

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AND IN _CLASS QUESTIONS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

We live in an Internet and information society age. We are urged to educate learning, improve the critical thinking, nurture the capacity to solve problems, promote formal thinking, stimulate creativity and impart techniques for more thoughtful reading and writing in this age. (Perkins 1986, 1). It is important for this reason to improve critical thinking abilities that entail assessing arguments at each stage, and obtaining more critical thinking skills is a key qualification (Astleither 2002). The achievement of the students and their class questions are always in the interests of teachers and educators. If instructors receive far more information about the needs and expectations of their students, they can assist their pupils attain the certifications and abilities necessary. The development of students' questions and critical thinking abilities cannot be taken individually. Therefore, every educational effort should be designed to prepare pupils for a Socratic critical questioning of life outside the classroom.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

As Halonen (1995) pointed out, the equipping of critical competency is necessary for an information society. The growth of think-tanks will enable future generations to create new concepts and provide them with the basis to explain occurrences in everyday life (cited in Feuerstein 1999, 44). Logic is closely linked to criticism as It's a reasoning research, and reasoning is a specific thought kind. Philosophy is also the only discipline which offers the criterion - logical principles – that enables better and better thinking to be distinguished from poorer. Their long-standing concern is to develop understanding skills, clarify concepts, analyze meanings, promote attitudes which allow us to wonder, ask and seek meaning and truth (Lipman 1984, 51). Feuerstein (1999, 44) says that the development of critical thinking is of both philosopher and psychologist's concern. Although philosophers emphasize the significance of logic and victims' thinking, psychologists concentrate on the educational procedures parallel to the pupil's stage of cognitive development and tendency to solve problems to extract the most from the thinking abilities that are accessible at every level. Evaluation is an essential element of

teaching in the classroom. It offers feedback for classroom instruction and training. Effective teaching and evaluation should overlap each other in order to produce positive feedback. Class evaluation research shows that effective education and learning methods may be central if appropriately applied. Black and William (1998, 7–74) proposed that the educational evaluation should offer students with effective feedback, active engagement of students in educational processes, adapt the teachings to the findings acquired, and equip students with the needs to evaluate themselves. As a consequence, good learning happens if students are aware of their objectives, if they are driven to attain achievement and when they are vitally motivated. Within this context, thinking can be improved without a clear idea of what criteria one uses; Just as readers may know which novels they like without a clear notion of what exams they actually performed (Black 1947). The goal of logic may be summed up as a critique of reasoning in art and science.

Critical thinking encompasses both disposition (e.g. openness, search for reason and awareness) and ability (e.g. involvement in argument analysis, question identification, credibility appraisal and inferences) (Commeyras 1993, 486). When critical thinking is examined as a cognitive process, the focus will eventually be placed on critical thinking, which is seen as a higher level, deeper thinking process which will lead to a greater understanding via reasoning (cited in Rogers 2003). The language activities designed in line with cognitive science must employ the mind of the learner to observe, think, classify and hypothesize and progressively find out the way language functions (Williams and Burden 1997, 13). Under the direction of Facione (1992), the American Philosophical Association (APA) sponsored a 2–4 year project to define critical thinking. The definition obtained from this project is as follows:

Critical thinking is a process of purposeful, self-regulatory judgment, which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inferences, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based. (APA 1990, 3)

In addition, Petress (2004 and 461), critical thinking studies hypotheses, discerns hidden values, analyses evidence and evaluates findings.

While a number of definitions have been provided in recent decades for critical thinking, most of them incorporate the same basic concepts with regard to using cognitive abilities or techniques to enhance the chance of desired results. It is intentional, sensible and aim-oriented for this reason. At the same time, it involves thinking, drawing conclusions, evaluating probabilities and deciding on issue solving (Halpern 1999). The Study of Stahl and Stahl (1991) also offers a set of definitions for a talented education curriculum, and lists separate critical thinking skills. One of the definitions acknowledged is that critical thinking is the position to take the issues and the

topics within the range of one's experience carefully and perceptively. Astleitner (2002) defines critical thought as an understanding of higher order, which consists mostly of assessing the arguments. Furthermore, Hudgins and Edelman (1986, 333) describe critical thinking as the readiness to prove their findings and to ask for proof from others before they accept their conclusions.

