

UDC 37.032

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4634.2025.322718>

Aghamali Gunay Fazail, *Postgraduate Student of the Educational Psychology Department, Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University*

## FEATURES OF THE MANIFESTATION OF CRITICAL THINKING IN PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

*The article notes that studying critical thinking in preschool-aged children significantly impacts the overall development of their personality. Even children of preschool age, when favorable conditions arise, are able to comprehend the essence of cognitive objects, from which they are able to draw some conclusions, find errors and inconsistencies, and make some reasoning about the reasons that caused them. Therefore, it is necessary to put in front of preschool children problems that gradually become more difficult and require relatively intense mental activity and direct them to solve them independently.*

**Purpose of the study.** *It is to study the psychological characteristics of the formation of critical thinking in preschool-aged children and to explore the factors that influence its development. During the study the following research methods were used: analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature, observation, experiment, psychodiagnostic techniques, and qualitative and quantitative analysis of research results. Literature analysis is an important method in the study of the relevant problem.*

**The novelty of the study.** *The formation of mental qualities in children of preschool age is intensified against the background of the development of individual cognitive processes, not suddenly having a gradual character. Factual information characterizing the criticality of thinking in children of preschool age has been collected and systematized. Psychological-pedagogical ways and means for the formation of mental qualities in preschool children are shown.*

**Keywords:** *student; school; mental quality; critical thinking; teacher; education; training.*

**Ref. 12.**

Агамалі Гюнай Фазайл, *аспірантка кафедри педагогічної психології Азербайджанського державного педагогічного університету*

## ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПРОЯВУ КРИТИЧНОГО МИСЛЕННЯ ДІТЕЙ ДОШКІЛЬНОГО ВІКУ

*У статті зазначається, що вивчення критичного мислення дітей дошкільного віку суттєво впливає на загальний розвиток їх особистості. Уже діти дошкільного віку за сприятливих умов здатні осягнути сутність об'єктів пізнання, з чого зробити певні висновки, знайти помилки і невідповідності, міркувати про причини, що їх викликали. Тому необхідно ставити перед дошкільнятами завдання, які поступово ускладнюються і вимагають порівняно напруженої розумової діяльності, і спрямовувати їх на самостійне їх вирішення.*

*Мета дослідження полягає у вивченні психологічних особливостей формування критичного мислення дітей дошкільного віку та факторів, що впливають на його розвиток. Під час дослідження були використані такі методи дослідження: аналіз психолого-педагогічної літератури, спостереження, експеримент, психодіагностичні методики, якісний та кількісний аналіз результатів дослідження. Важливим методом у вивченні відповідної проблеми є аналіз літератури.*

*Новизна дослідження. Формування психічних якостей у дітей дошкільного віку посилюється на тлі розвитку окремих психічних процесів, не носить раптово поступовий характер. Зібрано та систематизовано фактичну інформацію, що характеризує критичність мислення дітей дошкільного віку. Показано психолого-педагогічні шляхи та засоби формування психічних якостей у дітей дошкільного віку.*

**Ключові слова:** *учень; школа; розумова якість; критичне мислення; учитель; освіта; навчання.*

**I**ntroduction. In modern conditions, the study of thinking and creative qualities is one of the central problems of a number of sciences and is quite relevant. In this regard, the upbringing, intelligence, wisdom, and comprehensive development of preschool-aged children stand as a state-level priority in modern times.

Formation of preschool children as a personality is the demand of today. The law on education of the Republic of Azerbaijan specifically states that education and upbringing are most often based on mental thinking and new pedagogical thinking. In this sense, the period of preschool age constitutes an important stage in instilling many necessary qualities in the

personality being formed. For this reason, preschool institutions must first take care of the effective use of the necessary opportunities of that stage.

**Purpose of the study** is to study the psychological characteristics of the formation of critical thinking in preschool-aged children and to explore the factors that influence its development.

**Analysis of the latest relevant research and publications.** In general, mental qualities as an important scientific problem in the history of psychology were comprehended in the 20th century. The first intriguing pages of this history were written by renowned psychologists such as A. Binet, E. Claparède, J. Piaget, and W. Stern. In their studies, the study of two impor-

tant qualities of the mind – criticality and independence-in an experimental direction is especially significant. But in the 30s and 40s, the problem of mental qualities was not systematically studied in psychology. After experiencing a period of stagnation for some time, already in the early 60s, various works (M. Morozov, A. Lipkina, S. Juykob, Z. Kalmykova, N. Stadnenko, etc.) devoted directly to this problem were published.

In the history of psychological thought of Azerbaijan in the 20th century and modern times, serious attention was given to this area and scientific mass works, monographs, dissertations, textbooks and methodical aids were written. The works of M. Maharramov, A. Bayramov, A. Alizade, V. Aliyeva, A. Kadirov, V. Aliyev and others can be cited as an example. Professor A. Bayramov has been the most active in this field.

