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FORMING PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' COMPETENCE IN CRITICAL READING THROUGH AUTHENTIC SHORT STORIES

Abstract. *The article is devoted to the problem of developing critical reading competence and critical thinking skills of pre-service English language teachers by means of interactive teaching on the material of authentic short stories. The phenomenon of critical thinking is considered thoroughly, its definition is given, and its features are described. Critical thinking is defined as the process of using cognitive techniques and strategies with the purpose of skilful and active understanding and evaluation of observations, communication, information, and argumentation that increase the probability of obtaining the desired final result. The critical thinking skills are outlined, as well as the stages of their formation in correlation with the stages of interactive foreign language teaching. The definitions of critical reading and critical reading competence are worked out. It is established that critical reading is a process of reading which presupposes the use of reflection with the purpose of content evaluation and reasonable judgments in relation to it. Critical reading competence is defined as a person's ability to read authentic texts of various genres with full understanding, analysis, and evaluation of their content; which is based on relevant abilities, skills, knowledge, and communication skills, in order to respond intelligently and adequately to what is read. The potential of using authentic short stories to develop critical reading competence of pre-service English language teachers has been explored. The difficulties of forming critical reading competence on the material of authentic short stories are considered. The methodology of teaching critical reading on the material of authentic short stories to pre-service English language teachers is suggested: the stages of developing critical reading skills are distinguished and described; the strategies and techniques of teaching critical reading on the material of authentic short stories with interactive method are presented.*

Keywords: *critical thinking; critical reading; competence in critical reading; authentic short stories; critical reading skills; critical reading strategies; interactive foreign language teaching; interactive techniques for the development of critical thinking and critical reading skills.*

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ФОРМУВАННЯ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ В КРИТИЧНОМУ ЧИТАННІ У МАЙБУТНІХ УЧИТЕЛІВ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ НА МАТЕРІАЛІ АВТЕНТИЧНИХ КОРОТКИХ ОПОВІДАНЬ

Анотація. *Статтю присвячено проблемі формування компетентності в критичному читанні майбутніх учителів англійської мови засобами інтерактивного навчання на матеріалі автентичних коротких оповідань. Розглядається феномен критичного мислення, його визначення, описуються якості та особливості. Окреслено ключові вміння критичного мислення, а також етапи їх формування у співвідношенні з етапами інтерактивного навчання іноземних мов. Розглянуто визначення критичного читання, його вміння; запропоновано визначення та окреслено зміст компетентності у критичному читанні майбутніх учителів англійської мови. Досліджено потенціал використання автентичних коротких оповідань для розвитку вмінь критичного читання у майбутніх вчителів англійської мови. Розглянуто труднощі формування ан-*

ломовної компетентності в критичному читанні на матеріалі автентичних коротких оповідань. Запропоновано методику навчання майбутніх учителів англійської мови критичного читання на матеріалі автентичних коротких оповідань: виділено та описано етапи формування вмінь критичного читання; представлено стратегії та прийоми формування вмінь критичного читання на матеріалі автентичних коротких оповідань з використанням інтерактивного навчання у майбутніх вчителів англійської мови.

Ключові слова: критичне мислення; критичне читання; компетентність у критичному читанні; автентичні короткі оповідання; вміння критичного читання; стратегії критичного читання; інтерактивне навчання іноземних мов; інтерактивні прийоми формування вмінь критичного мислення та критичного читання.

Statement of the Problem. The ability and readiness to think critically belongs to the key components of the competences of modern education (Pometun) and is an important component of the professional competence of pre-service English language teachers (Ministerstvo rozvytku ekonomiky, torhivli ta silskoho hospodarstva Ukrainy, 2020; Podosynnikova et al, 2022). Researchers mostly claim critical thinking (CT) and its skills to be essential for students' successful personal and professional development, for building up their communicative competence and reading skills in particular, either in their first language or in second or foreign language (Mohammadi et al., 2022). At the same time, the results of empirical studies demonstrate that the majority of students have an average level of CT development (77%), and only 7% have a high level (Kostyushko, 2020), which was also confirmed by the results of our observations on students of Sumy State Pedagogical University named after A.S. Makarenko majoring in specialty 014 Secondary Education (the English language and literature). So, in our opinion, the research topic is relevant to trends and objectives of modern education.

