

CRITICAL READING AND WRITING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Edited by

Semin Kazazoğlu

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Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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This book first published 2022

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-8385-6

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-8385-6

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FOREWORD

“To succeed in the 21st century, all students will need to perform to high standards and acquire mastery of rigorous core subject material. All students also will need to gain the cognitive and social skills that enable them to deal with the complex challenges of our age.”

(Rebecca Stobaugh, 2013)

The phrase “critical thinking” was first used to define an educational purpose by American philosopher John Dewey (1910), who mainly called it “reflective thinking.” A dominant prescription of foreign language teaching at the time was to hear before speaking, speak before reading, and read before writing. Until recently, reading and writing skills were not considered as a learning experience requiring active thinking. Nowadays, the goal of teaching these skills is to help students form the habit of critical thinking. Accordingly, they are to undergo the intense mental activity involved in selection, organization, and production. For these reasons, it may be claimed that the combination of thought and activity is more suited to 21st century approaches to teaching reading and writing.

It follows that contemporary linguists suggest that teaching how to write essays is bound to include judging various written pieces on a logical basis in an involved process, recognizing the relevant similarities or differences between facts, looking for fallacies, finding sounder evidence in an argument, and making assertions. Reading also requires the skill of critical thinking, that is, the ability to solve the problem of unlocking meanings by adding together a number of associations and interpretations. Developing the critical thinking skills of students is one way of bringing out creativity. Since creativity is also a cognitive term covering tasks that involve generating new ideas and unique solutions to a problem. Indeed, it is more significant to talk about creativity skills than the four skills that are prominent in learning a foreign language. Accordingly, educators should find ways to identify the mindsets of critical thinkers and provide ways to improve critical thinking and creativity.

This book aims to point out the logical relationships between reading and writing and to suggest some approaches and activities that develop the particular critical thinking abilities of 21st century students. Given that critical thinking is a relatively new term in the domain of teaching languages, educators should give more attention to finding the “most useful” and “most common” ways of teaching it.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Semin KAZAZOĞLU
İstanbul, Turkey
20.02.2022

CHAPTER I

PROMOTING CRITICAL THINKING IN EFL CLASSES

SEMIN KAZAZOĞLU

“Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.”

Francis Bacon, English essayist

Preliminary Questions:

1. Why is critical thinking necessary in language learning?
2. How can literature foster critical thinking?
3. What is the distinction between reading and critical reading?
4. What are the phases of critical writing?

Introduction

Formal education is supposed to assist the growth of autonomous and critical thinkers who would eventually become self-conscious and reflective individuals. According to Walker & Kettler (2020), critical thinking involves “analyzing arguments, evaluating arguments and claims for aspects such as plausibility and relevance, drawing conclusions about the claims, constructing one’s own arguments, and reflecting on one’s own reasoning” (p. 22). However, there is some debate as to whether critical thinking is intuitive or needs to be taught. Abrami et al., (2008) suggest that instructional approaches can influence the outcomes of critical thinking and that students often need instruction, scaffolding, and different contexts to develop this skill. Walsh and Paul (1988) assert that critical thinking does not automatically come with maturity and it should be taught to be improved, either as a process and/or in context. Literature is one such context where the reader tries to

understand an author's vision as they meet the focal characters, discover new settings, and begin to interpret the story in their own mind. This exploration encourages innovative and systematic problem-solving along with the ability to identify various viewpoints and approaches (Facione, 2007).

Integrating literature into language learning dates to the beginning of the 20th century and significant bodies of research continue to affirm the benefits of doing so (Carter, 2007; Carter & Long, 1991; Hall, 2005; Kim, 2004; Maley, 2001; Paran, 2008; Parkinson & Reid-Thomas, 2000; Vandrick, 2003). The approach is thought to foster critical literacy (Thompson, 2000) and critical thinking (Jones & Ratchcliff, 1993; Gajdusek & van Dommelen 1993; Diaz-Santos 2000). In the same vein, Langer (1997) states that literature provides a locus for reflection, interpretation, connection, and exploration. Hall (2000) defines a communicative and humanistic role for literature in language teaching settings. Paran (2008), claims that language learning involves not only language but also training and education as well. At the heart of this triangle, the notion of critical thinking sparkles like a mid-point that provides all possibilities of learning at ease. In this frame, literature is a medium of critical thinking that enables students to acquire language through interpretation, exploration, and comprehension. Lazar (1993) states that it facilitates understanding of the human condition and fosters linguistic and cognitive skills. However, Duff and Maley (1990, p. 6) emphasize the importance of "linguistic, methodological, and motivational" criterion for successful integration of literature into the language class.

Literature Review

Linking Critical Thinking and Reading

When decoding the meaning of a text the reader reaches for background information or "shared knowledge" sufficient to aid their comprehension. The same is necessary for critical analysis. In this vein, Umberto Eco (cited in Hendricks, 1981) observes that readers infer things about a text through intertextual frames. In his view "no text is read independently of the reader's experience of other texts" (p. 21). Similarly, Tomasek (2009) explains that "good readers connect their past experiences with a text:

interpreting, evaluating, and considering alternative responses or interpretations” (p. 127). Eco describes an open-closed distinction for texts whereby “open ones constitutes a flexible type of which many tokens can be legitimately realized whereas closed texts cannot sustain such interpretation” (p. 372). Bernstein (1972) employs the same notion for speech, defining elaborated code as “universalistic, explicit, and less tied to a given context”; whereas a restricted one is “particularistic, implicit, and tied to a given context” (Hendricks, 1981, p. 372).

Although seen as an “alternative way of reading”, McDonald (2004), believes that critical reading requires a more cognitive and detailed analysis. Larkin’s 2017 study identified items used in survey questions that differentiated critical reading strategies from comprehension-based ones, see Table 1 for a comparison of these approaches.

Table 1. Survey Question Items Divided by Critical and Comprehension-Based Reading Strategies

Critical Reading Strategies	Comprehension-Based Reading Strategies
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distinguish main and supporting ideas. 2. Evaluate the credibility of the claims. 3. Make relevant inferences about the text. 4. Make judgments about how the text is argued. 5. Question the author's assumptions. 6. Decide how to use the text for your own study. 7. Identify rhetorical devices. 8. Identify power relations. 9. Evaluate the quality of the text. 10. Distinguish between fact and opinion. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preview a text. 2. Scan a text for specific information. 3. Recognize topics in the text. 4. Locate topic sentences. 5. Guess the meaning of unknown words from the context. 6. Skim a text for the overall idea. 7. Paraphrase parts of a text in your own words. 8. Read faster by reading phrases rather than single words. 9. Reread a text for deeper understanding. 10. Understanding the relationship of ideas by recognizing the structure of a text.

(Adapted from Larkin, 2017, p. 60).

Pardede (2007) suggests that “unlike basic literal comprehension, critical reading requires the reader to interact with the writer. The reader must understand the writer’s message, question it, and react to it in terms of his own knowledge and experience ”(p. 5). McLaughlin & DeVogd (2004) claim that in the process of critical reading, “the readers have the power to analyze the hidden message”. According to Angeletti (1990), integration of reading and writing, class discussions, and the use of questioning are effective ways of improving critical skills. Novels, particularly classic ones, provide different stories and perspectives that encourage students to practice higher level thinking skills.

Manarin et al (2015) assert that critical reading requires the following skills:

- Sifting through various forms of rhetoric
- Recognizing power relations
- Questioning assumptions
- Engaging with the world
- Constructing new possibilities (p. 6).

According to Tomasek (2009) students can critically read in a variety of ways as follows:

- When they raise vital questions and problems from the text,
- When they gather and assess relevant information and then offer plausible interpretations of that information,
- When they test their interpretations against previous knowledge or experience and current experience,
- When they examine their assumptions and the implications of those assumptions, and
- When they use what they have read to communicate effectively with others or to develop potential solutions to complex problems.

Clearly, the reader’s task is to perceive what is objectively present and to do so in a pragmatic way that affords opportunity to broaden their own sense and intuition. Thus, critical reading can be practiced by observing the following criteria:

1. Having necessary background information for the relevant topic
2. Skilled at using clues for making relevant inferences
3. Recognizing foreshadowing ideas
4. Having intertextual competence
5. Distinguishing facts and opinions
6. Using rhetorical devices skillfully
7. Following traces for the references
8. Marking the propositions
9. Identifying the tone of the writer
10. Recognizing speech-acts

Wallace and Wary (2011) offer a useful survey that students can use to evaluate their critical approach and practices in relation to reading and producing academic texts, see Table 2, along with questions they can ask during critical reading such as:

- A Why am I reading this?
- B What are the authors trying to do in writing this?
- C What are the authors saying that is relevant to what I want to find out?
- D How convincing is what the authors are saying?
- E In conclusion, what use can I make of this?

Table 2. Linking a critical approach to your reading with a self-critical approach to writing

How critical a reader and self-critical a writer are you already?

A Tick each element of critical reading in the list below that you already employ when you read academic literature.

B Tick each element of self-critical writing that you already employ when you write. (You may find it helpful to look at assessors' comments on your past work, to see what they have praised and criticized).

C Then add up the number of ticks for each column, and consider your response to our statement at the end of the exercise.

Element of critical reading	Element of self-critical writing
When reading an academic text:	When writing an academic text:
1. I try to work out what the authors are aiming to achieve;	1. I state clearly what I am trying to achieve;
2. I try to work out the structure of the argument;	2. I create a logical structure for my account, to help me develop my argument and to help the reader to follow it
3. I try to understand the main claims made;	3. I clearly state my main claims;
4. I adopt a skeptical stance towards the authors' claims, checking that they are supported by appropriate evidence;	4. I support my claims with appropriate evidence, so that a critical reader will be convinced;
5. I assess the backing for any generalizations made;	5. I avoid making sweeping generalizations;
6. I check how the authors define their key terms and whether they are consistent in using them;	6. I define the key terms employed in my account, and use the terms consistently
7. I consider what underlying values may be guiding the authors and influencing their claims;	7. I make explicit the values guiding what I write;
8. I keep an eye open mind, willing to be convinced;	8. I assume that my readers can be convinced, provided I can adequately support my claims

9. I look out for instances of irrelevant or distracting material, and the absence of necessary material;	9. I sustain focus throughout my account, avoid irrelevancies and digressions, and include everything relevant;
10. I identify any literature sources to which the authors refer, that I may need to follow up.	10. I ensure that my referencing in the text and the reference list is complete and accurate so that my readers are in a position to check my sources.
Total number of ticks:	Total number of ticks:

The more ticks you have for both columns, the further you have already progressed in becoming a critical reader and self-critical writer. Look back at any items that you have not ticked. Consider how you might incorporate these elements of critical reading and self-critical writing into your habitual approach to study (Wallace & Wray, 2011, p. 13).

Critical Thinking and Writing in the EFL Context

The distinction between writing and critical writing can be made neither through its content nor its form but the discursive argument it conveys. Writing is often decontextualized. Therefore, writers are bound to “make inferences about the relevant knowledge possessed by the reader, and decide what to include and what to omit from their text ”(Nunan, 1991, p. 86). Traditionally, writing is generally seen as a three-stage process: pre-writing, writing, and rewriting. However, writing in the 21st century is increasingly the product of critical reading. Paul and Elder (2007) suggest that “writing which is not based on critical reading might well be merely personal and exist without either context or wider purpose. It may include ‘prejudices, biases, myths and stereotypes’” (p. 40). Indeed, “CT in EFL is not born out of research, literature or global trends. It is born out of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001), in which an independent user (B1-B2) develops a clear

argument, expanding and supporting his/her points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples, constructs a chain of reasoned argument, explains a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options (Marin & Pava, 2017). Accordingly, students' writing is being evaluated in terms of their CT skills such as:

- giving reasons for supporting or being against a particular point of view,
- obtaining information, ideas and opinions from different sources,
- evaluating alternative proposals, making and responding to hypotheses,
- participating actively in routine and non-routine discussions,
- speculating about causes, consequences and hypothetical situations,
- helping along the progress of work by inviting others to join in, say what they think,
- negotiating in order to reach a goal, coping linguistically to resolve a dispute,
- evaluating different ideas and solutions to a problem, synthesizing information and arguments from a number of sources,
- correcting slips and errors if he/she becomes conscious of them or if they have led to misunderstandings, making notes of “favorite mistakes” and consciously monitoring speech for them, correcting errors in use of tenses and expressions that lead to misunderstandings,
- using circumlocution and paraphrasing to cover gaps in vocabulary and structure, defining the features of something concrete for which he/she cannot remember the word, planning what is to be said and the means to say it, considering the effect on the recipient/s, rehearsing and trying out new combinations and expressions, inviting feedback (p. 85).

Critical Reading and Writing Activities

Critical thinking should also be examined as apart and parcel of EFL reading and writing, asides from specific language content. In this frame Stobaugh (2013) states that critical thinking is a skill that “prepares students to adapt to changing circumstances in the 21st century ”(p. 4) and that “it is easy to

define what critical thinking is not—a memorized answer or reactive thinking. Critical thinking is not a simplistic recalling of previous information or illogical and irrational thinking’’. Therefore, she considers a weak critical thinker as being incapable of comprehending, assessing, finding the relevant parts of the problem, focusing on minor details and providing bootless solutions.

The following activities may be given as an example for developing the critical reading skills of language students.

Activity 1: While reading a book, students examine the concept of theme in the text. To assess their understanding of theme, students describe a fairy tale that has a similar theme or, in a multiple-choice format, select the title of another text they have already read that has a similar theme.

Activity 2: When writing a research paper, students could create a list of sources that provide support for their thesis. In order to complete this task, students must be able to read each source and identify if it provides relevant information to support the thesis. Many sources may be discarded before the final list of sources is determined.

Activity 3: In *Charlotte’s Web*, there are two clearly different points of view—the farmer’s and the pig’s. Students can pinpoint the perspectives and biases in the text.

Activity 4: When studying historical figures or characters in a novel, students could identify who would be their friend based on criteria.

Activity 5: Students rewrite the ending of a book by brainstorming possible endings or listing various modern-day adaptations to an older text.

Activity 6: As an employee of a publishing company, select one book that was published fifty or more years ago by your company but is not widely known and would be appealing to the young adult market today. Prepare a persuasive presentation to convince the editor to reprint it (Stobaugh, 2013).

Activity 7: Illustrations may be used as an authentic tool for promoting critical skills:

Using the painting as a reference answer the following questions:



A Sunday on La Grande Jatte — 1884, by Georges Seurat
 (<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/27992/a-sunday-on-la-grande-jatte-1884>)

1. What emotions do you have when you look at the painting or photograph?
2. What details most appeal to you?
3. What do you think happened at the time and place this scene was captured? Why?

SENSE	Jot Down Descriptive Adjectives for Each of these Senses Based on Your Response to the Painting or Photograph.
Touch	
Taste	
Sight (colors, objects, or people)	
Sound	
Smell	

7. What is the meaning or insight this image conveys to you?
8. What details in the image support your interpretation?

Activity 8: Identify the angles of vision in the following excerpts.

- a) Suddenly he felt himself jerked off his feet, shoved against something hard. The garage Wall. Then they were searching him
“Hey, listen”

“Okay, stand up. What were you doing-casing that house over there?”

“Casing nothing. There is a girl”

“Some kind of nut, huh?”

He was sweating and laughing and clearing his throat. He remembered when Mr. Creel had grabbed him for stealing comics and he figured he’s wind up in jail, and this time-oh, lord- maybe he would. And who would believe him? And if they did, it would be worse.

- b) The boy held himself against the cool cement wall of the garage. A car with parking lights on turned the corner and rolled to a stop in front of her house. A cop stepped out, another from the passenger side. The boy held his breath. They started across the Street; it was too late to slip away. He stood up straight and walked casually towards them. “Evening officers”.

Activity 9: Read the following excerpts. What makes “excerpt b” different from “excerpt a”? Explain in ONE Word.

- a) When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house, which no one save an old manservant- a combined gardener and cook- had seen in at least ten years.

- b) Old Emily Grierson dropped dead at last, and the whole town invited themselves to her funeral. The men kind of liked the old lady-once she was really something! The women mostly just wanted to snoop through her house- nobody but the guy who cooked for her and weeded her garden had been inside for maybe ten years.

Activity 10: Read the following story (Desiree’s Baby by Kate Chopin) carefully and answer the questions.

- a) **The point of view used in the story is.....**
- b) **What is the significance of the heading? Explain in one sentence.**

Activity 11: The following excerpt has 2 different functions. Identify them and say what functions it serves.

“Oh, Armand is the proudest father in the parish, I believe, chiefly because it is a boy, to bear his name; though he says not, that he would have loved a girl as well. But I know it isn’t true. I know he says that to please me. And mamma,” she added, drawing Madame Valmonde’s head down to her, and speaking in a whisper, “he hasn’t punished one of them- not one of them- since baby is born. Even Negrillon, who have burnt his leg that might be rest from work- he only laughed and said Negrillon was a great scamp. Oh, mamma, I’m so happy, it frightens me”.

Activity 12: Explain the ultimate irony in the story in one sentence. What kind of irony is it?

Activity 13: Explain Armand’s character briefly by drawing on evidence in the story.

Desiree's Baby

Kate Chopin

As the day was pleasant, Madame Valmonde drove over to L'Abri to see Desiree and the baby.

It made her laugh to think of Desiree with a baby. Why, it seemed but yesterday that Desiree was little more than a baby herself; when Monsieur in riding through the gateway of Valmonde had found her lying asleep in the shadow of the big stone pillar. The little one awoke in his arms and began to cry for "Dada." That was as much as she could do or say. Some people thought she might have strayed there of her own accord, for she was of the toddling age.

The prevailing belief was that she had been purposely left by a party of Texans, whose canvas-covered wagon, late in the day, had crossed the ferry that Coton Mais kept, just below the plantation. In time Madame Valmonde abandoned every speculation but the one that Desiree had been sent to her by a beneficent Providence to be the child of her affection, seeing that she was without child of the flesh. For the girl grew to be beautiful and gentle, affectionate and sincere, — the idol of Valmonde.

It was no wonder, when she stood one day against the stone pillar in whose shadow she had lain asleep, eighteen years before, that Armand Aubigny riding by and seeing her there, had fallen in love with her. That was the way all the Aubignys fell in love, as if struck by a pistol shot. The wonder was that he had not loved her before; for he had known her since his father brought him home from Paris, a boy of eight, after his mother died there. The passion that awoke in him that day, when he saw her at the gate, swept along like an avalanche, or like a prairie fire, or like anything that drives headlong over all obstacles.

Monsieur Valmonde grew practical and wanted things well considered: that is, the girl's obscure origin. Armand looked into her eyes and did not care. He was reminded that she was nameless. What did it matter about a name

when he could give her one of the oldest and proudest in Louisiana? He ordered the corbeille from Paris, and contained himself with what patience he could until it arrived; then they were married. Madame Valmonde had not seen Desiree and the baby for four weeks. When she reached L'Abri she shuddered at the first sight of it, as she always did. It was a sad looking place, which for many years had not known the gentle presence of a mistress, old Monsieur Aubigny having married and buried his wife in France, and she having loved her own land too well ever to leave it. The roof came down steep and black like a cowl, reaching out beyond the wide galleries that encircled the yellow stuccoed house. Big, solemn oaks grew close to it, and their thick-leaved, far-reaching branches shadowed it like a pall. Young Aubigny's rule was a strict one, too, and under it his negroes had forgotten how to be gay, as they had been during the old master's easy-going and indulgent lifetime.

The young mother was recovering slowly, and lay full length, in her soft White muslins and laces, upon a couch. The baby was beside her, upon her arm, where he had fallen asleep, at her breast. The yellow nurse woman sat beside a window fanning herself.

Madame Valmonde bent her portly figure over Desiree and kissed her, holding her an instant tenderly in her arms. Then she turned to the child.

"This is not the baby!" she exclaimed, in startled tones. French was the language spoken at Valmonde in those days.

"I knew you would be astonished," laughed Desiree, "at the way he has grown. The little cochon de lait! Look at his legs, mamma, and his hands and fingernails, — real finger-nails. Zandrine had to cut them this morning. Isn't it true, Zandrine?"

The woman bowed her turbaned head majestically, "Mais si, Madame."

"And the way he cries," went on Desiree, "is deafening. Armand heard him the other day as far away as La Blanche's cabin."

Madame Valmonde had never removed her eyes from the child. She lifted it and walked with it over to the window that was lightest. She scanned the

baby narrowly, then looked as searchingly at Zandrine, whose face was turned to gaze across the fields.

“Yes, the child has grown, has changed,” said Madame Valmonde, slowly, as she replaced it beside its mother. “What does Armand say?”

Desiree’s face became suffused with a glow that was happiness itself.

“Oh, Armand is the proudest father in the parish, I believe, chiefly because it is a boy, to bear his name; though he says not, — that he would have loved a girl as well. But I know it isn’t true. I know he says that to please me. And mamma,” she added, drawing Madame Valmonde’s head down to her, and speaking in a whisper, “he hasn’t punished one of them — not one of them — since baby is born. Even Negrillon, who pretended to have burnt his leg that he might rest from work — he only laughed, and said Negrillon was a great scamp. Oh, mamma, I’m so happy; it frightens me.”

What Desiree said was true. Marriage, and later the birth of his son had softened Armand Aubigny’s imperious and exacting nature greatly. This was what made the gentle Desiree so happy, for she loved him desperately. When he frowned she trembled, but loved him. When he smiled, she asked no greater blessing of God. But Armand’s dark, handsome face had not often been disfigured by frowns since the day he fell in love with her.

When the baby was about three months old, Desiree awoke one day to the conviction that there was something in the air menacing her peace. It was at first too subtle to grasp. It had only been a disquieting suggestion; an air of mystery among the blacks; unexpected visits from far-off neighbors who could hardly account for their coming. Then a strange, an awful change in her husband’s manner, which she dared not ask him to explain. When he spoke to her, it was with averted eyes, from which the old love-light seemed to have gone out. He absented himself from home; and when there, avoided her presence and that of her child, without excuse. And the very spirit of Satan seemed suddenly to take hold of him in his dealings with the slaves. Desiree was miserable enough to die. She sat in her room, one hot afternoon, in her peignoir, listlessly drawing through her fingers the strands of her long, silky brown hair that hung about her shoulders. The baby, half naked, lay asleep upon her own great mahogany bed, that was like a sumptuous throne,

with its satin-lined half-canopy. One of La Blanche's little quadroon boys — half naked too — stood fanning the child slowly with a fan of peacock feathers. Desiree's eyes had been fixed absently and sadly upon the baby, while she was striving to penetrate the threatening mist that she felt closing about her. She looked from her child to the boy who stood beside him, and back again; over and over. "Ah!" It was a cry that she could not help; which she was not conscious of having uttered. The blood turned like ice in her veins, and a clammy moisture gathered upon her face.

She tried to speak to the little quadroon boy; but no sound would come, at first.

When he heard his name uttered, he looked up, and his mistress was pointing to the door. He laid aside the great, soft fan, and obediently stole away, over the polished floor, on his bare tiptoes. She stayed motionless, with gaze riveted upon her child, and her face the picture of fright.

Presently her husband entered the room, and without noticing her, went to a table and began to search among some papers which covered it. "Armand," she called to him, in a voice which must have stabbed him, if he was human. But he did not notice. "Armand," she said again. Then she rose and tottered towards him. "Armand," she panted once more, clutching his arm, "look at our child. What does it mean? Tell me."

He coldly but gently loosened her fingers from about his arm and thrust the hand away from him. "Tell me what it means!" she cried despairingly. "It means," he answered lightly, "that the child is not white; it means that you are not white."

A quick conception of all that this accusation meant for her nerved her with unwonted courage to deny it. "It is a lie; it is not true, I am white! Look at my hair, it is brown; and my eyes are gray, Armand, you know they are gray. And my skin is fair," seizing his wrist. "Look at my hand; whiter than yours, Armand," she laughed hysterically.

