

THE ROLE OF CRITICAL THINKING IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract

In modern education, developing students' intellectual and analytical abilities has become an important goal of the learning process. One of the most essential skills that supports effective learning is critical thinking. In English language learning, critical thinking allows students to analyze information, evaluate ideas, and express their opinions more clearly. It also helps learners understand texts deeply and participate actively in communication. The purpose of this article is to explore the role of critical thinking in learning English and to examine how teaching strategies that promote analytical thinking can improve students' language abilities and classroom interaction.

Key words

critical thinking, English language learning, analytical thinking, communication skills, language education.

Introduction. English is one of the most widely used languages in the world. It plays a significant role in international communication, education, science, and technology. Because of this global importance, many students study English to improve their academic and professional opportunities.

However, learning a language successfully requires more than memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary. Students also need to develop the ability to analyze information, evaluate different ideas, and express their opinions clearly. These abilities are closely related to critical thinking.

Critical thinking helps learners interpret information, compare perspectives, and form logical conclusions. When students use critical thinking in English classes, they become more active participants in the learning process. They ask questions, discuss ideas, and communicate more effectively.

Therefore, integrating critical thinking into English language teaching is an important aspect of modern education. It helps students develop both language skills and intellectual abilities.

Literature review. Critical thinking has been widely studied by many scholars in the field of education and psychology. According to Richard Paul and Linda Elder, critical thinking is the process of analyzing and evaluating information in order to improve the quality of thinking. They emphasize that critical thinking enables learners to question ideas, examine evidence, and make reasoned decisions.

In the field of language education, H. Douglas Brown highlights the importance of critical thinking in developing communicative competence. He explains that students who think critically are better able to understand complex texts and express their opinions clearly during communication.

Similarly, Jeremy Harmer states that modern English teaching should include interactive activities such as discussions, debates, and problem-solving tasks that encourage students to think independently.

Another important contribution is presented by Jack C. Richards, who argues that communicative language teaching methods help learners develop both language skills and cognitive abilities.

Furthermore, Diane F. Halpern notes that critical thinking skills allow students to analyze arguments, evaluate information, and apply knowledge in real-life situations.

These studies demonstrate that critical thinking is a key factor in successful language learning.

Methodology. This study focuses on the use of teaching strategies that encourage critical thinking in English language classrooms. Several interactive activities were used to develop students' analytical thinking and communication abilities.

First, group discussions were organized during English lessons. Students were given different topics related to education, culture, and daily life. They were encouraged to share their opinions and listen to the perspectives of other students.

Second, debate activities were introduced in the classroom. Students were divided into groups and asked to defend different viewpoints on specific issues. This method helped students develop logical reasoning and practice speaking English.

Third, text analysis tasks were used. Students read short English texts and discussed the main ideas, arguments, and messages presented in the texts. This activity improved their reading comprehension and analytical thinking.

These teaching strategies created an interactive learning environment where students could actively participate in the educational process.

Results and discussion. The implementation of critical thinking activities produced several positive results in the English learning process.

First, students became more active during classroom discussions. They participated more willingly and expressed their opinions more confidently.

Second, debate and discussion activities helped improve students' speaking abilities. Because learners were required to explain their ideas and arguments, they used English more frequently during lessons.

Another important result was the increase in students' confidence. Many learners initially felt shy when speaking English, but after participating in interactive activities, they became more comfortable communicating with others.

Furthermore, students began to analyze information more carefully. Instead of memorizing facts, they started to evaluate ideas, compare different perspectives, and express their own arguments. This process contributed to the development of both language skills and critical thinking abilities.

These results show that integrating critical thinking activities into English language teaching can significantly improve students' communication skills and overall learning experience.

Conclusion. In conclusion, critical thinking plays an important role in the process of learning English. It helps students analyze information, develop logical reasoning, and express their ideas clearly.

The findings of this study demonstrate that activities such as discussions, debates, and text analysis can effectively improve students' critical thinking and language skills. These teaching strategies encourage learners to become active participants in the classroom and develop stronger communication abilities.

Therefore, English teachers should incorporate critical thinking activities into their teaching methods in order to create a more effective and engaging learning environment.

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