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DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE (ENGLISH) LESSONS

Abstract: The article discusses about the problems associated with the development of critical thinking in high school students, discusses the main techniques and strategies for its development in foreign language (English) lessons.
Key words: critical thinking, basic model, comparison of texts, reflection, expression of evaluative opinion.
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Introduction

One of the types of human mental activity is critical thinking, characterized by a high level of intellectual perception, understanding and an objective approach to the surrounding information field. In the conditions of constantly accelerating dynamics of life, the teacher is tasked with developing a personality that could be successful in the modern world, teaching students to work correctly with various information sources, correctly evaluate and use the information received.

Since the study of a foreign language (FL) today is aimed at developing a person who is ready for contacts with representatives of a different culture at a high level, the central task for students in studying a foreign language is to learn how to find knowledge effectively and think critically. Students should be able to perceive new information in a foreign language, carefully and critically examine it, and also be able to balance different points of view in their minds, be able to formulate their point of view on a foreign language.

The development of critical thinking has become an integral part of the modernization of the modern school in general and the optimization of foreign language teaching in particular. The relevance of this study is associated not only with a special final form of knowledge control, but also due to the practical need of society for a person with freedom of thought, which implies its critical orientation. At the lessons of a foreign language, the formation of critical thinking is carried out, first of all, through such types of speech activity as reading, writing and speaking.

Therefore, a foreign language teacher needs special attention to the development of students' critical thinking. At the same time, as practice shows, the technology of developing critical thinking is still little used in practical pedagogical activity. Teachers of foreign languages are either not at all familiar with the techniques and strategies of critical thinking, or are familiar with some of them, but do not have a clear idea of their use in all of the above types of speech activity, using them mainly in reading, writing or dialogic speech and almost not using them in monologue speech, while monologue speech special importance is attached, because, according to the program, the student should be able to describe, report, characterize and tell something, expressing his attitude [7]. In fairness, it should be noted that most teachers are still aware of the importance of mastering the techniques and strategies of critical thinking in full and are ready to study them.

Thus, the relevance of the chosen research direction is determined by the following contradictions: 1) between the need of the educational and educational process in a foreign language in the

development of critical thinking among undergraduates and the lack of proper training and the desire of teachers to master modern teaching technologies; 2) between the need to use technologies for the development of critical thinking in all types of speech activity, including monologue speech in a foreign language lesson and episodic, non-systemic use of them.

The range of problems associated with the development of critical thinking among students is very wide, the research process is quite long-term, the ultimate goal of the study is to identify the effectiveness of the use of elements of technology for the development of critical thinking of students in teaching monologue speech at the senior stage of English language teaching.

But at this stage we have limited ourselves to solving only a few tasks, namely: 1) to reveal the essence of the concept of "critical thinking" and to consider the technology of developing this type of thinking in students; 2) to identify the possibilities of developing students' critical thinking in a foreign language lesson.

In the course of solving the first problem, as a result of the theoretical analysis of psychological, pedagogical and methodological literature on the problem of the development of critical thinking, we managed to find out that:

- firstly, in the West they started talking about a holistic technology for the development of critical thinking in the mid-90s, since 1997 this technology has officially existed with the financial support of the Open Society and Coordination Institute of the International Reading Association. It was developed by the Americans Ch.Temple, K.Meredith, and J.L.Steele. There are quite a lot of supporters of the development of students' critical thinking. These include Americans D.Halpern, J.Dewey, D.Kluster.

Domestic teachers also spoke about the need to teach critical thinking: A.V.Brushlinsky, M.I.Stankin, E.D.Bozhovich and others. For Uzbek didactics, the idea of developing critical thinking is also quite new.

The stage when a person creates conditions for the development of critical thinking comes by the age of 14-16. At the same time, according to scientists, this does not mean that these skills are developed by everyone to the same degree [4; 5].

In order for a student to use his critical thinking, it is important for him to develop a number of qualities, among which D. Halpern highlights: readiness for planning, flexibility, perseverance, willingness to correct his mistakes, awareness, search for compromise solutions [10, 372].

Having considered many definitions of critical thinking, we found that with all their diversity, one can see a close meaning in them, which allowed us to deduce the following generalized definition of critical thinking - this is analytical, creative, reflexive and "understanding" thinking, this is the ability to choose

the most optimal among a variety of solutions, to refute the false in a reasoned manner, to question ineffective solutions.