"As white as La Blanche's," he returned cruelly; and went away leaving her alone with their child.

When she could hold a pen in her hand, she sent a despairing letter to Madame Valmonde.

“My mother, they tell me I am not white. Armand has told me I am not white. For God’s sake tell them it is not true. You must know it is not true. I shall die. I must die. I cannot be so unhappy, and live.”

The answer that came was brief:

“My own Desiree: Come home to Valmonde; back to your mother who loves you. Come with your child.”

When the letter reached Desiree she went with it to her husband’s study, and laid it open upon the desk before which he sat. She was like a stone image: silent, white, motionless after she placed it there.

In silence he ran his cold eyes over the written words. He said nothing. “Shall I go, Armand?” she asked in tones sharp with agonized suspense.

“Yes, go.”

“Do you want me to go?”

“Yes, I want you to go.”

He thought Almighty God had dealt cruelly and unjustly with him; and felt, somehow, that he was paying Him back in kind when he stabbed thus into his wife’s soul. Moreover, he no longer loved her, because of the unconscious injury she had brought upon his home and his name. She turned away like one stunned by a blow, and walked slowly towards the door, hoping he would call her back.

“Good-bye, Armand,” she moaned.

He did not answer her. That was his last blow at fate.

Desiree went in search of her child. Zandrine was pacing the sombre gallery with it.

She took the little one from the nurse's arms with no word of explanation, and descending the steps, walked away, under the live-oak branches. It was an October afternoon; the sun was just sinking. Out in the still fields the negroes were picking cotton.

Desiree had not changed the thin white garment nor the slippers which she wore. Her hair was uncovered and the sun's rays brought a golden gleam from its Brown meshes. She did not take the broad, beaten road which led to the far-off plantation of Valmonde. She walked across a deserted field, where the stubble bruised her tender feet, so delicately shod, and tore her thin gown to shreds. She disappeared among the reeds and willows that grew thick along the banks of the deep, sluggish bayou; and she did not come back again. Some weeks later there was a curious scene enacted at L'Abri. In the centre of the smoothly swept back yard was a great bonfire. Armand Aubigny sat in the wide hallway that commanded a view of the spectacle; and it was he who dealt out to a half dozen negroes the material which kept this fire ablaze.

A graceful cradle of willow, with all its dainty furbishings, was laid upon the pyre, which had already been fed with the richness of a priceless layette. Then there were silk gowns, and velvet and satin ones added to these; laces, too, and embroideries; bonnets and gloves; for the corbeille had been of rare quality.

The last thing to go was a tiny bundle of letters; innocent little scribbblings that Desiree had sent to him during the days of their espousal. There was the remnant of one back in the drawer from which he took them. But it was not Desiree's; it was part of an old letter from his mother to his father. He read it. She was thanking God for the blessing of her husband's love: —

“But above all,” she wrote, “night and day, I thank the good God for having so arranged our lives that our dear Armand will never know that his mother, who adores him, belongs to the race that is cursed with the brand of slavery.”

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CHAPTER II

HUMANISTIC TRADITION
AND THE MODERN REACTION:
LITERARY THEORY IN ENGLISH FROM THE
RENAISSANCE TO THE POSTMODERN

BARIŞ METE

This chapter is about the evolution of literary criticism and theory in English Literature. It starts with Philip Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry* posthumously published at the end of the sixteenth century. The chapter argues that beginning with this example literary criticism and theory in English follows the Liberal Humanist/Humanistic/Aristotelian tradition until the emergence of the modern reaction in criticism in the second half of the twentieth century in England. Besides, it is pointed out that seventeenth century is marked by John Dryden as the leading literary critic of the time and the first Poet Laureate of England. Dryden proceeds with what Sidney principally initiates in the previous age. In addition, Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Criticism* is one of the most representative works of the humanistic tradition of literary criticism in the eighteenth-century England. Furthermore, Samuel Johnson's Shakespeare criticism of the eighteenth-century England is part of the same Aristotelian tradition of the humanistic school. English Romanticism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century is no exception. And the most critical divergence comes with the avant-garde reaction emerging in the second half of the twentieth century with the influence of continental criticism like structuralism, poststructuralism and postmodernism on English Literature. Therefore, this chapter aims to provide the reader with:

- A perception of the development of how English-Language literary criticism and theory changed and developed.
- Knowledge and understanding of the relationship between criticism and writing in English Literature.

Before reading this chapter

- What is the difference between literary criticism and literary theory?
- Who are the literary critics you know?
- Do you think that every literary critic is a writer who publishes novels/poems/stories?

After reading this chapter

- Why is it Sidney who introduces the Aristotelian tradition into English Literature?
- How do Dryden and Pope extend Sidney's discussions?
- Why does Johnson focus on Shakespeare but at the same time belong to the same argument?
- Why is it surprising that English Romantics are noted for their adherence to the above critics?

1. Introduction

Philip Sidney's (1554-1586) *An Apology for Poetry* is one of the earliest canonical examples of literary criticism and theory written in English at the end of the English Renaissance. It was written in 1580 and posthumously published in 1595 after Sidney's death after the Battle of Zutphen in 1586. Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry* is structured in the form of a legal defence of literature against the moralistic attacks on poetry particularly made by the Puritan minister and playwright Stephen Gosson in his *Schoole of Abuse* published in 1579. In *An Apology for Poetry*, Sidney sadly acknowledges the contemporary situation of poetry claiming that his direction is to form "a pitiful defence of poor poetry, which from almost the highest estimation of learning is fallen to be the laughing-stock of children" (2). Sidney asserts

that those who are against poetry should certainly be objected, for it is an example of thoughtlessness to pursue an intention to abolish poetical works. Sidney strongly believes that poetry is “in the noblest nations and languages that are known, hath been the first light-giver to ignorance, and first nurse, whose milk by little and little enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges” (2).

Canonical literary critics and theorists writing in English after Sidney during the following centuries have either repeated or restated the references Sidney has to the humanistic tradition. It is not only Dryden but also Pope and Johnson who make clear their adherence to the same classical tradition. Moreover, it is unpredictable enough that even English Romanticism acknowledges the unescapable connection with the Aristotelian heritage. Therefore, it might be argued that the mid-twentieth century has initiated the first appropriate reaction to the tradition. Both continental European – particularly French – non-traditional developments in literary theory and the experimentalist arguments of the critics and writers of the time in Britain have generated an enquiry into the mechanism and dynamics of the long-established liberal humanist school.

- Sidney associates literature with learning. He believes that societies where literature is held in high esteem will prosper. Do you agree with him?
- Sidney lived in the English Renaissance. It was a period of interest in art, literature and music. Though it was the Renaissance, how do you think literature was under attack?

2. The Aristotelian Significance

Turning back to Sidney, most of his assertions in *An Apology for Poetry* remind the careful reader of Aristotle’s *Poetics* where the classical philosopher identifies poetry – just like Plato in *The Republic* formerly does – with imitation. Aristotle agrees that the contemporary literary genres are works of imitation, and says, “Now epic poetry and the making of tragedy, and also comedy and dithyrambic poetry ... are all as a whole just exactly imitations” (19). Pursuing the Aristotelian track, Sidney considers that poetry provides man with extensive knowledge, for Aristotle illustrates that

imitation is a process of learning since human beings “produce their first acts of understanding by means of imitation” (22). Aristotle’s interpretation of man’s imitative nature makes a critical claim. We learn when we imitate, and the end of this practice is poetry. According to Aristotle, “imitating is in accord with our nature ... from the beginning those who were naturally disposed toward these things the most, progressing little by little, brought the poetic art into being” (23). Sidney’s references to the classical illustration of the correlation between poetry and learning adequately surface especially when he asserts that in the classical Greece “in any of her manifold sciences be able to show me one book before Musaeus, Homer, and Hesiod, all three nothing else but poets” (2).

Sidney’s defence of poetry occasionally demonstrates the critic’s practical observations about some academic disciplines. One of the most notable is the comparison between history and poetry, for both branches are characteristically the narratives of past experiences. History and poetry are so similar that they look alike, although, as Sidney comments, “[historiographers’] lips sound of things done” (4). Sidney here recites the analogy drawn by Aristotle in *Poetics* between history and poetry. However, his illustration is comparatively limited to the difference in the nature of the two branches. According to Aristotle, “the work of the poet is to speak not of things that have happened but of the sort of things that might happen and possibilities that come from what is likely or necessary” (32). Furthermore, the Aristotelian interpretation provides Sidney with more details of the comparison between history and poetry. Aristotle significantly differentiates between the historian and the poet, “For the historian and the poet differ not by speaking in metrical verse or without meter ... Rather, they differ in this, that the one speaks of things that have happened, but the other of the sort of things that might happen” (32). He concludes with a solid interpretation: “For this reason too, poetry is a more philosophical and more serious thing than history, since poetry speaks more of things that are universal, and history of things that are particular” (32).

Sidney enlarges Aristotle’s comparison between the historian and the poet by adding some more analogies between poetry and other branches of knowledge. He adds a long list of professions – the astronomer, the geometrician, the arithmetician, the musician, the natural philosopher, the

moral philosopher, the lawyer, the historian, the grammarian, the rhetorician, the logician, the physician and the metaphysic – to the Aristotelian illustration. Professions in Sidney’s list require special training and skill. For example, Sidney says, “doth the astronomer look upon the stars ... setteth down what order nature hath taken therein” (7); or “doth the musician ... tell you which by nature agree” (7); or “The lawyer saith what men have determined; the historian what men have done” (7). However, Sidney’s main argument here is that the subject of poetry, in contrast to any other discipline, is nature. In other words, poetry is the straightforward consequence of the poet’s imitation of nature. As a result, as Sidney comments, it is “the poet, disdain[ing] to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow, in effect, into another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew” (7). Sidney devotedly maintains his defence of poetry claiming that there is indeed “no art delivered unto mankind that hath not the works of nature for his principal object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend as they become actors and players, as it were, of what nature will have set forth” (7).

Sidney’s most straightforward reference to Aristotle’s *Poetics* is his definition of poetry as a form of imitation. Sidney first restates what Aristotle originally formulates. He says, “Poesy, therefore, is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word *mimesis*” (9). Different forms of the word ‘mimesis’ are nearly on every page of *Poetics*. Sidney’s contribution to this classical notion is his interpretation of the relationship between the poet and the social and physical environment. Sidney gives most of the responsibility for the artistic creation to the poet. In other words, mimesis, for Sidney, is “a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth; to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture” (9). According to Sidney, the poet imitates in order to recreate. Furthermore, Sidney accords again two familiar purposes to poetry. Sidney’s poet creates “with this end,— to teach and delight” (9). The poet teaches and delights, in Sidney’s terms, on the condition that they “imitate to teach and delight; and to imitate borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or shall be; but range, only reined with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be and should be” (10), which fully corresponds, once again, to the Aristotelian emphasis on

plausibility. Aristotle occasionally emphasises that the tragic performance – from the characters to the representation – should be acceptable to the audience. It is, therefore, “the work of the poet ... to speak not of things that have happened but of the sort of things that might happen and possibilities that come from what is likely or necessary” (32). In addition, for Aristotle, any dramatic change in a tragic performance should be “in accord with what is likely or necessary” (34).

- Sidney must have read Aristotle’s *Poetics*. If it was an English translation, do you wonder who the translator was? A literary critic?
- Similarities between history and poetry are organised thematically in *Poetics*, and Sidney refers to this. Do you know that the modern literary theory discuss the same subject?
- Mimetic representation is one of the most frequently discussed topics in literary theory. Aristotle names it mimesis, which Sidney exactly repeats. What do you think the term connotes?

- Below is an example of how Sidney associates the poet with future and knowledge. The poet is the one who knows and understands the man and the world. Do you think that the period of time in which Sidney lived had contributed to this view?

“But since the authors of most of our sciences were the Romans, and before them the Greeks, let us a little stand upon their authorities, but even so far as to see what names they have given unto this now scorned skill. Among the Romans a poet was called vates, which is as much as a diviner, foreseer, or prophet, as by his conjoined words, vaticinium and vaticinari, is manifest; so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this heart-ravishing knowledge. And so far were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the chanceable hitting upon any such verses great foretokens of their following fortunes were placed.”
(Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, 6)

As the leading literary critic of the time John Dryden’s (1631-1700) *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* is the most remarkable illustration of the same classical tradition in literary criticism and theory in the seventeenth-century

England. Although it is not an attempt to make a coinciding defence of poetry, Dryden's *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* exemplifies exactly the same awareness of the contemporary fragile status of literature as Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry* promotes. Dryden complains about the widespread indifference to literature in the society. Similar to Sidney, Dryden reminds the readers of the distinguished status poetry enjoyed in classical cultures, or, as he names, "those times of writing well" (18). Dryden argues that "though it be found in all ages and all persons ... yet poesy being then in more esteem than now it is, had greater honours decreed to the professors of it" (18-19). The age in which Dryden lives is so different especially in terms of its cultural and intellectual priorities from the classical ages that he illustrates the situation asserting "But now, since the rewards of honour are taken away, that virtuous emulation is turned into direct malice" (19). This artistic and literary negligence is at the same time the consequence of the contemporary writers' inability to set up a resemblance to the accomplishment of the classical poet. As Dryden acknowledges, "to imitate the ancients well, much labour and long study is required; which pains, I have already shewn, our poets would want encouragement to take, if yet they had ability to go through the work" (19).

Dryden bitterly resents having to make a comparison of different times and cultures. He has already recognised that classical poets were incomparably gifted. Therefore, any attempt to make a comparison between the modern and the ancient has to fail at once. But the difference lies in the classic poet's capability to make true observation of life. Dryden points to this feature claiming "Those ancients have been faithful imitators and wise observers of that nature which is so thorn and ill represented in our plays" (19-20). Dryden's severe criticism about the poor character of contemporary English drama obviously echoes the Aristotelian notion of imitation. Aristotle illustrates artistic imitation in terms of an interpretation of the present socio-economic reality. On the condition that the poet succeeds in achieving a careful observation of life his work will be rewarding. This is exactly what the ancient writers initially achieved, for Dryden comments that "they have handed down to us a perfect resemblance of her" (20). According to Dryden, however, his contemporaries have failed to carry out the same performance. Dryden blames them for the fact that "we, like ill copiers, neglecting to look

on, have rendered monstrous, and disfigured” (20). Dryden’s strong attachment to the Aristotelian tradition becomes even more easily discernible when he reminds his contemporaries of the fact that the English dramatists are to be beholden to their classical forebears. According to Dryden, they should never forget “how much [they] are indebted to those [their] masters, and be ashamed to have so ill requited them” (20).

Dryden’s most straightforward reference to the classical tradition is the Aristotelian definition of drama – tragedy in particular – as a prominent literary genre of the ancient critic’s time. This dramatic heritage is so acknowledged in the present literary culture that “all the rules by which we practise the drama at this day ... were delivered to us from the observations which Aristotle made, of those poets, who either lived before him, or were his contemporaries” (Dryden, 20). In addition to this observation, Dryden points out the great significance of Aristotle’s *Poetics* for those who have been studying drama. Nevertheless, as Dryden’s direction is to defend and legitimise English drama, his bitter tone of voice has never faded away. Aristotle initiated the discussion, Dryden says, but “we have added nothing of our own, except we have the confidence to say our wit is better; of which, none boast in this our age, but such as understand not theirs” (20). The rest of the argument is mostly the exact repetition of some principal elements of Aristotle’s illustrations of dramatic art.

The three unities introduce Dryden’s strong adherence to the classical Aristotelian interpretation. He simply suggests that every play should attend to this rule. The unity of time, as Dryden argues, is that “they comprehend in twenty-four hours, the compass of a natural day, or as near as it can be contrived” (20). Dryden claims that the reason for the unity of time is to assure the realistic effect the tragic play should have upon the audience; in other words, it is “that play is to be thought the nearest imitation of nature” (21). As the unity of time refers to a span of a single day the playwright should observe that the action on the stage should never exceed the one-day rule. The poet’s responsibility, Dryden claims, is “to take care that no act should be imagined to exceed the time in which it is represented on the stage; and that the intervals and inequalities of time be supposed to fall out between the acts” (21). Dryden interprets the unity of place as that “that the scene ought to be continued through the play, in the same place where it

was laid in the beginning” (22). As the time of the whole performance is limited to a single day place should accordingly be restricted. This is, at the same time, to ensure that the audience would have the realistic impression that the play should eventually create. Otherwise, “a greater distance will bear no proportion to the shortness of time which is allotted, in the acting, to pass from one of them to another” (Dryden, 22). The unity of action is the “one great and complete action” (Dryden, 23) where there is almost no diversion – mostly in terms of sub-plots – from the main story.

Reinterpreting the three unities for the contemporary reader Dryden strictly suggests that modern English plays should be analysed considering how precisely they attend to this rule. Though the truth is that “few of them would endure the trial” (Dryden, 24), Dryden believes that modern English drama should still seek to achieve the classical perfection. In addition, Dryden directly refers to Aristotle and repeats the parts of a play in terms of the classical vocabulary such as protasis, epitasis, catastasis and catastrophe (27-28). In this terminology, Dryden especially concentrates on catastrophe; and he talks especially about the plot in detail.

- Sidney’s is a defence of poetry that was under attack. Dryden’s stimulus in the seventeenth century is the same. How would you explain this?
- How would you illustrate Dryden’s notion of nature?
- Shakespeare did not follow the three unities. But Dryden insists that playwrights should stick to the rule. How do you think Dryden would explain this?

- Aristotle underscores the significance of realistic representation in dramatic arts (tragedy). Dryden points to the same argument in the quotation below. The question of realistic representation is one of the most frequently debated topics of modern literary theory. How could you comment about this fact?

“I will not deny but, by the variation of painted scenes, the fancy, which in these cases will contribute to its own deceit, may sometimes imagine it several places, with some appearance of probability; yet it still carries the greater likelihood of truth, if those places be supposed so near each

other, as in the same town or city; which may all be comprehended under the larger denomination of one place; for a greater distance will bear no proportion to the shortness of time which is allotted, in the acting, to pass from one of them to another” (Dryden, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 22).

Considered one of the most important literary names of the early eighteenth-century English literary theory Alexander Pope (1688-1744) provides another significant illustration of the Aristotelian tradition in one of his most notable poems, *An Essay on Criticism*. Although Pope’s *Essay* evolves around a number of central terms, nature is one of the most frequently employed terms of all. Instead of the current popular connotation, Pope’s nature largely refers to classical knowledge and wisdom – the Aristotelian notion of truth in particular. Therefore, nature is where Pope’s *Essay on Criticism* practically becomes part of the same classical tradition. Pope says, “Nature to all things fix’d the limits fit” (14), for it not only defines but also checks and supervises the critic. Nature means wisdom, for it wisely shapes human mind. The critic – as well as the poet – should “First follow Nature” (Pope, 16) so that their judgement and understanding could be truly moulded. As long as nature remains to be “the source, and end, and test of art” (Pope, 17), the critic’s judgement would hardly be an inappropriate resolution. Pope associates nature with classical learning so effectively that the ancient cultures “are Nature still, but Nature methodiz’d” (18).

- Although their discussions look alike how would you differentiate between Dryden and Pope?

- According to Pope,
“all were desperate sots and fools
Who durst depart from Aristotle’s rules” (Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 41).

- Do you agree with him?
- How would you explain this stringent perspective?

Eighteenth-century English writer Samuel Johnson's (1709-1784) Shakespeare criticism in his *Preface to Shakespeare* is no exception. Relying on the Aristotelian emphasis on the indispensable importance in dramatic practice of realistic representation Johnson sees Shakespeare as "above all writers, at least above all modern writers" (11). Johnson has come to this decision considering Shakespeare's expertise as a playwright in careful observation and detailed depiction. Shakespeare is "the poet of nature" (Johnson, 11), for he is "the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life" (Johnson, 11). The mirror Shakespeare holds is a reference to the Aristotelian illustration of realistic representation. In addition, Johnson concentrates on the Shakespearean character formation and asserts that his characters have never been artificially constructed personalities. Instead, "they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find" (Johnson, 12). Aristotle underscores that the poet is not a historian; therefore the poet makes up what is believable and probable. Otherwise no tragedy would succeed in achieving the cathartic experience. Similarly, Johnson concludes that "Shakespeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life" (12).

- Johnson's mirror metaphor originally comes from Plato who considers the poet to be an imitator holding a mirror to deceive. How do you think the negative connotations of the mirror have disappeared?

Perhaps the most significant names of the Romantic movement in English Literature, William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and S. T. Coleridge (1772-1834), preserve the same tradition. Although Romanticism promises a powerful break with the mainstream literary theory and practice, both Wordsworth and Coleridge recognise what earlier English critics have already practiced. Wordsworth clarifies in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* that his notion of poetry and literary criticism might possibly sound analogous to the previous practice. The names Wordsworth cites are familiar to the reader: "Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope" (2). Wordsworth's poet is "a man speaking to men: a man ... endowed with more lively sensibility" (8). More significantly, Wordsworth defines his poet as a man "who has a greater knowledge of human nature" (8). It becomes inconceivable here not to recall Plato's banishment of the poet from the state

since he accuse the poet of having no proper knowledge of what he is asserting. Wordsworth notion of the poet assures anyone who has the Platonic anxiety of the poet's knowledge of his subject matter.

- How do you think Wordsworth's concept of nature differs from the classical understanding of the term?

Coleridge's definition of poetry owes its essence to Sidney who pays most of his attention to happiness and enjoyment that he believes poetry will bring about. According to Coleridge, poetry promises pleasure; and it delights the reader. Particularly in contrast to truth Coleridge defines poetry as a "composition ... proposing for its immediate object pleasure" (148). In addition to pleasure, Coleridge's poetry provides 'delight' and 'gratification.' If Coleridge's poetry first intends to bring about pleasure, this does not mean that it has essentially been removed from its direction. This is so much so that even works of "Plato ... furnish undeniable proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre, and even without the contradicting objects of a poem" (Coleridge, 149).

- How would you associate Coleridge with the Aristotelian tradition of literary theory?

3. Recent Deviations from Previous Practice

The emergence of structuralist, poststructuralist and postmodern literary theories in the mid-twentieth-century France has marked probably the first proper deviation from the Aristotelian humanistic tradition. All of these movements are non-traditional and anti humanistic schools of thought where artistic realism is particularly under attack. The writers and critics associated with these schools have challenged and questioned the assumption that realistic literature holds a mirror to life and thus makes us better human beings promoting at the same time common values such as empathy, friendship, generosity and goodness. Instead, they believe that traditional literature has created an illusion in which such conditions are but falsely propagated notions among people. What is suggested is the idea that traditional realistic literature is neither global nor universal. Especially after poststructuralist and postmodern discussions, it is no longer possible to talk

about literature itself. All the qualities and characteristics of traditional writing have – although in theory – disappeared. It is believed that not only the writer but also the character, genre, time and space have lost their conventional meaning and significance.

- Plato banishes the poet from the state, for he believes that the poet is an imitator who creates illusions. Poststructuralist and postmodern theorists similarly outlaw realistic literature claiming that realistic representation is just some kind of deception.

When it comes to Britain there has been no major development and the lengthy conventional practice has remained influential until the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century. It is mostly due to this literary atmosphere that criticism of the period is said to be frozen and fixed (Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, 38). In addition, literary theory in English is described as “decidedly thin” (Byatt, 148), and claimed to be written “against a critical lore which has been ... characteristically moral and prescriptive” (Byatt, 148). Nevertheless, although mainstream criticism and theory have tended to be fully concerned with tradition, English Literature has the outstanding modernist experience of the 1920s and the mid-twentieth century has already witnessed the emergence of a similar but less powerful reaction to the tradition. This reaction originally comes from British experimentalist critics of the time who maintain much of the characteristics of the British modernist writers. Since the mid-twentieth century, especially in Britain, encourages new developments not only in literary theory and criticism but also in social and economic policies, literature, for example, “could easily be identified with the ‘coming’ class and thus with a spirit of change in post-war English society” (Onega, 2). In addition, literary tradition is likely to become depleted and unproductive. It is undeniable that “Literary forms do become exhausted ... They are so not because the men who wrote them were inferior poets, but because the form was finished, worn out, exhausted” (Johnson, 167).

