



RESEARCH PAPER

**Exploring the Perceptions of English Teachers and Students for
Developing Critical Thinking Skills at the University Level in
Pakistan**

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ABSTRACT

In this research work, the viewpoints of both teachers and students are investigated in relation to the development of critical thinking skills. The development of abilities in critical thinking is of the utmost importance in the context of language acquisition. Not only does it make the acquisition of linguistic competence easier, but it also nurtures cognitive aptitude and the ability to find solutions to problems. This makes the development of critical thinking skills one of the most important aspects of language learning. The purpose of this research is to acquire a better understanding of the current state of critical thinking skills within the field of English language instruction through the collection of relevant data. In addition, it aims to uncover the challenges that students have when attempting to acquire these skills, as well as the strategies that teachers employ in order to cultivate them in their students. In order to acquire an exhaustive understanding of the topic at hand, the research makes use of a qualitative method, which includes semi-structured interviews from 10 teachers and 7 students at university level. According to the findings, there is a consensus among educators regarding the significance of encouraging students to engage in critical thinking within the context of the study of the English language. This research study works as a helpful resource for instructors and stakeholders in the field of English language education, offering significant insights and recommendations for the enhancement of critical thinking abilities among students.

KEYWORDS Critical Thinking Skills, English Language, Students, Teachers, University

Introduction

For English language students, critical thinking is not only crucial for language acquisition but also for academic success and future career opportunities. To keep up with the rest of the world, Pakistan needs to produce young people with 21st-century traits and skills, such as imagination, critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, confidence, and enthusiasm (Mahmood et al., 2009). The objective of education in the twenty-first century in a developing nation such as Pakistan is to integrate critical thinking abilities into the educational framework (Azmat et al., 2021). Hence, teachers must acquire knowledge regarding the critical thinking process. In addition to other components, educational institutions should incorporate a creative framework. This content will be applied practically in order to promote the cultivation of critical thinking skills. Moreover, previous scholarly investigations substantiate the scarcity of research pertaining to the advancement of critical thinking skills among pupils in Pakistan (Khatoon et al., 2022; Mahmood, 2017). The predominant focus of scholarly inquiry lies in the examination of pedagogical approaches and the efficacy with which teachers employ these strategies within educational settings.

The significance of critical thinking in language education has grown in the 21st century, as evidenced by studies conducted by Li (2016) and Van Laar, Van Deursen, Van Dijk, and De Haan (2017). These studies indicate that critical thinking can aid in the development of language skills (Wang & Henderson, 2014; Wu et al., 2013) and improve overall language proficiency (Liaw, 2007). Furthermore, the enhancement of critical thinking abilities enhances the process of language acquisition by extending it beyond the mere acquisition of language skills and rote memorization (Sanavi & Tarighat, 2014). The importance of cultivating critical thinking skills in language classrooms has been emphasized by scholars (Zhao et al., 2016), and empirical research has provided evidence supporting its successful incorporation into foreign language instruction (Chapple & Curtis, 2000). Scholars have proposed that language instructors should promote students' capacity for critical thinking throughout the language acquisition process (Davidson, 1998; Lipman, 2003; Rezaei et al., 2011) by facilitating their involvement in a critical examination of educational resources to internalize the language (Li, 2016).

Literature Review

Critical thinking has now become an upsurge in language education in the 21st century and evidence can be found in studies that shows that it helps in the process of language acquisition (Wu, et al, 2013; Wang & Henderson, 2014) and increases general proficiency of the language learners (Liaw, 2007; Dijk & Haan, 2017). According to Sanavi & Tarighat, (2014) critical thinking skills increases language learning experiences by exploring it beyond rote learning and memorization. Studies on Critical Thinking Skills (CTSs) are an emerging phenomenon, and it is an integral part of teaching English to non-native learners (Facione, 1998 p.9). Al-Osaimi et al. (2014) conducted an extensive literature review to develop the ideas further initially presented by Paul (1990), with the purpose of investigating the phenomena referred to as "uncritical thinking." The phenomena of uncritical thinking can be described as a tendency to abstain from engaging in inquiry, instead passively accepting information without subjecting it to scrutiny (Dijk & Haan, 2017).