This study, in confirmation with other findings (Femilia, 2018; Mohammadi et al., 2022) emphasizes the use of interactive (facilitative, collaborative-interactive) method in teaching critical reading (CR) to pre-service English language teachers.

Interactive teaching is defined as a form of organizing a teaching-learning activity in a foreign language class under which students, being divided into small groups, actively interacting and working in conditions of mutual support, solve a certain problematic and personally oriented task (Podosynnikova, 2012, p. 4). Interactive teaching and learning foster the ability to think analytically and critically, as well as to justify logically one's own vision of a certain problem and generate creative ideas of solving the problem (Podosynnikova, Kryvosheya, 2022, p. 8).

Literature Review. The term "critical thinking" came to educational studies quite a long time ago from works by J. Dewey, J. Bruner, L. Vygotsky, J. Piaget. In American and European educational research, CT, its

characteristics, peculiarities, leading qualities, skills, development strategies were studied by a number of psychologists, applied linguists and educators (D. Brookfield, J. Guilford, J. Dewey, R. Ennis, J. H. Clark, D. Kluster, M. Lipman, E. Norris, R. Paul, V. Ruggiero, P. Facione, A. Fisher, D. Halpern, W. Hewitt, etc.). In Ukraine, these issues were primarily considered in perspective of didactics (O. Belkina-Kovalchuk, T. Voropai, V. Kozyra, T. Oliynyk, O. Pometun, S. Romanova, S. Terno, O. Tyaglo, N. Tsyoma, and others).

Since CT is a significant phenomenon within the modern educational paradigm, it has been approached and examined from various perspectives (Mohammadi et al., 2022) and there exist many definitions of CT. At the same time, the definitions suggested mostly have comparable values.

The psychologist D. Halpern (Halpern, 2003) defines CT as "the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome" and further characterizes CT as "purposeful, reasoned...goal-directed" and "involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions". The definition also stipulates that the thinker must be using appropriate skills for a particular "context" and "type of thinking task" (Halpern, 2003). This type of thinking is used while solving various tasks, forming conclusions, probabilistic assessment, and decision-making; in the meantime, skills that are useful for a specific situation and type of a task to be solved are used (Halpern, 2000, p. 24).

A. Fisher and M. Scriven provided the following definition of this phenomenon: a skilful and active interpretation and evaluation of observations, communication, information, and argumentation (Fisher, 2011, p. 20). They define CT as an "active" process, partially because of questions that it comprises but also due to metacognition, "think about one's own thinking" (Fisher, 2011, p. 21).

In his turn, S. Terno defines CT as the scientific evaluation of both the positive and negative sides of reality, the ability to use the techniques of data processing, that allows to obtain the desired result (Terno, 2011).

O. Bihych states that CT is the set of qualities and abilities that determine the high level of scholarly engagement among participants in the educational process; in such reflective/evaluative thinking, knowledge serves as the foundation rather than the ultimate goal of competence (Bihych, 2019).

D. Spears claims CT not to be related to rejecting different judgments or a total criticism of all the information that is received; rather "it means using careful evaluation, sound judgment, and our reasoning power. This requires keeping an open mind, not accepting unquestioningly what you read just because it is in print, but also not rejecting ideas simply because they are different from your beliefs" (Spears, 1999, p. 250).

According to O.I. Pometun, CT is a complex of mental operations characterized by the human ability to analyze, compare, synthesize, and evaluate information from multiple sources; identify problems, ask questions; suggest hypotheses and evaluate alternatives; make a conscious choice, take a decision and justify it (Pometun, 2017). To think critically means utilizing mental strategies and high-level operations without efforts for making reasonable conclusions and assessments as well as making decisions; these mental operations should be acquired and improved in the process of forming various subject competences (Pometun, 2017).

CT assumes that knowledge is not issued ready-made and that the information received by students from various sources is not taken for granted and cannot be an indisputable fact; on the contrary, everyone searches and forms personal opinions within the educational process (Kostyushko, 2020).

In educational theory, the CT is generally understood as “mode of cognition using deliberative reasoning and impartial scrutiny of information to arrive at a possible solution to a problem. CT encompasses both a set of logical skills that can be taught and a disposition toward reflective open inquiry that can be cultivated” (Britannica).

