area, type of course, the inclusion of LT in English classrooms should not take place without knowing learners' objectives behind learning English so as to the English language they need. The time frame is of no less importance, meaning that the teacher needs to know the number and length of the allotted sessions. In addition to this, since the teacher is required to take into account individual differences among his/her learners, especially this latter will probably vary noticeably, choice of a text, which is appropriate for all the learners, has to be made (Lazar, 1993).

Concerning the second area of text selection criteria, Lazar (1993) tackles factors related to students. Firstly, knowledge about students' interests, intellectual and maturity levels, and cultural background should be known and considered by the teacher. The chosen texts should not contain themes that are too close to the students' interests and cultural background, but at the same time it should not be far from them otherwise it would be disengaging. Intellectually speaking, it is not advisable to use texts that exhibit content that is overly developed as it could prevent students from approaching it. This does not mean that texts should contain easy concepts, which could also lead to disengagement. Moreover, neither texts that contain language that is too advanced nor texts that contain language that is too easy are recommended for use by teachers since the former is thought to hinder students' understanding while the latter is believed to be demotivating and hinder their efforts at development. In this regard, Lazar (1993) argues that even communicatively proficient learners may find some LT incomprehensible to some extent, particularly if they involve archaic language, register, or dialect. Teachers, therefore, need to be vigilant when it comes to selecting texts. In the last criterion in this area of text selection,

Lazar (1993) targets the literariness of texts and the literary level of students, asserting that even though some texts are linguistically accessible, they may still be difficult to understand because their level of literariness is higher than that of the students. Hence, students are unable to infer meanings and uncover authors' messages.

The last category of criteria comprises several features that LT should have before being brought to the classroom. Firstly, Lazar (1993) discusses the availability of texts, emphasizing that teachers should ensure that every student will have a copy of the text. Secondly, the length of the text is equally important because the teachers need to know whether the allotted time is sufficient to make use of the text or not. By knowing the time allotted, teachers can easily decide whether they will work with long or short extracts or the entire text. Thirdly, exploitability refers to the ability of the teachers to design tasks and activities to make most use of the text. In doing so, teachers should ask themselves if the text can be used to generate tasks and activities to test any targeted aspect. The last criterion highlights the idea that LT should be in conformity with the syllabus, meaning, they should relate to the syllabus in terms of themes, terminology and grammar.

Although they share the same perspectives with Lazar concerning most of the issues needed to be taken into account before selecting a literary text, Hedgecock and Ferris (2009) suggest other aspects teachers are required to consider for teaching literature. Intensive reading or extensive reading of LT should be different from reading other texts in terms of designing tasks and activities. For example, in intensive reading it will not be appropriate to opt for previewing or skimming texts since LT lack titles and subtitles. As for extensive reading of LT,

teachers can provide students with a set of LT that are unified thematically or written by the same writer.

### **3.5.5. One Step before the Exploitation**

Learners' exposure to LT should not take place without preparing the ground for beneficial use of those texts. Simply put, teachers need to make sure that students are aware of many features and elements of literature and its language and are able to recognize them prior to introducing LT. According to Wall and Wall (2005), learners need to know that subgenres of fiction differ in terms of content, structure and type. They also need to know that narrators tell stories in very distinctive ways. Similarly, they should be aware that figurative language is a significant feature of literary language, so they should be able to recognize them. According to Leech (1969) and Widdowson (1975), learners also need to recognize that LT also contain deviant language, which may often be odd to learners.

Literature in nature is believed to be didactic and allegorical. This means that there is a hidden deeper meaning rather than surface meaning in a story. Parables refer to allegorical stories which aim at teaching a moral lesson and this is what makes literature didactic. Elegiac poems differ from lyric poems in that the former is used to express a poet's grief while the latter is used by poets to express their own beliefs and feelings. Briefly, knowing the genre of the LT at hand is beneficial for learners since it paves the way for learners to generate somewhat accurate expectations about the content of those texts (Wall & Wall, 2005).

Additionally, according to Wall and Wall (2005), prosaic LT, mainly novels and novellas, have a consistent structure that is ordered as follows: Action, background, conflict, crisis and climax, denouement and conclusion. Stories need actions so that readers can see the

course of events, which is commonly known as the plot. In order to understand these stories better, readers need to know the background of characters, meaning, their drives, the places they came from and so on. Before a climax, takes place, which implies the highest point of tension in a story, there is a conflict that develops into a crisis where the protagonist of the story encounters tough situations. Next, a series of events, commonly known as falling action, occur in an attempt to overcome the tough situation or reach a resolution. These actions lead to the end of the story where the problem is resolved and this is known as resolution. Some other authors choose to go the extra mile by including a conclusion where they mention what happens in the protagonist's life. If learners are aware of these elements, there will be a smooth progress in terms of exploiting LT.

In an attempt to discuss further elements that shape the basic structure, Wall and Wall (2005) argue that learners' awareness of the settings, the plot, the theme, the point of view and the characters enhance the process of reading a literary text. Hedgecock and Ferris (2009) assert that knowing the settings of a story, time and place, is of high vitality for learners because these elements help learners understand and expect what will be side within the story. For instance, reading Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* while being aware that the events of the story took place during the Great Depression would allow the learners to expect sad events and miserable conditions in which most of the characters lived. According to Wall and Wall (2005), what also aids reading of LT is knowing that every narrator has a hidden meaning to convey, which is known as the theme of the story. Moreover, stories are not all told the same way; for example, some stories are narrated by characters within the story while others are narrated by someone from the outside. These different views of narrating a story are called narrative techniques, which can be summarized as the following:

**a- First Person:** This view has two different types, first person narrator and first person observer. Whereas first person narrator refers to situations where narrators tell stories as someone who is a part of the story, revealing his or her feelings and ideas, first person observer entails those situations in which narrators tell the events of stories from a point of view of a character whose participation in the story is diminished (Wall & Wall, 2005).

**b- Second Person:** When narrators feel the urge to address the reader, they use this type by using ‘you’ (Wall & Wall, 2005).

While the previously mentioned viewpoints are concerned with who is telling the story, third person point of view is categorized according to the extent to which a narrator owes knowledge about the details in a story (Ribó, 2019). Ribó (2019) suggests three types of third person point of view:

**a- Third Person Omniscient:** The narrator seems to be aware of the whole ‘story world’ such as characters’ states and the development of the story (Ribó, 2019).

**b-Limited:** As its name suggests, this type is when the narrator tells a story while having limited knowledge about the story and some characters (Ribó, 2019).

**c- Objective:** The narrator is not existent in the story events since he or she does not have any knowledge about the characters and the story, meaning, his or her primary work is to report the events from an external viewpoint (Ribó, 2019).

According to Bousbai (2010), familiarizing students with features of literary language such as metaphorical and deviant language is a must before starting any exposure of LT to students in the classroom. Sharing a similar view, Wall and Wall (2005) argue that recognition of

metaphors and symbols ‘opens doors wide for further understanding’ (p. 116). Familiarity with these characteristics guarantees pleasurable reading experiences.

### **3.5.6. Reading Novels and Short Stories:**

As previously stated, each genre or subgenre of LT is predominantly characterized by specific features and elements. That is why approaching them using the same method would seem impractical. When LT are brought to the classroom, teachers need to take those varying specificities into account. Educators and researchers put in the hands of teachers of literature in English language classrooms numerous strategies for each subgenre through which teachers can make their objectives attainable. Watkins (2017) suggests the following strategies:

**a- Literature circles:** This reading strategy boosts collaborative work since all learners in each group are expected to have a role. A student will need to be the chair who directs discussion and makes sure everyone is participating to fulfill the task. Another student will be a summarizer of the entire passage. A word wizard is the one whose main duty is to elucidate ambiguous words. The last role, which is the connector, implies establishing connection between the text at hand and other external resources (Watkins, 2017).

**b- ‘Old themes, new characters’:** Some literary works discuss timeless themes, for instance themes that human beings used to suffer from and may suffer from in the future. It is possible to retell an old story with new characters and new settings (Wall & Wall, 2005).

**c- Writing your own story:** This can be applied on many elements of a story. For example, students may be given extracts of each part of the plot; after that, while reading each part, each

learner asks himself/herself who, why, what, and how. By doing so, students may end up having diverse versions of one story (Lazar, 1993).

**d- Using graphic novels:** A slightly similar activity is suggested by Watkins (2017) where learners read a LT until they have a grasp of the plot and recognition of the main characters. Supported by visuals, learners are then given blank frames to complete in accordance with the story. Once completed, learners compare their versions with the text after having read it.

**e- This doesn't belong here:** While reading a text, the teacher chooses two extracts from the story and includes another paragraph from an external source. Next, students are given a sufficient amount of time to read and discuss which paragraph is odd. This is beneficial when the teacher aims to provide opportunities for learners to discuss stylistic features (Watkins, 2017).

**f- Preparing a trailer:** Students are asked to watch trailers of two movies before they are asked by the teacher about the film they like most. After the discussion takes place, the students are asked to propose a trailer for the text being read by suggesting the extent to which the trailer will uncover the story, the type of music, the inclusion of a voice and so on. This type of activity triggers learners' summarizing skills (Watkins, 2017).

### **Exploiting Poetry:**

**a- Exploiting unusual Language features:** Language of poetry is viewed as deviant since it does not respect language norms, yet teachers need to make use of that language. Lazar (1993) suggests a dictation task where the teacher dictates a verse of a poem and asks learners to punctuate it. Afterwards, the teacher displays the poem and asks learners if they notice any difference.

**b- Poems and oral activities:** A teacher gives a few verses that describe a situation and asks learners what they may do in similar situations. Reversely, a teacher depicts a situation and asks learners what verses can be said. Apart from that, poetry can be a basis for many ideas from which discussions can be generated (Lazar, 1993).

**c- Exploiting plays:**

Plays can be used in different ways to target various learning skills by teachers of English since plays can be both read and performed. A role card activity can be used to offer opportunities for learners to act out in front of their classmates. The learners pick up a card that depicts a scene then they use their imagination to write what might be said in similar situations so they would be ready to perform. For further exploitation of this activity, teachers may provoke a discussion with students by asking them who and where these characters are. Moreover, activities that enhance learners' conversational language can be generated using plays. For instance, a teacher can show scenes where two people meet for the first time in a formal or an informal situation and then students are asked about what to say in formal first meetings. Other activities can also be used to increase learners' language awareness. For example, a teacher may hand in an archaic form of a text and a modern one and ask them to highlight differences in grammar and vocabulary (Lazar, 1993).

**3.6.Critical Reading of Literary Texts:**

Due to the specific features of fiction, such as involving hidden messages rather than explicit ones, CR of LT entails new dimensions where readers consider elements of and factors that affect the production of a literary text. The stepping stone of CR, according to Wall and Wall (2005), is curiosity. By this, they argue that LT cannot be approached if there is no interest

in them. They define CR as analytical reading that involves reading, questioning, and reasoning, claiming that there are no right or wrong answers, but “there are only the authors’ intentions and your interpretations” (p. 4). Holding a similar view, Abcarian, Klotz, and Cohen (2009) define CR as the use of “complex set of experiences that define you as a human being to analyze the work you encounter” (p. 6). In other words, a critical reader has to be present as an influencing entity and a judge whose cultural, social and personal background shapes the way he or she reads and interprets LT. In a more comprising definition, Rockowitz and Rockowitz (n.d) describe CR as the reader’s search for meanings, establishing connection, and taking notes to pave the way for analytical reading, followed by delivering personal interpretations.

Based on these definitions, a critical reader has numerous tasks to ensure that successful CR takes place. Generally, critical readers read slowly so as to scrutinize every line. In the meantime, readers usually keep a pen or highlighter at hand so they highlight key words and ideas. Whenever words are difficult to understand, critical readers use dictionaries (Rockowitz & Rockowitz, n.d).

As previously mentioned, questioning is a vital element in the CR process. According to Abcarian, Klotz, and Cohen (2009), critical readers deal with questions similar to:

What perspective does the author have that led him or her to write this work?  
What social, cultural, or historical conditions influenced the production of the work of literature? What other ways might the author have presented the ideas or subjects of the work? Are the author’s values different from your own? (p. 6)

Here are also some questions, which a critical reader has to consider (Rockowitz & Rockowitz, n.d):

- What is the basic story or plot?
- Who are the characters? If there is a specific character speaking, who is the speaker and who is s/he addressing?
- What is the context or situation?
- Where is the action taking place?
- When is the action taking place? In what historical period, and at what point in the development of the story?
- Do you see a conflict, a matter that must be resolved, a goal that the characters are seeking?
- Do there seem to be themes and ideas which are implied, rather than being explicitly stated?

In order to exploit LT through questioning, Watkins (2017) suggests a strategy called ‘Ask the author’ (133). Teachers ask students to form groups and formulate questions about what they had just finished reading, or teachers ask students to have interviews with one of the characters of a story. Afterwards, students report back the questions. Some of the suggested questions might be: What inspired you to write the book? What message(s) would you like a reader to take away from the story?

Moreover, in order to read critically, various literary elements have to be considered by the reader. Simply put, the critical reader can scrutinize how the author chose to convey the themes, whether through description or action. Not only this, but the critical reader’s scrutiny has to entail even characters and their traits and changes throughout the stories. Whenever an author uses a word or an expression repetitively, this should be perceived by the critical reader (Rockowitz & Rockowitz, n.d).

Last but not least, reading fiction critically implies establishing connections and relationships among diverse elements of a literary text, which needs careful analytical reading. Critical readers have to know how subplots are related to the whole plot. The relationship between the characters and the theme of the story should also be considered by critical readers (Rockowitz & Rockowitz, n.d). According to Abcarian, Klotz, and Cohen (2009), critical readers have to examine the relationship between external factors, such as the historical and social conditions surrounding the authors, and the produced LT.

### **3.7.The Relationship between PBL, Critical Reading and Literary Texts:**

The theoretical part of this study is an attempt to outline what the existing literature says about PBL, reading and CR and the exploitation of LT in the English language classroom. This section provides an overview of how each construct of the current study is related to the other as per the existing literature. To this end, the researcher will first highlight the relationship between CR and critical thinking. As a second step, the researcher will shed light on the association between LT and critical thinking. Finally, an emphasis will be placed on accentuating the relationship between PBL elements and critical thinking.

As a reader of this section, you may wonder why the researcher is addressing critical thinking, although it is not considered as one of the variables tackled in this study. According to Pirozzi et al. (2014), CR is one's application of critical thinking skills while reading. What is more, they assert that "critical reading is dependent on critical thinking" (p. 234). In other words, when a critical reader approaches a reading material, s/he analyzes, evaluates, interprets, and synthesizes, which are viewed as critical thinking skills, while reading diverse texts.

Accordingly, there is an overlapping relationship between CR and critical thinking; therefore, critical thinking is opted for to clarify the relationship among the variables of this study.

In order to address the relationship between CR and LT, the relationship between LT and critical thinking should be clarified first. Kohzadi et al. (2014) reported that critical thinking skills can be optimized through CR of LT. Similarly and Gajdusek and Van Dommelen (1993), Hall (2005) (found in Kohzadi et al., 2014) state that the exposure to LT enhances critical thinking. This is explained by Hedgecock and Ferris (2009) who assert that LT, by nature, can be critically analyzed, particularly since they exhibit universal themes, characters developments and life experiences which make literature accessible for many students. Besides, literature provides opportunities for learners to apply CR elements such as reflecting, responding to authors and disagreeing with them.

In order to illustrate the relationship between PBL and critical thinking, the researcher opts for bringing attention to the relationship between self-directed learning, collaborative work, and self-reflective learning and learners' critical thinking skills according to the existing literature. The role of self-directed learning in fostering learners' critical thinking skills has been tested by many researchers, with positive findings are reported. Numerous researchers have reported that self-directed learning promotes learners' analytical, evaluative, and synthesizing skills (Basereh & Pishkar, 2016; Kreber, 1998; Tabatabaei & Parsafar, 2012). Concerning self-reflective learning and its role in enhancing learners' critical thinking skills, Austin et al. (2008), and Ghanizadeh and Mirzaee (2012) assert that self-reflective practices optimize learners' critical thinking skills. As for collaborative work, many studies have reported that it is positively linked with learners' critical thinking skills (Gokhale, 1995; Loes & Pascarella, 2017; Nelson,

1994). Gokhale (1995) states that collaborative work offers students several opportunities for analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of ideas. According to Nelson (1994), collaborative learning generates chances for group discussions and negotiations, thus enabling learners to express disagreements and corrects misunderstandings.

To sum up, since CR is based on critical thinking skills of analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing, and since LT are reported to enhance learners' critical thinking skills, and since PBL elements such as self-directed learning, self-reflection, and collaborative work are positively associated with learners' critical thinking skills, the researcher of this study predicts a relationship between PBL and CR of LT.

## **Conclusion**

Though literature is a term that comprises various written works, in English language teaching setting scholars agree that literature refers to fictional works such as plays, novels, short stories, and poems. In spite of the limitless advantages of integrating literature into EFL classrooms, learners should be equipped with enough knowledge about LT prior to exploiting them in the classrooms. In addition to this, each literary genre has its own ways and strategies through which it is possible to exploit. In order to approach LT critically, learners need to approach them using skills such as analyzing, inferring, synthesizing, and evaluating events, opinions and the like. Not only this, but learners need to question, highlight, and annotate while reading. Simply put, each learner has to put forth his/her own experience while reading.

## **IV. Chapter Four: Methodology of Research**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is devoted to presenting the methodology of research adopted by the researcher in attempt to answer the present study's research questions, test its hypotheses, and achieve its objectives. To this end, the researcher discusses the main research design, population and the sample, data collection tools and procedures, the intervention, and data analysis procedures. Furthermore, since a vital target of any research study is attaining both valid and reliable results, in this chapter the researcher discusses all measures followed to successfully obtaining valid and reliable results.

### **4.1. Research Design**

The researcher opted for a mixed method research that includes two main methods: a quantitative quasi-experiment, an attitude questionnaire and qualitative observations. This study has a manipulated independent variable and a dependent variable, an experimental and control group, treatment, and hypothesis testing of causal relationship, it is not considered as a true experimental research mainly due to the lack of random assignment. Campbell et al. (1963) and Cook et al. (2002) define a quasi-experiment as an interventional study where a researcher manipulates an independent variable and controls which group of participants receives a treatment and which group is control (hence, it lacks randomization). The researcher of the present study carried out a quasi-experiment since randomization could not be applied, mainly due to administrative and other constraints. The manipulation and exposure of the treatment to the EG, according to Cook et al. (2002) and Crano et al. (2015), needs to take place after the pretest; hence, the occurrence of the posttest is after the treatment in an attempt to measure the

causal effect by comparing the results obtained from the presence and the absence of independent variable prior to and after the treatment.

Quasi experimental designs are known for their lack of random selection and/or random assignment. Because of such lack of randomization, participants typically do not have equal chances of being assigned in the experimental or the CG. This, according to Crano et al. (2015), results in differences between individuals in the control and experimental groups. In case of a treatment effect on the dependent variable, the lack of randomization and thus the differences between groups make it difficult for the researcher to draw the conclusion that the treatment was actually responsible for the effect rather than the differences between groups that occurred from lack of randomization. In this regard, Cohen et al. (2005) describe the control and experimental groups in quasi-experimental designs as being non-equivalent, arguing that there is a considerable difference among the participants owing to the lack of randomization.

Accordingly, throughout this study, the experimenter chose an EG and a CG; while the CG was exposed to the usual way of teaching literature, the EG received the treatment, which was the application of PBL-based instruction to studying LT. The researcher administered a pretest and a posttest to both groups in order to measure their initial performance, their final performance, and the differences between variance in performance between the two groups from pre- to post- performance.

Since the aim of the current study is to examine a possible causal interference between PBL and CR of LT, a true experiment would be the ideal research design for attaining this aim without running the risk of having extraneous variables. True experiments ensure randomization when assigning participants in control or experimental groups, thus, increasing possibilities of

having equivalent groups (Cohen et al., 2005). This equivalence, according to Crano et al. (2015), contributes to an increase internal validity, which refers to the extent to which a cause-effect relationship is trustworthy. Because the researcher of the current study could not execute a true experiment, he opted for a quasi-experimental design since it is an alternative option to true experimentation when seeking to examine causal relationships between variables (cook et al., 2002; Kim & Steiner, 2016).

The researcher also opted for the aforementioned research design because it is more vigorous than a one-group pretest posttest quasi experiment designs (Cohen et al., 2005) and it has “fewer threats to internal validity than correlational studies” (Crano et al., 2015 p.186). Although quasi-experiments have their weaknesses—notably a reduction in internal validity from lack of randomization—the researcher believes that the design’s advantages outweigh its disadvantages. Furthermore, with the aims of minimizing threats to internal validity and providing relatively valid outcomes overall, the researcher took a few measures (discussed in section 4.5)

#### **4.2.Population and Sample**

The population of the current research study consists of third year EFL learners who were enrolled at the department of English at Abbes Laghrour University of Khenchela during the academic year 2019-2020. The total number of the population is 85 students who were divided into two groups. Group 1 consisted of 39 students, and group 2 consisted of 46 students. Because the population was composed of only two groups, the researcher chose the whole population as the sample of this study. The participants of this population were both males and females whose

ages ranged from 19 to 27. Nearly all participants had been studying English for 10 years, since middle school.

In terms of sampling method, the researcher applied non-probability, convenience sampling procedures. Cohen et al. (2005) label convenience sampling as those situations where “The researcher simply chooses the sample from those to whom she has easy access” (p.102). The researcher chose the available population and sample to work with because they were most convenient. In this regard, the authors state that convenience sampling reduces generalizability of the outcomes over a larger population since a convenience sample is only representative of itself.

