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CRITICAL THINKING IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AT THE HIGHER INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGES, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF ASUNCIÓN, PARAGUAY

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Abstract
One of the most important goals in higher education is to prepare professionals, especially in education, who able to develop critical thinking skills in order to promote citizenship and meet the challenges of a globalized and ever-changing world. This article presents the results of the first stage of a participatory action-research study which involves teachers and students from five degree programs at the Higher Institute of Languages from the National University of Asunción. Teachers' perspectives on their practices were gathered through a questionnaire designed by Estigarribia et. al. (2019), and were analyzed in relation to the development of critical thinking skills. The results show that, teachers in the language courses evaluate their critical thinking skills in a mostly positive way, with overall averages per skill that were 3.7 to 4.6 on a scale of 1 to 5. However, this is not always related to the practices they indicate to perform with their students. The highest number of significant correlations was found in the category "problem solving" where positive correlations were found between self-assessment of skills and teaching practice. According to this initial survey, interventions that promote the development of critical thinking will be planned and implemented with university students in language careers, to be later evaluated in relation to the attitudes and actions found in this first stage.
Keywords: critical thinking, second language teaching, foreign language teaching

Resumen
Uno de los principales objetivos de la educación superior es el de preparar profesionales capaces de desarrollar habilidades de pensamiento crítico para promover la ciudadanía y hacer frente a los desafíos de un mundo globalizado y en constante cambio, especialmente en el ámbito de la educación. En este artículo se presentan los resultados de la primera etapa de un estudio de investigación-acción participativa en el que participan profesores y estudiantes de cinco programas de grado del Instituto Superior de Lenguas de la Universidad Nacional de Asunción. Los puntos de vista de los profesores sobre sus prácticas se recogieron mediante un cuestionario diseñado por Estigarribia y otros (2019), y se analizaron en relación con el desarrollo de las habilidades de pensamiento crítico. Los resultados muestran que, los profesores de las carreras de lengua evalúan sus habilidades de pensamiento crítico de manera mayormente positiva, con promedios globales por habilidad que fueron de 3,7 a 4,6 en una escala de 1 a 5. Sin embargo, esto no siempre se relaciona con las prácticas que indican realizar con sus estudiantes. El mayor número de correlaciones significativas se encontró en la categoría "solución de problemas", en la que se encontraron correlaciones positivas entre la autoevaluación de las aptitudes y la práctica docente. De acuerdo con esta encuesta inicial, se planificarán y ejecutarán intervenciones que promuevan el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico con estudiantes universitarios de carreras de lenguas, para ser evaluadas posteriormente en relación con las actitudes y acciones encontradas en esta primera etapa.

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Palabras clave: pensamiento crítico, enseñanza segundas lenguas, enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras

Introduction

As two decades into the 21st century come to an end, debates continue about a new model of learning that takes into account the current reality in which the constant is change, accelerated by the unbridled pace of technological advances. The competencies and skills required to function in today's world, as well as the pedagogies needed to stimulate these capabilities, are at the heart of these debates. The Delors Report (1996), prepared by the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century, presents one of the first frameworks on the competencies needed in this century presented in the "four pillars of education": learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. According to the review of literature conducted by Scott (2015), the question arises as to whether students today have the combination of critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative and communication skills that are necessary to deal with the new unexpected situations they will face... [and] the importance of personal, social and learning competencies is highlighted.

Thus, according to Bozu and Canto (2009), one of the challenges of higher education is to prepare new generations of teachers to be able to learn and use knowledge in different contexts and modalities, as well as to adapt it to new situations throughout life. Therefore, "critical thinking is considered fundamental for learning in the 21st century" (Scott, 2015).

This study is carried out at the National University of Asuncion, in the Higher Institute of Languages from Faculty of Philosophy. The mentioned faculty was created from the School of Humanities, by decree Nº 3925, in 1944 and on February 16, 1948 the Faculty of Philosophy was founded. The “Instituto Superior de Lenguas” (ISL) was created by Resolution No. 123 B of April 12, 1965 and simultaneously signed an agreement with the United States Embassy to organize and implement the Bachelor's Degree in English Language with the purpose of training professionals to teach in the English language. Currently, the ISL offers bachelor's degrees in English, French, German, Portuguese and Guarani. As part of the Faculty of Philosophy, the ISL aims to have its careers recognized as quality programs at the national, regional and international levels in the training of competent teachers, in the generation and application of knowledge in an innovative manner, helping consolidate UNA in its leadership role locally and regionally in response to social needs and expectations as well as in the permanent search for the full realization of its students. To this end, the ISL adopts the mission of training critical, creative, ethical, and socially responsible professionals prepared to optimize the teaching-learning process at the various educational

levels where they work, through the effective use of appropriate teaching materials and tools that respond to current and future educational needs.

Historically, pedagogical approaches in higher education have focused on the traditional model of the teacher as an authority and on the tacit rules of knowledge transmission where education has been seen as a cornerstone in the construction of national identity. However, according to Davies and Barnett (2015), a sense of modernity has developed in recent decades that requires students to take a more questioning and critical stance so that higher education can fulfill its mission to transform society. Thus, Facione (2007) considers critical thinking as the "cornerstone on the path that humanity is traveling from bestial savagery to global sensibility" (p. 8).