**Results of the study.** Nowadays, in the conditions of an abundance of information, the development of mental qualities in children of preschool age is much faster. Physical, socio-psychological, ethnic-psychological factors play a specific role here. For the development of these qualities, education and the environment are motivating stimuli, but they are weak in the vast majority of preschool children. Not all of them, but a certain part of them find it difficult to independently express their thoughts without the direction of outsiders. Therefore, in the process of training upbringing, it is necessary to develop in children all their mental forces, as well as to form a system of knowledge in them.

- In the process of training and education, the development of cognitive qualities in preschool-aged children depends, on one hand, on their knowledge and age levels, as well as the content and logical structure of the materials outlined in the programs; on the other hand, it is influenced by the teaching methods, how the children assimilate those materials, and the degree of engagement from parents and educators. We observed this once again during our research. Whether with parents or educators, there is almost no practical effort made to develop children's intellectual knowledge and skills related to their mental abilities. Setting general goals is not enough to develop critical thinking in preschool-aged children. It became clear during the research that children in both middle groups (ages 3–4) and older groups (ages 5–6) show interest in texts and narrative images that require mental operations to uncover their inner meaning. Moreover, they even request educators to conduct interviews using such texts and images.

- During the experiment, it turned out that both independent and critical thinking in children is manifested in a very weak form. Therefore, parents and educators need to create conditions for the mutual development of both mental activities through the use of

educational techniques. The experiment shows that children's expressive qualities develop and improve gradually, that is, when they move from medium to older groups. In middle and large groups, critical thinking skills are still weak, but after specific instruction, these qualities develop in them.

- Using general texts and tests is effective for developing critical thinking in preschool-aged children. Here, specific instructions, such as using questions and tests that encourage identifying images and texts, discrepancies, and mistakes, can be more beneficial.

- Although children in the middle and older groups show critical and independent thinking, they find it difficult to express their critical and independent thinking. And after the second, guiding instruction, they easily cope with the work and take an active part in future experiments. The study showed that independent thinking has a wider range of forms of manifestation than critical thinking. Bright examples of this are the questions of children that put some parents and educators in difficult situations. To develop independent and critical thinking in preschool-aged children, it is necessary to select texts and illustrated stories that comprehensively contribute to their intellectual development. Although preschool children have the ability to think independently and critically, they always need help, mainly to do what is requested. Research shows that some preschool children sometimes do not need outside help to achieve common goals. And some do not pay attention to texts, pictures, questions, omissions in them and accept them as they are. Others, even when provided with additional help to clarify the questions aimed at identifying independent and critical thinking, still fail to achieve the desired goals.

- Experience has shown that some preschool-aged children are not satisfied with merely observing the external similarities of events and pictures, with the help of a few guiding questions, they approach the presented objects thoughtfully, measuring and evaluating them, and respond in ways that correspond to the listed details. And this, at least a little, ensures the development of mental qualities in them.

- To develop critical and independent thinking in children of preschool age, pictures and texts should be selected that correspond to their level of knowledge, age. It is necessary to achieve that children, by the way, give examples of critical and independent thinking. It is always advisable to accustom children to independent speech, adding them to stories and fairy tales. It would be beneficial to encourage children to uncover hidden meanings in pictures and texts. Efforts should be made so that, even in the simplest discussions or experiments, children always draw their own conclusions. Along with pictures, it is better to provide children with materials that have a hidden meaning appropriate to their level of knowledge, which can only be revealed as a result of certain thinking and judgment.

- It has a great effect to constantly direct children to solve issues that require intellectual thinking. For example, it is at this time that children give logical answers to the questions asked. They consciously absorb the hidden meanings of materials, images and are able to approach their (self-critical) and also to the opinions of their companions at a critical pace. Materials and images should be chosen to support children's intellectual development.

- To develop mental qualities in children of preschool age, educators and parents should not rush them to critical thinking and achieve that they find inconsistencies themselves. Teachers, tutors, and parents should work on the development of mental qualities in preschool children, so that children ask questions to their peers in this direction and answer questions together. Such interviews have positive effects. Including specific texts, images, and other tasks in the programs, textbooks, and teaching materials published for conducting educational activities in preschool institutions would, in our opinion, greatly support efforts to develop intellectual qualities in children. It would certainly be beneficial if educators and parents, in addition to group work, could also work individually with children to develop intellectual qualities, taking into account each child's unique characteristics whenever possible.

- The vast majority of preschool children have a weak ability to have a certain critical attitude towards cognitive objects, to consider them seriously, to approach them from different angles when a common goal is set for them. Not all children, but only some are able to think critically without external guidance.

- The ability for critical thinking exists in preschool-aged children. However, setting a general goal is not sufficient for the expression and development of this ability. To turn this potential into reality, other means – more specific objectives – must be fulfilled. Teachers, educators, parents should strive for the development of mental qualities in preschool children so that children ask questions to peers in this direction and conduct joint question answers.

- There are significant differences between children of preschool age due to independence and criticality of thinking. These should be taken into account by parents and educators.