Secondly, the technology developed by Ch.Temple, K. Meredith and J. L. Steele for the development of critical thinking through reading and writing offers a system of specific methodological techniques that can be used in various subject areas. This is a universal, penetrating, "over-subject" technology, open to dialogue with other pedagogical approaches and technologies. The technology of developing critical thinking through reading and writing is based on a basic model consisting of three phases: the challenge phase, the implementation phase, and the reflection phase [8; 9].

Often, the lack of learning effectiveness is explained by the fact that the teacher constructs the learning process based on the goals set by him, implying that these goals were initially accepted by students as their own. At the same time, didactics develops the ideas of a constructivist approach to teaching, which implies the possibility for the student to set goals himself, creating the necessary internal motive for teaching. If the student is given the opportunity to analyze what he already knows about the studied topic, or make a decision in accordance with his experience, this will create an additional incentive for him to formulate his own goals - motives. It is this task that is solved in the challenge phase. The second task is the task of activating students. It is important that everyone can take part in the work aimed at updating their own experience. An important aspect in the implementation of the challenge phase is the systematization of all the information that appeared as a result of free statements of students [4, 24].

The stage of the implementation phase is called the semantic stage. In most classes where new material is being studied, this phase takes the longest. One of the conditions for the development of critical thinking is to track your understanding when working with the material being studied. It is this task that is the main one in the learning process at the implementation phase. In the process of implementing the semantic stage, the main task is to maintain the activity of students, their interest and the inertia of movement created during the challenge phase. Also, at the semantic stage, students continue to independently design the goals of their teaching. It is important that the teacher encourages students to pose new questions, search for answers through the context of the information with which students work. It is necessary to allocate sufficient time for the implementation of the semantic stage [4, 29].

Robert Bustrom in the book "The Development of creative and critical thinking" notes: "Reflection is a special kind of thinking... Reflexive thinking means focusing your attention. It means careful weighing, evaluation and selection" [4, 35]. In the process of

reflection, the information that was new becomes appropriated, turns into one's own knowledge. Reflexive analysis and evaluation permeate all stages of work, but at the third stage – the reflection phase – it becomes the main goal of the activity of the teacher and students. Reflexive analysis is aimed at clarifying the meaning of the new material, building a further learning route. It is in the process of verbalization that the chaos of thoughts that was in consciousness in the process of independent comprehension is structured, turning into new knowledge. In any case, the reflection stage actively contributes to the development of critical thinking skills.

Thus, at the reflection phase, students systematize new information in relation to their existing ideas, as well as in accordance with the categories of knowledge. At the same time, the combination of individual and group work at this stage is the most appropriate. In the process of individual work (various types of writing: essays, keywords, graphic organization of the material), students select the information that is most significant for understanding the essence of the topic being studied. Along with written forms, oral reflection is no less important. By resolving the dialogue at the stage of reflection, the teacher gives the opportunity to see and consider different versions of opinions on the same question. This is a time of rethinking and changes in the educational process. Questions can be an effective mechanism for stimulating reflection. Another incentive for the activation of reflection is the subjective judgments of the teacher himself. The partnership's position allows us to make the atmosphere of discussion more open. In the process of reflection, the results of students' work are evaluated.

Thirdly, within the framework of educational technology for the development of critical thinking, there are many technological techniques. By combining these techniques, teachers can adapt the lesson to a specific material and to the level of development of students. At the "challenge" stage, it is recommended to use the following techniques: pair or group brainstorming (brainstorming), drawing up "clusters" (associative fields), filling in constructive fields, maintaining a "logbook" in the lesson, etc. At the stage of "implementation", a system of marking the text "insert", tables "Plus - Minus - Interesting", "We know - We want to know - We found out" can be applied. Being at the final stage – "reflection", the teacher can combine the above-mentioned techniques, as well as turn to group summing up, discussing the results, return to the problem posed at the beginning of the lesson and check whether it has found its solution. At the stage of "reflection", the teacher can develop students' creativity by giving the task to come up with a "cinquain" (short rhyme), write an essay, etc.

As for the second task of our research, namely, to identify the possibilities of developing students' critical thinking in a foreign language lesson, the results of the analysis of the experience of domestic teachers [1; 2; 3; 6] also indicate that critical thinking, if it develops, is most often based on reading and writing, less often – speaking. However, the authors agree that strategies for developing critical thinking in teaching reading, used in foreign language lessons, can be successfully used not only in other types of speech activity, but also in other subjects. The list of these strategies includes: annotating the text, previewing, contextualization, posing questions by students, reflection, presenting the text in general terms and concise presentation, expressing an evaluative opinion, comparing and contrasting different texts with a common thematic focus. Let's consider each of the mentioned strategies.

