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### **Some peculiarities of developing critical thinking skills in children through the process of teaching English as a second language**

The article discusses the features of the development of critical thinking in children in the process of learning English as a second language, its essence and its stage of development at English lessons. The article reveals the development of critical thinking through listening and speaking. Using foreign language lessons, some methods of formation of critical thinking, students get a lot of satisfaction from the learning process itself and on its results.

*Key words:* globalization, vocalization, critical thinking, observation, experience, reflection, universal intellectual values, self-worth, self-esteem, competition, foreign language, resolving a problem.

English is a widely spoken language around the world. It is used in business communications, foreign relations, in entertainment and in formal classroom education as a medium of instructions in some academic subjects. Considered as the universal language, English now is taught in many non-English speaking countries especially in Kazakhstan. It is all part of the global revolution to be able to bridge the gap in communications by using one language as a means of expression. In this highly competitive world where globalization is an integral part of human development various cultures interact with each other by using English as the form of communications.

All babies have the natural capacity to learn any language even at the earliest stage of their infancy. Even before children learn to utter their first word they are already living in a world of language where non-verbal messages are expressed through actions, facial expressions, hand gestures and vocalization.

Language is an important part of human development where one can share thoughts, feelings and ideas. That is why children at an early age experiment with language and find a way to communicate their needs and wants.

An interesting stage in a child development is the preschool years where their keen sense of learning is at its peak and introducing a second language at this point will widen their concept of things and explore more of their ability to talk and communicate [1].

Children are confronted daily with rich opportunities to solve problems and exercise their own independent judgment when they're given the chance to safely explore the world. These problems, which might involve physical challenges, social relationship issues, or understanding how things work, often seem minor to us but provide great opportunities to practice critical thinking skills.

For example: an eight-month-old has crawled under a chair and now can't figure out how to get out. He wonders what to do. A two-year-old thinks: «My teacher put out tongs for us to pick up our chicken nuggets, but I can't figure out how they work. Do I keep trying or just use my fingers?» A four-year-old thinks: «I am trying to get the water in the sandbox to stay in the 'moat' I'm building for my castle, but it keeps disappearing into the sand. How do I make the water stay?» A seven-year-old speculates: «Several of my friends are teasing a kid in our class about his clothes. Do I join in, not participate, or tell them how I really feel about what they are doing?».

Each of these problems offers children chances to exercise and build a foundation for critical thinking and are not minor to children. Our role as the adults in their lives may sometimes be to offer guidance for creative problem solving. In other cases, it may be more useful to let a child experiment on his/her own for a bit. How and how quickly we respond can have a significant impact on children's development of critical thinking skills.

Learning to think critically may be one of the most important skills which today's children will need for the future. Ellen Galinsky, author of *Mind in the Making* (2010) includes critical thinking on her list of the seven essential life skills needed by every child. Helping children view themselves as problem solvers or critical thinkers is also one of ten strategies that Dombro, Jablon and Stetson describe in *Powerful Interactions* (2011) to extend children's learning [2].

Considering the notion of critical thinking by Michael Scriven and Richard Paul, presented at the 8th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform, Summer 1987 there is a need to define critical thinking as the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness. It entails the examination of those structures or elements of thought implicit in all reasoning: purpose, problem, or question-at-issue; assumptions; concepts; empirical grounding; reasoning leading to conclusions; implications and consequences; objections from alternative viewpoints; and frame of reference. There are a number of ways to look at the process of critical thinking. Brookfield presents several, with this one being perhaps the simplest.

Problem/goal identification: What is the real issue here?

Diagnosis: Given all the information we have, what's the best way to deal with this issue?

Exploration: How do we do what we decided on, and who will make it happen?

Action: Do it!

Reflection: Did it work? If so, how can it work better? If not, what went wrong, and how can we fix it? What have we learned here that might be valuable in the future?

Reflection leads you to the consideration of another problem or goal, and the cycle begins again.

Critical thinking involves being thrown into the questioning mode by an event or idea that conflicts with your understanding of the world and makes you uncomfortable. If you allow yourself to respond to the discomfort — that's partially an issue of personal development — you'll try to figure out where it comes from, and to come up with other ways to understand the situation. Ultimately, if you persist, you'll have a new perspective on the event itself, and will have broken through to a more critical understanding.