Hence, critical thinking is commonly acknowledged as encompassing the ability to formulate particular types of queries, together with an inclination to participate in such inquiry actively. The characteristic of uncritical thinking can be defined as the inclination to rapidly formulate judgments that may be swayed by personal biases or unquestioning obedience to the viewpoints of others. The observed behavior suggests a deficiency in either motivation or capacity to engage in critical evaluation of arguments, scrutiny of assertions, or analysis of interpretations. However, critical thinking requires an evaluation of the certainty and uncertainty of the information at hand. The capacity and a tendency to assess arguments, facts, and interpretations, as well as to identify the underlying assumptions on which they rest, is what we mean when we talk about critical thinking. Moreover, the application of judgment based on specific criteria and evidence, as well as the ability to evaluate the credibility of evidence and sources are all part of the process of critical thinking (Facione, 1998, p. 5).

Critical Thinking in Education

Their prominent and highly respected positions in the field of critical thinking have been created as a result of the research that Richard Paul and Linda Elder conducted in the year 1987. The authors of the book "Critical Thinking: The Nature of Critical and Creative Thought" provide a thorough conceptual framework that makes critical thinking easier to comprehend. Within the field of cognitive processes, it cannot be overstated how important it is to have clarity, correctness, precision, consistency, and relevance.

Ennis (1962) who formulated a comprehensive definition of critical thinking, is widely regarded as a pioneer in the field of critical thinking because of the significant contributions he made to the study of this topic. The man in issue was the author of a book that was released in 1962 under the title "A Concept of Critical Thinking." This book was crucial in laying the framework for defining critical thinking as a reasonable and reflective cognitive process that is centered on analyzing one's views or actions.

John Dewey's research activities, as seen by his landmark publication "How We Think" in 1910, investigate the complex relationship that exists between the sphere of education and critical thinking. The author emphasizes the value of experiential learning and reflective thinking in the area of education, stating that these components play a critical role in nurturing problem-solving abilities and promoting a spirit of inquiry in students. The author emphasizes the significance of experiential learning and reflective thinking in the field of education.

The key research conducted by Benjamin S. Bloom in 1956 marked the beginning of what would later become known as Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, which was presented by the academic above. Within this taxonomy's cognitive domain is found a hierarchical structure of cognitive capacities, with a specific emphasis placed on the most advanced level of critical thinking. Processes that are analytical, evaluative, and synthetic need to be utilized in order to complete this level.

In the 1998 paper entitled "Teaching Critical Thinking for Transfer," Diane F. Halpern explores the development and assessment of critical thinking skills. The release of her research in 1998 has significantly contributed to our understanding of pedagogical approaches and evaluation techniques related to critical thinking.

In the work titled "Teaching at Its Best" (2010), Linda B. Nilson highlights the importance of active learning in fostering the growth of critical thinking abilities. The author lays much emphasis on the active involvement of students in the learning process as a strategy to cultivate the growth of critical thinking skills.

In the publication authored by Robert J. Marzano and John S. Kendall (2007), the writers engage in a discussion over in their work titled "The New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives," Marzano and Kendall (2007) investigate the integration of critical thinking skills into classroom education. The authors emphasize the significance of cultivating critical thinking abilities, including analysis, interpretation, and evaluation, to facilitate the advancement of effective training.

The researchers above have made noteworthy contributions to the comprehension and advancement of critical thinking in the field of education, each presenting their distinctive perspectives and conceptual frameworks. Their contributions have significantly influenced the pedagogical strategies employed by teachers in diverse educational contexts when it comes to the cultivation and instruction of critical thinking abilities.

Critical thinking is often defined as the ability to think logically and analytically, evaluate information, and make well-informed decisions. In an educational context, critical thinking is considered a transferable skill that benefits learners across various disciplines. It involves skills such as analysis, evaluation, problem-solving, and decision-making (Paul & Elder, 2006).

