



DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING COMPETENCE IN NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

Avazova Zebuniso Salayevna

Urganch Ranch texnologiya universiteti ingliz tili fani o'qituvchisi

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15175746>

Abstract: *The issue of developing students' critical thinking through a foreign language is considered. The role and significance of the discipline "Foreign Language" in fostering students' universal competencies and their adaptation to modern requirements for future specialists are assessed. The key components of critical thinking skills are presented, enabling students to comprehend acquired information, generalize and distinguish it from secondary facts, formulate conclusions, and evaluate. A foreign language textbook text is chosen as a means of developing students' critical thinking, viewed not only as a source of information but also as a tool for stimulating cognitive activity. The lack of methodologies that facilitate the development of critical thinking is noted. The potential use of B. Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives in working with learning texts is described.*

Bloom's taxonomy helps set appropriate educational goals, formulate motivating tasks, and track progress in skill development. An example of working with a learning text based on the taxonomy principle is provided, allowing for adjustments in students' educational activities aimed at enhancing their critical thinking skills.

Keywords: *foreign language, universal competencies, critical thinking, educational foreign language text, Bloom's taxonomy.*

Modern higher education standards aim to shape and develop graduates who, upon completing their studies, acquire the necessary skills and abilities for a successful and effective transition into the professional environment. This involves not only gaining general professional and specialized competencies but also universal competencies that foster the development of communication skills, critical thinking, teamwork abilities, self-organization, and continuous self-improvement. As a result of global changes in social life in Russia, as well as worldwide, the role of foreign languages in the education system has evolved. It has transformed from a simple academic subject into a means of achieving professional self-realization [1, p. 7]. According to I. K. Voitovich, proficiency in a foreign language is now considered one of the key conditions for professional competence. Mastery of a foreign language is particularly relevant for Russian youth seeking good job opportunities, engaging with the outside world, and enhancing their cultural knowledge [1, p. 22].

The discipline "Foreign Language" in higher education has significant developmental potential in shaping cognitive abilities and intellectual skills. The need



XORIJY TILLARNI O'QITISHDA INNOVATSION YONDASHUVLAR NAZARIYANING AMALIYOTGA TATBIQI

mavzusidagi respublika ilmiy-amaliy anjumani

to explore the possibilities of this discipline is also driven by the increasing flow of information in foreign languages. A future specialist must not only comprehend information adequately but also critically analyze, process, and synthesize it [2, p. 687].

A number of studies (N. D. Galskova, N. I. Gez, I. K. Voitovich, I. I. Zimnyaya, A. A. Mirolubov, E. I. Passov, N. A. Makarova, and others) on the significance of foreign languages in modern life, science, and international cooperation highlight their high demand and confirm the necessity of studying them. These studies emphasize the importance of developing a self-sufficient specialist capable of independently extracting information from primary sources, staying informed about the latest technical and scientific advancements, discoveries, and events. Undoubtedly, proficiency in a foreign language ensures better adaptation and functioning of specialists in both social and professional spheres.

In an era of global and significant changes in economic, political, scientific, and technological fields, we cannot limit foreign language education solely to the development of communicative competence. Such an approach proves insufficient in preparing specialists. Society requires "broad-spectrum" professionals who not only possess specialized competencies but also have the ability to make independent decisions, demonstrate flexible skills for working in teams, with clients, and partners, as well as possess self-organization skills.

One cannot disagree with M. A. Shemanayeva's observation that the methodology of teaching foreign languages itself contributes to the formation of universal competencies, plays a role in the development of personal culture, and helps achieve integrative results at the level of personality and its general cultural and professional characteristics [3, p. 90]. In fact, teachers today are tasked with nurturing creative, critically thinking students who are capable of absorbing, integrating, and applying knowledge at various levels: from simple reproduction of facts, understanding concepts, and applying algorithms to solve problems, to metacognitive skills necessary for analyzing and responding to complex issues in their own lives and in society [4, p. 175].