D. Spears provides the following definition of CR: “*Critical reading* is a process of reading which presupposes the use of reflection with the purpose of content evaluation and reasonable judgments in relation to it” (Spears, 1999, p. 263).

CR can be also described as a purposeful and reflective process of understanding, analysing, and evaluating written text materials in order to respond intelligently and adequately to what is read (Kang Liu, 2019, p. 341).

Some scholars consider CR as a process that involves the analysing, interpreting, evaluating, and understanding of what is read; and it is essential to analyse and evaluate texts prior to combining one’s own beliefs or ideas (Mohammadi et al., 2022, p. 2–3).

According to Lewis (2000), “critical reading is an analytical process that promotes the reader to reread a text, enabling the identification of textual elements and patterns, extraction of information and assumptions, and comprehension of the language used within the text” (Mohammadi et al., 2022, p. 3).

The purpose of the Research is to theoretically justify and practically develop the methodology of teaching CR to pre-service English language teachers using authentic short stories.

Presentation of the Main Research Material. The ability and readiness to think critically belongs to the content of the key competencies of modern education (Pometun, 2004) and is supposed to be an important component of the professional competence of pre-service teachers of the English language (Ministerstvo rozvytku ekonomiky, torhivli ta silskoho hospodarstva Ukrainy, 2020).

The paper utilizes theoretical research methods such as analysis of academic and pedagogical studies connected with the issue of this research. The study also comprised the empirical research on the way the developed methodology influenced dynamics of pre-service English language teachers’ awareness of CT and their CR skills. The methods comprised applying the developed methodology in trial series through teaching CR with the use of suggested experimental materials set (authentic texts and specially developed exercises), carrying out observations and conducting interviews with students.

The subjects of the research were the fourth-year Bachelor’s students of English (014 Secondary Education, the speciality “The English Language and Literature”) of Foreign and Slavic Philology Department, Sumy State Pedagogical University named after A. S. Makarenko (16, 13, and 11 students in 2019–2020, 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 academic years accordingly). They were all Ukrainians with English being the first foreign language and an academic major to them.

In compliance with their curriculum all the participants previously studied theoretical courses in English lexicology and stylistics (Terms V–VI), and the course “The Practice of English” (Terms I–VI) with reading of authentic literary texts being an essential part of the syllabus.

The trial teaching took place within the course “The Professionally Oriented Practice of English” taught to senior students (Terms VII–VIII). The teaching and learning process was carried out in-class (2019) and remotely (2020–2022) in synchronous mode on the ZOOM platform with a targeted use of the specially developed CR teaching materials for two academic semesters. The students worked with the suggested teaching materials in class and independently having two contact hours of instruction once a fortnight.

At the beginning of the course we interviewed students (oral individual interviews) and administered a CR questionnaire.

At the end of the course the students went through the interview of the same type and the same CR questionnaire was administrated again.

In the beginning of the course interview the students reported that they are academically more successful in the so-called “analytical reading” that implied building up vocabulary and grammar sub skills rather than developing CT skills. Though they had practiced analytical reading at school and the university before, they admitted needing support and guidance to build up their awareness of CT and CR skills.

The results of CR questionnaires showed, that the majority of students misinterpreted CR with analytical reading: considered the terms to be fully identical (52–58%), suggested CR to be aimed at finding faults with the text (27–29%), 21–24% viewed CR in the perspective of academic correctness (language, stylistic, com-

municative). In their past experience of reading authentic texts many of them used to concentrate on language work (vocabulary and grammar subskills) and developing communicative skills – accordingly, 83–86% and 52–55%. Only 35–38% of students identified CR skills correctly. In addition, students revealed a rather low awareness of CT skills, only 21–24% of students could identify them correctly, 10–14% claimed that in the past they had practised CR with the focus on CT skills and 15–19% could give adequate examples of tasks for CT skills development. The limited quantity of students practised reading authentic short stories at school (5–9%), 37–41% – at the university.

In the end of the course interview the students reported having become academically more successful in both analytical reading and CR. They gave a positive feedback to the course and pointed out that the methodology practiced, support and guidance helped to build up their awareness of CT and CR skills (93%), as well as raised their intercultural awareness (72%), giving more concern to the dialogue of culture issues (74%), widened their horizon in modern English literature (85%). At the end of the course the majority of students interpreted CR correctly (from 82 to 85%) with 8–11% of students associating CR with finding faults with the text and 9–12% of students viewing CR more in the perspective of academic correctness (language, stylistic, communicative) rather than analytical thinking and CT. Only 78–81% of students identified CR skills correctly and 65–69% could give adequate examples of tasks for CT skills development.