In addition, in a 2006 report by a major American consortium, employers surveyed indicated that the skill needed for work in the new millennium is "critical thinking" over "innovation" and "application of ICTs. (Casner-Lotto and Benner 2006) On the other hand, the last decades have seen the growth of the business university where skills such as "leadership" and "teamwork" are privileged since the objective is to be able to compete in the global economy. Thus, Davies and Barnett (2015) observe a paradox in academia currently since the economic industry wants "more critical thinking" while the universities are not providing it adequately, in spite of the discourses where they express their value.

For this reason, the focus of this study is on the need to emphasize the development of critical thinking skills in the teaching of foreign languages in higher education in order to train professionals and teachers capable of developing these skills in their students. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of strategies for the development of critical thinking in the education of language teachers at the ISL. In order to achieve this aim, the following specific objectives are proposed: a) to identify the critical thinking skills emphasized by teachers in the careers of the ISL; b) to implement an action plan for the development of critical thinking skills in the students of the ISL; and c) to evaluate how the implementation of specific strategies for the development of critical thinking contributes to the training of future teachers of national and foreign languages. This article presents the results of a survey carried out in the framework of the preliminary phase where critical thinking skills emphasized by teachers in their classrooms are identified and evaluated.

Theoretical Framework

Competencies for critical thinking have long been debated by theorists and educators. In the last decades, they have become one of the most important foci of academic discussion, especially with regard to higher education. Its definition and

characteristics were the object of many discussions and meetings, among which the meeting organized by the American Philosophical Association (APA) in 1990 stands out. During this meeting, the following definition of consensus was reached: "we understand that Critical Thinking (CP) is the self-regulated and purposeful judgment that results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation and inference, as well as the explanation of the evidence, conceptual, methodological, criteria or contextual considerations on which that judgment is based."(APA, 1990)

This statement included aspects that can be classified as cognitive (argumentation, reflective judgement, etc.) as well as others related to disposition and attitude. Thus, in the perspective of "skills and judgment" there is the cognitive skills of critical thinking that involve interpretation, analysis, inference, explanation, evaluation, metacognition and self-regulation (Halonen, 1995). On the other hand, the perspective of "dispositions plus skills" poses a broader approach to critical thinking where attitudes and habits necessary for critical thinking which lead the individual to be critical are involved (Davies & Barnett, 2015). From this perspective, the authors propose a model of critical thinking for higher education where both individual and socio-cultural dimensions are included, incorporating skills, judgments, dispositions, actions, criticism and creativity. They also propose the concept of "criticality" that involves not only thinking, being, and acting. Thus, for Davies and Barnett (2015), "higher education can do much more than teach students to demonstrate critical thinking as analytical skills. It can lead them to understand themselves and to be critically oriented towards the world and to demonstrate an active socio-political stance towards the established norms and practices they are confronted with". (p. 16)

This perspective carries important implications for what higher education can be and rarely manages to be today, especially considering the corporatism in the university (Cowden and Singh, 2013). Finally, this model poses critical thinking as critical pedagogy that is defined as the use of higher education to overcome the conditions that restrict and limit human freedom, as Giroux (2010) puts it when he defines it as an educational movementto help students develop an awareness of freedomand the ability to take constructive action.Similarly, the authors Thomas and Lok (2015) outline the attributes of critical thinking in higher education in three major areas that they consider fundamental to their analysis: abilities, dispositions and knowledge.

Considering critical thinking as a fundamental aspect of higher education, there are several positions regarding how to develop it. Jones (2015) states that, although general attributes of critical thinking exist, they take different forms according to each discipline. On the other hand, Bailin and Battersby (2015) point out that reasoning and argumentation are

not generally the focus of discipline pedagogy and therefore propose a pedagogical approach that promotes aspects of argumentation that transcend the discipline barrier. To this end, they propose the teaching of critical thinking from the perspective of research.

In recent years, the role of critical thinking in language teaching has gained relevance (Davidson, 1998; Norton & Toohuey, 2004), especially since language teaching has traditionally focused primarily on the learning of communication skills rather than critical thinking. Researchers and language educators have noted the need to emphasize the critical aspects of language teaching since languages are fundamental tools of thought. Thus, Pennycook (2004) proposes that teachers-in-training discuss not only their practices but also how these are situated within the socio-political context.

In their study on critical thinking in the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Asunción, Estigarribia et al. (2018) identify seven fundamental cognitive skills for the development of evaluation indicators used in the development of an instrument applied to students and teachers. These include: 1) interpretation; 2) clarification; 3) analysis; 4) evaluation; 5) intellectual empathy; 6) problem solving; 7) transformative vision. These authors identify five levels of evaluation as follows: 1) unthinking thinker who is unaware of the problems of his or her thinking; 2) restless thinker who is aware but does not yet know how to improve; 3) beginning thinker who has begun to practice new skills; 4) advanced thinker who practices and has developed new thinking skills; and, 5) master thinker who regularly applies these skills to his or her tasks, and they are constantly reviewed. In the first stage of this study presented here, this questionnaire will be used in a descriptive way to identify the levels of critical thinking presented by teachers and the relationship between this self-evaluation and the emphasis they identify in their teaching activity.

