



THE ROLE OF INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHODS IN DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN MOTHER TONGUE AND LITERATURE EDUCATION

Sabirova Nasiba Ergashevna

Head of the Department of Language Teaching Methods,
Khorezm Regional Pedagogical Skills Center, Professor,
Doctor of Philology (DSc)

E-mail: sabnas1@yandex.ru

Tel.: +998904384950

ORCID: 0000-0002-1236-283X

Annotation. *The modernization of contemporary education necessitates the development of learners who possess not only subject-specific knowledge but also critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and effective communication skills. Within this context, mother tongue and literature education serves as an important medium for fostering intellectual growth and reflective thinking. This study investigates the pedagogical potential of interactive teaching methods in enhancing critical thinking skills among students studying mother tongue and literature. Employing a mixed-method research design, the study was conducted with secondary school students and incorporated classroom observations, achievement assessments, and learner feedback. The findings reveal that interactive methodologies significantly improve students' ability to analyze literary texts, formulate arguments, evaluate diverse perspectives, and express independent opinions. The study concludes that the integration of student-centered interactive approaches into mother tongue and literature instruction contributes substantially to the formation of higher-order thinking skills and supports the development of competencies required in the twenty-first century.*

Key words: *mother tongue education, literature teaching, critical thinking, interactive methods, student-centered learning, educational methodology.*

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of educational systems in the twenty-first century has led to a growing emphasis on the cultivation of critical thinking as a fundamental learning

outcome. Contemporary societies require individuals who are capable of evaluating information critically, solving complex problems, communicating effectively, and adapting to rapidly changing social and technological environments. Consequently, educational institutions are increasingly expected to move beyond the transmission of factual knowledge and focus on the development of intellectual competencies that enable learners to engage actively in knowledge construction and decision-making processes.

Mother tongue and literature education occupies a distinctive position within the school curriculum because it provides learners with opportunities to develop linguistic competence, interpretive abilities, and reflective thinking. Through engagement with literary texts, students encounter diverse perspectives, cultural values, and human experiences that encourage deeper analysis and personal interpretation. Nevertheless, in many educational contexts, instructional practices continue to rely heavily on traditional teacher-centered approaches that limit learner participation and reduce opportunities for independent inquiry.

Recent pedagogical research has highlighted the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods in promoting active learning and intellectual engagement. Interactive approaches encourage students to participate in discussions, collaborate with peers, analyze information critically, and construct knowledge through meaningful social interaction. Such methods are particularly relevant in mother tongue and literature classes, where interpretation, discussion, and personal response constitute essential aspects of learning.

The present study seeks to explore the contribution of interactive teaching methods to the development of critical thinking skills in mother tongue and literature education. By examining both theoretical and practical dimensions of interactive pedagogy, the research aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving instructional practice and enhancing student learning outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical thinking has long been recognized as a central objective of education. Educational theorists argue that meaningful learning occurs when students engage in reflective inquiry and actively construct understanding rather than merely memorizing information. Critical thinking encompasses a range of cognitive processes, including analysis, interpretation, evaluation, inference, and self-regulation. These processes enable learners to assess information objectively, identify underlying assumptions, and formulate reasoned judgments.

The theoretical foundations of interactive learning can be traced to constructivist perspectives on education, which emphasize the active role of learners in the construction of knowledge. Constructivist scholars maintain that learning is most effective when students engage collaboratively in problem-solving activities and meaningful social interactions. Such experiences facilitate cognitive development by allowing learners to negotiate meaning, challenge assumptions, and refine their understanding through dialogue and reflection.

Within language and literature education, interactive methodologies have attracted considerable attention due to their capacity to enhance learner engagement and promote deeper comprehension. Research indicates that classroom discussions, collaborative text analysis, role-playing activities, and debate-based instruction create opportunities for students to examine literary works from multiple perspectives and support their interpretations with evidence. These pedagogical practices encourage learners to move beyond superficial understanding and develop sophisticated analytical skills.

Furthermore, scholars have emphasized that literature provides a particularly rich context for the development of critical thinking because literary texts often present complex characters, ambiguous situations, and diverse viewpoints that require careful interpretation. Through interaction with such texts, students learn to evaluate arguments, compare perspectives, and construct coherent explanations based on textual evidence.