Critical Thinking in English Language Education

According to Paul and Elder (2006), Richard Paul and Linda Elder are renowned scholars recognized for their extensive contributions to the field of critical thinking and

its practical implementation within the realm of education. The authors of the book "Critical Thinking: The Nature of Critical and Creative Thought" (2006) underscore the significance of critical thinking within the realm of education, particularly emphasizing the necessity of cultivating critical thinking skills in both a broad sense and within the specific domain of English language education.

According to Gibbons (2015), titled "Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning: Teaching English Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom," Pauline Gibbons explores the significance of incorporating critical thinking into English language instruction. The author highlights the importance of language learners actively employing higher-order cognitive abilities, such as analysis and evaluation, in order to cultivate their competency in the English language.

The research conducted, namely the Hui-Hua Chang publication titled "Promoting Critical Thinking in English Language Teaching" in 2009, explores the incorporation of critical thinking abilities within the context of English language instruction. The primary focus of her research centers around pragmatic methodologies designed specifically for teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

The aforementioned researchers have made significant contributions to the comprehension and advancement of critical thinking within the realm of English language instruction. The research conducted by the authors places significant emphasis on the significance of cultivating critical thinking abilities among individuals who are learning the English language. Furthermore, their study offers valuable insights into various tactics and methodologies that can be employed to attain this objective effectively.

The incorporation of critical thinking skills in English language education is crucial as it enhances students' language proficiency and cognitive abilities. Critical thinking helps learners analyze and understand complex texts, express their ideas effectively, and engage in meaningful discussions (McPeck, 1981). English language instructors should not only teach language skills but also encourage students to think critically.

The present study adopts a working definition of critical thinking that is derived from the existing literature. Critical thinking is conceptualized as purposeful cognitive processes, encompassing abilities such as analysis and evaluation, the assessment of arguments, the evaluation of evidence quality, and the assessment of source credibility. The primary characteristic is the aptitude and readiness to pose constructive inquiries. This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of undergraduate students and teachers regarding the nature of critical thinking as a concept, as well as the specific skills that are considered to embody critical thinking. The working definition provided a framework for this exploration.

The study also investigated the potential factors that promote or hinder the cultivation of critical thinking skills, as perceived by the students and professors who participated in the course. Another subject that was examined was the adherence to course standards within the framework of fostering the growth of critical thinking skills.

Yuan, et al,(2022) conducted a critical review of 25 empirical studies of ESL\EFL teachers' perceptions regarding critical thinking engagement in a huge range of educational contexts from 2010 to 2020. The review of studies was selected from diverse EFL settings around the world. The critical review of studies categories into three main themes: 1. EFL teacher's CT strategies and instructional models, 2. Understanding of EFL

teachers of critical thinking and CT instructions, 3) the influence of CT instruction on learners and EFL teachers themselves and other impacting aspects at interpersonal, environmental, and individual levels. Future studies provide a critical review of methods used in previous literature and open new horizons for upcoming studies in the realm of language teacher education.

Material and Methods

To explore critical thinking skills among English language students, a qualitative research approach is adopted. The study involved interview questions for English language students and teachers to explore critical thinking English classrooms. The present study will specifically investigate the perceptions of participants with regard to critical thinking. Given that this study focuses on examining the perspectives of participants in relation to critical thinking rather than treating critical thinking as an objective phenomenon, it is not aligned with the positivist paradigm. The present study situates participants' viewpoints within the interpretive paradigm, which is characterized by an emphasis on understanding events and phenomena based on the subjective experiences of individuals (Morrison, 2007, p.26).

The study used semi structured interviews as a tool to collect data. The participants of the study include 10 English language teachers and 7 English language students from Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Sanghar campus. The study employed random sampling technique for data collection. The qualitative data (semi-structured interviews) is analyzed by using thematic process in which the data is transcribed and initial codes are generated. After initial codes the major themes and sub themes are derived from the responses of the participants. The study takes care of the ethical considerations while collecting data and provided interview protocol form to the participants. The participants were not harmed in any way and their data is used for study purpose only.