Methodology

The methodology used in this project is that of a case study with an action-research design. According to McNiff (2013), action research is the process of investigating and analyzing one's practice and learning to assess whether it is as we think it should be in order to take action to improve it if necessary and produce evidence that shows that practice has improved. Thus, this type of research is carried out in stages where first the problem and needs are identified, a plan of action is elaborated, it is implemented and a record is kept of what occurs, and the results of the action are evaluated in order to modify it or continue on that path until we are satisfied with the results. Finally, the results of the actions are reported to the entire community (Hernández Sampieri, 2014). Both quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies are used, with the main source of data being the activities carried out by

instructors and the work done by ISL students, although surveys and interviews with teachers and students are also included at all stages of the study.

The case selected for this study is the Higher Institute of Languages (ISL), from the Faculty of Philosophy, UNA. All of the courses offered at this institution, including German, French, Portuguese, English and Guarani, are part of this study. All teachers and students of national and foreign languages belonging to the institution take part in the actions. In the first stage, teaching practices will be analyzed in relation to the development of critical thinking skills, as well as the needs of students and teachers for the development of these skills in the different areas of the careers offered. For this purpose, a survey was carried out with teachers from the five careers at the ISL where they evaluate the approach they use in relation to critical thinking skills according to the instrument designed by Estigarribia et. al.

In addition, the reference framework proposed by Thomas and Lok (2015) will be used, which outlines the attributes of critical thinking in three major areas: abilities, dispositions, and knowledge. Based on these analytical categories, practices (activities, tasks, and evaluations) will be examined according to indicators of critical thinking presented in this reference framework. Based on this analysis, in the second stage an intervention will be planned with training and teamwork aimed at implementing specific strategies for the development of critical thinking skills. Work teams will be formed by area of knowledge and by language to plan the most appropriate strategies for the development of critical thinking according to the needs established in the first stage. From this strategic planning, in the third stage, each teacher will implement these strategies with their students and will collect data to analyze how these strategies improve or not the critical thinking skills in their students. The data will include class recordings, observations, and student work.

Finally, in the fourth stage, the results of the implementation of these strategies will be evaluated in order to make adjustments according to the results and to aim at the improvement of teaching practices in relation to the development of critical thinking skills. This analysis will use data from the work done by the students during the implementation phase of the strategies for the development of critical thinking. Again, the criteria established during the first stage will be used to evaluate the results of the implementation carried out. Once the evaluation is completed, adjustments or new interventions will be proposed to continue the improvement cycle characteristic of action research.

This article focuses on the preliminary results of the first stage which includes the survey conducted with teachers from the five careers of the Instituto Superior de Lenguas. The survey was sent to the total population of teachers which includes 113 teachers distributed as follows: 16 German-speaking, 23 French-speaking, 36 Guarani-speaking, 32

English-speaking and 6 Portuguese-speaking. Of these, 32 teachers answered, 4 for German, 8 for French, 5 for Guarani, 14 for English, and 1 for Portuguese. The questionnaire sent consists of 36 items grouped according to the seven critical thinking skills presented by Estigarribia et. al. (2019): 1) interpretation; 2) clarification; 3) analysis; 4) evaluation; 5) intellectual empathy; 6) transformative vision; and 7) problem solving. Each one of these variables presents five indicators that aim to evaluate the skills and identify the classroom approach of the teachers in the study. The 36 items of the questionnaire constitute statements to which the participants must indicate their perceptions according to a Likert type frequency scale from 1 to 5 as follows: 1 = never; 2 = occasionally; 3 = sometimes; 4 = often; 5 = always.

This questionnaire was administered through a form using the Google Forms tool. The answers were tabulated from the generated form and then the analysis was performed using SPSS software. The analyses performed include descriptive statistics (tables and graphs) of the individual questions, as well as by category and finally a correlation analysis (Spearman) by category was performed using the summation of the teachers' assessment of their own critical thinking skills and whether they emphasize them in their teaching practice.

Results

According to preliminary interviews and focus groups conducted with ISL instructors, several of them are enthusiastic about participating in the action research project to improve their practices in relation to the development and promotion of critical thinking skills in language teaching. The teams were organized by degree program (German, French, Guarani, English and Portuguese). Initial meetings were held with the career coordinators. In addition, a workshop on "critical thinking in language teaching" was held where instructors from the different language careers by academic area (linguistics, literature, social sciences, pedagogy, translation and research) shared the main challenges regarding the development of critical thinking skills in their classrooms. As a task for the next workshop, the teachers committed themselves to compile a portfolio of the activities carried out during the semester in order to analyze them in the next workshop at the end of the academic period according to the above-mentioned reference frameworks.

At the same time, after receiving the return of the questionnaires sent to instructors, it was possible to tabulate and organize in a descriptive way their perceptions about their own critical thinking skills according to the categories identified by Estigarribia et al. (2018) and to relate them to their evaluation of their ownpractices with respect to these skills.

Table 1 shows the frequency of responses for the skill "interpretation" where 81.3% of the respondents say that they can always differentiate the main idea when they read a text; while 46.9% say that often or only sometimes the practical work of the subject helps students to interpret texts or situations. Table 2 presents the descriptive results of the same data, in which it can be observed that, for all items in this category, instructors evaluated their skills and their application in the classroom with a minimum of four, being the means in all items of at least 4.5. The overall average of scores for this skill is 4.6 as can be seen in Table 22.