Having analysed the empirical data received, we decided to 1) start teaching CR with introduction into CT and CR (definition, characteristics, skills), 2) build up CR skills in correlation with stages of CT skills development, 3) take into account the specific difficulties of reading authentic short stories, 4) organize teaching CR in a cyclic mode, where CR theoretical concepts are successively presented and the appropriate CR skills are practiced in a sequence of cycles, each based on the material of an authentic short story, 4) extensively apply teaching instruments and activities that favour CT skills development.

Decisions, goals, and problem solving feature significantly in **CT definition and models**. The definitions account for uncertainty in the decision-making process because the result of CT skills need not be “a desirable outcome” but instead a higher chance of such an outcome (Halpern, 2014).

In this paper by CT we mean the process of using cognitive techniques and strategies with the purpose of skilful and active understanding and evaluation of observations, communication, information, and argumentation that increase the probability of obtaining the desired final result.

E. R. Lai connects the development of CT skills with such “21st-century skills” as metacognition, motivation,

and creativity (Lai, 2011, p. 18). Metacognition is the ability to reflect and think about one’s own thinking (Fisher, 2011, p. 21). Motivation is crucial for developing CT, since unmotivated learners will be reluctant to be engaged in thinking critically (Lai, 2011, p. 18). Besides, “good critical thinking” requires the ability to generate an intellectual product, that is to say, creativity (Lai, 19). D. Halpern also singles out such important qualities and skills provided by the CT skills development as planning; flexibility; persistence; willingness to correct mistakes; awareness; search for compromise solutions (Halpern, 2000, c. 47–48).

According to the Technology of CT Development, suggested by S. Terno, the basic educational model shifts from data-oriented learning to problem-based one. The methodology involves a three-stage sequence of working with teaching material in the class: 1) challenge (stage of actualization of existing knowledge); 2) understanding (the stage of mastering new material); 3) reflections (the stage of consolidating the studied material and drawing conclusions) (Терно, 2011)

Regarding CT development strategies, D. Halpern suggests a CT algorithm, which is a series of questions: “*What is the goal?*” – in order to make our thinking balanced and purposeful; “*What is known?*” – in order to process already known information and find missing information; “*What thinking skills will allow you to achieve your goal?*” – to develop the right strategy to achieve the goal; “*Has the goal been achieved?*” – conclusion (Halpern, 2000, c. 52).

In foreign language teaching methodology various methods / teaching technologies have been introduced to develop CT skills, including moderation technology (Bigych, 2019), dialogue journal and journal writing (Glazunova, 1997; Sinaga & Feranie, 2017; Stanton & Stanton, 2017) and CR (Femilia, 2018).

Reading competence is defined as a person’s ability to read authentic texts of various genres and to understand their content according to the language competence level under the conditions of mediated communication (Nikolayeva, 2013, p. 370).

In foreign language teaching three types of reading are predominantly considered: 1) reading with understanding of the main content of the text (introductory reading); 2) reading for the purpose of finding necessary information or information of interest (review reading); 3) reading with the full understanding of the text content (analytical reading) (Nikolayeva, 2013, p. 377; Harmer, 2015). However, some researchers distinguish CR from the analytical one (D. Spears, Yu. Bezvin, S. Nikolayeva, H.I. Podosynnikova, J. Duncan, D. Kurland) (Bezvin, Podosinnikova, 2019; Spears, 2012; Wallace, 2003 et al.).

Critical reading competence is a person’s ability to read authentic texts of various genres with full understanding, analysis, and evaluation of their content; which

is based on relevant abilities, skills, knowledge, and communication skills, in order to respond intelligently and adequately to what is read.

The goals of CR include recognizing the author's purpose; understanding tone and persuasive elements; identifying bias (Kurland, 2000). The main means used in the process of CR are analysis and conclusion (Kurland, 2000). The analysis of the issue in question involves recognizing those aspects of discussion that control meaning. Therefore, it entails processes of concluding and interpreting data from the text (Kurland, 2000).