The solution of problems plays a major part in critical thinking and hence the two are best combined rather than divided (Paul, Elder and Bartell 1997, 13). At this level Newton (1978, 286) contends that the student is an active being who interacts continuously with its social and physical environment. A pupil has to work to resolve cognitive growth and advancement issues. Any education should aim mainly at stimulating cognitive growth and development of the student. Ikuenobe (2001, 325) further says that "The Critical European Teacher Education Journal 391' s thinking requires a readiness to rigorously investigate, study and acquire information in terms of logical assessment and justification of the convictions."

QUESTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

Critical thinking abilities at all stages of schooling play an important role. Questions Teachers and students are one of the major instruments in order to achieve educational aims. Ikuenobe (2001, 325) keeps stressing that questions are important, and says inquiries are seen as a means to reflect on one's capacity or reasonability. And frequently it is supposed to imply that you are not at a good spot or that you articulate your thoughts. Professors should utilize questioning methods in this context to motivate students to analyze, resolve and investigate problems. Questions can also be used to stimulate meta-cognitive processes that make learning more efficient (Godfrey, 2001, 28–9). Moreover, Elder and Paul (2003) say that thoughts are motivated not by answers, but by questions. Moreover, each area only remains alive to the extent that new questions are created and treated seriously as a motor of thought. One must ask questions which encourage thinking to think through and reflect. Questions establish tasks, convey challenges, outline problems, and add that questions frequently mark a complete halt. Only when a question is answered will his life continue. Therefore, only if you have questions do you think and learn (p. 36). Simultaneously, inquiries may lead a person to think under the surface of thinking and to cope with difficulties. They have different educational roles.

Objective questions lead to tasks being defined for the pupils. On the other side, information inquiries allow them to view their information sources. Questions of interpretation help students analyze how information is organized or given meaning. As regards hypothesis, pupils have to consider what is accepted. Point of view questions allow pupils to look at own perspectives and other important points of view (Elder and Paul 2003, 36). We may argue that questions are the essential component of teaching in the classroom. Why ask questions in a class by students and

teachers? This question has numerous responses. First of all, in a language course, teachers ask questions because they verify student understanding. In presenting new vocabulary or structures, teachers might generate student understanding through the use of a new language. In presenting a text, teachers might examine if the pupils comprehended or not. Secondly, teachers assist students to use the target language by asking questions. If teachers wish to utilize a certain framework, a question needs a specific response to be asked. Teachers sometimes challenge what pupils actually think or what they really know (Doff 1988, 22-4). Excellent decision-making is frequently the skill of asking good questions (Finlayson 2001). In addition, students can discuss about themselves and their experiences using questions. Teachers and students can ask several types of questions in a language class. It is clear that issues demand a cognitive participation of the student in learning through starting classroom dialogue. To engage pupils in dialogue, conversations are needed. Discussion and discourse are a key to teaching critical thinking for many years (Passmore 1972; Taba 1962 in Commeyras 1993, 487). Encouraging criticism 392 H. S. eker and S. Ko mu r are supported by Vygotish viewpoint via dialog and the discussion technique, and the growth of language and cognition is maintained as the consequence of social interactions and innerization (Wersch 1984 in Rodriguez and Kies 1998, 3). Vygotsky stresses that in social and informative interactions cognition and reasoning are necessary. Social contact offers a framework for the learning of the kid. Teachers assist pupils to go from the unclear to the clear, unreasonable to reasoned, implicit, unexpected to the investigated, inconsistent, unarticulated to the articulated (Paul 1990). We engage in daily life with others from the time we are born, and we create our own understanding of the world via this interaction (Williams and Burden 1997, 39). The social world of humans was the emphasis of Vygotsky. He saw the mentality of man as a result of cultural history. The infant mind evolves via connection with other brains, stated Vygotsky (Bernstein et al. 1994). This gives students a chance to acquire higher cognitive processes during social interactions (Vandenburg 2006). Students engage with pairs of work and group work in order to perform certain tasks. They offer mutual support using a range of techniques in these jobs. These techniques increase their ability to think critically. Thus, conversations and discussions are initiated and maintained in classroom. Table 1 is provided in the context of critical thinking abilities to classify the query of pupils. While Bloom (1956) and its partners continue to work as a basis of some psychological classification systems and think tank programmes, the categorization of educational objectives in the cognitive field, Recent cognitive study has offered a fast expansion of information for richer and more diversified critical thinking models (Johnson 1994). In a two-dimensional framework: knowledge and cognitive processes, the taxonomy of Bloom was updated to accommodate contemporary advances of educational and psychological literature.

