

**SCTMG 2020****International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the  
Context of Modern Globalism»****READING AND WRITING FOR CRITICAL THINKING**

Ekaterina Evgenyevna Belova (a)\*, Maria Vladimirovna Arkhipova (b), Yulia Alexandrovna Gavrikova (c), Anastasia Evgenyevna Kosareva (d), Tatiana Evgenyevna Nikolskaya (e)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University, 1, Ulyanov st., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia  
belova\_katerina@inbox.ru,

(b) Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University, 1, Ulyanov st., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia  
arhipovnn@yandex.ru,

(c) Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University, 1, Ulyanov st., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia  
y.a\_gavrikova@mail.ru,

(d) Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University, 1, Ulyanov st., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia  
takashimchik@mail.ru,

(e) Maxim Gorky Institute of Literature and Creative Writing, 6, Academician Volgin st., Moscow, Russia  
t.e.nikolskaya@gmail.com

***Abstract***

The article touches upon the issue of applying the technology of development of critical thinking through reading and writing in foreign language methodology. The paper studies the peculiarities of this learning strategy, its interactive and democratic nature. The pedagogical technology is based on the involvement of students in the educational process and their active participation in it as subjects of learning. When using this strategy, it is necessary to focus on the development of students' intellectual abilities; the ability to analyze and systematize information; the formation of universal learning activities, skills of self-control, self-analysis and self-learning to minimize the role of the teacher. In addition, it is important to concentrate on students' creative abilities, their unconventional thinking, personal inclinations and strengths to increase motivation and interest in learning a foreign language. Moreover, when implementing this technology, it is crucial to create an effective educational environment that has to be as close to the authentic linguistic and cultural community as possible and not abstracted from reality. This is facilitated by the organization of the learning process in accordance with the concept of "Challenge – Comprehension – Reflection", which allows a teacher to get and keep all the students involved in the lesson. Therefore, such a clear structure of the educational process implies both the use of modern technical means and traditional learning methods, which leads to high efficiency of critical thinking technology in teaching a foreign language.

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**Keywords:** Critical thinking, reading, writing, dare, comprehension, reflection.



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## **1. Introduction**

Critical thinking is high-level intellectually disciplined process requiring mental effort. In a narrow sense, this phenomenon is interpreted as the identification and data evaluation for making decisions, conclusions and summarize a particular event or object of reality (Pupovci & Taylor, 2003).

Critical reading as a subspecies of an active analytical reading is to be carried out by person's the maximum attention and immersion into the text.

Analytical concepts and study results during the whole learning process are achieved through critical thinking, since it contributes the formation of an independent, energetic, creative and responsible thinker. A critical thinker knows how to relate existing experience with new experiences, able to evaluate and develop an individual learning strategy (Pupovci & Taylor, 2003).

A student who knows how to correctly receive and process information will success and show great results in studying foreign languages. So, the student's critical thinking helps to be an active participant in the educational process (Tereshchenko, 2017).

The critical thinker and critical reader use a deep and multifaceted analysis of facts to find the answer to the question put before them, generate ideas, reach a verdict, clearly and accurately consolidate beliefs and ideas about the surrounding reality. Critical thinking ability is necessary for the development of literacy skills (Tereshchenko, 2017).

Consequently, the introduction of measures and activities in the educational process aimed at helping students learning foreign languages to develop critical thinking skills, as well as the use of special pedagogical technologies, actually contribute to the development of their critical reading and writing. To reach these goals Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking technology was introduced into the pedagogical practice.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Modern methodology of teaching foreign languages includes different new technologies such as learning in cooperation, student-centered learning, language portfolio of a student, methodology portfolio of a teacher, Case-study, computational, distance and project learning, Internet use strategy in the educational process, problematic and intensive teaching, interactive teaching methods (which include the technology of critical thinking), and many others (Devterova, 2009).

The critical thinking technology in teaching a foreign language, presented in the Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT) program, is positioned as an interactive learning strategy. It is based on the concept of interaction, which involves the active interaction of participants in educational activities, understanding each other's educational actions and adapting their own behavioral model in accordance with situational norms and rules (Devterova, 2009).

## **3. Research Questions**

The introduction of activities in the learning process aimed at helping students of foreign languages to develop critical thinking skills, as well as the use of special pedagogical technologies, actually contribute to the development of their critical reading and writing skills. Introducing Reading and

Writing for Critical Thinking technology into pedagogical practice was one of the main issues of modern methodology.

The main idea of the critical thinking technology in teaching a foreign language is that democratic practices in educational organizations become important when transiting to a more open perception of information free from stereotypes and prejudices about representatives of various linguistic and cultural communities. Developed by American educators J. Steele, C. Meredis, C. Temple in 1996 and still in active use today, the RWCT is currently operating around the world, including Central and Eastern Europe, the territory of the former USSR and Latin America (as cited in Abdrafikova & Ieshenko, 2016).