- Preschool children (3–6 years old) think independently, approach what they see, hear, the opinions of their peers and elders independently, compared to critical thinking. This arises from their sense of wonder at what they see and their strong curiosity about how? and why? things come into being. Naturally, independent thinking is more challenging than investigating the essence of events. Questions such as where water, soil, bread, trees, humans, animals, and birds come from arise in children as a result of their direct observation of these living and non-living entities.

**Conclusion.** In the current era of information abundance, the development of intellectual qualities in preschool-aged children is progressing more rapidly. Physical, social-psychological, and ethnic-psychological factors play a unique role in this process. Although education, upbringing, and the environment serve as motivating stimuli for the development of these qualities, they remain weak in the majority of preschool-aged children. Not all of them, but a certain part of them find it difficult to independently express their thoughts without the direction of outsiders. Therefore, in the educational process, it is essential not only to form a system of knowledge in children but also to develop all their mental faculties.

- In the educational process, the development of intellectual qualities in preschool-aged children depends, on one hand, on their knowledge and age levels, as well as the content and logical structure of the materials outlined in the programs. On the other hand, it is influenced by the teaching methods used, how children assimilate these materials, and the extent to which parents and educators approach their work. We observed this again during our research. Neither parents nor educators carry out practically any effective actions to develop children's intellectual abilities, particularly in fostering their intellectual knowledge and skills. Setting general goals for developing critical thinking in preschool-aged children is not sufficient. Here, during the research, it became clear that whether in middle groups (3–4) or older groups (5–6), children are interested in texts that require mental operations, pictures with plots, and revealing their inner meaning. And even their tutors require them to conduct interviews with such texts and pictures.

- During the experiment, it became clear that critical thinking in children manifests in a very weak form. Therefore, parents and educators should create conditions for the mutual development of both intellectual activities by using more instructional experimental methods. The experiment shows that children's manifest qualities gradually develop and improve as they transition from the middle groups to the older groups. In medium and large groups, critical thinking skills are still weak but this quality develops in them after specific instruction.

- To develop critical thinking in children of preschool age, it is effective to use texts of a general nature, tests. Here, the use of specific instructions, i.e. pictures and texts, questions and tests that provoke inconsistencies and errors, can be of better benefit.

- Although children in the middle and older groups show critical thinking, they have difficulty expressing their critical and independent thoughts. And after the second, guiding instruction, they easily cope with the work and take an active part in future experiments. The research showed that independent thinking has broader forms of manifestation compared to critical thinking.

Some parents and educators pose questions that put children in difficult situations, which are clear examples of this. To develop independent and critical thinking in preschool-aged children, it is essential to choose texts and story-based images that contribute to their intellectual development in a comprehensive manner. Although preschool children have the ability to think independently and critically, they always need help, mainly to do what is required. In the course of the study, it turns out that some children of preschool age sometimes do not need outside help to achieve the general goals set. And some do not pay attention to texts, pictures, questions, almost the shortcomings there and accept them as they are. Others do not achieve the desired goal, even if there is additional help to clarify the questions posed in order to identify critical thinking.

- The experiment showed that some preschool-aged children do not settle for just the superficial similarities of events and images; with the help of a few guiding questions, they thoughtfully measure and evaluate the presented objects and respond in ways that correspond to what is listed. This, in turn, contributes, to some extent, to the development of their intellectual qualities.

- To develop critical thinking in preschool-aged children, images and texts should be selected that are appropriate for their knowledge and age levels. It is essential to provide examples that promote critical and independent thinking whenever possible. It is always advisable to accustom children to add to stories and tales to talk independently. It is useful to encourage images and texts to reveal hidden meanings. Efforts should be made to ensure that children draw their own conclusions, even in the simplest discussions or experiments. It would be better to present them with materials that, alongside images, have meanings that are hidden and can only be revealed through specific thinking and reasoning appropriate to their knowledge level.

- Directing children constantly toward solving problems that require critical thinking has a significant effect. For instance, it is during this process that children provide logical answers to the questions posed. They consciously grasp the hidden meanings in materials and images, and they learn to critically evaluate their own thoughts (self-criticism) as well as those of their peers. Therefore, materials and images should be chosen in a way that aids in the intellectual development of children.

- To develop critical thinking in preschool-aged children, educators and parents should not rush them to critical thinking and achieve that they find inconsistencies themselves. Teachers, tutors, and parents should work on the development of mental qualities in pres-

chool children, so that children ask questions to their peers in this direction and answer questions together. Such interviews have positive effects. The majority of preschool-aged children still have a weak ability to adopt a critical attitude toward cognitive objects when a general goal is set. They struggle to seriously examine these objects and approach them from various perspectives. Not all children, but only some are able to think critically without external guidance.

- The ability for critical thinking exists in preschool-aged children. However, setting a general goal for its manifestation and development is not sufficient. To turn that potential into reality, it is necessary to employ other means – more specific objectives. Although preschool-aged children possess the ability for critical thinking, they are still significantly influenced by external factors and primarily strive to fulfill what is required of them.

- There are significant differences among preschool-aged children in terms of the critical nature of their thinking. These should be taken into account by parents and educators.

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Стаття надійшла до редакції 07.01.2025

