



## DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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### ***Annotation:***

*Critical thinking skills are essential for personal and professional success in today's complex and interconnected world. These skills help individuals analyze information, evaluate arguments, and make reasonable decisions. Although the main goal of learning English is to improve communication skills, studying the language also presents a special chance to sharpen critical thinking abilities. This article explains the connection between English language learning and the cultivation of critical thinking and also introduces several pedagogical strategies for integrating these skills into the classroom.*

***Keywords:*** *critical thinking, ELT, TPR, text analysis, practical application of the language, word sequence.*

Critical thinking has become the central concept of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.[1] It is defined this way: The process of actively and skillfully conceiving, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating knowledge obtained from, or created by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a guide to belief and action.[2]

Critical thinking is crucial in multiple ways. Firstly, it helps a student analyze information from various points of view, Student interpersonal skills are impacted by critical thinking as well. Students become better communicators, receptive to



feedback from their peers, better critical thinkers, and more open-minded and sympathetic individuals when they practice critical thinking and viewpoint-taking. By enabling students' thought processes to flow freely and explore more options, critical thinking can help them discover their creative side on a personal level. With experience, it will also help students become stronger decision-makers and save time in the process.

A crucial part of teaching language involves teaching critical thinking skills. Language is the fundamental means of expressing ideas, and the structure of the native language is closely related to the way we arrange our thoughts. Thus, considering language is the first step in critical thinking. Critical thinking has to be included in English Language Teaching (ELT) engagingly and inclusively for ESL teachers to assist students in understanding how to organize and communicate their thought processes in English.

It takes more than just memorization of grammar and vocabulary rules to learn a language. It requires cognitive processes such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which are also fundamental to critical thinking. Reading comprehension, for instance, demands that students infer meaning, identify main ideas, and evaluate the credibility of sources. Similarly, writing in English necessitates organizing thoughts coherently, and constructing logical arguments. Also, activities that involve learning English, like analyzing texts or having discussions, naturally encourage higher-level thinking. Students are urged by these exercises to go deeper into analysis and contemplation, moving beyond simple comprehension. Students become adept in critical and creative thinking as they go through challenging texts and express themselves in a foreign language.

Teachers in ELT classrooms should always encourage critical thinking. It may be as easy as asking "Where did you see that?" or "How do you know?" or "Why?" when someone says something in class. Instead of attempting to intimidate



the student, the intention is to get them to begin approaching the subject in new and innovative ways.[3]

Students' critical thinking can be developed in various ways. For instance, there is a method called the TPR.

Total Physical Response (TPR) can be an effective method for developing critical thinking skills in language learners. Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method developed by James Asher, a professor of psychology, in the late 1960s.[4]

TPR is a language teaching method that relies on physical movement and actions to facilitate language learning.

TPR can foster critical thinking by:

1. Incorporating problem-solving scenarios that require students to think critically about how to use the target language to solve problems.
2. Encouraging questioning, discussion, and reflection on the meaning, context, and reasoning behind the commands.
3. Promoting adaptability and creativity by introducing open-ended commands that challenge students to go beyond just following instructions.
4. Connecting TPR activities to real-world situations and problems to help students understand the practical application of the language.
5. Fostering self-reflection on the learning process, understanding, and strategies used to respond to the commands, which can develop metacognitive awareness.

By incorporating these critical thinking elements into the TPR framework, language teachers can leverage the method's strengths to promote both language acquisition and the development of essential cognitive skills. In one study by the Taiwanese, held in 2010, the course incorporated a variety of teaching methods, including TPR, to promote both language proficiency and critical thinking skills.



[5] The researchers used pre-and post-tests to measure the students' critical thinking skills, as well as language proficiency. The results showed a significant improvement in the students' critical thinking abilities, as measured by their ability to analyze, evaluate, and problem-solve. The students also demonstrated enhanced English language proficiency, indicating that the integration of critical thinking and language learning was effective. The study concludes that combining TPR and other critical thinking-oriented activities can be a powerful approach for developing language skills and higher-order cognitive abilities.

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