Third year EFL students were chosen because CR, as Westwood (2001) argued, is an advanced level of reading that requires not only comprehension but also familiarity with literary devices and literary work structures and the ability to evaluate and relate literary works to historical, social, biographical, and other external factors . In brief, CR necessitates more association and exposure to LT and more historical and cultural knowledge. Therefore, the researcher of this study asked the administration to assign him as a teacher of third year LT because he assumed that third year students would be more acquainted with knowledge about LT and American and British history and culture than second or first year students. Such prior knowledge, the researcher believed, surely would have paved the way for third year students to read LT critically. Overall, third year students were perceived to be more able than first and second year students to read LT critically since they were equipped with more tools and background knowledge.

In regards to control and experimental group allocation, the researcher allocated group 1, which consisted of 39 students, to the EG and group 2, which contained 46 students, to the CG.

In allocating the smaller group to the experiment, the researcher had in mind his own performance. In this respect, Heller and Hollabaugh (1992), Lohman and Finkelstein (2000), and Duch (2001) recommend the formation of small size groups of students in order to improve the process of problem solving. Since the experiment is PBL-based instruction, the researcher believed that his own performance would be better with fewer students, notably when applying collaborative learning and the teacher's facilitation of learning. With fewer students, fewer groups would be formed, which would mean better opportunities for the groups to interact and for the teacher to play the role of facilitator and monitor during such short sessions. With more groups, on the other hand, the teacher's ability to facilitate the learning process was expected to decline.

### **4.3.Data Collection Instrument**

#### **4.3.1. The Tests**

Because the researcher opted for a quasi-experimental design that involves a pretest, posttest and control and experimental groups the researcher was required to assess the dependent variable twice, once prior to the intervention and a second time after the intervention. The former aimed at revealing the initial level of the students' CR of LT whereas the latter was done for comparison with the pre-test in order to determine whether treatment affected students' level of CR of LT.

The pretest was based on the literary work *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare. Students were given a shortened version of the play to refresh their memories of events within the play (Appendix D). They were then provided about 90 minutes to answer a few questions about the play. In order to read LT critically, readers have to prove their comprehension, analytical

reading, synthesis, and evaluation of content of reading materials and even relate literary works to elements external to the text (Abcarian, Klotz, and Cohen, 2009; Rockowitz & Rockowitz, n.d). Consequently, the researcher of this study, through designing the pretest, tried to tackle students' abilities of comprehending, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating literary works and relating their contents with historical, social and cultural aspects. For example, one of the questions included in the pretest was "Many critics say that Hamlet is insane. What is your say about this issue?" Besides comprehending and synthesizing numerous events, students were also expected to use their evaluation skills since they were asked for their viewpoint. Another key feature of CR is relating literary works through comparison. This feature is targeted in the question "Compare how the relationship between the king and his people is portrayed in *Hamlet* with how it is portrayed in Old English Literature."

Like the pretest, the posttest tackled the main skills of CR. However, the time allotted for the posttest was 60 minutes due to COVID-19 safety measures. The literary work covered in the posttest was Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* to design question for the posttest. The students had been assigned the American novel to read at home in the semester, along with a few other literary works, so in the posttest they were only expected to answer the given questions. Again, these questions were designed to examine students' ability to read LT critically. For instance, one question was "What is the setting of the novel? What if the story events took place in a place occupied by the Quakers, how could that affect the story?" This question aimed to test students' analytical skills and ability to imagine and relate the content of the novel to other historical and social factors. In order to test students' analytical and evaluation skills and ability to provide arguments, the researcher asked the following questions "Has the author claimed that committing a sin has effects on people? How? What made him claim as such?" and "Is Hester's

adultery justified? If Hester had married Dimmesdale after Chillingworth's long absence, would that have been acceptable? Justify."

In pretest and posttest, the researcher used literary works from different literary movements, one from the Renaissance in Britain and one from Romanticism in the United States. The researcher assumed that using either the original versions or even the first edition of texts would have meant using texts with differences in regards to various linguistic features related to vocabulary items and syntax. These differences between the literary works given in the pretest and posttest were predicted to be a possible extraneous confounding variable in the results. For instance, students' performances in the posttest could have been better than their performances in the pretest simply because of the aforementioned language features; perhaps in the posttest, the text was simply more comprehensible. For this reason, the researcher used edited texts wherein texts exhibited similar language features all in an attempt to neutralize the language features and limit their effect on the final results.

#### **4.3.2. The Observation Checklist**

Abcarian, Klotz, and Cohen (2009) and Rockowitz and Rockowitz (n.d) attempted to define some characteristics of critical readers, which include questioning the author, characters or even their previous perspectives, annotating, underlining and highlighting important ideas, using dictionaries to look up difficult words, and more. The pretest and posttest did not suffice in allowing the researcher of the current study to measure many of these characteristics because they were more behavioral in nature; thus, it was more feasible to observe them rather than conduct a written test to try to measure them. To accomplish this, the researcher devised an observation grid that included many characteristics not measured in the posttest (Appendix F).In

opting for an observation grid, the researcher sought to maximize coverage of the dependent variable CR of LT, support findings from the posttest, and consequently increase the validity of the findings of this research. Accordingly, the observation grid had a confirmatory role where it not only measured aspects that were not covered in the posttest, but it also attempted to measure some aspects that had already been targeted by the tests such as analyzing, synthesizing, and applying knowledge when dealing with LT.

The observation grid used in this study was used twice, once prior to and again after the treatment, and it aimed to measure the CR practices for both the experimental and the control groups. The researcher developed this observation checklist based on the existing literature. It is comprised of 18 items pertaining to characteristics and practices of critical readers. The researcher carried out structured classroom observation procedures since the items upon which the sample was being observed had been prepared by the observer in advance. Although observation procedures are typically qualitative in nature, each of its items was measured quantitatively on a 5-pointscale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Each level of each item was attributed a description accordingly (refer to Appendix F for a detailed evaluation grid). The feasibility of quantitative analysis of qualitative data is argued by Mackey and Gass (2005):

As a simple, concise way of reporting general research findings, quantification of some kind is used by many qualitative researchers, who commonly gather enough data to fill a book, and then pare down their data and findings to a length that conforms to journal publication requirements. Quantification is also valuable in that numerical descriptions can make it readily apparent both why researchers have drawn particular inferences and how well their theories reflect the data.

Another benefit of quantification is its usefulness to other researchers who may be interested in ascertaining quickly whether the research findings are relevant to other contexts (p.182).

The items included in the checklist that were not covered in the tests were the use of annotations, use of dictionaries, questioning, and the use of marginalia. By observing the use of annotations, the researcher aimed to see if participants in the experimental and control groups wrote any elucidating comments or added notes on papers containing the reading materials to aid understanding. The observation of the use of annotations also entails the use of highlighting and underlining of words and ideas. In observing questioning, the researcher sought to notice if the participants were orally asking authors of the given reading material questions similar to “What message does the author want to convey?”, “Why has an author/literary critic mentioned this/that?”, “Does this make sense to you?” Similarly, written questions, or marginalia, were observed where the observer scrutinized the participants’ papers to check if they initiated any discussion with the authors through questions. Furthermore, the students were observed to see whether they used dictionaries in an attempt to explain difficult words.

The observation grid also tackled reading as well as writing practices such as skimming, rereading, summarizing, and paraphrasing. Through his observation, the researcher sought to check if the participants read quickly in order to identify the general meaning and get an overview of the reading materials. Additionally, the researcher considered the rereading practice to see if participants were careful towards getting the real meaning of the reading materials and cautious towards misinterpreting the given reading materials. To accomplish this, the researcher monitored learners to see if they were reading the given texts more than twice. By observing

summarizing and paraphrasing, the researcher attempted to see if the students were writing shortened versions of the texts in their own words, which contained the main ideas, in order to pave the way for synthesis and inference.

Another element observed by the researcher was students' open-mindedness or resistance. The observer sought to know the participants' tendencies to challenge and overcome authors' implied ideas through examining their attitudes and arguments so as not to be manipulated by those authors. Being resistant does not mean a reader should refuse to discuss any idea that is different from his or her own or refuse to discuss their instilled ideas. In this regard, Abcarian, Klotz, and Cohen (2009) argue that a critical reader should test his or her 'comfortable convictions' (p. 6). In an attempt to measure this, an item named 'open-mindedness' was incorporated into the observation checklist.

Other important CR elements were also targeted during classroom observations. Some examples are students' abilities of analyzing, synthesizing, and inferring. By targeting students' ability to analyze, the researcher sought to identify the extent to which they broke down the elements and the different ideas exhibited by the given LT. As for inferring abilities, the researcher examined participants' abilities of using textual clues from a single source to formulate a conclusion. Unlike analyzing, which refers to the ability to break down information and ideas, the skill of synthesizing entails the ability to combine ideas. In observing their skills of synthesis, the observer examined if the participants attempted to combine their prior knowledge and different texts to form a new idea or opinion.

Finally, other aspects tackled in the observation checklist are related to KA, contextualization of the reading materials, and figurative language. Being a vital element of CR, KA refers to students' usage of their knowledge to solve problems and gain a better

understanding of the content. By observing this, the observer attempted to examine the extent to which the participants made use of their acquired knowledge to solve the problem at hand. KA also comprises the participants' use of prior historical, social, cultural, and biographical knowledge to contextualize the texts, or identifying which facts had influenced the production of the given texts. The last aspect dealt with was figurative language. The researcher aimed at observing the extent to which the participants in each group could understand figurative language and identify the purposes of using such language.

#### **4.4.Procedures of the Observation**

The observation of CR practices and active learning took place twice, once prior to the PBL treatment and another time during the last session of the treatment. Prior to the treatment, the researcher of the current inquiry observed the participants of the experimental and the CG once for 90 minutes in a tutorial session, which was devoted to teaching the literary movement Medieval Literature. The post-treatment observation took place in the last session of the treatment, which was the eleventh session. Students in both groups were observed, however, in different settings.

For the CG, the observation took place when the teacher was using the traditional method during a tutorial session to explain two different short stories, which are both written by Edgar Allan Poe. The short stories were *The Masque of the Red Death* and *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, the first being a Gothic story and the second a detective story. As for the EG, the observation was conducted in a PBL environment. The participants were observed during a TD session while they attempted to solve a problem where three critics were arguing over six poems written by Walter Whitman. The participants were expected to identify who, among the critics, was incorrect and who was right. While monitoring the participants, the researcher revealed

noticeable usage of marginalia, annotations, summarizing and paraphrasing skills. Through classroom discussion, the observer was able to remark practices such as questioning, analyzing, and synthesizing. Due to PBL implications, which accentuate self-directed learning, the teacher's talking time was significantly reduced, allotting him enough time to observe the participants in the EG.

#### **4.4.1. The Attitude Questionnaire**

In order to reveal the students' attitudes towards the various PBL activities they dealt with in class, the researcher distributed a questionnaire to students in the EG (Refer to Appendix H for the attitude questionnaire).

##### **4.4.1.1. Piloting the Questionnaire**

Before administering the questionnaire to the EG, the researcher administered it to a smaller sample of third year EFL students at the University of Abbes Laghrour. This smaller sample consisted of 10 randomly selected students. The researcher gave them enough time to answer the questionnaires by telling them they could take them home. They were told to report any difficult words or ambiguous ideas. Eight students responded to the questionnaires by reporting that the whole questionnaire was understandable and contained nothing problematic. One student reported that she did not understand what was meant by the term 'self-reliant'. In response to the issue encountered, the researcher reformulated the statement, substituting the term with 'self-directed' and using explanations.

#### **4.4.1.2. The Main Attitude Questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in this study aimed at unveiling attitudes of third year EFL students in the EG towards the use of PBL elements in general and self-directed learning practices in particular in LT classes. The questionnaire was distributed after the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the treatment. In order to provide the participants with enough time to answer, they were informed that they could take home the questionnaires with them and hand them back in after two days. Out of 39 participants, 31 responded and returned them.

The attitude questionnaire was comprised of three sections and 54 items (Appendix H). The first section contained 4 items about general information about the sample, notably demographics. In the second section, there were 33 items that aimed to reveal the extent to which self-directed learning and teachers' facilitation of the learning process took place in the classroom, according to students' perspectives. Each of the items included in this section was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The items tackled self-directed learning practices in order to see if, according to learners, PBL boosted active learning during LT classes or not. Therefore, the questionnaire includes various items that reflect this aim, such as "You used to solve the assignment by your own selves", "You used to choose the materials to solve the problems by yourselves" and "You used to conduct online research to solve the given problem".

In addition to self-directed learning, the role of the teacher as a facilitator was addressed. Learners were expected to shed light on the teacher's role according to their own experiences and perspectives in the classroom. This PBL element was addressed with items such as the following: "The teacher used to facilitate the process of problem solving", "The teacher used to

impose his own view”, and “Whenever there was a misunderstanding related to the assignment, the teacher clarifies”.

The third section of the questionnaire contained 71 items, all of which were devoted to identifying the extent to which the participants of the treatment group agreed or disagreed on the usefulness of PBL to promote self-reflective teaching, self-directed learning practices and the facilitation of learning. Some of the items that were included in the second section of this attitude questionnaire were also mentioned in the third section. For instance, items that targeted self-reflective practices in the second section, like “You used to evaluate your learning process” can be found in the third section except worded differently, like “PBL helps me to know my strengths and weaknesses”. Such items were repeated to ensure that the participants were providing consistent answers, done for the sake of obtaining reliable results. Other elements targeted by the attitude questionnaire were KA and open-mindedness.

#### **4.4.2. The Treatment (Tutorial Sessions)**

It is worth noticing that before the main treatment took place, a pilot study had been conducted. In other words, before implementing PBL on the EG, I applied it on another group first.

##### **4.4.2.1. The Pilot Study**

Before embarking on the main experiment, the researcher decided to carry out a pilot study, also known as a feasibility study. According to In (2007), a pilot study is a small-scale version of a study that is carried out with the aim of investigating the feasibility of the main study. Researchers implement the main study on a small sample for a number of reasons. One of

the main reasons is knowing whether certain features of the main study will be practical and executable. In the pilot study, researchers may find out what sample size is needed, whether the study design is appropriate and applicable, what kind of difficulties may be encountered in its application, how participants respond to the study, how much time and other resources are needed, whether data gathering tools and other equipment will be feasible, and much more. Because the main study usually requires a considerable amount of time and money to be carried out, doing so without first running a pilot study places the researcher at risk of making mistakes and losing time and money in the process. Accordingly, to avoid making major mistakes in the full-scale study, a researcher should run a pilot study in order to be confident in every step of the full-scale study.

In executing the pilot study for the current research, the researcher selected a small group of students that reflected the sample of the full-scale study. They were learners of EFL at the University of Abbes Laghrour who had been studying literature. The researcher first introduced himself then the activity. The activity was based on literary movements in Britain, and the focus was placed on the two literary periods Renaissance and the Middle Ages. The pilot activity was broken down into several phases: warm-up, problem exposition, researching, reasoning, synthesis, application, discussion, and knowledge dissemination.

In the warm-up phase, the teacher/researcher set up the context for the activity by stating that literature affects society and it itself is affected by the period in which LT are being written. Learners were then asked to provide examples they may have, all of which were briefly discussed with the teacher. After discussing a few examples, the teacher introduced and briefly discussed the main periods of British literature. The entire warm-up phase took only about 10

minutes. In the second phase, problem exposition, the researcher took another 10 minutes to introduce the problem. Participants were told that they would be given a problem scenario to read and that they were assigned the task of finding a solution to the problem using a range of resources. The problem is as follows:

*James missed his literary class as he was ill. During his absence, a homework was assigned by his teacher. The homework is about literary movements. In this homework, the teacher gave his students four extracts of four literary works one from the Middle Age, and the Renaissance. The teacher has asked his students to determine which extracts belong to the Renaissance and which extracts belong to the Middle Age, based on the characteristics of each period. James needs a helping hand as he was not told about the homework until 3 hours are left.*

The researcher then gave learners four extracts, each from a different literary work from the two different eras. Students were then asked to read the given texts and write down all information they had already known about the topic, which initiated the third phase of the activity, researching. Students were informed that they could use resources like the internet and each other to help them brainstorm everything they could about the given periods. In this phase, the teacher played the role of facilitator by providing students with a table that included the main characteristics of the two eras. The researcher also devoted about 10 minutes for the phase of researching.

After gathering all the required information, the students transitioned into the fourth and fifth phase, which are reasoning and synthesis. Students were allotted about 15 minutes to gather in groups so they could discuss and try to decide which information is relevant to the topic and

which is needed to solve the given problem and decipher which texts belonged to which era. Then they discussed what steps they needed to follow in order to solve the problem. Once they decided on the necessary steps, they transitioned into application. In groups, students started applying the findings on the given texts to solve the problem, which took a total of about 20 minutes. Once they finished application of the data gathered, the teacher initiated a short discussion, asking about the characteristics they found in each text and to which era they were significant. In this discussion phase, the researcher also intervened in case of any misunderstandings. In the final phase, students presented their knowledge, what they learned, and their final findings, or their solutions to the problem.

The researcher believed the activity was highly successful for a number of reasons. First, learners were well engaged and interested in the activity. Instead of each student completing their activity to their own taste, all students were responsible for getting together and interacting. Even though most students were not sure of the accuracy of their answers, they still made thought-out suggestions and discussed them in detail. This was a nice change since it is quite difficult to get such adult learners to become interested in such activities. Second, learners successfully progressed through and completed each of the necessary phases of problem-solving. This came as a surprise to the researcher since the activity was novel to the learners. Contrary to the researcher's expectations, no problems were encountered in the application of this PBL activity.

#### **4.4.2.2. The Main Study**

During the academic year 2019-2020, third year EFL learners at the University of Abbas Laghrour in the department of English were expected to study literary movements of British and

American literature. The former was taught during the first semester while the latter was taught during the second semester in the course LT. In addition to literary movements, an introduction to postcolonial theory was covered during the first semester. Both the EG and CG had two sessions per week. One was a lecture section wherein the two groups studied together, and another was a tutorial session wherein each of the two groups had a separate session. The intervention was implemented during the experimental group's tutorial sessions, where participants received an 11-week treatment of PBL-based instruction of LT. This was applied to various British and American LT from different eras and an introduction in postcolonial theory.

The implementation of PBL in LT classes entailed the use of PBL Language Learning Model elements to teach the aforementioned literary movements and postcolonial theory. PBL Language Learning Model, according to Ansarian and Teoh (2018) consists of the following steps and procedures: problem creation, problem exposure, researching, thinking, synthesis, application, reapplication, reflection, and knowledge. All these steps should be carried out under collaborative work, self-directed learning and with the facilitating role of the teacher. The researcher, however, had to make some modifications mainly in order to finish in the allotted time of each session and increase the practicability of PBL in LT classes. For instance, the step of reapplication was omitted since it required extra time. Moreover, because the experimenter wanted to reduce his interference with learners' choices and he wanted to allow them decide on their own their preferred problem-solving method, collaborative work was sometimes replaced by cooperative and pair work. These changes made by the experimenter have theoretical basis. According to Barrows (1986), during the implementation of PBL, its elements may occur at varying degrees. For example, in one instance of PBL implementation, self-directed learning may be reduced while it may be increased in another. This makes the process of PBL

implementation flexible (Savin-Baden, 2002), which results in a plethora of ways through which it can be implemented. Regardless of degrees of implementation of each element, Barrows (1986) confirms that one vital criteria of PBL is a problem scenario that is used as a starting point of any lesson. These problem scenarios, he adds, can be in a form of questions, unsolved phenomenon, or public problems shared by a population.

Throughout this study, the implementation of PBL in teaching British and American literature started with the creation of an appropriate problem scenario for every session. Since the teacher started by teaching literary movements of British literature and their characteristics, students were expected to solve problems where they made clear distinctions among LT and to which movement they belonged according to the characteristics of each movement. To make this objective attainable, problems were designed containing different LT and/or excerpts of LT. Afterwards, other problems were designed so as to tackle postcolonial theory. After exposure to the chosen LT, the facilitator (teacher) exposed the problems, making sure that he explained them well enough that everybody understood the assignments. The researcher believed that if he had used original versions of LT, the learners would have easily recognized each literary era of those texts. For instance, learners could have easily used the language features as a determiner of the type of text and to which literary movement it belonged. The researcher, therefore, aimed at making the problems complicated, challenging and motivating. Besides providing nameless LT, the researcher used edited texts in order to neutralize the language, making them only distinguishable through other features. This way, learners could not tell the type of text or its era merely based on language since all texts were written similarly. Instead, they had to rely on each literary era's prevailing criteria to classify the works accurately. In instances where the researcher used poems as samples, he did not change anything.

After the first reading and problem exposure, the students, working in groups of 2 to 4 learners, read again in order to identify the information required to solve the problems. Then, they started researching, which was done mostly through the use of their phones and the internet. Since the students had been taught about the features of each literary movement, they knew most of the characteristics of those movements. As a consequence, most of the searching they conducted was about difficult words, expressions and figurative language. Researching also meant looking for biographical information about the authors of LT. Afterwards, the students negotiated and discussed which information was appropriate for solving the problems.

Next, the participants, having deciphered most of the parts of the given LT, tried to connect those parts to make meaningful entities. The students then applied the features of the concerned literary movement, which they had learned beforehand, on the given texts. Simply put, the given texts implicitly exhibited some features of their literary era; hence, it was the students' task to relate each part of a text to its appropriate feature. The use of the data collected from the internet, the knowledge acquired from lectures, and the textual clues paved the way for the students to connect and synthesize information that was new for them.

