Improving Students` Critical Thinking in Teaching a Foreign Language

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ABSTRACT

The article reveals the theoretical and methodological foundations for the development of students' critical thinking in the process of teaching a foreign language and to substantiate the pedagogical conditions for its implementation. The author developed and substantiated a set of initial provisions that form the theoretical and methodological foundations for the development of students' critical thinking in teaching a foreign language and revealed the essence and features of the development of critical thinking of students in the process of teaching a foreign language. The theoretical analysis made by the author on various aspects of the development and formation of critical thinking at the philosophical, social, psychological and pedagogical levels indicates the relevance of the problem and the interest of scientists in solving a number of identified problems.

Keywords: critical thinking, higher education, civil-democratic, curriculum, reflective assessment, adequate, interaction, cooperation, cause-and-effect, relationships, analyze.

Introduction

The main task of modern higher education is to reveal the abilities of each student, to educate a personality ready for life in a high-tech, competitive world. Modern society, and hence modern education, needs a free, creative person with certain qualities of thinking. Freedom of thinking implies its critical orientation, focused on creative and constructive activity, therefore, a qualitative characteristic of the thinking of a free person is critical thinking.

The study of state educational standards, curricula and programs of higher educational institutions reveals the growing importance of the development of students' critical thinking during the university stage of education. An analysis of the practical activities of universities indicates a growing need for the education of a critically thinking person. The formation of critical thinking of students of a modern university will allow future specialists to adapt flexibly in the modern information space, and the ability to understand and analyze information in a foreign language allows this goal to be achieved

The Main Part

The development of critical thinking is the preparation of people for life in a civil society, where tolerance and cooperation (competition in this case is also considered as a form of interaction and cooperation) become necessary attributes of the existence of society in general. The disciples realize the impossibility of the infallibility of life. When the traditional system provides that the student must learn the material, and after that do everything according to the learned prescriptions, then the development of critical thinking forms the instruction that prescriptions for all occasions have not been created. And only those who do nothing do not make mistakes. If a person thinks, makes decisions and executes them, he can make mistakes. There is no tragedy in error now. Mistake becomes just one of the learning options. A negative result is also perceived as a

result that helps in understanding the world no worse than a positive one .

Now few people doubt that the development of critical thinking among young people is an urgent and necessary task. P. Lushin [6] notes that this idea has spread and is spreading in two contexts. The first of these is to instill in the new generation the foundations of a civil-democratic way of life, which is inconceivable without the ability to convincingly argue one's position in the process of discussing social projects and defending one's own point of view. The second context is related to the ability to resist various forms of unauthorized intrusion into a person's personal life, tendencies to manipulate her consciousness. Moreover, in both the first and second contexts, it is understood that young people in general, and domestic youth in particular, are suggestible and are not able to adequately analyze the phenomena of their lives and, therefore, are neither personally nor socially protected.

Critical thinking does not mean negativity or criticism, but a reasonable consideration of a variety of approaches in order to make informed judgments and decisions. Orientation towards critical thinking assumes that nothing is accepted as dogma. Each student develops their own opinion in the context of the curriculum. Critical thinking is the ability to analyze information from the standpoint of logic and a person-centered approach in order to apply the results obtained to both standard and non-standard situations, questions and problems. Critical thinking is the ability to ask new questions, develop a variety of arguments, and make independent, thoughtful decisions. Teaching foreign languages in a modern school involves the continuous introduction and use of updated forms, methods and content of language education based on a student-centered approach based on the use of modern technologies, taking into account the interests of students.

Modern educational technologies allow the teacher to:

• work out the depth and strength of knowledge, consolidate skills and abilities in various fields of activity;

• develop technological thinking, the ability to independently plan their educational, self-educational activities;

• develop habits of strict adherence to the requirements of technological discipline in the organization of training sessions.

Currently, the educational system is called upon to educate a free, developed and educated person who owns a certain subjective experience, able to navigate in a constantly changing world. The formation of critical thinking during the expansion of the information space is of particular relevance. Critical thinking in teaching activity is understood as a set of qualities and skills that determine a high level of research culture of a student and teacher, as well as "evaluative, reflective thinking", for which knowledge is not the final, but the starting point, reasoned and logical thinking, which is based on personal experience and proven facts. [15]

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The Critical Thinking Development technology was developed by the International Reading Association of the University of Northern Iowa and Hobard and William Smith Colleges. The authors of the program are Charles Temple, Jeannie Steele, Kurt Meredith. This technology is a system of strategies and methodological techniques intended for use in various subject areas, types and forms of work [2].

