

*Nargiza K. Abbasova,
Senior lecturer,
Fergana State University*

Using Effective Techniques Developing Learners' Critical Thinking in Teaching English Proverbs and Sayings

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Annotation: *nowadays there are a huge number of techniques designed for the development of language skills, but it is also very important to develop students' critical thinking in order to prepare them for adulthood. This article discusses various techniques for developing students' critical thinking through the study of proverbs and sayings, and also analyzes the effectiveness of their use in English lessons.*

One of the most common genres of oral folk art in any country are proverbs and sayings, the time of occurrence of which is not known, but the fact that this is the most fertile material for learning a foreign language remains an indisputable fact. Early sources describe the use of proverbs in England as one of the effective tools in teaching Latin. In proverbs and sayings, a large part of human experience is formed. Owing to its generalized nature, proverbs and sayings can be used at all levels of foreign language teaching in teaching the art of allegory, the ability to illustrate one's thought and summarize it in a short form. The use of proverbs and sayings in a foreign language lesson will certainly contribute to a better mastery of this subject, expanding knowledge of the language, vocabulary and the developing of critical thinking of the learners. The purpose of this work is to analyze and summarize the experience of working with proverbs and sayings in English lessons and its efficiency in elaboration of critical thinking.

The modern school, foreign teachers - practical workers are working on the problem of developing students' cognitive activity by introducing new teaching methods, ideas and approaches to the learning process, influencing the formation of students' motivation, increasing it by strengthening the communicative orientation of the educational process. This contributes to the creation of a favorable atmosphere in the classroom for students, an increase in student interest in the subject and the development of a desire for practical use of a foreign language. Learning content consists of knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, the mastery of which provides the ability to use language as a means of communication, the formation and development of personality. In teaching a foreign language, expressive means play a huge role. There is a need to develop a child's linguistic intuition, which helps him to select language tools for figurative utterance. Fiction and folklore play an important role in learning a foreign language. In the process of learning English, proverbs and sayings are the expressive means that promote the development of linguistic intuition. The terms "proverb" and "saying" are always nearby. Longman Contemporary English Dictionary defines the 'proverb' as follows: "proverb – a short well known statement that contains advice about life in general". Proverbs and sayings have common properties that make them irreplaceable in the learning process: exact rhyme, simple balanced form and conciseness. Proverbs and sayings are fertile material in teaching any aspect of any language. In this article, the author considered the possibility of

using proverbs and sayings in developing critical thinking of the learners. It cannot be argued that it is possible to build critical thinking entirely on the material of proverbs and sayings, however, in order to increase the motivation to learn English, improve the degree of memorization and to develop the level of critical thinking of the learners it seems appropriate to use them.

According to modern requirements for education it should be directed not only at the development of certain subject knowledge of a student but also at the improvement of his personality, paying special attention to such qualities as responsibility for his choices and ability to set priorities. A comprehensive school should form an integral system of universal knowledge, skills, abilities, as well as the experience of independent activity and personal responsibility of students, that is, the key competencies that determine the modern quality of educational content. The modern student is extremely difficult to motivate for cognitive activity, for finding a path to a goal in the field of information and communication. This happens because children often have serious difficulties in perceiving educational material in all school subjects. The reason for this is the insufficiently high level of development of thinking and, above all, critical. Regarding the concept of "critical thinking" there is a wide variety of opinions and assessments: on the one hand, it is associated with negative, as it involves a dispute, a conflict; on the other hand, it unites the concepts of "critical thinking", "analytical thinking", "logical thinking", "creative thinking", etc. The goal of teaching critical thinking is to develop students' thinking skills that are necessary not only in school, but also in later life, the ability to make informed decisions, work with information, analyze and draw conclusions.