Results and Discussion

Teachers Thematic Interview Findings

The results of the initial study inquiry "What are the perceptions of university teachers for developing student's critical thinking skills while teaching English language?" elucidate the viewpoints and dispositions of teachers concerning their aptitude for critical thinking within the domain of English language acquisition. The following is a thematic summary of the research findings:

Recognition of Importance

The responses of the teacher's interviews indicated that teachers recognize the importance of critical thinking skills in language classrooms. The vast majority of faculty members who teach English at universities recognize how important it is to help students develop their capacity for critical thinking while they are learning the language. They are of the opinion that children need to develop their ability to think critically in order for them to become competent and independent language learners and communicators. They emphasize that these skills are essential for students to become proficient in language and to apply it effectively in real-life situations. They were of the views that the world is changing and the demands critical thinkers who can face the challenges and overcome with confident.

The teachers were of the opinions that students need to develop their critical thinking skills because it can help them in solving real life problems and career prospects. Moreover, some of the teachers emphasized the development of critical thinking skills

from the very first stage of student's life because critical thinking is learn skill and it needs to be taught to students. Some of the teachers stated that it is the responsibility of the teachers to teach critical thinking skills to students from the start of their education. All of the teachers agreed that critical thinking plays a vital role in developing student's language proficiency and help them use language effectively. Teachers believe it is their professional responsibility to foster critical thinking skills in their students. They view it as a means of preparing students for success not only in language acquisition but also for their future academic and professional endeavors.

Integration into Teaching

The responses of the teachers revealed that teachers should integrate critical thinking skills in their teaching processes. The findings show that teachers perceive critical thinking as an integral component of their teaching approach. Some of the teachers were of the views that they know the significance of the integration of critical thinking skills in teaching. They incorporate activities that promote critical thinking, such as debates, discussions, and problem-solving tasks, into their curriculum to enhance students' language learning experiences. They incorporate activities and tactics that foster critical thinking into their instruction of English as a second language. Students are encouraged to engage in critical thinking through the utilization of a variety of instructional strategies, including but not limited to discussion-based lessons, problem-solving activities, and the examination of real texts.

But most of the teachers responded pessimism to integrate critical thinking skills in their teaching practices due to several constraints they shared. They were of the views that critical thinking should be taught from the basic level of education and continue it till higher education. However, when students entered in university, they demand to learn a critical thinking skill which is not possible at all. The teachers responded that critical thinking is a lifelong learning skills and it cannot be taught at university level only. Teachers have to face difficulties due to time constraints, curriculum constraint and lack of training to integrate critical thinking skills at higher level. Therefore, most of the teachers suggested that teachers should incorporate critical thinking skills in their teaching processes from primary level in order to make students capable to solve real life problems and compete with the fast pacing world.

Professional Development\Training

The findings of teacher's interviews revealed that most of the teachers believe that teaching critical thinking demands training and professional development as it is learning skills, thus, teachers should be trained how to teach critical thinking skills to students effectively. Some teachers emphasize the importance of ongoing professional development in enhancing their own ability to teach critical thinking skills effectively. They may express a need for training and resources to better support their students. They were of the views that they need to resources and strategies that can better help students' develop critical thinking skills. Some of the teachers responded that they need training for improving their pedagogical approaches, and they express the need for additional professional development in the integration of critical thinking into their teaching practices.

Some teachers indicated that they often lack training that make them effective teachers to teach 21st century skills as these skills are new to develop for facing the challenges of this era. They were of the concerns that modern teaching practices should be incorporated at university level and it needs to be known by all teachers. The only way is to give them enough training and provide them professional development

opportunities to improve their teaching methods. Most of the teachers were of the perceptions that incorporating critical thinking skills in English language classroom need training, support and resources.

