

HOW TO DEVELOP LEARNERS' CRITICAL THINKING IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Navruzova Nigina Khamidovna

Teacher of English Linguistics Department, Bukhara State University

n.x.navruzova@buxdu.uz

Subxonova Aziza

4th year student of Bukhara State University

Abstract. *Critical thinking is an essential skill in learning a foreign language, as it helps students analyze, interpret, and apply language effectively. This thesis explores strategies for developing critical thinking in foreign language teaching. It examines methods such as problem-solving tasks, debates, and open-ended questions that encourage deeper engagement with the language. The role of teachers in fostering critical thinking through interactive and student-centered approaches is also discussed. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of authentic materials and real-life communication in language learning. Challenges in integrating critical thinking into foreign language education are analyzed, along with possible solutions. The research is based on both theoretical perspectives and practical classroom applications. By enhancing critical thinking, students can improve their language proficiency and develop skills necessary for lifelong learning.*

Keywords: *Critical thinking, foreign language teaching, problem-solving, interactive learning, student-centered approach, authentic materials, communication skills, lifelong learning.*

Introduction

Learning a foreign language is not just about memorizing words and grammar rules. It's also about understanding, analyzing, and using the language effectively. One important skill that helps with this is critical thinking. Critical thinking allows students to think deeply, solve problems, and communicate ideas more effectively in a new language. This study explores how critical thinking can be developed in foreign language teaching. It looks at different strategies, such as problem-solving tasks, debates, and open-ended questions, which encourage students to engage with the language more actively. The role of teachers in promoting critical thinking through interactive and student-centered teaching methods is also discussed.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of using real-life communication and authentic materials in language learning. It also addresses the challenges teachers may

face when integrating critical thinking into foreign language education and suggests possible solutions. By improving critical thinking, students can enhance their language skills and prepare for lifelong learning, making language learning a more meaningful and effective experience.

John Dewey (1859–1952), an American philosopher and educator, is often regarded as the father of modern critical thinking. He introduced the idea of "reflective thinking," which he described as "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends." Dewey laid the foundation for incorporating critical thinking into teaching methods by stressing the value of challenging and assessing information. The 2001 American Educational Studies Association Critics' Choice Award went to Terry A. Osborn, an American academic renowned for his contributions to world language instruction, for his book *Critical Reflection and the Foreign Language Classroom*. According to his research, teaching language should include critical reflection in order to foster social justice and students' increased cognitive involvement.

Fostering Critical Thinking in the Teaching of Foreign Languages Critical thinking is an essential component of learning a foreign language that changes how pupils interact with it, not only an extra ability. To become proficient, I believe that memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary alone is insufficient. The capacity to evaluate, decipher, and apply language in a variety of settings is the hallmark of true language proficiency. Students should, for example, not only comprehend the text's literal meaning while reading it in a foreign language, but also deduce deeper meanings, recognize biases, and assess the reliability of the source. Learning experiences become more relevant when language is engaged analytically. This viewpoint is also supported by research. The value of reflective thinking, which entails actively challenging and evaluating knowledge rather than passively accepting it, is emphasized by academics such as John Dewey (1859–1952). The groundwork for incorporating critical thinking into foreign language instruction is laid by Dewey's theories. Similar to this, Terry A. Osborn (2001) contends that teaching critical thinking in language classes aids in the development of higher-order cognitive abilities in students, hence equipping them for communication in the classroom and in the real world. Problem-solving exercises are among the best methods for fostering critical thinking in language learners. In my opinion, conventional teaching strategies that mostly focus on translation exercises and repetition frequently fall short of engaging pupils on a deeper level. Rather, students are forced to think critically through activities like debates, case studies, and open-ended conversations that push them to use language in problem-solving settings. For instance, a teacher might assign students to evaluate opposing views on a contentious issue in the target language and provide