Table 1: Frequency of responses for the skill "interpretation"

		Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
When I read a text, I can tell the main idea	Frequency	0	0	0	6	26	32
	%	0	0	0	18,8	81,3	100
In a complex situation, I can understand the importance of a fact	Frequency	0	0	0	11	21	32
	%	0	0	0	34,4	65,6	100
I can capture the message that the author of a text wants to convey	Frequency	0	0	0	12	20	32
	%	0	0	0	37,5	62,5	100
In texts from newspapers or magazines, I identify the author's opinions and ideology	Frequency	0	0	0	13	19	32
	%	0	0	0	40,6	59,4	100
The practical works of my subject help students to interpret texts or situations	Frequency	0	0	2	13	17	32
	%	0	0	6,3	40,6	53,1	100

Source: Author

Table 2: Descriptive summary for the skill “interpretation”

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
When I read a text, I can tell the main idea	32	4	5	4,8	5	0,40
En una situación compleja, puedo comprender la importancia de un hecho	32	4	5	4,7	5	0,48
In a complex situation, I can understand the importance of a fact	32	4	5	4,6	5	0,49
En textos de periódicos o revistas, identifico las opiniones y la ideología del autor	32	4	5	4,6	5	0,50
I can capture the message that the author of a text wants to convey	32	3	5	4,5	5	0,62

Source: Author

Table 3 shows Spearman's correlation with bilateral tests to determine the association or interdependence between the variables analyzed. As can be seen in this table, there are significant correlations between the assessments that teachers make of their own critical thinking skills. However, no significant relationship was found between this self-evaluation and what these teachers indicate they do in the classroom through their practical work. This was because of the five items, this is the one with the greatest variation in responses and the average is lower than the other items, although by a minimal margin.

Table 3: Correlation between items in the skill **"Interpretation"**

		When I read a text, I can tell the main idea	In a complex situation, I can understand the importance of a fact	I can capture the message that the author of a text wants to convey	In texts from newspapers or magazines, I identify the author's opinions and ideology	The practical works of my subject help students to interpret texts or situations
When I read a text, I can tell the main idea	CorrelationCoefficient	1				
	Sig. (bilateral)					
In a complex situation, I can understand the importance of a fact	CorrelationCoefficient	0,495**	1			
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,004				
I can capture the message that the author of a text wants to convey	CorrelationCoefficient	0,289	0,391*	1		
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,108	0,027			
In texts from newspapers or magazines, I identify the author's opinions and ideology	CorrelationCoefficient	0,418*	0,607**	0,411*	1	
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,017	0,000	0,020		
The practical works of my subject help students to interpret texts or situations	CorrelationCoefficient	0,073	-0,121	0,178	0,000	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,689	0,510	0,331	1,000	

*, **. The correlation is significant to the 0,01 and 0,05 levels respectively.
Source: Author

The frequencies in the answers obtained for the skill "clarification" are presented in Table 4, where 56.3% of the respondents consider that they never find it difficult to teach the concepts of their area and delimit them correctly, and prefer to teach them through memorization. In this skill, the second question that looks at how clear they are in their classes, there was a greater dispersion of responses and even 3 of the respondents indicated that they tend to go in circles during their classes often. On the other hand, 59.4% of the participants said that they often find it easy to explain when students have doubts about a complex subject. Table 5 shows that the oral presentations made by students in class help them learn to communicate their ideas clearly has the highest average (4.3) among the different aspects analyzed for the skill of clarification. The overall average of evaluation of the items presented to assess this skill is 4.2. Table 6 shows that no significant correlation was found between any of the different aspects related to the skill "clarification". This may be due again to the fact that the dispersion in teachers' self-evaluations is minimal, so no statistically significant relationships can be established between what teachers evaluate about their performance with respect to this skill.

Tabla 4: Frequency of responses for the skill "Clarification"

		Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
I find it difficult to teach the concepts in my area and	Frequency	18	8	5	1	0	32

delimit them correctly, I prefer to teach them by heart	%	56,3	25	15,6	3,1	0	100
I take a lot of detours when communicating something in class	Frequency	14	8	7	3	0	32
	%	43,8	25	21,9	9,4	0	100
When a student has doubts about a complex subject, it is easy for me to explain	Frequency	1	0	2	19	10	32
	%	3,1	0	6,3	59,4	31,3	100
The oral presentations made by the students in my class help them learn to clearly communicate their ideas	Frequency	0	0	3	15	14	32
	%	0	0	9,4	46,9	43,8	100
The debates in my classes promote the construction of a hierarchy of values based on social commitment	Frequency	0	2	5	13	12	32
	%	0	6,3	15,6	40,6	37,5	100

Source: Author

Tabla 5: Descriptive summary for the skill “clarification”

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
I find it difficult to teach the concepts in my area and delimit them correctly, I prefer to teach them by heart	32	1	4	1,7	1	0,87
I take a lot of detours when communicating something in class	32	1	4	2,0	1	1,03
When a student has doubts about a complex subject, it is easy for me to explain	32	1	5	4,2	4	0,81
The oral presentations made by the students in my class help them learn to clearly communicate their ideas	32	3	5	4,3	4	0,65
The debates in my classes promote the construction of a hierarchy of values based on social commitment	32	2	5	4,1	4	0,89