The step that followed was reflection. This was done when the facilitator established classroom discussion for students to report their findings. Throughout these established debates, the students asked each other about their findings and showed and discussed any disagreement between themselves and the other groups. In turn, this was an opportunity for any students who had missed some details or misunderstood anything to learn from others' reports. This peer learning was effective in triggering reflective practices, particularly since the students corrected their misunderstandings and discovered their weaknesses when provided with feedback from the

facilitator or their peers. Finally, the final step was students confirming what they learned through contextual application, correcting any misunderstanding, and learning new information.

### **Session-by-session Overview**

In order to provide a detailed description of the intervention, sample sessions are described in detail below.

#### **Session 01**

Students in the experimental and control groups studied together during lectures. They were firstly taught about Old English, Medieval Ages, and Renaissance literary movements, each for 90 minutes. With students acquiring some of the elements and characteristics of these movements, students would be able to practice those characteristics in the subsequent 90-minute tutorial sessions where the researcher could start his implementation of PBL.

The researcher opted to use the same lesson that was presented in the pilot study. The main aim of the lesson was to enable the students to clearly distinguish LT from the Middle Ages and Renaissance eras based on their characteristics. The skills targeted were searching, analysis, negotiation, evaluation, synthesis, and drawing conclusions. In order to achieve the aim of the lesson and enable students to practice the aforementioned skills, the same procedures mentioned in the pilot study of the treatment were followed by the experimenter. Along with the presentation of the four LT, the researcher gave the students a table recapitulating the main characteristics of both literary movements. This was done because the experimenter believed that the students were not familiar with the PBL instructional method, which might have resulted in insufficient time. Additionally, the participants were provided with only brief summaries of

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* because the participants had already been exposed to those LT.

## **Session 02**

In the second session, the researcher set the same aim and tackled the same skills as those in the first session. The problem designed, again, required the participants to make clear distinctions between two LT provided by the experimenter. The first work was a play entitled *Ordo Virtutum*, which means 'Order of the Virtues' by Hildegard of Bingen, and the second was a plot summary of *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlow. Unlike the first session, where the participants were provided with a table summarizing the characteristics of the concerned literary movements, in the second session the researcher did not provide such helping hints. In doing this, the experimenter reduced the degree of facilitation of the learning process. Facilitation, like other elements of PBL, can occur at varying degrees according to the facilitator's choice (Heron, 1989).

To ensure access of materials for all of the groups in the class, the researcher shared an electronic version of the play *Ordo Virtutum* and handed out a printed version that contained a summary of *Doctor Faustus*. After explaining the assignment and the problem to the students, they started reading the LT; as a first step towards solving the problem, they had the option of highlighting distinctive features between those texts. The students were curious about the title of the play, which was evident from their first actions; they either used the internet to look for its meaning or directly asked the teacher about its meaning. After discovering the meaning, many participants could recognize the literary movement to which the play belonged since the word 'virtues' in the title indicated that the play tackled religious topics, which was a defining

characteristic of medieval literature. The only challenge for the students was providing textual clues and arguments to support their answers.

Since the play was longer than the typical texts used in class, the participants were skimming and scrutinizing some parts of it, which allowed them to identify most of the characteristics of Medieval literary Era. The first thing they noticed was the characters' names Innocence, Chastity, and Mercy who were trying to defeat the Devil and convince the penitent souls to repent. This allowed them to know several things about the characteristics of the play. They knew that the play exhibited the famous battle between good (God and the virtues) and evil (Devil). Seeing these characters and their names, the students were able to recognize another feature of that era, which was personification, where good deeds and merits were represented by persons. After reading the entire story, the students could recognize that the category of the play was a morality play, commonly acted out during the Middle Ages.

The students were asked why Hildegard of Bingen, the writer of *Ordo Virtutum*, wrote a literary work with similar characteristics of works written in Britain, even though she was European but not British. The students could not solve this part of the problem since they could not recall that Europe was under the control of the church and priests during the dark ages, which had affected most LT across European countries, leaving them with similar characteristics.

In regards to *Doctor Faustus*, the students read it then they started identifying its literary movement and its corresponding characteristics. Many students did not know the novel; this, however, did not prevent them from solving the problem since they identified Renaissance as the concerned literary movement and recognized most of the characteristics. The students argued that when Doctor Faustus made a pact with the Devil and started practicing magic, these were

signs that LT became free from religious influence during the Renaissance era. Other characteristics such as people's focus on life on earth rather than the afterlife and focus on human beings were identified by the students. This particularly the case when Doctor Faustus did not care about his death after the pact was over. Overall, this session was more successful because the students were able to solve the introduced problems by themselves and shared more insights during classroom debates.

### **Session 5**

In an attempt to avoid the monotony and routine of presenting, comparing, and extracting excerpts of LT, the researcher used a different approach to exploit another genre of LT, which was a poem *Ode on Melancholy* by John Keats. The aims of this lesson were to see how students would perform on a Standardized Aptitude Test (SAT) reading test and to explore characteristics of Romanticism, which had been and had not been tackled during the lectures (refer to Appendix--- for the reading test). To this end, the teacher designed a problem where the students experienced sitting for an SAT test as well as replying to the following question: "John Keats, besides other writers, is described as a rebellious writer. Can you see that throughout this poem?" In order for this problem to be solved, students were allotted two 90-minute sessions; the first was devoted to the SAT test while the second was devoted to discussing the characteristics of the poem and answering the given question. In an attempt to make the problem complicated and challenging, the experimenter chose a SAT test whose answers could not be found on the internet so that the students could not provide ready-made answers.

The presented SAT reading test was composed of multiple choice questions and statements, so the students had to read the poem and the items carefully to provide correct

answers. Firstly, the students started reading the poem trying to figure out its messages. This is when they started using the internet to understand the meaning of difficult words and expressions. The students kept rereading the poem when they started scrutinizing the questions and the statements. Working in groups, the students discussed and argued remarkably over the appropriate choice provided to answer the given items. The facilitator tried to help some groups who faced difficulties with the poem by being a part of these groups and explaining some ideas included in the poem. After monitoring all the groups where the facilitator examined their answers and discussed the choices of group members, the students started sharing their answers with the other groups. To a great extent, the participants succeeded in providing correct answers for the SAT reading test.

In regards to the second session, the students had read the poem prior to the session, so they immediately started the process of extracting and recognizing the characteristics of the poem. Scrutiny of the title and the stanzas led students to noticing the words ‘melancholy, mournful, sorrow, joy and delight’ and the like; this made them perceive the poem as being Romantic because it involved words about feelings. Another argument for the claim that the poem belonged to Romanticism was that several terms related to nature were present throughout the poem: ‘Wolf’s bane, flowers, rose, and clouds’. Concerning the last part of the problem, which was about showing Keats’s rebelliousness in his poem, only a few students could figure it out. They said that Keats was perceived as rebellious because the content of his poem involved ideas that were against what people’s common beliefs and against general consensus. In an attempt to illustrate, they said that unlike people who viewed melancholy and sadness as bad things in human beings’ lives, John Keats said that we should embrace sadness arguing that there would be no joy if there was no sorrow. At this stage of the lesson, some students opposed this

view by questioning the poet and saying that Keats was not right to claim such a thing. The debate between the two conflicting viewpoints ensued for some time in the session, which ended with the facilitator putting an end to the debate by highlighting Keats's claims.

## **Session 8**

After introducing the students to the main concepts of postcolonial theory, the researcher planned a tutorial session in attempt to apply those concepts on a literary text. The aim of this session was to contextualize and apply postcolonial theory concepts such as Euro-centrism, Cultural Superiority, Hybridity, Mimicry, and Ambivalence. To make this aim achievable, the instructor designed a problem where the learners had to play a role of postcolonial critics whose task was to decolonize previously colonized countries by highlighting the postcolonial concepts and the unfairness of the white man in the given work, which was Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. A plot summary of the novel was then given to the learners.

The assignment was explained thoroughly so that students were sure of what they had to do. They started reading in groups, trying to figure out what the story was about. Whenever they encountered problems with words, they referred to the internet. As soon as they finished reading and understanding the given material, the students started identifying how the text demonstrated postcolonial concepts. Firstly, they extracted evidence of Euro-centrism and European Cultural Superiority in *Robinson Crusoe*, arguing that when he settled on the island after the shipwreck, Crusoe described natives as cannibals, gave the name Friday to one of the freed prisoners, taught him English, and converted him to Christianity. All of these deeds were perceived by the students as proof of Daniel Defoe's Euro-centrism and Cultural Superiority. Other students also pointed out that while Crusoe was described as a knowledgeable and skillful craftsman, Friday

was described as a beast who spoke a savage and ambiguous language. In regards to Hybridity and Mimicry, the students discussed how Friday spoke a language that was a mixture of his mother tongue and whatever English words he had learned to utter. Others pointed out how he tried to use a gun like Crusoe. In regards to Ambivalence, the students could not find any evidence of it, so they were asked to predict what could be written in order to show that Friday was ambivalent. Students then suspected that Friday would start doubting his religion and culture, especially since he would not be allowed to integrate into English society.

### **Session 11**

This session, which was the last session of the treatment, took place after a 5-month lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the second semester was devoted to teaching American literary movements, this session targeted American authors' LT and their characteristics. The aims of this session, thus, were to enable students to apply their knowledge about American literary movements and to make students realize how a single American author used to write texts of varying features, reflecting different literary eras. To accomplish these aims, a problem scenario was designed where the experimenter chose six LT, some full poems and some excerpts of poems, all of which were written by Walter Whitman. Additionally, the researcher included different views provided by three critics, each arguing for a different viewpoint. One critic argued that the author was romanticist because there was reference to nature in the provided poems. Due to the depiction of real life and war, the second critic perceived Walter Whitman to be realist. Another argued that the author was transcendentalist since he accentuated the connectedness between men and the universe. After reading the poems and the critics' different opinions, the students had to decide whose viewpoint they agreed with.

Having understood the assignments, the students took a long time scrutinizing the poems and the critics' viewpoints. They used the internet to figure out the meaning of ambiguous words, expressions and figurative language, and they asked each other about hidden messages of some poems because they could not grasp the meanings of all of them. While monitoring the groups, the facilitator helped some students by interpreting some poems with them and explaining lines that they could not grasp the meaning of.

After fully understanding the poems, the students began to apply their knowledge about the characteristics of the concerned literary periods on the given poems. Once they found out that there were diverse characteristics from different literary movements, they questioned how these poems could be written by one author. The students were confused, so they chose to side with different critics. Next, the students started questioning and debating without reaching an agreement over one viewpoint. Each critic had opponents and proponents amongst the students. Whenever a student chose one critic's viewpoint, other students disagreed by providing pertinent arguments. For instance, those who claimed that Walter Whitman was a romantic critic by mentioning space, oak tree, the night air and the stars were opposed by other students who argued that the writer was realist because he was describing real life by reporting details about wars and how people were urged to go to the battlefield. The students kept questioning each other and questioning the claims of the critics with whom they did not agree. The facilitator, once more, intervened because the students could not reach a common ground, and he discussed with the students the meaning of each poem. After ups and downs, only one student changed his mind and said that he did not agree with any critic because each one of them was partially right. He then argued that the writer was incorporating different features from different literary eras

into his poems. The other students agreed with this student who recognized that a single writer in one literary movement incorporated various features of other movements.

It is worth reporting that collaborative or cooperative work did not occur in this session because of the safety measures of the COVID-19 pandemic where the students had to maintain distance from each other. In spite of this, a few students chose to work in pairs to solve the given problem.

#### **4.4.3. Data Analysis Procedures**

To answer the research questions and to confirm or reject the hypotheses, the researcher used Microsoft Word, Excel, and SPSS version 25. Graphs for the frequency tables for the questionnaire were done through Microsoft Word, the rest of the data were coded and organized in Excel then imported into and analyzed by SPSS. Statistical analysis took two different forms: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. For the descriptive statistics, the researcher analyzed the mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation. As for the inferential statistics, ANCOVA and Pearson's correlation analysis were used. Each research question and the method of data analysis used to answer the question are outlined below.

- Research question 1: To what extent does the implementation of PBL in the EFL classroom affect learners' CR of LT? This research question was answered by ANCOVA. Prior to using ANCOVA, however, the researcher tested for its assumptions. The researcher chose to use ANCOVA because it can test for a difference between two or more scores by taking into consideration another variable (known as the covariate). In the case of this research question, the other variable is pre-test scores. The use of ANCOVA is particularly helpful

when testing for the difference in progress of two groups since the two groups did not start with the same scores in the pre-test (Huitema, 2005).

- Research question 2: Which aspect of CR, if any, is affected most by PBL? To answer this research question, the researcher used ANCOVA with each aspect of CR. In the same way that the differences in the overall CR post-test scores were compared while taking into consideration differences in pre-test scores, the researcher tested for differences in each aspect of CR by itself while taking into consideration the pre-test score for each aspect.
- Research question 3: What are learners' attitudes towards PBL in the LT classroom? To answer this question, the researcher used a questionnaire, for which the data was analyzed using frequency tables and descriptive statistics only. No inferential statistics were used to answer this question.
- Research question 4: Does PBL intervention in LT classes promote self-directed learning practices? To answer this question, the researcher used a questionnaire, for which the data was analyzed using frequency tables and descriptive statistics only.
- Research question 5: To what extent are learners' experiences with PBL activities related to their attitudes towards these activities and the PBL environment? After ensuring that the data did not violate the assumptions of parametric testing, the researcher used Pearson's correlation analysis to answer this question, which tests for a correlation between two continuous variables (Hauke & Kossowski, 2011).

#### **4.5. Reliability and Validity**

As previously mentioned in this chapter, a quasi-experimental design lacks randomization, which causes a major threat to external validity. Lack of external validity leads to less generalizability of the findings to other populations. To try and counter this weakness in

validity, the researcher took several measures in an attempt to strengthen other aspects of validity and reliability. In particular, the researcher carried out the following: triangulation, inter-rater reliability, blinding, and piloting.

According to Cohen et al. (2005), “Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior” (p.112). This means that in triangulated studies, researchers opt for varying methods of data gathering in order to obtain data. This, in social sciences, aims to “map out, or explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint” (Cohen et al., 2005, p. 112). Throughout the present study, the researcher used different tools to collect the required data and to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. These different instruments were the test, the observation checklist, and the attitude questionnaire.

By using various data collection instruments, the researcher aimed at providing valid and reliable results. Generally speaking, validity as defined by Lewis-Beck et al. (2003), is the extent to which a data gathering tool measures what it claims to measure. To attain validity, the researcher included most of the elements of the dependent variable CR, such as analyzing, applying, evaluating, and synthesizing, in the pre and post tests. In spite of including these elements in the tests, there were still some aspects related to CR that were not covered by the tests, mainly questioning, annotating, using dictionaries, dealing with figurative language. This is why the researcher opted for an observation checklist attempting to tackle the elements that could not be tackled by the tests, enabling the researcher to observe the participants’ behavioral aspects related to CR. Otherwise stated, the researcher of this study tried to cover the dependent variable comprehensively through the use of both an observation grid and a test. By doing this,

the researcher emphasized strengthening construct validity, which refers to measuring what the research aims to measure and content validity, which refers to the extent to which the measuring tools cover the dependent variable (Cohen et al., 2005).

In regards to reliability, define it as the extent to which findings or scores obtained during a research are consistent over an extended point in time and on a similar population (Cohen et al., 2005; Crano et al., 2015). This consistency of the results, which denotes trustworthy findings, can be achieved through a number of ways. In the case of this research study, the researcher sought to provide reliable results mainly through inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater reliability refers to a measure of the degree of similarity or agreement between observers over the rating or assessment of the same phenomenon (Crano et al., 2015). Accordingly, the pretest and posttest of this inquiry were both assessed by two raters; the first is a doctoral candidate in didactics of LT and the second is doctor in didactics of English as a foreign language. For the sake of providing reliable and unbiased results, prior to this assessment of students' papers, both raters were blinded by hiding the names of all the participants and mixing up the papers of the experimental and control groups.

After assessment scores from both raters were complete, they checked the marks together. Whenever there was a significant difference between the two rater's score, they discussed and re-assessed that particular paper in order to reach an agreement. Inter-rater reliability was measured using the intra-class correlation coefficient as an index for measuring the degree to which rater's scores were homogenous.

In addition to conducting inter-rater reliability, to strengthen the study's reliability, the researcher made sure that most of the data gathering instruments were piloted prior to using

them. Firstly, the intervention designed to teach LT using PBL-based instruction was pilot tested with a smaller group prior to engaging in the main study. In this regard, Kumar (2002) and Gorard (2003) assert that it is essential for any researcher who is conducting an experimental inquiry to embark on a pilot study where he or she tests his or her treatment on a smaller scale. Pilot tests strengthen reliability since they allow the experimenter to discover any unforeseen hurdles that would compromise the main study; they provide the researcher with insight on the degree to which participants may resist or cooperate (Kumar, 2002), and they reveal the extent to which different parts of the study are feasible and practical (Crano et al., 2015). After uncovering any difficulties related to the implementation of the intervention, pilot studies are a source of feedback that enables researchers to omit or alter some elements in order to increase the feasibility and practicality of their program.

Based on the pilot study, the researcher concluded that, overall, implementation of PBL-based instruction in teaching LT was feasible, and the students were cooperative, so the experimenter decided to make only minor changes. For instance, the step of ‘reapplication’, which is a step in the problem solving process in PBL, was omitted because of time restrictions. Another minor change was the researcher’s decision to reduce the degree of facilitation of the learning process after the first session of the main treatment.

Piloting was not limited to the intervention only; the researcher also piloted the attitude questionnaire in attempt to increase reliability and validity of the results obtained from this tool. Oppenheim (1992) confirms that piloting questionnaires increases, besides practicability, the chance to have reliable and valid results. Piloting the questionnaire is beneficial since it not only

allows the researcher to know how clear each item is and clarify anything that is ambiguous, but it also I know the time needed to respond to all the questions (Cohen et al., 2005).

### **Conclusion**

This chapter serves as an overview of the methodology adopted for the current study in order to answer the research questions, test the set hypotheses, and attain the set objectives. In doing so, the chapter introduced and described in detail the main research design and data collection instruments. Afterwards, a detailed description of the treatment and procedures for the pilot study and the main study were provided. The chapter then provides an overview of the measures taken by the researcher to strengthen the design and provide valid and reliable findings. Such measures include conducting pilot studies, inter-rater reliability, and blinding. Finally, this chapter outlines data analysis procedures for answering each of the research questions. In the next chapter results obtained from the three data gathering tools are reported and the research questions are answered.

## **V. Chapter Five: Data Analysis, Results, and Interpretations**

### **Introduction**

To answer the research questions and achieve the objectives, the researcher used multiple tools. This chapter presents results attained from various forms of data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics are presented for data attained from the pre- and post-test, descriptive statistics are provided for data attained from the questionnaire, and classroom observation. The first section presents statistics for the tests. The second section provides results from the classroom observation analysis, and the third section presents results of the questionnaire. In the final section, the researcher interprets the data in the light of the research questions and discusses the findings in light of the broader literature.

### **5.1. Findings of the experiment:**

In order to find out whether an intervention of PBL-based instruction in the EFL LT classroom would be effective in improving learners' ability to read critically, the researcher ran a pre-intervention and a post-intervention test of CR of LT (Refer to Appendix B and Appendix C for the tests). For assessing CR of LT, the researcher referred to an evaluation rubric containing six main categories: comprehension, analysis, and synthesis, use of SE while arguing, KA, and MC. While the entire evaluation was based on a 24-point grading scale, each category was based on a 4-point scale.

Before running inferential statistics and testing for any significant difference between group performances, the researcher first ran descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics are used for describing data gathered from a sample, which usually reflects the target population (Descriptive and Inferential Statistics, 2019).

Table 5.1 presents descriptive statistics for each of the five categories of CR of LT as well as total scores for CR.

As the table shows, for the category of comprehension in the pre-test the EG performed slightly better ( $M= 1.714$ ,  $SD= .698$ ) than the CG ( $M= 1.632$ ,  $SD= .779$ ). In the post-test, however, the difference between the two groups was more noticeable, with the EG ( $M= 1.852$ ,  $SD= 1.012$ ) outperforming the CG ( $M= 1.590$ ,  $SD= .812$ ). Since the scale is based on 0-4, both groups performed slightly below the expected average of 2, especially the CG. Furthermore, while the EG appeared to improve from the pre-test to the post- test, the EG performed slightly worse in the post-test. Pre-test comprehension scores for the EG ranged from .25 to 3.25, which, along with a SD of .698, indicates that scores varied considerably from one participant to another. The same pattern is present in the CG, of which the performance ranged from 0 to 3, with a SD of .779. Although the two SDs mentioned above may not seem like a large number, when taking into consideration that the maximum score that a student can attain in each category is 4 then .698 and .779 for an average difference between each participant is a relatively large deviation. Like mean scores, minimum and maximum scores saw an improvement from the pre-test to the post-test. In the post-test, the CG had a minimum score of .50 (compared to 0 in the pre-test) and a maximum score of 3.25 (compared to 3 in the pretest). Similarly, the EG had a minimum score of .38 (compared to .25 in the pre-test) and a maximum score of 3.38 (compared to 3.25 in the pre-test). For both groups, the SD was even higher than in the pre-test, indicating that scores varied more from one student to another.