evidence to support their positions. This improves their confidence in utilizing the language naturally as well as their capacity to formulate arguments. Language education experts support similar strategies. Research indicates that student-centered learning, in which learners actively participate in conversations and decision-making, fosters critical thinking as well as language competency. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory states that meaningful conversation and peer interaction are crucial for cognitive development. This supports my view that rather than merely enforcing a strict curriculum, classrooms ought to promote more participatory learning where students are allowed to investigate many viewpoints. However, there are difficulties in incorporating critical thinking into the instruction of foreign languages. The strict framework of traditional educational institutions, where standardized tests value rote memory over critical thinking, is, in my opinion, one of the main challenges. Instead of learning to think for themselves, many children are taught to concentrate on getting the answers right. Furthermore, learners may find it challenging to articulate complicated concepts in a foreign language due to linguistic difficulties, which deters them from participating in critical conversations. Scholars have also identified these challenges. Research indicates that many teachers struggle with implementing critical thinking strategies due to a lack of training or institutional support. Some educators find it challenging to balance critical thinking activities with syllabus requirements, especially in exam-driven environments. Furthermore, cultural factors may influence how critical thinking is perceived—some educational systems emphasize conformity and respect for authority, which can discourage students from questioning ideas or engaging in open debates. Notwithstanding these difficulties, I think that encouraging critical thinking in language learners is crucial for sustained success. Language is a tool for comprehending the world, communicating, and expressing oneself; it is more than just a collection of laws. Students can improve their analytical abilities, gain confidence in communicating their thoughts, and eventually become more fluent by incorporating critical thinking into their foreign language instruction.

Benefits and Drawbacks of Including Critical Thinking in Language Instruction

While there are many advantages to integrating critical thinking into foreign language instruction, there are drawbacks as well. Although it improves students' capacity for analysis, problem-solving, and communication, it may also be time-consuming, difficult for novices, and tricky to evaluate. The benefits and drawbacks of incorporating critical thinking into language learning are thoroughly examined below.

Benefits of Including Critical Thinking in Language

Firstly, It improves Linguistic Ability

Improving general language competency is one of the main benefits of integrating critical thinking into language acquisition. Students interact with the language in meaningful circumstances rather than only learning vocabulary and grammar

rules. Students get a deeper comprehension of sentence structure, word usage, and idiomatic expressions through text analysis, debate, and problem-solving. For instance, a student reading a French newspaper item is urged to consider the author's tone, key points, and prejudice in addition to translating the piece. Critical reading and comprehension skills are strengthened by this approach. Secondly, it promotes Participation and Active Learning. Learning a language becomes a dynamic and involved process when critical thinking is applied. Students take an active role in their education rather than just passively absorbing knowledge. This sustains their motivation and fosters a stronger bond with the language. Example: Students are required to rewrite the ending or assess the choices made by the characters in the target language, which calls for creative and analytical thinking, rather than responding to simple comprehension questions about a story. Thirdly, it gets Students Ready for Communication in the Real World. Language is essential for interactions in real life and is not only a tool for academic success. Students that possess critical thinking skills are able to confidently interpret, react to, and participate in discussions. Students aiming for jobs in academia, international commerce, or diplomacy will especially benefit from this. For instance, in a business English course, students may be asked to employ persuasive language, logical reasoning, and problem-solving techniques to provide solutions in English to a corporate crisis situation. Fourthly, it fosters the Development of Analytical and Problem-Solving Skills. Students who use critical thinking skills develop into self-sufficient learners who can handle language-related problems independently. They gain the ability to identify grammatical patterns, assess various approaches to expressing an idea, and deduce the meaning of unknown words from context. For instance, students are encouraged to infer a word's meaning by examining the phrases around it and identifying well-known roots or prefixes rather than instantly consulting a dictionary. The drawbacks of using critical thinking in language instruction