Traditional literary theory in English has been so limiting that it simply fails to recognise any form of unconventional discussion. In other words, “the criticism ... was insufficient to deal with contemporary developments” (Bradbury and Palmer, 14). Therefore, it is only recently mainstream

literary criticism has acknowledged that it is no longer possible to reduce critical recognition to conventional arguments. Instead, experimentalist discussions are equally discernible. The mid twentieth-century reaction to the classical understanding of theory is persuasive enough to move canonical criticism into the recognition of alternative opinions. However, this is not an uncomplicated process; and it is not clear either which direction the contemporary theory and writing would be taking. It is asserted that “We tend now ... still to question the existence of a prevailing canon of postmodernist fiction in Britain, one that can be identified and discussed as such” (Todd, 115). Still what indicates the unconventional theories of the coming decades in Britain is the same reaction to the traditional theory. More particularly, “what signals the presence of the postmodern ... is the foregrounding of literary artifice ... and above all the writer’s self-conscious awareness of the fictionality of literature and its status as a construction of language” (Johnston, 139). It is once again the non-traditional theory of literature rising to challenge the rhetoric of traditional realist discussion, or, in other words, “our mimetic assumptions about representation ... assumptions about its transparency and common sense naturalness” (Hutcheon, *Politics*, 32).

Conclusion

Mainstream literary theory in English has been directed and organised by critics who seek to reinvigorate the premises of the Aristotelian humanistic tradition. The first and the most noticeable example of this specific practice is the sixteenth-century poet and scholar Philip Sidney. Sidney’s *An Apology for Poetry* is a defence of literature against the attacks of the Puritan minister Stephen Gosson. As a remarkable representative of the English Renaissance Sidney acknowledges how miserable the contemporary situation of literature is. In order to reinforce the effect of his defence, Sidney goes back to one of the earliest canonical references – Aristotle’s *Poetics*. He reminds his readers of most of the key concepts Aristotle illustrates in his work. Following Aristotle’s starting point of discussion, Sidney uses the original Aristotelian term mimesis and states that literature is imitation. He strongly emphasises that literature is a source of learning, it provides man with knowledge, for Aristotle asserts that we learn when we

imitate. Very much like what Aristotle does, Sidney makes the same comparison between poetry and history only adding a long list of some other professions. Canonical theorists of the following centuries such as Dryden, Pope, Johnson and even Wordsworth and Coleridge have not departed from the tradition Sidney inaugurated. Dryden settles the superiority of the classical culture to the modern and suggests that English dramatists should follow every single rule that Aristotle formulates in *Poetics*. Pope focuses on the term nature since he believes that the term includes all the references to the classical Aristotelian discussion. Johnson's Shakespeare criticism relies on the assumption that Shakespearean character formation complies with Aristotelian emphasis on realistic representation. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge make clear their recognition of canonical tradition. Therefore, perhaps encouraged by English modernism the first divergence comes with the effect of the emergence of structuralist, poststructuralist and postmodern theories in continental Europe.

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CHAPTER III

LITERACY, DIGITAL LITERACY, AGENCY IN RELATION TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

ECE TOPKAYA AND BORA DEMIR

This chapter aims to explain the concepts of literacy, digital literacy, and the significance of agency (i.e., goal-directed, purposeful activities by autonomous actors) in digital literacy with a focus on their connection to English language teaching (ELT) and teacher education. By the end of the chapter, the reader will be able to:

- discuss how the concept of literacy has evolved in relation to literacy theories.
- explain the concepts of digital literacy, digital literacies, digital competence, agency, and critical digital literacy.
- compare some prominent digital literacy frameworks.
- Explain the place of digital literacy education in ELT.
- link learner agency, digital literacy, and critical digital literacy to educational goals.

Preliminary questions:

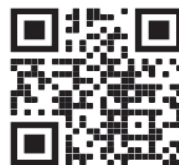
1. Name some essential skills needed in 21st century workplaces, academia, and social life.
2. What is your definition of ‘digital literacy’?
3. Do you think teaching digital literacy is among the goals of ELT? Why/not?
4. How would you describe ‘agency’?

1. Introduction

The goal of ELT is no longer confined to teaching the language. Alongside linguistic objectives comes a full package of knowledge, understanding, and skills that learners are expected to develop in relation to the demands of the 21st century. Problem solving, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, social and civic responsibilities, responsible national and global citizenship, acceptance and understanding of diversity, and interactive use of digital tools are but some of these skills which can be categorized under four broad dimensions: personal skills, social skills, information and knowledge, and digital literacy (Chalkiadaki 2018).

Activity 1

Read Chalkiadaki's study on 21st century skills. What skills are listed under digital literacy? Can you add more to the list?



Due to their significance, 21st-century skills and their instruction have become an integral part of formal education; finding their place in school curricula and all subject areas including language education in many countries. Likewise, they were also identified as one of the foundational components of the Turkish K-12 national curriculum during the most recent curriculum revision, in 2018 (MoNE [Ministry of National Education] 2017). Accordingly, all teachers, including language teachers, are responsible for integrating 21st-century skills instruction into their teaching practice.

Activity 2

Read the press briefing about the latest Turkish K-12 curriculum revision. Discuss the role of 21st century skills in relation to the curriculum revision.



The dimensions of the 21st-century skills mentioned above are interlinked and necessary for individuals to be prepared better to achieve their goals and seize, as well as create, life's opportunities; be they personal, leisure, academic or job-related. Yet, no matter what skills are focused on, cognitive, social, emotional, or technical, they inevitably appear to be based on different forms of literacy, including computer literacy, data literacy, information literacy, web literacy, media literacy, internet literacy and so on, which can be brought under the umbrella term of *digital literacy* (Eshet-Alkalai 2004). Now more than ever, individuals need to communicate and collaborate in digitally networked environments, use digital tools and multimedia, access information and use it creatively, effectively and efficiently, identify problems and find solutions to them (Leu and Kinzer 2000). Therefore, it would not be an overstatement to say that digital literacy is a critical life skill and as such it deserves to be scrutinized in depth.

In an increasingly digitalized world, however, it is usually considered that digital technology controls human life and actions. It is true that there are certain spaces that dictate how we go about with our lives, for instance, many banks now offer online-only services, requiring us to be literate of digital platforms where such services are offered. Yet we need to understand that the digital world “is subject to *human agency* and to human understanding” and technology, as a tool, “does not determine how we must act” (Koltay 2011, 211). This being the case, what needs to be done is to develop our understanding of literacy, and use different digital literacies to engage in meaningful, thoughtful, critical actions which call for knowledge, understanding, and skills development in the digital world.

In this context, the place of English and English language education, and its connection to digital literacy require further probing. As the global lingua franca, English mediates all communication, which is getting more and more digitized and connected on a worldwide scale. On one hand, digital spaces act as language learning contexts offering opportunities for different forms of expressivity, where individuals can employ whatever language resources they have. Language use becomes more fluid in such digital spaces, necessitating the adoption of new modes of literacies, as well as different communication strategies and ways of language use and learning. Thus, the English language curriculum needs to address these new needs of language learners and also help them discover how they can autonomously use the learning opportunities that digital spaces offer (Hafner, Chick, and Jones 2015). On the other hand, digital spaces mediate English language learners' participation in digital environments as digital citizens, which may foster their civic engagement, civic participation, democratic practice, and so on. In other words, individuals may engage with digital media for social and political purposes as well. Therefore, approaching digital literacy just as a foundation skill or as an inevitable part of language learning is not enough. Helping language learners develop a critical mindset, an awareness of how they can practice citizenship -global and local-, and a variety of skills to engage in active social and democratic participation should also be viewed as a goal of English language education.

With these objectives in mind, this chapter aims to raise the awareness of English language teachers in relation to literacy, digital literacy, agency, and their place in language education. It starts with establishing the context in which the connection between the increasingly networked information and communication technologies (ICT) and their impact on literacy is revealed. It then moves onto defining literacy and its ever-changing nature. Expanding on the concepts of digital literacy and human agency, the chapter draws attention to the role of English language teaching in helping to educate the digitally literate, autonomous individuals of the digital age.

2. Current context and problematizing digital literacy

The forms and functions of literacy as well as literacy instruction have always been determined by different contextual factors which are diverse in

nature: “the complexity of economic structures, the forces of oppression and resistance, the dissemination of religious dogma, the essential forms of a certain form of democracy, nation building, international conflict” have been among those factors in different eras (Leu and Kinzer 2000, 111). Today, we live in a media-saturated world. People of all ages are engaged with ICT in various contexts via various tools and devices utilizing different digital skills and competencies for various purposes. Therefore, in today’s world, it is technology and the digitization of communication that seem to influence and shape the kind of literacy and its instruction.

The findings of several studies also support the huge impact of technology upon our lives. For instance, according to the findings of a study carried out in over twenty-one countries in 2018, it is reported that children experience digital technologies and internet use before the age of two (Chaudron, Di Gioia, and Gemo 2018). In a much more recent study by OECD (2020) comparing the digital media and device use among five-year-olds in three countries, namely England, Estonia, and the United States, it is reported that 42% of them use a digital device every day while approximately 83% of the children use it at least once a week. A large scale cross-country research study in 2011 reporting the internet access, online practices, skills, online risks and opportunities for children aged 9-16 in 19 European countries showed that 93% of them go online at least every week with 60% every day or almost every day (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, and Ólafson 2011). In a repeated research study in 2020 (Smahel et al. 2020), “a substantial increase in ...the proportion of smartphone-using children ... compared with the EU Kids Online survey in 2010” (6) was observed as well as the internet use “with 15 to16-year-olds spending almost twice as much time online” (between three to four and a half hours) “than children in the youngest category” (between 74 minutes to nearly three hours) (23). Similarly, according to the latest report by We are Social and Hootsuite (2021), the online behavior of people has changed drastically since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Social media users especially have increased by 13%, reaching a total number of 4.2 billion users globally by early 2021, accompanied by an increase in the time spent on smartphones.

All the above studies reveal information about how people of all ages access and use technology, and what skills and competencies they have/need. Yet,

despite the fact that younger people generally are more exposed to technology and they develop a familiarity with and confidence in using it, digital literacy development is not a natural process, as some studies' findings show. There are differences among individuals, groups, and countries. For instance, in the International Computer and Information Literacy Study of 2018, including pupils from 13 countries from the northern and southern hemispheres, it was found that more than one-third of the pupils underachieved in digital literacy (Frailon, Schulz, Friedman, and Duckworth 2019), with variations in and across countries. In another inter-country study (Hamutoğlu, De Raffaele, Gemikonaklı, and Gezgin 2020), focusing on the level of digital literacy of university students from Malta, the United Kingdom, and Turkey, the participants from Turkey were reported to have a lower score in the cognitive skills needed for digital literacy skills. Another study conducted with the participation of 14,943 public school teachers in Turkey revealed that 39% of the teachers stated that students have insufficient digital literacy skills (EBSAM 2021).

These findings indicate that being exposed to digital technology does not ensure being digitally literate. Obviously, there are several factors impacting the development of digital literacy of individuals: family context, education and income level of household, race, infrastructural and structural issues, and so on. As the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed, there are digital inequalities in internet access and ICT skills, deepening the global learning crisis (see UNICEF-Office of Research 2020). In this context, to combat the digital divide and to help people realize their potential, it is essential we create an educational system to help learners develop not only the necessary digital literacy skills currently required in schools, work, and social life but also life-long learning strategies so that they can continue thriving in digital spaces as autonomous learners who are in control of their own learning.

Last but not least, new digital media have also created a space where diverse ideas and conflicting perspectives are promoted and freely shared. Social media especially helps to provide a “more liberal environment” with the “involvement of individuals from all classes of society without any distinctions such as income level, age, and gender” (Çetinkaya, Şahin, and Kırık 2014, 51). Thus, it can be used as a space where “groups can express their views and lobby for change (in civic, political, cultural or social

spheres)” (Keating and Melis 2017, 879). On the other hand, digital means can also be easily used to manipulate opinions and behaviors. Therefore, people need to be more informed about broader political, social, cultural, economic issues, assume a critical stance, and be empowered to bring about change in their lives, as well as in others. In other words, they need to be transformed from being ‘users’ and ‘consumers’ to ‘critical thinkers’ and ‘critical agents’. In this regard, we have relatively little information to what extent young generation netizens are engaged in digital communication means for civic, social, and political issues. The available research gives contradictory results. For instance, a small-scale study in Turkey (Çetinkaya et al. 2014) showed that only 11.2% of the 160 participants used social media to obtain political and social information. Similarly, another study surveying Turkish university students found a relatively low level of political participation on social media (Balcı and Akar 2020), due to widescale disinterest by youngsters. Yet, a study in Pakistan indicated that a majority of the university students “use social media for political awareness and information” (Ahmad, Alvi, and Ittefaq 2019, 2). In this context, we need to rethink the essential role of education and digital literacy education to prepare individuals for democratic participation, civic responsibilities, political efficacy, and social involvement. ELT as a subject area helping learners develop their communication skills via its real-life content can greatly contribute to attaining these goals.

3. Understanding literacy, its evolving nature, and literacy pedagogies

Before moving to explain the concepts of digital literacy, agency, and the role of ELT in digital literacy education, it is necessary to look at what literacy means and the underlying literacy theories which inform our understanding of digital literacy.

The term *literacy* has been defined in a number of ways and its definitions are continuously evolving. The variety of definitions clearly indicates a growing complexity of the term, making it difficult to determine its scope, and therefore, to arrive at a unified definition (Hanemann 2015).

Traditionally, literacy has been known as the ability to read and write. To this traditional, basic definition, sometimes numeracy is also included. For instance, UNESCO (2017, 2) states that literacy “refers to a set of skills and practices comprising reading, writing and using numbers as mediated by written materials”. This approach to literacy is behaviorist in nature and indicates a set of generic skills that can be taught to anyone regardless of what they bring to the learning environment. As such, literacy is viewed as “neutral, objective, text-based, apolitical, reproductive, standardized and universal” and is related to employment and economic growth (Lupton and Bruce 2010, 5).

Following the behaviorist paradigm and being more utilitarian in purpose, another model of literacy, called ‘functional literacy’, describes literacy as the verbal, numerical and computation skills one needs to develop in order to function effectively in specific contexts (Verhoeven 1997). According to UNESCO (2005), “[a] person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his (or her) group and community and also for enabling him (or her) to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his (or her) own and the community’s development” (22). Functional literacy is significant because it allows people to find employment opportunities, to participate in social life, and to realize their potential; in short, to become confident and competent individuals.

As opposed to the behaviorist perspective, there is also a cognitivist perspective to literacy which is mainly interested in what happens in the head of the individual when learning literacy and therefore classroom pedagogies usually focus on “reading abilities including letter/word recognition, reading automaticity, strategic activities in reading, bottom-up/top-down processing, schema development, and stages of skill learning” (Compton-Lilly 2013, 5).

In a similar vein, UNESCO (2017) states that “everyone needs to have a wide set of skills and competences ... to learn, adapt and participate in social, economic, cultural and civic life” (1) and that literacy can be best described as “a competency: the (cap)ability of putting knowledge, skills, attitudes and values effectively into action when dealing with (handwritten,

printed or digital) text in the context of ever-changing demands” (2). In school-based literacy instruction, this approach is manifested through the inclusion of some skill sets which students are required to learn including, for instance, the ability to read (a message, a newspaper) and to compose different texts (a cv, an academic essay), to build cross-cultural relationships, to develop skills for using technological tools to achieve goals, and to observe and employ ethical norms required in different contexts, etc.

In a fast-changing and ever-evolving world, though, literacy is no longer accepted as a set of skills to be gained at some point in one’s life. The nature of the interactions that individuals experience across a wide range of texts, tools, modalities, and platforms is getting more complex, interconnected, and demanding as they move across different sociocultural and linguistic communities (Jones-Diaz 2007). In short, individuals now need to thrive, succeed, and become more productive across their lifespans. This view is echoed by Hanemann (2015, 295), who asserts that literacy is the “foundation of lifelong learning”. Consequently, as a life skill, an expanded definition of literacy should encompass different literacy activities and various text forms that are produced for particular purposes and functions to be learned and updated as a continuous activity, i.e., as “a lifelong learning process” (Hanemann 2019, 259), at different ages and stages of an individual’s lifespan.

In parallel with the abovementioned conceptualization of literacy, another current trend positions it in a life-wide learning process framework where literacy and numeracy are keys to a successful inclusion and participation in social, cultural, economic, and civic life (UNESCO 2017). For instance, a research study carried out by OECD (2013) in 21 countries in 2013 revealed that literacy skills have far-reaching effects on social outcomes besides the economic ones. The study reports that the workers who can infer complex meanings and evaluate the validity of assertions and arguments earn more than those who can only read shorter texts to find a single piece of information. Furthermore, the study shows that higher literacy and numeracy skills correlate significantly with general health, political processes, volunteering activities, and social trust. Thus, literacy when approached from a life-wide learning perspective has the potential to offer

individuals the means by which they can attain not only individual but also broader social goals (Reder 2020).

The lifelong and life-wide approaches to literacy go beyond the traditional notion of literacy learning confined to the classroom and they shift the provision and development of literacy on policy, strategy, and program levels encompassing formal (school-based), non-formal (community settings such as clubs, reading groups, etc.), and informal (daily activities) learning environments. In this context, “policies should be oriented towards continuously sustaining and improving the development of literacy skills, and also encourage people to learn new skills (i.e., working with digital texts)” (Hanemann 2015, 304). Also, building systems and providing opportunities in individuals’ life spheres; be it school, workplace, home, community or personal spaces where they use print, electronic, or digital literacy skills, means “linking literacy to economic, social and cultural activities that people want or need to develop in their daily lives” (Hanemann 2019, 261).

Furthering the understanding of the situatedness of literacy that connects literacy to context, a major paradigm, the sociocultural one, emphasizes the social and cultural contexts where literacy is practiced (Perry 2012). The sociocultural perspective encompasses a collection of theories including literacy as a social practice, multiliteracies, and critical literacy. The first view, literacy as social practice, also termed as the New Literacy Studies, sees literacy as a social construction that is shaped by “historical, social, cultural and political factors” (Jones-Diaz 2007, 31). Opposing the view that literacy is a set of technical skills, this perspective introduces the idea of ‘literacy practices’, which simply means what people do with literacy in their daily lives. Accordingly, literacy practices are not universal or culturally neutral or value-free or apolitical; contrarily, they “connect to, and are shaped by values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships” (Perry 2012, 54). The underlying pedagogical goal here is to develop “educational practices that move learners to the center of educational practice and enable them to take responsibility more fully for learning and knowledge-building in the communities that they participate in” (Talja and Lloyd 2010, xii). For instance, in the classroom learners may investigate different literacies belonging to different communities of practice (e.g., a photographer, a chef,

or a watchmaker) regarding the specific terminology they use and the values they hold, to understand how literacy is socially-contextualized and what it means to be literate in a specific community.

Activity 3

Watch Pauline Moon delivering a session at British Council Seminars in 2011. She talks about language and literacy as social practice. Note down her answers for the questions she raises:



- What does 'language and literacy as social practice' mean?
- What implications does it have for learning and teaching?
- Why should we embrace 'controversial' topics?

The next theory, multiliteracies, reflects two viewpoints: the first one emphasizes the multiplicity of global communications means and media - visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal- and how they reshape “the way we use language”. The second one points to the fact that diverse cultural and linguistic differences have “become central to the pragmatics of our working, civic, and private lives. Effective citizenship and productive work now require that we interact effectively using multiple languages, multiple Englishes, and communication patterns that are more frequently cross-cultural, community-orientated, and national” (New London Group 1996, 63). Based on these two viewpoints, multiliteracies pedagogy aims to help learners to be more responsive to “cultural and linguistic diversity as a consequence of migration and globally-networked economies” (Mills 2010, 250). Moreover, it also emphasizes the variability of meanings and their representations that change according to cultures, technologies, and so on; therefore, it promotes multimodal literacy. Lastly, it acknowledges the role of learner agency in meaning-making. Each learner brings their own

experiences, practices, languages, and purposes to the process (Cope and Kalantzis 2009).

Literacy, defined and practiced from this socio-cultural perspective, also emphasizes the significance of learners' becoming aware of the choices they are given, growing more critical about them, and finding the resources and ways to challenge and change them because literacy practices are also "embedded in relations of power" (Street 1997, 48), "rooted in a particular worldview and a desire for that view of literacy to dominate and marginalize others" (Street 2003, 77-78). Thus, it is argued that literacy pedagogy needs to enable learners to question and discuss the kind of literacy they are learning and why they are learning it (Street 1997). This approach to literacy, namely "critical literacy", has its roots in Freire's work on literacy and pedagogy which centers around "a dialectical relationship between human beings and the world, on the one hand, and language and transformative agency, on the other" (Giroux 1987, 5). In this context, literacy becomes "a necessary foundation of cultural action for freedom, a central aspect of what it means to be a self and socially constituted agent" (5). This goal in literacy education highlights 'identity' and 'agency'. In other words, this literacy learning process puts the individual learner in the center as a critical meaning-maker and highlights the significance of the contribution of literacy in empowering them to create a just, democratic, equal society. In such a view, literacy "has the potential to enhance people's capability and agency for the pursuit of freedom, and to empower them to interpret and transform their life realities" (Hanemann 2015, 297).

As this overview of definitions and theories of literacy reveals, there are three major perspectives: the earlier conceptualization of literacy as *print literacy* has been replaced by more contemporary views of it as *socially-constructed* and *contextualized practice* via verbal, non-verbal, visual, and other multimodal, digital means of communication, drawing upon the notions of critical thinking, diversity, social justice, equality, identity, agency, and so on (Fellowes and Oakley 2019). This broadened understanding of literacy helps us to realize how people communicate, how they understand what they understand and why; which all have implications for language pedagogy. In this context, English language education, a key partner in literacy education, should prepare learners to communicate in

various forms (reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, etc.) as well as media, including print, electronic, and digital, and to select, critically analyze, use and create information for various purposes.

Looking Back

Discuss the different ways to define literacy along with reasons why the definitions have evolved.

4. Digital literacy

With increased awareness that meaning-making practices in different social and cultural contexts, including home, school, work, and leisure, have become more and more digitized, there is a need to reconsider what it means to read and write. This broadened and enriched outlook on literacy in the digital world, i.e., digital literacy, compels us, the English language teachers, to better understand what digital literacy encompasses since we strive to help learners to become literate in the global lingua franca. With this aim in mind, the following section first looks at the definitions of digital literacy, then moves on to literacies encompassing the digital revolution, and finally discusses different digital literacy frameworks.

4.1. What is digital literacy? Who is a digitally literate person?

To start with, let's consider what the term *digital* refers to. As there is no consensus over its definition, it means different things to different people. For instance, Jones-Kavalier and Flannigan (2006) explain it as “information represented in numeric form and primarily for use by a computer” (9). So, for them, it is the mathematical language of computers. For others, it is the technology and the information sent and received via computerized devices. Yet for some it denotes “progress, develop[ment] and change” (Pangrazio and Sefton-Green 2021, 17); in other words, the qualities characterizing the rapidly changing, technologically-mediated social, economic, and cultural landscapes of the 21st-century world. Despite its vagueness, in broad terms it can be used to refer to all technology -hardware and software- and its use by human beings to interact with one another and with information (Leighton 2015).