The components of reading competence embrace relevant abilities, skills, knowledge, and communication skills (Nikolayeva, 2013, p. 370).

Basically, **CR skills** include the ability: to find and highlight information in the text, to find the main idea and purpose of the author of the text; draw correct conclusions from what is read; determine the author's tone, recognize different shades of irony; find hidden assumptions, identify arguments, weigh evidence; recognize false appeals, claims, and common logical mistakes (Spears, 1999, p. 18–19).

There can be specified the group of **CR skills of evaluation** (Spears, 1999): locating arguments; detecting unstated assumptions behind an argument; judging the quality of the evidence supporting the argument; distinguishing between deductive and inductive reasoning; telling a valid argument from invalid one; detecting false appeals and logical fallacies; recognizing bias and the misuse of authority; recognizing false reasoning (generalizations, distortions, manipulation with facts).

There can also be distinguished **CR skills of language understanding** (recognizing author's voice) that are necessary for reading a fiction text: understanding levels of language, the denotation and connotation of words; understanding the misuse and abuse of words (weasel words, euphemisms, sneer words, doublespeak, politically correct language, jargon, clichés), figurative language; understanding tone - ironic stance (wit, irony, satire, cynicism, sarcasm), allusions, symbols; understanding figures of language (metaphors and similes) (Spears, 1999).

The strategies for CR skills development include: 1) predicting text content; 2) text annotating (singling out the most important parts of a text, theses; margin notes); 3) contextualizing (representation and perception of the text in the original historical or cultural context); 4) identifying contradictions concerning your convictions and values (finding and analyzing what contradicts the reader's convictions and values); 5) paraphrasing (deep understanding of information while paraphrasing); 6) taking notes (structuring information, defining the main idea); 7) retelling (presenting information in one's own words); 8) exploring the figurative language (finding various stylistic means and artistic details); 9) looking for patterns of opposition (while considering two conflicting views or issues, writers of-

ten take the side of one of them); 10) evaluating the logic of an argument (checking whether the argument meets the "ABC" criteria: A – Appropriate; B – Believable; C – Consistent); 11) recognizing emotional manipulation (sometimes, writers can manipulate readers by evoking some emotions in them, for instance, with the help of racist statements, or judgments that strongly contradict the readers' convictions); 12) judging the writer's credibility (checking whether the author uses facts and statistics; bases reasoning on general beliefs) (Gilmartin, 1999).

As well as CT, CR is a process that goes through several stages: first, we learn what is said in the text; then we try to understand what the text evokes in us (for example, doubt, disagreement, sympathy, etc.); and only then we interpret the meaning of the text (Kurland, 2000).

According to the CR instruction theory, it is necessary to introduce the following steps: previewing, contextualizing, questioning, reflecting, outlining, and summarizing, evaluating an argument, and comparing and contrasting (Mohammadi et al., 2022).

The stages of interactive foreign language teaching and learning correlate with the stages of CT skills development (Podosynnikova, 2012; Bihych, 2019, p. 47).

Thus, we suggest the **CR teaching model** that includes three stages of developing CR skills. The consistent accomplishment of which stage enables a student reader to penetrate the very essence of the authentic literary text of a short story and to analyze its pragmatic orientation alongside with enhancing his CT ability.

The **stages of the teaching CR model** suggested correlate, firstly, with the general three-phase structure of working with a text, and secondly, with the stages of CT.

The pre-reading stage of CR skills development correlates with **the stage of call** in CT. Traditionally for the Ukrainian foreign language teaching methodology, the following sub-stages are singled out: 1) motivating perception and understanding of a short story text; 2) forming skills and sub-skills of prediction; 3) reducing language and speech difficulties (Nikolayeva, 2013, p. 383). The **CR strategies** applied are actualizing learners' personal experience, transferring experience and knowledge from other spheres, predicting the content of the authentic short stories etc. To interactive teaching techniques (activities) practiced at this stage belong: associative bush; cluster; fishbone; basket of ideas; mind map; poster of thoughts; brainstorming; think, pare, share, etc.

