



INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CRITICAL THINKING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS STUDYING ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN CHABAHAR UNIVERSITIES IN 2016. A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY

Malek Mohammad Hout^{1*} and Abdolmaek Danesh²

¹*MA of English Teaching, Islamic Azad University Chabahar Branch, Chabahar, IR Iran.

²Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran.

*Corresponding Author: Abdolmaek Danesh

Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Paying attention to the improvement of students' critical thinking skills is an important principle in teaching and learning processes because the ability to think critically is essential for success in today's world. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between critical thinking and academic achievement of students studying English translation in the city of Chabahar in Iran. **Research approach:** This is a descriptive cross-sectional study that was conducted on 90 students of English Translation of Chabahar in 1395 (2016). The samples were randomly selected. Data collection was done by Ricketts' Critical Thinking questionnaire. Finally, after collecting the information, data were analysed using SPSS software version 19 and descriptive statistics. **Findings:** The results obtained from this study showed that 90 students of English translation participated in this study and 63 of these samples (65.6%) were male. The average age of these students was 23.92 ± 5.57 . Pearson's correlation test showed that there is a significant relationship between critical thinking and academic achievement of students ($p=0.02$). This means that by increasing students' critical thinking skills, they also have higher academic performances. **Conclusion:** Given that the results of this study showed that there is a correlation between critical thinking and academic achievement, therefore, we can play an important role in developing students' critical thinking skills by modifying and providing appropriate educational process and methods.

KEYWORDS: Critical thinking, academic achievement, students.

INTRODUCTION

Today, due to the abundance of information and the necessity of learning it, people have no critical thinking in their information. Students do most of their assignments without thinking.^[1] Assembly of the National Education Goals considers as a necessity the critical thinking and effective communication and problem-solving abilities to achieve academic success in higher levels of education.^[2] Among the experts and specialists in this field, "John Dewey" is known as the father of modern critical thinking tradition. John Dewey considers the critical thinking as active, accurate and stable investigation of any belief of hypothetical knowledge that is created based on a series of supporting reasons and results obtained from them.^[3] Paying attention to the improvement of students' critical thinking skills is a very important principle in the process of teaching and learning. What is more important than acquiring specific knowledge is that, in addition to intellectual activities, people acquire skills that help them in evaluating the frequency of information that they are faced with. Today, critical thinking is neglected due to

rapid scientific advances and the increasing volume of information and knowledge that students need to learn and educational objectives is led to convey the information by lecture. Halpern considers critical thinking as the use of cognitive skills and strategies that raise the probability of achieving desirable results.^[5] One of the biggest challenges of professors is helping the students to develop their experience and familiarizing them with values and different new ideas. Ability to understand new experiences and visualization of capabilities beyond the immediate experiences of a person are considered as the most important elements of critical thinking. Learning the critical thinking involves the development of thought processes through the course beyond attitudes and self-centered imaginations and immediate sensory experience.^[6] In critical thinking, people decide to do something based on a careful evaluation of issues and evident cases and they reach concrete results by taking into account all relevant factors.^[7] We should also know that progress on critical thinking skills is one of the most important reasons for formal training because the ability to think critically in

essential to succeed in today's rapidly progressing world.^[8] Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between critical thinking and academic achievement of students studying English translation in the city of Chabahar in Iran.

Research approach

This is a descriptive cross-sectional study that was conducted on 90 students of English Translation in the city of Chabahar in 1395 (2016). The samples were randomly selected. Data collection was done by Ricketts' Critical Thinking questionnaire. This questionnaire includes 33 questions. The participants scored the level of their agreement or disagreement with each of the questions with 5-point Likert scale with the options of: I strongly disagree (Number 1), I disagree (Number 2), I don't know (Number 3), I agree (Number 4) and I strongly agree (Number 5). So the highest score was 165 and the lowest score was 33. The validity of this questionnaire is evaluated by the study of Ajam and its reliability by Cronbach's alpha is obtained 0.68 in this study.^[9] Finally, after collecting the information, data were analysed using SPSS software version 19 and descriptive statistics.

Findings

90 students of English translation participated in this study and 63 of these samples (65.6%) were male. The average age of these students was 23.92 ± 5.57 . Pearson's correlation test showed that there is a significant relationship between critical thinking and academic achievement of students ($p=0.02$). This means that by increasing students' critical thinking skills, they also had higher academic performance.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed that there is a significant relationship between critical thinking of students and their academic achievement. This result is also obtained in other studies that are consistent with the present study.^[2,10,11] People with high critical thinking can have a better academic performance due to the strength in reception and good processing of information and organizing it, possessing the power of reasoning and deduction, curiosity and openness of mind, avoidance of bias and the power of distinction.^[12] Critical thinking is considered as a targeted process of self-judgement that results in problem solving and decision making in individuals. This process consists of the flexibility that helps an individual to judge logically and by rational methods the applied theories, evidences, described criteria and standards or the value of the methods used.^[7] The approach of thinking critically should be taught to students because this is the fundament of learning process. Students who have developed critical thinking skills in themselves and apply it are able to think independently. They recognize the limitations of their knowledge and analyse important issues before acting on them. Skilful use of critical thinking enables students to improve their achievement and get higher scores and

results in different tests and understand lesson subjects with more depth, more long lasting and even in a more efficient level.

If we intend to foster critical thinking in medical universities, it seems that a decrease of texts is one of its backgrounds. Another contributing factor in low scores of critical thinking skills in students of medicine could be the method of teaching. The main teaching method in medical universities is the lecture method. This method makes possible the transmission of massive information in a short time. One of the most principal problems of this method is not having time to talk and exchange ideas with students about education topics.^[13]

CONCLUSION

Given that the results of this study showed that there is a correlation between critical thinking and academic achievement, therefore, we can play an important role in developing students' critical thinking by modifying and providing appropriate educational process and methods. Therefore, administrators and educational planners of our country should pay more attention to acquiring critical thinking skills during university studies by making changes in the curriculum and the approach of its implementation and it may be necessary to pay attention to this fact from very low educational stages.

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