1. Demands More Work and Time. Critical thinking calls for investigation, debate, and review, all of which take more time and mental energy than standard memorization-based learning. For pupils that need to pick up language skills fast, this can be difficult. For instance, a critical thinking-based grammar course could ask students to infer rules from sentence structures, which takes more time than a straightforward exposition of the rules followed by activities.
2. May Be Too Much for Novices. It might be frightening and discouraging for students who are still having trouble with fundamental vocabulary and sentence patterns to participate in critical debates in a foreign language. If their low language skills prevent them from adequately expressing their thoughts, some people may become frustrated. Example: Because they lack the vocabulary and language structures needed to articulate complicated thoughts, a beginner in German may find it difficult to contribute to a debate regarding cultural

differences.3. Assessment Challenges Compared to typical assessments that concentrate on vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension, evaluating critical thinking in language learning is more subjective. Creating equitable and reliable assessment strategies is a common challenge for educators. For instance, marking an article that assesses moral quandaries in a foreign language necessitates subjective evaluation of both linguistic correctness and logical reasoning, whereas multiple-choice grammar tests provide obvious right and wrong responses.4. Barriers related to education and culture It might be challenging for students to adopt a critical thinking approach in some countries when traditional education prohibits challenging authority figures or voicing differing viewpoints. Furthermore, standardized testing and rote learning are given priority in many educational systems, leaving little opportunity for discussion-based learning. For instance, in certain Asian educational systems, pupils are used to blindly obeying their teachers' directions, which makes it challenging for them to participate in debates or argument analysis exercises.5. Not Every Subject Is fit for a Critical Conversation Although critical thinking is useful, not all language learning subjects call for in-depth discussion and analysis. Repetition and practice are the most effective ways to master some language skills, including pronunciation or fundamental grammatical rules. For instance, learning how to pronounce French nasal sounds or conjugate Spanish verbs doesn't always involve a critical debate; instead, it just calls for repetition, listening practice, and drilling.

Conclusion. Fostering Critical Thinking in the Instruction of Foreign Languages Fostering deeper comprehension, problem-solving abilities, and effective communication all depend on the development of critical thinking in foreign language instruction. In order to accomplish this, teachers must incorporate interactive and thought-provoking exercises in addition to memorization and grammar drills. Students are encouraged to examine, contrast, and assess linguistic patterns and cultural quirks through the use of techniques including debates, open-ended discussions, problem-solving exercises, and real-world applications. Furthermore, using real resources (such news stories, movies, and books) encourages students to interact with many viewpoints and develop their own beliefs. Promoting introspection, questioning strategies, and group projects also helps kids become more capable of independent thought. In the end, critical thinking enables language learners to employ the target language in authentic contexts in a creative way. By encouraging curiosity, flexibility, and in-depth study, teachers equip students to think critically in a foreign language in addition to speaking it.

REFERENCES:

1. Navruzova, N. K. (2024). A Historical Linguistic Approach of Connotative and Denotative Meanings. *International Multi-disciplinary Journal of Education*, 2(10), 532-537. <https://multijournals.org/index.php/excellencia-imje/article/view/2493/2609>
2. Navruzova, N. (2024). THE POSITION OF CONNOTATIVE MEANING IN THE SEMANTIC STRUCTURE OF A WORD. *ЦЕНТР НАУЧНЫХ ПУБЛИКАЦИЙ (buxdu. uz)*, 50(50).
3. Navruzova, N. (2021). EMOTSIONAL–EKSPRESSIVLIKNING NUTQ BIRLIKLARIDA IFODALANISHI. *ЦЕНТР НАУЧНЫХ ПУБЛИКАЦИЙ (buxdu. uz)*, 8(8).
4. Khamidovna, N. N., & Akmaljonovna, A. S. (2024). THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF ABBREVIATIONS IN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION. *INNOVATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS IN SCIENCE 2024*, 3(28), 148-154.
5. Khamidovna, N. N., & Kamola, T. (2024). LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ONOMATOPOEIC WORDS IN ENGLISH. *INNOVATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS IN SCIENCE 2024*, 3(28), 143-147.
6. Khamidovna, N. N. (2023, April). THE EXPRESSION OF CONNOTATIVE MEANINGS IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. In *Integration Conference on Integration of Pragmalinguistics, Functional Translation Studies and Language Teaching Processes* (pp. 76-81).
7. Khamidovna, N. N., & Gulmira, J. (2023, April). Ingliz va o'zbek tillarida frezeologizmlarning lingvomadaniy xususiyatlari. In *Integration Conference on Integration of Pragmalinguistics, Functional Translation Studies and Language Teaching Processes* (pp. 61-64). Retrieved from <https://www.conferenceseries.info/index.php/online/article/view/740>
8. Khamidovna, N. N. (2024). Words that Paint a Picture. *Miasto Przyszłości*, 47, 1175-1178.
9. Khamidovna, N. N., & Nargiza, R. (2024). EXPLORING THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF PHRASAL VERBS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS. *INTELLECTUAL EDUCATION TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATIVE DIGITAL TOOLS*, 3(28), 202-206.
10. Khamidovna, N. N. (2022). The denotation and connotation of a word.
11. Khamidovna, N. N., & Gulasal, H. (2024). STUDY OF WORD FORMATION: A LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE. *INTELLECTUAL EDUCATION TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATIVE DIGITAL TOOLS*, 3(28), 207-211. <https://interoncof.com/index.php/nether/article/view/2274/2090>
12. Xamidovna, N. N., & Nilufar, R. (2023). FRAZEOLOGIZMLARNING LINGVOKULTUROLOGIK JIHATLARINI TAHLIL QILISHDA TIL VA MADANIYATNING O'ZARO BOG'LIKLIGI. *FORMATION OF PSYCHOLOGY*

AND PEDAGOGY AS INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCES, 2(20), 31-37.

<https://interonconf.org/index.php/ity/article/view/5668>

13. Khamidovna, N. N., & Nozigul, G. (2023). LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF TOPONYMS. FORMATION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PEDAGOGY AS INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCES, 2(20), 259-266.

<https://interonconf.org/index.php/ity/article/view/5798/5062>

14. Khamidovna, N. N. (2023). STRUCTURE OF THE CONNOTATION COMPONENTS IN THE ADJECTIVES. Finland International Scientific Journal of Education, Social Science & Humanities, 11(2), 180-185.

<http://farspublishers.org/index.php/ijessh/article/view/442>

15. Navruzova Nigina Khamidovna, & Kodirova Dilfuza. (2023). THE STYLISTIC FEATURES OF PHRASEOLOGICAL SYNONYMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES. Integration Conference on Integration of Pragmalinguistics, Functional Translation Studies and Language Teaching Processes, 65–67. Retrieved from <https://www.conferenceseries.info/index.php/online/article/view/741>

16. Khamidovna, N. N. (2022). The importance of denotation and connotation. Integration of Pragmalinguistics, Functional Translation Studies and Language Teaching Processes, 119–120. <http://conferenceseries.info/index.php/online/article/view/624>

17. Navruzova, N. (2023). CONNOTATION IN VERBS AND ITS EXPRESSIVE FUNCTIONS. ЦЕНТР НАУЧНЫХ ПУБЛИКАЦИЙ (buxdu.Uz), 32(32). извлечено от http://journal.buxdu.uz/index.php/journals_buxdu/article/view/9399

18. Navruzova Nigina Khamidovna. (2023). THE EXPRESSION OF CONNOTATIVE MEANINGS IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. Integration Conference on Integration of Pragmalinguistics, Functional Translation Studies and Language Teaching Processes, 76–81. Retrieved from <https://www.conferenceseries.info/index.php/online/article/view/744>

19. Khamidovna, N. N., & Zafarovna, M. D. (2024). THE IMPORTANCE OF USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING. FORMATION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PEDAGOGY AS INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCES, 3(34), 259-265. <https://interoncof.com/index.php/italy/article/view/5666/5116>

20. Navruzova, N. K. (2024). A Historical Linguistic Approach of Connotative and Denotative Meanings. International Multi-disciplinary Journal of Education, 2(10), 532-537. <http://eprints.umsida.ac.id/id/eprint/14448>