For the second category of CR of LT, analysis, the EG (M= 1.359, SD=.685) performed nearly the same as the CG (M=1.361, SD= .677) in the pretest. In the post-test, there was only a slight difference in performance between the EG (M=1.516, SD= .756) and the CG (M=1.488, SD= .742). Again, since the scale is based on 0-4, both groups performed below the expected average of 2. Unlike in the category of comprehension, in the category of analysis, both groups appeared to have improved from their pre-test to post-test performance. Pre-test analysis scores for the EG ranged from .25 to 2.50 with a SD of .685, again indicating that scores varied considerably from one participant to another. The same pattern is present in the CG, of which the performance ranged from 0 to 3.13, with a SD of .677. Like mean scores, minimum and maximum scores saw an improvement from the pre-test to the post-test. In the post-test, the EG had a minimum score of .63 (compared to .25 in the pre-test) and a maximum score of 3.13 (compared to 2.5 in the pretest). The CG had a minimum score of .25 in the post-test (compared to .25 in the pre-test) and a maximum score of 3.38 (compared to 3.13 in the pre-test). Although both groups improved in the post-test, the EG saw a greater improvement.

The third category in the CR assessment rubric is synthesis. In the pre-test, the CG (M=1.364, SD=.792) and the EG (M= 1.406, SD=.793) performed nearly the same. Both groups, however, performed lower than the expected average of 2. Similarly, scores on the post-test were not much different when comparing the CG (M=1.379, SD= .740) and the EG (M= 1.531, SD= .816). When comparing pre-test to post-test scores, neither of the groups improved much in terms of synthesis. Pre-test synthesis scores of the EG ranged from .25 to 3.13 with a SD of .793, and for the CG, scores ranged from 0 to 3.13 with a SD of .792, again indicating that scores varied considerably from one participant to another. In the CG, minimum and maximum scores

did not improve at all from the pre-test to the post-test, but the EG's minimum score improved slightly. This may indicate that the EG was affected by the treatment.

The fourth category of CR of LT is SE, which is the use of SE while arguing reasonably. In this category, in the pre-test, the CG (M=1.497, SD= .727) performed slightly better than the EG (M= 1.385, SD= .753). Unlike in the other categories, in the post-test the EG (M= 1.771, SD= .929) saw what seems to be a significant improvement in performance when compared to the CG (M= 1.649, SD=.844). Pre-test SE scores for the EG ranged from .25 to 3 with a SD of .753, and scores for the CG ranged from 0 to 2.75, with a SD of .727. Like mean scores, minimum and maximum scores improved considerably from the pre-test to the post-test. In the post-test, the EG scored a minimum of .50 (compared to .25 in the pre-test) and a maximum score of 3.50 (compared to 3 in the pretest). The CG scored a minimum score of 0 in the post-test (compared to 0 in the pre-test) and a maximum score of 3.25 (compared to 2.75 in the pre-test). Although both groups improved in the post-test, the EG saw a greater improvement, indicating that perhaps the treatment was effective.

**Table 5. 1.** *Critical Reading Pre-test and Post-test Scores*

Group		Statistic	Std. Error		Statistic	Std. Error	
Experimental	Pre Comprehension	Mean	1.7135	.14246	Post Comprehension	1.8521	.20648
		Std. Deviation	.69790			1.01153	
		Minimum	.25			.38	
		Maximum	3.25			3.38	
Control	Pre Comprehension	Mean	1.6319	.12976	Post Comprehension	1.5903	.13526
		Std. Deviation	.77859			.81153	
		Minimum	.00			.50	
		Maximum	3.00			3.25	
Experimental	Pre	Mean	1.3594	.13982	Post Anal	1.5156	.15426
		Std. Deviation	.68496			.75570	

		Minimum	.25		.63
		Maximum	2.50		3.13
Control		Mean	1.3611	.11288	1.4882 .12367
		Std. Deviation	.67730		.74199
		Minimum	.00		.25
		Maximum	3.13		3.38
Experimental	<b>Pre Synthesis</b>	Mean	1.4063	.16177	1.5313 .16660
		Std. Deviation	.79250		.81615
		Minimum	.25		.38
		Maximum	3.13		3.13
Control	<b>Post Synthesis</b>	Mean	1.3635	.13193	1.3785 .12325
		Std. Deviation	.79158		.73950
		Minimum	.00		.00
		Maximum	3.13		3.13
Experimental	<b>Pre SE</b>	Mean	1.3854	.15363	1.7708 .18970
		Std. Deviation	.75264		.92934
		Minimum	.25		.50
		Maximum	3.00		3.50
Control	<b>Post SE</b>	Mean	1.4965	.12112	1.6493 .14067
		Std. Deviation	.72671		.84400
		Minimum	.00		.00
		Maximum	2.75		3.25
Experimental	<b>Pre KA</b>	Mean	1.2969	.15508	1.4365 .18929
		Std. Deviation	.75973		.92733
		Minimum	.25		.23
		Maximum	3.13		3.38
Control	<b>Post KA</b>	Mean	1.2778	.10316	1.3610 .14540
		Std. Deviation	.61898		.87238
		Minimum	.00		.00
		Maximum	2.38		3.38
Experimental	<b>Pre MC</b>	Mean	2.0000	.16329	1.9208 .18247
		Std. Deviation	.79997		.89390
		Minimum	.63		.50
		Maximum	3.75		3.50
Control	<b>Post MC</b>	Mean	1.5938	.11062	1.6111 .13916
		Std. Deviation	.66371		.83494
		Minimum	.00		.25

		Maximum	3.00		3.63
Experimental	Pre Total	Mean	9.1615	.80313	10.0271
		Std. Deviation	3.93450		4.99605
		Minimum	2.00		3.98
		Maximum	18.38		19.63
Control	Post Total	Mean	8.7247	.58528	9.0783
		Std. Deviation	3.51168		4.51112
		Minimum	.00		1.25
		Maximum	14.13		19.38

The fifth category of CR of LT is KA. In the pre-test, the control group's performance (M= 1.278, SD= .619) was the same as that of the EG (M=1.297, SD= .760). In the post-test, performance of the two groups was only a bit different, with the EG (M=1.437, SD= .927) just slightly outperforming the CG (M=1.361, SD= .872). When comparing pre-to-post-test performance, the EG improved slightly more than the CG, but neither group's improvement appeared to be significant. For the category of KA, pre-test SE scores for the CG ranged from 0 to 2.38 with a SD of .619, and those for the EG ranged from .25 to 3.13, with a SD of .760. In the post-test, the CG scored a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 3.38, with a SD of .872 while the EG scored a minimum of .23 and a maximum of 3.38 with a SD of .927. Unlike in the other categories, the CG saw the greatest improvement in KA.

The final category in the evaluation of CR of LT is MC, which refers to linguistic correctness; i.e., grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc. In the pre-test, the EG (M=2.000, SD= .800) outperformed the CG (M= 1.594, SD= .664) in this category. Similarly, in the post-test, the EG (M=1.921, SD=.894) outperformed the CG (M=1.611, SD= .835), but when comparing pre-test to post-test performances, only the CG improved, albeit it was a barely noticeable improvement. For the final category, MC, pre-test scores for the EG ranged from .63 to 3.75 with

a SD of .800, and those for the CG ranged from 0 to 3, with a SD of .664. In the post-test, the EG scored a minimum of .50 and a maximum of 3.50 with a SD of .894 while the CG scored a minimum of .25 and a maximum of 3.63 with a SD of .835. In this category, the CG saw considerable improvement from pre-test to post-test scores while the EG actually performed worse in the post-test. This is the same for the mean scores, where the CG improved in the post-test but the EG performed just slightly worse.

Finally, since all of these categories were added up to attain a sum score for CR for each student, the researcher also ran descriptive statistics for their sum score. In the pre-test, the EG (M= 9.162, SD= 3.934) performed slightly better than the CG (M=8.725, SD= 3.512), but both groups improved slightly in performance from pre-to-post-test scores, with the EG (M=10.027, SD= 4.996) slightly outperforming the CG (M= 9.078, SD= 4.511).

When looking at the total scores for CR of LT, the CG scored a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 14.14 (with a SD of 3.52) on the pre-test and a minimum of 1.25 and maximum of 19.38 (with a SD of 4.5) on the post-test, indicating that the group experienced a considerable improvement from pre-test to post-test scores, albeit with great variance between scores of each participant. When comparing this level of improvement with the mean scores (M=8.725 in the pre-test and 9.078 in the post test), there doesn't seem to be much of a difference considering that the total score is out of 24. The great improvement in minimum and maximum scores and lack of great improvement in mean scores is perhaps attributed to the great range in scores from one individual to another. For instance, while the minimum and maximum scores improved, most individuals probably did not improve, which explains the little difference in mean scores.

When looking at the total CR scores for the EG, in the pre-test, the minimum score was 2, and the maximum was 18.38 (SD of 3.935). In the post-test, the minimum score was 3.98, and the maximum score was 19.63 (SD of 4.996). As the scores indicate, there was what appears to be a slight improvement in minimum and maximum scores, with great variance from one individual to another. Like the improvement in mean scores (from 9.162 to 10.027), this improvement does not seem to be very significant considering the fact that the total score was out of 24. When the EG is compared to the CG, there seems to be little difference. In the pre-test, the EG started off with a slightly higher score, so the slightly higher score in the post-test seems a bit insignificant since the CG also improved by about the same amount. Because of all the different scores, the researcher could not reach a conclusion based on descriptive statistics alone, so he decided to run inferential statistics to test for any statistically significant differences.

## **ANCOVA**

The inferential test statistic ANCOVA is used to test for the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable while controlling for other variables, which may include variables that interact with the two main variables and/or covariates (Laerd Statistics, 2021). In other words, sometimes when testing for the effect of one variable on another, a different variable (known as the covariate) can affect the outcome because it may be correlated with either or both of the other two variables. In this case, the covariate has to be controlled for by incorporating it into the analysis. ANCOVA, therefore, analyzes the effect of one variable on another while calculating the effect of the covariate. In the case of this study, the researcher used ANCOVA to test for a difference between post-test scores on CR while adopting pre-test scores as the covariate. This was done because, according to some of the descriptive statistics, pre-test scores seemed to vary, so the two groups could have started the study with different scores.

Thus, adopting pre-test scores as a covariate eliminates any chance of having their initial performance (thus the pre-test scores) contribute to any difference in their end performance (post-test).

In order to proceed with ANCOVA, the researcher ran a few other test statistics, primarily to confirm that the data is suitable for ANCOVA. Since it is a parametric inferential statistic, ANCOVA comes with certain assumptions that should be met in order to attain reliable results (Laerd Statistics, 2021). The first assumption is that the dependent variable and the covariate should be measured on a continuous scale. The researcher of the current study used a continuous scale (1-24) to measure CR, which is the dependent variable. The same scale was used to measure the covariate, which is pre-test CR scores. The second assumption is that the independent variable should take on two or more categorical independent groups. In the case of this study, the independent variable does take on two categorical level groups, which are control and experimental groups. The third assumption of ANCOVA is that there should be independence of observations, which, in essence, means that groups should not overlap. In other words, members of the CG should not also be included as members of the EG. The fourth assumption is absence of significant outliers. After running descriptive statistics and finding a few significant outliers, the researcher removed them from the dataset and re-did the entire analysis without them.

Table 5. 3. Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for Pre-test

	Group	Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
PreComprehension	EG	.964	24	.529
	Control	.978	36	.680
PreAnalysis	EG	.945	24	.206
	Control	.976	36	.618
PreSynthesis	EG	.930	24	.096
	Control	.972	36	.484
PreSE	EG	.956	24	.372
	Control	.963	36	.272
PreKA	EG	.918	24	.053
	Control	.962	36	.243
PreMC	EG	.974	24	.771
	Control	.962	36	.249
PreTotal	EG	.967	24	.590
	Control	.955	36	.152

Table 5. 2. Shapiro-Wilk Tests of Normality for Post-test

	Group	Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
<b>Post</b>	<b>EG</b>	<b>.914</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>.043</b>
<b>Comprehension</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>.929</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>.023</b>
Post	<b>EG</b>	<b>.905</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>.028</b>
Analysis	Control	.966	36	.334
Post	EG	.949	24	.252
Synthesis	Control	.982	36	.822
PostSE	EG	.935	24	.123
	Control	.969	36	.398
PostKA	EG	.937	24	.138
	Control	.949	36	.097
PostMC	EG	.952	24	.304
	Control	.970	36	.438
PostTotal	<b>EG</b>	<b>.907</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>.031</b>
	Control	.962	36	.256

The fifth assumption for ANCOVA is that the data should be approximately normally distributed. To test for normality (Table 5.2 and Table 5.3), the researcher ran the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, which indicates that most of the data is normally distributed. For instance, in the pre-test, all scores have a significance value greater than .05, which translates to normal distribution for that particular dataset. On the post-test, a few of the datasets (emphasized) are not normally distributed, such as data for both groups in the category of comprehension, data for the EG in the category of analysis, and data for the EG in total post-test scores. Despite this, the researcher chose to overlook the few instances of violation of normality for a number of reasons. First, as their significance value indicates, these are not extreme violations of normality. The

significance values for post-comprehension for the EG ( $D(24) = .914, p = .043$ ) and the CG ( $D(36) = .929, p = .023$ ), those for the EG for post-analysis ( $D(24) = .905, p = .028$ ), and those for post total scores for the EG ( $D(24) = .907, p = .031$ ) are only slightly lower than .05, which indicates that the violation of normality is not extreme. Second, out of 28 categories of data, only four have slight violations of normality, which also indicates non-extreme violations.

Finally, the researcher decided to proceed with ANCOVA because ANCOVA is “robust” to such minor violations (Laerd Statistics, 2021). The final assumption that was tested for was homogeneity of variances, which basically means that the extent to which data for the dependent variable is spread out is equal across groups. In other words, if there is a large variation in data in the CG, there should also be a large variation in data in the EG, or if there is little variation in the CG, there should be little variation in the EG. To test for homogeneity of variances, the researcher ran Levene’s test of homogeneity of variances for the dependent variable. Table 5.4 presents data from the test statistic. As the table shows, there is equality of variances for the categories of comprehension ( $F(1, 70) = 1.560, p = .217$ ), analysis ( $F(1, 70) = .088, p = .767$ ), synthesis ( $F(1, 70) = .1748, p = .190$ ), SE ( $F(1, 70) = 1.207, p = .276$ ), KA ( $F(1, 70) = .253, p = .617$ ), MC ( $F(1, 70) = .295, p = .589$ ), and post total ( $F(1, 70) = 1.415, p = .238$ ) across the two groups since all of the p-values are below .05. Results from Levene’s test, therefore, indicate that the final assumption for ANOVA is not violated.

Table 5. 4. Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Comprehension	Based on Mean	1.560	1	70	.217
Analysis	Based on Mean	.088	1	70	.767
Synthesis	Based on Mean	1.748	1	70	.190
SE	Based on Mean	1.207	1	70	.276
KA	Based on Mean	.253	1	70	.617
MC	Based on Mean	.295	1	70	.589
Total	Based on Mean	1.415	1	70	.238

Since the data meets nearly all assumptions for running ANCOVA, the researcher proceeded with the analysis. The researcher ran seven separate ANCOVA analyses, one for the total CR of LT score, and one for each of its six categories. Table 5.5 shows results for the ANCOVA analysis for the total CR of LT scores. The table consists of several rows. The row “pre total” (in bold) presents data for the effect of the pre-test scores on post-test scores, which indicates that the pre-test scores, in fact, do have a significant effect on post-test scores ( $F(1, 57) = 46.467, p = .000$ ). The researcher expected this since the descriptive statistics revealed that in their pre-test scores, the two groups performed differently in CR as a whole and in more than one category of CR skills. Without taking this effect into consideration, the results could be confounded. The test statistic ANCOVA, therefore, took into account the effect of the pre-test scores while calculating the effect of the intervention on post-test scores. This is presented in the row “group” (also in bold). After controlling for pre-test scores, results from the ANCOVA analysis revealed that the intervention of PBL-based instruction did not have an effect on post-test scores since there is no significant difference between group performances ( $F(1, 57) = .381, p = .539$ ). These results are in line with those of the descriptive statistics.

**Table 5. 5.** ANCOVA Table for Total Critical Rereading

Dependent Variable: **Post Total**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	590.664 <sup>a</sup>	2	295.332	23.755	.000
Intercept	30.163	1	30.163	2.426	.125
<b>Pre Total</b>	<b>577.702</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>577.702</b>	<b>46.467</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Group</b>	<b>4.739</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4.739</b>	<b>.381</b>	<b>.539</b>
Error	708.647	57	12.432		
Total	6666.347	60			
Corrected Total	1299.310	59			

a. R Squared = .455 (Adjusted R Squared = .435)

The second ANCOVA table (Table 5.6) presents data for the analysis of post-test comprehension scores after controlling for pre-test comprehension scores. Again, at the row pre-comprehension reveals that pre-test scores do have an effect on post-test scores ( $F(1, 57) = 39.285, p = .000$ ). After controlling for pre-test comprehension scores, the ANCOVA analysis has revealed that the intervention of PBL-based instruction in the LT classroom has not affected the CR skill of comprehension since there is no difference in post-test comprehension scores ( $F(1, 57) = 1.179, p = .282$ ).

**Table 5. 6.** ANCOVA Table for Comprehension

Dependent Variable: **Post Comprehension**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	19.994 <sup>a</sup>	2	9.997	20.662	.000
Intercept	1.871	1	1.871	3.867	.054
Pre Comprehension	19.007	1	19.007	39.285	.000
Group	.570	1	.570	1.179	.282
Error	27.577	57	.484		
Total	219.953	60			
Corrected Total	47.571	59			

a. R Squared = .420 (Adjusted R Squared = .400)

The third ANCOVA table (Table 5.7) presents data for post-test analysis scores after controlling for pre-test analysis scores. As the row pre-analysis reveals, pre-test scores do have an effect on post-test scores ( $F(1, 57) = 11.048, p = .002$ ). After controlling for pre-test analysis scores, the ANCOVA analysis has revealed that the intervention of PBL-based instruction in the LT classroom has not affected the CR skill of analysis since there is no difference in post-test analysis scores ( $(F(1, 57) = .024, p = .877)$ ).

**Table 5.7.** ANCOVA Table for Analysis

**Dependent Variable: Post Analysis**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5.272 <sup>a</sup>	2	2.636	5.535	.006
Intercept	9.383	1	9.383	19.704	.000
Pre Analysis	5.261	1	5.261	11.048	.002
Group	.011	1	.011	.024	.877
Error	27.143	57	.476		
Total	167.265	60			
Corrected Total	32.415	59			

a. R Squared = .163 (Adjusted R Squared = .133)

The fourth ANCOVA table (Table 5.8) presents data for post-test synthesis scores after controlling for pre-test synthesis scores. As the row pre synthesis reveals, pre-test scores do have an effect on post-test scores ( $F(1, 57) = 23.565, p = .000$ ). The ANCOVA analysis has revealed that, after controlling for pre-test synthesis scores, the intervention of PBL-based instruction in the LT classroom has not affected the CR skill of synthesis since there is no difference in post-test synthesis scores of the two groups ( $(F(1, 57) = .571, p = .453)$ ).

**Table 5. 8. ANCOVA Table for Synthesis**

**Dependent Variable: Post Synthesis**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	10.416 <sup>a</sup>	2	5.208	12.175	.000
Intercept	7.518	1	7.518	17.575	.000
Pre Synthesis	10.080	1	10.080	23.565	.000
Group	.244	1	.244	.571	.453
Error	24.381	57	.428		
Total	159.141	60			
Corrected Total	34.797	59			

a. R Squared = .299 (Adjusted R Squared = .275)

The fifth ANCOVA table (Table 5.9) presents data for post-test SE scores after controlling for pre-test SE scores. As the row pre SE reveals, pre-test scores do have an effect on post-test scores ( $F(1, 57) = 39.712, p = .000$ ). The ANCOVA analysis has revealed that, after controlling for pre-test SE scores, the intervention of PBL-based instruction in the LT classroom has not affected the CR skill of SE since there is no difference in post-test SE scores of the two groups ( $F(1, 57) = 1.317, p = .256$ ).

**Table 5. 9. ANCOVA Table for SE**

**Dependent Variable: Post SE**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	18.607 <sup>a</sup>	2	9.303	20.085	.000
Intercept	4.457	1	4.457	9.623	.003
Pre SE	18.394	1	18.394	39.712	.000
Group	.610	1	.610	1.317	.256
Error	26.402	57	.463		
Total	217.984	60			
Corrected Total	45.009	59			

a. R Squared = .413 (Adjusted R Squared = .393)

The sixth ANCOVA table (Table 5.10) presents data for post-test KA scores after controlling for pre-test KA scores. As the row pre KA reveals, pre-test scores do have an effect on post-test scores ( $F(1, 57) = 19.954, p = .000$ ). The ANCOVA analysis has revealed that, after controlling for pre-test KA scores, the intervention of PBL-based instruction in the LT classroom has not affected the CR skill of KA since there is no difference in post-test KA scores of the two groups ( $F(1, 57) = .094, p = .761$ ).

**Table 5. 10.** ANCOVA Table for KA

**Dependent Variable: Post KA**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	12.117 <sup>a</sup>	2	6.059	10.045	.000
Intercept	3.591	1	3.591	5.953	.018
Pre KA	12.035	1	12.035	19.954	.000
Group	.057	1	.057	.094	.761
Error	34.380	57	.603		
Total	162.618	60			
Corrected Total	46.497	59			

a. R Squared = .261 (Adjusted R Squared = .235)

The final ANCOVA table (Table 5.11) presents data for post-test MC scores after controlling for pre-test MC scores. As the row pre MC reveals, pre-test scores do have an effect on post-test scores ( $F(1, 57) = 35.421, p = .000$ ). The ANCOVA analysis has revealed that, after controlling for pre-test MC scores, the intervention of PBL-based instruction in the LT classroom has not affected the CR skill of MC since there is no difference in post-test MC scores of the two groups ( $F(1, 57) = .003, p = .957$ ).

