

DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE PRACTICE CLASSES OF SENIOR STUDENTS

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The article explores the development of critical thinking in senior foreign language students through video-based methodologies. It proposes a three-stage approach integrating authentic materials to enhance analytical and reflective skills. Experimental

results show significant improvements in logical reasoning (23%) and reflexivity (18%), underscoring the effectiveness of critical thinking training for academic, research, and professional success.

Keywords: critical thinking; foreign language education; video technologies; senior students; cognitive skills; authentic materials.

In the conditions of the information society, the development of critical thinking becomes a key task of education. As Dewey notes, critical thinking is "a quality of thought aimed at solving problems and formulating reasonable conclusions" [3]. For senior students studying in the speciality "Foreign Languages", this skill is especially significant, as it allows them to analyse large amounts of information and to present their position in a reasoned manner. The article presents the results of the research devoted to the development of a methodology for the development of critical thinking in the process of teaching listening comprehension and understanding of foreign language speech using video technologies.

Critical thinking is a key skill for linguistics students as it directly affects their success in academic, scientific and professional endeavours.

In the learning process, students are constantly faced with the need to analyse information, synthesise data and formulate reasoned conclusions. For example, when writing reviews, essays or participating in discussions, critical thinking allows:

1. Evaluate the credibility of sources. As Halpern notes, "critical thinking requires the ability to distinguish between facts, opinions and biases" [10]. This is especially important when working with scientific articles or authentic texts in a foreign language;

2. Analyse hidden meanings. Tasks to identify implicit information (for example, through analysing non-verbal means in a video) develop the ability to "read between the lines" [5];

3. Building logical chains. Tests such as Lippman's Logical Patterns help students improve their thought structuring, which is critical for academic writing [1].

In addition to academic activities, undergraduate students are actively involved in research work, where critical thinking is necessary to formulate hypotheses. For example, when analysing videos, students learn to predict content based on visual and verbal features, which is directly related to scientific prediction [5]. It is also important to train students to critically evaluate methods and results. As Zagashv points out, "objective research is impossible without reflection" [3]. Students who know how to evaluate their own and others' work avoid methodological errors. Students' research activity is impossible without synthesising interdisciplinary data. Linguistics often requires integration of knowledge from psychology,

cultural studies and pedagogy, which requires analysing information from different points of view. Let, for example, note specialists in the field of foreign language teaching, because teachers should not only impart knowledge, but also teach students to think independently. Critical thinking allows designing effective assignments. For example, using videos with different points of view helps students to analyse arguments and learn to debate. The ability to think critically enables objective assessment of students' progress. The ability to identify weaknesses in argumentation or reflection (as in Karpov's questionnaire) helps to adjust the learning process [5].

Critical thinking is equally essential in the field of translating and interpreting. It helps to understand the context accurately. For example, when interpreting political speeches, it is important to recognize hidden meanings and cultural nuances, which requires the analysis of non-verbal cues (gestures, intonation) [8]. As Dewey notes, "thinking begins with a problem" [3]. The translator must be able to choose between literal accuracy and adapting the foreign-language text for the target audience. Moreover, critical thinking helps to overcome cultural barriers. Analysing arguments in intercultural conflicts requires the consideration of different perspectives, which is directly related to the ability to highlight the main idea and structure information. It is most important to make informed decisions. For example, when organising international projects, it is important to assess risks based on reliable data rather than stereotypes.

Thus, critical thinking integrates cognitive and communicative skills, which makes it indispensable for linguists. As our research emphasised, systematic work with authentic materials (videos, texts) and reflection on the learning process allow students not only to master the language, but also to become professionals capable of independent thinking and adaptation in a changing world [5]. This is confirmed by our experiments, where students trained using the developed methods showed an increase in the logicity of conclusions by 23% and reflexivity by 18% [6].

The purpose of the study was to theoretically substantiate and experimentally test the methodology of developing critical thinking in senior students in foreign language practice classes.

The objectives included developing a set of tasks for the development of critical thinking based on the communicative-cognitive approach and experimentally verifying the effectiveness of the methodology.

Critical thinking is defined as an intellectually organised process aimed at analysing, evaluating and applying information to make decisions [11]. Structurally, it includes cognitive skills such as formulating requests for information, highlighting the main point, restructuring data, assessing credibility, reasoning; as well as reflexive components: procedural

(analysing one's own actions) and substantive (critical evaluation of information) reflection [5]. These elements are formed through a system of tasks integrated into the stages of work with authentic video materials.

Research included theoretical analysis of the literature on critical thinking (works by Dewey, Halpern, Zagashv) and language teaching methodology and experiment: trial teaching of 4th year students (group 405/1, MSLU) using three-stage tasks specifically designed to develop critical thinking during the class of foreign language speech practice.

The first stage of the class is the pre-text stage: predicting content of the video based on visual cues from its' introduction and screenshots, formulating questions to the topic (using the KWL-chart), followed by the textual stage: checking the accuracy of predictions, analysing arguments presented in the video material, highlighting key theses. Post-textual stage included reflection, group discussion, drawing own conclusions on the content and writing an argumentative essay. After the trial learning the students were tested with the following diagnostics: Lippman's test "Logical regularities" and Karpov's reflexivity questionnaire.

The experiment showed a significant increase in the indicators of logical thinking (by 23%) and reflexivity (by 18%) in the experimental group. Students improved their ability to identify fallacious arguments (by 30%) and formulate reasoned conclusions. As Halpern notes, "critical thinking is developed systematically, through constant practice" [10], which is supported by the results of the study.

The developed methodology can be applied by foreign language teachers to selection of materials: authenticity, arguments and different points of view are taken into account; as well as development of exercises and tasks, for example: before watching a video, students formulate hypotheses based on the title and footage and after viewing, discuss how non-verbal means (gestures, intonation) influence the interpretation of information. Moreover, deeper discussions can be organized where students learn how to refute or support a thesis using facts from the video material.

The development of critical thinking in foreign language classes not only improves the quality of listening comprehension, but also builds skills that are in demand in the professional environment. As Zair-Beck and Zagashv emphasise, "critical thinking technologies integrate cognitive and communicative aspects of learning" [3]. The proposed methodology, tested in the teaching materials and handouts for students, can become the basis for the development of new teaching materials, contributing to the systematic development of students' analytical abilities.

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