Developing Critical Thinking in Language Teaching

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Keywords	Abstract
critical thinking English language teaching problem solving creativity	The article analyzes the ways to develop students' critical thinking. The acquisition of higher-order thinking skills is an integral part of the English curriculum. According to research, in order to achieve the ability to think critically and creatively according to the requirements of the curriculum, the ability to make favorable decisions and solve problems should be formed in students, intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual factors should be properly balanced. If this is the case, critical thinking will expand the learning experience of students and facilitate the acquisition of a foreign language. Because critical thinking is highly correlated with student achievement. Strong critical thinking means having a correct attitude to facts or events, making an objective analysis.

Introduction

One of the main tasks of foreign language teachers is to introduce new learning strategies for developing critical thinking in English classes in general educational institutions. Based on this, it should be noted that cognitive development of students around the topic is one of the important goals of foreign language teaching. English is one of the international languages as a spoken language for communication. English is also the universal language of instruction used almost everywhere in the world. English language teaching in general education schools has a new content based on the formation of students' thinking skills. Critical thinking in English is a prerequisite for the success of every young school leaver in an increasingly complex world and is recognized as a competency.

Critical thinking, as an important and necessary skill, helps students to make the right choice in their future education, overcome mental and logical questions, and is used to evaluate national values, innovations and educational progress. It is considered one of the strategic goals for students to have knowledge, skills and habits based on critical thinking and cognitive thinking in English in solving global problems. Critical thinking is clear, reasoned, reflective thinking aimed at deciding whether to perform any activity. It involves not just memorizing topics and facts, accepting what you hear or read, but how to critically approach what is reflected in the topic and how to arrive at hypotheses.

Theoretical Foundations of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking skills are important to develop students' logical and analytical thinking abilities in the teaching process. This skill teaches students to analyze information with skepticism, draw objective

conclusions from different perspectives, and make independent decisions. Critical thinking is one of the main conditions for deeper learning during education, more effective problem solving and development of creative approaches. Critical thinking skills increase students' academic success, make them more active learners, and develop logical and analytical thinking skills necessary for future working life. The development of this skill in the educational process ensures that students think more freely and creatively and plays an important role in the formation of future leaders. Critical thinking in education is of great importance not only for the study of facts, but also for the analytical analysis of these facts, deep thinking and application in practical life.

Various studies confirm the role of critical thinking in improving English writing skills. Here, the role of motivation to demonstrate students' language skills and oral communication skills is emphasized. If learners are taught ways to demonstrate critical thinking when using a foreign language, they can become proficient language users. Educators also point to the importance of comfortable classrooms and the use of efficient resources to develop thinking skills in English. As Pica (2000) points out, the integration of language and thinking skills is peripheral in English language teaching methodology.

It is argued that teaching language as a communicative tool does not really help students become proficient in the target language. He notes that thinking creatively and critically in the target language is a prerequisite for making an idea logically perfect (Turkan, 2023, p.29) Increasing critical thinking in language learners is possible by having an academic language program, developing critical thinking in accordance with curriculum requirements, and going beyond the influence of linguistic factors.

Development of Students' Crıtıcal Thınkıng In Englısh

The analysis shows that the critical thinking skills of language learners are not very satisfactory. The main reasons for the emergence of these problems include the lack of appropriate motivation and topic selection in English, the shortcomings in the organization of the free learning environment, the failure to conduct dialogues, and at the same time the low level of students' social skills and individual abilities (1.p.23). Other factors include the fact that high school students spend most of their time preparing for the entrance exams of higher education institutions with tutors, physical fatigue, giving preference to only linguistic knowledge in English, spending little time on reading materials, and not giving suitable topics for the development of students' thinking skills.

Despite the high test results of students in English, they cannot find their development dynamics in terms of critical thinking skills, they find it difficult to freely express their opinion on any topic. Another existing problem is the lack of space in the curriculum for topics that develop critical thinking. Weak motivation in training reduces students' interest in training and has a negative effect on joint cooperation in group work (3, p2). The main difficulties faced by teachers are related to their lack of experience in learning technologies, which play an important role in the formation of critical thinking, and their lack of participation in relevant training.

Therefore, educators do not pay attention to the use of methods that affect the development of students' free speech and ensure their thinking. In many cases, the lessons are mainly performed by reading and answering the tasks given in the textbooks, re-reading prepared dialogues and solving grammar exercises. Although group work is conducted in the lessons, students are still presented with the works given in the textbook.

With this kind of activity, it is very difficult to ensure quality in education and to form creative thinking in students.

It is difficult to create motivation for oral speech in students because there is no daily assessment of students' ability to think freely. The conducted observations and analyzes show that the activities and methodical methods for learning English in group discussions around original topics and for students to express their attitude to the topic, evaluate the information they have obtained, and justify the existing problem with facts are not applied. (Bensley, Crowe, Bernhardt, Buckner & Allman, 2010). In general secondary education, communicative activities that affect the development of critical thinking in English, creation of oral dialogues, discussion of video materials, reporting of attitudes to events and problems are rarely observed

Ways to Develop Critical Thinking In Language Teaching

Critical thinking enhances the ability of individuals to think independently and make sound decisions. In today's rapidly changing world, informational and technological innovations are an undeniable fact (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012; Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Voogt & Roblin, 2012). These changes require the acquisition of a number of skills, including digital media literacy. Some skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, enable learners to think critically and express themselves freely (Dewey, 2009, p.345). Some approaches and methods should be applied to achieve critical thinking.

Based on recent studies, new methodological approaches to the development of critical thinking are presented. Class discussions are a method of motivating students to use skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity. Discussions help to guide the thinking process, as students gain the ability to make clear, fact-based opinions about an interesting topic. Debates and games – stimulate students' thinking by stimulating their speaking skills, creating multiple ideas and thoughts in their minds that enrich their critical thinking.

The main feature of the debate is the conflicting opinions for and against the topic. Online forums – both written weekly assignments and online discussion posts help review student positions and conduct research using reliable online sources. Out-of-class projects – Offers direct presentation of language facts and concepts based on project-based learning (PBL). This approach also introduces students to new concepts in the language and encourages them to use complex real-world problems as a tool to encourage discussion. Karakuzular (2013) and Kow (2016) explain that critical thinking is a disciplined process of actively conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating information gathered through observation in project-based learning.

Preparation of free writing samples - students are asked to write free ideas on weekly writing assignments about interesting topics and events they observe. Here, the main idea is to write, use appropriate words and describe the text expressively (Bensley, 2010, p.95). Analysis and evaluation of writing by a teacher or classmates leads to new thinking. Weekly writings allow students to freely approach topics, add new ideas, express their attitudes and learn the language more thoroughly (Kow, 2016; Rafi, 2013, p.39). Tools for this self-evaluation process are provided by critical thinking. People with this ability provide the most reliable perspective for their career. Strong critical thinking means having a correct attitude to facts or events, making an objective analysis.

Conclusion

It is an important and necessary skill for students to have critical thinking in English because it helps them to get out of any situation and evaluate behavior. Based on the problem, it can be concluded that the lack of English speaking is caused by the lack of critical thinking. By forming critical thinking with the help of effective methods and methods, it is possible to gain high thinking ability with some indicators such as finding solutions to existing problems, collecting and compiling necessary information, logical thinking, distinguishing between false and true information, evaluating, and drawing conclusions.

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