Source: Author

Tabla 6: Correlation between items in the skill **“Clarification”**

		I find it easy to teach the concepts in my area and to delimit them correctly	I am concise when communicating something in class	When a student has doubts about a complex subject, it is easy for me to explain	The oral presentations made by the students in my class help them learn to clearly communicate their ideas	The debates in my classes promote the construction of a hierarchy of values based on social commitment
I find it easy to teach the concepts in my area and to delimit them correctly	CorrelationCoefficient	1				
	Sig. (bilateral)					
I am concise when communicating something in class	CorrelationCoefficient	0,250	1			
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,168				
When a student has doubts about a complex subject, it is easy for me to explain	CorrelationCoefficient	-0,176	0,110	1		
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,337	0,549			
The oral presentations made by the students in my class help them learn to clearly communicate their ideas	CorrelationCoefficient	0,004	-0,167	0,328	1	
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,983	0,360	0,067		
The debates in my classes promote the construction of a hierarchy of values based on social commitment	CorrelationCoefficient	-0,070	-0,086	0,304	0,289	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,704	0,641	0,091	0,108	

Source: Author

Tables 7, 8 and 9 present the results obtained for the skill "Analysis". It was observed that 56.3% of the participants of this study *never* present their own approach to their students, demanding that they leave aside other approaches; while 75% can *always* realize the intention of a discourse, being this the aspect that presents the highest average (4.8) of all those who were studied in relation to the skill "Analysis". The overall average positive rating for this skill is 4.4, which represents the second highest average for the skills. Taking into account the analysis of the correlation between these aspects presented in Table 9, it can be observed that there is a positive correlation at the 0.05 level between the statement that "when teaching a subject, the teacher demands that the students leave other approaches aside" and that "the research activities carried out teach them to analyze complex situations". This occurred mainly because some of the instructors who indicated 5 in the latter had indicated 1 and 2 in the former.

Table 7: Frequency of responses for the skill “Analysis”

		Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
To address a complex issue, I start by breaking it down into its parts and then look for connections between them	Frequency	0	0	3	16	13	32
	%	0	0	9,4	50	40,6	100
When teaching a subject, I present my approach and demand that my students leave other approaches aside	Frequency	18	7	5	1	1	32
	%	56,3	21,9	15,6	3,1	3,1	100
When I review information, I look for connections between the data	Frequency	0	0	2	13	17	32
	%	0	0	6,3	40,6	53,1	100
I can tell the intent of a discourse	Frequency	0	0	0	8	24	32
	%	0	0	0	25	75	100
The research activities carried out during my course teach how to analyze complex situations	Frequency	0	1	3	21	7	32
	%	0	3,1	9,4	65,6	21,9	100

Source: Author

Table 8: Descriptive summary for the skill “Analysis”

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
To address a complex issue, I start by breaking it down into its parts and then look for connections between them	32	3	5	4,3	4	0,64
When teaching a subject, I present my approach and demand that my students leave other approaches aside	32	1	5	1,8	1	1,05
When I review information, I look for connections between the data	32	3	5	4,5	5	0,62
I can tell the intent of a discourse	32	4	5	4,8	5	0,44
The research activities carried out during my course teach how to analyze complex situations	32	2	5	4,1	4	0,67

Source: Author

Table 9: Correlation between items in the skill**"Analysis"**

		To address a complex issue, I start by breaking it down into its parts and then look for connections between them	When teaching a subject, I present my approach and demand that my students leave other approaches aside	When I review information, I look for connections between the data	I can tell the intent of a discourse	The research activities carried out during my course teach how to analyze complex situations
To address a complex issue, I start by breaking it down into its parts and then look for connections between them	CorrelationCoefficient	1				
	Sig. (bilateral)					
When teaching a subject, I present my approach and demand that my students leave other approaches aside	CorrelationCoefficient	0,160	1			
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,381				
When I review information, I look for connections between the data	CorrelationCoefficient	0,233	-0,045	1		
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,199	0,807			
I can tell the intent of a discourse	CorrelationCoefficient	0,135	-0,269	0,199	1	
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,462	0,136	0,276		
The research activities carried out during my course teach how to analyze complex situations	CorrelationCoefficient	-0,004	0,440*	-0,096	-0,019	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,983	0,012	0,601	0,920	

*. The correlation is significant to the 0,05 level.
Source: Author

With regard to the skill "Evaluation", Table 10 shows that 28.2% of those surveyed say that occasionally or never the instructor evaluation methods applied in the institution help to evaluate and improve their way of thinking, while for 31.3% this only happens sometimes. In another of the aspects related to "Evaluation", 75% point out that always when they look for scientific information, they evaluate the credibility of the information. In Table 11 it can be observed that the average in four of the items in this category is above 4 while in the last one it reaches only 3.2 as was already observed in the frequency table. Thus, the overall average of this skill is 4.2. In Table 12 the correlation between these aspects related to the skill "Evaluation" is presented, and it can be seen that a significant correlation could be established at the level 0.01 between the first two items.