As the world has become more digitized, what digital literacy means has changed as well. The term was first popularized by Paul Glistler in 1997, and in his conceptualization it refers to “the ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers” (1). There have also been several other definitions emphasizing its different aspects. For instance, following a competency and skill-based understanding, Pilgrim and Martinez (2013) define it as “the ability to use technology for gathering and communicating information” (60). Along the same line, Jones-Kavalier and Flannigan (2006) state that it “represents a person’s ability to perform tasks effectively in a digital environment ... (which) includes the ability to read and interpret media (text, sound, images), to reproduce data and images through digital manipulation, and to evaluate and apply new knowledge gained from digital environments” (9). In a similar vein but with an expanded view, Littlejohn, Beetham, and McGill (2012) explain that digital literacy refers to “the capabilities required to thrive in and beyond education”, including work and leisure as well as “full political and social participation in society”, using various digital forms of information and communication such as emailing, instant messaging, and “sourcing, using, evaluating, analysing, aggregating, recombining, creating and releasing knowledge online” (547). One of the most comprehensive definitions belongs to Martin and Grudziecki (2006). According to them:

Digital Literacy is the awareness, attitude and ability of individuals to appropriately use digital tools and facilities to identify, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, analyse and synthesize digital resources, construct new knowledge, create media expressions, and communicate with others, in the context of specific life situations, in order to enable constructive social action; and to reflect upon this process. (255)

As can be seen, there are a variety of definitions provided for digital literacy. When they are considered from a more theory-driven perspective, List (2019) argues that the conceptual development of digital literacy can be categorized under three major views: The first one contends that digital literacy is an automatic process and people acquire it through exposure. It stems from the concept of *digital natives*, introduced by Prensky in 2001 to describe individuals born into digital technology who are “native speakers

of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet” (Prensky, 2). Although it sounds rational, List maintains that research findings indicate that many digital natives lack digital literacy skills, showing that exposure alone is not enough for the development of digital literacy. The second view approaches digital literacy from a competency-based perspective and defines it as “an inter-related set of skills or competencies necessary for success in the digital age... including competencies associated with assembling information, reading and understanding multimedia and hypermedia texts, finding and critically evaluating information, and working collaboratively to communicate information” (List 2019, 147). However, as argued by List, despite offering a pragmatic approach for learning and teaching digital literacy, this view overlooks the experiences of people in the digital world. Therefore, the third view explains digital literacy from a socio-cultural perspective; explaining it as a process of participating in digital communities, engaging in activities, holding conversations, and producing artifacts -conceptual or physical. In short, the socio-cultural perspective sees “digital literacy as the intentional and gradual process of engaging in the situated social practices and with the cultural tools of particular digital communities”, as can be observed in fan fiction sites, video game sites, blogs, secondhand exchange marketplaces, fitness communities, and so on (List, 149) where individuals find, use, aggregate, create, share, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information, media, and technology.

Activity 4

Based on the views for the development of digital literacy as summarized by List (2019) above, can you think of any real-life examples you have observed around you or experiences you have had? Take short notes in the box below.

View	Example
Digital literacy as an automatic process	
Digital literacy as a set of skills	
Sociocultural perspective on digital literacy	

In addition to List’s views about the development of the concept of digital literacy, one last view can be listed here. As part of the socio-cultural perspectives, this view accounts for the transformative nature of digital literacy for the individual and society. This transformation requires approaching digital media critically (consciously), questioning and analyzing texts of all kinds to understand the hidden ideologies and agendas of the institutions/individuals that produce them (Jones and Hafner 2021; Warnick 2002). This approach, namely “critical digital literacy”, attempts to reveal how power and ideology are enacted and reinforced in digital media and invites individuals “to consider and critique the broader social, political and economic issues” as part of educational programs delivering functional digital literacy skills (Pangrazio 2016, 170). As Pangrazio states, “[w]hile learning how to use and manipulate digital technology is important, without an understanding of the role humans play in questioning, challenging and therefore shaping this techno-social system, then the scope of digital literacy is limited” (169).

Summing up, this brief overview clearly shows that the conceptualization of digital literacy has changed over time and has evolved parallel to the theories of literacy and advances in digital technologies. The definitions

reflect a continuum ranging from an individualist conception of digital literacy where the individual is described as a ‘*user*’, and therefore as the one who needs certain digital skills and competencies to thrive in a digitized world, to a conceptualization where the individual is described as an ‘*agent*’, and therefore as the one who critically assesses and evaluates the digital world, makes choices and acts upon them to bring about changes for themselves and, by extension, for the society they live in. Consequently, digital literacy is a multidimensional construct encompassing technical, cognitive and metacognitive skills, competencies, behaviors, social-emotional aspects, and dispositions.

Time to think

In the section above, several definitions of digital literacy are presented. In the light of this information, develop a working definition of digital literacy.

As a final word in this section, it may be appropriate to summarize some of the most prominent characteristics of successful digital literates who exercise control over the digital world and adapt well to the rapid changes. According to Pangrazio and Sefton-Green (2021, 16), a prerequisite to be a successful digitally literate is being “literate in a pre-digital sense”. They assert that some activities that are regarded as fully digital such as editing a video online or coding or joining blogs indeed depend on some kind of non-digital literacy. In other words, digital literacy has its roots in traditional literacy. Therefore, strong literacy skills are a prerequisite for the development of effective digital literacy skills. Reddy and Sharma (2020, 83-84) also list some essential abilities of digital literates: they have knowledge of existing and emerging ICT technologies and how to effectively and efficiently use them; they have a wide range of technical and cognitive skills to find information, critically consider it and assess its quality; they understand the place of technology in a networked world, value personal privacy and communicate appropriately with others using digital means; and they are active digital citizens and help build, sustain, as well as transform society. Moreover, according to Green (2020, 115), successful digital learners possess particular personal qualities: They are life-long learners with the ability to learn how to learn. They are self-motivated to stay up-to-date and learn new technical skills. They have a sense of curiosity

and an exploring mindset. Moreover, digital learners are critical and reflective individuals in that they know how to use digital technologies, are aware of their affordances and constraints, develop a sense of identity, and thus have an awareness of their own place and audience in a networked global community. Last but not least, they are willing to question “the political and economic systems that digital media are a part of, and to work together with others to try to influence these systems” (Jones and Hafner 2021, xv).

Time to think

You read the qualities and abilities of a successful digital literate above. Now make your own list of the top 5 important characteristics of successful digitally literate individuals. What would you do to cultivate these characteristics in your students?

4.2. Literacies of the digital and digital literacy frameworks

The term “literacies of the digital” (Littlejohn et al. 2012, 1) represents the multidimensionality of digital literacy as various terms are placed under the umbrella concept of digital literacy, such as web literacy, information literacy, internet literacy, media literacy, and so on. To provide clarity, we will briefly explain the most relevant ones in relation to some digital literacy frameworks in this section.

According to Covello (2010, 3), these literacies are the sub-disciplines of digital literacy which include information literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, communication literacy, visual literacy, and technology literacy. Martin and Grudziecki (2015) also identify the same set of literacies as literacies of the digital. On the other hand, UNESCO (2019) defines them as competencies related to digital literacy skills comprising information literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, and ICT literacy. It should be noted that the terms ‘competence’ and ‘skill’ are generally used in reference to pragmatic models of digital literacy designed for educational purposes. In this way, digital literacy is broken down into competence areas with performance indicators and proficiency levels, which enables curriculum

designers, materials developers, and teachers to integrate them into curricula, subject areas, and lesson plans.

There are several digital literacy frameworks that have been developed by international institutions such as OECD, UNESCO, the European Commission and private sector companies, NGOs, and foundations such as Microsoft and Common Sense Education (UNICEF 2019), as well as prominent scholars in the field of digital literacy.

Ala-Mutka (2011), in a report prepared for the European Commission, offers a detailed and useful conceptualization and not only lists the literacies of digital literacy but also explains how they inform digital literacy (see Figure 1).

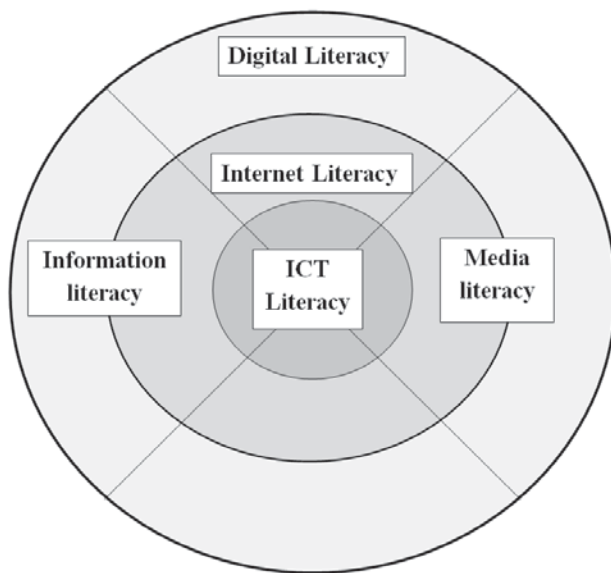


Figure 1: Digital literacy and related literacies (Ala-Mutka 2011, 30)

The Ala-Mutka model has four visible literacies, namely, ICT literacy, internet literacy, information literacy, and media literacy. It is averred that, despite being invisible in the figure, literacy (in the pre-digital sense) “as a basic concept of understanding information and communicating with

culturally agreed symbols and rules” is the foundational concept supporting the other literacies (30).

In the model, ICT literacy (computer literacy) is considered as the narrowest one, referring to an understanding of how computers work (hardware and software) and the skills associated with their usage with the related software applications. Internet literacy refers to the knowledge and skills required to use the Internet successfully to achieve a purpose. Information literacy is about “skills needed for information access and problem-solving” (Pilgrim and Martinez 2013, 61), i.e., “finding and locating sources, analyzing and synthesizing the material, evaluating the credibility of the source, using and citing ethically and legally, focusing on topics and formulating research questions in an accurate, effective, and efficient manner” (Covello 2010, 4). Media literacy involves “the ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contents and to create communications in a variety of contexts” (European Commission 2007a, 3). The last two literacies emphasize the importance of critical thinking and having a critical attitude, since information and media can be manipulated to influence the behavior and opinions of the readers/viewers.

Another well-known digital literacy framework belongs to Ng (2012). This model shows digital literacy existing at the intersection of three dimensions: technical, cognitive, and social-emotional (see Figure 2).

Technical literacy refers to those skills related to accessing and using ICT as well as being knowledgeable about the devices, troubleshooting, etc. The cognitive dimension covers the ability to seek, find, evaluate, use, and create digital information and doing all these with a critical mind (information literacy). The individual knows the ethical, moral, and legal issues concerning how to use digital resources (critical literacy) and is knowledgeable about different representations of meaning (multiliteracies). The technical and cognitive dimensions intersect, involving hyperlinking and reproduction literacies, which means that the individual is able “to navigate hypermedia environments to construct knowledge and to synthesize new understandings using appropriate online or offline tools”; while the social-emotional dimension and the intersecting areas involve using digital means “responsibly for communicating, socializing and

learning” (Ng 2012, 1068). As the figure clearly demonstrates, critical literacy is central to the dimensions of digital literacy. In Ng’s words, “understanding that people behind the scene writing the information have their own motivations and being able to critically evaluate whose voice is being heard and whose voice is not is important for learning as neutrally as possible” (1068). Ng’s model reveals the underlying complexity of digital literacy; enabling us to understand that all literacies are connected and interdependent (Green 2020).

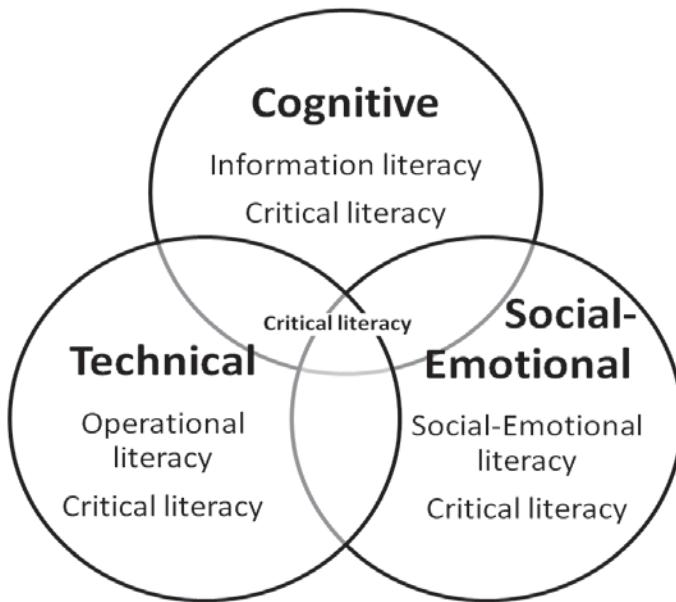


Figure 2: Digital Literacy Model (Ng 2012, 1067)

As the demands of the digitized world and individuals change, one can observe shifts in digital literacy frameworks and what they entail. For instance, a recent one offered by the DQ Institute, Digital Intelligence Framework, proposes a taxonomy based on the demands of the fourth industrial revolution in which artificial intelligence, robotics, automation, and other digital breakthroughs shape the nature of human-context-technology interaction, requiring new sets of skills and competencies. The framework depicts one’s digital life as consisting of eight broad areas, one

of which is digital literacy, comprising three competencies: ‘media and information literacy’, ‘content creation and computational literacy’, and ‘data and artificial intelligence literacy’. While the first two already existed in the earlier frameworks, the last one refers to “the ability to generate, process, analyze, present meaningful information from data and develop, use, and apply artificial intelligence (AI) and related algorithmic tools and strategies in order to guide informed, optimized, and contextually relevant decision-making processes” (Park 2019, 17).

As can be seen, digital literacy expands its territory to include different literacies as new technologies emerge and digital usage changes. This is due to socio-cultural, economic, and political factors constantly defining and shaping the knowledge, understanding, and skills, as well as the mindset to develop successful learners, active citizens, critical agents, and satisfied and productive individuals. Therefore, it is essential for educators to stay current with new and evolving digital literacies, their definitions, underlying philosophies and theories, and frameworks as well as the research focusing on different aspects of digital literacy learning and teaching, since their instructional decisions and practices are determined by a knowledge and understanding of these definitions, theories, and research findings.

4.3. Digital Literacy and English language teaching in K-12

As briefly mentioned above, digital literacy frameworks help to structure curricular goals and inform the decisions made regarding learning resources and instructional practices. In Turkish K-12 education, digital literacy is identified as one of the eight key competences and a cross-curricular goal (MoNE 2017) following the Reference Framework (Key Competences for Lifelong Learning) identified by the European Parliament and Council (European Commission 2007b). The Turkish MoNE have also launched several digital education initiatives in the past decade such as the FATİH project, the e-school project, Future Classroom Project, Educational Information Network (EBA), and a compulsory Information Technology and Software Development Course for 5th and 6th graders, which includes coding training as well as organizing in-service training courses for subject teachers. Teacher education programs at universities also offer some compulsory courses to help pre-service teachers develop their computer

literacy, web literacy knowledge and skills, as well as participate in courses about instructional technologies. All these efforts demonstrate Turkey's commitment to equipping its citizens with 21st century skills. Despite these efforts, at macro-policy level there is no national digital literacy framework identifying the concept, digital skills and competencies, and proficiency levels that learners are expected to attain at different grade levels, or how different subject courses should contribute to digital literacy development.

As for ELT, the primary and secondary school ELT programs (ELTPs) also refer to the key competences as a priority but also acknowledge their integration into the ELTPs is a challenge, due to the subject-specific emphasis on the attainment of linguistic skills and communicative competence as major learning goals. Yet, in both programs, it is stated that the competences are included in the programs as themes “specifically to help teachers and coursebook authors to make effective contextual choices and other supplementary and additional materials” (Primary School ELTP 2018, 5). However, it is not clearly indicated what topics are chosen for which grade levels and what learning goals are specified for the development of these competencies. Consequently, there is only one topic, ‘the Internet’ (8th grade), which may be considered to support students’ digital literacy awareness directly in the primary school ELTP. In the secondary school ELTP, on the other hand, technology-enhanced language learning and blended learning are advocated. It is stated that “[t]he new curriculum encourages the integration of technology in all aspects of ELT and learning because technological tools match the dynamic and interactive nature of the language as well as the adolescents’ interests and real-life experiences” (Secondary School ELTP 2018, 14). Accordingly, some themes such as ‘Television and Social Media’ (9th grade), ‘Digital Era’ (10th grade), ‘Technology’ (12th grade) are embedded in the program and several digital tools and techniques are suggested for active use by the teachers and learners such as v-logs, blogs, e-portfolios, digital storytelling, podcasts, animation makers, and so on.

These explicit references to digital technologies, their use, and their adaptation for language learning and teaching purposes in the major policy documents, undoubtedly call for language teachers to develop a new approach meshing language pedagogy, literacy pedagogy, critical

pedagogy, and digital pedagogy. This new pedagogy should rest on a deeper understanding of and knowledge about what digital literacy means, the underlying theories, and the frameworks detailing what literacies to prioritize

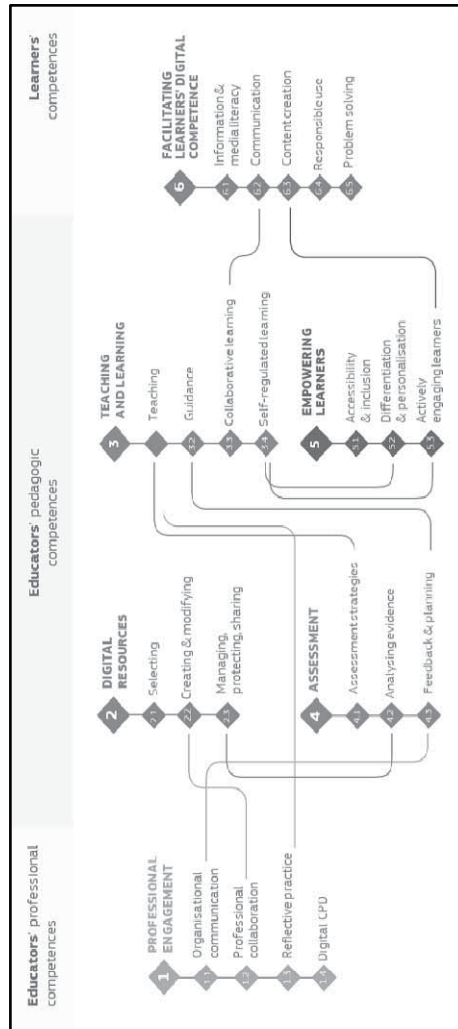


Figure 3: DigCompEdu Framework (Redecker 2017, 8)

in a given context. In addition, the technical skills and familiarity with tools and their affordances to bring about the intended learning outcomes, the adoption of new roles as mediators, moderators, facilitators, co-collaborators and fearless digital learners open to change should be considered and put into practice.

To describe this new profile for teachers and identify the digital competences for educators, The European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu) has been published by the European Commission (Redecker 2017).

The framework describes 6 areas with 22 competences under three broad categories: professional, pedagogic, and learners' competences. It is noteworthy that the underlying digital literacies that educators need to build on to develop these competencies, such as technical literacy, information literacy, and critical literacy, are not visible in the framework. Yet, it would not be an overstatement to claim that they are the foundations that support the development of the competencies. In short, first and foremost, teachers should be digitally literate to help themselves so that they can help their learners develop these competencies.

Time to think



In line with the DigCompEdu, there is a tool called SELFIE for TEACHERS, which helps primary and secondary school teachers examine how they make use of digital technologies. Visit the tool to learn more about your skills, and identify your strengths and weaknesses that you need to improve.

Certainly, these top-down macro-level educational policy documents and initiatives are shaped in response to national, international, sectoral, and individual needs. On the individual side, firstly, language learners' participation in digital cultures and practices “both mediates and transforms their language learning” (Hafner et al. 2015, 2). Digital spaces offer them

new opportunities in which they can autonomously direct their own learning. Using mobile applications and online tools, they can build on their vocabulary, study grammar, and practice the four skills. Moreover, the multilingual contexts and multimodal representation of meanings require new reading, writing, and communication skills which can be adopted in English language education. Secondly, as members of the future workforce, they need various digital skills and life-long learning strategies to upskill themselves. Thus, as digital literacies are embedded in the language curriculum, language learners also acquire 21st-century skills. Lastly, language learners are part of the larger community and society. In other words, they have rights and duties as citizens. To ensure a well-functioning social, political, and economic system that is getting more and more digitized, involving democratic participation and collaboration, then also a critical stance, resistance, and resilience are required. Thus, English language learners utilizing the principles of critical digital literacy can recognize the digital space as a social and political space and learn to connect broader collective concerns about inequalities, injustice, power imbalance, and violence to their individual practices (Pangrazio 2016).

5. Agency in Digital literacy

Since technology has penetrated all aspects of our lives, our interaction with it predictably requires being cautious about the consequences of being a user of the digital environment, which includes vast bodies of information represented in various forms and modes. Passey et al. (2018) argue that emerging technologies encompass a great potential to increase technological determinism, which refers to “the autonomous and social-shaping tendencies of technology” (Dafoe 2015, 1047). On this point, some critical questions can be raised such as “[t]o what extent do we have control over the tools we use—and hence also our systems of production, social relations, and worldview? To what extent are our technologies thrust upon us—by controlling elites, by path-dependent decisions from the past, or by some internal technological logic?” (Dafoe, 1048). These questions are central to the concept of *agency*. Therefore, the following section first attempts to explain the concept from a historical perspective, and then

situates it in digital literacy. Finally, it looks into ways of integrating digital agency in English language teacher education.

5.1. From agency to digital agency: Understanding the concept

Bandura's research on agency (1997) is considered as the preliminary conceptualization of the complex concept of *human agency* and has provided insight for later studies. In his earlier study, Bandura (1977) hypothesized that "...expectations of personal efficacy determine whether coping behaviour will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences" (1). By postulating that, Bandura underlined the role of individuals' self-efficacy perceptions in determining thought patterns, actions, and emotional arousal that he later defined as *human agency* (Bandura 1982). According to him, "[h]uman agency is the capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one's life" (Bandura 2001, 1).

While Bandura's earlier conception of agency was presented within a cognitive framework to explain the mediator of human actions, he later updated this model of human agency drawing upon the social cognitive theory and stated that "[p]ersons are neither autonomous agents nor simply mechanical conveyors of animating environmental influences. Rather, they make causal contributions to their own motivation and actions within a system of triadic reciprocal causation", which comprises personal factors, behavior, and the environment (Bandura 1989, 1). He also presented a list of processes that shape the multidimensional nature of human agency including the cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes. Cognitive processes focus on the power of thought by which human behavior is regulated to establish personal goals. Motivational process is related to the amount of effort and perseverance that people exert when faced with obstacles. Affective processes are to do with the belief of the individual in their capabilities to control potential threats. Finally, selection processes are related to any factor that influences people's choice of behaviors in activities and situations that they believe will exceed their coping capabilities (Bandura 1989). This conceptualization underlines Bandura's approach to agency as a combination of various dimensions.

Thus, while *agency*, from an individual perspective, refers to “the capacity and tendency to make intentional choices, to initiate actions based on these choices, and to exercise control over the self and the environment” (Goller and Harteis 2017, 87), it cannot be explained without considering its dependence on the context the individual lives in. “All choices and actions are always influenced by what a particular context affords or denies its participants. Such affordances or constraints are directly related to social, cultural, historical, and physical context factors” (Goller and Harteis, 89). Therefore, agency is not just a disposition but also the malleable, learned, and socio-culturally mediated ability of an individual “to act upon, modify, and give significance to the world in purposeful ways, with the aim of creating, impacting, and/or transforming themselves and/or the conditions of their lives” (Basu, Barton, Clairmont, and Locke 2009, 355).