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The central goal of this technology is the development of critical thinking skills in the implementation of such types of speech activities as reading and writing, and not just when speaking and listening. This poses certain tasks for both teachers and students. When applying RWCT, it is necessary to focus on the development of students' intellectual abilities (Sokolova & Plisov, 2019), the formation of universal educational actions (Ryabova & Terletskaya, 2018), self-control and self-testing skills that allow students to learn independently, without monitoring from the teacher (Ariyan & Shamov, 2017). Moreover, the level of independence of students from teachers in search creative activities is growing (Avdeeva & Alexandrov, 2018; Buyskikh & Zadorozhnaya, 2003).

The next thing to pay attention to when introducing this technology is the organization of the educational environment as close as possible to the authentic language, the creation of comfortable and favorable conditions for learning (Galskova, 2017). Encouragement from the teacher in response to bold comments and creative considerations of students leads to an increase in the latter's interest in acquiring new ones and motivates them to demonstrate existing knowledge (Avdeeva & Alexandrov, 2018; Buyskikh & Zadorozhnaya, 2003).

In addition, it should be remembered that the educational process should not occur in isolation from reality (Ilyashenko et al., 2019; Bim, 1999). Each new lexical or grammatical material introduced by a foreign language teacher in a lesson, each task of speaking, reading, listening or writing - all this should be presented in a context familiar and understandable to students (Runova et al., 2019).

From this follows the formation of a reading culture. The text ceases to be just an integral part of the task; working with him is no longer limited to searching for a few details, formulating the main idea and voicing answers to special questions - what he reads leads to reasoning, a thorough analysis of the problem, broadening the horizons and creating logically consistent conclusions (Voronova, 2015).

#### **5. Research Methods**

This teaching technology is introduced by a set of research methods designed to teach students to reflect, think in a structured way, take responsibility for self-education, understand the logic of arguments, listen carefully, do not be afraid to argue and be able to defend their point of view and continue learning throughout their life. The most important thing is that the critical thinking technology

can be used not only in teaching foreign languages, but in all classes within any educational program (Abdrafikova & Ieshenko, 2016).

## 6. Findings

Significantly, critical thinking technology is implemented through the organization of the learning process based on the concept of Challenge – Comprehension – Reflection, which acts as an example of the structure of a typical lesson. The typical lesson consists of three stages: challenge, comprehension and reflection. However, sometimes ‘reflection’ is experienced primarily after the second and before the final steps, although most teachers consider it to be an integral part of class work. Each stage implies the inclusion of all students in educational activities, their work with each other in pairs and groups and with a mentor teacher (coordinator), therefore it is important to use certain techniques that are most effective for a particular phase of the lesson (Nizovskaya, 2003).

Moreover, Reading and Writing as an integral part of Critical Thinking involves the use of partial search and research teaching methods in the introduction, development and consolidation of language. Consequently, students are encouraged to become independent and creative in the process of language acquisition, and their knowledge and skills are activated through the competent use of role-playing games, staging, design techniques and other forms of individual work (Buyskikh & Zadorozhnaya, 2003; Voronova, 2015; Halpern, 2000).

The ‘challenge’ in this case becomes more difficult: a question that needs to be resolved and requires a certain set of actions to search for an answer. It is designed to perform stimulating, relevant, communication functions. The main tasks of the “challenge” are the creation of positive motivation among students, the formation of their interest in learning, the setting of the main objectives of the lesson, the determination of the central topic and the activation of students to be included in the work.

At this stage, it is important to encourage students to manifest a reaction and start exercises using such critical thinking methods as a blitz survey, questionnaire, cluster / connection diagram / mind mapping, brainstorming, ideas, key words, true or false statements, cinquain, tree of assumptions, forecasting by illustration, ‘thin and thick’ questions, etc.

Interestingly, all of the above mentioned techniques are highly effective exercises – “icebreakers” / icebreakers (if the audience is not yet sufficiently cohesive) and warm-ups used in an already worked out team. They help to draw students' attention into the topic, actualize the knowledge in this field, schematically build a personal attitude to the material being studied, structure it and make up their own opinion. It also worth to note that almost every method will act at the stages of ‘comprehension’ and ‘reflection’, which allows you to maintain the integrity of the lesson, its logical structure and smooth development (Tereshchenko, 2017).

The ‘understanding’ stage performs two main functions: information and systematizing, i.e. During this part of the lesson, students receive new material for them and work with it. Students' activities are carried out both in group and pair, as well as in an individual form – the main thing is that a collective discussion is preceded by independent research and analysis. The role of the teacher is minimized: the teacher controls the course of the lesson, coordinates the actions of students, monitors their participation in the learning process.