The annotation is carried out directly on the pages of the text. It includes underlining keywords, writing comments or questions in the margins, bracketing individual parts of the text, putting forward hypotheses using lines of different colors and arrows, numbering the sequence of events, marking everything that is unusual or controversial.

Preview prepares students to understand the new text, familiarization with it before reading. This stage helps to understand its theme and structure. In this case, new information can be gleaned from the title or viewing reading.

Contextualization is the comprehension of a text within a historical, biographical or cultural context. When reading the text, students consider and evaluate events through the prism of their personal life experience, often forgetting that the text describes the events of the past and for its critical assessment it is necessary to understand the difference between modern ideas and those that were an integral feature of the "days of the past" with their system of values, morality and features. This process is called contextualization.

Composing their own questions to the text helps students to penetrate more deeply into the content of the text and better remember the material they read. Moreover, each question should be formulated independently and focused on the main idea of the text.

Reflection is the comprehension of a text on a personal level. It is recommended to make special notes in the margins of the text if its content does not correspond to the student's opinion, idea or belief.

The general outline and the concise presentation, despite the apparent identity of the formulations, imply different, albeit related, activities. The outline can be part of the annotation process. It implies an understanding of the differences between the main ideas of the text, as well as the events confirming these ideas. The concise presentation is not limited to a simple enumeration of the idea, but completely reconstructs the text and presents it in a new form, based on its creative reinterpretation, which

demonstrates a critical understanding of what has been read.

The expression of an evaluative judgment about the text is an important technique that is used to form the ability to put forward a hypothesis, draw conclusions, conclusions based on specific facts contained in the material read in a direct and veiled form in the form of a subtext. It is the understanding of the implication that is the deep understanding of the material.

Comparison of similar texts helps students to better understand their thematic features, and most importantly, learn to draw conclusions based on the use of different sources of information.

According to teachers, not only the above-mentioned types of strategies can be used in foreign language lessons, but also a whole arsenal of other aforementioned techniques and methods that contribute to the development of critical thinking at different stages of learning:

- creating clusters when introducing new topics that build an associative field, which, in fact, is a brainstorming session;

- determination of cause-and-effect relationships between the main characters, statement of conclusions based on personal interpretation;

- creating media texts, ads, writing continuation stories or your own ending;

- definition of fact and fiction, tracing the links between the content of a literary text, the student's personal experience and the real world, etc. [3, 26].

The researchers also recommend considering the development of critical thinking when teaching a foreign language and in the field of its linguistic features. At the same time, it is important to take into account language features that affect the formation of reading comprehension, and, consequently, the development of critical thinking.

The so-called "problem words" often cause difficulties for students in their interpretation, namely:

- words that have an indefinite, blurred meaning: fast, slow, much, little. For example, the word fast is understood differently by a runner and a participant in a Formula 1 race;

- words with double meanings, it will be useful for students to learn that politicians often use this technique of ambiguity in order to be understood differently by different groups of people;

- words with additional meanings. First of all, we are talking about such nouns as love, death, school, which can be associated with different concepts;

- expansion of the synonymic series, which is extremely necessary for understanding the evaluative characteristics of the characters: elegant, skinny, as well as irony, idioms, words with evasive meaning (probably), emotionally colored words [3, 27].

To conclude, at this stage of our research, we have come to the following most general conclusions:

1. The technology of critical thinking development is considered by researchers as innovation-modernization. The use of this technology in the educational process does not lead to its organizational transformation, that is, the use of this technology is quite feasible within the framework of traditional forms of education.

2. Insufficient attention is still being paid to the development of critical thinking in a foreign language lesson, especially English. Nevertheless, interest in the development of critical thinking in the field of foreign language education in our country has grown in recent years.

3. Despite this, we have not received a clear idea of whether the technology of developing critical thinking in the methodology of teaching a foreign language has been fully developed, including a narrower aspect – monologue speech.

4. In the process of developing critical thinking in a foreign language lesson, it is important to take into account the linguistic aspect.

In the future, we plan to develop and test a program for the development of critical thinking of students at the senior stage of teaching monologue speech in English at universities in Samarkand and to refract it in relation to the English language course at the Faculty of Foreign Languages.

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