There are two reasons to revise the original taxonomy, according to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). First of all, they believe that there should not be a historical record but a document which

in many aspects is "before the times" (Rohwer and Sloane 1994, in Bu'men 2007, 440), that educators should re-center their attention on the significance of the first Handbook. Secondly, fresh information and thinking must be included in the framework (Bu'men 2007, 440). The updated taxonomy comprises the six categories of the original taxonomy, the categories of knowledge are referred to as understanding, the names of synthesis are referred to, and the top-class is created. Application, analysis and assessment. The arrangement is hierarchical, although not as stiff as the original taxonomy. (Christianity 2002, 218)

The learners' understanding of text relies significantly on the teacher's sorts of questions. This is true both for reading and for listening (Savage 1998, cited in Gauthier 2000, 239). Traver (1998) indicates that the power of thoughtful interrogation tactics can give intellectual concentration and coherence, in particular the use of leading questions. In addition, student questions can improve understanding, via practical application, improved enthusiasm and emphasis on the essential ideas, by promoting a synthesis of concepts (cited in Gauthier 2000, 239). In addition, Ohta and Nakaone (2004) say that the teacher/learner interaction in language instruction might focus on student inquiries.

THE REALIZATION OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AND MEANING

English teachers require various approaches, interpretation of texts and diverse understandings of the world to stimulate pupils' critical thinking capabilities. The significance of thinking in education today demands the principal idea of critical thinking, where there are always several ways to understand things and where the truth resides in any given problem it is always the responsibility of the person to judge (Mason and Washington, 1992).

The writer offers a teaching method that may be adjusted in many ways with regard to the flexibility of critical thinking. Because using the skills and meaning of critical thinking in language learning is not new and an absolute structure was not advised to date. The concept is that language acquisition is aided by motivation and may be observed naturally in relevant situations. If a student is interested in a subject and is given the opportunity to talk about a meaning, he or she will analyze things critically and acquire language in order to communicate (Darn, 2006; Rfaner, 2006).

METHOD

Participants

In this inquiry, data was collected using a purpose and a stratified technique of sampling. They were second year students in Bghdad University's department of English Language Teaching (ELT). Two phases of the research group were created. In the first stage, 53 second-year students

who had already taken readings and other related courses in the program were administered the Ennis-Weir Critical Think Test. They computed their critical thinking scores from 29, as this critical thinking essay test was directed. In the second level 10 students scored 2 out of 29 and 10 other students earned the highest (between 10 and 17).

Data collection instruments

Three data collection instruments were used:

- (1) Ennis-Weir Critical Thinking Essay Test;
- (2) A reading passage; and
- (3) Structured interview form.

(1) Critical Thinking Ennis-We In the context of argumentation, the essay exam is a generic measure of critical thinking skill. The kind of setting is one where someone tries to defend a claim and the defense is generally preceded by other arguments about the issue or parts thereof. It's a letter to the factional journal editor. The author gives a number of justifications for this in the letter. In a separate numbered paragraph, each argument appears. A total of eight paragraphs; at least one of the reasoning mistakes is illustrated in each paragraph. The exam maintains that it may be used with high school students and high school students (Ennis and Weir 1985). The kids could do this Understand the directions easily and everyone could paraphrase The letter content is precise.

(2) In the first phase, 53 students received a reading material about the behavior of a student who wrote his thesis. Up to five questions were posed from this lecture excerpt to the students. Then the questions were raised.

(3) Structured forms of interview. 16 students from the study band, 8 from the lower band and eight from the upper band were invited to open questions on the analysis of a reading passage and questioning behaviors in the classroom.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

20 of the 53 students were enrolled in the study (10 had the highest and the other 10 had the lowest scores). In this study the question "with lower and higher critical thinking scores, which sorts of questions are produced," can be answered. A reading passage was presented to the pupils and five questions were asked on the basis of this paragraph. The questions were then taken from students and categorized according to Bloom's taxonomy, which meticulously created definitions in the cognitive domain for each of the six primary categories. This taxonomy ranged from simple

to complicated and from concrete to abstract the categories (knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and assessment) from simple. First of all, when presented, the term taxonomy was unknown as a term in education. However, the context became widely recognized and mentioned, eventually being translated into 22 languages, as readers realized its potential (Krathwohl 2002, 212).

Before evaluating the questions the pupils inquired how many questions in the classroom. Four out of 10 students in the lower scoring group stated they never questioned anything. Two of them seldom raised questions in the classroom, and two of them regularly said they did. Of the top 10 pupils, three claimed they never asked questions, two seldom, and two told them they frequently put queries. Three answered that in the classroom they often asked questions.