Table 10: Frequency of responses for the skill "Evaluation"

		Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
When I listen to the students' opinions, I can identify the strengths and weaknesses of their approach	Frequency	0	0	3	14	15	32
	%	0	0	9,4	43,8	46,9	100
Before expressing my ideas, I check the coherence of my thinking	Frequency	0	0	5	12	15	32
	%	0	0	15,6	37,5	46,9	100
When I search for scientific information, I evaluate the credibility of the information	Frequency	0	0	2	6	24	32
	%	0	0	6,3	18,8	75	100

The practice of teacher self-evaluation can promote the emancipation of thought	Frequency	0	0	9	7	16	32
	%	0	0	28,1	21,9	50	100
The teacher evaluation methods applied in my institution help to evaluate	Frequency	3	6	10	8	5	32
	%	9,4	18,8	31,3	25	15,6	100

Source: Author

Tabla 11: Descriptive summary for the skill “Evaluation”

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
When I listen to the students' opinions, I can identify the strengths and weaknesses of their approach	32	3	5	4,4	5	0,66
Antes de expresar mis ideas, reviso la coherencia de mi manera de pensar	32	3	5	4,3	5	0,74
Before expressing my ideas, I check the coherence of my thinking	32	3	5	4,7	5	0,59
La práctica de la autoevaluación docente puede promover la emancipación del pensamiento	32	3	5	4,2	5	0,87
When I search for scientific information, I evaluate the credibility of the information	32	1	5	3,2	3	1,20

Source: Author

Tabla 12: Correlation between items in the skill**“Evaluation”**

		When I listen to the students' opinions, I can identify the strengths and weaknesses of their approach	Before expressing my ideas, I check the coherence of my thinking	When I search for scientific information, I evaluate the credibility of the information	The practice of teacher self-evaluation can promote the emancipation of thought	The teacher evaluation methods applied in my institution help to evaluate and improve my way of thinking
When I listen to the students' opinions, I can identify the strengths and weaknesses of their approach	CorrelationCoefficient	1				
	Sig. (bilateral)					
Before expressing my ideas, I check the coherence of my thinking	CorrelationCoefficient	0,474**	1			
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,006				
When I search for scientific information, I evaluate the credibility of the information	CorrelationCoefficient	-0,017	0,123	1		
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,924	0,501			
The practice of teacher self-evaluation can promote the emancipation of thought	CorrelationCoefficient	0,000	0,105	0,234	1	
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,999	0,568	0,198		
The teacher evaluation methods applied in my institution help to evaluate and improve my way of thinking	CorrelationCoefficient	0,080	0,128	-0,073	0,246	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,663	0,486	0,692	0,174	

**. *. The correlation is significant to the 0,01 level.
Source: Author

Below, in Table 13, the frequencies of responses obtained for the "Intellectual Empathy" skill are presented, where 50% of the participants in this study state that they never formulate explanations of the problems in the area of study from a single perspective. Most of the respondents - 56.3% always and 40.6% often - claim to be aware of their point of view and their way of thinking regarding the country's problems. Table 14 shows that the

lowest average (1.9) represents the "formulation of explanations of the problems of the area of study from a single perspective", and the highest average (4.5) refers to respondents stating "being aware of their point of view and their way of thinking in relation to the problems of the country". The overall average for this ability is 4.1.

Table 13: Frequency of responses for the skill “Intellectual Empathy”

		Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
To understand an idea, opinion or theory of my career, I first seek to know the author's point of view	Frequency	1	2	7	14	8	32
	%	3,1	6,3	21,9	43,8	25	100
To understand a problem, I take into account the views of the people involved	Frequency	0	1	4	9	18	32
	%	0	3,1	12,5	28,1	56,3	100
I formulate explanations of the problems in my area from a single perspective	Frequency	16	7	6	2	1	32
	%	50	21,9	18,8	6,3	3,1	100
I am aware of my point of view and my way of thinking in relation to the problems of my country	Frequency	0	1	0	13	18	32
	%	0	3,1	0	40,6	56,3	100
Classroom discussions help develop students' vision of social transformation	Frequency	0	2	3	16	11	32
	%	0	6,3	9,4	50	34,4	100

Source: Author

Table 14: Descriptive summary for the skill “Intellectual Empathy”

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
To understand an idea, opinion or theory of my career, I first seek to know the author's point of view	32	1	5	3,8	4	1,00
To understand a problem, I take into account the views of the people involved	32	2	5	4,4	5	0,83
I formulate explanations of the problems in my area from a single perspective	32	1	5	1,9	1	1,12
I am aware of my point of view and my way of thinking in relation to the problems of my country	32	2	5	4,5	5	0,67
Classroom discussions help develop students' vision of social transformation	32	2	5	4,1	4	0,83

Source: Author

En la Tabla 15 se presentan los resultados de la correlación entre los distintos aspectos analizados que se relacionan a la habilidad “Empatía Intelectual”. Aquí se encontró una correlación positiva significativa en el nivel 0,05 entre los dos primeros ítems correspondientes a esta habilidad que tratan de comprender el punto de vista de autores u otras personas. También se encontró una correlación positiva entre el segundo ítem que corresponde a tomar en cuenta los puntos de vista de otras personas y el último donde se evalúan los debates de acuerdo a si ayudan a desarrollar en los estudiantes una visión de transformación social.