Learning to think critically is more often than not a long process. Many people have to learn to think abstractly — itself a long process — before they can really apply the principles of critical thinking. Even those who already have that ability are often slowed, or even stopped, by the developmental and psychological — and sometimes the actual — consequences of what they're being asked to do. Often, it takes a crisis of some sort, or a series of negative experiences to motivate people to be willing to think in a different way.

Even then, developing the capacity for critical thinking doesn't necessarily make things better. It can alter family relationships, change attitudes toward work and community issues, and bring discord into a life where none was recognized before. Learning it takes courage.

The point of all this is that, although there's a series of what we believe are effective how-to steps laid out in this section, teaching critical thinking is not magic. The reason we keep using the words «develop» and «process» is that critical thinking, if it takes root, develops over time. Don't be frustrated if many people don't seem to get it immediately: they won't.

Helping others learn to think critically can take place in a classroom — it's essentially what higher education is all about — but it's probably even more common in other situations. Community interventions of all kinds provide opportunities for learning, both because participants are usually involved over a period of time, and because they are often experiencing difficulties that make it clear to them that their world view isn't adequate to solve the problems they face. Many are ready to change, and welcome the chance to challenge the way things are and learn new ways of thinking.

By the same token, learning to think critically can be a frightening process. It leads you to question ideas that you may have taken for granted all your life, and to challenge authority figures whom you may have held in awe. It may push you to tackle problems you thought were insoluble. It's the intellectual equivalent of

bungee jumping: once you've leaped off the bridge, there's no going back, and you have to trust that the cord will hold you [3].

As a result, facilitating critical thinking — whether formally or informally — requires more than just a knowledge of the process. It demands that you be supportive, encouraging, and honest, and that you act as role model, constantly demonstrating the process as you discuss it.

There are really three aspects of helping people develop critical thinking: how to be a facilitator for the process; how to help people develop the «critical stance», the mindset that leads them to apply critical thinking all the time; and how to help people learn to apply critical thinking to dealing with community problems and issues. Stephen Brookfield has developed a 10-point guideline for facilitators of critical thinking that focuses both on the learner and the facilitator herself.

Affirm learners' self-worth. Critical thinking is an intellectual exercise, but it is also a matter of confidence and courage. Learners need to have the self-esteem to believe that authority figures or established beliefs could be wrong, and to challenge them. Facilitators need to encourage that self-esteem by confirming that learners' opinions matter and are worthy of respect, that they themselves have and deserve a voice.

Listen attentively to learners. Repeat back their words and ideas, so they know they've been heard. What they say can reveal hidden conflicts and assumptions that can then be questioned.

Show your support for critical thinking efforts. Reward learners for challenging assumptions, even when they're your own.

Reflect and mirror learners' ideas and actions. That will help to identify assumptions and biases they may not be aware of.

Motivate people to think critically, but help them to understand when it's appropriate to voice critical ideas and when it's not. The wrong word to the boss could get a learner fired, for example. It's important that he understand the possible consequences of talking about his conclusions before he does it.

Regularly evaluate progress with learners. Critical thinking involves reflection as well as action, and part of that reflection should be on the process itself.

Help learners create networks of support. These can include both other learners and others in the community who are learning to or who already practice and support critical thinking.

Be a critical teacher. Model the critical thinking process in everything you do (particularly, if you're a teacher, in the way you teach), encourage learners to challenge your assumptions and ideas, and challenge them yourself.

Make people aware of how they learn critical thinking. Discuss learning and thinking styles, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, learning methods, the role of previous experience, etc. The more conscious you can make people of their preferred ways of learning, the easier it will be for them to understand how they're approaching ideas and situations and to adjust if necessary.

Model critical thinking. Approach ideas and situations critically and, to the extent possible, explain your thinking so learners can see the process you've used to arrive at your conclusions.

Learning a new language at any age is an enormously rewarding experience in many ways. While language learning is an enriching experience for all ages, children have the most to gain from this wonderful adventure. Quite simply, starting early offers the widest possible set of benefits and opportunities.