Despite the fact that the skills included in UK-1 (the ability to search, critically analyze, and synthesize information, apply a systemic approach to solving problems [5]) are of interest to educators, several authors note the lack of developed recommendations regarding specific methods and tools that would most effectively develop these skills. They emphasize the need to identify and create tools that



XORIJIY TILLARNI O'QITISHDA INNOVATSION YONDASHUVLAR NAZARIYANING AMALIYOTGA TATBIQI

mavzusidagi respublika ilmiy-amaliy anjumani

promote the development of critical thinking skills [2, p. 687; 6, p. 265]. Additionally, educators observe that students are not prepared for selecting and processing information through critical analysis and reflection. They face difficulties in formulating conclusions, generalizing information, and providing evidence to support their viewpoints [2, p. 687; 7, p. 27].

When discussing the development of critical thinking necessary for a modern, successful professional, researchers highlight key skills: problem formulation and critical reflection, interpretation of ideas, evaluation of arguments, formulating one's opinion on the reading, decision-making, and drawing conclusions. Educators suggest developing these skills through collaborative project work, brainstorming, creating and solving problem situations, group discussions, case studies, and other activities [2, p. 689; 6, p. 268; 7, p. 25; 8, p. 343].

In connection with the above, the teacher's task is outlined: to aim to implement the "Foreign Language" discipline in such a way that by the end of the course, the student has formed the required universal competencies. The goal of this work is to describe the potential of the foreign language instructional text and its application in developing critical thinking skills in students of non-linguistic fields of study.

Traditionally, the foreign language instructional text is attributed several functions, as outlined by S. K. Folomkina: 1) the function of expanding and supplementing the student's language knowledge; 2) the function of training in the language material the student should master; 3) the function of developing oral speech – speaking; 4) the function of developing reading skills [9, p. 83]. According to the scholar, the primary function of the text is still the development of reading skills, while the other functions are considered auxiliary, as not every text can create conditions for the development of speech activities.

Teachers continue to use instructional texts primarily for students to extract information, and they remain one of the main tools for satisfying learners' cognitive needs. In order to ensure cognitive activity while reading educational texts, it is necessary to accompany them with tasks that contain intellectual challenges, which stimulate the students' mental activity (such as comparing facts, grouping them, establishing connections between them, and dealing with problem situations). Educators note that the presence of difficulties in the academic tasks activates students' thinking [9, p. 37].

E. P. Alexandrov and M. V. Vorontsova refer to this process of accompanying a text with tasks as didactic adaptation with motivating, commenting, emphasizing, and



XORIJIY TILLARNI O'QITISHDA INNOVATSION YONDASHUVLAR NAZARIYANING AMALIYOTGA TATBIQI

mavzusidagi respublika ilmiy-amaliy anjumani

analyzing texts [10, p. 56]. It is important to note that not all texts used in foreign language classes are initially educational and have explicit educational goals. During lesson preparation, many texts taken from the internet, newspapers, and magazines are transformed and adapted by the teacher for different teaching purposes, selected based on the students' interests, the theme of the lesson, and are equipped with tasks to activate students' cognitive and intellectual activities. The accompanying methodological processing of the text converts it into an educational text. It is widely believed that well-designed intellectual tasks influence students' cognitive activity and their involvement in the learning process.

E. P. Alexandrov emphasizes the importance not only of understanding the text and memorizing it, but also of comprehending, interpreting, and analyzing it. When the acquired information is creatively reinterpreted, it can become an internal asset of the individual, a foundation for finding effective solutions in non-standard life and professional situations [10, p. 61]. Mastery of the meaning of the text enables the student to apply the acquired knowledge for effectively expressing their thoughts and engaging in dialogic interaction [11, p. 132].

The experimental material for our study is the textbook in two parts, *General English for Bachelor Students*, used with students of non-linguistic majors during their 1st and 2nd years [21]. The authors of this article hypothesized that the development of critical thinking skills can successfully occur through the study of texts from this textbook, which was developed by faculty members of the Department of Foreign Languages. The textbook is designed in accordance with the syllabus of the "Foreign Language" course and aligns with the interests of non-linguistic students. The textbook was analyzed for the presence of tasks related to the texts, which contribute to the development of cognitive skills at both lower and higher levels.

For example, the text "*Deforestation*" from the first section is accompanied by tasks to check the understanding of terms and their pronunciation, as well as the matching of phrases with their Russian equivalents. This provides an opportunity to address lexical difficulties before reading the text itself.

