

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CRITICAL THINKING IN LEARNING LANGUAGES

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**Abstract :** In this article discusses about the importance of critical thinking in learning languages and given some important information. Nowadays, much of the thinking done in education concentrates on teaching students to analyze and therefore, understand assertions to build a reasonable argument or figure out answers.

**Key words :** *Learning languages, "krisis", EFL, immanent integration, critical thinking, intellectual independence, cooperative learning.*

**Abstract:** Ushbu maqolada tillarni o'rganishda tanqidiy fikrlashning ahamiyati haqida so'z boradi va ba'zi muhim ma'lumotlar beriladi. Hozirgi kunda ta'lim sohasida amalga oshiriladigan fikrlashning aksariyati talabalarni tahlil qilishga va shuning uchun asosli dalillarni yaratish yoki javoblarni aniqlashga qaratilgan da'volarni tushunishga o'rgatishdir.

**Kalit so'zlar:** *Tillarni o'rganish, "krisis", EFL, immanent integratsiya, tanqidiy fikrlash, intellektual mustaqillik, hamkorlikda o'rganish.*

**Абстракт:** В этой статье рассказывается о важности критического мышления при изучении языков и дается некоторая важная информация. В настоящее время большая часть размышлений в сфере образования концентрируется на обучении студентов анализировать и, следовательно, понимать утверждения, чтобы построить разумный аргумент или найти ответы.

**Ключевые слова :** *Изучение языков, «кризис», EFL, имманентная интеграция, критическое мышление, интеллектуальная самостоятельность, кооперативное обучение.*

The word "critical" is derived from the Greek word "krisis" which means "to separate." When life presents us with turning points, when we are faced with situations that require decisive action, when we need plans that will yield positive consequences, then we also need critical thinking. Such thinking allows us to separate ourselves from the crisis that can suck us into disaster and permits us, instead, to forge new pathways to success. Critical thinking is the ability to look a situation carefully and make thoughtful decisions on that analysis. Critical thinking supplies to deeper understanding and demanding accepted perception with strong arguments, and allows for more completely developed thoughts. Students who developed critical thinking skills are more able to

achieve high marks, become less dependent on teachers and course books and have their own views on society where they are growing up. As Dewey (1915) observed, "There is all the difference in the world between having something to say and having to say something" (p. 39). Students of critical thinking will not lack for "something to say" and will not be reduced to discussing trivial topics.

Neil Browne & Stuart Keeley considers critical thinking as followings (2007, p.4):

- Awareness of a set of interrelated critical questions;
- Ability to ask and answer critical questions at appropriate times;
- Desire to actively use the critical questions;

They also wrote that everyone who improves one's critical ability can enhance self-confidence for oneself by increasing sense of intellectual independence (2007). In recent years, interest has been renewed by educators for teaching and analysing critical thinking. However, traces of critical thinking goes back to ancient times when Socratic questioning developed as a Western philosophical way. Mulnix (2012) eases some of the confusion around defining critical thinking when she states that "critical thinking has little to do with what we are thinking, but everything to do with how we think" (p.3). Facione tried to standardize a definition for critical thinking by asking 46 experts on critical thinking in order to come to a consensus on what critical thinking is. The panel of experts agreed that critical thinking is "purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based" (Facione, 1990, p. 2). While this definition is one that the majority of experts asked by Facione were able to agree with, most of the language used in the definition would be difficult for intermediate learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to understand Cooper (1995, p. 8) set forth that putting students in group learning situations is the best way to foster critical thinking. Cooper (1995) clarified "In properly structured cooperative learning environments, students perform more of the active, critical thinking with continuous support and feedback from other students and the teacher." Some theorists in this field agree that critical thinking skills need to be taught within the context of a discipline, not as an isolated discipline. The others believe that critical thinking cannot be taught as a separate subject. Gilster and Gilster (1997) view critical thinking as the most important skill when using the Internet, because the Internet is full of false, incomplete, obsolete, etc. information. So, including that the Internet contains an immense range of information that is posted by individuals and organizations, and the difficult of ensuring the quality of this information. Students need to learn critical evaluation skills which enable them to identify information that meets their needs. Therefore, critical thinking

should be the goal of most college courses, and online discussions should be utilized to encourage the use of critical thinking. Allen Matthew expressed the word critical thinking as smart thinking and listed the following which can assist students to be more critical. They are

- Working out where and how to look for the information you need;
  - Understanding that information in relation to your own work;
  - Deciding which information is relevant to your topic and which is not;
  - Identifying when you need to find out more information to make sense of a problem;
- He also wrote that, to think smart one must use reasoning. Reasoning is the of much our thinking.

It is described as the process of thinking through and communicating our reasons for holding certain views or conclusions. Reasoning is, however, better defined as a process of understanding and exploring the relationships between the many events, objects, and ideas in our world. Critical thinking is the soul of analyzes critically adapting to new situations. Paul and Elder (2008) asserted that critical thinking provides a vehicle for educating the mind (p. 88). Within three years of compulsory secondary specialised educational system and four years of higher education, it is impossible to explore and analyze classroom setting and one's own problems which they encounter in life. Moreover, it is difficult to teach students what to think but we can teach them how to think. Instead of teaching students to merely memorize facts easily found on the internet, we should instead - teach them how to think: clearly, accurately, precisely, relevantly, deeply, broadly, logically, significantly, fairly (Paul & Elder, 2008, p. 88). Mendelman (2007) warned - in a day and age in which more and more children grow up engaged with primarily passive activities like television, video games, and the internet, teaching critical reading and writing are the most important and most difficult burdens of the classroom (p. 300).

For critical thinking skills to develop, teachers need to teach critical thinking while students take responsibility for their own learning. Students need 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that allow them to own their learning; students need to be able to locate, analyze and evaluate new information while at the same time organize and plan what to do with that new information (Coughlin, 2010, p. 50). Critical thinking involves ways of thinking about the written and spoken word that go beyond the surface meaning in order to discern the deeper meaning, ideology, and bias expressed therein (Pescatore, 2007, p. 330). Thinking in a disciplined, critical manner does not automatically evolve on its own; educators are critical to helping students take command, and self-assess their learning and thinking. In this regard, Coughlin (2010) concluded that research on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills reveals that

student success is more related to critical thinking than traditional core subject matter (p. 50). Nowadays educators often come across with students who have great difficulties to support their ideas or viewpoints. In most cases students try to copy the information from others, sometimes they use irrelevant verifications or inadequate reasons at proving their claims. The problem probably comes for the result of spoon-feeding method and this method as Stapleton mentions (2002) mostly in use of English learners of Asian countries. The immanent integration of Asian Economical Communities requires critical thinking skills even more apparent. Stapleton tried to overcome this difficulty through supporting and developing critical thinking in academic sphere as well as our globalising world requires being more critical in all fields. Paul and Elder (2006) suggest that developing critical thinkers is necessary and should be the central goal of all educational institutions. Paul and Elder (2006) think that instructors can play an important role in the development of Internet based students' critical thinking skills through the use of effective strategies. Moore (2004) views that developing critical thinkers is fundamental to good education and those critical thinking skills are necessary in order to function as engaged and active citizens of our world

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