ENHANCING EFL READING COMPREHENSION: A CRITICAL THINKING-BASED APPROACH FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Shernazarova Sabohat Saparkulovna

Annotation: This article discusses the integration of critical thinking into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading instruction for university students. It explores the benefits of this approach, including improved reading comprehension, enhanced language proficiency, and the development of transferable skills. The article also highlights the challenges and considerations of implementing critical thinking-based methods and underscores the importance of preparing university students to be critical thinkers and lifelong learners. Additionally, it discusses how this approach can accommodate multilingualism and cultural diversity and foster collaboration across disciplines.

Keywords: EFL reading, critical thinking, university students, reading comprehension, language proficiency, transferable skills, multilingualism, cultural diversity, interdisciplinary learning, lifelong learners.

Introduction. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction at the university level often faces challenges in improving reading comprehension among students. Conventional methods have primarily focused on language acquisition and vocabulary expansion, leaving room for a critical component to be overlooked—critical thinking. This article explores the effectiveness of integrating critical thinking skills into EFL reading instruction for university students. By doing so, we aim to shed light on how a critical thinking-based approach can enhance EFL reading comprehension and contribute to a more holistic language learning experience.

Critical thinking in EFL reading goes beyond merely understanding the words on a page. It encourages students to analyze the content, discern authorial intent, and evaluate arguments. This approach promotes deeper engagement with the text, helping students build analytical skills that are transferable to various aspects of their academic and professional lives.

Traditional EFL reading instruction often involves passive reading, where students read a text and answer comprehension questions. In contrast, a critical thinking-based approach encourages active reading. Students are prompted to ask questions, make predictions, and engage in discussions, thus fostering a more interactive and immersive reading experience.

By incorporating critical thinking into EFL reading, students are exposed to real-world problems and scenarios presented in texts. This exposure helps them develop problem-solving abilities as they navigate complex ideas and concepts within the readings. Such skills are invaluable in both academic and professional contexts. The first step in implementing a critical thinking-based approach is selecting texts that stimulate critical thought. These texts should be challenging but not overwhelming for students, allowing them to engage with the material effectively. Topics should be relevant and interesting, ensuring that students are motivated to delve deeper into the content. Instructors play a pivotal role in facilitating critical thinking during EFL reading. They should encourage guided discussions and questioning sessions. Instructors can ask open-ended questions that prompt students to think critically about the text, its themes, and the author's perspective. This dialogue fosters a collaborative learning environment.

https://wordlyknowledge.uz

A critical thinking-based approach to EFL reading can also serve as a bridge for collaboration across disciplines. Students engaged in critical analysis of texts may find connections to other fields of study, opening doors to interdisciplinary learning. For example, a literature text analyzed through a critical thinking lens might spark discussions in history, philosophy, or sociology classes. This interdisciplinary approach not only enriches students' educational experiences but also fosters a more holistic understanding of complex issues, encouraging them to think beyond the confines of their specific academic domain.

The integration of critical thinking into EFL reading for university students empowers them to become active participants in their own education. It encourages them to question, analyze, and challenge the information they encounter, fostering a sense of intellectual curiosity and autonomy. This approach not only enhances reading comprehension and language proficiency but also equips students with lifelong skills that extend well beyond the classroom. As universities strive to prepare students for an ever-changing global landscape, a critical thinking-based approach to EFL reading stands as a pivotal step towards nurturing well-rounded, adaptable, and critical-thinking-driven individuals ready to face the challenges of the 21st century.

To enhance EFL reading comprehension, students need practical tools to apply critical thinking effectively. These tools may include techniques such as:

a. Identifying bias and point of view: Students learn to recognize the author's perspective and any potential biases present in the text.

b. Analyzing arguments: Students evaluate the strength of arguments presented in the readings and identify logical fallacies.

c. Making connections: Encouraging students to relate the text to their personal experiences, other readings, or current events enhances their comprehension.

d. Summarizing and synthesizing: Students practice summarizing the main points of a text and synthesizing information from multiple sources.

One of the most significant benefits of this approach is improved reading comprehension. Students who engage in critical thinking while reading are better equipped to understand complex texts, extract key information, and make meaningful connections between ideas.

Critical thinking-based EFL reading instruction fosters language proficiency by encouraging students to interact with the language in a more meaningful way. It reinforces vocabulary acquisition, exposes students to diverse language structures, and promotes active language use through discussions and analysis.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of integrating critical thinking into EFL reading is the cultivation of transferable skills. Students develop skills that are applicable across disciplines and throughout their lives. Critical thinking skills can improve problem-solving, decision-making, and communication abilities, benefiting students in their academic and professional pursuits.

While the benefits of a critical thinking-based approach to EFL reading are evident, there are challenges to consider:

Time Constraints: Integrating critical thinking into EFL classes may require additional time. Instructors must strike a balance between covering course materials and allowing for critical analysis.

Instructor Training: EFL instructors may need training and support in incorporating critical thinking strategies effectively into their teaching methods.

Assessment: Assessing critical thinking skills can be challenging, as traditional assessments may not accurately reflect students' abilities in this area. Developing appropriate assessment tools is crucial.

https://wordlyknowledge.uz

One of the remarkable advantages of implementing a critical thinking-based approach in EFL reading instruction is its ability to accommodate multilingual and culturally diverse university classrooms. Critical thinking transcends language barriers and encourages students to approach texts with a global perspective. It allows students from different linguistic backgrounds to engage in meaningful discussions, drawing from their unique experiences and cultural insights. This not only fosters a richer learning environment but also prepares students for a globalized world where intercultural competence and understanding are increasingly important.