Student Engagement and Participation

The responses of the teachers reported that students have been shown to be more interested in the classroom as well as more likely to actively participate in assignments and conversations when teachers incorporate activities that encourage critical thinking, as reported by teachers. They have noticed an increase in the pupils' capability to analyze, evaluate, and formulate logical arguments in the English language. They were of the perceptions that student's engagement and participation play a vital role because without their active participation teachers cannot implement critical thinking activities in classroom. They were of the concerns that it is important for students to show their enthusiasm in activities and take part actively to develop their critical thinking skills. Most of the teachers claimed that sometimes, they face difficulties to engage student's in critical thinking activities due to their lack of interest as they think critical thinking a challenging task. Majority of the teachers were of the perceptions that it is also the responsibility of student's to understand the importance of developing critical thinking skills and they should take part and engage themselves in critical thinking enhancement activities.

Challenges and Constraints

The interview findings of teachers revealed that there are many challenges and constraints that hinder them from teaching critical thinking skills in language classrooms. Most of the teachers claimed that they are not allowed to teach out of the curriculum. Some teachers acknowledge challenges in integrating critical thinking activities due to time constraints, rigid curriculum requirements, and large class sizes. They responded that they have to struggle with assessing students' critical thinking abilities effectively within these constraints. They were of the perceptions that in universities, the number of students in a class is beyond capacity that create hurdles in giving student's the opportunity to practice their skills. They also indicated that due to less time period for teaching English, it becomes difficult to work on student's critical thinking skills.

Teachers may express frustration with curriculum constraints and standardized testing, which can limit their ability to prioritize critical thinking skills. This theme highlights the tension between educational standards and the desire to foster critical thinking. Teachers are aware that time restraints and limitations imposed by curricula can often limit their capacity to concentrate extensively on teaching students critical thinking abilities. The degrees of students' language proficiency and the size of the class might also be obstacles in the way of efficiently meeting the critical thinking demands of individual students. Therefore, most of the teachers suggested that teachers should be given freedom to modify their teaching contents and incorporate activities that help in the development of critical thinking skills. Moreover, time period should be increased and class size should be decreased for effective teaching and learning.

Assessment and Feedback

The responses of the teachers indicated that assessment of critical thinking is complex and challenging. They were of the views that in English lessons, teachers should regularly evaluate their students' critical thinking abilities since they believe this is a crucial ability for students to develop. Some of the teachers responded that giving feedback on student's critical thinking skills in language classrooms is quite challenging as Critical thinking is an ability that involves mental processes which is difficult to assess

and give feedback on. Teachers recognize that assessing critical thinking skills can be complex.

However, few of the teachers responded positively that they use different techniques and employ activities in lessons that help them to assess student's level of critical thinking. They shared that in order to evaluate the students' capabilities and give them feedback on how they may grow; they employ a combination of formative and summative evaluations. Teachers think that assessment is an integral part of learning and without feedback students cannot determine their progress. Therefore, teachers should incorporate activities or assessment methods that can measure student's critical thinking skills. They may discuss the difficulties of grading open-ended, qualitative responses and the need for more nuanced assessment methods.

Pedagogical Strategies

The responses of the teachers indicated that pedagogical strategies are significant for developing student's critical thinking skills. The teachers were of the perceptions that critical thinking cannot be taught without strategies as critical thinking involves Metacognition. They were of the opinions that teachers should be fully aware of the strategies of techniques that can help in the development of critical thinking skills. Some of the teachers were of the concerns that they don't have knowledge about pedagogical strategies and they rarely use any strategy while teaching English keeping apart critical thinking skills.

They claimed that this lack of pedagogical strategies is because of lack of training and professional development. However, few of the teachers were of the views that they use pedagogical strategies for developing critical thinking skills. They mentioned specific pedagogical strategies they employ to nurture critical thinking skills. They may discuss the use of Socratic questioning, problem-based learning, or inquiry-based approaches to encourage students to think critically. The teachers suggested that these strategies are helpful for developing critical thinking skills.