Information can be represented in various ways:

- text from the textbook;
- text written by a teacher;
- excerpt from a literary work;
- a fragment of a magazine or newspaper article;
- table or diagram (Halpern, 2000).

These types of text organization are related to tasks aimed at developing reading skills. However, the data necessary for writing exercises are also entered through films, audio recordings, pictures and photographs, reports, etc.

However, in most cases, the use of critical thinking technology in teaching a foreign language through reading and writing involves the use of the text in its usual sense, since this is the most effective way of presenting information. Consequently, the methods and techniques of active reading are already in use: Zigzag reading scheme, INSERT (Interactive Noting System for Reading and Thinking; is a type of reading marked with symbols and filling the table; it is often positioned as “effective reading technology”), IDEAL strategy (Identify, Define, Explore, Act, Look), Fishbone, Bloom cube, generators and critics, mutual learning, ranking, logbook, table of findings (know – want to find out – found out in the lesson), table of arguments, the Euler – Venn diagram, Jockeys and horses, etc.

It is important to note that the teacher should not give preference to any one technique or method of teaching, since the critical thinking technology in teaching a foreign language is a holistic system that requires regularity, structure and a specific order. The main thing is that all the Reading and Writing in Critical Thinking strategies used by the teacher should be adapted in accordance with the classroom space to promote students' cognitive inquiry and initiative, develop problem-solving skills, joint learning, reading and writing as types of speech activity and alternative assessment methods (Abdrafikova & Ieshenko, 2016; Avdeeva & Alexandrov, 2018; Buyskikh & Zadorozhnaya, 2003).

The stage of reflection is the final part of the lesson and involves summing the work up with information during the reflection, evaluating the results, one's own activities, emotions and feelings in connection with newfound knowledge, skills and abilities. The following techniques and methods are considered the most productive: questionnaires, surveys, round tables, discussions or discussions; compilation of a cynquain, graph, or flow chart. Performing creative tasks such as writing an essay or reviewing. All this stimulates the student to express personal opinion, helps him to form a certain attitude to the text, his position on the issue raised in it (Tereshchenko, 2017).

Often ignored by many educators, the reflective phase is an integral part of the lesson and, according to the Federal State Educational Standard, is mandatory for its responsibility for evaluating, stimulating, and communicating functions. It is during the reflection phase that the student becomes aware of the perfect progress in learning a foreign language, as he or she can compare fresh personal results with previous indicators.

Consequently, a clear lesson construction, a conscious transition from one stage to another, a teacher's knowledge of various methods and techniques and the ability to implement them in class work,

as well as an understanding of the critical thinking technology in teaching foreign languages through reading and writing, guarantee the following achievements of students:

- development of foreign-language communicative competence – “the ability and willingness to carry out foreign-language interpersonal and intercultural communication with native speakers within the limits specified by the standard program” (Bim, 1999; Ilyashenko et al., 2019).
- ability to use the learned theoretical material in practice;
- perception of new information;
- interest in the educational process and activity in the classroom;
- improving the quality of education;
- the acquisition of cooperation and collaboration skills when interacting with other students;
- increasing the level of creativity of foreign language learners, their creative desire in expressing individuality (Galskova, 2017; Pupovci & Taylor, 2003).

Such a high productivity of this technology is provided by several factors. First of all, the learning process takes place in the classroom, when students have a real opportunity to communicate with the interlocutor (as opposed to completing tasks at home, i.e. outside the school). Moreover, the learning itself is not static – it is inherent in flexibility, variability. Its details – both methodological and technical – are easily modernized and adapted to the age of the students, their level of language proficiency and the conditions of the educational organization. Due to the features of their presentation, the topics and materials studied in the lessons are easily acquired and memorized for subsequent practical use.

## 7. Conclusion

Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking technology is one of the most effective modern teaching strategies, since the program positions the general development of students as the main guideline of their work, and not only the transfer of knowledge about the rules and patterns of studied foreign languages. In accordance with this, the methodological concept is cross-subject in nature and effective in relation to any educational discipline.

In addition, it is important to note that this technology does not imply the mandatory use of technical means, and therefore can be implemented in the format of traditional training. Focusing on the acquisition by students of critical thinking skills, the development of universal educational actions and existing knowledge, skills and a variety of methods and techniques that the teacher operates with the introduction of new material – all these aspects indicate the progressive orientation of the critical thinking technology in learning through reading and writing.

Thus, this technology contributes to the development of not only critical thinking, but also foreign communicative competence – the main goal of the entire process of teaching foreign languages.

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