The students from the top-class score group showed that they asked more questions in the lessons than the bottom score group.

As a second stage, students were asked to answer up to five questions from a reading passage to identify the levels of questions. Ten students from the bottom group answered 47 questions while the top 10 asked 46. In comparison to the questions (knowledge or remember) of the lower group, the students of the higher score group requested more understanding and questions of the higher level (questions contain inference of requests, synthesis and evaluation abilities." Some of the questions asked by the lower score group are as follows:

Student AD:

1. What did X write in a proposal.....?
2. When did she want the.....?
3. Whom did she meet.....?
4. Why did she hire.....?
5. How much money did.....?

The student AD produced only one question at comprehension level and above. It was Question 4 in the list.

The questions produced by student BI from the lower score group are as follows:

1. What did X want.....?
2. Who did she meet with.....?

3. What did she do after.....?
4. Who offered X.....?
5. When did.....?

The question posed by student BI can be deemed to be at the level of knowledge. It is also evident that questions put by the students in the lower group of critical abilities began with the terms 'what' (15 questions), 'who' (8 questions), 'how many' (5 questions). Moreover, at the lower level of critical thinking, pupils could only create one issue at the level of understanding and above.

The results reveal that the questions asked in the bottom scoring group are knowledge-level questions. Higher-level questions might have a better influence on your critical reading technique. Our study divided the questions at the level of knowledge or memory as the critical thinking questions at the lower level and those at the understanding level and beyond. This classification is comparable to the classification of Daines (1986). As for the literal, interpretative, application and emotional matters, Daines (1986) stated the issues. Questions limited to accurate reminder of truth and significance are classified as literal. Answer sorts of questions are low in thinking and students should be aware of how facts, data, dates, events, definitions, concepts and trends may be recalled. Daines considers problems of interpretation and application to be of greater or higher order. The questions put by the higher-level pupils contain queries that are cognitively higher than those in the lower-level groups. Examples include:

Student SZ:

1. Why did X write a.....?
2. What was her.....?
3. If I were you, would you listen to my advice and change your proposal?
4. Was her project successful?

Except for the second question, it is obvious that the rest of the questions are comprehension and above level questions.

Student ZE:

1. Why did X become a financier for this work?
2. Why isn't this programme good and safe?

3. What kind of education will be given in this programme?

The questions asked by Students ZE and SZ are comprehension and above level questions. The students in this group are asking cognitively higher questions.

It is obvious, nevertheless, that some people in this group may raise questions about the degree of understanding. Some of these questions start with "what" (13 questions), "how many" (4 questions), "who" (3 questions). Questions at understanding and above begin with "why" (7 questions), "how" (5 questions) and "if I am" (3 questions). The students in this group generated a maximum of three questions of understanding.

All the pupils' questioning behaviors, through open questions, were gathered. The lower score group's questioning behaviours:

In the classroom, I attempt to ask questions. In general, when I do not comprehend the issue I ask questions on these things. I judge if I have grasped the material with the instructor questions.

(Student EA)

I normally ask in the classroom questions. I don't want to be in public and I'm scared when I ask inquiries. I ask questions when I am not seen in the back row, and when we are alone with the teacher. Sometimes while I reflect hard on this issue, the teacher goes to another subject and I can't ask. A question is not appropriate in this instance. I'd rather ask my pals questions. Sometimes I feel sad when I think the teacher knows that I cannot understand. For this reason I don't usually ask questions. (Student NO)

In the lessons, I'm not asking too many questions. I ask my buddies for the first time. For me to ask a question is a way of understanding a topic. I don't ask a lot, but I listen closely to the lesson. The final choice for me is to ask questions again.. (Student GGK)

I'm not asking inquiries generally. In general, the questions I ask are to understand the matter. I am asking clarifying questions. I strive to listen attentively to what is being taught. (Student HE). Firstly, the issues I don't comprehend are asked by my pals. If my buddies can't provide me answers, I ask the professor. (Student AD)

I initially ask my buddies when I've got anything I don't comprehend. I question the teacher if the response is not satisfactory. (Student EC)

Generally I do not ask questions. If I do not understand some points, I ask my friends.

And then I ask the teacher. In my opinion, asking a question is to clarify the points you do not understand. (Student AD)

.... Generally I do not ask questions. I cannot dare to ask questions to the teacher.

