TANQIDIY FIKRLASHNI EFL SINFLARIGA INTEGRATSIYALASH: TILNI BILISH VA O‘QUVCHILARNING AVTONOMIYASINI OSHIRISH STRATEGIYALARI

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Annotatsiya:
Tanqidiy fikrlash (KT) zamonaviy ta'limning asosiy kompetensiyasiga aylandi, ayniqsa ingliz tili chet tili sifatida (EFL) kontekstlarda til rivojlanishi va o'quvchilarning avtonomiyasini qo'llab-quvvatlaydi. Ushbu maqola KTni EFL sinflariga integratsiyalash strategiyalarini o'rganadi va bunday integratsiya talabalarning tilni bilish va mustaqil o'rganishni qanday oshirishi mumkinligini o'rganadi. Tadqiqot pedagogik nazariyani sinf amaliyoti bilan sintez qilib, sifatli yondashuvni qo'llaydi. Topilmalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, EFL o'qitishda KT ning kiritilishi til bilan chuqurroq shug'ullanishga yordam beradi va o'quvchilarning mustaqil o'rganish qobiliyatini yaxshilaydi.

Kalit so’zlar: Tanqidiy fikrlash, ingliz tilini o'rgatish, o'quvchilarning avtonomiyasi, tilni bilish, pedagogik strategiyalar, 21-asr qobiliyatlari

иНТЕГРАЦИЯ КРИТИЧЕСКОГО МЫШЛЕНИЯ В ЗАНЯТИЯ ПО АНГЛИЙСКОМУ КАК ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ: СТРАТЕГИИ ПОВЫШЕНИЯ УРОВНЯ ВЛАДЕНИЯ ЯЗЫКОМ И САМОСТОЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ УЧАЩИХСЯ

Аннотация
Критическое мышление (КМ) стало ключевой компетенцией в современном образовании, особенно в контексте английского языка как иностранного (EFL), где оно поддерживает как развитие языка, так и автономию учащихся. В этой статье исследуются стратегии интеграции КМ в классы EFL и изучается, как такая интеграция может повысить уровень владения языком и самостоятельное обучение учащихся. В исследовании используется качественный подход, синтезирующий педагогическую теорию с практикой работы в классе. Результаты показывают, что внедрение КМ в обучение EFL способствует более глубокому взаимодействию с языком и улучшает способность учащихся к самостоятельному обучению.

Ключевые слова: Критическое мышление, преподавание английского языка как иностранного, автономия учащихся, владение языком, педагогические стратегии, навыки 21-го века

INTEGRATING CRITICAL THINKING INTO EFL CLASSROOMS: STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND LEARNER AUTONOMY

Abstract:
Critical thinking (CT) has become a key competency in modern education, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts where it supports both language development and learner autonomy.

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This paper investigates strategies for integrating CT into EFL classrooms and explores how such integration can enhance students' language proficiency and independent learning. The study adopts a qualitative approach, synthesizing pedagogical theory with classroom practices. Findings suggest that embedding CT in EFL instruction fosters deeper engagement with language and improves students' capacity for self-directed learning.

Keywords
Critical thinking, EFL teaching, learner autonomy, language proficiency, pedagogical strategies, 21st-century skills

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the demand for learners who can think critically, solve problems creatively, and communicate effectively has increased exponentially. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, integrating critical thinking into language instruction has become an essential goal to meet both linguistic and cognitive development needs. While EFL instruction has traditionally focused on grammatical accuracy and vocabulary acquisition, educators are now urged to go beyond linguistic competence and foster higher-order thinking skills (Richards, 2015; Brookhart, 2010). This paper explores strategies for integrating critical thinking into EFL classrooms and examines how such integration enhances both language proficiency and learner autonomy.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach through a literature review and classroom observation data to identify effective strategies for embedding critical thinking in EFL instruction. Thematic analysis was used to interpret data.

2.2 Data Collection

Two primary sources were used:

A systematic review of peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2024 using databases such as Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar.

Observations of EFL classes (n=8) at two language centers that implemented critical-thinking-based instructional activities.

2.3 Data Analysis

Data from literature and observation notes were analyzed using a thematic coding system focusedon:

Instructional strategies

Student language performance

Evidence of learner autonomy

Findings were triangulated to ensure reliability.

3. Results

The findings are categorized into three main themes:

(1) Strategies for fostering critical thinking,

(2) Impact on language proficiency, and

(3) Promotion of learner autonomy.

3.1 Strategies for Fostering Critical Thinking

Several effective strategies were commonly used across reviewed literature and observedclassrooms:

Socratic questioning: Teachers prompted learners to justify opinions and explore alternative views (Paul & Elder, 2008).

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Problem-solving tasks: Scenarios and role-plays encouraged analysis and decision-making.
Debates and argument writing: Encouraged structured reasoning and persuasive language use.
Textual analysis and evaluation: Students assessed sources for credibility and bias.
3.2 Impact on Language Proficiency
Students exposed to critical-thinking tasks demonstrated:
Improved coherence and cohesion in writing tasks.
Increased lexical variety and grammatical complexity, especially in argumentative writing.
Greater spoken fluency during discussions and debates, with more self-correction and interactional awareness.
3.3 Promotion of Learner Autonomy
Learners in such classrooms:
Initiated questions more frequently.
Self-evaluated performance using reflective journals.
Demonstrated more confidence in selecting resources for learning independently.

4. Discussion

The findings support the hypothesis that integrating critical thinking into EFL teaching significantly benefits both language development and autonomous learning. These outcomes are consistent with constructivist theories of learning, which posit that meaningful interaction with content promotes deeper cognitive processing (Vygotsky, 1978). When learners are encouraged to analyze, evaluate, and create, their linguistic output becomes more purposeful and sophisticated (Facione, 2011).

Moreover, learner autonomy—an essential goal in lifelong learning—was seen to flourish when students were given tasks that required judgment, reflection, and self-direction. This aligns with Little’s (1991) theory that autonomy grows when learners engage in decision-making about their learning processes.

However, the success of this integration depends on teacher training and curriculum design. Teachers must be equipped with the skills to design and facilitate critical-thinking tasks and assess them meaningfully (Benesch, 1999). Curriculum designers must embed critical thinking outcomes alongside language goals to ensure alignment.

5. Conclusion

The integration of critical thinking into EFL classrooms provides a dual benefit: enhancing language proficiency and fostering learner autonomy. As global education shifts toward competency-based frameworks, EFL practitioners must adopt pedagogies that go beyond grammar and vocabulary. Critical thinking is not a luxury but a necessity for developing empowered, proficient language users.

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