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## DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH READING NEWS ARTICLES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

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### ABSTRACT

*Today, teachers all over the world are trying to incorporate critical thinking skills into the learning process in order to raise their students as independent critical thinkers. The article discusses about critical thinking development through reading authentic news articles in English classes.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Critical Thinking, Reading, Analytical Reading, Authentic Materials, Newspaper, Critical Discourse Analysis*

### INTRODUCTION

How does critical thinking relate to the educational process and how important is its role in modern society? Reality shows that it is difficult to incorporate critical literacy and critical thinking into the process of learning English as a foreign language, as it often exceeds the capabilities of students. Today we can state the fact that this problem is not given due attention in language classes, not only in our country, but throughout the world, as evidenced by numerous experiments and studies. It was revealed that the interpretation of texts is reduced to a retelling, a description of insignificant details, and the key points of the content are not mentioned by students due to a lack of understanding of the meaning, as well as the inability to distinguish the main from the secondary.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Let's discuss some reasons explaining the existence of this problem.

*First*, when teaching analytical reading in English, priority is given to explaining the lexical and grammatical subtleties of the text, rather than teaching comprehension.

*Secondly*, in the conditions of intensive and rich study programs, teachers do not have enough time and dedication to teach students the appropriate skills.

*Thirdly*, the teachers do not have a lot of experience and a sufficient level of training to develop students' critical thinking skills.

We know that, English as a Foreign Language students absorb new knowledge and bring it to their culture. In this case, good language training and critical thinking allows you to understand the latent meaning of the information received, to avoid the imposition of alien ideas or reject them. Nowadays, the method of critical discourse analysis in teaching is widely promoted abroad and in our country as well, which makes it possible to increase the level of critical language thinking of students. We have a discourse analysis course, which one of the Pre SETT modules at our university [1]. The methodology is aimed at developing the ability to explore the world around us, form critical judgments and find ways to change the course of events. Critical discourse analysis offers a revolutionary new approach to language and its teaching. There is an expression "language in action", which means that its use is sometimes ambiguous and problematic, reflecting social and ideological processes and influencing these processes [2].

According to critical discourse analysis, the text is studied meaningfully, taking into account the linguistic environment. Three aspects underlie the analysis of a communicative event: text, discursive practice, social and cultural practice. In contrast to critical discourse analysis, critical language awareness is a mental and internal ability that develops gradually in motivated students interested in independently "discovering" the language for themselves [2]. In other words, we can call this approach self-education.

Developing and educating a student as a person capable of critically evaluating his work, analyzing the thoughts of other authors, we always ask ourselves the question of what critical thinking is. Of course, this is a complex concept due to the fact that people perceive information differently in the conditions of the existence of intercultural and interethnic differences, peculiarities of logic, thinking, etc., therefore, the same facts or events are considered from different positions, and the conclusions are opposite.

We understand critical thinking as a combination of abilities and attitudes. Ability is a cognitive element that gives an idea of what to do, and students' disposition is this or that attitude or inclination that forms critical thinking in a certain direction. EFL teachers face with the urgent task of organizing work in the classroom in a new way. Students should have time to search for an approach to solving the problem posed, formulating adequate questions, considering hypotheses, and putting forward valid arguments. At this stage, the teacher's methods of work play a decisive role in shaping students' critical thinking. There is a widespread misconception that students learn exclusively through the transmission of information according to the teacher-student scheme. In this case, it can rightfully be argued that students are not interested in working together and exchanging ideas, since they work under duress. On the contrary, discussions and the formulation of one's own judgments stimulate the intellectual development of students, which contributes to a better understanding of ideas, including scientific ones. We emphasize that there is a circumstance that we should not forget: the text in English is a cultural source of values, the meaning of which is determined by a particular historical era. In other words, the author is not a neutral person, but a personality with its inherent culture, knowledge, intentions, actions that are reflected in the text, and each reader interprets the author's ideas,

guided by his own critical point of view. Knowledge is always contextual, and readers construct their understanding based on everyday and cultural views based on their own life experiences. Thus, critical thinking will always depend on a whole range of socio-cultural factors and be characterized by situational conditioning.

It is the ability to critically analyze texts and reasoning that help the reader understand the author's ideas and go beyond the text, draw conclusions, thereby forming a personality in himself, armed with new knowledge and capable of fighting, defending his civic position in our contradictory world [2].