Tasks of this type are quite traditional and correspond to the 1st and 2nd levels of the taxonomy, helping to reinforce vocabulary knowledge and understanding. By using the verbs suggested for creating tasks, one can expand the list of questions that, in our opinion, stimulate cognitive activity and prevent the process from stopping at the level of "look, repeat, find." List some human actions improving/deteriorating the



XORIJY TILLARNI O'QITISHDA INNOVATSION YONDASHUVLAR NAZARIYANING AMALIYOTGA TATBIQI

mavzusidagi respublika ilmiy-amaliy anjumani

state of the soil. Collect the words from the list to make your own word combinations concerning the problem. Или задать несколько вопросов: How would you define deforestation? What are the main causes of deforestation? Can you name some consequences caused by deforestation?

After reading the text, students are offered questions to check their comprehension of the content. Most of the questions correspond to the "Knowledge" and "Comprehension" levels, with one question on "Application," but there are no tasks related to "Analysis," "Synthesis," or "Evaluation." The experience of working with this text showed that the tasks are suitable for introducing an актуальной topic, activating the acquired vocabulary, and developing speaking skills. However, insufficient attention is given to the development of students' critical thinking through the means of a foreign language.

Thus, the implementation of Bloom's Taxonomy principles into practice, where students gradually move from elementary knowledge acquisition to its understanding and evaluation, allowed us to stimulate their cognitive interest, expand the possibilities for organizing work with the educational text, confirm the multifunctionality of the "Foreign Language" discipline, and provide a clear guide for tracking the development of cognitive activity according to the levels of the taxonomy.

Reference:

1. Voytovich, I. K. Foreign Languages in the Context of Lifelong Education / edited by T. I. Zelenina. Izhevsk: Udmurt University Press, 2012. 212 pages.
2. Korsakova G. G., Popadina Zh. P. The Use of Critical Thinking Development Technology in the Process of Teaching a Foreign Language in a Non-Linguistic University // Pedagogy. Issues of Theory and Practice. 2020. Vol. 5, No. 5. pp. 687–692.
3. Shemanaeva M. A. Formation of Universal Competencies of a Bachelor's Student through a Foreign Language // Higher Education in Russia. 2018. Vol. 27, No. 8–9. pp. 89–95.
4. Yaeger L. The Impact of the Flipped Classroom as a Type of Online Learning on Teachers // Education Issues. 2020. No. 2. pp. 175–203. DOI: 10.17323/1814-9545-2020-2-175-203.
5. Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Education. URL: <http://fgosvo.ru/> (accessed: 15.10.2020).
6. Shcheglova I. A., Koreshnikova Yu. N., Parshina O. A. The Role of Student Engagement in the Development of Critical Thinking // Education Issues. 2019. No. 1. pp. 264–289. DOI: 10.17323/1814-9545-2019-1-264-289.
7. Glavan A. A., Gramma D. V. Development of Critical Thinking in the Process of Teaching a Foreign Language to Students of Non-Linguistic Specialties // Pedagogy and Education. 2019. No. 2. pp. 24–31. DOI: 10.7256/2454-0676.2019.2.29671.



**XORIJIY TILLARNI O'QITISHDA INNOVATSION
YONDASHUVLAR NAZARIYANING AMALIYOTGA TATBIQI**
mavzusidagi respublika ilmiy-amaliy anjumani

8. *Vostrikova N. M., Bezrukova N. P. Educational Chemical Texts as a Means of Developing Critical Thinking in Students – Future Metallurgists // Bulletin of Kazan Technological University. 2014. Vol. 17, No. 8. pp. 342–347.*
9. *Folomkina S. K. Teaching Reading in a Foreign Language at a Non-Linguistic University. Moscow: Vysshaya Shkola, 1987. 208 p.*
10. *Alexandrov E. P., Vorontsova M. V. Educational Text and Textual Activity in the Educational Process // Modern High-Tech Technologies. 2015. No. 6. pp. 56–61.*
11. *Karabutova E. A., Kolchintseva L. N. Cognitive-Communicative-Activity Approach to Teaching Students Foreign Language Speech Activity // Higher Education in Russia. 2014. No. 8–9. pp. 131–135.*