

О ВАЖНОСТИ КРИТИЧЕСКОГО МЫШЛЕНИЯ В ОБУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

П. А. Чернопинская

*Белорусский государственный университет,
пр. Независимости, 4, 220030, г. Минск, Беларусь, pollykovalsky@gmail.com*

Критическое мышление набирает популярность по всему миру. Существует несколько способов интерпретации значения критического мышления. Возможно интерпретировать критическое мышление как способность мыслить рационально, способность установить логическую связь между значениями. Критическое мышление — это выявление и оценивание аргументов, решение проблем систематически, способность проанализировать убеждения и ценности других. Оно играет ключевую роль в оценке новых идей и выборе наилучших. Люди искали способ обучения критическому мышлению на протяжении ста лет. Считается, что Сократ начал искать подходящий способ две тысячи лет назад. Однако, «отцом» критического мышления считается американский философ и педагог Джон Дьюи. Он также известен за определение критического мышления. Он верит, что важными являются причины, по которым мы верим во что-то и влияние наших убеждений. Не обязательно мыслить критически все время, но необходимость обучения критическому мышлению должна быть приоритетной задачей для того, чтобы вырастить будущее поколение, способное принимать практические и рациональные решения в сложных ситуациях.

Ключевые слова: критическое мышление; креативность; коммуникативная компетенция.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL THINKING IN TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

P. A. Chernopinskaya

*Belarusian State University,
4 Nezavisimosti ave., Minsk, 220030, Republic of Belarus, pollykovalsky@gmail.com*

Critical thinking is getting more and more popular, trending worldwide. There are several ways to interpret the basic meaning of it. One may say that critical thinking is the ability to think rationally, realizing the logical link between meanings. It is about identifying and evaluating arguments, solving problems systematically, reflecting on the beliefs and values of the others. Critical thinking plays crucial role in evaluating new ideas and choosing the best ones. People have been searching the way of teaching critical thinking for about a hundred years. It is said that the Socrates began this approach 2,000 years ago. Although “the father” of critical thinking is considered to be an American philosopher and educator John Dewey. He is also known for giving a definition to critical thinking. He believes what matters is the reasons we have for believing something and the implications of our beliefs [1]. There is no need to think critically all the time, but the necessity of teaching critical thinking should be a primordial concern in order to raise a generation with the ability to take practical, rational decisions in complex situations.

Key words: critical thinking; creativity; communicative competence.

Learning a language is a delicate and a challenging process. Teaching a language, especially foreign language, may be far more complicated. In a world we live now, there are plenty of different approaches to teaching a language, using numerous varieties of modern technologies and trying different ways of teaching. Primary aim of teaching a foreign language is to form communicative competence and to reach fluency on the level, which allows students to use a language in their professional field. Talking about student's ability to communicate in English classes, a large number of factors affect learner's efficiency. Here we can specify student's motivation, teaching and learning context, friendly environment in class, certainly learner's personal abilities to study. A significant concern, which should be taken into account, is that today's qualified specialists who teach future generations do not only form communicative proficiency, grammar literacy, and other aspects of a language usage, but they also need to enhance critical thinking. What is an actual meaning of critical thinking and why is it an important issue in a world of global advancement? Critical thinking is the ability of an individual to think logically and make solid decisions, to take charge of individual's own thinking, to create an appropriate way of analyzing their own thoughts. Through critical thinking, learners improve their ability to communicate in a foreign language. Thus, enhancing of critical thinking encourages autonomous learning. Complex tasks given to the students during the lesson, influence student's perception in studying the language. Teacher's role in serving the lesson is undoubtedly crucial [4]. Teachers can help to develop students' abilities to think by adopting different methods of according to students' learning styles. Critical thinking playing a leading role in student's creativity, it makes them reflect and helps to become self-confident and independent. Critical thinking can be taught at all levels of studies appealing to any topic. If language learners can analyze their thoughts,

therefore they can observe their own means of study and become more successful. Sometimes we use critical thinking unconsciously and it is important to know that none of us think critically all the time. Sometimes, when we are out of control and affected by anger or other emotions, we think in almost any way, but critically. A good thing is since our critical thinking varies in accordance with our mindset, we can enhance it by doing some routine activities and applying them to all problems that touch our lives [2].

Critical thinking is not about gathering information. Someone who possesses knowledge of varying facts does not have to be good at critical thinking. A critical thinker makes conclusions based on what he knows; he is able to make use of information in order to find solutions to difficult problems, and he is eager to seek relevant information to educate himself. Critical thinking should not be confused with being critical or argumentative. However, critical thinking might be used in bad reasoning, can help us to strengthen our knowledge and make constructive arguments. It is relevant to say, that critical thinking is the way of thinking “out of the box” [2].

As the main aim of learning a language is to use it in and for communication, it is very important to use an effective teaching methodology. By communicative competence we mean the ability to use language for different purposes and functions, the ability to understand different types of texts; the ability to use language in accordance with the setting and the participants (in formal and informal speech, in written form, or in spoken); and be able to maintain a conversation.

Traditional approaches of learning, for example, a traditional method of translation should be replaced with a communicative one. Students should learn to become good listeners and thinkers. It takes time to set out strategies, which work best in approaching teaching methods. Since the basic goal is to use the language for communication both teacher and the student have to concentrate on the aspect. If the teacher does not stimulate students, they will not collaborate with the others. Teaching a language is to not only explain the lesson, give tasks, explain the vocabulary, and just to give homework. Teacher’s task is to explain how to learn a vocabulary, how to write an essay, for example. Teacher supports and monitors the student while the last work on the task referring to the topic.

Speaking about thinking critically, students connect known information with the unknown, and connect thoughts and ideas with the meanings. Teacher’s aim is to show how to do that and explain the importance of critical thinking, how to make conclusions. By developing critical thinking, learners develop their creative thinking, enrich their vocabulary, and broaden their mind. While teaching critical thinking the following aims are being offered: teaching how to search for information; understanding and analyzing statements; asking for opinions, approval or disapproval.

A student uses critical thinking:

While reading a passage or an extract from a text and relating own experience to the character from the text;

While discussing given questions referring to the topic with the other students;

In written form: when students do exercises in written, answering questions Why? How? When?

While listening (e.g. listen and fill in the blanks, answer the questions)[3];

Most of the tasks should be communicative; students share, discuss and prove their point of view in groups or in pairs. Teachers use practical activities which are aimed to be communicative that require students to practice their language, stimulate critical thinking. The practical activities during the lesson may be: a play-role (a simulation of a real-life situation), students work in pairs or in small groups sharing their opinions after reading some text materials, they may write a report on a survey, or may interview each other. The language level is always different, so the teacher’s task is to divide students with different levels (strong-weak level), so the student with a stronger lever could help the other student.

Language teachers have a great influence on the types of learning. It is our major task to help students to start thinking critically using their communicative skills, their background knowledge and gained experience, and of course, by using their language.

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