The reading stage correlates with **the stage of understanding** in CT skills development, it involves reading itself. This stage is divided into the sub-stages: 1) reading of the text itself; 2) neutralization of the content and compositional difficulties; 3) recognition and understanding of explicit and implicit information (Nikolayeva, 2013). It is important to indicate that this stage is not limited to reading exclusively; learners must meet a challenge of a certain task, problem to be solved. In this way

they learn to work with information and “earn” their own understating and arguments: identify explicit and implicit information, interpret it, search for some new information, correlate new and already known facts, systematize information, do independent analysis.

As the reading stage aims at providing learners with an opportunity to interact with the text, the activities practiced should help learners understand the story, characters, events, time, and cultural perspectives (Pardede, 2011). Here the appropriate *CR strategies* are text annotating; paraphrasing; taking notes; retelling; exploring figurative language; reflecting on the logic of the argument; recognizing emotional manipulation. The teacher might encourage students to make notes about the events, ideas, feelings, values, cultures presented in the story; to summarize information; and to record their reactions and thoughts. At this stage the appropriate interactive teaching techniques are: “I know, I found out, I want to find out”; mind-map; chain of events; clustering; concept map; reading with marks; reading in pairs; “Six thinking hats”, etc.

The post-reading stage of CR skills development correlates with *the stage of reflection* in CT at which assessment, analysis, interpretation of a short story text with the subsequent reflection take place. Accordingly, we suggest dividing this stage into the following sub-stages: 1) control of the depth, completeness, clarity, and accuracy of reading comprehension; 2) interpretation and critical evaluation with the help of a full critical analysis of what has been read; 3) analysis of the pragmatic character of the story, the system of images (Nikolayeva, 2013); 4) creative response that is generating solutions of the task or problem, suggesting new original perspectives, decisions, etc. The appropriate *CR strategies* are: contextualization; identifying contradictions in your beliefs and values; looking for patterns of opposition; judging the writer’s credibility; identifying central ideas on the basis of personal knowledge and experience; discussing texts to generate creative ideas, etc. The appropriate interactive teaching techniques are: double-entry diary; fishbone; associative bush; basket of ideas; poster of thoughts; brainstorming; RAFT; cinquain; writing an essay, etc.

The effective means of sharpening and rounding out CR competence of pre-service English language teachers are contemporary *authentic short stories*. Their didactic (instructional) value is rooted in bridging learning a foreign language with enjoyment, revelation of human experience and behaviour, cultural norms and values.

In this research we consider the language, speech, content and compositional *difficulties of forming CR skills of pre-service English language teachers on the material of authentic short stories* (Podosynnikova, 2002a).

Language difficulties naturally correlate with a considerable linguistic and sociocultural potential of authen-

tic literary texts and are caused by a large number of words and phrases unfamiliar to students, lexical units that cause certain misunderstanding when reading: 1) words that are part of stable constructions or idioms and thus have a different meaning (a fire means “flame; combustion or burning”, but to lack fire is “to lack enthusiasm”); 2) words whereof the meaning is to be explained with the help of a certain comment; 3) unfamiliar abbreviations (OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Administration); 4) provincial and jargon words (a tuxedo – смокінг) (Smelyakova, 1996; Podosynnikova, 2002b).

Speech difficulties are connected with 1) fixed speech patterns (idiomatic constructions) that reflect cultural norms and are traditional for the target language usage but seem to be of irrational communicative design to the language learners (Podosynnikova, 2002b), 2) elements and structural characteristics of a literary text that make it difficult to understand: a) proverbs, sayings, aphorisms, quotations, etc.; b) long paragraphs; c) long descriptive fragments: scenes, paintings, portraits, characteristics, etc.; d) rambling thoughts of a logical and/or emotional nature (Smelyakova, 1996). This also includes particular difficulties associated with the stylistics of authentic literary texts and short stories particularly: 1) words with an emotional colour; 2) tropes – metaphors, metonymy, similes, epithets, etc.; 3) lofty, poetic vocabulary; 4) rhetorical questions, poetic structures, and complex rhetorical figures (Smelyakova, 1996; Podosynnikova, 2002b).

Content difficulties are those related to the content of a short story text: 1) implicit information; 2) explicitly figurative means, such as similes, metaphors, epithets (Smelyakova, 1996; Podosynnikova, 2002b).

Compositional difficulties are difficulties connected with the structure of an authentic short story text: 1) non-chronological order of events; 2) an “open” compositional structure; 3) absence of an exposition, “start from the middle”; 3) the omission of one of “closed” structure components; 4) retardation, expository stops (Smelyakova, 1996; Podosynnikova, 2002b).