Table 15: Correlation between items in the skill**Intellectual Empathy**

		To understand an idea, opinion or theory of my career, I first seek to know the author's point of view	To understand a problem, I take into account the views of the people involved	I formulate explanations of the problems in my area from a single perspective	I am aware of my point of view and my way of thinking in relation to the problems of my country	Classroom discussions help develop students' vision of social transformation
To understand an idea, opinion or theory of my career, I first seek to know the author's point of view	CorrelationCoefficient	1				
	Sig. (bilateral)					
To understand a problem, I take into account the views of the people involved	CorrelationCoefficient	0,389*	1			
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,028				
I formulate explanations of the problems in my area from a single perspective	CorrelationCoefficient	0,054	0,156	1		
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,767	0,395			
I am aware of my point of view and my way of thinking in relation to the problems of my country	CorrelationCoefficient	0,290	0,325	0,163	1	
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,108	0,070	0,373		
Classroom discussions help develop students' vision of social transformation	CorrelationCoefficient	0,232	0,402*	0,092	0,242	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,202	0,022	0,615	0,182	

*. The correlation is significant to the 0,05 level.

Source: Author

When analyzing the responses obtained for the "Transformative Vision" skill, it can be seen that 40.6% of the participants state that they never act with indifference in the face of the country's social challenges; while 75% state that they always or often express their disagreement in the face of injustices and abuse of power. This last item had the highest average as can be seen in the descriptive summary presented in Table 17. It can also be seen that the averages presented in this item are lower than those in the previous categories, reaching an overall average of 3.7.**Table 16:** Frequency of responses for the skill "Transformative Vision"

		Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
When I analyze a current problem in class, I propose solutions that can be carried out through a process of change	Frequency	0	4	10	11	7	32
	%	0	12,5	31,3	34,4	21,9	100
To solve a problem, I propose innovations that can transform the current situation	Frequency	0	4	8	12	8	32
	%	0	12,5	25	37,5	25	100
I participate in the decision-making process of my institution, together with my students and fellow professors	Frequency	1	7	10	10	4	32
	%	3,1	21,9	31,3	31,3	12,5	100
I am indifferent to the social challenges of my country	Frequency	13	9	7	2	1	32
	%	40,6	28,1	21,9	6,3	3,1	100
I express my disagreement with the injustices and abuse of power	Frequency	0	2	6	12	12	32
	%	0	6,2	18,8	37,5	37,5	100

Source: Author

Table 17: Descriptive summary for the skill “Transformative Vision”

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
When I analyze a current problem in class, I propose solutions that can be carried out through a process of change.	32	2	5	3,7	4	0,97
To solve a problem, I propose innovations that can transform the current situation.	32	2	5	3,8	4	0,98
I participate in the decision-making process of my institution, together with my students and fellow professors.	32	1	5	3,3	3	1,05
I am indifferent to the social challenges of my country.	32	1	5	2,0	1	1,09
I express my disagreement with the injustices and abuse of power.	32	2	5	4,1	4	0,91

Source: Author

According to what was observed in the correlation table about this ability (Table 18), there is a positive correlation at the 0.01 level between the first two items that have to do with analysis and problem solving for processes of change and social transformation.

Tabla 18: Correlation between items in the skill**Transformative Vision**

		When I analyze a current problem in class, I propose solutions that can be carried out through a process of change	To solve a problem, I propose innovations that can transform the current situation	I participate in the decision-making process of my institution, together with my students and fellow professors	I act in favor of my country in light of social challenges	I express my disagreement with injustices and abuse of power
When I analyze a current problem in class, I propose solutions that can be carried out through a process of change	CorrelationCoefficient	1				
	Sig. (bilateral)					
To solve a problem, I propose innovations that can transform the current situation	CorrelationCoefficient	0,620**	1			
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,000				
I participate in the decision-making process of my institution, together with my students and fellow professors	CorrelationCoefficient	0,047	0,154	1		
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,798	0,399			
I act in favor of my country in light of social challenges	CorrelationCoefficient	0,224	-0,048	-0,246	1	
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,218	0,796	0,175		
I express my disagreement with injustices and abuse of power	CorrelationCoefficient	0,052	0,149	0,243	0,021	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,778	0,416	0,180	0,910	

**. La correlación es significativa en el nivel 0,01.

Source: Author

With regard to the last skill, "Problem Solving", Table 19 presents the frequencies in the answers about the aspects that were analyzed about it. According to this analysis, 37.5% of the participants in this study say that they never have any difficulty organizing their time and fulfilling their teaching tasks on time. On the other hand, 50% say that often and 28% that always when they investigate a problem in their area of study, they question the false beliefs that affect it. 37.5% of the teachers indicated that they often consider the technical solution exclusively and 40% of the teachers sometimes consider the institutional point of

view exclusively which is striking considering the other answers indicated in this questionnaire. The overall average for this category is 3.7.