Students' Thematic Interview Findings

The results of the initial study inquiry "What are the perceptions of university students for developing student's critical thinking skills while learning English language?" elucidate the viewpoints and dispositions of students concerning their aptitude for critical thinking within the domain of English language acquisition. The following is a thematic summary of the research findings:

Language Acquisition Perceptions:

The responses of the participants reported that students may have differing views on the relationship between language acquisition and critical thinking. Some may believe that language learning primarily involves memorization and grammar rules, while others may understand that critical thinking is vital for language proficiency. They were of the perceptions that most of the students do not understand the importance of language acquisition along with critical thinking skills because both are different. However, some of the students believe that critical thinking play a vital role in order to use language effectively in real life situations. The students were of the positive perceptions regarding language acquisition. They were of the opinions that teachers should teach language by employing critical thinking strategies and activities because students have to use language in real world that demands critical thinkers. Majority of the participants reported that effective language learning needs to be taught with

teaching critical thinking skills. Therefore, teachers of English language should be given trainings to teach both English language and critical thinking skills' contents effectively.

Role of Classroom Environment

The responses from the interviews of students reported that educational environment play a pivotal role in effective learning generally and developing critical thinking skills specifically. They were of the views that student's should be given supportive and friendly classroom environment for better learning progress. Most the students reported that the learning environment they are in and the instructional strategies used by their teachers have a major impact on the development of their critical thinking skills. Some of the students revealed that their teachers help them in developing critical thinking skills by using different techniques, strategies and activities. Students have a favorable impression of assignments, conversations, and activities in the classroom that foster analysis and interpretation. However, most of the students were unsatisfied with their teachers because they were of the views that teachers only teach the content of the lesson neglecting soft skills especially critical thinking. They claimed that their teachers are unaware of the strategies that can be implemented for improving student's critical thinking skills. Therefore, majority of the students emphasized that university teachers should provide student's supportive classroom environment that foster their critical thinking skills.

Peer Collaboration

The interview findings revealed that students highlighted the importance of peer collaboration in developing critical thinking skills. They may discuss how group discussions and peer interactions enhance their ability to think critically and solve problems. The students reported that for developing critical thinking skills it is important to discuss and collaborate with fellows and peers. They were of the opinions that peer collaboration can help students to think, discuss and share their ideas with each other. Moreover, Peer collaboration help students to analyze, interpret and argue on different topics with each other that ultimately help in fostering critical thinking skills.

However, some of the students were of the perceptions that Students' perceptions can be influenced by their peers. If they observe their classmates valuing critical thinking and actively participating in such activities, it can motivate other students to do the same. But some were disagreed with this and claim that at university level, peers make fun of those students who ask critical questions in the classroom and they try to discourage the student to think out of the box. This behavior of their peers hinders the way of developing critical thinking skills. Therefore, most of the students suggested that peer collaboration should be done for positive learning environment and helping each other to progress and improve skills

Relevance and Real-Life Application

The responses of the students in interviews reported that students perceive critical thinking as relevant to their language learning journey. They appreciate that it helps them apply the language in real-life contexts, understand the culture associated with the language, and communicate effectively. The students were of the views that critical thinking is a significant for solving real life problems and they perceive it as a source to communicate effectively. Most of the students were of the perceptions that as language is a tool of communication critical thinking skills help to the use that tool effectively. They were of the concerns that teachers should understand the relevance of critical thinking with language learning as they both are important tools to solve real life problems. majority of the students were of the perceptions teachers should taught them

language along with the application of critical thinking skills in real life circumstances. This will help them progress and get success in all aspects of life.

Diversity of perspectives

The interview findings indicated that students' interest in developing critical thinking skills can vary. Some students are highly motivated and enjoy engaging in activities that require critical thinking, while others may find them less engaging or challenging. Some of the students were of the perceptions that critical thinking is important and they engage themselves in critical thinking activities and tasks. They were of the views that critical thinking exercises help them learn the language efficiently by employing motivating and engaging activities. Moreover, they believe that by engaging themselves in critical thinking activities, they improve their language, problem solving skills and become quick learners. However, some of the students were of negative perceptions regarding critical thinking enhancement activities. They were of the perceptions that critical thinking activities are challenging and complex. They find it as less motivating activities because they believe that language leaning is a different thing and critical thinking should not be taught along with it. They feel less anxious to improve their critical thinking skills.