Children understand intuitively that language is something to explore, to play around with and to enjoy. Their enthusiasm is both infectious and effective. The quickness with which they pick up their first language is nearly miraculous and such a joy to watch as a parent. As children grow, all parents can attest to how much fun their children continue to have as they sing new words they hear and even invent new ones with a huge, bright smile. The joy with which children explore their first language makes childhood the ideal time for a second language — even if all the other reasons for an early start didn't exist! But there are many other reasons, and while this list does not exhaust the number and variety of advantages starting a language early can provide, these are some of the most notable benefits:

Higher test scores: numerous reports have proven that students who have studied a foreign language perform much better than their monolingual peers on many standardized tests, including all sections of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). In fact, the 2007 College Bound Seniors report, issued by the College Board, which administers the SAT, vividly demonstrates the significant benefits of studying a foreign language. The report shows that students with four or more years of foreign language study score on average 140 points higher (out of 800) than students with half a year or less experience on the Critical Reading section, and almost another 140 in the Math section and over 150 points higher on Writing [4].

**Better and more advanced reading skills:** A study undertaken by York University in Canada suggests that bilingual children's knowledge of a second language gives them an advantage in learning to read. Their ability to apply the insights and experiences of one language to the other as well as their wider experience of language gives them a big leg up. As they grow older, this advantage continues and grows. Plus, being able to read two languages is pretty impressive all by itself.

**Learning English to prepare for the future:** as children go into their growth and development there are exposed to various forms of information usually in English language. From multi-media stimulations to books and entertainment, English has long been established as a method of expressing ideas in a global scale. Many young kids are very much into using the internet for school homework, social interactions and even games and having a good understanding of this second language will make their experience even more meaningful. Once they pursue higher education wherein English play an integral part in college and university environment having the ability to communicate and understand in English will give them a big chance for a brighter future. Many lucrative jobs whether in the field of technology, medicine, health, science and business require excellent verbal and oral skills in English.

**Greater confidence:** children are always discovering new things, but learning a new language is a uniquely rewarding experience at any age. For children, the feeling of accomplishment that comes with their first steps toward a second language can spur them on to a deeper and broader passion for learning in general. And because children are at a special «window of opportunity» in which language learning is intuitive and natural, the ease and pleasure of the experience may boost their confidence and their desire for new discoveries.

**Gives brains a boost:** in a recent article in *The New Yorker*, Malcolm Gladwell quotes James Flynn, a renowned scientist, as saying: «The mind is much more like a muscle than we've ever realized. ... It needs to get cognitive exercise. It's not some piece of clay on which you put an indelible mark». Research into the effects of bilingualism on children suggests that exposure to more than one language is an excellent way of flexing those brain muscles and building them up, too. Bilingual children in one study reported in *Nature* showed a significantly larger density of grey matter in their brains. And those who had been exposed to a second language from an early age proved to have the most grey matter of all. Grey matter is responsible for processing information, including memory, speech and sensory perception. And if it can be increased by exposure to a second language, then language learning would be just like taking your brain to the gym.

**Natural-sounding, native-like accent:** children are always mimicking what they hear and are surprisingly good at it! They are uniquely attuned to slight differences in tone and sound. Their sensitive ears help them pick up on and duplicate the tricky sounds adults and even adolescents often stumble over. For adults just beginning a new language, this difficulty can be discouraging — trying to speak Spanish like Antonio Banderas from *Evita* only to end up sounding like Jack Black in *Nacho Libre* isn't exactly the best language experience. A study conducted by researchers from UCLA and the University of Hong Kong, however, shows that even adults with significant exposure to a language in childhood can end up speaking like a native. By starting early, your children can speak smoothly and confidently from the first.

**Greater opportunities for college and careers:** colleges now place an increasingly high value on knowledge of more than one language. As the admissions process becomes more competitive across the board, knowing a second or a third language adds a new dimension to an applicant's resume. And as the economy becomes more and more globalized, English-only becomes less and less of an option.

**Bigger view of the world:** Traveling abroad is an experience which can benefit anyone, offering not just new sites to see, but new frames of mind and new perspectives. But going abroad and feeling comfortable in the language of your destination means you're doing more than just traveling. You are going from your home to another place, and then back home. You can feel as if you're a part of the culture and the life of this new world, as if you aren't a total stranger just visiting. Like reading a poem in another tongue you know, you will hear more than just the language, you will hear the music behind it as well and the life.