Proverbs and sayings were created by many generations of people, developed over the centuries. Knowledge of the proverbs and sayings of the country of the language being studied enriches the vocabulary, helps to assimilate the figurative structure of the language, attaches to the wisdom of the people, develops memory. It is important to use proverbs and sayings for the development of children in order to make correct speech, concentration, and memory. In addition, in these small in volume works, the history, the wisdom of our ancestors, their ideas about what is good and bad is captured, so you can think about it with the pupils. Using the proverbs, we see as different peoples on different continents in different ways, but at the same time equally modified similar life situations, phenomena of objective reality, characterizing them with peculiar features. Each culture developed a certain system of norms of behavior that ensured a psychological balance in a collective, a society.

Applying the intercultural approach, one can reveal what is hidden in another culture, learn to understand and interpret it, cultivate respect for one's own and foreign culture, be able to notice differences and similarities, mutually enrich and develop strategies of adequate behavior in situations of intercultural communication.

Developed critical thinking allows students to solve various problems, control themselves and their impulsiveness, cooperate with other people, be open to new ideas and different points of view, be good listeners, tolerate points of view that differ from their own, build various conclusions and to think logically, to come to compromise solutions and to be able to use their skills and knowledge in various situations.

Proverbs and sayings can greatly increase the level of critical thinking, but it is important to choose appropriate techniques for teaching them. The meaning of proverbs and sayings does not lay just beneath the surface, which makes students think logically. In order to include proverbs into the English lesson it is beneficial to make posters with popular proverbs and sayings and hang them on the wall. Each lesson you may discuss one proverb with your pupils in order to reveal hidden meaning and relying on the experience of past generations to infuse children to distinguish bad from good. For instance, the proverb: 'Measure thrice and cut once' can teach pupils to take the time to make serious decisions and be responsible for their actions. The teacher may tell them the story from real life or from literature where injudicious actions lead to irreversible consequences and thereby consolidate the meaning of the proverb and develop the critical thinking of children. The teacher may also divide the class for several groups, give each group one proverb and ask them to role play the situation which will show the meaning of the proverb. It will develop not only the critical thinking of the learners but also their communicative and speaking skills. While role playing in front of their classmates shy learners may gain confidence in themselves and their abilities. For example, you may give one group a proverb: "When in Rome, do as the Romans." This proverb will explain the learners that we should act the way that the people around you are acting. This phrase might come in handy for your pupils when they are traveling abroad and notice that people do things differently than used to. While working on organizing the role play for this proverb learners will improve their language skills and develop their critical thinking. They will also find out a lot of new facts about some customs and traditions not only of their own culture but the culture of target language, this will help the learners to avoid culture shock in future. Another effective technique of teaching proverbs is to give your pupils a list of different proverbs and ask them to create a story based on these proverbs. You may divide your class into pairs, groups or ask pupils to work individually. In order to include the proverbs into their story they should understand the meaning of each proverb and while analyzing them they will highly increase the level of critical thinking.

Students cannot think critically if they do not have the information they need. Begin any critical thinking exercise with a review of related information. This ensures they can recall facts pertinent to the topic. So it will be very useful to read some legends or stories about the origination of the proverbs in order to interest the learners in this topic and to make them think critically. One of the most important part of developing critical thinking of the learners is to teach them how to distinguish adequate information from misleading one. While preparing the text about some events that cause the origination of the proverb, you may include some untrue facts and after reading the text you should ask the learners which fact is false and how they found out it.

Another way to develop students' critical thinking is to make them to speak with sketches. Though we are inherently visual learners, it can be challenging to effectively communicate an idea without words. Nevertheless, translating thoughts to picture form encourages critical thinking beautifully. It guides kids to think using a different mental skill set, and it's also a great way to get them truly invested in an idea. You may divide your classroom into groups and give them some proverbs, the learners should show the meaning of the proverb with the help of mime, body language or role playing so that the other group will be able to guess

which proverb they want to express. This technique will be very helpful not only for developing the critical thinking of the learners, it will also create a funny and friendly atmosphere in the classroom, which is also very significant in learning process.