As for digital agency, a variety of definitions exist in the literature. Some put emphasis on the technical skills of the individual while others approach it from a more critical perspective. For instance, according to Passey et al. (2018), digital agency is a rich concept referring to “the individual’s ability to control and adapt to a digital world” and encompasses “digital competence, digital confidence, and digital accountability” (426). They describe digital competence as “the “ability to safely and effectively navigate the digital world” (428). Based on traditional literacy, numeracy, knowledge, and critical thinking, it embraces digital literacy and digital skills. Passey et al. conceptualize digital confidence as individuals’ ability and confidence to skillfully use computer applications and software in different digital contexts for varying purposes such as learning, communication, and social participation; thereby demonstrating digital autonomy, which is “knowing the informed basis of one’s choices and actions” (428). Lastly, digital accountability embraces “digital responsibility for oneself and for others regarding one’s digital actions; knowledge of the digital world and its ethical issues; understanding concerns and ensuring security and privacy; and understanding the impact of our digital activities” (429).

As this brief overview shows, digital agency does not simply refer to the ability to ‘function with technology’ but “a rich and holistic concept that frames the ways people engage meaningfully with technology” (Hunter and

Costello 2018, 51). Within the framework of this chapter, we conceptualize digital agency as an individual's awareness of all aspects of the digital world, their capability of interacting with technology competently through a critical lens and in a self-directed way that eventually transforms them into socially responsible individuals having the power to exercise control over their lives, their choices as digital netizens, and their empowerment to contribute to society.

5.2. Digital agency in education and critical digital pedagogy

Despite the common consensus that agency should be an integral part of instruction, the way it is theorized or defined in education still remains diverse. In a systematic review of student agency in literacy, Vaugh et al. (2020b) highlight its complexity and underline the need for alternative approaches to examine it in literacy contexts.

Approaching it as an inter-connected construct, Vaugh et al. (2020a, 723) define agency as “a multidimensional construct where individuals exert, influence and create opportunities in the learning context through intentions, decisions, and actions”, highlighting that agency “includes self-perception as readers and writers, intentionality, choice-making, persistence, and interactiveness” (533). A typical example for this type of agency can be illustrated by the decisions and actions of an English language learner who may choose to write to a language forum asking the opinions of the forum members about the use of a grammatical structure that they finds problematic while preparing a written assignment in collaboration with a peer using Google docs. In this example, the student identifies a gap in their grammatical competence, makes the decision to write to a forum to solve it, and acts upon that decision and posts the question to the forum. In short, the learner exercises agency in digital literacy, demonstrating the prominent features of autonomous learners.

It is a fact that learning methods have altered dramatically in the digitized, networked world in just a few decades, and students, as agents of learning, have become more than recipients of information (Bandura 2002). With the spread of networked communication technologies, today's students have the opportunity to reach information and any kind of media regardless of time

and place. This revolutionary change has extended the roles of students beyond being mere consumers of the input presented by their teachers and has turned them into content producers. Thus, it can be asserted that digital means and sources of information have broken down the hierarchy between the students and teachers "...in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (Freire 1970, 72). Naming this relationship as "*banking*" and supporting a critical approach to pedagogy, Freire is robustly against the idea of considering the teacher as more knowledgeable than their students. From this perspective, as an alternative source of information, the digital world offers students an alternative way of learning by opposing the idea that assumes "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (Freire, 72).

Although today's so-called 'digital natives' are born into a digital world, this does not guarantee that they develop the necessary skills for digital agency. In other words, being competent in using cutting-edge technology requires being critically literate at the same time. Particularly in educational settings, learners should use/produce digital content responsibly and critically. Being respectful to the intellectual property of others, taking action against misuse, being attentive to disinformation, misinformation, and manipulation are but a few of the characteristics of critically literate learners. Thus, an education system valuing and fostering appropriate attitudes, practices, and behaviors to support students' digital agency development should be built. As Passey et al. (2018) state, "equipping citizens with the skills and attributes required to exercise DA [digital agency] is a big societal challenge involving all stakeholders, including policymakers, technology leaders, practitioners and the research community" (427).

On the other hand, learner agency should be discussed in a wider perspective to include its societal benefits and transformational impact on human lives. Knowledge is socially constructed and as Freire (1970) puts it, "emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (72). Recognition of this collective behavior should enable learners to become more socially aware individuals, and help

them to develop their social identities. In other words, they need to learn “...to use the knowledge they gain both to critique the world in which they live and, when necessary, to intervene in socially responsible ways in order to change it” (Giroux 2007, 13). Thus, a pedagogy capitalizing on educational practices that reach beyond the walls of the classroom will enable students to turn into social agents (Freire 2014). This pedagogical approach, namely, critical digital pedagogy, has its roots in critical pedagogy which focuses on helping learners to “...deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world” (Freire 1970, 34). Thus, critical pedagogy “opens up a space where students should be able to come to terms with their own power as critical agents” (Giroux 2007, 181) and encourages “students to take risks, act on their sense of social responsibility, and engage the world as an object of both critical analysis and hopeful transformation” (Giroux, 14). When this approach to education is translated to digital space, critical digital pedagogy aims to create “an open and liberating digital space for learning” where the learners’ digital agency is supported by encouraging them to draw upon their diverse backgrounds, cultural and political experiences to “deconstruct, elaborate and critique any sort of knowledge” freely available in digital spaces to challenge the existing social structures, power imbalance, status quo, and social injustices (Masood and Haque 2021, 71).

As can be understood, critical agency is different from the learner agency explained at the beginning of this section. To illustrate, a case study reported by Waddel and Clariza (2018) can be given as an example. In the study, a group of university students was assigned to create infographics to discuss science research topics. For this aim, they first explored infographic design and related it to the impact of technology on culture and society. Then, they investigated the connection between the science topics they chose and their cultural experiences and identity. After that, they examined the infographic maker web tool and designed their infographics. Finally, they questioned the power structures controlling the dissemination of scientific information. Guided by the overall principles of critical digital literacy, the students in this case study practiced information literacy and technology literacy as well as digital agency and critical digital agency.

All in all, the concepts discussed in this section -agency, agency in digital literacy, and critical digital pedagogy- have not found their way into school curricula or ELTPs yet and there are no established practices to guide instruction. Therefore, English teachers need to consider how they can integrate them into their teaching, drawing upon their knowledge and understanding of the concepts and combining them with their professional knowledge. As stated by Rorabaugh (2012):

If students live in a culture that digitizes and educates them through a screen, they require an education that empowers them in that sphere, teaches them that language, and offers new opportunities of human connectivity... In its evolution from passive consumption to critical production — from the cult of the expert to a culture of collaboration — the critical and digital classroom emerges as a site of intellectual and moral agency. (para. 7)

Time to think

Do you believe education should involve the purpose of enabling students to become critical, acting members of society? Why? Why not?

6. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the major concepts of digital literacy, digital literacies, digital competence, and human agency in the digital world and examined the place of ELT in helping individuals become digitally literate and critical digital agents. The chapter aimed to raise English language teachers' awareness about how the changing digital landscape and the role of English as a contact language have shifted the goals of language teaching, pushing teachers to become knowledgeable and skillful digital literacy and critical digital literacy educators. As such, it is argued that English language teachers are essentially literacy teachers who need to provide their learners with the opportunities to develop their meaning-making skills via reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and other modes of representation which have become increasingly digitized in the past couple of decades.

Since personal assumptions, values, beliefs, and interpretations directly influence decisions concerning how instruction should be planned and practiced, the teachers of English nowadays need a clear understanding of

the concepts surrounding digital literacy and the critical role they are expected to play in order to educate digitally knowledgeable, skillful, autonomous, critical learners. Only in this way can they develop a sound pedagogy and empower their learners with the understanding and skills not only to thrive in a digitized world to accomplish their personal goals but also to bring about positive social change in the life of others.

Discussion questions:

1. Compare and contrast the ways that the concepts of literacy and digital literacy have evolved. How do they differ from one another? What similarities can you find?
2. Explain how literacy and digital literacy are linked to human learning.
3. What is the role of critical agency in the construction of teacher identity, both as a professional and a member of society?
4. What can EFL teachers do to enhance their students' digital literacy skills?
5. Reflect upon your own understanding of literacy, digital literacy, human agency, and English teachers as digital literacy educators prior to reading this chapter. Did it change in any way? If yes, explain in what ways it has changed.

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CHAPTER IV

FOSTERING DIALOGIC SKILLS

SEZEN ARSLAN AND NURDAN KAVAKLI

Preliminary Questions:

1. Have you ever heard about dialogic pedagogy?
2. How could dialogic pedagogy be related to language teaching?
2. In what ways does dialogic pedagogy contribute to teaching reading?
3. Do you think that L2 teachers can teach writing through dialogic interactions? If yes, how?

“In true dialogue, both sides are willing to change.”

Nhat Hanh

1. Introduction

Rooted in the 19th century, dialogism which was developed by Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975) is essentially a language theory that puts importance on socio-verbal classroom interaction (Skidmore and Murakami 2016, 1). As Bakhtin (1981, 280) states: *“The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: It provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer’s direction.”* Accordingly, the dialogue is not a simple exchange between the speakers but it is mainly cumulative and it encompasses a procedure where meaning-making is fundamental. Being the binary opposite of monologism which is heavily dependent on teacher talk (Lyle 2008, 225), dialogism also focuses on the real-life implementations of interaction in the classroom, thereby allowing everyone to make their voice heard. Therefore, dialogic pedagogy has remarkably been emphasized thanks to the changing roles of teachers from being solely knowledge providers to facilitators in the 21st century.

Over the past ten years, dialogic pedagogy has permeated the research (See Alexander 2018; Resnick, Clarke, and Asterhan 2018). Thus, increasing attention has been given to classroom interaction through meaningful, thought-provoking, and shared activities between teachers and learners.

Given the growing number of English as a second language (ESL) learners across the world, and their corresponding higher dropout rates and low educational achievement unlike native speaker counterparts, the current situation for ESL learning can be deemed alarming (Melby-Lervag and Lervag 2014, 409). This finding essentially implies the strong link between literacy skills and educational achievement (OECD 2000, 93). That is to say, those who have a poor second language (L2) literacy skills have lower academic performance. Therefore, it will be of utmost importance to improve the reading and writing skills of language learners. However, instead of the traditional methods for teaching reading and writing-, which is mainly based on correct grammar, comprehension, coherence, spelling-, these skills must be developed through empowering contextual insights, thereby engaging students with the authors, characters, and the conducted ideas within the text (Spence 2008, 254). This could be feasible by using innovative implementations which promote meaningful, interactive, and collaborative talk among learners. These structured implementations to improve L2 reading and writing in this chapter are thus underpinned by dialogic pedagogy. Building on the extant literature, the authors will provide practical implementations including shared reading (Huennekens and Xu 2016, 336-337), PEER and CROWD techniques (Morgan and Meier 2008, 13), writing prompts (Beck, Jones, Storm and Smith 2020, 4) and argumentative writing (Hirvela 2017, 1-6). Thus, the chapter will add to the growing literature by illustrating how dialogic L2 reading and writing skills can innovatively be improved for language learners. In this sense, it aims to provide a guide for L2 teachers in writing and reading classes.

2. Theory

2.1 A direction towards dialogic pedagogy

With the advancements in the media, especially the use of interactive TV in the 1980s, people began to contribute more from themselves to the

television audience by connecting with fax and Teletext (Jensen 2008, 8). They were able to communicate their thoughts and reactions and they were not passive viewers anymore as they had the chance to actively engage in this televised world. In the 1990s, a new form of communication, the Internet appeared as a novel technology. A variety of communication instruments such as e-mails and instant messaging clients were developed. Since that time, we have been comfortably communicating with each other, even without a cellular phone. We can watch videos, listen to music, read a book and post our immediate reactions and feelings concerning the media content. We can almost think aloud online and let others hear our thoughts. Thus, in such an interactive environment, can we expect our students to sit silently and do what we tell them to do?

The 19th and 20th centuries have witnessed dozens of language teaching approaches and methods. While some of them prioritized grammar or vocabulary, the others focused on more language exposure. Each of them sought the ideal route that the learner should take to language attainment. In the 1970s, however, thanks to the scholarly works by Vygotsky (See Vygotsky 1978), the socio-cultural view towards the language became widespread. According to this perspective, language development happens in a social environment; thus, classroom interaction is an essential part of language teaching (Hall and Walsh 2002, 187). That is, the students need to engage in negotiations, discussions, role-plays, or group works where they have the opportunity to talk to each other. They are necessary for meaningful dialogues.

However, dialogues are not as simple as we may imagine. Quite often, the word 'dialogue' and 'conversation' is used interchangeably although they have slightly different meanings. While a conversation is not purposeful and is an end in itself, dialogues trigger further questioning; that is, they build on others' responses (Alexander 2001, 2). Therefore, it would be logical to understand the dialogic pedagogy from this distinction.

Essentially, Wegerif thinks that the use of the term 'dialogic' can be referenced to the works of Michael Bakhtin (Wegerif 2007, 14). According to Bakhtin, language is a living being and becomes more dynamic when we communicate with other people. As a result, we get more experienced and

engaged actively in real life (Hall, Vitanova and Marchenkova 2005, 3). Advancing this body of knowledge, Robin Alexander coined the term 'dialogic teaching' by referring to dialogism in educational settings; however, he did not suggest a definition for the dialogic term in order not to restrict the concept (Alexander 2018, 562). Despite the absence of a definition, the principles and indicators of dialogic teaching can be summarized as follows, by drawing on Alexander's Dialogic Teaching Framework (Alexander 2018, 564):

1. Language is crucial for communication, social relationships, and cultural engagement.
2. Spoken language is in close relation to the cognition, psychology, and quality of classroom talk.
3. The classroom is the setting where the pupils produce a talk by building on each other's utterances.
4. Pupils need to listen to each other mutually to communicate the message across.
5. Classroom atmosphere should be positive with no discomfort concerning teachers, peers, and classroom settings.
6. The pupils build on each other's responses through shared reasoning and understanding.
7. Classroom talk should have a meaning and direction.
8. Classroom talk should be designed in a way that the pupils should have the knowledge and skills of asking questions, agreeing/disagreeing, explaining things, clarifying, and performing other basic oral functions.

This framework is mainly concerned with improving classroom talk. In doing this, dialogue is valued and considered a way of making inquiries. Everyone in the classroom is expected to contribute to the talk equally and mutually and the suggested opinions are often questioned until a consensus is reached among the participants (Renshaw 2004, 8-9). Thus, questioning is of importance for making dialogues meaningful.

One of the popular forms of questioning that has dominated the classroom talk for years is Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE). The teacher, who is the expert, initiates the questioning by nominating a student and expects a

correct answer; then, the student is evaluated with immediate but shallow feedback (Hall and Walsh 2002, 188). Classroom talk is mostly led by the teacher with limited peer-to-peer interaction. This shows the value to be given to effective questioning for creating interactive settings for the students. Instead of asking true/false or short-answer questions, the questions that are open to interpretation and evaluation are directed for a dialogic class. Questioning is used as an effective medium of building dialogues in collaboration through meaning-making. Dialogic teaching thus relies on this interaction to make room for cognitive stimulation which, in turn, will promote our questioning (Fisher 2007, 617).

2.2. What makes reading dialogic?

When people write or speak, the end product is usually visible and overt; however, the procedures that are operationalized for reading are not clear as the reading behaviour is not observed (Hughes 2002, 136). Also, little research is available for second language (L2) reading to shed light on its cognitive and social dimensions; therefore, our understanding is limited (Kim 2019, 73).

Aukerman thinks that reading is a meaning-making of the text (Aukerman 2013, 2). However, drawing from Bakhtin's view of language, that is, - language is dynamic and changes depending on the qualified interactions that we build with people-, one can argue that meaning obtained from reading can be richened with different approaches of thinking (Bakhtin 1986, 60). Thanks to various perspectives proposed by the readers, different interpretations can be made. In line with the view of Bakhtin, Aukerman also argues that meaning in a text cannot be fixed (Aukerman 2013, 2); thus, reading should not be considered as an end in itself and suggests 'comprehension-as-sensemaking' pedagogy for dialogic comprehension. She defines this pedagogy as "active exploration of possibilities for meaning" (Aukerman 2013, 5); thus, the students engage actively in the text through their interests, cultural background and sense of the world. Accordingly, the teachers do not provide their subjective standpoint for the meaning by indicating what is right or wrong as there is not a pre-determined answer. Instead, the students read the text, address questions with their peers to get the textual meaning and each response is valued,

thereby inviting other perspectives. Then, each opinion can be criticized respectfully by providing an evaluation of the judgment and arguments. In this sense, the teachers are supposed to request further information or reason by seeking evidence and clarification. This is important for the development of dialogic comprehension. If the readers cannot see the reflections of themselves in the texts, they may not feel a sense of belonging; therefore, readers should be encouraged to explore the characters, cultural and linguistic components in the text (Franquiz Ortiz, and Lara 2019, 381).

Thus, it may be argued that the central feature of dialogic reading is not enacting a true understanding of the text by focusing on true/false statements. Rather than attempting to find the appropriate textual implications, the readers are encouraged to think critically, use questioning to elicit different viewpoints, and then reach a collective decision. In this sense, considering Alexander's framework for reference (Alexander 2018, 564), the teachers are expected to create a comfortable classroom setting where the students can express their ideas without hesitation and offence.

FOR YOUR NOTE!

There is no right or wrong answer for textual understanding in dialogic reading. You can elicit arguments from your students through questioning. Make sure that these questions are not Yes/No questions but ones that seek to evaluate judgments.

2.3. Dialogic reading in practice

2.3.1. Shared Reading

Having discussed what makes reading dialogic, the next step is to consider the strategies to be used in implementing dialogic reading for language teaching. In this sense, strategies are crucial because they can guide how to operate dialogic practices for reading classes. Among them, shared reading is a dialogic reading strategy that can be used with children to engage them in literacy activities (Huennekens and Xu 2016, 336). This type of reading is frequently employed by the parents in L1 reading. They read a book together, ask/answer questions concerning the content, point to illustrations,

and talk about them. Particularly, disadvantaged parents should be encouraged for shared reading in L1 for their pre-school children so that they may not experience reading difficulties (Lingwood, Levy, Billington, and Rowland 2020, 188).

Shared reading has such benefits for L1 development; however, it is not only limited to L1 and can also be used for L2 learning. For example, Glynn and Glynn's study showed that ESL learner kids who practised shared-reading with their mothers improved their English (Glynn and Glynn 1896, 170). Although the mothers were not proficient in English reading, they provided questions to their kids and commented on the stories together. This study illustrates that parents do not need to have proficient English to engage in the shared-reading practice. Similarly, another study conducted by Yeung and King (2016, 115) also illustrates that shared reading is a major part of home literacy skills and thus plays a vital role in L2 development. Therefore, equipping the parents with some techniques to enhance child-parent interaction when reading in L2 such as asking 'why' and 'how' questions can be beneficial in increasing the quality of L2 language use (Jimenez Filippini, and Gerber 2006, 445). L2 teachers can encourage the parents to practice shared reading at home through some strategies. Among them are repetitions, gesturing, translations, explanations, and recalling information (Pontier and Gort 2016, 95). If these strategies are introduced to parents with the help of a L2 teacher, the parents can also benefit from them.

Even though parents with even limited L2 proficiency can be motivated for shared reading, this does not seem to be feasible for parents with no L2 knowledge. This practice is then only limited to L2 classrooms, especially for low socio-economic profile students. Drawing on the previous studies (Chen 2014, 234; Colville-Hall and O'Connor 2006, 490; Sarhi and Region 2005, 108-109), the stages of shared reading can be summarized as follows:

1. A book that has predictable content is chosen so that students could use their prior knowledge to predict the content.
2. The book can be big enough for everyone to view it or it could be reflected on a projector. Alternatively, copies of the book can also be used so that each student has the chance to see the print.

3. The students are first prepared mentally for reading the book. At this stage, the teacher can present the book, titles, and characters.
4. The students and teacher read aloud the book together. While the teacher reads at a slow pace, s/he reads a little faster than the students. This will help improve pronunciation.
5. The teacher reads sentence by sentence and makes the students repeat the sentence loudly.
6. Unknown words are not explained or translated. Students are encouraged to infer the meaning from the sentences.
7. The teacher proceeds from one sentence to another after making sure that the students have understood the meaning of the sentence.
8. While reading, the teacher can direct questions to the students about the story or ask them to predict some parts.

The stages clearly show that shared reading is mainly directed by the teacher. Thus, it is noteworthy to say that the books that are of interest to the students should be selected to encourage the students to read further. In addition, the culturally-relevant books should also be preferred, especially for beginners in that the students make cultural references easily, which can enhance their motivation to reading (Kim 2019,76).

2.3.1.1. Implementation: A Story for Shared-Reading Practice

THE BLACK PUP

Four little black pups lived in an orange hut with their mum. They loved their mum very much. They played games with her. They liked playing with a ball the most. They were very happy when they played this game. The dog mum threw the ball and the pups tried to catch the ball. They run as fast as they could to catch the ball. One day, they were playing this game again and again. They were in the garden. The dog mum threw the ball. Prites, one of the pups, jumped very high to catch the ball but he fell! "Ahh", he screamed in pain. Prites was now lying on the ground. Dog mum was shocked and trembling with fear. She suddenly...

This excerpt was produced by the authors of this study to demonstrate how shared-reading practice can be implemented. Having inspired from prior studies (Gonzalez et al. 2014, 220; Lever and Senechal 2011, 9), we suggest the following procedures as an example:

In the preparation stage, the teacher can bring the pup pictures to the class, points to these pictures and says: "This is a pup. A baby. A pup is a baby dog. Let's remember what we call a baby cat. What is a baby cat?" Alternatively, other responses can be elicited in this way to review baby animal names.

In addition to revision, the teacher (T) can elaborate the student (S) responses as follows:

(T): *Look (pointing a picture of a pup). What is this?*

(S): *Pup.*

(T): *Yes, it is a pup. A pup is a baby dog.*

(S): *A pup is a baby dog.*

Here, the teacher paraphrases and expands the student's response and encourages him/her to reformulate the response. This type of dialogue can be helpful for beginning learners. The following dialogue shows a similar contribution of the teacher, as well:

(T): *How many pups are there in the story.*

(S): *Four.*

(T): *Yes, four little black pups.*

With this dialogue, the teacher reformulates the sentence by adding adjectives and emphasizes the meaning of 'little' and 'black'. The incorporation of such words highlights the need to use them for narrations (Lever and Senechal 2011, 9).

Moreover, to build connections with one's experiences and elicit more responses (Gonzalez et al. 2014, 220), the teacher can address such questions:

(T): *Have you ever seen a pup before? What is it like? Is it pretty? What colour is it?*

(T): *Have you ever seen a cow? Is it big? Small? Bigger than a dog? What colour is it?*

In this sense, the teacher expands the vocabulary by connecting the story to the student's life, which will be effective for new vocabulary gains. For more advanced level students, "Why" questions can be directed to the students as they promote more extended oral production.

(T): *Why was dog mum shocked?*

(T): *What do you think happened to Prites?*

To conclude, shared reading may be effective for creating simple but meaningful dialogues with L2 learners. In so doing, the teachers are expected to select an appropriate reading material from which they could formulate questions, depending on the students' language proficiency level.

2.3.2 PEER and CROWD Techniques

Other techniques to be used for dialogic reading are PEER and CROWD, which are essentially acronyms. CROWD stands for **C**ompletion, **R**ecall, **O**pen-ended, **W**h-prompts, and **D**istancing. Each of these components can be summarized and exemplified as follows (Morgan and Meier 2008, 13; Zevenbergen and Whitehurst 2003, 6):

(1) Completion prompts: These prompts are blank-filling type activities that ask students to come up with a word or a phrase, which are useful for listening comprehension.

(T): *Look. What do we call baby dogs? We call them -----.*

(S): *Puppies.*

(2) Recall prompts: These prompts are the questions that include some aspects of the reading text.

(T): *What did Prites do when he fell?*

(S): *He screamed.*

(3) Open-ended prompts: These are the prompts that invite the students for extended oral production.