Given the importance of teaching CT skills explicitly, it is reasonable to focus on CT frameworks or models that will leverage and hone its existing CT general education assessment process. In support of this intention, we studied Diane Halpern’s Four-part Model, that embeds the following aspects of CT skills development: 1) *the overt teaching and learning* of specific CT skills; 2) *developing the disposition and attitude* of a critical thinker such as the “willingness to plan, flexibility, persistence, admitting errors, and changing one’s mind under the changing evidence; 3) *CT skills transfer* suggests teaching students to identify circumstances that require CT skills and which particular skills are necessary in a particular situation (Halpern 25-6); to transfer skills, students must go beyond “the domain-specific surface characteristics” to identify the “structural aspects of the prob-

lem or argument” that “trigger the recall of the thinking skill”; 4) *using metacognition* helps students track the effectiveness of their thinking (Halpern, 2014).

It might be useful to review several more CT models and then decide to adopt one or to combine models for integrating into the methodology of teaching CR to pre-service English language teachers. The possible models to consider are William Perry Model, The Delphi Report Model, Visible Thinking Model, Susan Wolcott’s Steps for Better Thinking, Foundation for Critical Thinking Framework, etc.

The other point for consideration and discussion is connected with authentic short stories as the means of teaching CR to pre-service English language teachers. On the one hand, texts of this type present the highly concentrated context, combination of explicit and implicit information, and possibilities for immersion into the text content that provides food for thought and space for integrated formation of reading skills, linguistic competence, linguo-sociocultural competence, values, aesthetic feeling and motivation (Spears, 1999, p. 473; Podosynnikova, 2002a, p. 6). On the other hand, while reading texts authentic short stories students face quite a lot of difficulties that might impede the learning-teaching process.

At the same time, it’s important to admit that some negative aspects may naturally neutralize the others. For instance, the low level of unit prediction causes some discomfort when reading, but it attracts attention and stimulates to continue reading the text further (Smelyakova, 1996; Podosynnikova, 2002b).

The successful challenging difficulties of reading authentic short stories critically is the factor that has a considerable influence on students’ motivation and attitude to CR of authentic short stories. Accordingly, it might be reasonable to introduce specified CR strategies, practices and tasks to overcome the particular difficulties.

Results of the Research. Teaching CR as a communicative activity and the component of a foreign language communicative competence suggests wide perspectives for developing CT skills of pre-service English language teachers.

The results of this study have proved the research hypothesis. The emphasis on developing CT skills in the process of teaching CR is an indispensable means for building positive motivation for learning a foreign language, enhancing cognitive abilities, language acquisition efficiency, social and communicative competence.

Researching into theoretical grounds of CT, CT skills and stages of their formation, CR and CR competence allowed to design the scientifically grounded methodology based on correlation between stages of developing CR skills, CT skills and practising interactive teaching.

Exploring the potential of authentic short stories in developing CR competence of pre-service English language teachers allowed outlining the stages of forming

CR skills of pre-service English language teachers in the process of reading authentic short stories; suggesting CR strategies and techniques to form competence in CR of pre-service English language teachers through reading authentic short stories.

The research proved that the model of teaching CR of authentic short stories to pre-service English language teachers in regard to CT stages and skills, through applying CR strategies and using interactive teaching techniques has a range of positive effects: it activates the process of CT; raises the awareness of CT skills, CR aims and strategies; motivates the reading process and enhances its results. Students learn to analyse and evaluate the information transmitted through a literary text, recognize the author’s manipulations, identify contradictory statements, ground agreement or disagreement with the author’s opinion or attitude, put forward their point or view, etc.

When students interact within small groups to meet intellectual challenges and generate creative solutions, they naturally apply CT skills, that enhances the joint effect of their personal active position and mutual efforts in solving real life problems, helps develop CR competence and increases the CT awareness level.

Prospects for further research consist in further developing, detailing and experimentally testing the methodology of forming CR competence of pre-service English language teachers on the material of short stories. Future research can also help to compare the effectiveness of different interactive strategies and techniques within the suggested methodology, to theoretically frame the system of exercises and work out some practical recommendations on its implementation.

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