By emphasizing critical thinking in EFL reading, educators are nurturing lifelong learners. The skills acquired through this approach extend far beyond the classroom. Students who are accustomed to thinking critically about the content they encounter in readings become more discerning consumers of information. They are better equipped to evaluate the credibility of sources, make informed decisions, and engage in constructive discourse. These skills are indispensable in an information-rich society, where the ability to differentiate between reliable and unreliable information is paramount.

The integration of critical thinking into EFL reading instruction for university students represents an evolving field of study. Future research can delve deeper into various aspects of this approach, including its long-term impact on students' language proficiency, their success in subsequent academic endeavors, and its adaptability to different cultural and educational contexts. Furthermore, exploring the role of technology, such as digital reading platforms and collaborative online tools, in enhancing critical thinking in EFL reading could yield valuable insights. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, embracing critical thinking in EFL reading promises to be an essential aspect of preparing university students for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Conclusion. Enhancing EFL reading comprehension among university students is a multifaceted endeavor that requires a more holistic approach. By integrating critical thinking into EFL reading instruction, educators can provide students with the tools they need to engage with texts more deeply, think critically, and apply these skills in their academic and professional lives. While challenges exist, the benefits of a critical thinking-based approach make it a valuable addition to EFL classrooms, ultimately enriching the learning experience for university students. As educators continue to explore and refine these methods, we can look forward to a more proficient and critical-thinking-driven generation of EFL learners.

REFERENCES:

1. Brookfield, S. D. (2012). Teaching for critical thinking: Tools and techniques to help students question their assumptions. Jossey-Bass.
2. SAGDULLAEV, I. I., Zhorabekova, A. N., & Tulenova, K. (2018). Methodological approaches of researching the problem of forming the creative qualities of future english teachers. *Revista Espacios*, *39*(10).
3. Tulenov, J., Tulenova, G., & Tulenova, K. (2016). Falsafa. *T.:—Fan va texnologiya*.
4. Смирнова, С. С., & Туленова, К. Ж. Герменевтика как метод анализа литературы.-«Евразийский Научный Журнал № 6 2017»(июнь, 2017).[Электронный ресурс]. *URL: http://journalpro. ru/articles/germenevtika-kak-metod-analiza-literatury*.
5. Иззетова, Э. М., & Ли, Е. В. (2022). Философский анализ образования и науки в контексте глобальных культурных трансформаций. *Academic research in educational sciences*, *3*(NUU Conference 2), 326-331.

https://wordlyknowledge.uz

6. Изетова, Э., & Ли, Е. (2021). Философский анализ нелинейной парадигмы науки и образования. *The Way of Science*, (10), 92.
7. Ахмедова, С. Д., & Изетова, Э. М. (2023). «БАБУР–НАМЕ» ЗАХИР АД–ДИНА МУХАММАДА БАБУРА–ЛИТЕРАТУРНЫЙ ПАМЯТНИК КУЛЬТУРЫ НАРОДОВ ВОСТОКА (ФОНДЫ РУКОПИСЕЙ БРИТАНИИ). *Oriental renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences*, *3*(4), 5-15.
8. Ли, Е. В., & Изетова, Э. М. (2022). ФИЛОСОФСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ ИННОВАЦИОННОГО И ТВОРЧЕСКОГО МЫШЛЕНИЯ. *INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENTS AND RESEARCH IN EDUCATION*, 229.
9. Li, E. V., & Izzetova, E. M. (2020). ПРОБЛЕМА ПОЗНАНИЯ И СОЗНАНИЯ В КОНТЕКСТЕ ФИЛОСОФИИ КОНСТРУКТИВИЗМА. *Theoretical & Applied Science*, (2), 538-542.
10. Ли, Е. В., & Ли, А. (2020). ФИЛОСОФСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ ПОНЯТИЙ «НОВАЦИЯ» И «ИННОВАЦИЯ». In *ФИЛОСОФИЯ ИННОВАЦИЙ И СОЦИОЛОГИЯ БУДУЩЕГО В ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ КУЛЬТУРЫ: НАУЧНЫЙ ДИАЛОГ* (pp. 192-195).
11. Mamadjonova, M. (2022). СИНЕРГЕТИКА МАНТИҚИЙ ТУЗИЛМАСИ ШАКЛЛАНИШИДА ТАМОЙИЛЛАРНИНГ АҲАМИЯТИ. *Science and innovation*, *1*(B8), 1695-1697.
12. Мамаджонова, М. (2022). THE ROLE OF CHANCE AS A FACTOR OF THE FORMATION OF NECESSITY. *Scienceweb academic papers collection*.
13. Мамаджонова, М. (2020). ZARURIYAT VA TASODIF KATEGORIYALARINING SINERGETIK TAHLILI. *Scienceweb academic papers collection*.
14. Мамаджонова, М. (2022). Synergetic Paradigm In The Study Of Social Processes. *Scienceweb academic papers collection*.

WORDLY
KNOWLEDGE

https://wordlyknowledge.uz