In this article we want to describe the results of using one of the above-suggested techniques for developing critical thinking through proverbs and sayings in an English class in a secondary education school. During the training in secondary school #2, we conducted a lesson for 9th grade students on the topic: 'My future profession'. The aim of this lesson was not only to improve their language skills and to enrich students' vocabulary with new words related to the theme of profession and career, but also to analyze the efficiency of using proverbs and sayings for developing the critical thinking of the students. At the beginning of the lesson we didn't tell the students the theme, instead we wrote a following proverb on the board: 'If a job is worth doing it is worth doing well.' we asked the students to guess which topic we would discuss. We think it was a good way to introduce the topic because the students actively started to express their opinions and found out the theme very quickly. This will help students to build predictions and substantiate them, which is one of the components of developed critical thinking. Then we discussed the meaning of this proverb and tried to understand the wisdom that is hidden in it. We suppose that the discussion of this proverb highly increased the level of students' critical thinking as this proverb contains the great wisdom of previous generations and the discussion of it helped us to explain the students that we should choose professions not according to the principle of demand, prestige and high pay, but according to our own interests. In our opinion it will help students in one of the most important choice of their life – the choice of future profession. Reflection on this proverb will help students to improve the efficiency of information perception, as well as interest both in the material being studied and in the learning process itself. After that we asked what other English proverbs or sayings about professions and job they know, it was a kind of brainstorming in order to recognize whether they are familiar with oral folk art and how often proverbs and sayings are used in their everyday life. It was an efficient way of developing their critical thinking as they tried to remember some background information which made their brains work. Then we divided the students into groups of three people and distributed to each group 3 proverbs about different professions., such as 'A lovelorn cook oversalts the porridge', 'A barber does not shave himself', 'Lawyers' gowns are lined with the willfulness of their clients', 'The shoemaker's wife is the worst shod', 'Painters and poets may have leave to lie'. Each member of a group had to show the profession that is described in the proverb without verbs and the team who first guessed it, got the score. This technique will help students develop not only language skills such as speaking and listening, but also to develop their critical thinking as they had to create the scenario of their role play and make it understandable for their classmates. So this technique will improve students' creative thinking, it may also help shy students to overcome their modesty and demonstrate their abilities. This technique is also a good way for teachers to involve to the learning all students, even inactive and low level students. Each team wanted to win and this competitive atmosphere made students be active and sharp-witted. We think this technique is very useful and is suitable for learners of different age group and level. There are a huge number of proverbs and sayings on various topics, which will allow the teacher to pick up the necessary proverbs according to the topic and use it in different lessons. At the end of the lesson we gave students a task to match the beginnings and the endings of the proverbs and sayings that we learned during the

lesson. The students had to work individually and to complete the task as quickly as possible. This technique is a good way to consolidate in the memory of students the material they learned during the lesson. It will also help students organize their thoughts, which is one of the components of developed critical thinking. After the end of the lesson, we conducted a survey to find out whether the students liked the lesson and what knowledge and skills they had learned. We distributed to the students questionnaires where they needed to answer such questions as whether they liked the lesson, what technique they liked the most, what they didn't like in the lesson and so on. According to the results of this survey, we can infer that the learners were satisfied with the organization of the lesson, they got a lot of new knowledge and realized the value of proverbs and sayings not only in the educational process but also in life. Most of all, they liked the technique where they needed to explain the meaning of proverbs through mime, gestures and role play. They also noted that they had learned many new proverbs and were interested in the topic of oral folk art. Some active students suggested organizing extra-classes where we could continue to develop critical thinking through proverbs and sayings.

In conclusion we can see that the use of proverbs and sayings in the development of critical thinking of students is quite effective. This can help the teacher to create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere in the classroom and to rally all students. And also to develop in students such components of critical thinking as curiosity, desire for new knowledge, openness to new ideas, interest in the learning process, responsibility for their own education and to use acquired skills in everyday life. The modern world requires a person not only to master various knowledge and skills, but to be able to use them in life, not just to possess information, but to be able to analyze it and to distinguish truth from falsehood. Developing critical thinking will allow students to cope with difficulties, collaborate with people, discover something new and find their place in society.

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