**Table 5. 11.** ANCOVA Table for MC

**Dependent Variable: Post MC**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	17.776 <sup>a</sup>	2	8.888	19.203	.000
Intercept	1.560	1	1.560	3.369	.072
PreMC	16.395	1	16.395	35.421	.000
Group	.001	1	.001	.003	.957
Error	26.383	57	.463		
Total	224.773	60			
Corrected Total	44.159	59			

a. R Squared = .403 (Adjusted R Squared = .382)

### 5.1.1. Discussion

The main aim of this study was to examine the effect of PBL on CR of LT of third year EFL learners at the department of English in Abbes Laghrour University of Khenchela. To achieve this, the researcher devised several research questions. In order to answer the first research question, “To what extent does the implementation of PBL in the EFL classroom effect learners’ CR of LT?” the researcher employed the inferential test statistic ANCOVA. In doing so, the researcher tested for the effect of pre-test CR of LT scores, which were found to have an effect on post-test CR of LT scores. Pre-test scores, therefore, were adopted as a covariate when testing for the effect of the treatment (PBL-based instruction) on post-test scores. Results from the ANCOVA analysis have revealed that, after taking into account the effect of pre-test CR scores, the treatment of PBL-based instruction had no effect on post-test CR scores.

Different internal and external reasons have led to obtaining these results. Lack of reading comprehension and scarcity of reading various materials have affected CR of LT scores.

According to Westwood (2001), literal and inferential understanding of a text can pave the way for readers to successfully read it critically. This means that when readers fail to read the text at the literal and inferential levels, they will likely fail to read it critically. Therefore, based on the results of the posttest, learners' comprehension levels were below the average which negatively affected learners' ability to read critically, lowering their CR scores. Another factor that negatively affects CR of LT is the scarcity of reading various materials. Since synthesizing and contextualizing skills require learners' awareness of historical and cultural knowledge that directly affect the production of LT, which in turn needs much exposure and reading of varying materials, learners' failure to synthesize or contextualize LT may be due to the lack of necessary knowledge of improving such skills. Concerning the external factors that have affected the final results, they are discussed in the section of limitations of the study.

## **5.2.The Observation Grid**

When observing participants, the researcher used an observation grid consisting of 16 categories. Some of these categories were already tested for in the pre-test and post-test, but other categories were not tested since they are mostly behavioral in nature, and the time allotted for the tests was not sufficient for covering all aspects of CR of literary text. Thus, the observation took place as a supplementary measure for tracking their progress of CR practices. The observation took place both prior to and following the intervention, wherein the researcher checked the extent to which each category of CR was practiced effectively on a scale of 0 to 4, with 0 meaning no effectiveness, 1 meaning limited effectiveness, 2 meaning some effectiveness, 3 meaning considerable effectiveness, and 4 meaning high degree of effectiveness.

Figures (5.1 to 5.8) present the bar graphs for each group's performance in the pre-test (which is actually the pre-intervention observation rather than test) and in the post-test (post-intervention observation). Figure 5.1 shows a comparison between the CG and the EG's level of effectiveness in using annotations and marginalia. As the figure shows, the CG and EG both started with limited effectiveness in using annotations prior to the intervention. After the intervention, however, the EG improved considerably, demonstrating considerably effective usage of annotations while the CG remained the same. Similarly, prior to the intervention, the CG started with limited usage of marginalia and remained that way post-intervention. The EG, however, started with ineffective or no use of marginalia but improved significantly following the intervention, demonstrating considerably effective usage of marginalia. The graphs indicate that the EG was more successful in developing these two CR skills.

**Figure 5. 1.** *Use of Annotations and Marginalia*

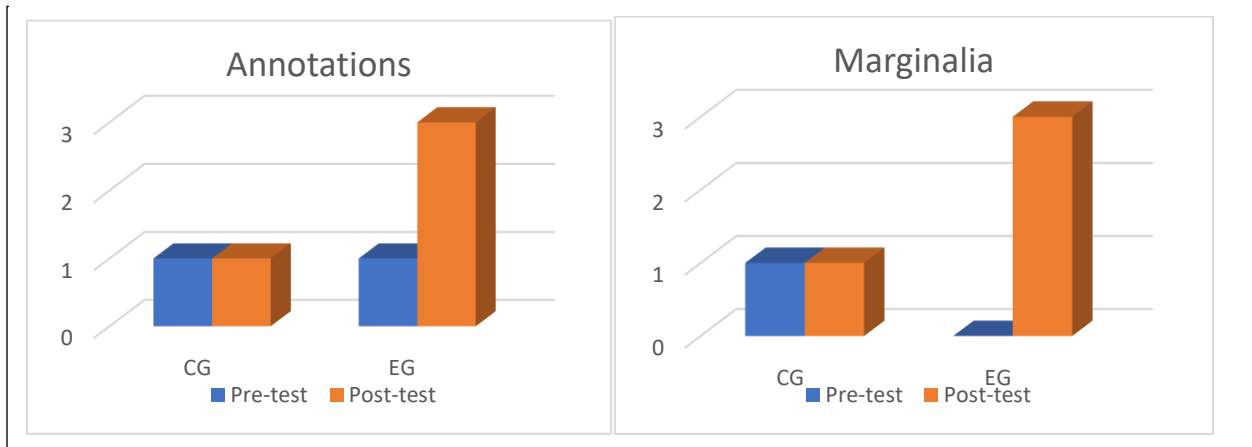
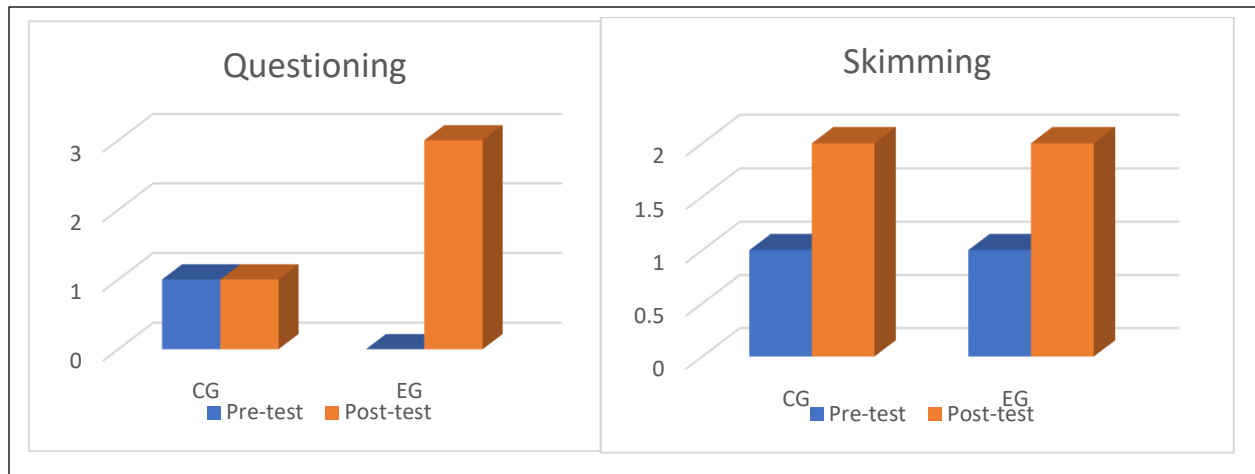


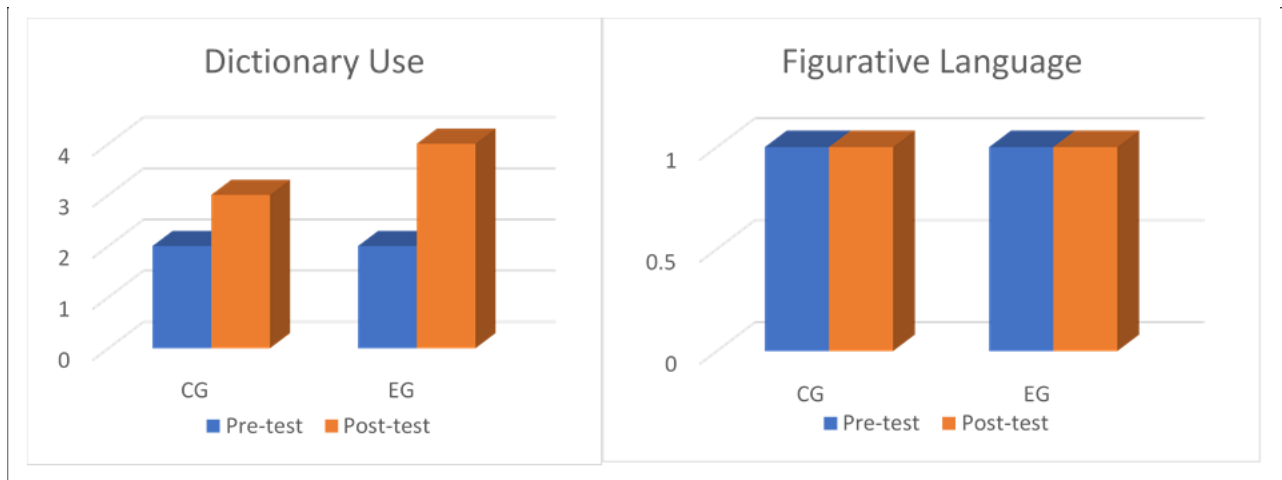
Figure 5. 2. Use of Questioning and Skimming



The second set of graphs (Figure 5.2) provides data for the use of two other elements of CR, questioning and skimming. Prior to the intervention, the CG demonstrated limited effectiveness in practicing both questioning and skimming but improved slightly in skimming after the intervention, demonstrating somewhat effective skimming. As far as the EG is concerned, prior to the intervention, they demonstrated ineffective or lack of questioning strategies, which improved significantly in the post test since they demonstrated considerable effectiveness in questioning. In terms of skimming, they improve slightly, from limited effectiveness to some effectiveness, just like the CG. Again, the graphs indicate that the EG was slightly more effective in improving their CR skills.

Figure 5.3 presents data for the third set of graphs, dictionary use and dealing with figurative language. Both groups improved in effectiveness of dictionary use, with the EG improving slightly more (from 2 to 4) than the CG (from 2 to 3). In terms of dealing with figurative language, performance was the same for both groups, neither improved. Unlike the first two sets of graphs, this set indicates that there is not much of a difference in improvement between the two groups.

Figure 5. 3. Use of Dictionaries and Figurative Language



The fourth set of graphs (Figure 5.4) presents data for the two categories re-reading and summarizing. Both groups demonstrated the same level of effectiveness (2) in re-reading prior to the intervention, which improved slightly for both groups (3) following the intervention. Likewise, both groups demonstrated ineffective or lack of summarizing skills in the pre-intervention observation, which failed to improve in post observation. These two graphs indicate that groups demonstrated the same level of effectiveness in both summarizing and re-

Figure 5. 4. Use of Rereading and Summarizing

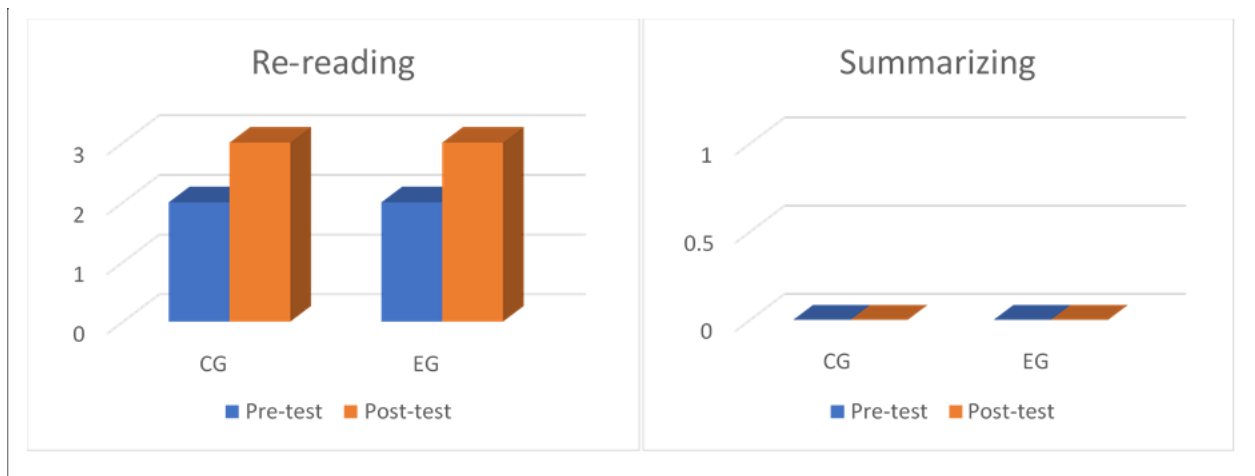


Figure 5.5 shows the fifth set of graphs, paraphrasing and open-mindedness. Like the previous categories, participants in both groups performed similarly both prior to and following the intervention. They demonstrated ineffective or no paraphrasing skills (0), and they demonstrated an intermediate level of open-mindedness (2), with neither skill developing. From pre-intervention to post-intervention.

Figure 5. 5. Use of Paraphrasing and Open-mindedness

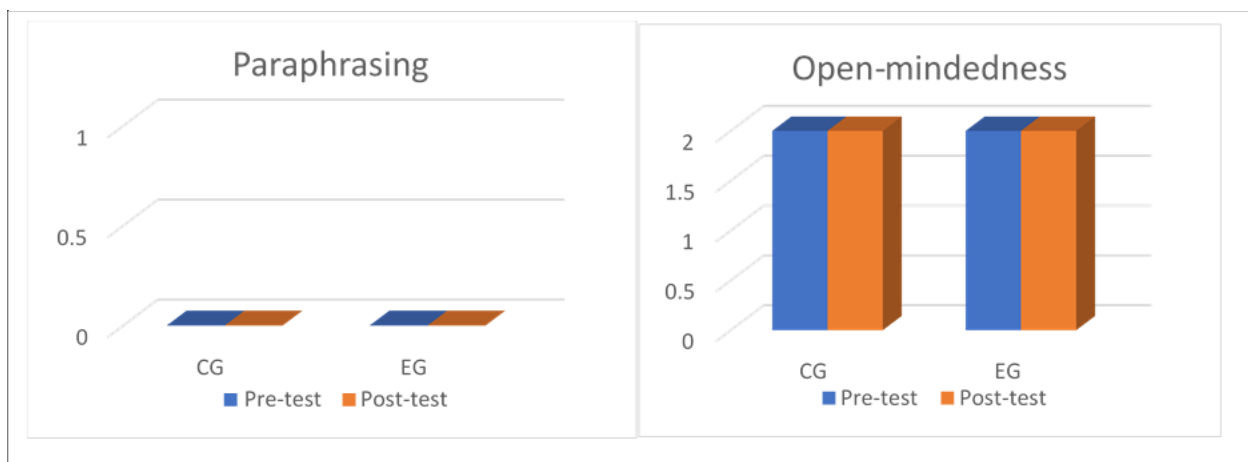


Figure 5.6 reveals data for the sixth set of categories, arguing reasonably and analyzing. For both categories, both groups improved from pre-intervention to post-intervention observation, but the EG appears to have improved slightly more. For the skill of arguing reasonably, both the CG and EG demonstrated ineffective or no use of the skill (0) in the pre-intervention observation. In the post-intervention observation, the CG improved slightly, demonstrating limited effectiveness (1) while the EG improved slightly more, demonstrating somewhat effective use (2). For the skill of analysis, the CG started with ineffective or no use of the skill (0) then limited use (1) in the post-intervention observation. The EG, however, started with limited use (1) and improved to somewhat effective usage of the skill (2).

Figure 5. 6. Arguing Reasonably and Analyzing

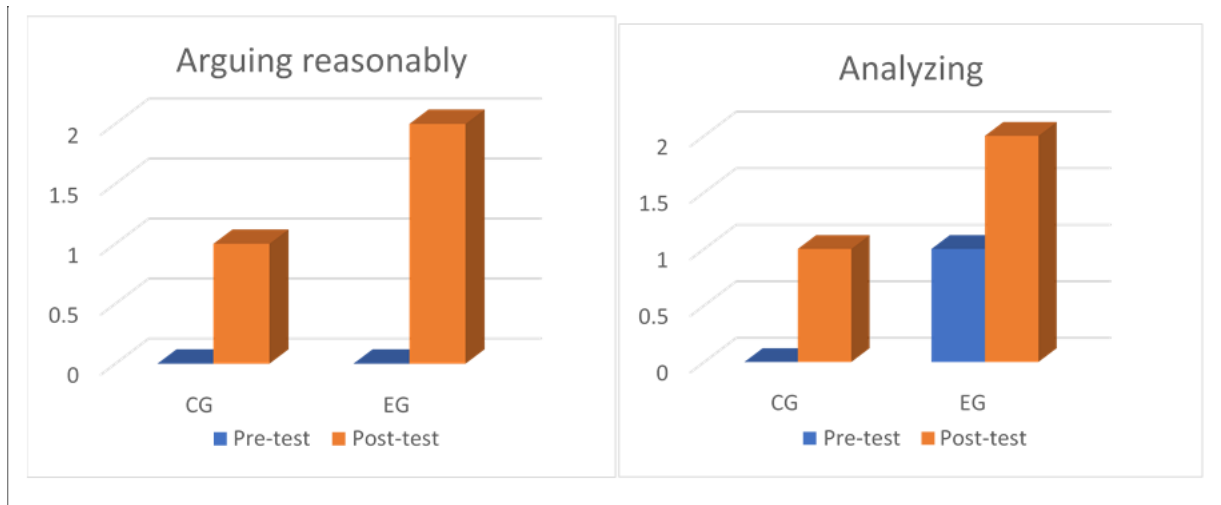


Figure 5.7 presents graphs for the categories inferring and synthesizing. For both categories, the EG appears to have improved slightly more than the CG in performance. For inferring, the EG improved from limited (1) to somewhat effective (2) demonstration of the skill while the CG remained at a limited level. For synthesizing, the CG improved from ineffective (0) to limited (1) application of the skill while the EG improved from ineffective (0) to considerably effective application (3) of the skill.

Figure 5. 8. *Inferring and Synthesizing*

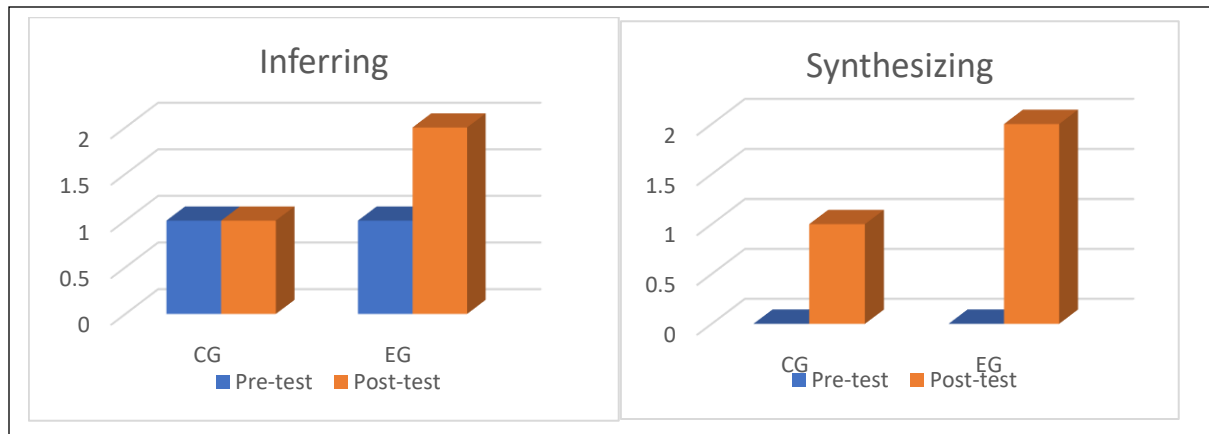
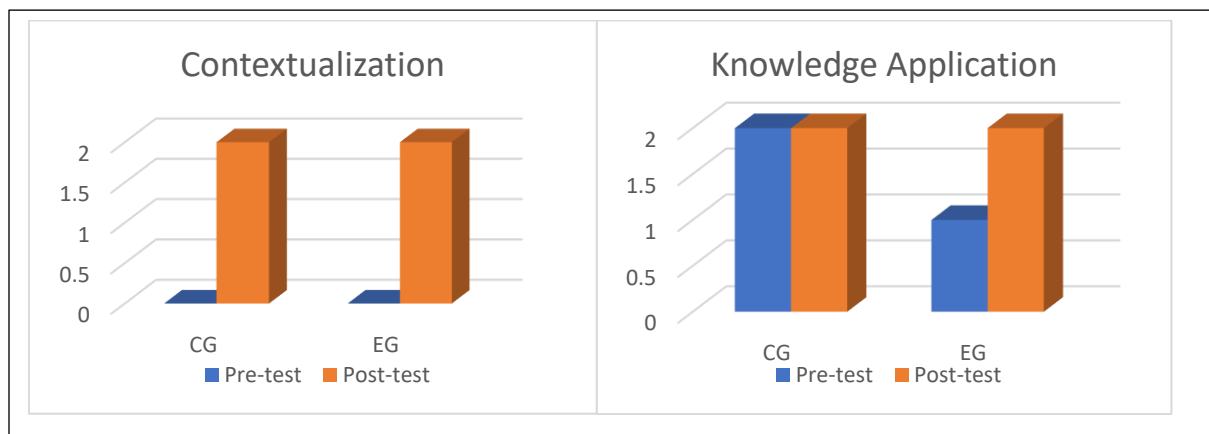


Figure 5. 7. *Contextualizing and Knowledge Application*



Finally, Figure 5.8 presents data for the two skills of contextualization and KA. For contextualization, both groups improved from the pre-intervention to post-intervention observation. In the pre-intervention observation, both groups demonstrated level 0 contextualization, and in the post-intervention observation both groups demonstrated level 2 contextualization. As for KA, the CG demonstrated level 2 usage both prior to and following the intervention. The EG, however, improved slightly, demonstrating level 1 application prior to the intervention but level 2 application following the intervention. These results indicate that the CG

and EG did not perform much differently from each other when it came to these two skills of CR.

