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COMMUNICATIVE TASKS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING

Abstract. This article examines the role of communicative tasks in the development of critical thinking skills in English language teaching. In modern education, critical thinking is recognized as a key competence that enables learners to analyze, evaluate, and apply information effectively. Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching provide a strong methodological foundation for integrating such skills into language learning. The study highlights that communicative tasks such as group discussions, debates, role-plays, problem-solving, and project-based activities create opportunities for meaningful interaction and cognitive engagement. These tasks encourage learners to express opinions, justify arguments, and evaluate different perspectives, thereby fostering analytical, evaluative, reflective, and problem-solving skills. The article also emphasizes the importance of the teacher's role as a facilitator who guides students toward independent and critical thinking. Overall, the integration of communicative tasks in the classroom significantly contributes to the development of both linguistic competence and higher-order thinking skills.

Keywords: Critical thinking, communicative tasks, communicative competence, Task-Based Language Teaching, cognitive skills, student-centered learning, interaction, problem-solving, reflection.

In modern education, the development of critical thinking has become a key objective. Educational systems are expected not only to transmit knowledge but also to develop students' ability to analyze, evaluate, and apply information in different contexts. Critical thinking is considered an essential competence for academic achievement and professional success.

In foreign language teaching, particularly English language instruction, communicative tasks are widely used as an effective pedagogical approach. These tasks simulate real-life communication and encourage learners' active participation. At the same time, they contribute to the development of higher-order cognitive skills.

Critical thinking is a complex cognitive process that includes interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, and self-regulation [1]. These skills enable learners to think independently and make informed decisions.

Communicative Language Teaching emphasizes interaction as the main goal of language learning. According to Hymes, communicative competence includes not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts [2].

Task-Based Language Teaching, developed by Nunan, focuses on meaningful tasks that require learners to use language for real communication [3].

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory explains that cognitive development occurs through social interaction [5]. Therefore, communication plays a crucial role in learning and thinking development.

Communicative tasks are structured activities that require learners to achieve a specific goal using language. These include:

- group discussions
- debates
- role-plays
- problem-solving tasks



- project-based learning

These activities encourage students to exchange ideas, express opinions, and develop communicative competence.

Swain argues that language output promotes deeper cognitive processing and reflection, which enhances both linguistic and thinking skills [6].

Communicative tasks significantly contribute to the development of critical thinking.

Firstly, they develop analytical skills, as students compare ideas and evaluate information.

Secondly, they strengthen evaluative skills, since learners must justify opinions and assess arguments.

Thirdly, they improve problem-solving abilities, requiring students to identify issues and select appropriate solutions.

Fourthly, they promote reflective thinking, allowing learners to evaluate their own learning process [7].

Finally, communicative tasks enhance collaborative learning, exposing students to diverse perspectives and improving cognitive flexibility.

Effective implementation of communicative tasks requires:

- designing open-ended tasks with multiple solutions
- creating a student-centered learning environment
- integrating real-life contexts into lessons
- providing constructive feedback for reflection

Teachers act as facilitators rather than knowledge transmitters, supporting students' independent thinking.

Communicative tasks are an effective tool for developing critical thinking in English language teaching. They promote analysis, evaluation, reflection, and problem-solving while enhancing language skills. The integration of such tasks into the educational process contributes to the formation of independent, creative, and cognitively active learners.

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