

VIDEOS AS THE MAIN AIDS IN TEACHING STUDENTS OF TECHNICAL SPECIALTIES CRITICAL THINKING IN THE EFL CLASS

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Keywords: video, teaching, students, technical specialties, critical thinking, EFL, English as a Foreign Language, lesson, class.

Ключові слова: відео, навчання, студенти, технічні спеціальності, критичне мислення, англійська мова як іноземна, заняття.

As technology modernizes every single day, teachers of English are becoming more and more interested in using multimedia sources in their EFL (English as a Foreign Language) lessons. Among the types of multimedia aids, authentic videos in English (e.g. clips from feature films or programmes, corresponding to students' specialties) play the most beneficial role in education, especially at technical universities. This is due to the fact that with their help English language lecturers can not only make the work in the class more diverse but demonstrate visually a device, process or technology, which the students come across in their textbooks or handouts provided by the teacher. Moreover, when students watch authentic videos in the EFL lesson, they have a complete and unabridged immersion in the English language they need to know in order to work according to their specialty in the future, with all the neologisms, idioms, and special phrases that often cannot be seen in textbooks.

No modern language studying can do without communication practice. Speak-

ing using newly-learned foreign terminology is obligatory for transfer of knowledge from the short-term to the long-term memory, which is the one that is responsible for the students' extensive foreign language vocabulary, and so, easy communication in English. In order to develop students' high-level communication skills, an EFL lecturer needs to organize a productive vocabulary studying and teach students to think critically in English. Authentic videos are the key aids for such tasks: they provide new vocabulary and may serve as the basis (encouragement) for discussion, which includes each student's critical thinking. Among the groups of students that benefit from using videos, the most are engineers and others with a technical/scientific orientation, i.e. specific interest groups [2, 5], who have either advanced or intermediate level.

Critical thinking can be defined as the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgement [3]. It is connected with quality thinking and gives students an opportunity to communicate

with others in a more skilful way, obtaining new knowledge, and dealing with different ideas, points of view, and attitudes. In all these areas language plays a central role [4, 56].

Thus, when working with authentic videos in the EFL class, students of technical specialties can start thinking critically right at the beginning of the lesson pondering over the possible issue depicted in the movie/programme, its effects and outcomes, or some other elements. This can be done when the teacher provides their students with stills/pictures or some other helpful aids that suggest an idea prior to the viewing. If necessary, those can be accompanied with vocabulary lists containing an explanation of new terminology needed.

Among abilities that characterize the person who thinks critically are (R. Nickerson; S. Schafersman) [4]: 1) concise and coherent organization and expression of thoughts; 2) asking appropriate questions; 3) judgement suspension if there is no satisfactory evidence to support a decision; 4) ability to gather relevant information, efficiently and creatively sort through the data; 5) ability to predict the likely consequences; 6) application of problem-solving techniques; 7) ability to come to reliable conclusions.

The process of critical thinking consists of several stages, which are called “a stairway” while they progress steadily upwards in order of complexity [1, 4]: 1) *understanding* (processing and trying to comprehend what the information heard/read is

about, i.e. the gist); 2) *applying* (employing new information, for instance, doing comprehension-checking tasks or answering questions); 3) *analysing* (students become more critical of the oral or written text, analysing it and its main point(s)); 4) *evaluating* (students have isolated arguments and views on the video and start to evaluate the validity and relevance of the data, as well as assess how much of the information is fact supported by evidence); 5) *creating* (students create something using gained knowledge: express their opinions basing on the facts they have studied during the lesson or do a team presentation including arguments for and against the issue presented in a film or a scientific programme and their own conclusions).

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