### **5.2.1. Discussion**

The results obtained from the analysis of the observation grid reveal a great resemblance with those obtained from the analysis of tests. In particular, the findings from the observation checklist support those from the ANCOVA analysis of the post-test scores, which revealed that PBL instruction did not affect EFL learners' CR of LT. This is evident in the limited level of improvement in the post-intervention observation in several CR skills, such as analyzing, synthesizing, contextualizing, applying knowledge, and arguing reasonably. Not only this, but the learners also failed to improve in terms of summarizing and paraphrasing skills, skimming, dealing with figurative language, and rereading. With this being said, the observer witnessed a considerable improvement in some categories such as the use of dictionaries, use of annotations and marginalia, and questioning.

Both synthesizing and contextualizing require learners' awareness of historical and cultural knowledge that directly affect the production of LT. Thus, in case learners fail to synthesize or contextualize a LT, there is a great possibility they lack the necessary knowledge to improve such skills. To some extent, the learners of the EG improved in terms of these two elements (synthesizing and contextualizing); however, the improvement was not to a considerable level, meaning that the learners could not reach a high level of synthesizing or contextualizing LT. This was evident since only some students could recognize transcendentalism in some of Walter Whitman' poems, which were introduced during the session in which the observation took place, and connect them to the characteristics of transcendentalism

and beliefs promoted by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Added to that, most of the students did not succeed in contextualizing the poem '*I SAW old General at bay*' by Walter Whitman except for one student who could say that the General of whom Whitman spoke, who had gray eyes, was General Robert Lee when he had a battle in Virginia state. Worse still, the learners could not use textual clues from the six poems presented to know the exact period to which the poems belonged and how Walter Whitman used characteristics of different literary eras in different poems.

When it comes to the skills of skimming, re-reading, dictionary use, and the ability to deal with figurative language, the learners showed varying levels of effectiveness. Firstly, the observer saw that only some students read some poems rapidly to get the gist of the presented materials. The majority of students, however, were reading exhaustively by trying to figure out the meaning of every difficult word. Many students referred to online dictionaries so frequently to know the meanings of the difficult words they encountered, which caused multiple interruptions of their reading processes. For the most part, the observer did not detect usage of compensatory skills where learners used textual clues to identify the meanings of the ambiguous words while the use of dictionaries was so frequent. Though it is a sign of active reading, over-use of dictionaries indicates the learners' rudimentary level of linguistic stock. This, in turn, confirms and explains the learners' reading comprehension scores in the posttest, which were below average. Not only this, but the learners' poor level of linguistic reserve obliged them to read and reread. Thirdly, the learners avoided trying to decipher figurative language and its purposes, which was not surprising since the learners had poor linguistic stock. For example, the students could not figure out the personification in 'And you O my soul where you stand' and the irony in 'I saw them depart with cheerfulness, freely risking their lives' in Whitman's poems.

Furthermore, the low level of skimming skills practiced by the learners likely affected their ability to practice summarizing or paraphrasing strategies. This was observed by the researcher as he could not find any kind of summaries in his post-intervention observation. This might be because most of the learners did not skim the texts in order to get the main ideas of the exposed poems. Concerning paraphrasing, the students also could not produce any paraphrased passages of the poems, although some of the presented materials were relatively short and could easily be paraphrased. This might be due to the limited level of vocabulary knowledge of learners and lack of comprehension. In this regard, Khairunnisa et al. (2014) and Anogu (2018) find that poor comprehension and poor knowledge of vocabulary items are the main reasons that are directly related the English language learners' failure in paraphrasing.

Unlike the results of the previously mentioned CR categories, annotating, questioning, and using marginalia are areas where the observer witnessed considerable improvement. While reading the presented texts, the learners added extra comments and information for several purposes. For instance, whenever they looked for the meaning of words, the learners wrote their definition beside it and sometimes wrote the meaning of the words in Arabic. Whenever they found a characteristic of a literary movement, they wrote that characteristic beside that verse or stanza or used highlighters to draw attention to a word, line, or a stanza. Some of these notes were in a form of questions, otherwise known as marginalia. The learners wrote some questions asking the author about some of his ideas or about his usage of the characteristics of the literary era to which he belonged. Not only this, but the learners also asked the teacher many questions about the content of the poems in a way that demonstrated resistance to Whitman's ideas. They also questioned the critics who provided different claims about Whitman's literary era. This questioning demonstrate the learners' resistance to manipulation and non-conformism with

others' ideas, which are among the important traits of a critical reader (Abcarian, Klotz, and Cohen, 2009; Watkins, 2017). Despite demonstrating resistance to some elements, some students were left confused since they could not figure out which critic was right; hence, each student sided with a different critic, unable to recognize that they were all wrong. None felt comfortable enough to say that all the critics' views were wrong. To sum up, when learners annotate, use marginalia, question, and show resistance to the content and views portrayed in LT while reading, it is a sign that they are practicing a great part of active reading. The learners, however, could not use marginalia to express their personal experiences or to connect the content of the poems to external reading texts or their background knowledge.

Questioning was not meant for only the author or the teacher, but it included even the learners who questioned each other's views about the poems and the critic with whom they sided. Hence, debates were established where learners exchanged ideas and views. This was when the observer saw that the learners were, to some extent, providing evidence while arguing. The learners could provide a few convincing arguments about the literary era to which Whitman belonged, along with arguments justifying their choice of the critic. While arguing, some students took turns to elucidate their opinions, to oppose or accept each other's views which was an acceptable level of open-mindedness.

### **5.3.The Attitude Questionnaire**

In order to gain a different perspective on the implementation of the treatment, the researcher sought to understand participants' attitudes towards its implementation as well as the extent to which learners' attitudes were correlated with how much they felt they had applied PBL activities

in the classroom. Table 5.12 presents detailed data about the elements of PBL in an attempt to determine the extent to which these elements were implemented.

Before running descriptive and inferential statistics, the researcher ran a reliability analysis to test for the questionnaire's internal consistency. The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of  $\alpha = .713$  for PBL application (section 1) and  $\alpha = .745$  for attitudes towards PBL activities (section 2), which suggests an average and acceptable level of reliability, respectively (Cortina, 1993). After running the test of internal consistency, the researcher ran descriptive statistics analyses. The analysis of students' answers about the implementation of each element of PBL reveals varying perceptions. For the first element, use of problem scenarios in LT classes (items 1 and 16), students responded rather neutrally ( $M = 3.03$  and  $M = 2.86$ , respectively), which indicates that learners felt like they moderately approached LT in accordance with PBL-based instruction, particularly following a problem scenario.

Another element addressed in the questionnaire is self-directed learning. When considering responses for items 5, 9, 12, 14, 27, and 28, which are believed to be related to self-directed learning, the following mean scores were found:  $M = 3.46$ ,  $M = 2.8$ ,  $M = 3.8$ ,  $M = 2.93$ ,  $M = 2.96$ , and  $M = 3.43$ , which are mainly neutral with two scores being positive and no reports leaning towards an absence of self-directed learning. These results indicate that, to a considerably extent, the learning process is assigned to the students. This is demonstrated in item five, for example, which addresses students' role in solving the presented problems without having to rely on the teacher. Another example is item 28, which addresses students' preparation of their own plans for solving the problems.

**Table 5. 12.** *Implementation of PBL in the Classroom*

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. We used to start our lessons with problems based on literary texts.	3.0357	1.26146	Neutral
2. I used to work in groups.	3.0645	.92864	Neutral
3. The teacher used to explain the given assignment.	4.3548	.98483	Very positive
4. Whenever there was a misunderstanding related to the assignment, the teacher clarifies.	4.4516	.85005	Very positive
5. I used to solve the assignment by my self.	3.4667	1.30604	Positive
6. I used to interact with your classmates.	2.5714	.92009	Neutral
7. I used to interact with my teacher.	3.3667	1.24522	Neutral
8. The teacher used to facilitate the process of problem solving.	4.2333	.72793	Very positive
9. I used to choose course materials for myself.	2.8000	1.32353	Neutral
10. I used to set my own learning objectives.	3.6000	1.27577	Positive
11. The teacher used to impose his own view.	3.1333	1.45586	Neutral
12. I used to utilize the internet and online resources.	3.8065	1.24952	Positive
13. I used to negotiate meanings of ideas with the teacher.	3.2903	1.29598	Neutral
14. I used to negotiate meanings of ideas with my classmates.	2.9333	1.22990	Neutral
15. The teacher used to provide me with feedback.	3.4828	1.15328	Positive
16. The problems you start your lessons with represent problems that you may face in your real-life.	2.8621	1.32891	Neutral
17. I used to evaluate my learning process.	3.5357	1.34666	Positive
18. I used to share my solutions with the classmates.	3.1000	1.15520	Neutral
19. The teacher used to choose the course materials for you.	2.3793	1.20753	Neutral
20. The teacher used to monitor the learning groups.	3.7241	1.13063	Positive
21. I used to choose the materials for solving the problems by myself.	2.9355	1.31493	Neutral
22. You used to form groups to find solutions to the problems provided.	2.8710	1.43159	Neutral
23. When other students share their knowledge, I used to learn from them.	3.7742	1.33441	Positive
24. Discipline used to be kept during the classes.	4.3871	1.05443	Very positive
25. The teacher used to clarify ambiguous points.	4.3226	1.19407	Very positive
26. The teacher used to let the students find their own solutions.	4.0323	.83602	Positive
27. I used to conduct online research to solve the given problem.	2.9677	1.16859	Neutral
28. We used to plan our work to solve the problems.	3.4333	1.13512	Positive
29. I used English when discussing with group members.	3.8000	1.18613	Positive
30. I used to share my solutions using English.	4.1613	1.15749	Positive

31. I used to accept my classmates' opinions.	3.7419	1.29016	Positive
32. I was given enough time to cope with the problems.	3.6452	1.11201	Positive
33. We used to establish debates in class.	3.4667	1.27937	Positive
OVERALL	3.4767	.55461	Positive

Responses to item 10, which addresses who sets learning objectives in the learning-teaching process, indicate that the students were responsible for setting their own learning objectives, a practice considered to be vital for self-directed learning (M=3.6). Responses to item 19 (M=2.37), which addresses selection of course materials, indicate that the teacher usually did interfere in course material selection. This is one of the statements for which the coding value was reversed.

Another element of PBL that was addressed was the teacher's role as facilitator of the learning process. In numerous statements, learners were asked for their perceptions of the teacher's role in LT classes. Responses ranged from neutral (M=2.96) to very positive (M= 4.45) on these items, which indicate that the teacher was perceived by the learners as a facilitator, successfully taking on the role recommended by PBL. An example is item 11, which demonstrates that the teacher did not impose his own beliefs and views on students (M= 3.13), and item 13, which shows that meaning and ideas were negotiated between the teacher and students (M=3.29). When considering items number 8 and 20 (M= 4.23 and M= 3.72), we find that the teacher used to monitor the groups and his facilitation took place at the level of solving problems.

Collaborative work is another vital element of PBL, so it was addressed in several statements in the questionnaire. Responses item 2 and item 22 (M=3.06 and M=2.87, respectively), indicate that students often practiced collaborative learning to try and solve problems presented during class. Responses to item 14, which addresses meaning negotiation (another aspect of collaborative work), reveal that students sometimes negotiated meanings of concepts and ideas during LT

classes (M=2.93). Finally, responses to item 18 revealed that students often shared their answers and solutions with their classmates (M= 3.1).

The last element of PBL addressed in the first section of the questionnaire is reflection. Responses to item 17 indicate that learners frequently evaluated their learning process (M=3.53), usually by identifying their strengths and weaknesses. In addition to evaluation of learning, the questionnaire addressed students' openness in items 23 (M=3.77) and 31 (M=3.74), for which responses indicate that students were usually open to listening to and learning from their classmates. Additionally, when students were asked if they were offered opportunities to practice English with classmates (item 29), they reported quite positive responses (M=3.8). When asked whether they thought that they would encounter in their daily lives the problem scenarios they worked on in class (item 16), students were rather neutral (M=2.86), indicating that the problem scenarios could have been more practical and relatable. When looking at the overall score for the entire section, students responded rather positively (M=3.48), indicating that, for the most part, they practiced the main elements of PBL in their LT class. Based on the overall mean score, the teacher was relatively successful in implementing PBL-based instruction as per the main features of PBL.

### **Attitudes towards PBL**

The second section of the questionnaire was devoted to understanding the participants' attitudes towards the various PBL-based activities they practiced in class. Table 5.13 presents sample statements followed by descriptive statistics for each statement. The majority of the statements in this section received an average positive or very positive response (15 statements), and the rest (12 statements) received neutral responses. There were no averages that leaned towards a negative response. These results indicate that, for the most part, the students in the EG held

positive attitudes towards the PBL activities they practiced. For example, based on responses to the first statement, students seemed to be motivated to work collaboratively on various assignments (M=3.600). As another example, the students felt very positive about their interaction with the teacher, reporting that such interaction with the teacher helped establish effective learning (M=4.214).

**Table 5. 13.** *Attitudes towards Implementation of PBL*

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. It is motivating to work collaboratively with classmates to finish an assignment	3.6000	1.40443	Positive
5. PBL provides me with opportunities to direct my own learning.	3.4444	1.12090	Positive
10. Interaction with the teacher established effective learning of LT.	4.2143	1.03126	Very Positive
11. Interaction with my classmates helped me in learning literary texts.	2.9677	1.25124	Neutral
16. PBL has helped me develop my social skills.	3.2667	1.17248	Neutral
17. The problems presented by the teacher motivated me to learn.	4.0968	1.10619	Positive

**Source: Prepared by the authors**

After calculating descriptive statistics for each statement, the researcher calculated those for each section, which meant that each student's scores for the items of each section were added to obtain the sum score for that section. For the first section, the total possible score was 165 (33 items based on a 5-point scale), and for the second section, the total possible score was 115 (17

items based on a 5-point scale and 10 items based on a 3-point scale). Table 5.14 presents the descriptive statistics for the sum of each section.

**Table 5. 14.** *Sum of Attitudes Descriptives*

		<b>Descriptives</b>	
		Statistic	Std. Error
Application of PBL Activities	Mean	115.0000	2.31040
	Std. Deviation	12.65456	
	Minimum	84.00	
	Maximum	140.00	
Attitudes	Mean	80.3667	1.67434
	Std. Deviation	9.17073	
	Minimum	60.00	
	Maximum	94.00	

As shown in Table 5.14, total scores for application towards the various PBL activities ranged from 84 to 140 (M=115, SD= 12.655), which is above the expected mid-point of 99 (the midpoint between the minimum possible score of 33 and maximum possible score of 165). These results suggest highly positive responses from participants, which conform to the results obtained from the individual statements suggesting that more participants perceived frequent application of PBL activities. For the second section, attitudes towards these PBL activities, scores ranged from 60 to 94 (M=80.367, SD= 9.171), which is also above the expected mean. These results indicate that participants viewed PBL-based instruction, the various PBL activities, and the PBL environment rather positively.

#### **5.4. Inferential Statistics**

To test for any correlation between students' perceived level of application of PBL and their attitudes towards the various PBL activities, the researcher ran Pearson's correlation analysis. Prior to running the inferential test, however, the researcher tested for its assumption of normality by running the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality (Table 5.15). According to the test statistic, the assumption of normality was not violated for the variable application of PBL ( $W(30) = .936, p = .070$ ) and attitudes towards PBL activities ( $W(30) = .955, p = .225$ ) since both significance values were greater than .05.

**Table 5. 15.** *Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for Attitudes and Application of PBL*

	Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality		
	Statistics	df	Sig.
Application of PBL	.936	30	.070
Attitudes	.955	30	.225

Since the main assumption of normality was not violated, the researchers proceeded with the analysis. Table 5.16 presents results from Pearson's correlation analysis, which yielded a significant positive correlation between students' perceptions of the level of applicability of PBL and their attitudes towards the various PBL-based activities that they applied in the classroom ( $r = .474^{**}, n = 30, p = .008$ ). However, although the correlation is significant, a coefficient of 0.474 suggests only a weak to moderate relationship. Based on the results yielded from Pearson's correlation analysis, the more students felt like they applied PBL in the classroom, the more positive their attitudes towards these PBL activities were.

**Table 5. 16.** *Pearson's Correlation Coefficient: PBL Implementation and Attitudes*

### Correlations

		Application of PBL	Attitudes
Application of PBL	Pearson Correlation	1	.474**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008
	N	30	30

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As an illustration of this relationship, statements addressing application of PBL include “I used to negotiate meaning of ideas with my classmates”, and “We used to establish debates in class”. Sample statements addressing attitudes include “The problems stimulated the acquisition of new knowledge”, and “Interaction with my classmates helped me in learning LT.” For the first section, participants clearly could have had different views on the extent to which each PBL activity was applied on them in class. In reference to the above statements, one respondent could have participated in debates more than another respondent for multiple reasons, naturally leading the participants to respond differently to the statement about debates. Consequently, the participants who participated in debates more would have responded more positively to the other statements above since he or she probably benefited from classroom discussion or debates more.

These findings are significant for multiple reasons. First, the significant positive association between the two variables suggests as learners applied practiced and internalized PBL activities more, they enjoyed them more and even felt like they benefited more from PBL instruction. Second, low satisfaction with the PBL activities addressed does not necessarily imply that these activities were not enjoyable. Rather, low satisfaction could also imply that those who were not satisfied did not fully apply or practice them. A perfect example is from the above statements, where someone who did not practice debates, perhaps because they were absent on the day of

debates or for some other reason they failed to participate in them fully, would obviously not be as satisfied with debates as someone who attended often and practiced debates. Third, these results show that regardless of how hard a teacher tries to provide the ideal experience for all learners, it may be next to impossible to successfully achieve that. Some learners were extremely satisfied with the PBL experience while few remained dissatisfied. The researcher attributes this to varying learning styles and preferences among learners, which can make it difficult for any teacher to satisfy all learners and meet all of their needs equally. These findings reveal that the application of PBL teachers considering PBL-based instruction should be cautious of this phenomenon and try to neutralize the classroom to the point where most of the learners are receiving the same experience.

#### **5.4.1. Discussion**

The above results indicate that the fifth hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, the more often students practiced PBL activities, the more positive attitudes they expressed towards PBL. These findings can also be contextualized to the broader literature. For instance, Roskams (1999) found that students rated the usefulness of peer interaction positively. Thanks to the teacher, who is also the facilitator, peer interaction and teacher-student interaction can be established successfully in a PBL environment. Along with self-directed learning, interaction helps students feel free and facilitates their learning. Likewise, in Douglas and Morris (2014) students rated their activeness positively, and they reported that interaction, both with peers and the teacher, helped establish successful learning. This study has also revealed that the use of challenging problem scenarios as the bases for lessons has made the learning process motivating for students. Fukuzawa et al. (2017) also reported that the problem scenarios were highly motivating for learners,

particularly at the start of PBL classes. In the same vein, Azman and Shin (2012) found that students' motivation increased as they encountered and tried to solve various problems.

The analysis of the questionnaire answered the research question 'Does PBL intervention in LT classes promote self-directed learning practices?' Based on the students' responses, PBL allows the students to set their own learning objectives, prepare their own plans to solve problems and decide which course materials to use during the problem solving process. This considerable level of learners' freedom, of course, limited the role of the teacher who became a facilitator of the learning process who monitored the learning groups, and provides feedback to his learners. Not only this, but knowledge transmitting, from teacher to learner, did not take place since the learners reported that they had learned from their classmates. This reduced teacher's authoritative practices particularly the teacher was found to negotiate meanings with his learners avoiding imposition his own views during debates. Similar findings were revealed by Golightly (2018) and Ghufon and Ermawati (2018) highlighting that PBL implementation increases self-directed learning practices with Ghufon and Ermawati (2018) accentuating that self-directed learning increases learners' self-confidence and responsibility in learning, and motivation. Despite the fact that Lohman and Finkelstein (2000) also find an increase in learners' self-directed learning due to the implementation of PBL, they found that this increase of self-directed learning was only in small and medium size groups unlike large groups where the researchers found a decreasing level of self-directed learning among learners.

## **Final Discussion**

The three data gathering tools used by the researcher throughout this study, which are the test, the observation checklist, and the attitude questionnaire, revealed somewhat different results. Analysis of the tests and the observation checklist revealed data that are similar to a great

degree. This similarity entails CR elements such as analyzing, synthesizing, contextualizing, arguing reasonably, and KA. Both test and the observation checklist highlight a limited improvement in the previously mentioned elements of CR. Added to this, both data gathering instruments revealed the low level of learners' comprehension of LT and its potential effects in lowering their inferring and synthesizing skills. Not only this, but the low level of comprehension, along with the reliance on memorization, prevented the learners from applying their schemata in new situations; this was an outcome that was revealed by the test and the observation checklist.

Concerning CR elements tackled only by the observation grid and not by the tests, which are mainly annotating, using marginalia, using dictionaries, and questioning, the observation grid shows that the learners improved considerably in all these elements. This improvement makes the learners, to a moderate level, practitioners of active reading. The observation grid also emphasizes learners' low levels of summarizing, paraphrasing, and skimming skills. All in all, the discussion of the results provided by the test and the observation grid does not allow the researcher to claim that PBL intervention improved third year EFL learners' CR of LT.