In the discussions and debates, students develop not only critical thinking, but also to improve the skills of all types of speech activity: speaking, listening, writing, reading. There are advantages of using newspaper material in English classes: diversity, gradation of difficulty levels, consideration of socio-cultural, political-economic and other topics, contextual reading, text design in literary English, the ability to look at the text analytically, interacting with other students through hypothesis, the possibility of individual interpretation of facts. Among the above listed advantages of using newspaper material in the classroom, the most significant factor for anyone learning English as a foreign language is the literary language in which the articles are written. It is in this connection that it is appropriate to recall that the dictionary of applied linguistics characterizes literary English as follows [3]: “the language that has the highest status in society, which is spoken by educated people, which is also used in the media and fiction, dictionaries, grammars. This language is taught in educational institutions, it is studied as a foreign one”. Thus, it can be stated that the press is an excellent source of living English. It is very important to note that journalists, editors, columnists, reporters and other professionals write texts in the literary language, so the use of authentic materials is essential for effective work in classrooms.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The advantage of using newspaper material in the classroom is obvious, since in this case a critical vision of a fact or event is encouraged, which leads to the creation of a special creative atmosphere in the class, as we have already written about above. The teacher has an urgent need to learn more about the interests of his students in order to correctly navigate in the selection of material for analytical reading or other types of activities for the formation of critical thinking, which we will write about below. The most important condition for success in this work is to increase the level of students' motivation to read the press. The choice of a newspaper depends not only on the interests of students, their level of preparedness, educational goals that are set for them. Developments are an excellent didactic material for preparing for classes. Students who are just starting to work with an English newspaper must be familiar with its structure, know the names of sections of newspapers. Knowledge of the features of a particular newspaper allows a critical comparative analysis of the structure of English and foreign newspapers. When discussing the organization of articles, relevant vocabulary is introduced, which is discussed in a group or frontally: an article with the name of the author, an expression of gratitude, the structure of an inverted pyramid, the first paragraphs of the article. In the first lessons, students introduce with grammatical features of newspaper material, in particular, headings, which are characterized by shorter sentences, the absence of clauses, the use of substantive phrases, the use of word forms without prepositions. The teacher's function in the subsequent work on the newspaper is

for students to know exactly how to approach the analysis of the material read from the standpoint of a critical reader. We give an algorithm of actions that a student should follow when working on an article:

- 1) Information about the article: before you start reading the article, you need to know all the data about the journal, the author, etc .;
- 2) information about the analysis: it is necessary to research the article as a whole and try to determine what goals the author has set, for which readership the article is intended; before reading, find clues in the title and / or subtitle;
- 3) The main details: find the formulation of the question, the thesis statement of the author, and also find out what facts the author uses to substantiate his position;
- 4) general presentation and argumentation: as you delve into the process of "observational" reading, it is necessary to achieve a deep understanding of the facts used and how harmoniously they fit into the argument; inquire about the meaning of unfamiliar words in the dictionary or try to guess their meaning; follow the author's progress in the final part, after analyzing the last few paragraphs; think about the meaning of the article, about the logic of its construction;
- 5) Assessment: after reading the article carefully, it is advisable to determine your attitude towards it, whether the reader liked it; whether it was difficult / easy or interesting / boring to read it, try to make some judgments about the article.

Analyzing the article critically and comprehensively, the student needs to logically build his train of thought, relying on the following strong points: the purpose of the article, target audience, subject of discussion, reason, main position, facts, style, presentation of arguments, conclusions, meaning, impact on the reader, dignity ... For each of the listed sections, a standard series of questions is posed for a faster and more qualitative analysis of the material. For example, in the section "Purpose" the student is required to: explain his point of view regarding the reasons why the author wrote the article; express an opinion on whether the article contains refutation / approval of the views of other people regarding the phenomena or events mentioned in the article; present a point of view on whether the author presents new information in his article, whether there are elements of novelty in it, what is the degree of its uniqueness.

In order to show the requirements for newspaper articles, determine the strategies of students for working with them, determine the assessment criteria and evaluate the work, we offer the template below.

Article ... - taken from the recommended source; - has sufficient volume; - provides opportunities for analysis.

The summary of the article assumes that ... the student ... - defines the purpose of the article; - summarizes her key points.

The presentation of the content implies that ... the student, using language means and critical thinking skills, demonstrates understanding of the content of the article and tries to interpret the author's position on the issue under consideration, as well as express consent / disagreement, approval / disapproval, etc., as well as draw conclusions ...

Criteria for evaluating article analysis

Objectivity of a critical assessment of an article \_\_\_\_\_

Reasoning logic \_\_\_\_\_

Validity and integrity \_\_\_\_\_

Lexico-grammatical design \_\_\_\_\_

Compliance with the rules for registration of work \_\_\_\_\_

Work methods \_\_\_\_\_

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we recommend the abovementioned types of practical activities in the lesson focused on reading newspaper materials, aimed at further developing students' critical thinking skills. Students learn to review the material that they have to read in writing, as well as develop a leadership position in the discussion.

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