**Greater grasp of one's first language, including a bigger, richer vocabulary:** most of the time we use our first language with little thought to grammatical rules or constructions. This is perfectly natural, but the experience of learning a new language can bring greater understanding and perhaps even better grammar to our first language. Knowing the way another language works encourages us to examine our own language's mechanics in a positive way. By being able to compare the two, we learn more than we ever would as a monolingual. Or as Nancy Rhodes, director of foreign language education at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., says, «The more children learn about a foreign language, the more they understand about their own language». Children use what they learn in one language to reinforce concepts and terms they've

learned in the other. They can solidify their gains in their native tongue by matching them to their new adventures in another language [5].

**Building and keeping cultural connections:** some of us are lucky enough to have a relative who still speaks their mother tongue frequently. To be able to communicate with them in that language builds a bridge not only to that person, but to the heritage and history they represent. To maintain that connection keeps alive so much: memories, stories and traditions, and brings to life new memories, stories and traditions as well.

**An all-family activity:** modern life is hectic; its demands are frequent and often contradictory. Learning a language together as a family provides a unifying activity which doesn't require you to drive your kids anywhere and doesn't make it necessary to be in 10 places at once. Starting this process early with your child or children provides your family with an activity and an experience it can return to and grow with over the years.

Some might think it is not possible to teach children how to be thinkers. A common belief is that one is either born with intellect or not. Creative and critical thinking are skills, something that can be learned.

There are, however, developmental issues. Young children are less likely to be analytical than older ones. How well youngsters think depends on whether teachers and parents have expected them to think for themselves. Schools too often focus on teaching students what to think (read «No Child Left Behind»), not how to think. Parents tend to tell youngsters what to think. But even in the interests of telling youngsters how to behave in proper ways, the instruction is more likely to be accepted if children are encouraged to think through why certain behaviors are preferred over others.

Teachers know that many students have poor thinking skills. Several reasons help explain why. Changes in culture are a factor, such as mind-numbing music, television, video games, social networking Websites, cell-phone texting, and so on. We have no problem telling children what to think, but when their thinking becomes flawed, we are reluctant to intervene. Many parents (and even teachers) think it is bad to challenge children's thinking when it is flawed. They worry that such challenges can be embarrassing and damages self-esteem. The reality is that such students eventually discover they are not as capable as their peers who have effective thinking skills, and that gives them real reason to have low self-esteem.

Schools and state mandates also contribute to the problem. Too often, students are trained to look for the one «right answer». Then there are state knowledge and skills standards, where students are actively discouraged from thinking «outside the box».

How does one teach critical thinking? Three ways:

1. Expect it

Require learners to defend their ideas and answers to questions. Show them it is not enough to have an opinion or the «right» answer. Learners need to defend their opinions and understand how they arrived at the answer and why it is «right».

2. Model it

The teacher can show students how to think critically and creatively about instructional material. Even in «teaching to the test», show students how to think about alternative answers, not just memorize the right answer. Show why some answers are right and some wrong.

3. Reward it

When good thinking occurs, teachers should call attention to it and to the students that generated it. Learning activities and assignments should have clear expectations for learners to generate critical and creative thought. A grading premium and other incentives should be provided. Rigorous analysis will only occur if it is expected and rewarded.

One might argue that children don't need to move beyond the simple comprehension of words and sentences when learning a foreign language. However, critical thinkers are better learners, because they explore meaning much more deeply. As English language curriculums continue to use more content to teach English, critical thinking strategies give students a chance to analyze and process the information in valuable ways [6].

Let's look at one specific way in which you can begin to bring critical thinking into your lessons. It begins with vocabulary, one of the building blocks of language.

In all vocabulary development, students must know a word in three ways: by its form, its meaning, and its use. Critical thinking takes this concept even further. Students should know a word as it relates to other words. For example, let's say that you are teaching students the following lexical set about forms of transportation:

bicycle	sailboat
airplane	hot air balloon
rocket	subway train
cruise ship	bus
taxi	skateboard

Once your students have a solid understanding of the above words, one should suggest the following activity: divide the class into groups of four learners, ask learner groups to list the above forms of transportation in order from slowest to fastest. Ask each child group to discuss their list with another group.