(Student MK)

...I don't ask inquiries in general. I don't ask if I don't know about questions. It's absurd for me when kids ask the teacher the least. My inquiries do not indicate that I'm a pitiful student. (Student DK)

From the responses given by the lower score group above, we may suggest that: N these students do not like asking questions,

N they are reluctant to ask questions,

N they use questions to understand some points better, and

N they first ask questions to their friends; if they cannot get satisfactory answers, they ask questions to the teachers.

Some of the pupils in the highest critical score group are asking questions on their behavior: I don't ask inquiries in general. I ask inquiries when I think I cannot solve or comprehend a problem by myself. (Student DD)

I believe I ask questions if I cannot fully understand, or if I have contradicting opinions on the issue, or if I have alternate thoughts. Sometimes we ask inquiries to check whether or not our remarks and ideas are valid. For me, questions are one method to build thinking abilities. We can head for new thoughts by asking questions and having answers. (Student ES)

I do not ask questions in the lessons. The questions I ask are generally useful questions like 'what is it for'. For me asking questions is to ask what you need. (Student MK)

I do not ask questions very often. I prefer to ask questions to my friends outside the classroom. I feel comfortable when I ask questions to my friends. For me asking questions is to remove the question marks in mind. (Student SZ)

Generally I do not ask questions very often. I ask when the new things I have learnt contradict with the old ones. (Student PU)

In the course of the lesson many questions come to my mind. Usually I can find answers before asking them to the teacher. I do not like uncertainties. Questioning is the first prerequisite that leads us in science. (Student SE)

I do not ask questions very often. I ask questions when I am curious. (Student ES)

I do not ask questions in every lesson but I am not reluctant to ask questions. I ask questions when I need approval or clarification. Asking questions is an important element for the interaction and dialogue with the teacher. (Student ZE)

The responses given above show that there are some students who do not ask

questions very often in the higher score group. However, the findings suggest that the questions asked by these students are not questions that clarify the unclear points but they are the questions asked out of curiosity, to remove the uncertainties, to lead people to think. Moreover, these students ask questions to seek alternatives, to think the reverse and to head for new ideas. It can be suggested that the students in the higher score group experienced thinking processes more intensively than the lower score group.

The students from higher score group mostly prefer to ask questions that are:

N not descriptive of the existing situation but inquiring;

N not approving of the existing one but developing (promoting);

N relevant but satisfying curiosity;

N practical and useful;

N related to what they have already learnt.

CONCLUSION

Questions allow the learner in meaningful, thought-provoking discussions and activities to negotiate meaning via interaction with others. The student must acquire communication skills in order to negotiate meaning. Interactive exercises including questions help gain communicative competence.

The outcomes of this study show that students must be given a classroom, including peer-group cooperation on reasoning tasks including data generation, planning and sharing.

Percins and Tishman (1993, 69) propose that effective thinking is doing the best of what one knows to provide a decent judgment when people encounter judgmental challenges. In addition, healthy thinking calls for flexible and innovative investigations when people encounter issues requiring innovation. During the course planning, teachers should supplement the content with authentic teaching activities which require constructing, and not reproducing, disciplined inquiries.

These assignments can be more successful for pupils than for those who do not. Interactive reading at all levels can allow students to build critical and creative thinking abilities.

Teacher training programmes, however, should assist student teachers in their realization that the development of critical thinking abilities is necessary in all academic fields, but indispensable for teacher education. Taking into account the amount of kids that go to school, The critical thinking abilities of the entire society might someday be affected by future instructors (Williams 2005, 164). That is why the focus of beginning teacher education should be on teaching critical and creative thinking abilities and a number of effective examples and practices in the curricula should be integrated. They should be emphasized on their function in developing cognitive abilities and should also concentrate on life-long learning, the promotion of thinking skills. There should be a great deal of action research in order to analyze the instructors' and students' queries in the classrooms. The results should be shared among experts and excellent practice should be included in the pre-service teacher training courses. During the internship student instructors should utilize classroom questioning methods and evaluateIn response, with the assistance of their mentors and supervisors, they should create new tactics.

The questions put in literal form and in memory can provide pupils an overview of text reading. This does not mean that the questions are useless in the reading of less crucial questions. The amount of questions asked by teachers and students should be assessed and improved in the classroom, because teaching and learning are an on-going process. In order to attain this objective, the exercises and activities of teacher training programs should be given considerably greater prominence.

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