In regards to the questionnaire, the learners show more positive attitudes towards PBL as long as its perceived level of implementation increases. Mainly, the learners enjoyed the significant level of freedom in the LT classroom where they used to plan for problem solving, negotiate meanings, share knowledge among each other, reflect on their learning, and use learning tools by themselves. This means that active learning was promoted during the learning of LT. This learners' ownership of the learning process, in turn, might have paved the way for them to practice an accepted level of active reading, which is reported by the observation

checklist. Simply put, when learners practiced some responsibility over several aspects of their learning process, this gave them enough opportunities to annotate, highlight, question, use dictionaries, and show resistance towards authors' opinions.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter is to present the data obtained from the three data gathering tools used by the researcher of the current study to test the set hypotheses and answer the research questions. Since the researcher used different data gathering tools, he divided this chapter into sections, each of which sheds light on a data gathering tool, its targeted aspects and its results. The tests provided results that allowed the examination of the effectiveness of PBL on CR of LT. Analysis and discussion of data obtained from the second data gathering tool, the observation grid, allowed the researcher to know what traits of critical reading learners of EG have developed. Next to this, the findings of the attitude questionnaire revealed learners' perspectives towards the implementation of PBL, along with their attitudes towards this implementation. After that, the researcher discussed the results from all the data gathering tools as a whole while trying to relate these results to the existing literature.

## **VI. General Conclusion**

The reason that triggered this research is that the researcher, during the academic year 2019-2020, had witnessed that learners at the department of English at Abbes Laghrour University of Khenchela seemed to possess a limited ability to treat LT at the inferential and the critical level. This, the researcher attributed to the learners' past experience of studying LT only at the literal level. Additionally, a considerable level of passiveness was observed among these learners, which came as a result of their tendency to rely on their teachers' delivered knowledge and interpretations of LT. Throughout this study, the researcher has aimed to unveil the extent to which EFL learners' CR is affected by PBL in the LT classroom. The researcher has not only aimed to examine this, but he has also aimed to examine the role of PBL in promoting active learning in the EFL LT classroom, as well as learners' attitudes towards PBL.

This study included the general introduction, the literature review, the research methodology, data analysis and discussion, and limitations, pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research. In the general introduction, the researcher shed light on the origin of PBL as a learner-centered instructional approach in the medical field before its expansion to other fields, among them being the field of English language teaching. The researcher then reviewed the existing literature in an attempt to identify a knowledge gap among studies that have investigated PBL in the EFL classroom. This enabled the researcher to establish a basis upon which the research questions and hypothesis were built. Afterwards, the researcher outlined the research problem, in which he highlighted EFL learners' poor CR and passiveness in the LT classroom. The research devised the following research questions:

- 1- To what extent does the implementation of PBL in the EFL classroom effect learners' CR of LT?
- 2- Which aspect of CR, if any, is affected most by PBL?
- 3- What are learners' attitudes towards PBL in the LT classroom?
- 4- Does PBL intervention in LT classes promote self-directed learning practices?
- 5- To what extent are learners' experiences with PBL activities related to their attitudes towards these activities and the PBL environment?

The researcher also devised the following research hypotheses:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** PBL in the EFL classroom will help improve EFL learners' CR of LT.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** All aspects of CR will improve as a result of PBL.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Most learners will find PBL to be enjoyable and effective.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** An intervention of PBL promotes self-directed learning.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** Learners who employ PBL more often will view the activities more positively.

In order to thoroughly tackle the main variables of this research, the first few chapters were devoted to theoretical work, mainly to provide an overview of what pioneers and other scholars have theorized or revealed about each variable. The first chapter was devoted to the independent variable, which is PBL. This chapter first focused on the constructivist principles upon which PBL is based, then details about PBL elements were provided where the researcher mentioned problem scenarios, self-directed learning, collaborative work, facilitation, and reflection. This review of the literature provided the researcher with insight on how to implement PBL in the LT classroom.

In regards to the second chapter of the literature review, the researcher divided it into two sections: reading and CR. In the first section, the researcher aimed to introduce reading and its strategies, provide an overview of its components and levels, and show how it is being approached as a skill in the EFL classroom. In regards to the second section, the researcher introduced the dependent variable, which is CR. The main focus of this section was to introduce the term CR and highlight how it is based on critical thinking skills. Moreover, the researcher explained the levels of reading comprehension where he focused on CR as an advanced level of reading comprehension. In order to explore CR deeper, the researcher exhibited its strategies, along with the traits of critical readers, reporting that critical readers should doubt, analyze, evaluate, synthesize and apply their knowledge while approaching reading materials.

Being a significant part of this research, LT have also been reviewed. The researcher drew attention to the complexity of LT and its types, reporting that this study would deal only with fictional LT. Afterwards, the main characteristics and benefits of using literature in the EFL classroom have been discussed, establishing that implementing literature in the English language classroom is believed to be culturally and linguistically enriching for learners. Moreover, the researcher presented some activities through which LT can be exploited in the EFL classroom. More importantly, the relationship between LT and CR has been explained where the researcher addressed how learners should question the texts' content, analyze and infer in order to read between the lines, establish connections between themselves and the exposed LT and how they should apply their prior knowledge while reading those texts.

In order to answer the research question “To what extent does the implementation of PBL in the EFL classroom effect learners’ CR of LT?” and to test for the hypothesis “PBL in the EFL

classroom will help improve EFL learners' CR of LT", the researcher conducted a pretest to know the initial level of learners' CR of LT; then, the researcher implemented an 11 week intervention where PBL was used to teach LT for third year EFL learners. After completion of the intervention, a posttest was conducted. After correcting the pretest and posttest papers, which was done by two raters to ensure reliability, the results from the ANCOVA analysis were not statistically significant, which means that the researcher rejects his hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

Since the tests did not allow the researcher to measure all the CR aspects, he opted for an observation grid to measure aspects such as annotating and highlighting, questioning and using marginalia, using dictionary, paraphrasing and summarizing while reading LT before and after the PBL intervention. For confirmatory reasons, through this observation the researcher aimed to measure CR aspects which had been already measured by the tests such as analyzing and synthesizing skills and KA. Similar to the results revealed by the tests, the analysis and discussion of the results obtained from the observation checklist revealed no significant effect of PBL on learners' analyzing and synthesizing skills and ability to apply prior knowledge in new situations. However, the analysis of the observation has revealed positive results in some CR elements such as annotating, highlighting, questioning and using marginalia, and using dictionaries while reading. In other words, PBL implementation in the LT classroom has promoted an acceptable level of active reading practicing among EFL learners.

In regards to the questionnaire, it aimed for scaling EFL learners' attitudes towards the implementation of PBL in the LT classroom and the extent to which this implementation promoted active learning. According to the data analysis, the learners reported that they had sufficiently practiced PBL elements such as meaning negotiation, group work, the teacher's facilitation, and self-directed learning. Overall, the learners revealed positive attitudes towards most of the

elements claiming they had enjoyed approaching LT in the light of PBL. In addition to this, the data obtained from the questionnaire affirm that PBL implementation generated active learning among EFL learners especially that they could actively use their learned knowledge to solve problems, choose their preferred learning materials, set their own learning objectives, and learn from each other during group work or debates. This active learning might have triggered the learners' acceptable practice of active reading where they could annotate, highlight, and question different contents of LT.

### **6.1. Implications, Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research**

This section exhibits some pedagogical implications based on the outcomes revealed by this study, along with suggestions for future studies where PBL can be applied in EFL teaching and learning. Finally, this chapter summarizes the various constraints encountered by the researcher during his inquiry.

### **6.2. Pedagogical Implications**

In spite of the failure to reject the null hypothesis, which claims that there is no causal relationship between PBL and CR of LT, this study provides some insights and positive findings. This means that by testing the effect of PBL on CR of LT among EFL learners, the researcher, regardless to the attained results, has contributed to the existing literature of implementing PBL in EFL learning. This study provides insight for EFL teachers and researchers for how PBL can be implemented when teaching undergraduate learners British and American LT.

Moreover, based on the outcomes of this study, implementing PBL in EFL LT classes promotes self-directed learning. Therefore, EFL teachers who encounter problems like learners' passiveness, lack of motivation and engagement with LT can opt for PBL in order to increase

learners' self-directed learning, thus increasing their engagement with LT. Not only this, but EFL teachers are also recommended to use PBL in teaching LT to promote an acceptable level of active reading practices, such as annotating, highlighting, and questioning, among EFL learners.

### **6.3.Limitations of the Study**

This study was carried out with a number of limitations, mainly due to administrative constraints and some other external factors. The researcher of this study, because of administrative constraints, could not adopt a true experimental design since he was unable to choose a larger sample while ensuring random sampling selection and random assignment so as to ensure equal chances for all participants to be assigned in the experimental or the CG. This makes the research design of this study less robust, particularly since the researcher was obliged to opt for a quasi-experimental design for testing a causal relationship. Moreover, the researcher could not apply PBL during lecture sessions (as opposed to tutorial sessions) because both the EG and the CG shared the session, studying in one classroom. PBL interventions, therefore took place during tutorial sessions only since that is when they studied separately. This obliged the researcher to introduce PBL after lecturing although it should have been introduced in place of lecturing. Because there were only two groups of third year EFL students during the academic year 2019-2020, the researcher conducted the pilot study of the PBL intervention with second year EFL learners at the same department.

In regards to the period of the intervention, it lasted only for eleven weeks because of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown while the researcher had aimed for an 18-week intervention. Because of safety measures, the period of the posttest was shorter since it was limited to 60 minutes while the pretest lasted for 90 minutes. Furthermore, the researcher could not opt for inter-observer

reliability because of the lack of availability of teachers during the lockdown. This made the researcher observe the groups alone, and this observation is quite subjective. Compensatory rivalry might have been a factor that affected the results of this study. Because they might have felt disadvantaged, learners of the CG might have doubled their efforts to compete with the EG learners.

#### **6.4.Suggestions for Further Research**

First of all, the researcher suggests replication of this study while taking into consideration the stated limitations in order to avoid the same flaws experienced throughout this study. Otherwise stated, future researchers may replicate this study while making sure that they choose a larger sample, opting for random assignment while sampling, and applying PBL during all lectures and for a longer period. This would allow better testing of the effect of PBL on CR of LT among EFL learners.

Research on the use of PBL in EFL settings is relatively scant. Therefore, EFL researchers can investigate the role of PBL in various EFL fields. Being based on problem scenarios and problem solving skills, PBL can be used to test learners' grammar in contexts. For instance, researchers can use different problem scenarios where specific grammatical functions are needed to raise learners' awareness about grammar in use. Moreover, future researchers can target intercultural competence by exposing learners to different problem scenarios faced by immigrants or visitors of foreign countries. Furthermore, English for Specific Purposes teachers can analyze target situations of their learners and use it as a basis for formulating different problem scenarios to trigger learning of the English language. Whatever researchers choose to test, they should avoid the limitations encountered by the researcher of this study.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A (Treatment Lesson Samples)

**Lesson Plan :** Literary movements in Britain.

**Lesson Focus:** Middle age and Renaissance eras.

**Objective:** Students will be able to recognize, compare and contrast between “Middle age” and “Renaissance” eras.

**Skills:** Students will search for information, analyze, negotiate, synthesize and draw conclusions.

Steps/time	Procedures	Materials needed
Warm-up 10 min	The teacher starts by stating that literature affects the society and it itself is affected by the period in which literary texts are being written. The teacher asks learners to give examples. The teacher may intervene if needed.	
Problem Exposition 10 min	The teacher gives learners four extractions of four literary works from the two different eras and tells them the following scenario:  James missed his literary class as he was ill. During his absence, homework was assigned by his teacher. The homework is about literary movements. In this homework, the teacher gave his students four extractions of four literary works one from the Middle Age, and one from the Renaissance. The teacher has asked his students to determine which extractions belong to the Renaissance and which extractions belong to the Middle Age, based on the characteristics of each period. James needs a helping hand as he was not told about the homework until 3 hours are left.	Printed papers
Researching 10 min	Students read the given text. Students start writing down every information they already know about the topic.	Phones/tabs... Printed papers.
Reasoning and negotiation 10 min	The teacher’s role is a facilitator (The teacher gives the students a table in which he mentions all the characteristics of the two eras). Students use the internet to look for the required information.  Students discuss the steps to be followed in order to solve the problem. After gathering information, learners	

Application 20 min	will together decide which information is relevant to the topic and needed to solve the problem.	
Discussion/ Synthesis 15 min	After reading the two texts and doing some research about the topic, students start applying the findings on the given texts to solve the problem.	
Knowledge 15 min	The teacher asks the students about the characteristics they found and asks them to illustrate. If there is any misunderstanding the teacher's intervention is needed.  Students present their final findings after synthesizing information from different used sources. Next, the students discuss the points over which they agree or disagree. By doing this, the students may correct their misunderstandings and mistakes and even learn things they missed to tackle. Students learn how the characteristics of each literary era is presented in contexts	
Middle Age		Renaissance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Miracle plays(saints plays).</li> <li>-Religious (related to the bible)</li> <li>-Morality plays (Church's instruction)</li> <li>-Personification.</li> <li>-Morale tales.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shift from religion and after life to life on earth.</li> <li>-Literary texts got free from religion.</li> <li>-Many aspects of love were explored.</li> <li>- Focus on human beings</li> </ul>

### The Clerk's Prologue and Tale

The Host asks the Clerk to cheer up and tell a merry tale, and the Clerk agrees to tell a tale by the Italian poet Petrarch. Griselde is a hardworking peasant who marries into the aristocracy. Her husband tests her fortitude in several ways, including pretending to kill her children and divorcing her. He punishes her one final time by forcing her to prepare for his wedding to a new wife. She does all this dutifully, her husband tells her that she has always been and will always be his wife (the divorce was a fraud), and they live happily ever after.

### Everyman

The premise is that the good and evil deeds of one's life will be tallied by God after death, as in a ledger book. The play is the allegorical accounting of the life of Everyman, who represents all mankind. In the course of the action, Everyman tries to convince other characters to accompany him in the hope of improving his account. All the characters are also allegorical, each personifying an abstract idea such as Fellowship, (material) Goods, and Knowledge. The conflict between good and evil is dramatized by the interactions between characters. Everyman is

being singled out because it is difficult for him to find characters to accompany him on his pilgrimage. Everyman eventually realizes through this pilgrimage that he is essentially alone, despite all the personified characters that were supposed necessities and friends to him. Everyman learns that when you are brought to death and placed before God, all you are left with is your own good deeds.

### **Romeo and Juliet**

William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, a long feud between the Montague and Capulet families disrupts the city of Verona and causes tragic results for Romeo and Juliet. Revenge, love, and a secret marriage force the young star-crossed lovers to grow up quickly — and fate causes them to commit suicide in despair. Contrast and conflict are running themes throughout Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet* — one of the Bard's most popular romantic tragedies.

### **Hamlet**

William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* follows the young prince Hamlet home to Denmark to attend his father's funeral. Hamlet is shocked to find his mother already remarried to his Uncle Claudius, the dead king's brother. And Hamlet is even more surprised when his father's ghost appears and declares that he was murdered. Then, Hamlet decides to take revenge and he did it successfully.

**Lesson Plan :** Literary movements in Britain.

**Lesson Focus:** Romanticism in British Literature.

**Aim:** Students will be able to recognize features of the romantic literary movement .

**Subsidiary aim:** to see how students would perform on a Standardized Aptitude Test (SAT)

**Skills:** Students will search for information, analyze, negotiate, synthesize and draw conclusions.

Steps/time	Procedures	Materials needed
Warm-up 10 min	The teacher starts by introducing the SAT test and its function. Te teacher also explains how questions should be answered.	Printed papers
Problem Exposition 10 min	The teacher gives learners handouts that contain the poem ' <i>Ode on Melancholy</i> ' by John Keats along with the SAT which consists of multiple choice questions. After that, the teacher presents the following problem:	
Reading/Researching 10 min	<p>"John Keats, besides other writers, is described as a rebellious writer. Can you see that throughout this poem?"</p> <p>Students read the given text. Students start writing down every information they already know about the topic. The students also identify any missing knowledge to answer the questions. Students use the internet to look for the required information.</p>	Phones/tabs... Printed papers.
Reasoning and negotiation 10 min	The teacher's role is a facilitator who monitors the groups in order to check the students' performances and intervene if any group faces difficulties when they try to solve the problem	
Application 40 min	Students discuss the steps to be followed in order to solve the problem. After gathering information, learners will together decide which information is relevant to the topic and needed to solve the problem.	
Discussion/ Synthesis 10 min	After reading the text and doing some research about the topic, students start applying the findings on the given text to answer the SAT.	

Knowledge 20 min	The teacher asks the students about the characteristics they found and asks them to illustrate. If there is any misunderstanding the teacher's intervention is needed.	
Classroom Discussion 70 min	Students present their final findings after synthesizing information from different used sources. Next, the students discuss the points over which they agree or disagree. By doing this, the students may correct their misunderstandings and mistakes and even learn things they missed to tackle. Students learn how the characteristics of each literary era is presented in contexts A debate between students is held in order to show whether John Keats is rebellious or not.	

### Ode on Melancholy by John Keats

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist  
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;  
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd  
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;  
 5 Make not your rosary of yew-berries,  
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be  
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl  
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;  
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,  
 10 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall  
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,  
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,  
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;  
 15 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,  
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies;  
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,  
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,  
 20 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;  
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
 Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:

25 Ay, in the very temple of Delight  
    Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
        Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue  
    Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;  
    His soul shalt taste the sadness of her might,  
30     And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

1. The speaker, in the first stanza, is telling the listeners to
  - A. Not allow Lethe to twist Wolf's-bane
  - B. Not to go to Lethe and not to twist Wolf's bane
  - C. Not allow night's shade to touch their forehead
  - D. To not allow Lethe to be twisted by Wolfe's bane
  
2. The speaker repeatedly conjures up images of
  - A. poisonous plants
  - B. dangerous animals
  - C. death by love
  - D. revenge

**Lesson Plan :** American Literary Movements .

**Lesson Focus:** Transcendentalism in American Literature.

**Minor Focus:** Romanticism and realism in literature.

**Objective:** Students will be able to recognize, compare and contrast among ‘Transcendentalism’ ‘Romanticism’ and ‘Realism’ American literary movements.

**Skills:** Students will, besides comparing and contrasting texts, search for information, analyze, negotiate, synthesize and draw conclusions.

Steps/time	Procedures	Materials needed
Warm-up + Problem Exposition 10 min	<p>The teacher starts by telling the students they will encounter American poetry.</p> <p>The teacher gives learners six literary texts, poems and excerpts of poems. All of which were written by the same author ‘Walter Whitman’ After that, the facilitator exposes the learners to the following scenario:</p> <p>The six excerpts/ poems were written by a single author and read by a number of critics. Three critics debated over which literary movement the author was associated with. Carefully read the three statements below, and in light of what you have learned about features of literary movements, and discuss whose critic’s opinion you agree with?</p> <p>The facilitator makes sure the assignment is clear for the students Students read the text prepared and given by the facilitator.</p>	Printed papers
Reading/Researching /Discussing 10 min	<p>Students start writing down every information they already know about the topic.</p> <p>The teacher’s role is a facilitator.</p> <p>Students use the internet to look for the required information.</p>	Phones/tabs... Printed papers.
Reasoning/comparing /contrasting/ Application 20 min	<p>After reading the texts and doing some research about the topic, students start applying, besides their prior knowledge about American literary movements, their findings on the given texts to solve the problem.</p>	
Synthesis 10 min	<p>After applying knowledge and using textual clues from different sources the students synthesize their own ideas about Walter Whitman and the given literary texts.</p>	
Discussion/ Synthesis 10 min	<p>The teacher asks the students about the characteristics they found and asks them to illustrate and also asks them about their agreement with the critics’ opinions.</p> <p>Students present their final findings. They argumentatively debate, saying why they agree or disagree with some critics and classmates.</p>	

<p>Knowledge 10 min</p>	<p>After the debate, they review their opinions by considering their classmates' opinions to produce a new whole.</p> <p>The students agree upon one idea which is that a single writer, who belongs to one literary era, used to refer to characteristics from different literary movements.</p>	
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<p>1- I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing, All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the branches, Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous leaves of dark green, And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself, But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone there without its friend near, for I knew I could not, ..... For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana solitary in a wide flat space, Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend a lover near, I know very well I could not.</p>	<p>2- THIS is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless, Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done, .....</p>
<p>3..... And you O my soul where you stand, Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space, Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them, Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold, Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.</p>	<p>4- When I heard the learn'd astronomer, When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me, When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them, When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room, How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick, Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself, In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time, Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.</p>
<p>5- I SAW old General at bay, (Old as he was, his gray eyes yet shone out in battle like stars,) His small force was now completely hemm'd in, in his works, He call'd for volunteers to run the enemy's lines, a desperate emergency, I saw a hundred and more step forth from the ranks, but two or three were selected, I saw them receive their orders aside, they listen'd with care, the adjutant was very grave, I saw them depart with cheerfulness, freely risking their lives.</p>	<p>6- HOW solemn as one by one (Washington City, 1865.) HOW solemn as one by one, As the ranks returning worn and sweaty, as the men file by where I stand, As the faces the masks appear, as I glance at the faces studying themasks, (As I glance upward out of this page studying you, dear friend, whoever you are,) How solemn the thought of my whispering soul to each in theranks, and to you, I see behind each mask that wonder a kindred soul, O the bullet could never kill what you really are, dear friend, Nor the bayonet stab what you really are; The soul! yourself I see, great as any, good as the best, Waiting secure and content, which the bullet could never kill, Nor the bayonet stab O friend.</p>

**Appendix B (Pretest)**

University of Abbes Laghrour –Khenchela-  
Department of English

Faculty of letters and languages  
Full

name:..... Gr:.....