This activity, as simple as it sounds, involves lots of logic and critical thinking. For example, students may decide that a skateboard is probably the slowest form of transportation on the list. However, it gets a bit more difficult after that [7]. Is a bicycle faster than a sailboat? It depends on the wind speed. Therefore, does a sailboat move at the same speed as a hot air balloon, since they both move with the wind? Does a taxi move faster than a subway train? Sometimes, but then a taxi has to stop at intersections. How about a cruise ship? Perhaps we can find the average speed of one on the Internet. Is a rocket the fastest form of transportation? Yes, everyone agrees that it is.

The goal is actually not to arrive at a correct answer, but to get students to think more deeply about words, what they represent, how they are each part of bigger systems, how they relate to each other within those systems, and so on.

By doing so, children are required to use all of their language skills in the process. The lesson is no longer about memorization and simple meaning. It has transcended this and become an experience. Children are much more likely to remember and use these vocabulary words after such an activity.

Thus, critical thinking is a vital skill in health, human service, and community work. It is the process of questioning, examining, and analyzing situations, issues, problems, people (in hiring decisions, for instance) and information of all kinds — survey results, theories, personal comments, media stories, history, scientific research, political statements, from every possible angle. This will give you a view that's as nearly objective as possible, making it more likely that you'll be able to interpret information accurately and resolve problems and issues effectively [8].

Teaching critical thinking, whether formally or informally, requires a supportive and encouraging presence, and a willingness to both model and be the subject of critical analysis. It entails teaching the critical stance — how to recognize and analyze your own and others' assumptions, question information, and examine the context of any information, situation, problem, or issue. Finally, it requires helping people to apply the critical stance to a problem and learn how to come up with a solution that is effective because it addresses the real issues involved. Once learners can do that, they're well on their way to successfully addressing the concerns of their communities.

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## **Ағылшын тілін екінші шетел тілі ретінде оқыту үрдісінде балалардың сыни ойлау дағдыларын дамытудың кейбір ерекшеліктері**

Мақалада балалардың ағылшын тілін екінші тіл ретінде қабылдап, сыни тұрғыдан ойлау қабілетінің даму ерекшелігі, оның болмысы және ағылшын тілі сабағындағы даму деңгейі қарастырылды. Авторлар сыни тұрғыдан ойлау қабілетін тыңдап-түсіну және сөйлеу біліктері арқылы дамуы жайы жайлы баяндады. Шетел тілі сабағында сыни ойлауды қалыптастырудың бірнеше әдістерін пайдалану арқылы оқушылар оқыту процесінің өзімен және нәтижелерімен қанағаттанады деген қорытынды жасады.

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## **Особенности развития навыков критического мышления у детей в процессе изучения английского языка как иностранного**

В статье показываются особенности формирования критического мышления у детей, его сущность и стадии его развития в процессе изучения английского языка в качестве второго. Определено развитие критического мышления посредством аудирования и говорения. Выделены некоторые приемы формирования критического мышления. Авторами отмечено, что ученики получают большое удовлетворение от самого процесса обучения и его результатов.

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## **Полиязычное образование студентов вуза как фактор эффективности межкультурного общения**

В статье рассматривается содержание полиязычного образования, включающее систематизированные знания, умения и навыки в области одного или нескольких иностранных языков в соответствии с межкультурной парадигмой языковой подготовки. Автором выделены факторы эффективности межкультурного общения. Показан триединый процесс обучения, воспитания и развития личности на основе одновременного овладения несколькими языками.

*Ключевые слова:* полиязычное образование, студент, межкультурное общение, высшее образование, казахский язык — государственный, русский язык — язык межнационального общения, английский язык.

Сегодня политика Казахстана в области образования направлена на интернационализацию образовательного пространства и обеспечение подготовки конкурентоспособных специалистов, знающих несколько языков. Нурсултан Абишевич Назарбаев в Послании народу Казахстана «Новый Казахстан в новом мире» отметил: «Казахстан должен восприниматься во всем мире как высокообразованная страна, население которой пользуется тремя языками: казахский язык государственный, русский язык как язык межнационального общения и английский язык — язык успешной интеграции в глобальную экономику» [1]. Реализация государственной политики в области образования обеспечивается посредством законодательных актов и программ развития.

В Концепции инновационного развития Республики Казахстан до 2020 г. [2] говорится о необходимости языковой подготовки специалиста новой формации, способного к общению