Challenges and Opportunities

The findings of student's interviews revealed that students recognize critical thinking activities as challenging. While this can be intimidating for some, others view these challenges as opportunities for growth and skill development. Some of the students were of the perceptions that critical thinking activities are complex and difficult to take part in as they were not trained from the start of their schooling. They claimed that they were forced to develop critical thinking skills at university level in order to face the challenges of real life which is now challenging for them to overcome as they are not habitual of involving themselves critical thinking tasks. Some students may express frustrations and anxieties related to critical thinking tasks. They might describe feeling overwhelmed or struggling to meet the expectations of such activities. However, Students reveal various motivations for engaging in critical thinking activities. Some are motivated by a desire to excel academically, while some of the students think that critical thinking skills is important and beneficial for future career prospects or cultural enrichment.

Assessment Concerns

The responses of the participants revealed that students express concerns about how their critical thinking skills are assessed. They may worry about grading criteria and whether their efforts will be properly recognized and rewarded. Students have expressed a desire to further improve their critical thinking abilities within the context of studying English. They have also emphasized the significance of maintaining exposure to information that is both demanding and unfamiliar, as well as the requirement for more instruction and practice in the application of critical thinking to language. The students were of the perceptions that they teachers should design a rubric or set parameters for measuring student's critical thinking skills. Majority of the students reported that teachers don't have proper criteria for measuring student's critical thinking skills that discourage student's to actively participate in critical thinking enhancement activities. Therefore, teachers should be trained to assess student's critical thinking in order to encourage students to actively participate in critical thinking development activities.

These are the key themes that may emerge from teachers' and students' perceptions of critical thinking skills in language classes. From both the teacher and student perspectives, these themes offer insight on the significance, problems, and various levels of motivation and interest connected with the development of critical thinking skills in language learning. These additional themes provide a more thorough view of teachers' and students' opinions of critical thinking skills in language classrooms. They provide insights into the tactics, problems, and motivations surrounding critical thinking skill development from both the teacher and student perspectives.

Discussion

From the analysis of the findings, it is found out that teachers and students have different perceptions for critical thinking skills in language classrooms. The teachers were of the perceptions that there are various strategies that teachers use such as Socratic questioning, discussion, problem based learning and collaborative learning etc. This distinct pedagogical tactics is often referenced by educators as a means to foster the development of critical thinking skills. This aligns with the findings of Kuhn (1999). Kuhn (1999) stated that different studies have discussed the effectiveness of using particular strategies to develop critical thinking skills.

The findings also align with the research conducted by Choy and Cheah (2009), which suggests that teachers recognize the significance and benefits of critical thinking in their students' learning process. However, they also encounter challenges in fully comprehending its intricate nature. Nevertheless, the teachers who were interviewed frequently articulated prerequisites and conditions for fostering critical thinking. These included emphasizing the significance of a dialogical learning environment, an adequate amount of instructional time, and the presence of proficient language skills among students

According to Yang, Newby, & Bill (2005), scholarly investigations have demonstrated that educators employ various instructional techniques, such as Socratic questioning, problem-based learning, and inquiry-based approaches, in order to cultivate the development of critical thinking abilities among students. Numerous educators articulate apprehensions pertaining to the limitations imposed by curriculum limits and the utilization of standardized testing. The aforementioned themes highlight the conflict between educational benchmarks and the inclination to emphasize the development of critical thinking skills within language instructional settings, as evidenced by prior research ((Halpern 1998).

Most of the teachers recognize the intricate nature of evaluating critical thinking abilities. They view that grading open-ended, qualitative replies poses challenges and that educators frequently seek more nuanced evaluation approaches is supported by research ((Evens et al., (2013) . Many teachers emphasize the significance of continuous professional development in order to strengthen their capacity to facilitate critical thinking in the classroom (Shah & Naveed, 2020). The necessity of providing educators with training and resources in this area has been emphasized in previous scholarly works (Marie Evens 2014). The findings of the study imply the significance of facilitating teacher's comprehension of the significance of regularly integrating critical thinking into their instructional practices.

