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FOSTERING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

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Abstract. This article investigates the critical challenges and opportunities associated with developing critical thinking skills within English language learning environments. In the framework of contemporary educational paradigms, critical thinking represents not only a cornerstone of academic achievement but also an indispensable life competency. The study systematically examines a range of pedagogical approaches, including Socratic dialogue, Problem-Based Learning (PBL), debate methodologies, and cooperative learning strategies. Empirical findings indicate that targeted pedagogical intervention significantly enhances students' capacity for critical analysis, evaluative reasoning, and creative synthesis. The article further explores the transformative role of digital technologies and online platforms in augmenting critical thinking development. The conclusion asserts that English language instruction offers uniquely rich opportunities for cultivating critical thinking skills, and that educators are well-positioned to leverage these opportunities through intentional, reflective practice.

Keywords: critical thinking, English language teaching, pedagogical strategies, Socratic method, problem-based learning, cognitive skills, higher-order thinking

Anotatsiya. Ushbu maqola ingliz tili darslarida tanqidiy fikrlash ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishning dolzarb muammolarini o'rganadi. Zamonaviy ta'lim paradigmasida tanqidiy fikrlash nafaqat akademik muvaffaqiyatning asosi, balki hayotiy ko'nikma sifatida ham muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi. Tadqiqot turli yondashuvlar, jumladan, Sokrat suhbat, muammoga asoslangan ta'lim (PBL), debat metodlari va kooperativ o'qitish strategiyalarini tahlil qiladi. Olingan natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, maqsadli pedagogik aralashuv orqali o'quvchilarning tanqidiy tahlil qilish, baholash va ijodiy fikrlash qobiliyatlari sezilarli darajada oshadi. Maqola shuningdek, texnologik vositalar va raqamli

platformalardan foydalanishning tanqidiy fikrlash jarayoniga ta'sirini ko'rib chiqadi. Xulosa qilib aytganda, ingliz tili ta'limi tanqidiy fikrlash ko'nikmalarini shakllantirish uchun noyob imkoniyatlar taqdim etadi va pedagoglar bu imkoniyatdan to'liq foydalanishlari lozim.

Kalit so'zlar: tanqidiy fikrlash, ingliz tili ta'limi, pedagogik strategiyalar, Sokrat suhbat, muammoga asoslangan ta'lim, kognitiv ko'nikmalar

Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена исследованию актуальных проблем формирования навыков критического мышления на занятиях по английскому языку. В условиях современной образовательной парадигмы критическое мышление является не только основой академических достижений, но и важнейшим жизненным навыком. В ходе исследования анализируются различные методологические подходы, включая метод сократовского диалога, обучение на основе проблемных ситуаций (PBL), дебатные технологии и стратегии кооперативного обучения. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что целенаправленное педагогическое воздействие способствует значительному повышению способности учащихся к критическому анализу, оценке и творческому мышлению. В статье также рассматривается влияние цифровых технологий и образовательных платформ на процесс развития критического мышления. В заключение отмечается, что преподавание английского языка открывает уникальные возможности для формирования навыков критического мышления, которые педагоги должны активно использовать.

Ключевые слова: критическое мышление, преподавание английского языка, педагогические стратегии, метод Сократа, проблемно-ориентированное обучение, когнитивные навыки

The ability to think critically has long been seen as one of the most important goals of education. Today, in a world full of information, global connections, and complex problems, the ability to analyze, evaluate, and combine ideas is more important than ever. In English language teaching (ELT), teachers are in a special position. Because language is both the subject and the tool of learning, English classes offer excellent opportunities to develop students' critical thinking skills. Critical thinking generally includes higher-level skills such as logical reasoning, reflective thinking, creative problem-solving, and the ability to look at issues from different perspectives. Bloom's Taxonomy (1956, later revised in 2001) is one of the most well-known frameworks for understanding these skills. It shows that analysis, evaluation, and creation are the highest levels of thinking. These skills are not natural; they need to be

taught, practiced, and supported in structured learning environments. In English classrooms, language learning and thinking skills develop together. When students read real texts, take part in discussions, build arguments, and reflect on their language use, they improve both their language ability and their thinking skills. However, even though many educators understand this potential, a lot of English teaching is still teacher-centered and focused on simple knowledge transfer, which does not strongly support critical thinking. This article explores both theory and practice for developing critical thinking in English classes. It reviews research, suggests practical teaching strategies, looks at the role of digital technology, and offers recommendations for teachers. The main goal is to help English teachers make critical thinking a central part of their teaching.

Researchers have studied the connection between second language learning and critical thinking. Scholars like Kubota (1999) and Atkinson (1997) have discussed whether critical thinking is the same across cultures. They found that while basic thinking processes are universal, the way they are expressed and valued can differ depending on cultural and educational backgrounds. This is important in English language teaching (ELT), where students often come from diverse cultures. Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (1978) helps explain how critical thinking develops through social interaction and language. According to this theory, students learn best in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where they complete challenging tasks with help from teachers or more knowledgeable peers. This shows that critical thinking is not just an individual skill—it develops through communication and collaboration. Therefore, group work and discussion are very crucial in English classes. The rapid growth of digital technology has created both opportunities and challenges for developing critical thinking in ELT. On one hand, tools like online forums, collaborative writing platforms, multimedia resources, and artificial intelligence can make learning more engaging and interactive. On the other hand, today’s digital world also includes misinformation, biased content, and unreliable sources, making critical thinking even more necessary.

Online discussion tools such as blogs, wikis, and shared documents allow students to communicate over longer periods and think more deeply about ideas. Research has shown that online communication can lead to more equal participation, more complex language use, and deeper thinking compared to traditional classroom discussions. Artificial intelligence tools also raise important questions. They can support learning by providing feedback and practice, but they may also reduce the effort students need to think deeply. Teachers should use these tools

carefully, designing activities that encourage students to think independently while still benefiting from technology.

Another important skill is digital media literacy—the ability to evaluate the reliability and purpose of online information. English classes are well suited for teaching this skill because analyzing texts is already a key part of language learning. Activities like checking facts, comparing sources, and analyzing different viewpoints can help students become more critical users of information.

In conclusion, English language classrooms have great potential to develop critical thinking, but this potential is often not fully used. This article has discussed several effective teaching methods, such as Socratic questioning, problem-based learning, debates, and cooperative learning. These approaches can turn English classes into spaces for deeper thinking, not just language practice. Developing critical thinking in ELT is not just a teaching choice—it is a responsibility. In today’s world, people need to think clearly, evaluate information, and communicate effectively. English education should help students become not only good language users but also thoughtful and independent thinkers. As Freire (1972) said, education is never neutral—it either limits or empowers people. Teachers who focus on critical thinking choose to empower their students.

Future research should continue to study how culture, first language, and language level affect critical thinking. Long-term studies and research on teachers’ beliefs and classroom practices would also be valuable. Most importantly, ongoing communication between researchers and teachers is needed—and this communication itself is an example of the critical thinking we want students to develop.

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EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH IN A HYBRID LEARNING MODEL: INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY, INTERACTION, AND EQUITY

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Abstract: The hybrid learning model, combining synchronous in-person and online instruction, has become a dominant approach in English language teaching (ELT) post-pandemic. This paper examines effective strategies for optimizing English acquisition in hybrid environments, drawing on recent empirical studies (2020–2025). Key strategies include flipped classroom models, cooperative learning with digital tools, multimodal resources, differentiated instruction via adaptive platforms, and fostering equity through teacher training and