(T): *(pointing to a picture) Let's describe the picture. What are they doing?*

(4) Wh-questions: They are Wh- questions such as 'What?', 'Why?', 'Who?'.

(T): *(pointing to a picture of a pup) What is this?*

(5) Distancing prompts: These prompts include questions that make connections with the students' life.

(T): *Have you ever seen a pup? What is it like? Is it small? Big?*

In addition to CROWD, there is also PEER technique which stands for *Prompt, Evaluate, Expand* and *Repeat*. It encompasses a sequential procedure unlike CROWD (Morgan and Meier 2008, 13). According to Zevenbergen and Whitehurst (2003, 6), teachers (1) 'prompt' to point to the characters in the text and talk about them; (2) 'evaluate' the students' responses and give feedback. Corrections are provided, if necessary. Then, the teachers (3) 'expand' the students' responses by reformulating the utterance and adding into it and ask the students to (4) 'repeat' what the teacher expressed as expanded utterances. As stated by Ping (2017, 6), PEER and CROWD strategies are not limited to L2 instruction for young learners but they can also be used for adult L2 learners in small groups. In addition, Chow, McBride-Chang, and Cheung (2010, 287) state that dialogic reading enables exposure to the use of English for L2 learners, which is useful for improving vocabulary and phonological knowledge. Thus, L2 classes can give place to such dialogic reading techniques.

2.3.2.1. Implementation: PEER Technique for Dialogic Reading

Below is the excerpt taken from a story that the authors of this current study produced. Based on this excerpt, there are some sample dialogues between the teacher (T) and students (S) to practice PEER technique.

CHARLIE THE CAT
<p><i>The cat's name was Charlie. He was waiting under the roof. It was raining harder. He was shivering with cold. It was getting darker outside. He was very hungry but there was no food around. He must do something to get food. Suddenly, he saw a light coming through the door of a house. "Aha, he said! "There must be some food there."</i></p> <p><i>Charlie walked along the rocky path and stepped into the house. All lights were on but there was no one. He walked around quickly and found the kitchen. Charlie was happy. While he was eating bread and meat, he heard a noise...</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">....</p>

(T): *What is the weather like in the story?* (Prompt)

(S): *Rainy.*

(T): *Good. Well-done.* (Evaluation)

(T): *It was rainy. It was raining harder. It was raining...* (Expansion-eliciting answers)

(S): *Harder.*

(T): *It was raining harder. Right?* (Request for repetition)

(S): *Yes, it was raining harder.* (Repetition)

In the sample dialogue above, the teacher started by directing a prompt to L2 students. The students may tend to give short answers due to limited language production. Therefore, the teacher needs to expand on the students' responses to promote interaction and extend the oral production. Alternatively, the following dialogue also illustrates how PEER technique can be used with L2 students:

(T): *What did Charlie do when he saw the light coming from the house?*

(Prompt)

(S): *He walked.*

(T): *That's true. He walked.* (Evaluation)

(T): *Where did he walk?* (Expansion)

(S): *Rocky path?*

(T): *Yes. Rocky path! He walked along....*(Expansion-eliciting answers)

(S): *He walked along the rocky path.* (Repetition)

(T): *Bravo! He walked along the rocky path. There were pieces of rock on the path.*

These two examples show how PEER can be implemented in a L2 class. The teacher prompts students to elicit utterances. In this sense, the story provides contextualization to facilitate the use of linguistic structures such as grammar and vocabulary. Teacher-student dialogue is important because it creates a meaningful context for reciprocal listening where there are listeners and speakers (Chow, Hui, Li, and Dong 2021, 2). This imitates real-life speaking conventions. Thus, combining reading with this type of dialogue is essential for creating interaction. At the same time, it will help to improve vocabulary knowledge and model pronunciation (Jacobs 2016,10). Besides, such dialogic reading activities can guide the learners about how to read a book in the target language and make meaning (Kim and Hall 2002, 345).

Assignment

Find a fairy tale/short story or produce one if you could. When you choose/produce the text, you can consider the following checklist. Once you have found/produced the text, prepare questions based on it for dialogic reading practice. While you prepare the questions, please consider the words that you would like to review and write as many questions as possible to encourage your students to talk about the content.

CHECKLIST FOR CHOOSING READING TEXT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is the content of the text familiar to my students? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it culturally relevant to my students? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the text have predictable content for my students? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there enough hard or digital copies of the text? Are they available to all my students? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there too many unknown words in the text for my students? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the text appropriate in terms of making revisions of the previously learned linguistic components such as vocabulary and grammar?

3. What makes writing dialogic?

Writing is a productive skill that is-the students are expected to come up with a product at the end of the writing process. Lots of considerations need to be taken into account in the development of writing such as grammar, vocabulary, flow/organization of ideas, coherence, and punctuation. Therefore, it is argued that it is a difficult aspect of literacy (Al-Adeimi and O'Connor 2021,1).

Although we often consider writing as only related to paper, pen, drafts, and edits, it is much broader than that, encompassing interactions. At the first step, we may not associate writing with interaction; however, writing and speaking are in a close relationship with each other. Andrews and Smith (2011, 7) state that speaking is a “rehearsal for writing”. They maintain that ideas can be discussed and negotiated in groups and developed into writing. In this sense, multiple voices can be invited into the writing process, which leads to dialogic writing.

3.1 Dialogic writing in practice: L2 writing as a process

Considering that learning has a social aspect and that learning can happen by interacting and collaborating with other people, writing can also be taught with interactive construction (Mariage 2001,180). For example,

Beck, Jones, Storm, and Smith (2020,1) suggest that the teachers should encourage their students to talk explicitly about their writing process, and then they can scaffold this process with the questions and prompts. In so doing, they list some prompts to be performed by the teachers to design interactive writing constructions. Drawing on their study, we also provide sample teacher utterances as follows:

(1) Reflect or recall: Reformulating the students' ideas.

(T): *Your title is 'The Black Cat', right? You inserted 'the' instead of 'a'. This means..."*

(2) Elicit ideas: Obtaining more information from the students.

(T): *How do you describe this main character? What about her physical appearance?*

(3) Praise/encouragement: Motivating the students with positive feedback.

(T): *This is such a great title. Good job.*

(4) Check understanding: Asking students to summarize some aspects (to find out everything is clear).

(T): *This is a good and evil story, right? So, tell me more about the moral?*

(5) Assessment question: Asking questions concerning the writing process.

(T): *Do you think you had any challenges in citations?*

(6) Provide clues (content or metalinguistic): Providing clues concerning the content or metalinguistic components.

(T): *Please tell me what adjectives can be used for telling the physical appearance of a person.*

(7) Exemplify, illustrate, or explain: Explaining for making the writing process much clearer for students.

(T): *In a fairy tale, we have mostly a hero. Let's define it.*

(8) Direct instruction: Giving clear guidance.

(T): *Let's use quotation marks here because the character is talking right now.*

(9) Locate the part of the text that needs improvement

(T): *This paragraph is too short. Add a few sentences.*

These prompts show that the teacher is a mediator between the writing and the students. By providing prompts, the teacher can enable the students to reflect on the writing process and reach a decision.

FOR YOUR NOTE!
It is suggested that dialogic writing sessions be held in groups so that multiple voices can be incorporated into the composition process. When the teacher suggests ideas, they need to be evaluated in the group in the first place. Then, the group members contribute their views and a consensus can be made.

In the above prompts suggested by Beck, Jones, Storm, and Smith (2020, 4), the interactive pattern is between the teachers and students. On the other hand, the prompts indicated by Mariage (2001, 179) require other students' involvement, calling for their responses. Those prompts are listed as follows with example teacher remarks:

(1) Floor holding: The main aim here is to make everyone's voice heard in the group. In doing this, the teacher gives everyone equal opportunity to say their ideas without being interrupted by any group member.

(T): *Okay, Ali, I did not hear you at all. What is your idea? What is the audience of this paper?*

(T): *Okay, friends. Let's listen to Elif now.*

(2) Permission: The teacher asks for permission to negotiate an idea with the students. The traditional role of the teacher is thus dismissed and other students' responses can also be expanded.

(T): *Elif, sorry for interrupting but do you want to say that the title of the text is too wordy? Right?*

(3) Direct call on students: In the groups, some students may stay silent and contribute no idea. The teacher, therefore, nominates some silent students and provides opportunities to add their opinions to the writing process.

(T): *What about you, Ali? Should we use the word 'gloomy' for describing the weather in this sentence? Do you want to add any adjective for the weather?*

We can understand from the prompts suggested by Beck, Jones, Storm, and Smith (2020, 4) and Mariage (2001, 179) that dialogic writing is process-oriented. That is, the teachers do not focus on end-products but the process that the writing has gone through. In doing this, they can employ group works and encourage the students to speak their ideas freely. Each student's contribution is respected and given a place in the writing process. Even deciding on word choice, the teacher asks for every member's opinion, which is useful for their involvement in the writing.

3.2 Argumentation in L2 writing

"My father used to say 'Don't raise your voice, improve your argument.'"

Desmond Tutu

Hirvela (2017, 1) argues that writing argumentative texts is an important indicator of L2 writing performance. He also maintains this indicator is often considered as an end-product although the process of development of argumentation needs to be considered as well. That is, 'inquiry' must be on focus. Thus, L2 students should be equipped with the necessary thinking skills to direct essential questions before or during writing an argumentative text (Hirvela 2017, 3). According to Newell, Bloome, and Hirvela (2015, 48), learning how to write argumentatively does not only necessitate techniques and skills for producing an effective argumentation but also participation in social exchanges. They add that argumentative writing is social in that the students need to interact with others to explore new ideas and perspectives. Therefore, writing arguments can be considered as taking part in dialogues and allowing everyone to take their turns (VanDerHeide, Juzwik, and Dunn 2016, 289). For example, the students can be given a controversial topic and asked to evaluate their peers' responses by indicating the points they agree/disagree with. In doing this, they are encouraged to explain why they agree/disagree and add their ideas; they also may direct questions to them to ask for more clarification (Roose and Newell 2020, 266).

Reina and Clark (2019, 2) also suggested a dialogic writing approach that can be used in composing argumentative writing: 'Talk to the Wall'. Accordingly, the steps proceed in the following way:

Talk to the wall: This is the first stage where the students metaphorically talk to the wall to find out their background knowledge of the given topic. In other words, it is the 'What do I know about the topic?' stage.

Build the evidence: In this stage, students search for information related to the topic. Opposing and supporting evidence is gathered.

Share the evidence: Students share the evidence that they have built recently. Sharing is also a good opportunity to find out other evidence concerning the topic.

Argue the evidence: Students share their ideas and listen to others to find out their reactions and further thoughts.

Build an oral opinion essay: The students create an oral essay in groups. Every group member is responsible to create a specific part of the composition.

Write your own opinion piece: In this stage, after the students negotiate in oral opinions, each of them tries writing their opinion essays.

Talk to the wall (final stage): They compare and contrast what they know now and what they knew before this whole process began. They can thus see the gains in knowledge.

This cycle can help compose dialogic argumentative writing for L2 students. The students are engaged in an interactive process through active listening and reasoning. However, there may be some occasions where the L2 students need guidance or prompts. They may not know how to explore other students' ideas or add on these ideas. The teachers thus direct some questions to encourage student-student interaction as follows (Al-Adeimi and O'Connor 2021, 4):

- *What do you think about what has been said?*
- *Who agrees? Who disagrees? Why do you think that?*
- *Can you provide an example of this?*

These questions may prompt the students to utter their claims and counterarguments which will be useful for writing an argumentative composition. In doing this, they engage in dialogic interactions with other classmates.

3.3 Application: Homeschooling in the future

In this section, building on the related literature (Al-Adeimi and O'Connor 2021, 4; Reina and Clark 2019, 2; Roose and Newell 2020, 266), we provide a sample application for L2 dialogic writing by suggesting certain steps.

Accordingly, let's imagine that the students are expected to write an argumentative essay about the role of homeschooling in the future. In doing this, the L2 teacher will divide the students into certain groups. Each group will search for the topic by considering the pros and cons of homeschooling. The first step is thus creating familiarity with the topic through obtaining information.

The second step is to tell the students to expand what they have found while gathering information for homeschooling. That is, they may add new ideas apart from the evidence they have gathered so far. This means that their views are welcomed and respected.

For the third step, as the heart of argumentation is to have a sceptical attitude towards one's views and others, the teacher is expected to guide the students with some questions that prompt critical thinking such as:

- *What is the purpose of homeschooling?*
- *In what ways it is different from formal schooling?*
- *Which learners might be vulnerable if the whole teaching is based on homeschooling?*

These questions can help the students to produce ideas and handle different aspects of homeschooling. In addition, the teacher needs to hear every member's voice in the group to promote involvement and make this process dialogic. In doing this, the teacher may address such questions to all group members:

- *What evidence do you have to support homeschooling in the future, Ali?*
- *Elif, what is your strongest counterargument for what Ali has just said?*

- *Do you think your arguments are weak? What could be done to make them strong? How could you convince your reader, then?*

In so doing, the teacher should visit all groups and pay attention to each utterance of the group members. When necessary, the teacher should give prompts to motivate the students for further ideas.

Study Questions:

1. Suppose that you are a L2 teacher and you have found a topic on which your students are expected to develop argumentative writing. List the steps for designing this activity and suggest some potential questions for the students in each step.
2. Suppose that you will design a shared-reading activity for your L2 learners (kindergarteners) and you have decided to use a fairy-tale in this activity. Which considerations should be taken into account for choosing the appropriate text?
3. Is there a link between dialogic pedagogy and L2 literacy skills? If yes, how?
4. What would be the potential problems of incorporating dialogic pedagogy in L2 reading and writing classes?

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CHAPTER V

WORKING ON DEVELOPING CRITICAL SKILLS THROUGH ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

The chapter discusses the role of critical thinking (CT) skills and activities in foreign language teaching and aims to answer how it is used as a language pedagogy, one that enables learners to effectively take charge of their own thinking and thus analyzing and evaluating their own learning processes, becoming autonomous learners and reflective practitioners. CT is a thinking process that we can use to solve problems, when making decisions and drawing inferences. Each of which are considered as key thinking activities in different settings. This chapter considers specific teaching strategies that have emerged to promote CT skills in the language classroom and includes practical suggestions for lesson design and activities. It also suggests areas where further work is necessary to cement CT skills and activities in English language teaching (ELT).

Introduction

The new technological era requires individuals to improve themselves for the engagement and integration of new skills continuously. Critical thinking is also emphasized in ELT education where teachers are expected to enable their students to think critically and become autonomous learners who can take the control of their own learning. This has brought significant changes to the field of chapter broadly sets out the critical thinking skills and activities in the field of ELT. Current definitions and the background of CT

is examined in the existent literature along with some of the activities that can be applied in pre-service ELT teacher trainee programs. The chapter concludes with some implications and recommendations for all ELT stakeholders ranging from student teachers, learners to teachers and teacher educators.

While CT has been in focus since the early beginning of the 20th century, the concept dates back more than two thousand years to Socrates' period, in 400-360 BC. Socratic questioning defines the scope and rationale for a discussion or claim of any knowledge. Before discussion one has to think profoundly and find a ground for one's assumptions. Today's modern critical thinking concept derives from the adoption of this concept by Socrates' followers including Plato, Aristotle and others.

In educational literature, CT is conceptualized in terms of processes and skills, along with its complex nature and demands for higher order reasoning skills, cognitive / metacognitive skills and mental processes (Almeida and Franco 2011; Astleitner 2002; Carroll 2005; Halpern 1999; 2006; Lin 2018; Miele and Wigfield 2014). Understanding the nature of CT also requires engaging in many different skills such as the questioning of information, analyzing the attained knowledge, acquiring problem solving skills, testing validity, and giving proper explanations of certain tasks and activities (Hong and Choi 2015).

CT has been defined in different ways in the literature, often referring to the main tenets. Halpern (1999) provides a fairly comprehensive definition:

Critical thinking refers to the use of cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. Critical thinking is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed. It is the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions. Critical thinkers use these skills appropriately, without prompting, and usually with conscious intent, in a variety of settings. That is, they are predisposed to think critically. When we think critically, we are evaluating the outcomes of our thought processes—how good a decision is or how well a problem is solved (70).

From this perspective, it can be understood that CT can be handled with different cognitive skills and one of its purposes is to transfer such skills so

that we can all share in the solving of problems and analyzing situations. From another perspective, CT has also been defined as “purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based” (Facione 1990, 2). As Lin (2018) summarized all the definitions portraying CT emphasize that it is “a self-adjusting cognitive process in which the mind is used to make reasonable judgments” (2).

How can EFL learners become critical thinkers?

The rapid developments in technology have brought CT to be considered as a key educational goal in the 21st century, that is, the roles of both teachers and students have dramatically been changed from simply transferring or receiving information to implementing critical judgment and creative thinking (Petek and Bedir 2018; Piedade et al. 2020; Willingham 2008). Frequently described as a metacognitive process, CT consists of sub-skills such as creating, evaluating, analyzing, applying, and understanding, which is displayed in the following figure, whereby the appropriate use of these skills helps stakeholders produce a reasonable conclusion to an argument or a practical solution to a problem.

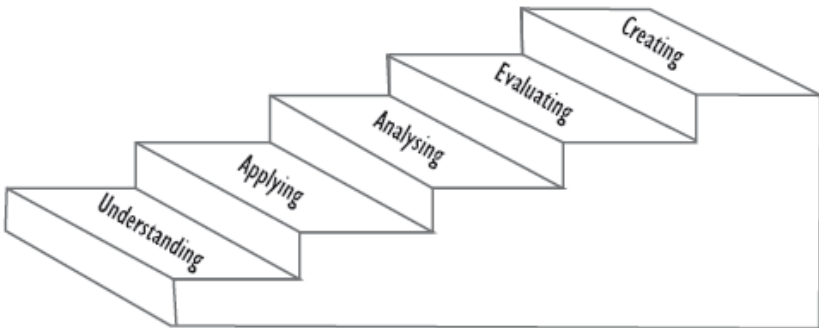


Figure 1. A stairway of critical thinking (Hughes 2014, 3).

Considering its complex nature, it can be a challenge to adopt, acquire, or develop CT for use in the classroom. This has been seen in the debates over culture that emerged in context of CT implementation in EFL settings,

which stemmed from claims that CT is culture specific (Atkinson 1997) and it is nearly impossible to apply CT in non-Western cultures. Similarly, Fox (1994) stated that CT has a close relationship with culture:

This thing we call “critical thinking” or “analysis” has strong cultural components. It is more than just a set of writing and thinking techniques—it is a voice, a stance, a relationship with texts and family members, friends, teachers, the media, even the history of one’s country. This is why “critical analysis” is so hard for faculty members to talk about; because it is learned intuitively it is easy to recognize, like a face or a personality, but it is not so easily defined and is not at all simple to explain to someone who has been brought up differently. (125)

On the other hand, Davidson (1998) states that CT can be implemented in any culture and context and the role of universities determines the level of CT skills in language institutions. A recent study (Floyd 2011) also suggested that cultural stereotypes can have an influence over perceptions while evaluating CT skill. Therefore, the difficulties experienced in CT can be related to culture that the use of L2 as a nonnative speaker can affect students’ CT performance (Atkinson 1997).

As a non-overt social practice, CT requires more than a well-defined and teachable set of behaviors; it has an exclusive and reductive character; thus, it is hard to go beyond narrow contexts of instructions when taught (Atkinson 1997). Regarding the fact that CT does not have one simple definition in literature (Brown 2014; Hughes 2014), teachers mainly adopt some frameworks consisting of cognitive skills to provide a foundation in order to design instructional activities to develop students’ CT skills efficiently (Reed 1998). The framework below emphasizes cognitive sub-skills to develop students’ CT skills (Facione 1990; see Figure 2).

In order to prepare students for English language learning as critical thinkers, students need sustained thematic input, explanation, and demonstration of relevant skills with content-based instruction (Brown 2014). Considering how the ability of CT depends on adequate content knowledge, students should know a topic well enough to think about it critically; however, content knowledge may not be sufficient. To illustrate, Willingham (2008) claimed that: “Knowing that one should think critically

is not the same as being able to do so. That requires domain knowledge and practice” (13). Possessing adequate domain knowledge and practice suggests that students will not only achieve a quality of reasoning, but obtain an ability to select the correct answer (Hart et al. 2021). Thus, a perennial goal of CT in the educational arena is to encourage learners to complete an autonomous learning cycle and self-regulated learning milieu. In today’s digitalized learning atmosphere, learners are also supposed to merge multiple abilities along with CT skills to process information, consider beliefs and opinions, and solve problems.

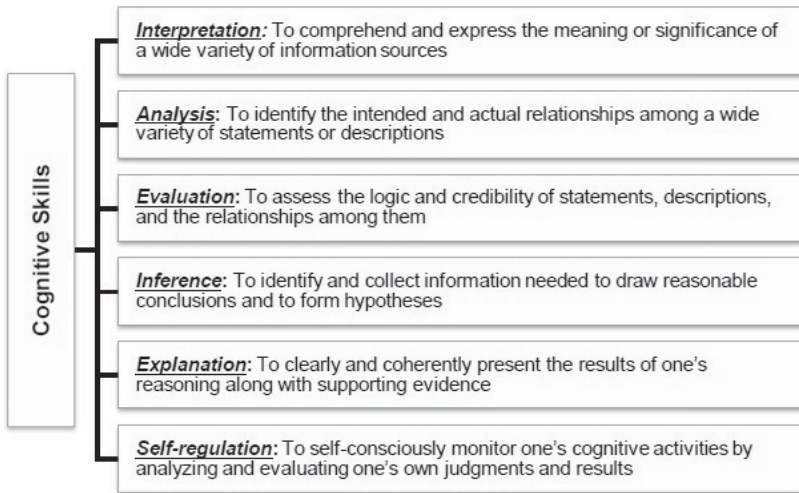


Figure 2. The Delphi Project’s core CT skills (adapted from Facione 1990 as cited in Brown 2014, 272).

Students can be encouraged to think more critically and creatively in foreign language learning by learning and applying CT skills. They can also become more aware of their own CT skills as well as become more active in their learning process (Bedir 2013; Yükselir 2020). Considering the role of teachers is also significant in terms of how they develop and foster CT skills embedded in curriculum, syllabus, and materials in language classes. However, it can be difficult to analyze, synthesize and interpret all the instructional affordances (Yükselir 2020; Tuzlukova et al. 2017).

The significance of EFL learners to think critically lies in enabling them to think the right thing for different scenarios; thus, while it is not possible to acquire any CT skills without context, there are five metacognitive strategies that teachers can use to help students become critical thinkers (Willingham 2008, 18):

1. Special programs (CT programs) are worth it.
2. Thinking critically should be taught in the context of subject matter.
3. Critical thinking is not just for advanced students. (Everyone is capable of CT.)
4. Student experiences offer entrée to complex concepts. (Especially when subject matter knowledge lacks.)
5. To teach critical thinking strategies, make them explicit and practice them.

Employing a specific framework and the instructional model of CT skills in language learning environments improves not only language skills, but also CT skills; therefore, teachers should be careful to provide authentic and sustained thematic input for students to gather adequate content knowledge and later use it to improve their CT skills as well as the linguistic ability (Brown 2014). The implementation of CT in language learning environments also enhances language skills. According to previous studies, improving CT skills affected students' reading in L2 (Fahim et al. 2012; Pourghasemian and Hosseini 2017) as well as writing (Alnofaie 2013). On the other hand, teaching CT explicitly was also found to have positive impact on the students' speaking proficiency especially when explicit instruction of CT was provided (Iman 2017; Sanavi and Tarighat 2014). Moreover, contrary to previous studies that found improvement in specific language skills, in a study conducted by Petek (2018) it was found that students' enlarging vision of CT helped the development of all language skills.