Table 19: Frequency of responses for the skill “Problem Solving”

		Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequentl y	Always	Total
I analyze the problems from the institutional point of view only	Frequency	6	9	13	3	1	32
	%	18,8	28,1	40,6	9,4	3,1	100
To guide a student in choosing a research topic for my subject, I first identify the main problems in my area	Frequency	1	2	4	15	10	32
	%	3,1	6,3	12,5	46,9	31,3	100
When investigating a problem in my area, I question the false beliefs that influence it	Frequency	1	2	4	16	9	32
	%	3,1	6,3	12,5	50	28,1	100
I find it difficult to organize my time and fulfill my teaching duties punctually	Frequency	12	8	5	6	1	32
	%	37,5	25	15,6	18,8	3,1	100
I research the technical solution exclusively for each problem	Frequency	0	9	8	12	3	32
	%	0	28,1	25	37,5	9,4	100
In the problems researched in my field, I teach to consider the implications of each solution option	Frequency	0	0	7	12	13	32
	%	0	0	21,9	37,5	40,6	100

Source: Author

Table 20 presents the descriptive summary of the aspects that have been analyzed in relation to the skill "Problem Solving", where the highest average (4.2) is presented when the respondents refer to the problems investigated in their subjects, teaching to consider the implications of each solution option, and the lowest average is (2.3) is given when they refer to the fact that they find it difficult to organize their time and fulfill the teaching tasks on time.

Table 20: Descriptive summary for the skill “Problem Solving”

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
I analyze the problems from the institutional point of view only	32	1	5	2,5	3	1,02
To guide a student in choosing a research topic for my subject, I first identify the main problems in my area	32	1	5	4,0	4	1,00
When investigating a problem in my area, I question the false beliefs that influence it	32	1	5	3,9	4	0,98
I find it difficult to organize my time and fulfill my teaching duties punctually	32	1	5	2,3	1	1,24
I research the technical solution exclusively for each problem	32	2	5	3,3	4	0,99
In the problems researched in my field, I teach to consider the implications of each solution option	32	3	5	4,2	5	0,78

Source: Author

Table 21: Correlation between items in the skill**“Problem Solving”**

	I analyze the problems	To guide a student in choosing a	When investigating a problem in my	I organize my time without	I research the technical	In the problems researched in my field, I teach

		from the institutional point of view only	research topic for my subject, I first identify the main problems in my area	area, I question the false beliefs that influence it	much trouble and fulfill my teaching duties punctually	solution exclusively for each problem	to consider theimplications of each solution option
I analyze the problems from the institutional point of view only	CorrelationCoefficient	1					
	Sig. (bilateral)						
To guide a student in choosing a research topic for my subject, I first identify the main problems in my area	CorrelationCoefficient	0,417*	1				
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,018					
When investigating a problem in my area, I question the false beliefs that influence it	CorrelationCoefficient	-0,024	0,268	1			
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,898	0,139				
I organize my time without much trouble and fulfill my teaching duties punctually	CorrelationCoefficient	-0,061	0,027	-0,050	1		
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,741	0,884	0,785			
I research the technical solution exclusively for each problem	CorrelationCoefficient	0,528**	,728**	0,068	-0,018	1	
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,002	0,000	0,713	0,921		
In the problems researched in my field, I teach to consider the implications of each solution option	CorrelationCoefficient	0,434*	0,462**	-0,017	-0,116	0,639**	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,013	0,008	0,926	0,527	0,000	

*, **. The correlation in significant to the 0,01 y 0,05levels respectively.

Source: Author

In addition, Table 21 shows the correlations between the different aspects analyzed about the skill "Problem Solving". It can be seen that this category is the one that presents the greatest number of items with significant correlation. Thus, a significant positive correlation was found at the 0.05 level between the first two items, as well as between the first and last items. A significant correlation was found at the level 0.01 between item 5 and items 1, 2, and 6 respectively, as well as between items 2 and 6.

Finally, Table 22 shows a summary of the average scores received by each of the skills analyzed in this study, with a scale from 1 to 5 in the positive sense, with the skill "Interpretation" having the highest average score with 4.6 and the skills "Transformative Vision" and "Problem Solving" having the lowest average score with 3.7 respectively.

Table 22: Average scores by skill

Skill	Average
Interpretation	4,6
Clarification	4,2
Analysis	4,4
Evaluation	4,2
Empathy	4,1
Vision	3,7

Solving	3,7

Obs: Averages are in a positive sensefrom 1 to 5

Source: Author

Conclusion

From the results presented, it was observed thatprofessors and instructors in the language degree programs evaluate their critical thinking skills mostly positively, with overall averages per skill that were 3.7 to 4.6 on a scale of 1 to 5. However, this is not always related to the practices they indicate to be carrying out with their students. Most of the significant correlations found were between the self-assessment of their skills or between the practices. Most significant correlations were found in the first and last category where positive correlations were found between the self-evaluation of their skills and their teaching practice.

This first instructor self-evaluation serves as a basis for establishing how they view their practices with respect to the development of critical thinking skills with language students. From this initial evaluation and once the teaching period has ended, teaching practices will be evaluated through a qualitative analysis of the pedagogical and evaluative activities carried out during the period. The categories proposed by Estigarribia et al. (2018) presented in this paper will be used, organized according to the reference framework presented by Thomas and Lok (2015) where they are grouped according to the broadest concepts of knowledge, skills and dispositions. Once this analysis has been completed, the following stages of the study will be carried out in which actions and interventions will be planned to promote the development of critical thinking from each of the areas of the language degree programs. These actions will be implemented and the results obtained from the intervention will be evaluated in relation to the attitudes and actions evaluated in this first stage. Through this participatory action-research study it is expected to create a greater awareness of what critical thinking is and how to approach it with students so that they can develop these skills so necessary in their professional and academic development today.

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