This assertion is substantiated by Lauer (2005), who observed that facilitating the development of critical thinking skills among educators and students within the educational setting can provide a formidable obstacle. Lauer (2005) argues that in order to provide a seamless progression of learning while also fostering the development of

critical thinking skills, it is imperative to integrate instructional strategies specifically designed to cultivate critical thinking among students.

This study implies that the majority of teachers hold the perception that their activities were engaging for students. Additionally, they perceived their personal satisfaction with the classes they instruct as a reliable predictor. Furthermore, the students' individual efforts in preparing for the subject matter would enhance their capacity for critical thinking. It is imperative to analyze the assertions made by Horowitz (1989) regarding the divergence between a teacher's perspectives and those of their students. The students within the educational institution may possess various viewpoints when examining a particular scenario. Nevertheless, the findings do not appear to provide evidence in favor of Horowitz's assertion.

There exists a range of perspectives among students regarding the correlation between language acquisition and critical thinking. Some of the students perceived the process of language acquisition as a mere act of memory, whilst others recognize the significant contribution of critical thinking in attaining competency in a language. This perspective is consistent with the conclusions drawn from previous scholarly investigations (Hansen & Salemi (2012, p.98). the findings of the study indicated that students exhibit a wide range of incentives when participating in activities that promote critical thinking.

The incentives identified in this study encompass academic achievement, chances for future careers, and cultural enrichment, as supported by scholarly studies on student motivations (Verburgh 2013). Most of the students in this study articulated their frustrations and fears concerning critical thinking activities, which aligns with the conclusions drawn from previous research on student apprehensions when confronted with intricate cognitive demands (Soden (2000).). The significance of peer collaboration in the cultivation of critical thinking abilities is underscored by students. The existing body of research substantiates this viewpoint by emphasizing the positive impact of group discussions and peer interactions on students' cognitive abilities, particularly in terms of critical thinking and problem-solving (Taylor (2002)).

Conclusion

According to the findings of this research, university students, in general, believe that the development of critical thinking skills is vital and advantageous to the process of acquiring proficiency in the English language. They do, however, acknowledge the difficulties that are connected with the application of critical thinking, particularly in circumstances that need a more sophisticated level of language. It is abundantly clear that the educational setting and the methods of instruction play a significant effect in determining the perspectives and capabilities of students. Because of this, more emphasis needs to be paid to the significance of language initiatives that are thoughtfully developed and stimulate critical thinking. Due to the large range of student perspectives, it is clear that customized guidance and direction are required to address individual variances in self-perception and skill development.

In short, it is widely recognized by the majority of teachers of English in higher education institutions that fostering students' ability to engage in critical thinking is a vital part of imparting English language learning. In the educational setting, many instructional strategies are utilized to foster critical thinking skills and highlight the advantages of such skills for students' language proficiency and cognitive growth. Furthermore, a diverse range of instructional methodologies is employed by teachers to cultivate critical thinking skills within the classroom setting. Despite the challenges and

constraints, they encounter, teachers demonstrate unwavering dedication to their profession and actively seek avenues for professional development to enhance their pedagogical approaches. The diverse range of perspectives held by educators highlights the crucial need for continuous encouragement and assistance in this pursuit.

The cultivation of critical thinking skills holds significant importance in the field of English language learning. The present study examined the contemporary status of critical thinking abilities among students learning English as a second language. It noted the obstacles encountered by learners as well as teachers while emphasizing the approaches utilized to cultivate these cognitive capabilities. The results show the necessity for a more intentional and methodical use of critical thinking within the realm of English language learning. This paper provides a valuable resource for teachers and those with an ownership stake in enhancing the cultivation of critical thinking abilities in English language learners. The ultimate goal is to provide these students with the necessary skills to be successful in a constantly shifting global context.

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