Teachers play a significant role in the implementation of CT skills and students' development (Üstünlüoğlu 2004). This can only be done by creating an environment fostering CT during their teaching practice. For this reason, pre-service English language teachers need to be sufficiently equipped with adequate knowledge and skills to enrich language learning environments with CT (Barnett and Francis 2011; Davies 2011; Petek and

Bedir 2018; Şeker and Kömür 2008). They should also be encouraged to infuse CT into their teaching syllabus effectively (Petek 2018). Lastly, the application of CT skills as mentioned in the curriculum should be encouraged by the education system as a whole (Alagozlu 2007; Bedir 2016).

CT Activities for English Language Teacher Trainees

Willingham (2008) suggests CT activities should be taught in the context of subject matter. That being said, we need to consider the contents of the courses offered in a particular program. Being one of the pillars of the 21st century educational paradigms, CT comes fore as *sin qua non* at each level of educational endeavors. As mentioned above, teachers have a pivotal role in raising awareness toward CT.

In Turkey, English language teachers graduate upon completion of a four-year undergraduate English language teaching (ELT) program housed in the Schools of Education. Although the courses reveal changes, taken as a whole, the core courses are comprised of similar topics. More specifically, there is a flexibility in the course offerings up to 30% and such courses are usually among the electives. The first year of their education is devoted to foundational courses that focus on reading, writing and conversation skills. Starting in the sophomore year though, student teachers are exposed to more pedagogical courses such as; approaches & methods, teaching language skills, testing and assessment and so on. Recent comparative research conducted on satisfaction with undergraduate education, ELT student teachers of junior and senior years stated that their pre-service education is monotonous, memorization-based, and limited to conceptual information while English language and literature majoring students find theirs creative, thought provoking and fulfilling. (Tunaboğlu and Kazazoğlu 2021). Although this research is beyond the scope of the chapter and the findings cannot be generalized beyond the sample, it has potential to provide insights into the contents of the courses offered in the ELT programs. Common sense suggests that we, humans, are prone to practice what we have been exposed to. In order to illustrate what can be done to foster CT, four courses that are commonly offered in the ELT programs were selected and possible CT activities were provided.

As the key person in fostering CT skills, the ESL/EFL teacher needs to be aware of how to create such a supportive environment to integrate CT practice in the classroom. Below are some strategies for educators/teachers to consider when integrating CT skills to ELT programmes. These are appropriate for use in any foreign language class and encourage collaboration and creativity.

Type of tasks to promote CT

Prediction task: Guessing strategies have always become valuable tools to promote CT. For example, predicting the title of a text, a video, book, guessing the rest of the story, thus film related tasks are useful too.

Problem solving task: This allows students to work collaboratively and focus more on details from a wider perspective. For example, seeking solutions for a daily problem or a classroom-based problem are good examples of such tasks. An example of this approach would be to find someone in the class who is seeking help for a problem, and give students time to interact with each other and generate a shortlist of appropriate responses.

Discussion task: Debate over a topic usually engages students to use their speaking, listening and thinking skills which promote CT as they need to express their opinions and defend their idea freely. The chosen topics for discussion should be selected carefully as they have to be relevant to life in general and do not require specific knowledge about the subject matter.

Support and against task: This is also known as a controversial statement task where learners have to support and be against the same idea in the question. This challenges students as they have to list the reasons of why they are against and support the idea.

Empathy task: This task helps students to understand others' feelings and take perspectives from others' point of view. For example, asking students how they would feel in a particular situation or how would they act if they were another person, are effective tasks that promote CT skills. A character from a story or a film can be used for such activities.

KWL chart task: (What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I Learned) as a teaching techniques KWL. This technique has always been popular in teaching and learning as it fosters CT skills and facilitates comprehension.

Open-ended questions: Students feel more confident when they are given questions that do not require right or wrong answers but prioritize and value students' opinions on a given topic.

Below are sample weekly topics that could be used in language classes to promote CT skills.

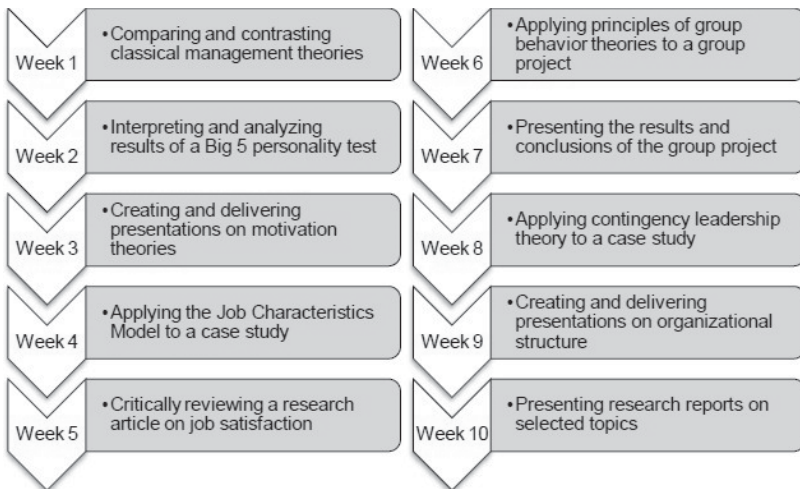


Figure 3. Tutorial Activities (Brown 2014, 275)

Considering the value of CT, it is clear that what teacher trainees are exposed to during pre-service education can be a potential predictor of what kind of teaching pedagogy they will adopt. If we need to relate this argument to the content of this chapter, then, teacher trainees are likely to practice CT in their teaching context provided that their teacher preparation program offers a curriculum which is itself rich in CT activities, tasks, projects and so on. With this in mind, the following exemplar endeavors can be integrated into the courses followed by teacher trainees in the ELT programs.

1. Course: Conversation Skills (Freshman)

Although the syllabus might change from one context to another, the goal of the course is to familiarize and help teacher trainees improve spoken language skills along with rhetorical features of various genres of speech. The following is one of the many ideas that can be exploited in this specific course with an emphasis on CT. Following the teaching of the major tenets of prepared talks, a genre of speech, students can undertake a project that fosters their CT skills as follows.

Goal: To help teacher trainees synthesize information from available sources and analyze them to decide on their subject for oral presentation.

Class: Freshman

1. Do research and find a quotation, epigram, proverb of your choice
2. Study its etymology
3. Prepare a 5 minute- oral presentation
4. In your presentation, please include the reason/s WHY you have picked that particular topic, enrich your presentation with real life experiences or examples, finally end your presentation with a slogan.

Along with higher order thinking skills like synthesis, analysis, the student teachers need to rationalize the topic of their talk by responding to the question why. Unlike the question words who, what, how, and when, WHY requires data-driven reasoning. As mentioned earlier, CT as a metacognitive process, is closely interlinked with various subskills such as: understanding, evaluating, analyzing, applying and creating. And, in the above activity, students can deploy many of them.

2. Course: Testing & Assessment

Along with various hands-on actionable projects, some other activities that foster CT can be integrated into the content of the lesson. The following is one example of such in steps:

Goal: To make student teachers critically think about by comparing and contrasting international and local proficiency tests and critically weigh the

potential benefits and drawbacks of both groups of tests.

Class: Senior teacher trainees

1. Group students in 4 or 5 based on the population of the class
2. Ask students to browse online sources to find international and local proficiency tests and bring a sample of questions to class.
3. Ask groups to present their findings regarding pluses and minuses of the sample questions they have sourced from the international and local arena. Tap on the WHY question.
4. Ask the groups to generate their own set of questions based on their analysis.

As can be seen, in each of the activities, teacher trainees are supposed to harness subskills of CT to some extent. In the first activity, freshman students are expected to spell out the reason as to why they have selected that specific topic for their presentation while in the second activity senior students will first synthesize (choosing two proficiency tests from tens of available samples), then analyze each test to find out the weaknesses and strengths. As stated by Halpern (1999), CT is primarily purposeful and includes problem solving, decision making, and weighing likelihoods.

3. Practicum (Senior)

Student teachers do practicum in their senior year of pre-service education in Turkey. They teach several times with the supervision of the mentor teacher. However, they teach also for evaluation purposes in the presence of the assigned teaching staff from the department and the mentor. Below is a possible extension that can enhance CT.

Goal: To help the student teacher analyze her teaching performance through questioning.

Class: Senior

Following the student teacher's teaching session for evaluation, the teaching staff who is in charge holds a mini-conference with the student alone. During the conference, the staff goes over her notes to ask questions:

1. How did you find your interaction with the students?
2. Given a chance, how would you change X activity and WHY?
3. How would you modify the closure part of your session and WHY?
4. Which part of your session did you like most and WHY?
5. Which part of your session did you find most challenging?
6. Given a chance, which parts of your session would you change and WHY?

These and similar questions that supervisor could ask to the mentees are likely to trigger CT skills. These questions will both help the teacher trainees realize their weaknesses and activate their CT skills.

4. Critical Reading and Writing (Sophomore)

Student teachers take a critical reading and writing course in the third semester during their second year. Although the course content varies across universities in Turkey the main aim is to equip students with 21st century skills and help them to think and take a critical perspective when approaching any task. Below is a possible extension that can enhance CT.

Goal: To help student teachers understand and analyze the story ‘The Gift of the Magi’ by O. Henry (William Sdyney Porter). The story is about a couple who wed recently, had no money but wanted to buy a Christmas gift for each other.

Class: Sophomore

The best way to bring the CT concept to critical reading and writing classes is to ask the students for an example to rewrite the story from their own or someone’s perspective. Alternatively, students can try to find cultural differences/similarities between their own culture and that of the society mentioned in the story. Students may change the situation of Jim and Maggie and rewrite the story. They could write about Maggie’s feelings before she bought the present from Jim’s perspective. Similarly, they can do the same activity for Jim’s feeling. Role play is another activity that promotes CT and encourages students to consider how others feel or react in a particular situation.

Conclusion

The current age is characterized by immense influx of information from almost every discipline. And what is more, reaching knowledge has never been easier thanks to the internet. Yet, surrounded by an abundance of information, neither today's teachers nor students are at ease. In the midst of mountains of knowledge, we need to be furnished with CT skills in order to synthesize, analyze, evaluate, infer, understand, interpret and create knowledge. The present age looks at the connections underneath what is observable. In other words, the top of the iceberg is already known to everybody, we need questions that are directed to what is under the water. As nicely put by Einstein "education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think".

CT skills teach people how they should think. As stated by Harpern (1999), CT is purposeful and a reasoned act of mind which proves to us how good a decision is or how well a problem is settled. In order to make CT a common practice and primary component of every lesson at schools, we, teacher educators, need to train our prospective teachers with CT-rich content as we mentioned above, particularly as we are all being exposed to a huge amount of information, not all of which is reliable.

When properly executed, peer assessments, teacher feedback sessions, even asking a question as simple as 'why do you think we have this X course in our curriculum?' at the beginning of the semester is sufficient to create wonders by feeding the early seeds of CT in your students' mind.

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CHAPTER VI

CRITICAL READING AND WRITING: GENRES AND PRACTICE

CEMILE DOĞAN AND SEHER BALBAY

This chapter focuses on critical reading and writing through genres. It considers how different text types assist learners in developing their critical reading and writing skills. By the end of the chapter, the reader will be able to:

- Recognize a number of genre types that can be utilized to develop reading and writing skills.
- Identify a number of activities, questions, and techniques that exploit critical reading and writing genres.

Before reading questions

- Which genres can you name?
- What are the features of these genres, their language style, and organization patterns?
- What are some of the benefits of exposing students to a variety of genres?

Questions answered in this chapter

- What is critical reading?
- What is critical writing?
- What are the most common genres?
- Why is it necessary to study genres when teaching critical reading and writing?

1. Introduction

“Genre” is the general term that refers to any category of written or spoken, aural or visual forms based on a set of stylistic criteria. Each genre is mapped around a specific structure and a language style in order to transmit the message to the intended audience to serve a function. They are context-dependent and formed by conventions that change over time as new genres are invented while old forms succumb to obscurity. In the case of reading, to start with, genres can refer to the types of texts such as poetry, fiction novels, biographies, stories, short stories, and so on. Eggins (2004) associates genres with the context of culture by stating that genres are cultural entities. Martin and Rose (2003) define genres as staged, co-oriented, and purposeful activities. The term “activity” is striking, as it is quite generic. Genres include essays, cover letters, statements of purpose, formal emails, articles for a general audience, academic articles, advertisements, billboard scripts, recipes, obituaries, text messages, and the like.

In language classes, students are exposed to the critical analysis of different genres and are required to write in different genres. Today, it is more likely than ever that a student will be using English proficiency not merely to achieve an expected score in a standardized test, but for authentic communication purposes. This is the most significant reason why genre-centered critical reading and writing is indispensable to any English language curriculum.

Currently, genres gain importance in the globalized and digitized world where most interaction requires English. In addition, the online platforms lend themselves to creating new genres that have their own format and rhetoric, which are not prescriptions, but are formed according to the shared norms of the online platform users. More students see advertisements in English, shop online from English-medium shopping sites, post on social media in English, participate in international online forums in English, have friends abroad that they have never seen face to face, engage in conversations through text messaging, apply to programs, universities, scholarships, or volunteer work in English, and read academic articles even when they are not students any more or are not employed in the academic world. Hence, the importance of dealing with a wide array of genre types in language courses is undeniable. This chapter aims to explore the significance of exposing English language students to various genres while suggesting some specific strategies for deciphering genre conventions. It will also provide examples of different reading and writing genres from English language course materials through critical analysis.

2. Critical Reading

Genres are the outcome of a culture that promotes conveying the message through a particular structure and discourse. When thinking of reading, to start with, the genre can refer to the types of texts, in the common use of the word, such as poetry, fiction novels, biographies, stories, short stories, formal and informal emails, posts on social media, advertisements, and so on. Genre is not simply a structure that the reading text has or that students are taught to abide by; each genre also has a specific language style through which the discourse helps the message to be conveyed.

Although this chapter focuses on critical reading and writing in relation to genres, it is necessary to note that reading and writing too are activities performed with the purpose of communication, and that communication should not be perceived in its limited sense with spoken interaction *per se*. In fact, there is no text that would not be categorized under a particular genre. Bakhtin states that genres are economical and are the results of a process of habituation, which means that there is an established routine of jargon and organizational format (Grübel, 2015).

Reading comprehension is a complex process. In his seminal book *The Death of the Author*, Barthes (1967) claims that it is not important to stick to the expectations of the reader and meet them, but to make room for the interpretation of the reader. Readers, when deciphering what they read, engage in a schemata activating process - that is they relate what they read to what they already know to make sense of what they read. The process of activating the schemata takes place in an interactive way of bottom-up and top-down processes. In the bottom-up process, the reader makes use of the details in the reading to reach a general understanding of the main idea. In the top-down process, the reader makes use of the global meaning in the text to understand the micro-level, local details (Heberle, 2000; Meurer, 1991). Reading comprehension requires an ongoing engagement in making inferences. Considering the interaction that takes place during reading comprehension - reading any genre, not only literary works, such as poetry, would require a cyclic procedure in which what the reader remembers is used to understand what the reader reads next (Heberle, 2000). Reading comprehension requires not only the interaction of what has been read and is being read, but also the relation between the background information in the reader's mind to what they read. The fixed units of thought - stereotypical depictions as background information - are called "frames" or "scripts" (Minsky, 1982; Schank & Childers, 1984). If the new information in a reading text fits the reader's script, the comprehension of the content is much easier (Heberle, 2000). Critical discourse analysis suggests that the script in the reader's mind is shaped to a large extent by social, historical, and political perspectives the readers are exposed to, reflect on, and reproduce. This is the main reason why the same text can be interpreted differently by different people.

When teaching reading, broader literacies are required due to the recently developed genres of the digital world (Elola & Oskoz, 2017). Today, the type of text that students are exposed to and may need to produce outnumber the textbook lists of genres due to the ever-evolving media of communication in the digital world. Internet memes, for example, were not on the agenda as a written language genre until recently. Similarly, students that use social media apps where pictures, updates, or news are posted, will encounter different types of written genre, discourse and symbols such as

emoji. While learning materials should aim to reflect the ever-evolving written language subgenres students encounter, more helpful to their acquisition and practice of critical skills is the confidence to engage with a wide array of formal and informal genres, emerging corpora and dynamic discourse styles themselves.

Critical reading entails some higher order thinking skills, such as analysing, synthesizing and evaluating. These skills are not limited to equipping the language learner with better reading skills for academic achievement, but also encompass critical thinking skills that language learners can transfer to the world outside the language classroom. As such, there are certain things that readers are expected to analyze, synthesize and evaluate when reading critically. To start with, critical reading entails analysis of the text read. Analysis refers to understanding the deeper meanings in the text by “digging” into it (Collins, 1993). When doing so, the reader deciphers implied meanings between the lines - making inferences which usually require synthesizing information in the reader’s background or in the title of the text, in the whole arrangement of the text, in the background of the writer, in the pictures accompanying the text, or even in the journal, magazine, book, or website where the text is published. The readers articulate all the information to reach conclusions, solve problems, or compare claims. What the readers evaluate can be how relevant the text is to their interest, and how adequate and credible the information in the text is. In short, readers evaluate the “worth” of the text (Harris & Hodges, 1981, p. 74). The main objective behind developing critical reading skills is to enhance attentive and wise evaluation skills considering the intricate details in a given text.

2.1. How to develop critical reading skills through the use of different genres

It is not uncommon for reading texts in English language teaching coursebooks to focus on discrete items, such as vocabulary through multiple choice, or more commonly, fill in the blanks type of exercises. While such single correct answer tasks might be the best fit to teach vocabulary or particular grammar, they remain confined in their ability to check whether the student has grasped the deeper meanings in the text that are not stated

explicitly to the naked eye (Tomitch, 2000). Critical reading questions do not have straight forward answers; hence they expect the reader to be active in interpreting the text based on inter-sentential and intra-sentential contextual clues, outside relevant information on the writer, and the publication or the time the text was published or posted. Critical reading questions focus the reader's attention on the whole text rather than parts of it because the answers require putting together details from different parts of the text.

Brown (1994) suggests that students' schemata should be activated through pre-reading activities. A topic is introduced via pre-reading questions - which also prepare the students for the reading. There are also reading questions that students find answers to when reading the text. These questions help focus on particular parts of the text. In the post-reading questions, students can be asked either comprehension questions, or build on questions that require reflection on the text - which can be discussed or written. Some critical reading questions that are suggested in the literature are as follows (Correia, 2006; Heberle, 2000):

- What is the main idea in the text?
- What is the aim of each paragraph?
- Are there parts of the text that can be ignored? Which parts? Why?
- Where, when, why, and by whom is the text written?
- What is the genre of the text and how does it manifest itself in the language and organization of the text?
- What keywords are used to summarize the text? Do they appeal to emotions or reason?
- Is figurative language used? Are there metaphors, similes, personifications and hyperbole in the text? What do they refer to? Why were they preferred instead of more direct references?
- Which tense/s predominate in the text? Why?
- If there are visuals, what is their contribution to deciphering the meaning of the text? Are there specific references to parts of the text with the visuals?

- Are there signs of stereotyped, sexist, racist, ageist or other discriminatory language?

Kahu and Gerrard (2018) suggest that as a critical reading strategy, engaging learners with tasks and questions that relate the text to their personal experience is an effective method. Their experimental study was based on Kahu's design (2013) which was based on the idea that emotional engagement affected the interest in the text and the motivation for reading comprehension. They also state that emotional engagement in critical reading also has a positive effect on cognitive ability, the time and effort put into reading comprehension, "deep learning, and self-regulation" (Kahu & Gerrard, 2018, p. 73). Hence, critical reading questions can be questions that would help readers reflect on and build on what they have read as well. However, it should be noted that a generic categorization of critical reading questions can be classified by how meaning is constructed through the interaction between the reader's background and linguistic knowledge, with the textual clues. That is, questions on contextual clues, inter-sentential and intra-sentential relations in the text, connotations of vocabulary or structure, implied meanings lying under the surface level, coherence items, and cognates and false cognates which constitute the most common critical reading skills questions. To exemplify critical reading questions on a text from different genres, sample questions on a variety of genres will be provided in the next part of this chapter.

Below is a short piece of news adapted from the open access English language resource site *Voice of America* (voalearnenglish.com, n.d.). Read the paragraph and think of some critical reading questions that would require genre-specific attention from students.

Task 1**Greek Gulf to Abandon Abandoned Ships**
The Associated Press

In Greece, shipwrecks from long ago lie in the waters of the sea abandoned. The huge remains of ships rise up in the waters near the Gulf of Elefsina. Their days of sailing the world's seas are over. Now the Greek authorities are removing the ships, some of which have been abandoned for many years.

Some of the critical reading questions that dwell on particular characteristics of news language are below. The possible answers are provided to emphasize the fact that critical reading requires a holistic approach to text analysis.

1. How do we understand that the short piece above is a piece of news?
 - The title is explanatory of the content; however, it is precise and requires the reader to read the rest of the text to understand the references made in the title.
 - The title is followed by the name of the news agency. The initials of each word in "The Associated Press" are capitalised.
 - More detail is provided in the text below the title as to who is abandoning what and why. The vague phrase "authorities" is a frequent word used when reporting news, be it on TV, on the internet or in the press.
2. Change the title of the piece of news above into a full grammatical sentence.
 - The Gulf in Greece is to / is going to / will / has to / is planning to get rid of / remove / leave / give up on the shipwrecks (which have not been cared for for a long time.)

3. What are the clues to help the reader understand that the title refers to the present or near future?
 - The grammatical structure “is to” in the title provides clues to understand that the news is about what is happening now or will happen in the near future.
 - The fact that the text is a piece of news indicates that the reported events have most probably taken place recently, or will take place soon, although it is still possible that the content refers to events in the past or in the distant future as well.

4. What are some contextual clues in the text to help guess the meaning of “abandon”?
 - The word “shipwreck” is a clue - it is likely that unused, dysfunctional, sunk, or broken ships are not to be kept because they cause visual and chemical pollution.
 - The phrase “long ago” is a clue because ships used long ago are likely to be old and therefore likely to be removed from the sea.
 - The word “remains” is a clue because it indicates that the ships are not intact.
 - The sentence “Their days of sailing the world’s seas are over.” is a clue. It makes sense that they are to be removed if they cannot sail any more.
 - “Remove” is another clue to guess the meaning of “abandon”. Writers paraphrase what they have stated before several times in the same text in the news pieces.

5. If a comma was to be added in the first sentence, which word would it come after?
 - “In Greece, shipwrecks from long ago lie in the waters of the sea abandoned.” In this sentence the comma can follow “long ago” or “sea”. The reader needs to pause at these two points so that the sentence is divided into meaningful chunks.

Task 2

Examine the formal letter of rejection below and find the clues from the text about the implied meanings referred to in the questions.

July 21, 2021
Mrs. Jane Brown
2345 Westside Drive
London, 98676

Dear Mrs Jane Brown,
Thank you for presenting your proposal. It was impressive.
I am sorry to inform you that the board decided to accept another proposal. Please feel free to follow our posts about future opportunities on our social media sites.
Best wishes in your future endeavours.

Sincerely,
Lee Davidson
HR director

Some of the possible critical reading questions that can be asked about the formal letter above are as follows:

1. Compare and contrast the formal letter conventions of your country with the one provided above. Do you write the address, the salutation, and the signature on the same side of the paper in your letters? How is the paragraphing different from the formal letters in your country? Are there any differences in the style or the organization pattern of the letter?
 - In some countries formal letter conventions may differ. Salutations may also be culture sensitive. The Western linear organization pattern usually starts by an expression of appreciation and the message follows it. It is concise and direct.

2. Are there any implied meanings in the letter?
 - The writer is the same person who has seen the proposal. Sometimes, representative agents write and send such impersonal letters in the name of the person who evaluated the proposal.
 - The writer does not prefer to go into much detail as to why the proposal was not accepted. The reasons could be content, formal, pitch or finance related.
 - The writer does not prefer to refer to the name or topic of the proposal either, which could indicate that the letter could be a generic one sent to many other addresses in cases of rejection.
 - The writer does not say that the proposal referred to is rejected, but it is stated that another proposal is accepted, which implies that this one is rejected. Indirect language may be preferred especially when giving bad news to people in formal letters.

