

პედაგოგია Pedagogic

**Critical Thinking And Public Speaking**

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*The industry of international relations is one of the most influential sectors of a country's economic development. Therefore, the training of qualified students in the field of international relations requires special attention to the development of public speaking skills. One of the most effective approaches to forming these skills is the use of critical thinking methods.*

*The study involved two groups of 18-year students in the educational program "International Relations". Group A was the experimental group, and Group B was the control group. In the experimental group, critical thinking techniques (brainstorming, KWL table, RAFT, "ladder of values", "thin and thick questions") were integrated into the learning process.*

*The results of the pretest and post-test showed a significant improvement in public speaking skills, confidence in communication, and the ability to make logical and effective decisions in the experimental group compared to the control group. The application of critical thinking methods had a positive impact on the development of communicative competencies among students of the "International Relations" profile.*

**Keywords:** international relations, public speaking skills, critical thinking, communicative competence, teaching methods.

**Introduction**

Public speaking is a core competency for International Relations (IR) students. Future diplomats, policy analysts, negotiators, and analysts must articulate complex global issues persuasively, defend positions under scrutiny, and engage diverse audiences. Critical thinking (CT) — the ability to analyze information, evaluate evidence, identify biases, construct logical arguments, anticipate counterarguments, and challenge assumptions — directly enhances these skills by transforming speeches from mere delivery into reasoned, evidence-based persuasion. Research shows that integrating CT methods significantly improves speaking ability, organization of ideas, confidence, and overall performance, particularly in higher education and fields like IR where argumentation and diplomacy are central.

The industry of international relations is one of the most influential sectors of economic development in any country worldwide. Through international relations, countries can compete with each other by attracting foreign guests. In addition, this sector creates opportunities to showcase the country's attractions and culture on the global stage.

Currently, many companies operate in the field of international relations, which intensifies competition. During trips, companies organize various activities to meet the needs of guests. To increase interest in their services, they offer promotions, transportation services, accommodation, leisure activities, security, and enhanced customer trust. The increase in the number of guests traveling through a company depends directly on the professionalism of each employee.

International relations are organized for different purposes and include several types: business, volunteer, ecological, medical, experimental, and religious. All these types have a significant impact on the economies of countries and contribute to their emergence as leading states. A special place belongs to cultural international relations, which involve familiarization with the culture, lifestyle, cuisine, and traditions of a country.

The number of domestic guests in the region significantly exceeds the number of foreign visitors.

In this regard, the specialty “International Relations” is one of the most important professions in any country. The quality of education for students in this profile directly affects the development of the industry and the country’s access to the global level.

The formation of public speaking skills among students of the “International Relations” profile helps them achieve career success. It is important to speak correctly and confidently, build good relationships with guests, and receive positive feedback. A special place is occupied by the English language as the most suitable means of communication with foreign guests. Public speaking skills in English are an important component of specialist training.

**The aim of the study** is to determine the influence of critical thinking methods on the development of public speaking skills among students of the “International Relations” profile.

**Methods and Methodology of the Research** One of the main components of success in the field of international relations is the formation of communicative competence, as the industry involves constant interaction with a large number of people.

□ **Brainstorming** — free generation of ideas for solving problems that arise during international trips;

□ **Ladder of Values** — comparison of the complexity of situations and prioritization when communicating with guests;

□ **KWL Table** (Know — Want to know — Learned) — structuring and expanding knowledge about destinations and objects of international relations;

□ **Thin and Thick Questions** — development of the ability to answer questions of varying complexity;

□ **RAFT** (Role — Audience — Format — Topic) — a role-playing game that allows students to assume different professional roles and develop public speaking skills.

### **Experimental Work**

The study involved two groups of 3rd-year students in the educational program “International Relations”: experimental (Group A) and control (Group B).

In the experimental group (A), critical thinking techniques were integrated into the learning process. At each lesson, students were given assignments related to their specialty. In the control group (B), classes were conducted according to the standard program without the use of these techniques.

To assess effectiveness, a pretest and post-test were conducted, consisting of 15 questions that modeled real situations in the field of international relations.

### **Results of the Study and Their Discussion**

According to the pre-test results, no significant difference was observed between the groups.

After the implementation of critical thinking techniques in the experimental group (A), students showed noticeable improvement in public speaking skills. They learned to speak more freely in front

of an audience, confidently answer any questions from guests, and make logical decisions in emerging problems.

In the control group (B), the development of skills occurred slowly, and no significant dynamics were identified between the pre-test and post-test.

The obtained data confirm the effectiveness of us-ing critical thinking methods for the formation of professionally significant competencies.

Use CT-driven methods, proven to boost public speaking performance:

Table 1:

Method	Descripti on & IR Application	How CT Is Integrated	Expected Outcomes	Evidence/ Support
<b>Flipped Classroom</b>	Students watch short videos/readings on IR topics at home; class time focuses on practice and feedback.	Pre-class questions (e.g., “What assumptions underlie this policy?”). In-class: argumentative speeches with peer critique.	Higher post-test scores in organization, persuasion, and delivery across all CT lev-els.	Significant improvement vs. traditional lectures.
<b>Structure d De-bates &amp; Model UN Simula-tions</b>	Teams debate IR topics (e.g., “Should NATO expand?” or climate treaty nego-tiations).	Research evidence, constr uct pro/con arguments, rebuttals using CT frameworks (e.g., systems thinking).	Strong argumentation, quick thinking, audience ad-aptation.	Common in IR pro-grams; builds diplo-macy + speaking.