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**1- What is the basic plot?**

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**2- Who are the protagonist and the antagonist of this play? Name a supporting character for each one.**

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**3- What are the main themes of the play?**

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**4- Is Hamlet certain about the person who murdered his father? Why or Why not?**

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**5- Does Hamlet fit the characteristics of the Renaissance’s hero? How?**

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**6- Hamlet said “What a piece of work is a man”, what characteristic of the Renaissance is implied in this expression? Explain.**

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**7- Do you see that Hamlet is misogynistic? Why/why not?**

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**8- Many critics say that Hamlet is insane. What is your say about this issue?**

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**9- Compare how the relationship between the king and his people is portrayed in Hamlet with how it is portrayed in Old English Literature**

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Appendix C (Posttest)

University of Abbes Laghrour –Khenchela-  
Department of English

Faculty of letters and languages  
Full

name:..... Gr:.....

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**1- What is the setting of the novel? What if the story events took place in a place occupied by the Quakers, how could that affect the story?**

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**2- What does the Scarlet Letter “A” on Hester’s chest symbolize?**

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**3- Has the author claimed that committing a sin has effects on people? How? What made him claim as such?**

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**4- The novel is thought to be romantic; however, there is determinism in it. Discuss.**

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**5- Is Hester’s adultery justified? If Hester had married Dimmesdale after Chillingworth’s long absence, would that have been acceptable? Justify**

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**6- Who is the biggest sinner in the novel? Why?**

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**7- If Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote his novel in this century, what would be different according to you?**

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## Appendix D (Pretest Answer Samples)

- 1- What is the basic plot?  
Exposition: Hamlet's Father Death.  
rising action = his father ghost seeks for revenge by him (controlling his mind).  
climax = King leaves the play (proved that he is guilty to Hamlet).  
Falling action = the battle in which the King, Queen, Laertes falls down (died).  
resolution = Hamlet death.
- 2- Who are the protagonist and the antagonist of this play? Name a supporting character for each one.  
Protagonist = Hamlet; supporting character = Ghost.  
Antagonist = King; " " = Laertes.
- 3- What are the main themes of the play?  
→ Never rush on; be patient, smart and tolerance.  
→ Forgiveness set your soul free, and revenge just buried you or your humanity.
- 4- Is Hamlet certain about the person who murdered his father? Why or Why not?  
Hamlet was sure about the murder, the King Claudius; because of the Ghost; moreover, the confirmation after the guilty to the "play" and it became obvious after catching his confessor spying on their private conversation.
- 5- Does Hamlet fit the characteristics of the Renaissance's hero? How?  
Somewhat; he is a noble birth (blue blood) prince but he was talented; and very smart. Although the Ghost affirmed the crime but he looked for the evidence smartly.
- 6- Hamlet said "What a piece of work is a man", what characteristic of the Renaissance is implied in this expression? Explain.  
Humanism & individualism; focuses on the human role his nature, his aims, not on the metaphysical, after life.
- 7- Do you see that Hamlet is misogynistic? Why/why not?  
In my opinion, Hamlet is not a misogynistic, cause after all he talked to Ophelia kindly; and moreover he respected his mother till the last breath although she married his father killer.
- 8- Many critics say that Hamlet is insane. What is your say about this issue?  
maybe they think so because he goes after a Ghost claiming but for me as long as it's proved that the King Claudius is the one after this murder, I don't see him as an insane taking in consideration his intelligence.
- 9- Compare how the relationship between the king and his people is portrayed in Hamlet with how it is portrayed in Old English.  
The relationship between the King in Old English - in Hamlet isn't strong (betraying) unlike in the old literature.

1- What is the basic plot?

The basic plot: Hamlet prince of Denmark, is home from school, Hamlet watches claudius closely to see how he reacts, he decides to spare his life for the time being, who has led an army to Denmark and attacked poland earlier in the play.

2- Who are the protagonist and the antagonist of this play? Name a supporting character for each one.

The protagonist of this play is: prince Hamlet  
The antagonist of this play is: King  
Supporting character for Hamlet is: Ophelia, for King is: Queen.

3- What are the main themes of the play?

The main themes of the play are: Revenge

4- Is Hamlet certain about the person who murdered his father? Why or Why not?

Hamlet not certain about the person who murdered his father because in the final of the play he just feels that Horatio goes to him.

5- Does Hamlet fit the characteristics of the Renaissance's hero? How?

Hamlet fit the characteristics of the Renaissance's hero, with: Humanism and Individualism, focus human life,

6- Hamlet said "What a piece of work is a man", what characteristic of the Renaissance is implied in this expression? Explain.

The characteristic of the Renaissance is implied in this story (expression) is Humanism and human life.

7- Do you see that Hamlet is misogynistic? Why/why not?

Yes I see that Hamlet is misogynistic because in the first of the play he wants to kill himself and after that Hamlet has killed his father and because he hates women.

8- Many critics say that Hamlet is insane. What is your say about this issue?

Ophelia and Gertrude said that Hamlet is insane, so when I look at that what Hamlet's do it and said it before, that's true because he is the prince and the protagonist in this play so this is my point of view.

9- Compare how the relationship between the king and his people is portrayed in Hamlet with how it is portrayed in Old English

The relationship between the both situation is not the same in old English.

Appendix E (Posttest Answer Samples)

Hester's husband became evil, toward Dimmesdale  
 Dimmesdale is pretty boy who gets really sick and

1- What is the setting of the novel? What if the story events took place in a place occupied by the Puritans how could that affect the story?

The setting... June 1642 in the puritan town of Boston. In the  
 Puritans... it would have been perfectly fine to be a  
 single mother since they pretty much believe  
 in individualism... having an affair that's her  
 business not anyone else

2- What does the Scarlet Letter "A" on Hester's chest symbolize?  
 Shame... guilt... committing a sin (...adultery)  
 It's a public punishment

3- Has the author claimed that committing a sin has effects on people? How? What made him claim as such?  
 Yes he did... we can notice the society's ridiculous  
 anger (as if it's their business) Dimmesdale got sick  
 for carrying the secret in his chest, Chillingworth's  
 anger and how he turned evil, Hester helping the poor for forgiveness

4- The novel is thought to be romantic; however, there is determinism in it. Discuss.  
 We can easily notice how the protagonists are men vs. women  
 Society... no matter how much they are determined to  
 change their lives to be better, the fact is nature  
 they basically fail because nature has the supreme  
 power

5- Is Hester's adultery justified? If Hester had married Dimmesdale after Chillingworth's long absence, would that have been acceptable? Justify  
 In my opinion yes... first of all it's her business... if she wants to  
 do it then she can... a marriage can only be  
 broken by divorce or death

6- Who is the biggest sinner in the novel? Why?  
 Roger... Chillingworth... he should have let them live in  
 peace for god's sake... like dude have life! also we  
 should don't torment people just because they made a mistake

7- If Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote his novel in this century, what would be different according to you?  
 not only the setting but well... the way of... society  
 the what is more... of... is... is  
 not the... anymore... she could just get a divorce  
 and marry Dimmesdale... or just live a single  
 mother, that sounds better, men only bring headaches.

1- What is the setting of the novel? What if the story events took place in a place occupied by the Puritans, how could that affect the story?

In June 1642 in the Puritan town of Boston

2- What does the Scarlet Letter "A" on Hester's chest symbolize?

The Shame

3- Has the author claimed that committing a sin has effects on people? How? What made him claim as such?

Dimmesdale tells the people he is also sinner like Hester and that he should have assumed his right full place by her side over 7 years earlier he rips open his shirt to reveal a scarlet letter on his flesh

4- The novel is thought to be romantic; however, there is determinism in it. Discuss.

The characteristics of determinism are selfishness

5- Is Hester's adultery justified? If Hester had married Dimmesdale after Chillingworth's long absence, would that have been acceptable? Justify

No, it is not justified. It would not have been acceptable, because they are living in Puritan society.

6- Who is the biggest sinner in the novel? Why?

The biggest sinner in the novel is Hester

7- If Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote his novel in this century, what would be different according to you?

If Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote his novel in this century the writing it would not be the same in describing and reporting the events to the readers.

### Appendix F (Observation Checklist)

Items	Level 0 No effectiv eness	Level 1 Limited effective ness	Level 2 Some effective ness	Level 3 Considerabl e effectiveness	Level 4 High Degree of effectiveness
1- Use of annotations. Adding notes or comments to texts through highlighting, underlining, and circling					
2-contextualizing texts. Relating a text to its historical, biographical, and cultural factors					
3- Open-mindedness. Accepting others' opinions to learn from them					
4-Questioning. Asking authors orally about the content of texts and their opinions to show sort of resistance to included ideas					
5- Dealing with figurative language. Recognize the type and the purpose of authors' use of figurative language					
6-Use of dictionary. Looking up difficult words					
7- Skimming. Reading quickly to get an overview of texts and their authors					
8- Use of marginalia. Writing questions to ask authors about the content of texts and their opinions to show sort of resistance to included ideas					
9- Summarizing. Synopsizing the main ideas of the text and rephrasing them in the learners' own words.					
10- Paraphrasing. Representing ideas from texts in the learners' words.					
11-Arguing Reasonably. Providing evidence while arguing about authors' opinions.					
12- Analyzing. Breaking down texts' ideas and structure for better understanding to draw conclusions.					
13- Rereading. Reading texts more than one time to grasp their content accurately.					
14- Synthesizing. Using background information and information from various sources to develop a new idea.					
15- Inferring. Using textual clues of a material to draw conclusion.					
16- Apply knowledge. Applying acquired knowledge whenever the situation implies.					

## Appendix G

### (Problem-Based Learning Attitude Questionnaire)

The questions below were designed with the aim of analyzing your attitudes toward Problem-Based Learning in Literary Texts classes in the department of English at Abbes-Laghrour University. You are expected to check every question carefully and choose the most appropriate answer that reflects your personal perspectives. Thanks in advance for your contribution, and be sure that any data you will provide us with will be treated confidentially.

**Problem-Based Learning (PBL):** Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which complex real-world problems are used as the vehicle to promote student learning of concepts and principles as opposed to direct presentation of facts and concepts.

**Section 1:**

- 1- Gender: .....
- 2- Age: .....
- 3- Level: .....
- 4- University: .....

**Section 2:** Please give your answers placing a ✓ into the box that corresponds to your appropriate choice. Answer according to your experience in TD sessions in literary texts this year.

Always = A; Usually=U; Sometimes = S ; Rarely=R; Never = N

Classroom Activities	N	R	S	U	A
1- We used to start your lessons with problems based on literary texts.					
2- I used to work in groups.					
3-The teacher used to explain the given assignment.					
4- Whenever there was a misunderstanding related to the assignment, the teacher clarifies.					
5-I used to solve the assignment by myself.					
6-I used to interact with my classmates.					
7- I used to interact with my teacher.					
8- The teacher used to facilitate the process of problem solving.					
9- I used to choose course materials for myself.					
10- I used to set my own learning objectives.					
11-The teacher used to impose his own view.					
12- I used to utilize the internet and online resources.					
13- I used to negotiate meanings of ideas with the teacher.					
14- I used to negotiate meanings of ideas with my classmates.					
15- The teacher used to provide me with feedback.					

16- The problems you start your lessons with represent problems that you may face in your real-life.					
17- I used to evaluate my learning process.					
18- I used to share my solutions with the classmates.					
19- The teacher used to choose the course materials for you.					
20- The teacher used to monitor the learning groups.					
21- I used to choose the materials to solve the problems by myself.					
22- I used to form groups to find solutions to the problems.					
23- When other students share their knowledge, I used to learn from them.					
24- Discipline used to be kept during the classes.					
25- The teacher used to clarify ambiguous points.					
26- The teacher used to lean on the students to find their own solutions.					
27- I used to conduct online research to solve the given problem.					
28- We used to plan our work to solve the problems.					
29- I used English to discuss with group members.					
30- I used to share my solutions using English.					
31- I used to accept my classmates' opinions.					
32- I had enough time to cope with the problems.					
33- We used to establish debates.					

**Section 3:** Please give your answers placing a ✓ into the box that corresponds to your appropriate choice. Answer according to your experience in TD sessions in literary texts this year.

**Strongly Disagree = SD; Disagree= D; Neutral = N; Agree = A;**

**Strongly Agree = SA.**

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
1- It is motivating to work collaboratively with classmates to finish an assignment					
2- The problems allowed me to deal with real-life examples.					
3- The problems allowed me to apply my learned knowledge.					
4- The problems stimulated the acquisition of new knowledge.					
5- PBL provides opportunities for me to direct my own learning.					
6- Group work facilitates the share of knowledge among students.					
7- PBL gives me opportunities to practice English.					
8- The problems presented by the teacher were challenging.					
9- Self-directed learning helps me better understand the information presented in literary classes.					
10- Interaction with the teacher established effective learning of literary texts.					

11- Interaction with my classmates helps my learning of literary texts.					
12- PBL allows you to gain knowledge without the teacher's intervention.					
13- PBL facilitates my retention of knowledge.					
14- PBL promotes my participation in the learning process.					
15- PBL helps me to know my strengths and weaknesses.					
16- PBL helps me develop my social skills.					
17- The problems presented by the teacher motivate me to learn.					

## Appendix H (Evaluation Grid)

<b>COMPETENCIES</b>	<b>Accomplished</b> (Exceeds Course Expectations)	<b>Competent</b> (Meets Course Expectations)	<b>Developing</b> (Incomplete in Meeting Course Expectations)	<b>Beginning</b> (Does Not Meet Course Expectations)
<b>Comprehension</b>	Demonstrates <i>accurate, clear,</i> and <i>precise</i> comprehension of <i>significant</i> concepts in the text(s). Objective assessment criterion: Not applicable.	Demonstrates <i>accurate</i> comprehension of <i>significant</i> concepts in the text(s). Objective assessment criterion: Correctly answers 75% or more of the factual question about the text or materials	Demonstrates limited or inexact comprehension of <i>significant</i> concepts in the text(s). (Not always <i>accurate</i> ) Objective assessment criterion: Correctly answers 50-74% or more of the factual question about the text or materials.	Fails to demonstrate comprehension of <i>significant</i> concepts in the text(s). (Not <i>accurate</i> ) Objective assessment criterion: Correctly answers 49% or less of the factual question about the text or materials.
<b>Analysis</b>	Provides <i>accurate, relevant,</i> and <i>precise</i> analysis by recognizing the parts or aspects of the text that contribute to understanding the purpose of the text.	Provides <i>accurate</i> and <i>relevant</i> analysis by recognizing the parts or aspects of the text that contribute to understanding the purpose of the text.	Provides limited <i>relevant</i> analysis by recognizing the parts or aspects of the text that contribute to understanding the purpose of the text. (Not always <i>accurate</i> )	Fails to provide relevant analysis by recognizing the parts or aspects of the text that contribute to understanding the purpose of the text. (Not <i>accurate</i> )
<b>Synthesis</b>	<i>Accurately, deeply,</i> and <i>broadly</i> connects and integrates relevant and <i>significant</i> concepts from text(s) to construct and support explanations, conclusions, or arguments.	<i>Accurately</i> connects and integrates relevant and <i>significant</i> concepts from text(s) to construct and support explanations, conclusions, or arguments.	<i>Accurately</i> connects and integrates some relevant and <i>significant</i> concepts from text(s) to construct and support explanations, conclusions, or arguments.	Fails to or inaccurately connects and integrates relevant and <i>significant</i> concepts from text(s) to construct and support explanations, conclusions, or arguments.
<b>Arguing Reasonably</b>	Support is precise and astutely chosen to reinforce student's ideas in a convincing way whether in a case of agreement or disagreement with an author/character. A valid connection to the student's ideas is efficiently maintained	Support is adequate, general, and appropriately chosen to reinforce the student's ideas in an acceptable way but may occasionally lack persuasiveness A reasonable connection to the student's ideas is suitably maintained.	Support is inadequate, inaccurate, largely a restatement of what was read, and/or inappropriately chosen to reinforce the student's ideas and thus lacks persuasiveness. A weak connection to the student's ideas is maintained.	Support is irrelevant, over-generalized, lacks validity, and/or is absent. Little or no connection to the student's ideas is evident.

<b>Application of Knowledge</b>	The ability to effectively use learned material or theory in unfamiliar concrete contexts and elucidate from the text.	Using learned facts in new situations adequately.	Limited and inadequate use of learned knowledge in unfamiliar situations. Memorizing knowledge but Difficulties in applying it.	The inability to apply knowledge in unfamiliar contexts.
<b>Matters of Correctness</b>	Writing demonstrates confidence in sentence construction, usage, grammar and mechanics. Relative absence of errors considering complexity of response and the circumstances.	Writing demonstrates control of basic correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. Occasional lapses in control, minor errors Communication is clear	Writing demonstrates faltering control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar and mechanics The range of errors blurs clarity of communication	Writing demonstrates lack of control or correct sentence construction, usage, grammar and mechanics Jarring errors impair communication

## ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص تأثير التعلم القائم على حل المشكلات على مستوى القراءة النقدية لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للنصوص الأدبية في جامعة عباس لغزور خنشلة. من مجموعة مكونة من 86 طالبًا في السنة الثالثة ، تم اختيار عينة من 39 طالبًا كمجموعة تجريبية وعينة من 47 طالبًا كمجموعة ضابطة. بعد الاختبار القبلي ، تلقت المجموعة التجريبية تدريس لمدة 11 أسبوعًا من التعليمات القائمة على حل المشكلات لنصوص الأدب البريطاني والأمريكي. كما ، تم قياس مستويات القراءة النقدية قبل وبعد التدخل لمقارنة معدلات المجموعتين في الأداء.

من أجل فحص القراءة النقدية بشكل أكثر شمولاً وتقييم مدى موثوقية درجات اختبار القراءة النقدية ، أجرى الباحث ملاحظات في الفصل وقيم أداء القراءة النقدي للمتعلمين باستخدام شبكة مراقبة. بالإضافة إلى الاختبارات والملاحظات ، قام الباحث بإدارة استبيان التوجهات في محاولة للكشف عن آراء المجموعة التجريبية تجاه فعالية التعليم القائم على حل المشكلات في فصل النصوص الأدبية. استخدم الباحث الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (25) لإجراء تحليل التباين المشترك وتحليل ارتباط بيرسون واختبارات الافتراضات البارامترية. أظهر تحليل النتائج عدم وجود فرق في درجات الاختبار القبلي والبعدي فيما يخص أداء القراءة النقدية بين المجموعة الضابطة والمجموعة التجريبية. كما كشفت نتائج الاستبيان أنه كلما زاد المتعلمين في ممارسة أنشطة التعلم القائم على حل المشكلات ، زادت مواقفهم الإيجابية نحو هذه الأنشطة. علاوة على ذلك ، كشفت نتائج الاستبيان أن تنفيذ التعلم القائم على حل المشكلات في فصول النص الأدبي عزز ممارسات التعلم الذاتي.

أكد تحليل بيانات النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من تحليل الاختبارات فشل التعلم القائم على حل المشكلات في التأثير على مستوى القراءة النقدية للمتعلمين. ومع ذلك ، كشفت الملاحظة أن التعلم المعتمد على حل المشكلات يعزز بعض الجوانب المتعلقة بالقراءة النقدية. بناءً على هذه النتائج ، نوصي باستخدام التعلم القائم على حل المشكلات لتعزيز التعلم الذاتي في دورات النصوص الأدبية. كما نشير ان مزيد من البحث يبقى مطلوب في هذا المجال.

## Résumé

Cette étude vise à mettre en évidence les effets de l'apprentissage par problèmes sur la lecture critique des textes littéraires des apprenants d'anglais comme langue étrangère à l'Université Abbes Laghrour de Khenchela.

A partir d'une population de 86 étudiants de troisième année, un groupe de 39 étudiants a été choisi comme groupe expérimental alors qu'un groupe de 47 étudiants comme groupe témoin. Suite à un pré-test, le groupe expérimental a reçu une intervention durant 11 semaines d'enseignement basé sur des instructions par problèmes des textes littéraires britanniques et américains. En plus, les scores de lecture critique ont été mesurés avant et après l'intervention pour comparer les moyennes des groupes en termes de performances.

Afin d'examiner plus en profondeur la lecture critique et d'évaluer dans quelle mesure les résultats des tests de lecture critique étaient fiables, le chercheur a effectué des observations en classe et évalué les performances de lecture critique des apprenants à l'aide d'une grille d'observation. En plus des tests et des observations, le chercheur a administré un questionnaire d'attitude dans le but de révéler les opinions du groupe expérimental sur l'efficacité de l'enseignement par problèmes dans la classe de textes littéraires. Le chercheur a utilisé le package statistique pour les sciences sociales (25) pour exécuter l'analyse de covariance, l'analyse de corrélation de Pearson et les tests d'hypothèses paramétriques.

L'analyse des scores pré-test et post-test a révélé qu'il n'y avait pas de différence significative dans la performance en lecture critique entre le groupe témoin et le groupe expérimental. Les résultats du questionnaire ont, toutefois, révélé que plus les apprenants pratiquaient des activités d'apprentissage par problèmes, plus ils exprimaient des attitudes positives à l'égard de ces activités. De plus, les résultats du questionnaire ont révélé que la mise en œuvre de l'apprentissage par problèmes dans les classes de textes littéraires favorisait les pratiques d'apprentissage autodirigé. L'analyse des données d'observation a confirmé les résultats obtenus à partir de l'analyse des tests, qui indiquaient que l'apprentissage par problèmes n'affectait pas la lecture critique des apprenants. L'observation a toutefois révélé que l'apprentissage par problèmes favorisait certains aspects liés à la lecture active. Sur la base de ces résultats, nous recommandons l'utilisation de l'apprentissage par problèmes pour promouvoir l'apprentissage autodirigé dans les cours de textes littéraires. Des recherches supplémentaires sont alors nécessaires.