3. Does the writer use sexist language in the letter?
 - Yes, the writer uses sexist language which is widely resented today. Instead of the “Mrs” title, the writer could have written “Ms” which would not make any reference to whether the addressee is married or not.

4. Are the writer and the addressee from the same country?
 - It is most likely that both of them are from Britain because the address line does not include the country name.

Task 3

Examine the poem, *The Road Less Travelled* by *Robert Frost*. Think of what the figurative language in the poem refers to. Can you identify with the poet and find specific examples for the situation he depicts in the poem from your life?

The Road Less Travelled

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
To where they ended, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And posing perhaps the greater test,
Because it was narrow and wanted wear,
Rising so steeply into thinning air
That a man would struggle just to rest,

While the other offered room to play
Or stand at ease along the track.
I took the lonelier road that day,
And knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one that dared me to try,
And that has made all the difference

Some of the critical thinking questions that can be asked in the above poem are below:

1. What may the “two roads in the wood” symbolise?

2. What does “standing long” refer to?
3. What does “looking to see the end of the road” refer to?
4. What does “wanted wear” mean?
5. Which road is the “other” road?
6. What does “offering room to play” refer to?
7. What does “lonelier road” refer to?
8. Why do you think the poet will be talking about his choice with a sigh?
9. Why do you think the poet does not refer to the specifics of his decision?

Task 4

Below is an abstract from an academic paper. Read it and try to answer the critical reading questions below.

This study set out to explore students’ perceptions of critical reading skills. The session will report on the comprehensive mixed-method study conducted at the School of Foreign Languages of a state university in Turkey. Creswell’s Explanatory Sequential Design was used to collect the numerical and short answer data through a self-developed online survey. 50 students responded to the survey, and 19 students were interviewed individually. The survey inquired about the most common critical reading strategies they employ. The semi-structured interview questions were based on the data obtained from the online surveys with the aim being to collect more detailed responses. The interview data were coded by thematic content analysis. The session will report on the findings of the study contributing to the literature on critical reading skills.

Some of the critical reading questions that can be asked about the abstract above are as follows:

1. What was the purpose of writing the abstract above?
2. Is the organization different from an academic essay? In what ways?
3. What other words would you use instead of the words below in an informal conversation if you were speaking with a friend about the

study in the abstract? How would you express the content of the abstract in your own words?

study, set out, explore, session, report, comprehensive, mixed-method, conduct, data, self-developed survey, respond, individually, inquire, employ, semi-structured, obtained, coded, thematic, report on, findings, contribute, literature

4. Discuss where and why abstracts are written and the expected reader audience of abstracts.
5. Do all abstracts abide by the same academic writing conventions?

3. Critical Writing

Writing is a profound means of creating our self by putting words together. It is a rational exercise of mind which requires several techniques to master. Obviously, it would be an assertive statement that one can learn to write like Shakespeare by studying those techniques thoroughly. However, one does not need to possess an inborn talent to write clearly, effectively, and even ostentatiously. It is necessary to learn to handle and play with the words with their literal and deeper meanings, place them into sentences properly to construct sentences and paragraphs to communicate one's message to the readers to explain, inform, persuade, entertain and so on.

When it comes to critical writing, it possesses the characteristics of opinion essays or argumentative essays in general. It entails bringing at least two points of view, including the writer's point of view to explain and evaluate the merits of an argument, such as while writing for a critique of a journal article or a synthesis of the existing ideas in the current research. There is a need for a structure that enables analysis of existing interpretations and developing the argument, supported by related concrete evidence. It bears utmost significance to work on developing critical writing, in fact, on a habitual act of thinking critically, as today's employers tend to seek employees who are able to adapt their thinking into communication through critical reading and writing (Elander et al., 2006; Tapper, 2004). Those who promote these constructs are perceived as not only central to a quality education or a profession but also integral to the society they live in and to the world as a reflective and active citizen (Moore, 2004).

3.1. What exactly is argumentation?

Think about the last argument you had with a person for a while and remember how you exchanged words. Whether some issues are resolved at the end or not, you have a number of words, phrases and sentences flashing before your eyes to be recalled at the right time in the ongoing argument.

The daily argument depiction above, in fact, is a simplified replica of argumentation in critical writing. In a social context, the arguers pick from the stream of ideas coming to their mind and display them one by one by making rigorous adjustments according to the course of argument. They lose focus on the debatable position or claim and support each claim with sufficient evidence. An argument can also be taken as a way to express oneself. Every individual is judged based on their opinions and moves. It is through argument that they can communicate their beliefs, opinions and ideas. It is not a quarrel without any real evidence - supporting thoughts by simply disregarding the audience's counter arguments. Hence, it would be more insightful to make a transition towards the argumentation in writing, which displays itself in the "essay" as a critical writing genre.

Argumentation is a process of conscious questioning which follows a linear fashion in style originating from the Ancient Greeks through which learning is triggered and fostered (Andrews & Mitchell, 2001). To write an argument there is a need for subject knowledge to analyze and draw conclusions to build content together with the stance that the writer will take. Sufficient subject knowledge can be obtained from the literature before starting to write the argument (Wingate, 2011). During this stage, initial steps are taken towards building a position by filtering out the relevant information about the topic. The writer reveals their stance in their writing; several scholars support the use of first-person pronouns in essays instead of an impersonal style which is displayed in the discourse after working on academic conventions (Hyland, 2002; Lillis, 2001).

Critical writing genres analyze and evaluate information, usually from multiple sources, to develop an argument as it is an opportunity for sharing our point of view with others and connecting with others' perspectives rather than defeating them (Boylan, et al., 2020; Devitt, 2004). In

developing the argument, the analysis and evaluation are made through other sources. It is more than just stringing quotes together without looking more deeply at the information and building on it to support the argument (Afshar et al., 2017; Hamied & Emilia, 2017; Wallace & Wray, 2011). That is to say, the information from other sources are broken down to determine how the parts relate to one another or to an overall structure or purpose, and then make judgments about it, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, and possibly “grey areas” in between, which are neither strengths nor weaknesses. Critical reading skills will help with this, as the writer will consider whether the source is reliable, relevant, up-to-date, and accurate. For example, the research methods used in an experiment are examined to assess why they were chosen, or to determine whether they were appropriate, or a writer’s line of reasoning may be deconstructed to see if it is valid or whether there are any gaps. As a result of analysis and evaluation, the reasons why the conclusions of different writers should be accepted or treated with caution can be stated. This will help build a clear line of reasoning which will lead up to conclusions such as the critical writing genres that will be touched upon in the following section.

3.2. Summaries

Summaries are a writing genre that is applicable to public communication and is an essential part of one’s profession. At university, writing summaries constitutes a vital part of assignments. Summaries are tasks that are required when the plot or the content of a discussion in the classroom, an assignment, a research paper, a dissertation, or a critique of a source material such as a book review, a film or an article in a newspaper needs to be expressed in a short paragraph or essay. For writing any of these summaries, there are requirements which can be outlined (Swales & Feak, 2007, p. 148) as follows:

- a. The source text/s’ relevant parts should be on the focus
- b. The source text/s should be precisely represented
- c. The summary should not include directly copied portions of the text only.

A thorough comprehension of the text, video or the listening excerpt is the preliminary requirement to meet the needs above. The length and purpose of the summaries may differ and are mostly decided by the instructors. If the aim is to check comprehension through language production and reveal the main ideas in the content, the students are not to disregard any main idea expressed. However, sometimes not the whole content but a particular point is cited to synthesize with the writer's own ideas, in which case the balance of the ideas cited may not be of equal importance. To begin with, the main idea and major supports are detected, proceeding with minor supports, and concluding sentences.

Short Text Summary

In a short summary, in-text references should be included while personal comments omitted. The preliminary stages of the summary can be outlined as in the flowchart below:

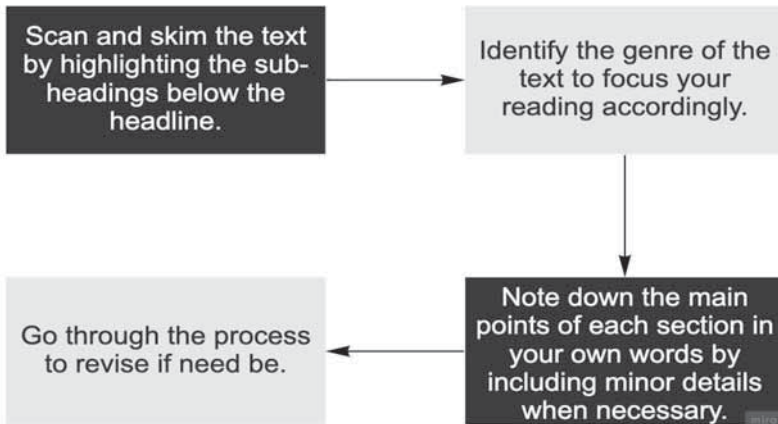


Fig. 1 Preliminary stages of the summary

Task 1

Write a summary of the text below.

What makes an effective manager? To be sure, no one characteristic or trait defines an effective manager. It is true, however, that the most effective managers hold group members to very high standards of performance, and this is the foremost characteristic of an efficient manager. Setting such standards increases productivity because people tend to live up to the expectations set for them by superiors. This is called the Pygmalion effect. Another factor which contributes to effective management is that the manager's perceptions contribute to success or failure. When a manager believes that a group member will succeed, s/he communicates this belief without realizing. Likewise, when a manager expects a group member to fail, that person will not disappoint the manager. Eventually, the manager's expectation of success or failure becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Cortina & Elder, 2004, p. 75).

Task 2

Compare your summary with the summary below. What do you think about it? Is it an inclusive summary? What may be added or deleted both from your summary and the summary below?

The summary:

Cortina and Elder (2004) explain that an effective manager encourages those working to keep high standards of performance and conveys his/her belief of success or failure (p. 75).

Long Text Summary

The summary of an article may range from a paragraph to a page. Although longer, the same sequence of summary steps should be followed cautiously without losing the focus on the main points essential for the text. It is necessary to keep the writer's original order of ideas and to include clear transitional words or phrases so that the reader can keep up with the text through meaningful connections. Needless to say, the in-text references should be included.

Task 3

Please see the following code or link
(<https://www.mpc.edu/home/showdocument?id=12794>)
on how to summarize a longer text with an inclusive step by step process.



There are a range of suggestions on how to refer to a source in a summary by frequently using reporting verbs, which number over 400 according to Hyland's study (1999). Some of these verbs can be seen in the separate reporting sentences below:

e.g. Baldwin (2020)
suggests/argues/claims/maintains/asserts/states/concludes that _____.

If a summary is written as part of a longer paper, the in-text and end-text references may use citation systems; namely, APA, MLA or Chicago. The exploitation of "writing summaries" as a critical writing genre in the classroom would typically center on a text and activities within and beyond the text. It would start with activating the readers' schemata by asking questions about the topic of the text. For instance, if the topic of the text is "nuclear power", then questions like "Are there nuclear power plants in your country? How do you feel about it? What are the dis/advantages of using fossil fuels? Is nuclear power an alternative to them?" can be the pre-discussion questions before reading to activate readers' schemata on the topic - that is to retrieve what the readers already know about the topic. The next step would be dealing with the key vocabulary that appears in the text. To have students scan the text, there can be a number of True/False questions or a matching of summary phrases with paragraphs. This can be an effective way of doing the initial summary work. Then, in the "making notes" stage, an alternative may be to write a short summary of the article by using the phrases from the

matching exercise. The summary phrases can be expanded by adding relevant information near the key phrases. One of the paragraph summaries can be given in the form of a fill in the blank exercise to be completed with the readers' words or phrases by receiving help from the text. It would look like a cloze test paragraph with numbered blanks. Another form of exercise on writing summaries can be making a selection from summaries of the same text and working on why one is a better summary than the other. As an alternative, a long summary can be given, with students asked to reduce the word limit - which requires a critical eye to maintain the message of the text.

While writing summaries, the following tips will help:

Summary Box

1. Restating: One's own words should be used to make notes from the text. Do not just delete sentences or words. Omit unnecessary details such as listing all examples, places, names, etc.
2. Putting notes down: Write notes in full accurate sentences. Rephrasing a sentence to reduce the number of the words without losing the message can be another tip.
3. Transitions: Use connectors where appropriate.
4. Checking: Give the summary a final check for all possible technical (punctuation, spelling, etc.) and meaning mistakes.

Below is a sample task designed to exemplify it:

Task 4

The summary of the text "The Greenhouse Effect" has exceeded the 100-word limit (148 words). Please reduce the text to 100 words without losing the message of the text.

If the temperature of the planet rises by 3° expected in the next 50 years, the result will certainly be catastrophic. As the polar ice melts, cities like London, Tokyo and New York could disappear under water, which would change the world map forever. The greenhouse effect is, in fact, a build-up of carbon dioxide which lets the sunlight in but not out. The increase in CO₂ from cars, nearly three times greater than 30 years ago, and the use of fossil

fuels has made problems worse, as well. We could, the article says, slow the process by economizing on the energy we use, for example by cutting back on fuel and by insulating our homes. We also need to stop the destruction of rainforests (which happens at the rate of 150 acres per minute) as trees absorb carbon dioxide as part of their life cycle (Stephens, 1992, p. 112).

3.2.1. Critical Summary for an article or a research paper

To build up a critical summary of an article or a research paper, a pattern which resembles the structure of an essay should be followed that includes an introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction indicates why the text is worth mentioning.

e.g.: A critical summary of the Mompean and Fouz-Gonzalez (2016) article is worth writing because it contributes to ...

While reporting the content of the article, the text is covered more without solely retelling the account in the source text, but by writing a straight description through answering two synopsis questions. The next component of the critical summary is content evaluation of the source text. To illustrate, discussion beginnings such as: Although one shortcoming is ... Nevertheless, this work seems to demonstrate that ... may be used to display evaluations. Finally, the conclusion section can show readers what has been gleaned from the text with its relevance to the student's views. The following is the suggested template to be used in writing critical summaries:

Task 5

Following the given guidelines, write a critical summary of an article or a chapter reporting research in 500 words.

- Title
- Introducing the text (50–100 words) to give the answer to:
 1. Why am I reading this?
- Reporting the content (100–200 words), informed by your answer to Critical Questions:
 1. What is the writer's aim?
 2. What is the author saying that's relevant to what I want to find out?

- Evaluating the content (100–200 words), informed by your answer to the critical question:
 1. How persuasive is the writer’s message?
- Drawing your conclusion (100–150 words):
 1. What use can I make of this?

3.3. The Essay

The essay is one of the default genres especially used in higher education to display a composite body of sentences that are strung together to recreate knowledge or argument. It is delivered in a structured frame which presents ideas in a logical and convincing manner (Bailey, 2003; Oshima & Hogue, 2007; Öz, 2000; Shiach, 2007; Vyncke, 2012). An argumentative essay supports an opinion and states the thesis in the introduction, supports the thesis in the body, and provides a resolution for the reader in the conclusion. There are essential characteristics of a qualified argumentative essay. A narrowed down thesis statement away from broad generalizations that identifies the position supported in the essay is the first vital component of the argument. Background or contextual information is necessary to introduce the audience to the physical, social, and psychological settings in which the argument is debated. Hence, it is required to make sound definitions to the terms used by concretely defining them or using a synonym, an antonym or providing an example. More specifically, it can be said that real-life examples that may depict an actual event observed or experienced can be given. Moreover, statistical evidence, research findings of authorities, and claims and analogies to display comparisons can be provided to strengthen the argument. In a similar vein, opposing arguments should be explained clearly, then refuted by providing reasons that support the thesis statement. The evidence or separate arguments are displayed mostly in the order of their strength. As the last step of the argumentative essay, proofreading is done by going over the following checklist:

- a. The text is spell checked.
- b. In-text and end-text references abide by the conventions of the expected format.
- c. The writer’s points are displayed together with their supporting evidence.

- d. The writer's refutations are explicitly stated in an order with evidence.
- e. The essay is coherent, and when necessary, connectors are used to enable a smooth transition between the ideas and indicate relations between the ideas.
- f. The thesis is restated in the conclusion.

Below is a guide to preparing a detailed outline for an argumentative essay:

► Introduction

It is concise and begins by drawing the readers' attention, which may be in the form of an anecdote or a piece of factual information relative to the main idea. The final subpoint of the introduction is mostly devoted to the thesis statement. The introduction serves to:

- Attract the reader's attention
- Introduce the topic
- State the thesis

► Body

This is the most information-rich part of the essay with all details required. Each paragraph has a topic which somehow supports the thesis, reinforced by credible opinion, research, fact, data, and so on with smooth transitions that bring the reader to the next point. It contains two or more paragraphs that provide reasons and evidence for the argument. These paragraphs include the following:

Topic Sentence (reason)
Evidence
Linking Sentence
Second piece of evidence
Linking Sentence
Third piece of evidence (if necessary)
Linking Sentence
Concluding Sentence

► Conclusion

Here, the reader should be reminded of what is proposed through restating the thesis. The concluding statement provides the audience with a resolution by referring to the introduction through calling for action, warning, suggesting, and making a recommendation.

Relating the thesis by restating it in the form of a summary.

Adopting a critical look and analyzing essays pave the way for the skill to ask and answer the critical writing questions below:

1. What is the purpose of the writer in this essay?
2. What is the tone?
3. What type of an introductory strategy is used?
4. Where is the thesis statement? Is it clearly introducing the topics to be argued in the body paragraphs?
5. Which supporting techniques are used in the body?
6. What concluding strategy takes place?

In the argumentation, the paragraphs should be coherent from the beginning through inclusion of useful expressions to build counterarguments to credit one's oppositions. Therefore, the following questions might be of help in strengthening one's argumentation.

1. How strong is my refutation?
2. What may be the arguments against my thesis?
3. Do you agree with the arguments at some points?
4. Which of my arguments are likely to be discredited?

In a nutshell, “the essay” is a genre which provokes the reader and writer to think in multiple perspectives. An argumentative essay states the thesis in the introduction, supports it through the body paragraphs, and provides a resolution to it in the conclusion. Although there is no set model of organization for argumentative essays, there are some common patterns for the writers to use to present their ideas in a logical and comprehensible way.

3.4. Book or Film Review

Book reviews have evolved into a highly evaluative genre of critical writing, which plays a significant role in sciences. They may be written for assignments or publications in academia. A book review is a critical encounter, with the writer as the audience (Hyland, 2000). Although book reviewers have certain forms of freedom in the organization of their criticism, there is still an outline proposed for the inclusion of certain elements. It is not an exhaustive list of “to dos” but rather points to touch upon. It involves the degree of originality, coherence of an argument, style and the scope of references within the following frame:

- a. Introducing the book through giving information about the writer/s, its topic and place in the field.
- b. Providing a general frame of the book through underlining organization, describing each section, including positive and negative commentary, and making references to non-textual materials such as illustrations, graphics, and appendices.
- c. Finalizing the review by talking about physical characteristics (whether it is a published book or not; talking about the binding, quality of paper, fonts, etc....) and reasons for recommending or not recommending it.

Task 6

Find a book review in a professional journal concerned with English Language Teaching. Come together with at least two friends in the classroom to discuss its organization, style, whether it is a praise or criticism or both, and analyze the evaluative language. The link and the video version of an ELT book review below may help you concretize your review.

<https://eltexperiences.com/50-tips-for-teaching-pronunciation-book-review/#more-52863>

<https://eltexperiences.com/category/book-review/>

To write a critical review of literature such as novels or short stories or their filmed versions, the student may be asked to follow a pattern similar to one written for books in different fields of study. Classroom discussion may start with gathering general information about the type, actors/actresses (main characters) and the theme. The next stage is devoted to what the book/film deals with - revealing a few more details of the plot. This may be done through True (T) - False (F) statements before the analysis of a given review and seeking answers to the following questions:

1. Is it based on fact? If so, provide some background information. If not, how does it start?
2. What happens (plot-wise) in the story?
3. Who are the characters? (Was the acting convincing? Well-directed?) Comment on as many aspects as you can.
4. Do you recommend it? Why/why not?

3.5. Advertisements

Needless to say, advertisements are produced to promote products and services to potential customers. Advertisers aim to reach and attract the attention of potential customers in various ways. Messages are usually short but appealing at the same time - which makes the language produced laden with implied meanings. Connotations of words bear significance when using advertisements as language course material.

Because the number of words in an advertisement are selected cautiously to create the maximum effect with minimum effort and cost, it is important to write advertisement slogans as concisely as possible. Pronouns, articles, verbs, even the verb phrases are deleted in the body text while ensuring that the message remains the same. Information is organized in well-divided sections together with visuals (pictures, sketches, scripts) to make the text more appealing to the reader in the attention market. Abbreviations are frequently used in advertisements; therefore, working on them can be a valuable pre-reading vocabulary exercise.

A sample advertisement critical reading task may start with a common question such as “Where would you see this notice?” Students are expected

to analyze the intention of the message, and later the task may ask students to write a dialogue between two people who talk about the advertisement by giving contextual details in the conversation. In the example below, it is clear that the main reason for the advertisement to be posted on a bus is to attract a larger number of young clients, the dialogue in the task can include two company employees planning to attract more students. Teachers should encourage students to be creative and think of authentic task design, while emphasizing that the intended meaning requires the interpretation of contextual clues. Today, there is a surplus of authentic materials that can be course material thanks to the online platforms. For the exploitation of the sample advertisement below, a series of instructions are below:



Figure x.2 Notice found on an Irish bus
(<http://www.buseireann.ie/inner.php?id=360>).

Task 7

Before/ While Reading

- ▶ Where would you see this advertisement?
- ▶ Find the abbreviation/s in the text if any, look them up in the dictionary and write their full version.

► Which of the following have been omitted? Find examples if there is any omitted from the following:

a) pronouns b) articles c) verbs d) prepositions e) whole phrases f) connectors

► Write the full version of the advertisement.

After Reading

► Work in pairs. Imagine you and your flat mate want to put an advertisement in a digital social media post for someone to share your flat/house. Decide what you want to say in your advertisement.

► What is your flat like? Where is it? What is the rent, and what does that include? What are some of the features of the person you would consider sharing your flat with? Will they have their own bedroom?

► Take notes for the points you have decided and write an advertisement for the digital social media page. Now take a look at the other posts.

► Which of the flats would you choose? Why?

Conclusion

The importance of the critical eye, and a questioning attitude that mines texts for hidden and implied meanings inferred when many a subtle detail in the text is put together, and writing by employing the same questioning attitude, supporting opinions with facts in the rhetorical pattern of different genres, is a 21st century survival skill. Familiarizing students with the formats and style of different genres is equally as important as teaching structure and vocabulary. When reading, not only students learning English, but anyone should consider the meanings between the lines, or the significance of the choice of a particular vocabulary item rather than the use of a synonym with different connotations. The format, the images that accompany the text, where the text is published, the intended audience and the readers' cultural and intellectual background play major roles when deciphering the meaning. Hence, simply put, critical reading requires us to

assemble and interpret all the available data to reach a coherent message. The rhetorical patterns of different genres contribute to this process since they predetermine the intention and the style of the writer. Moreover, as a writer, a clear and strong argument is developed to communicate with and convince the target audience. Critical reading yields itself in a written account of what has been read. Successful writers, therefore, are those who can apply their critical reading skills to their writing. In conclusion, it is of utmost importance that genres be studied in English language classes dwelling on the features that set them apart from other genres. In this way students can begin to apply critical reading and writing as lifelong skills and more readily cope with new genres and opportunities, as witnessed during the recent emergence of the phenomenon of social media in the digital age, where critical readers can readily become text-generators for mass audiences.

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