In relation to students, the use of critical thinking technology allows:

• improve the efficiency of information perception;

• increase interest both in the studied material and in the learning process itself;

• be able to think critically;

• highlight causal relationships;

• be able to work in collaboration with others;

• reject unnecessary or incorrect information

• understand how different pieces of information are related.

Regularly using critical thinking technology, the teacher:

• is able to create an atmosphere of openness and responsible cooperation in the classroom;

• uses a learning model and a system of effective methods that contribute to the development of critical thinking and independence in the learning process;

• becomes a practitioner who can competently analyze their activities.

This technology is based on a three-phase lesson structure:

During the implementation of the Evocation phase:

1. Students can freely, without fear of being corrected, express their point of view on the topic being studied.

2. Statements are fixed, at this stage there are no "right" or "wrong" statements.

3. Individual and group work are combined with each other. Individual work will allow each student to update their knowledge and experience, and group work allows to hear other opinions, express your point of view without the risk of making a mistake. The exchange of opinions can also contribute to the development of new ideas, which are often unexpected and productive.

The goal of the teacher is to encourage students to remember what they already know about the topic under study, to promote a conflict-free exchange of opinions in groups, to fix and systematize information received from students. At the same time, it is important not to criticize their answers, even if they are inaccurate or incorrect [3, p. 48].

The realization of meaning phase is focused on keeping the learners active, interested, and moving created during the challenge phase. In this sense, the quality of the selected material is of great importance [3, p. 56].

In the comprehension phase, students:

1. Make contact with new information.

2. They try to compare this information with existing knowledge and experience.

3. They focus their attention on finding answers to questions and difficulties that arose earlier.

4. Seek to pay attention to what attracts their attention, which aspects are less interesting and why.

6. Prepare for analysis and discussion of what they heard or read.

The goal of the teacher is to present information in a clear and attractive way, to track the degree of activity of students, to offer various techniques for reflection.

In the reflection phase, the information that was new becomes appropriated, turns into one's own knowledge. Analyzing the functions of the first two phases of the critical thinking development technology, we can conclude that, in fact, reflective analysis and evaluation permeate all stages of work.

Reflective analysis is aimed at clarifying the meaning of the new material, building a further learning route (this is understandable, this is incomprehensible, people need to learn more about this, it would be better to ask a question about this, and so on). There is often no time for detailed reflection, as much attention is paid to the presentation of new material in the lessons. Often, students may be confused by the teacher's offer to share in pairs or in a group opinions about questions that have arisen during the lesson. The answers in this case do not differ in variety and semantic richness. Few of the students can ask questions to the audience or the teacher about the difficulties encountered in mastering new material or its interesting points.

At the reflection phase, students systematize new information in relation to their existing ideas, as well as in accordance with the categories of knowledge. The combination of

individual and group work at this stage is the most productive. In the process of individual work (various types of writing: essays, keywords, graphic organization of the material, and so on), students, on the one hand, select information that is most significant for understanding the essence of the topic under study. On the other hand, they express new ideas and information in their own words, independently build cause-and-effect relationships. Students remember best what they have understood by expressing it in their own words. This understanding is long-term. When a student reformulates understanding using their own vocabulary, a personal meaningful context is created.

Conclusion

Thus, effective means of forming and developing critical thinking are role-playing games, a conference, a teleconference, a talk show on the topic under study, as well as debates. They contribute to the development of such important characteristics of critical thinking as the ability to analyze and compare different ideas, events, points of view; ability to defend one's position. Formed critical thinking contributes to an adequate reflective assessment of one's activities.

In conclusion, I would like to note that foreign language lessons contribute to the development of critical thinking through a variety of materials and interactive approaches. When performing any task, students must understand the main idea, highlight the problem, compare with what they already know in this area in order to draw a conclusion and formulate their point of view on a specific issue or problem. Obviously, this requires the formation of certain intellectual skills. Students should be able to analyze, evaluate the significance of the information collected, structure the information received, argue their point of view - all these are critical thinking skills.

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