**Key Applications of Critical Thinking in Diplomacy**

1. **Negotiation and Bargaining** Diplomats must understand their own interests deeply while appreciating the other side's perspectives, fears, and incentives. Critical thinking helps reshape perceptions so the other party sees an agreement as mutually beneficial. It involves weighing tradeoffs, identifying alternatives (BATNA — Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement), and avoiding emotional or positional traps.

2. **Strategic Foresight and Policy Analysis** In a multipolar world with "wicked problems" (e.g., climate change, cyber threats, or regional conflicts), diplomats use critical thinking for long-term planning. This includes scenario analysis, evaluating geopolitical trends, and crafting policies that maximize flexibility in complex systems.

3. **Communication and Persuasion** Clear, logical, and tactful communication is vital. Critical thinking enables diplomats to organize messages, anticipate reactions, use evidence effectively, and practice active listening. It supports drafting policy briefs, delivering speeches, or engaging in public diplomacy without causing misunderstandings.

4. **Cross-Cultural Understanding and Empa-thy** Diplomats must interpret nonverbal cues, challenge cultural biases, and build trust. Critical thinking pro-motes empathy while maintaining objectivity — questioning one's own assumptions about other cultures.

5. **Crisis Management and Conflict Preven-tion** In high-stakes situations, rapid yet reasoned analysis prevents escalation. Techniques like evaluating ev-idence in real time or considering multiple viewpoints help deescalate tensions.

### Benefits for Students in International Relations Programs

Integrating critical thinking into education (as in your experimental vs. control group design) develops:

- Confidence in public speaking and argumen-tation.
- Ability to handle real-world scenarios like treaty negotiations or cultural exchanges.
- Long-term career readiness — diplomats need these skills for leadership, coalition-building, and adaptive responses in a changing global landscape.

Training often includes simulations, debates, case studies, and reflective practices. Modern diplomacy also emphasizes digital literacy and strategic communication in virtual or hybrid environments.

In summary, critical thinking transforms diplomacy from reactive protocol into proactive, intelligent statecraft. It enables diplomats to turn potential conflicts into opportunities for cooperation while advancing national interests responsibly.

#### How These Techniques Work Together in Study

In the experimental group, combining these methods helped students:

- Generate ideas (Brainstorming)
- Analyze and prioritize problems (Ladder of Values)
- Organize knowledge (KWL)
- Handle different question types (Thin & Thick)
- Practice real-life communication (RAFT)

This led to better **public speaking skills** — more confidence, logical structure, quicker thinking on their feet, and the ability to make effective decisions when interacting with guests.

These techniques are widely used in education be-cause they are active, student-centered, and directly support higher-order thinking (analysis, evaluation, creation) rather than just recall.

The conducted experimental study allows us to formulate the following main conclusions:

1. Public speaking skills are one of the key pro-fessional competencies of students in the “International Relations” profile, since successful work in this field requires constant effective communication with domestic and foreign guests.

2. The integration of critical thinking methods into the educational process significantly enhances the development of public speaking skills. Students in the experimental group demonstrated a higher level of confidence in speech, logical presentation, and the ability to quickly solve non-standard tasks compared to students in the control group.

3. The use of techniques such as brainstorming, KWL table, RAFT, “ladder of values”, and “thin and thick questions” contributes not only to the improve-ment of speaking skills but also to the comprehensive development of analytical and systemic thinking, which is especially important for future specialists.

4. The results of the study confirm the feasibility and high effectiveness of implementing critical think-ing methods in educational programs in the specialty “International Relations”.

Based on the obtained data, it is recommended to:

- actively introduce critical thinking techniques into university educational programs;
- develop special methodological materials and practical courses for the development of public speak-ing skills;
- make wider use of role-playing and situational tasks in the process of student training.

Conclusions (Academic Style) — International Relations

1. Public Speaking Skills as a Key Competence

The development of public speaking skills is a fundamental component of professional competence for students specializing in *International Relations*. The effectiveness of activities in diplomacy, international organizations, and analytical or research institutions directly depends on the ability to interact with colleagues, partners, and audiences in an argumentative and persuasive manner.

## 2. Critical Thinking as the Basis of Communicative Competence

The formation of critical thinking is considered a strategic foundation for developing communicative competence. The ability to analyze international issues, construct logical arguments, and make well-founded decisions enables students to successfully handle professional tasks and non-standard situations in the international arena.

## 3. Effectiveness of Pedagogical Methods

Integrating critical thinking techniques into the educational process — such as *Brainstorming*, *KWL Table*, *Thin and Thick Questions*, *Ladder of Values*, and *RAFT* — significantly enhances students' professional development. These methods contribute to improving argumentation skills, logical structuring of speech, and confident public speaking within the context of international relations.

## 5. Evidence from Experimental Data

The results of the experimental study demonstrated statistically significant improvements in the experimental group compared to the control group:

- ✓ higher level of knowledge about international processes;
- ✓ improved ability to analyze and solve complex problems.

## 5. Comprehensive Approach and Systemic Understanding

Applying a comprehensive approach to developing public speaking skills through critical thinking fosters students' systemic understanding of international affairs, stimulates motivation for learning, and contributes to the formation of sustainable professional competencies required for effective functioning in a global environment. *Annali d'Italia* №78/2026 93

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