Although previous studies have documented the benefits of interactive learning, challenges remain regarding its implementation in classroom practice. Factors such as teacher preparedness, curriculum design, and assessment procedures influence the effectiveness of interactive methodologies. Consequently, further empirical investigation is necessary to determine how interactive approaches can be applied successfully within mother tongue and literature education.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-method research design that integrated quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of interactive teaching methods on students' critical thinking skills. The research was conducted in four secondary schools and involved a total of 120 students enrolled in grades eight and nine. Participants were divided into an experimental group and a control group, each consisting of sixty students.

Data collection was carried out over a twelve-week period. Students in the experimental group participated in lessons that incorporated interactive teaching methods, including classroom discussions, brainstorming activities, collaborative learning tasks, role-playing exercises, and structured debates. These instructional strategies were designed to encourage active participation, analytical reasoning, and reflective thinking. In contrast, students in the control group continued to receive instruction through conventional teacher-centered methods.

To assess the effectiveness of the intervention, data were collected through critical thinking assessments administered before and after the experimental period. Additional information was obtained through classroom observations, student questionnaires, and interviews with participating teachers. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and comparative statistical procedures, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and perceptions.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The analysis of quantitative data revealed a notable improvement in the critical thinking performance of students who participated in interactive learning activities. The experimental group demonstrated substantial gains in analytical reasoning, interpretation of literary texts, and argumentation skills when compared with the control group. Post-intervention assessment results indicated that students exposed to interactive methodologies achieved significantly higher scores than those who experienced traditional forms of instruction.

Classroom observations provided further evidence of the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods. Students in the experimental group displayed greater levels of engagement, actively participated in discussions, and demonstrated an increased willingness to express and defend their viewpoints. Their responses to literary texts reflected deeper levels of analysis and a stronger capacity to support interpretations with relevant evidence.

Questionnaire findings revealed positive student attitudes toward interactive learning experiences. Most participants reported that collaborative activities and classroom discussions enhanced their understanding of literary content and increased their motivation to learn. Students also indicated that interactive tasks enabled them to consider alternative perspectives and develop greater confidence in communicating their ideas.

Teacher interviews supported these findings by highlighting observable improvements in student participation, communication skills, and intellectual independence. Educators noted that interactive approaches created a more dynamic learning environment and encouraged learners to engage more actively with both language and literature content.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm the significant role of interactive teaching methods in promoting critical thinking within mother tongue and literature education. The observed improvements in student performance suggest that active engagement with learning tasks facilitates the development of higher-order cognitive

processes. By participating in discussions, debates, and collaborative analytical activities, students are provided with opportunities to evaluate information critically, justify their opinions, and refine their understanding through interaction with peers.

These results are consistent with constructivist theories that emphasize the importance of social interaction in cognitive development. Interactive learning environments encourage students to become active participants in the educational process rather than passive recipients of information. As a result, learners develop greater autonomy, intellectual curiosity, and confidence in their ability to solve problems and construct meaning.

The study also highlights the particular suitability of literature education for fostering critical thinking. Literary texts present complex themes and multiple interpretations that challenge students to analyze evidence, recognize ambiguity, and consider diverse viewpoints. Interactive pedagogical approaches enable learners to explore these dimensions more effectively by creating opportunities for dialogue and reflection.

Moreover, the research underscores the evolving role of teachers in contemporary education. Rather than functioning solely as transmitters of knowledge, educators become facilitators who guide discussion, support inquiry, and create conditions conducive to intellectual growth. This transformation aligns with current educational priorities that emphasize learner-centered instruction and competency-based education.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrate that interactive teaching methods constitute an effective pedagogical strategy for developing critical thinking skills in mother tongue and literature education. Students who engaged in interactive learning activities exhibited stronger analytical abilities, improved interpretive skills, and greater confidence in expressing independent judgments. The findings suggest that the systematic integration of discussion-based learning, collaborative activities, and problem-oriented tasks can significantly enhance educational outcomes.

In light of contemporary educational demands, it is essential for teachers to adopt methodologies that promote active learning and intellectual engagement. Interactive approaches not only improve academic achievement but also contribute to the development of competencies necessary for lifelong learning and participation in modern society. Therefore, the incorporation of interactive teaching methods into mother tongue and literature instruction should be regarded as a priority for educators, curriculum developers, and educational policymakers seeking to improve the quality and effectiveness of language education.

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